

TREES IN THE URBAN CONTEXT:
A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEANING AND DESIGN

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A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEANING AND DESIGN**

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ABSTRACT

TREES IN THE URBAN CONTEXT: A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEANING AND DESIGN

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Urban places, besides their physical characteristics, are regarded as grounds where personal or communal meanings are created and accumulated. An individual can capture the meaning of a place, or create a new meaning by relying on his/her own feelings and experiences. This substantial role of urban places makes them the core concepts of environmental perception and urban design studies. This research, by discussing the idea of togetherness of meaning and design in urban spaces, presents trees both as place making and meaning generating features, and raises the term *tree-places*. The reason behind this is the capability of trees in terms of place formation, and their meanings for people which are shaped throughout the history.

However, the attention of urban planners and designers towards working with trees in urban spaces is inadequate. They tend to focus solely on aesthetic appearances and biological contributions of trees. Moreover, trees are mostly thought afterwards, outside design processes. This attitude can be overcome through the identification of design principles with trees in urban exterior spaces. In this respect, this research presents a two-fold study, one of which is the *meaning* and the other is the *design*. Trees, in this context, are seen as the bridge connecting these two phenomena. While answering the question why trees have been chosen to relate meaning and design, an investigation is made on the deeply-rooted relationship between man and trees, and its traces on urban place. In order to strengthen the argument of the place making characteristics of trees, the existing urban places defined by trees are discussed under the term of *tree-places*.

The study concludes with inferences from the theoretical discussions and case research that provide guidelines for urban design with trees. Trees are the essentials of people and cities, and the silent witnesses of history. For this reason, they are presented as valuable beings and design elements that create distinct urban places while supporting the concept of meaning.

Keywords: Meaning in Urban Design, Design with Trees, Tree-Places, Yalvaç Çınaraltı

ÖZ

KENTSEL BAĞLAMDA AĞAÇLAR: ANLAM VE TASARIMIN İLİŞKİSİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Fiziki özelliklerinin yanında mekânlar, bireysel ya da toplumsal anlamların üretildiği, saklandığı ve sürdürüldüğü alanlardır. Kişi, günlük yaşamında bir mekânda saklı olanı algılayabilir veya kendi duygu ve deneyimleri doğrultusunda yeni anlamlar üretebilir. Kısacası, kent mekânları kişinin çevresini algılama sürecinde etken veya edilgen bir deneyim zemini oluşturur ki bu da onları kentsel tasarım ve çevresel algılama çalışmalarının merkezine koyar. Bu çalışma, ağaçları mekân yaratma ve mekâna anlam katma aracı olarak görmekte ve *ağaç-mekânları* kavramını ortaya atmaktadır. Bu savın temel nedeni ise, ağaçların doğru kullanıldıklarında fiziki özellikleri itibarıyla mekân tanımlayan öğeler olmaları ve tarih boyunca insanlarla olan derin ilişkileri sonucu uyandırdıkları anlamlardır.

Ancak, günümüzde planlama ve kentsel tasarım çalışmalarının ağaçların mekândaki varlığına yaklaşımları yetersizdir. Ağaçlar genellikle estetik özellikleri, biyolojik katkıları ile değerlendirilmekte ve de mekâna dahilîyetleri tasarım sürecinin dışında çözülmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu sorunsal, mekânda anlamın önemi, ağaçların bu bağlamdaki rolünün incelenmesi ve sonuç olarak kent açık mekânlarında ağaçlarla tasarım ilkelerinin tartışılmasıyla irdelenmektedir. Bu bağlamda birincisi, *anlam* ikincisi ise *tasarım* olmak üzere mekâna dair iki odaklı bir tartışma sunulmakta ve ağaçlar bu iki olguyu bağlayan bir köprü olarak görülmektedir. “Neden ağaç?” sorusuna cevap verilirken insanoğlunun geçmişten bugüne ağaçla olan ilişkisi, ağaca yüklediği anlamlar ve bunların mekâna olan yansımaları incelenmektedir.

Bu çalışma, teorik tartışmalardan ve alan araştırması sonuçlarından yararlanarak ağaçla tasarım yöntemlerine dair çıkarımlarla sonuçlanmaktadır. Ağaçlar şehirlerin ve insanların vazgeçilmezi, tarihin sessiz tanıklarındır. Bu sebeple, tanımlı mekân yaratma aracı olarak kullanılırken, mekânın ayrılmaz bir bileşeni olan anlam olgusunu pekiştiren değerli varlıklar ve önemli bir tasarım elemanı olarak ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel Tasarımda Anlam, Ağaçla Tasarım, Ağaç-Mekânı, Yalvaç Çınaraltı

To the *willow*, *olive* and *lemon* tree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Yoldaşlar, ölürsem o günden önce yani,
- öyle gibi de görünüyor -
Anadolu'da bir köy mezarlığına gömün beni
ve de uyarına gelirse,
tepede bir de çınar olursa, taş maş da istemez hani...

(Nazım Hikmet, *Vasiyet*,1953)

Trees, as the first source of food, shelter and worship for man, are one of the most valuable living things on earth. From early times till today, people have always been in contact with trees, but once worshiped as gods or holy spirits, they now enrich urban exterior spaces. That is, this long-standing relationship is concealed behind the appreciation of existence of trees, and in turn the extensive use of them in the built environment. However, a child who plays around a tree, a person who planted a tree to honor the birth of his child or to provide profusion for his home are the meaningful remnants of this deeply-rooted relationship. Whether tangible or not, these facts point out a strong connection between people, trees and spaces that needs a comprehensive study covering a range of meanings of trees from physical to symbolic that may influence a person who walks by trees on streets of his/her city.

Given the noteworthiness of trees for people and places, the question about the design with trees arises. Trees are widely used in urban outdoor areas, and this means that they should be integrated to the overall urban pattern, since a city is a meaningful whole together with its solid and void spaces. This can easily be achieved by simply relying on the capacity of trees to satisfy various design means. For instance, trees can divide, define, enclose, and add rhythm to urban spaces when used deliberately (Arnold 1993, 46). However, the design based contributions of trees seem to be disregarded by the designers of urban space. This thesis considers this as a problematic case and aims at elaborating the use of trees in space design and meaning dimension of this action in detail. Therefore, this introductory chapter presents the overview of the research, problem statement, main aim and scope of discussion around the fundamental idea of presenting trees as integrated and meaningful elements of urban space. The chapter proceeds with an initial study of connecting the related concepts of meaning, design and trees, and ends up with the structure of thesis.

1.1 Overview of the Study

The researcher's encounter with a Çınaraltı Square (a Turkish term used to define public places under massive and historical plane trees) which is marked by a plane tree that is called Musa (Moses) Plane (Musa Çınarı or Hıdırbey Çınarı) in Antakya/Turkey has triggered an idea of questioning the urban planning and design approaches beyond the broadly accepted role of trees as natural and aesthetic beings in cities. Later on, Yalvaç Plane (Yalvaç Çınarı) in Yalvaç/Isparta, and the grand public place under its tremendous branches carried this wonder one step further, since this Çınaraltı Square was not only an attractive place with a magnificent plane tree, but also the heart of the city.

The first example of Musa Plane is a magnificent and old tree collecting the local people and visitors around it. Besides, the plane affects the physical layout of the village creating a sort of urbanity, and most importantly a distinctive place (see Figure 1.1-1.2). This uniqueness of the site merges with the history behind the tree and its place. The plane tree has a religious myth that is related to Musa the prophet. It is believed that he stuck his rod into earth 3000 years ago and there grew a plane tree.



Figure 1.1 The Place of Musa Plane
(Gedikli, 2012)

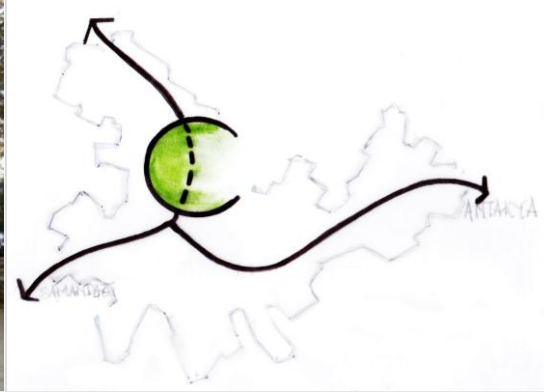


Figure 1.2 The Spine and the Plane Tree in Hıdırbey Village
(Personal Drawing)

Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square, on the other hand, is a product of a long term social and historical interaction process that created the main public place of a medium-sized Turkish city. Besides the similar characteristics with Musa Çınaraltı Square, Yalvaç example carries more of the urban qualities such as creating a city center and having a visible impact on the urban macroform. Therefore, in this thesis a case study research has been conducted in Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square to gain a comprehensive grasp of the social and spatial organization of an urban place that is dominated by a historical plane tree. In this sense, the role of Yalvaç Plane in the historical and spatial development of an urban space will be evaluated by relying on socially produced meaning in the built environment and urban design.

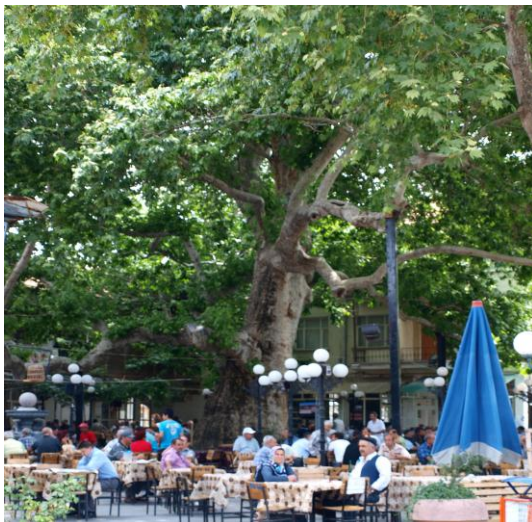


Figure 1.3 The Place of Yalvaç Plane
(Personal Archive, 2012)

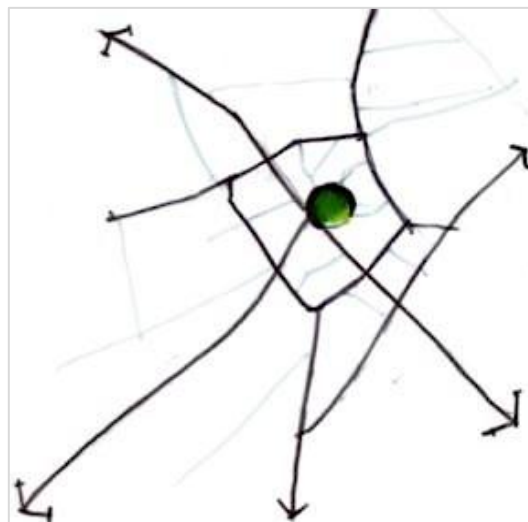


Figure 1.4 The City and Plane Tree in Yalvaç
(Personal Drawing)

The examples show that a tree can be the mediator in the formation of a public place within an urban environment. There seems to be a mutual and strong interaction between people and trees that is socially constructed throughout years and reflected itself on space. In other words, trees in these examples are more than decorative objects beautifying the urban environment; they connect man to his past and create places. This inference forms a basis for bridging the meaning and design in urban places.

Therefore, the importance of trees in space design calls for a wider study, in which the meaning and design of trees could be combined. Thus, a two-fold study guides this research as:

- The “**meaning**” in places and of trees.
- The potential of trees to “**create places**”

These two focuses are to be elaborated through an analysis of the deliberate use of trees. That is, main emphasis is given both to the meaning dimension of trees and design capabilities of them. At this point, the notion of meaning in place as a wide-ranging concept depending on various internal and external dynamics comes to the fore. Furthermore, design interventions play a crucial role in directing the meaningfulness of the built environment. However, lack of attention of urban planning and design actions to this indispensable issue may result in meaning erosion in urban places. Trees, in this context, can be introduced as one of the most influential elements of urban design to reinforce meaning in places. Dwyer et al. (1993, 138) justify this argument as:

“Ties between people and trees are associated with traditions, symbolism, and the need to get involved at the local level to sustain or enhance the environment for present and future generations. At the same time, managers and planners must learn about the many psychological, social, and cultural needs that trees and forests fulfill for urbanites.”

This thesis insists on pursuing the meaning of trees and design capabilities of them in tandem to solve the problem of meaning erosion and indeliberate use of trees. In this sense, the first consideration is the power of trees to unveil historical, moral and spiritual characteristics of spaces. That is, trees are capable of evoking deeper feelings besides beautifying the urban environment. Schroeder (1992, 83), who has pioneered valuable studies on this issue, states that:

“...The emotional, symbolic and spiritual connections between people and trees are just as real and just as important as the physical and biologic links.”

The second focus is about tree’s being an effective design tool in urban exterior space arrangements. Arnold (1993, 44) poses a concern supporting this idea by indicating that trees can be used as design means to define spaces, when arranged purposefully:

“Even though major definition of outdoor space is achieved in most urban places by buildings, the most important function of trees is to define, reinforce or create spaces.”

Since this research concentrates on two subjects as “meaning of trees and its influence on places” and “their potential to define urban places”, the notion of place becomes prominent. In this sense, the term tree-place gives a foothold to understand the role of trees in place. Before proceeding, it is important to explain a key concern related to the use of concepts of space, place, and tree-place in this research. During the discussions of these concepts, a linguistic differentiation emerged about what these words refer in English and Turkish. Because, place is translated as “*yer*” and space as “*mekân*” in Turkish. When urban design and human experience are concerned, the proper word to use is “place” in English, yet this does not provide a complete translation in Turkish as *yer*. Since, the word *mekân* connotes more of what is being expressed by the use of the word “place” in English. In short, what is called *mekân* (space) in Turkish is more suitable to indicate a defined and meaningful environment in which daily experiences of people are occurred, which is place.

By taking into the consideration of this personal understanding and concern as a researcher, I prefer to use and discuss the notion of place and concentrate on the term tree-place throughout this thesis. However, the Turkish translation has been made as *ağaç-mekânı* (tree-space in a word for a word translation) and this argument on linguistics will be developed further in a future study.

Claiming that trees can form places, this thesis sees a tree-place (*ağaç-mekânı*) as an urban quality shaped around a tree and produced by mutual interaction between trees and society. The term tree-place has previously been used by Jones et al. (2002, 73) to describe places “which are occupied and co-constituted by trees” and is embraced by this research as well. This term provides a frame of reference in which the meaning of trees and places can merge with the means of urban planning and design. Jones et al. (2002, 86) state some of the qualities of trees in places as:

“Many of the attributes of trees form common currencies in our understandings and appreciation of place; their size, rich materiality, their interconnectivity, their longevity, their life cycles and seasonal cycles all offer qualities which are readily and vividly drawn into the concepts of place.”

1.2 Connecting the Concepts: Meaning, Design and Trees

Bringing meaning and design together and achieving this through the purposeful use of trees in cities need a unitary approach. On the one side lies the necessity of exploring meanings of trees emerged after a mutual interaction between people and trees throughout years, and on the other the obligation of searching for a comprehensive urban design approach that aims to create places defined by trees.

Meaning and design are not separable, since urban planning and design activities intend to solve urban related problems through design interventions and plan decisions, seeking to create meaningful and working places for urbanites. Thus, the study is developed in order to reveal the reasons and methods of tree use in urban areas, with an array of some concepts and connecting aspects (Figure 1.5).

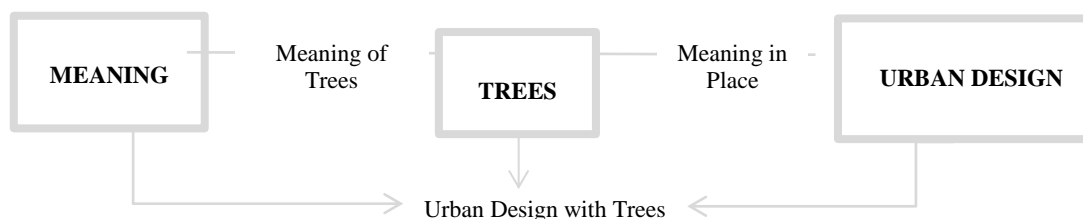


Figure 1.5 Connecting the Concepts: Meaning, Design and Trees

These two main headings intersect at the use of trees in urban places. The thesis proceeds with a framework that is shaped around the notion of meaning, its significance in urban place, and in turn for people. The following sections follow a deductive approach starting from the benefits and meanings of trees produced through a long social interaction between people and trees to the specific discussion of designing with trees in urban areas. This flow can be presented as:

1. Meaning
 - Meaning in Place
2. Meaning in Urban Design
 - Tree as a Place-Making Element
(*formation of meaningful and distinctive places*)

3. Meaning of Trees

For People and Places

4. Tree-Places: Distinctive Urban Places with Trees
5. A Closer Look at Tree-Place
6. Urban Design with Trees

1.3 Problem Definition and Significance of the Study

Despite the unique contributions of trees to urban areas, the way they are used and perceived is limited within a narrow frame in urban planning and design. Accordingly, main problem of this research has been identified by two main aspects. The first is the problem of loss of meaning in urban places, and the ignored role of trees in this process. That is, trees can help creating meaningful urban places since they have further meanings besides their practical benefits. Some scholars (e.g. Arnold 1993; Nadel et al. 1977) argue that three decades ago trees were perceived only as ornamental materials for urban areas. However, recent arguments emphasize the psychological benefits of trees in cities as well (Nadel et al. 1977). Some scholars (Schroeder 1990; Sommer 2003) point out the deeper meanings and significance of trees. According to this, the psychological ties and special bonds between people and trees are essential in people's lives (Sommer 2003; Arnold 1993).

The second problem is the indeliberate urban planning and design actions regarding the use of trees in urban places. It is mostly overlooked that trees create legible places and following the geometry of urban layout when arranged purposefully (Arnold 1993, 7). The reason behind this failure is elaborated by a few scholars. For instance, Arnold (1993) states that trees are not integrated to design process, and explain this problem as follows:

“There is little or no evidence that tree planting was a deliberate design consideration in planning the geometry of any districts of our cities. Rather it is apparent that trees were used to fill in the left over spaces that resulted from building and circulation demand. Spaces generally were not planned for trees.”

Similarly, Nadel et al. (1977) indicate that urban planning and design applications use trees afterwards to meet the planning standards and to correct design based deficiencies. The statement of Nadel et al. (1977, 32) below points out this problem:

“Trees planted in leftover spaces or at corners of buildings, their presence is afterthought. The planting of trees should always be integrated with design, from the original drawing to the final construction.”

These formulations of the authors are valid in the Turkish context as well. Despite the significance of trees in Turkish history, culture and urbanization process, contemporary approaches towards identification of tree's place in space and their embodiment in the overall urban pattern still fail. Figure 1.6 shows an awarded urban design project in which the trees seem to be scattered regardless to the overall design concern. Figure 1.7 was taken in Eskişehir Road/Ankara showing a narrow sidewalk with large trees. These two images present the two sides of the problem, which are the indeliberate use of trees in design process and the maintenance of their existence when faced with a technical requirement. It is certain that planning and landscaping activities favor the green areas and tree plantings; however the main concern here is the lack of urban design interventions in running together the green and grey infrastructure as a whole.



Figure 1.6 Trees in an Urban Design Project
 (<http://www.arkitera.com/etiket/index/detay/usak-belediyesi-ismetpasa-caddesi-ve-cevresi-ulusal-mimarlik-kentsel-tasarim-fikir-proje-yarismasi/11965>)



Figure 1.7 The Ignored Existence of Trees
 (Personal Archive, Ankara, 2012)

Thus, this study is important for describing urban design actions for tree use in cities in response to the need of distinction and meaning in places. Moreover, the term of tree-place will provide a framework for urban planning and design about the ways to work with trees. In a modern age of cherishing the new and innovative, places like Çınaraltı Squares will stand out as unique urban places. They are the illustrations of tree-places which serve as hearts, landmarks and nodes in urban places while symbolizing the history and culture of cities, not to mention their aesthetic and natural values. What is inferred from the elaboration of tree-places will be reflected on the proposals for urban design with trees.

1.4 Aim and Scope

This thesis aims at looking at trees from a wider perspective, understanding their meaning beyond what has been perceived so far, both in spatial design professions and in theory. This requires an abandoning of the understanding of trees as an attributes independent from space and supporting the creation of tree-places as attributes operating within the urban space. In this sense, emphasis is given to the concept of meaning, what makes a place meaningful, and how people experience this meaning within their environment. The tools and ways to preserve and maintain the meaning in places or to generate new meaning patterns are of utmost importance. Thus, the literature review aims to unveil the processes of meaning perception, and tools for generating meaning in urban places within the scope of environmental psychology, behavioral psychology, phenomenology and urban design. Following this, trees are to be displayed as important features that generate meaning in places.

A detailed study related to the meaning of trees discusses the depth of meanings of trees by investigating the subject in several academic fields. In this respect, the discussion concentrates on the urban culture, history, religious beliefs and their visible marks in the cities of today. So as to further develop and link these tree uses with the contemporary tree arrangements in cities, a study on existing tree-places intends to show trees as significant tools for urban planning and design perspectives. Briefly, the two main channels (meaning and role of trees in place) are elaborated to construct a framework to present trees as meaningful features and powerful tools to create unique urban places. This research puts forward the real value and meaning of trees for people and places as well as a new perspective for spatial designers to work with trees in accordance with the overall fabric of urban spaces.

1.5 Structure of the Study

Main hypothesis of this thesis is that, trees are valuable urban features to design urban exterior spaces, as well as to foster meaning in urban environments as a result of their social interaction with people. In this context, this study poses the following research question: “**How can tree(s) be used in urban design in a way to create meaningful and distinctive urban places?**” Thus, an overview that covers the discussions of the concept of meaning, how it emerges, and what it signifies for people and places is established. As the research proceeds, the sub-thematic issues related to the meaning formation through urban design interventions and the use of trees become important. In accordance with the main hypothesis and the research question, the main sub questions are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Main Concepts and Sub-Questions of the Study

Concepts	Sub-Questions
Meaning	1. What does “meaning” signify and stand for in urban place?
Meaning in Place	
Meaning in Urban Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree as a Place-Making Element 	2. What are the approaches and elements of the production of meaning in urban places via urban design?
Meaning of Trees	3. How could we categorize the contemporary approaches taking trees as a study object, to yield the deeper meanings of trees?
Tree-Places: Distinctive Urban Places with Trees	4. How can the observable tree uses be categorized to guide future studies of bringing meaning and design together with tree-places?
A Closer Look at a Tree-Place	5. What are the qualities of spatial organization, activity and meaning patterns in a specific tree-place?
Urban Design with Trees	6. How can the urban trees be designed as place makers to create distinctive and meaningful places in urban areas?

This research is composed of five main chapters apart from the introduction and conclusion parts. It starts with a theoretical framework, then examines the case, and concludes with a discussion on meaning, trees and place. The introduction part states the main objectives, problem definition and the flow of the study in general.

Chapter 2 provides an outlook related to the concept of meaning and its significance in place. First of all, the chapter aims to define the system of meaning by analyzing the related theories. This is to find the significance of meaning both for people, and in turn for urban places. Later on, the importance of meaning for the formation and maintenance of urban places is presented. Lastly, the quest for finding measures of meaning in urban places ends the chapter after the identification of interaction patterns between people and places.

Chapter 3 deepens the discussion of meaning in place on the studies of urban design. The most important argument this chapter establishes is the problem of loss of meaning and its consequences for people and urban places. Following this, the spatial design tools and approaches to overcome the problem of loss of meaning are provided.

As a final statement, there is an investigation of tools, ways and approaches to reinforce or create meaning within the built environment, one of which is the deliberate use of trees.

Chapter 4 puts forward the subject of tree as a meaning generator in places and provides a detailed analysis about their significance for people. This analysis presents the multiple aspects of trees ranging from the most concrete and practical benefits to the most abstract and spiritual characteristics. Then, the role of trees particularly in Turkish history and culture underlines the importance of trees for Turkish people and cities.

Chapter 5 takes the initial support of the previous chapter on the use of trees in urban places and orients the discussion towards the spatial use of trees in cities. In this respect, the term tree-place is introduced and distinctive tree-places are grouped and evaluated according to their spatial and activity-based contributions to urban places. This chapter ends with an assessment about the tree-places and the inferences of main concepts related to urban design.

Chapter 6 consists of the case study research held in Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square. This chapter provides a closer look to a specific tree-place and investigates the relevance of findings and main hypothesis. It introduces the methodology, research design and related hypotheses/sub-questions of the case study. Firstly, the significance of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square and the Yalvaç Plane per se is evaluated in accordance with the theoretical framework and research findings. It ends with an intermediate conclusion which evaluates the results and the validity of hypotheses.

The conclusion part summarizes the overall discussions and findings. Then it provides a final discussion on meaning, trees and place. As the last contribution, this concluding chapter presents the design guidelines for tree-places.

CHAPTER II

MEANING AND PLACE

This chapter focuses on the significance of meaning in place and factors upon which it emerges. The process of meaning formation, its importance for human - environment relationship, and the role of meaning in space and place are the fundamental aspects in this sense. It is essential to state that, meaning discussed during this thesis refer to a socio-spatial production of meaning that is constructed by people as a natural outcome of the mutual interaction with their built environment.

This thesis has no intention of playing the role of a scholar of philosophy in terms of arguing what meaning is. It is not claimed that the questions related to the concept of meaning will be discussed and solved in detail, though an attitude similar to the philosophical thinking provide a stimulating basis for the concern of this study. Main aim is to try searching for an experience-based relationship between people and their environment through which the notion of meaning emerges. In other words, meaning is accepted as a product of a social relationship between people and the built environment. Thus, it is preferred to discuss meaning merely in environmental psychology, semiology and phenomenology being very aware of the wide range of the discussion on this context. Respectively, this chapter aims at explaining the concept of meaning, the definition of space and place, and the role of meaning in place.

2.1 Deconstruction of Meaning

Meaning is primarily the connotation of a word, concept or action. Oxford Dictionary defines meaning also as “the implied or explicit significance” and “important or worthwhile quality, purpose” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2004). From an environmental perspective, it is described as the “*sets of cognitive contents used for defining, expressing and communicating significance for a variety of purposes*” (Casakin et al. 2008, 82). To gain an understanding of this sophisticated topic the theory of meaning, ways through which it emerges will be discussed by presenting the studies of different academic fields that have studied meaning.

2.1.1 The Theory and System of Meaning

Meaning is a familiar word due to its common usage in our daily life. However, it is a much more profound concept beyond its lexical definition. In this sense, this study uses the term meaning as the total of interpretations and emotions of people for places, and the substantial characteristics of them. When people make sense of a built environment they attach meaning to these places. This meaning association can either be negative or positive depending on personal preferences and former experiences. These study choses to focus on positive meaning generation provided via urban design tools, as well as touching upon the negative meaning formation.

To understand the processes that result in meaning attachment to places, the systematization of meaning, and how and through which factors it functions are of utmost importance. In this sense, two explanations related to the system of meaning will be presented in this thesis. The first of which is explained by Casakin et al. (2008) within a perspective of environmental psychology. According to this explanation meaning system comprises meaning units having two elements: “the referent” which is the input, stimulus or the subject to which meaning is assigned, and “the meaning value” which is the cognitive content to indicate the meaning of the referent (Casakin et al. 2008, 82).

For instance, “Ankara - is in Turkey”, “Table - is made of wood”, “Coal - is black.” are the meaning units. “Ankara”, “Table”, “Coal” are the referents; while “is in Turkey”, “is made of wood”, “is black” are the meaning values. The functions can respectively be illustrated as:

<p>MEANING UNITS = THE REFERENT <i>the input to which meaning is assigned</i></p>	+	<p>THE MEANING VALUE <i>cognitive contents to indicate the meaning of referent</i></p>
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Figure 2.1 Meaning System
(Casakin et al. 2008)

The functions through which meaning emerge explain the role of meaning systematization for perception and cognition (Casakin et al, 2008, 82). These phases are:

- Input Identification
- Cognitive Interpretation
- Personal Evaluation

The result of the three phases is the perception of meaning of external stimuli. This process starts with the input identification which primarily enables meaning association to the inputs. Then, cognitive interpretation provides cognitive contents to be implemented into different cognitive acts (Casakin et al 2008, 82). Lastly, the personal tendencies such as defense mechanisms, emotions, personality traits and characteristic (e.g. independence, sentimentality) come into the scene. As a result, we perceive meaning of an external stimulus by identifying, understanding and then evaluating it according to our personal tendencies, all which constitute the system of meaning association.

There are five meaning variables that help us characterize meaning units (the referent, the meaning value). These variables define our scope of final reflections to an external stimulus and are presented as follows:

1. Meaning dimensions - characterize the contents of the meaning values (e.g. locational qualities, material, quantity, size)
2. Types of relation – characterizes the immediacy of the relation between the referent and the meaning value (e.g., attributive, illustrative, metaphoric-symbolic),
3. Forms of relation - characterizes the logical-formal properties of the relation between the referent and the meaning value (e.g., positive, conjunctive, partial),
4. Shifts of referent - characterizes the relations of present referent to the initial input and previous referents (e.g., identical, partial, opposite),
5. Forms of expression - characterizes the media of expression of the referent and/or the meaning value (e.g., verbal, graphic, motional).

To illustrate, when the input is “Neighborhood”, an individual’s statement of the meaning of neighborhood can be “The neighborhood is big”. In this example, the meaning unit is “Neighborhood-is big” which is coded in the following manner (Casakin et al. 2008, 81-82):

1. Meaning dimension: Size and Dimensions
2. Type of relation: Attributive
3. Form of relation: Declarative positive
4. Shift of referent: Identical to input
5. Form of expression: Verbal

How and why these statements change depends on the personal tendencies. For instance, while some individuals use some specific meaning variables with a higher frequency, others might use same variables with a lower frequency (Casakin et al. 2008, 81-82). This results in almost an infinite number of meaning declarations. Using the countless terms under these five main variables every person may produce a different meaning for exactly the same place.

The second discussion on the systematization of meaning is studied in the field of architecture by Hershberger (1974) within a framework of behavioral psychology. His work focuses on the meaning communication between people and buildings in detail and asks the question of how architecture can be meaningful. In the theory of meaning he discusses in the context of architecture, Hershberger presents two essential categories of meaning that architect should be aware of:

1. Representational Meaning: “The architectural environment is known and anything to which it refers is represented in human organism as a percept, concept, idea etc.” (Hershberger 1974, 148)
2. Responsive Meaning: “The internal responses to the already internal representations.” (Hershberger 1974, 148)

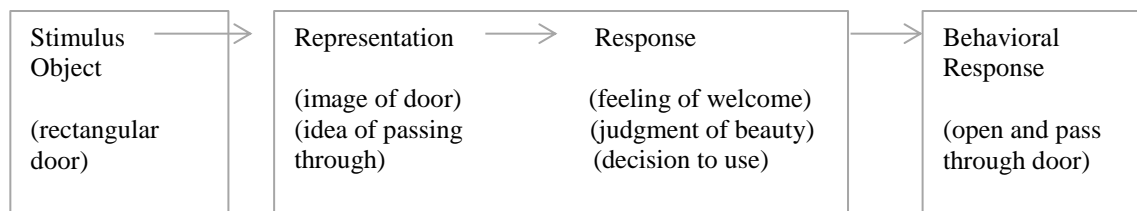


Figure 2.2 Meaning System in Architecture
(Hershberger 1974)

Although Hershberger argues this issue within a context of architecture, the bullet points he emphasizes are significant for urban planning and design as well. That is, he states that an architect should be aware of the possible representations that the users of the buildings can form, and then he/she must be concerned about how the users will react to it (Hershberger 1974, 149). In this sense, the two major categories of architectural meaning should be studied to further understand this issue. For instance, the representational meaning has two categories as:

1. Presentational Meaning: The recognition of form
2. Referential Meaning: Further meanings beyond what has been recognized

While perceiving a form in the environment, the initial identification is made in terms of the category of shapes (it’s a triangle, square etc.). The process of referential meaning, on the other hand, is about the meaning that this form refers. Although the meaning level varies among the users, a basic reference can be made in terms of the function of a building (or another built space) judging it by its color, shape and location (Hershberger 1974, 150). Nevertheless, it is still hard to predict the symbolic value given by its user. If a designer particularly cares about the presentational meaning of the product (size, color, shape, height.), and the users communicate meaning mostly in the referential level (use, value, purpose), there is a risk of differentiation during the responsive phase that covers the following meaning categories:

1. Affective Meaning: Feelings and emotions for the representations.
2. Evaluative Meaning: Immediate meanings and emotions for the representations.
3. Prescriptive Meaning: Decision of what to do after interpreting the meaning.

These three phases refer to the responsive meaning emerged after the perception of representations. That is, after perceiving the form and purpose of a building users include their feelings and emotions (e.g. it is a beautiful building, I feel comfortable etc.), then evaluation starts in terms of our role in that society and personal backgrounds (e.g. even if a tourist is pleased with the initial representations, he/she can conclude that it is an ugly and non-functioning building) and finally users decide what to do (e.g. whether to enter or walk around that building etc.) (Hershberger 1974, 53). This complicated yet quick formation of meaning association towards a building exemplifies that a designer (in this case an architect) should be aware of the whole range of meanings that the users relate with the designed environment (in this case a building), since it is important to predict the meaning patterns in order to bring together the intended use of the design and the behavior of the users.

2.1.2 Understanding Meaning in the Environment

Current literature offers a large accumulation of information about the notion of meaning. Some of the related academic disciplines can be sorted as anthropology, geography, environmental and behavioral psychology, and some branches of philosophy (Rapoport 1982, 35). Without going into detail, this research narrows its focus down to notion of meaning embodied in place or associated to place after a socio-spatial interaction process. Meaning in the environment is defined as the set of feelings, memories, and explanations, reactions of people while experiencing and interpreting an urban place. This section briefly concentrates on active meaning attribution to places with a specific focus on the studies of environmental psychology, philosophy and sociology.

First of all, the way that people perceive, experience and act in places, what they feel about places, what they relate to them can be addressed as the study area of environmental psychology and is specifically called as “environmental perception” (Gifford 1987, 20). Environmental psychology focuses on the “transactions between individuals and their physical environments” (Gifford 1987, 2) which makes the meaning attribute quite significant for this discipline. Besides, behavioral psychology argues that people behave according to the meanings that their environments offer to them (Rapoport 1982, 13).

Secondly, sociology is concerned with the notion of meaning in places as well. The ongoing changes and shifts in the concept of place and everyday life in response to modernity and globalization, and the ways that people relate themselves to the places raise the questions of the “roles and meanings of places in everyday life” and this makes the subject related to the studies of sociology (Gustafson 2001, 5).

Finally, philosophy deals closely with meaning in the environment. Cuthbert (2006) explains a particular philosophical perspective to space as “urban design is the symbolic attempt to express an accepted urban meaning in certain urban forms”. Meaning, in this respect, has been explained by philosophic perspectives, namely semiotics and phenomenology (Cuthbert 2006, 65). By taking into the consideration the richness of the related studies, this research exemplifies the discussion by the semiotic and phenomenological approaches to meaning communication between the environment and people.

2.1.2.1 Semiotic Approach

Semiotics, the science of signs and symbols, is the first systematized approach to the subject of meaning in environment (Cuthbert 2006, 65). The distinction between the terms of sign and symbol is not clear in the related literature. For instance, a sign represents something other than itself. A word, for instance, is a sign that stands for a concept in a language (Carmona 2010, 117). As we experience our environment, we perceive appearances as signs and interpret them into other things.

This process of interpretation depends on the societal, cultural and ideological background of the beholder. For instance, a familiar rhythm may recall a wedding ceremony to a person, while another person having a different cultural background, may not form this association (Madanipour, 1996, 69).

Similarly, the term symbol is defined as an idea or a concept that stands for another idea or objects other than itself (Whittick 1960, 4). The interpretation of a symbol also depends on the societal history and personal background. For instance, the verticality, height and majesty can be used to express power, divinity, greatness and many other things (Carmona et al. 2010, 117). The studies on this issue sometimes separate the concepts of sign and symbol in terms of the process of meaning association. The Jungian perspective underlines that "...a sign is related to the known and can be understood by reason", while a symbol is more mysterious and communicate deep and various meanings (Fatemi 2008, 26). That is, the interpretation of a sign occurs on a conscious level, yet a symbol "unfolds itself unconsciously and spontaneously" (Fatemi 2008, 26). A sign is defined as evoking one exact concept, whereas a symbol has many meanings (Rapoport 1982, 46-47). Briefly, we can say that a sign has relatively a more direct meaning than a symbol, yet the differentiation is not clear at all. Without going into further detail, it is essential to express the main discussion related to the meaning in the environment and the existence of symbols and signs. For instance, a symbol stands for something that is unknown to the perceiver. In other words, a structure may be designed with a particular height to evoke a feeling of divinity, yet the height may not indicate the intended meaning for everyone or anyone at all.

The science of semiotics argues that our cultural environment is being governed by a system of meanings, which are formed of codes embodying messages. These messages, Cuthbert argues, are encoded in "music, food, gestures, rituals, advertisements, buildings, spaces and all other areas of human activity". Decoding meaning embodied in these attributes depend on the social and cultural structure of a society. Thus, same objects and places (as signs as symbols) may mean different things for different societies (Carmona 2010, 117; Cuthbert 2006, 65). Semiotics seems to be in a close relationship with cultural processes and social structures which constitutes an important implication for urban planning and design actions. Because urban places are grounds for societies to produce their cultures and urban planning actions shape these places. In this sense, Cuthbert states that "...each built environment discipline employs methods of signification that engage particular semiotic opportunities and limitations" (Cuthbert 2006, 65).

Madanipour (1996) uses the term urban semiotics to explain socially constructed symbolic meaning of an urban form. Castells (1977) and Lefebvre (1991:5-7 cited in Madanipour 1996), on the other hand, argue that an induction of space to a symbolic level makes the space a "message" and the users its "readers", and this may cause users fail to evaluate history and practice of a particular space. In other words, users may solely interpret the things and their existing meanings in a space which may lead detachments from realities of that space (Madanipour 1996, 69-73). To overcome these gaps, a socio-semiotic perspective that aims to link semiotics with social processes has been developed. This theory argues that semiotics would be connected to the everyday activities, in which the space is produced (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986, 19 cited in Cuthbert 2006).

Other scholars (e.g., Cuthbert 2006, 65; Rapoport 1982, 36-37) criticize the semiotic approach to urban form. For Cuthbert (2006), focusing on semiological functions separates the built environment from its primarily real world functions which in turn results in the signal representation of contemporary capitalist use of land. Rapoport (1982, 37), on the other hand, argues that semiotics concentrate densely on syntactic level and this makes the approach more abstract.

Briefly, seeing the environment as a system of meanings (codes, cues etc.) is accepting that there is a continuous communication between the environment and people. In this sense, the signs and symbols embedded in the built environment are the mediators that help people to associate their way of understanding and perceiving the built environment as well. Furthermore, the tree example as a sign or symbol is significant for this thesis. Trees can be defined as the images embracing deeper symbolic meanings that depend on each individual. This issue will be developed further while discussing the symbolic values and meaning levels of trees in the upcoming chapters.

2.1.2.2 Phenomenological Approach

“All that is visible clings to the invisible. That which can be heard to that which cannot- that which can be felt to that which cannot. Perhaps, the thinkable to the unthinkable.”

(Heidegger, cited in Greaves, *On Goethe*, 2010)

Phenomenology deals with how things appear (Greaves 2010, 6). Phenomenon, briefly means “a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen” and for philosophy it is “the object of a person’s perception” (Oxford Dictionary, 2004). According to the dictionary of philosophy, phenomenon covers the whole natural and societal occurrences, and this makes whole universe an accumulation of phenomena (Haçerlioğlu 1973, 236).

Phenomenology is a method that studies phenomena claiming that the only way to reach knowledge of object is to study subject first. In other words, an object is only present “through the involvement of a self it is present”, this self, interprets the meaning that arises from the presence of the object (Schroeder 2007, 305). Phenomenology recognizes that meanings may vary from person to person. Yet, it is concerned with the experience of appearances beyond expectations and prejudices. For instance, when we name an object, such as “the tree”, it seems normal that whenever we see a similar plant, it is just “the tree”. However, the tree changes, it grows and dies, it may evoke different emotions for different occasions. Hence, the tree is no more only “the tree”. A similar illustration may be given for the experience of a place. A usual place, such as a park in your neighborhood, is familiar to you since you got used to see it every day. However, the small changes, such as the color shift in the grass, the growth of trees are easily ignorable. Phenomenology, in this sense, discusses to overcome these preconceptions and offers a total experiencing of the environment and argues that phenomenon itself is needed to be perceived away from learned habits or prejudices (Greaves 2010, 7). Regarding this, phenomenology deals with the place instead of space since it is abstract and people are unable to experience it (Casey 2001, 683).

The pioneering studies of phenomenological method are conducted by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Husserl’s arguments concentrate on the nature of human consciousness (a search to reveal the human actions while making sense of the world). He states that “*what is needed is not the insistence that one see with his own eyes; rather it is that he not explain away under the pressure of prejudice what he has seen*” (Greaves 2010, 7). Husserl underlines the necessity to bypass the human consciousness so that the real essence of the object could be experienced (Cuthbert 2006, 69).

As far as urban planning and design activities are concerned, phenomenology offers a philosophical perspective to cities. Phenomenological studies search for meaning in place (Cuthbert 2006, 69; Rapoport 1982). For instance, a phenomenological view does not merely focus on examinations or assumptions about the object; but it aims to bring forward the consciousness of the knowing subject. Cuthbert uses the example of “building” or an “urban space” as the “object” and the people as the “subject”, to clarify the relationships between perception and experience of people in the built environment through phenomenology.

Links between urban design theory and phenomenology are analyzed in the fields of environmental psychology and behaviorism, both of which focus on how people experience their physical environment (Cuthbert 2006, 69-70). All levels of experiencing and perceiving an urban built environment, rely on the lived experience of an individual and this underlines the phenomenological focus in built environment.

Another pioneering study on the association of the phenomenological method to architecture and urban design theory has been conducted by Christian Norberg-Schulz. He mainly focuses on existential space and its elements, meaning that the relationship between existence and place. According to Norberg-Schulz, the existential space “*comprises the basic relationships between man and his environment*” (Cuthbert 2006, 70).

Phenomenology is a complex and large topic having inspired lots of academic approaches from history, the theory of architecture and urban design, to the perceptions of space, place making and authenticity. This research addresses the phenomenological method since it focuses on place and its interpretation in the human mind. Besides, the studies related to the notions of place and meaning such as place making, place identity and sense of place all of which will be discussed in the following sections for their cultural, social, spiritual effects on urban place and urbanities.

2.1.3 Meaning of/in Place: Why Important

The fundamental academic disciplines that are concerned with environmental meaning tell us the delicate and essential role during experiencing the environment. This is because we make sense of our environment by attributing meaning to what we perceive. We add our own personal tendencies and preferences to this process. The key questions are how and based on which factors people attribute meaning to urban places and what can be done to enhance the favorable meanings in places through urban design interventions. After getting into the detail of how, it is also needed to understand why we give meaning to places and how this meaning association can be consciously controlled and shifted to a positive direction.

The need for a meaning installation to a place emerges from the need to perceive and make sense of our living environment. The meanings that are commonly or individually attached to urban places help an observer to interpret and express what he experiences within the urban structure. According to Strauss (1997, 12) even looking at the city is “*the beginning of the search for a meaning and quality of urban life. What is seen, literally or in the mind’s eye, must be expressed and interpreted.*” This interpretation can basically be defined as a process of meaning attachment which shows differences from one person to another. In the light of findings related to notion of meaning it is necessary to study further the dialectic relationship between meaning in place and meaning of place. Thus, the discussions will be deepened on the concepts of space and place, and the role of meaning in the definition of them.

2.1.4 Space and Place

“If space is a movement, then place is a pause...Place is security, space is freedom; we are attached to the one, and long for the other.”

(Tuan, *Space and Place*, 2001)

The terms of space and place are generally used interchangeably in daily life. However, there is a delicate yet a fundamental distinction between these two. As Tuan (1977) states, place and space are intertwined notions. However, we experience the place and we are attached to it, whereas space, basically, refers to a more amorphous and intangible concept. This distinction makes it relatively difficult to grasp the notions on space and place (Relph 1976, 8). In this sense, Relph puts forward four types of space as:

- Experienced and perceived space of individuals
- Built spaces of architecture
- Abstract space of geometry
- Existential and lived space: *phenomenological understanding of place*

Relph, also distinguishes some in-between conceptions of space, arguing that these four categories have their sub-concepts among a multiplicity of conceptions attributed to space. Table 2.1 was derived from Relph (1976, 8-24) and it displays these multiple conceptions of space.

Table 2.1 Conceptions of Space

Conceptions of Space	Explanations
Pragmatic or Primitive Space	Space of instinctive behavior and unselfconscious action.
Perceptual Space	Egocentric space perceived and confronted by each individual, having content and meaning, it cannot be divorced from experiences and intentions.
Existential/Lived Space	An active space that waits to be experienced but is constantly being created and remade by human activities and meaningful within one cultural group.
Sacred Space	Continuously differentiated and replete with symbols, sacred centers and meaningful objects. They are centers of the world, points at which three cosmic planes of heaven, earth and hell are in contact
Geographical Space	Unique and has its own name. A reflection of man's basic awareness of the world, his experiences and intentional links with his environment.
Architectural and Planning Space	A deliberate attempt to create space (Norberg-Schulz, 1984, p.13-16)
Cognitive Space	Abstract construct of space. A homogenous space, with equal value everywhere and in all directions. Which have little significance for direct experience

Madanipour argues that debates related to space are framed by a “dichotomy between absolute versus relational theories” (Madanipour 1996, 4). The absolute space or contextual space is described as “...clearly distinct, real, and objective space”. It is “...a dimension which focuses on the characteristics of things in terms of their concentration and dispersion”. On the other hand, the relative or created space is “...merely a relation between events or an aspect of events, and thus bound to time and process”. It is perceptual and socially produced. There is a continuous debate between the absolute/contextual and relative/created dimensions of space. The declaration of primacy of one over the other is a central point of discussion. From this another discussion arises about the physical and social space (form follows function or function follows form); mental and real space (domination of idea over matter, or vice versa) (Madanipour 1996, 5, 10-11).

In a phenomenological framework, Relph argues that space in urban planning is a two dimensional representation of an empty and undifferentiated area on maps and plans without any reference to human experience. He claims that planning space is “...objectively manipulable according to the constraints of functional efficiency, economics, and the whims of planners and developers” (Relph 1976, 24). This argument could be pursued if the matter was merely about the drawing process. However, the planning and design decisions are made after a process of analysis and surveys on an urban place, and the main goal of this method, besides Relph’s statement on providing the “land use efficiency”, is to create livable and meaningful urban places for users.

To summarize, the notion of space seems more amorphous, abstract and intangible than the notion of place. Place can be defined as distinctive space, its characteristics evolve after a certain interaction occur between people and their environments. Thus, place can be defined as a part of space which is engaged by people and meanings, values they attribute to that place (Madanipour 1996, 26). However, the differentiation of the terms space (mekân) and place (yer) in terms of linguistic perceptions make this argument vice versa for Turkish. This issue has been clarified in the first chapter and will be discussed in detail in future studies.

2.1.5 The Role of Meaning in Space

The concepts of space and place need each other for definition. Defining a location or a phenomenon with one of them requires a comprehensive understanding of human experience. This is because a space evolves into a place, as it gains meaning or value for people. Furthermore, this human factor also makes the place a changing phenomenon. Each person experiences his/her environment different from each other, and thus a wide range of variety of place experience is possible (Tuan 2001, 12; Relph, 1976).

Space, as noted before, generally refers to an amorphous, structural assets of an environment, while place is a part of space constructed through lived experiences, actions and intentions of people and shaped by meanings and values (Madanipour 1996, 24; Relph 1976). A place is differentiated from “the open and free space” with its provision of security and stability (Madanipour 1996, 24). Also, places are “recognized geographical entities of intersecting social relations, meanings and collective memory.” (Castello, 2010) referring to essential factors to maintain life within societies.

Since a space changes into place as it gains meaning by individuals or communities that occupy it, the notion of meaning comes to the fore one more time (Carmona et al. 2010, 120). In this sense, notion of meaning notion is an essence that makes a space a distinctive place. This statement does not aim to ignore the meaning levels embodied in space. Yet, this research defines a notion of distinctive and meaningful place that is embraced by its users. This is also in accordance with the given definition of meaning for this study which addresses people and their willingness for claiming an urban place as a main subject.

Relph argues that the quality of *insideness* and the *experience of being inside* sets place apart from the space. The term insideness relates to the intensity of experience of a place. That is setting places apart by being inside, such as the walls in a medieval city. From their most unconscious emotions to the shallow observations related to a place, people position themselves in places, differentiating them from abstract spaces. The experience of being inside, on the other hand, has several levels as explained below (Relph 1976, 55, 142):

- The deepest level: The deepest and unselfconscious relation with a place (*a home where your roots are, a center of safety and security, a place where you belong to, where you are accepted*)
- Secondary level: Cultural and communal level of experience of insideness. (*the sacred experience of involvement in holy places, knowing places in a home region*)
- A shallower level: Being in a place without paying attention to any sensitive way to its qualities or meanings.

To sum up, place is the locus of all human actions and intentions and space refers to a more abstract phenomenon offering the context for place. Also, the concept of space covers a wide range of understandings from the built space and landscape we experience in cities to the sacred spaces devoted to gods and to the space on maps and plans (Relph 1976, 8). As far as the urban space is concerned, it can be discussed within the dichotomies of absolute and relational space. These two perspectives refer to the discussions of whether space is mentally produced, or substance is more important; and whether the form created follows the function, or function determined creates the form. Meanwhile, as pointed by Relph, there is also a planning space, which is a two dimensional, undifferentiated and inexperienced map. These ambiguities related to urban space are significant. Moreover, this study focuses on the term urban place to express the notions of meaning and human experience.

2.1.6 Defining the Place

There is a substantial interest for studying and describing what place is. Yet, places do not have universally accepted definitions relied on their physical qualities (Kyle et al. 2007, 212). Pointing at its common usage and centrality in human life, various academic approaches have explained the place through the fields of architecture, urban design, phenomenology, behavioral psychology, environmental psychology, anthropology and so on. In earlier studies, place primarily is accepted as an amalgam of activities and physical form that is occupied by experiences, then the factors of meaning and experience of people come to the scene (Canter 1977 cited in Castello 2010, 4). For instance, phenomenological way of thinking does not separate places from human existence. On the other hand, Lewis argues that a behavioral approach is necessary since observing the effects of place on human behavior is a more clear way (Lewis 1979, 28 cited in Saar et al., 2009). Meanwhile, the postmodern approach claims that place should be studied at different scales concurrently. Integrated dimensions of socio-spatial relations, territories, places, scales and networks must not be separated from each other (Jessop et al. 2008, 391-400). The anthropological approach, on the other hand, states that a place is constructed after a certain number of meetings and some complicated connections are fulfilled in our minds (Auge 1995, 163). Relph, without denying the significance of physical form and activities, argues that place is a property of the intentions and experiences of people who use them (Relph 1976, 47).

The human focus is procured by meanings in places. These meanings emerge and develop by means of continuous relationships between people and environment which are shaped through individual or collective cultures, political and economic decisions, social interactions or daily concerns (Kyle et al. 2007, 212; Maarja et al. 2009, 7). It is clear that the concept of place has different definitions for each study field. However, nearly all of the approaches express two common characteristics in place definition (Amdur et al. 2009, 148):

- A place is a geographic entity
- A place carries meanings that differentiate a place from geographic location

2.2 The Role of Meaning in Place

“A place is a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feeling”

(Gustow, 1971, 27 cited in Relph 1976, 141)

Places are the centers where we experience the “meaningful events of our existence”, the fundamentals for preserving human life (Relph 1976, 43). This existential and experience based approach argues that the essence of place does not solely depend on its location, functions, and the communities that use it. Essence is determined by place’s being a “largely unselfconscious intentionality” which makes them “profound centers of human existence” (Relph 1976, 43). That is, people associate themselves closely with the places they experience. Hence, this linkage make place “a vital source, a point of departure which we orient ourselves in the world” (Relph 1976, 43). In addition to its being the starting point, place is the goal of our exploring (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 18). Place, in short, is an indispensable phenomenon that is embodied with meanings, and it cannot be secluded from the human existence and experiences.

The field of environmental perception has been favored to gain insight for the relationships between people and their environment (Castello 2010, 2). Along with environmental perception, the phenomenological thinking has come into the picture. The search for phenomenon, which forms the perception of the place in human mind, has been a central focus for architecture, urbanism and urban design (Castello 2010, 3). This way of thinking identifies foundational structures that provide coherence and continuity in human life (Seamon 2011, 2).

Dovey, however, argues that phenomenological approach is necessary, but limited in understanding the notion of place, especially with its consequences for architects and urban planners. He sees the phenomenological terms such as “sense of place” as intangible concepts, that it prepares ground for the market to legitimize its damaging actions. The ideological dimension for place remains neglected, when a specific focus is given to the everyday experience without understanding the ideology and social structure of everyday life (Dovey 1999, 44-45).

The phenomenological approach specifically deals with the meaning which is born out of human experience in lived-world and regards the place as an inseparable phenomenon of human life. For phenomenology, it does not make sense to consider “any happening without reference to a locality” since people “live, act and orient” themselves in places (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 10; Relph 1976, 6). Casey (2009 cited in Seamon 2011) states that “To be is to be in place.”, and “To be human is to have and to know your place” (Relph 1976, 1). Hence, the idea of place needs deeper explanations rather than its apparent functions and characteristics.

According to Relph (1976, 141) places are “full with meanings, with real objects and with ongoing activities.” They are the centers that we develop psychological bounds with our physical and social environment. Places contribute to the formation of individual and societal identities. Tuan (2001, 161) defines places as the “centers of felt values” in which biological needs are met. A place is the point of interest, containing the objects that attract our attention.

To summarize, the phenomenon of place is an essential and integral component of human life. Place is where every single human experience takes place and gains meaning. It is the ground shaped by meaning and the ground that produces meaning. Urban planning and design actions are concerned with the physical creation and development of place. Nevertheless, as the phenomenological approach to place suggests, rather than merely focus to achieve a well-structured physical setting, planning and design activities should aim at obtaining livable environments for people for they associate meaning firstly then relate themselves to places and thus to the world.

In short, people develop feelings and attachments towards places. A city, a street or a square tells something more than its visible physical qualities. Calvino says “*The city appears to you as a whole where no desire is lost and of which you are a part, since it enjoys everything you do not enjoy, you can do nothing but inhabit this desire and be content.*” (Invisible Cities, 1972) about the imaginative city of Anastasia which refers that places possess people with the feelings reside in them.

The questions of “How is meaning constructed by people?” and “What are the notions that make people attribute meaning to the place?” will help us understand the notion of meaning from a human perspective. In this sense, primarily the psychological and sociological perspectives on meaning generation, then the idea of place, its components and the significance of meaning are examined.

2.2.1 Human Perception of Meaning in Place

Starting from the words in languages to the quest of the meaning of life we are in a continuous effort to find meaning in life. Because, we need to make sense of words to communicate and understand each other and relate us to the world. Similarly, places are required to form meaning in human mind. Despite the centrality of notion of meaning, it is not easy to fully comprehend the notion for it's being both an abstract and loaded term. One way of understanding how we give meaning to phenomena can be through the studies of environmental perception. Psychological dimension in the formation of meaning in places is significant besides the physical interaction between people and places. The process of attributing meaning to a place is the subject matter of environmental psychologists. Environmental perception can be defined as the initial experience of people with the physical setting. Personal characteristics, cultural effects and physical setting are the main factors that affect the perception of the beholder. The further processing of information is called the spatial cognition. It refers to a system of cognitive information related to space, which we can store, organize and remember (Gifford 1987, 20, 24-30).

Table 2.2 Types of Simultaneously Operating Perceptions

Dimensions of Environmental Psychology (Gifford, 1987)	Dimensions of Environmental Perception (Ittelson 1978 cited in Carmona, 2010)	Formation of a Meaning towards a Physical Environment
<p>1. Environmental Perception</p> <p>Initial gathering of information</p>	<p>Cognitive Perception Thinking about and making sense of the environment</p> <p>Affective Perception Human feelings start to emerge towards an external stimuli</p> <p>Interpretive Perception Assessing the new information based on the memories of past experiences</p> <p>Evaluation Process Determination related to the stimuli, if it is good or bad</p>	<p>Shaping Semantic Images for a Physical Setting</p> <p>↕</p> <p>Construction of Meaning</p>
<p>2. Spatial Cognition</p> <p>Processing, storing and recalling information about places</p>	<p>Legibility The ease of which a setting may be recognized by people</p>	

Table 2.2 is derived by adapting the dimensions of environmental psychology from Gifford (1987) and the dimensions of environmental perception from Ittelson (1978). The flow indicated in the table shows the process of meaning construction towards an external stimulus, which can also be used to discuss the process of giving meaning to a place. This process covers biological, social and cultural dimensions. Moreover, there are several factors upon which the process is depended; such as gender, ethnicity, lifestyle, length of residence in an area (Carmona et al. 2010, 112).

Gustafson (2001, 9-11), on the other hand, expresses the role of *self, others, environment* in the formation of meaning, arguing that when people attribute meaning to places, they do it through these three concepts. That is, people either relate the meanings depending on themselves, others or to the physical environment. The first theme, *self*, explains the strong reflection of personal meaning on places. People tend to develop linkages in response to time they spend in a place, memories they gained in that place, and activities that place embodies. The second theme, *others*, signifies the meaning association with others indicating social relations. In other words, places are given meaning with reference to the behaviors of their inhabitants. The last concept is the *environment*, explaining that meanings are usually not given depending on self or other, but on the environment. Expressing physical characteristics (big, enclosed etc), natural conditions (warm, green etc.) and the symbolic-historical values relate to this group. Gustafson also argues that in-between relations among these three themes are equally important, and recommends a three-pole model for the concepts of meaning that is shown in the Figure 2.3.

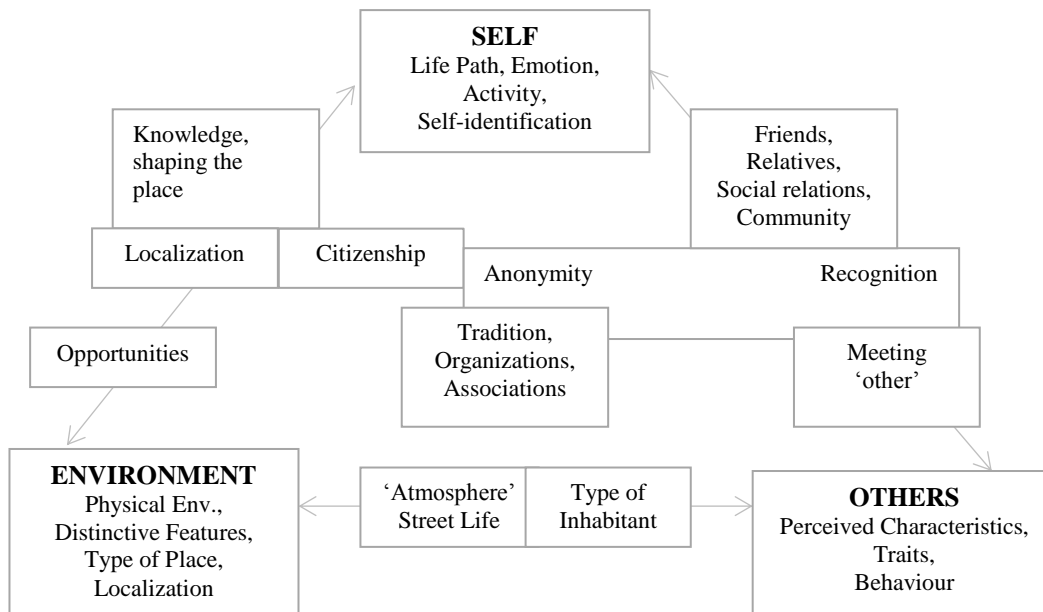


Figure 2.3 Three Poles of Meaning of Place
(Gustafson 2001, 10)

These studies about the perception process basically emphasize the importance of human factor in place. Yet, the environment and effects of “others” are still crucial. It is also clear that the meaningful place does not only refer to the terms as “beautiful” or “successful”. Consider an empty lot surrounded by few old buildings; it may seem disturbing or ugly for an outsider. However, it may be a place with many memories or feelings for a person who experienced it in certain sections of his life. This lot may be the place where he met with his wife or where he learnt to ride a bicycle. In this perspective, time seems to be a crucial factor. This example is related to the memory of a person and memory is only one of the aspects of time and life experiences. For instance, an outsider can develop a sudden connection with a place at first glance as well. He may find a familiar object (such as a house, a tree, a shop etc.) or a familiar face within the crowd, which makes that place meaningful. Briefly saying, either a well-structured-permanent memory or a sudden feeling can create meaning, and can turn a site to a place.

However, there are opponents arguing that meaning in place should only be associated with positive feelings of people towards a place. Castello states that the quality in place makes people feel better, and the appreciation of space constructs a place in a city (Castello 2010, 2). It is a fact that urban planners and designers are supposed to create physically well-functioning urban areas which evoke positive feelings in people. Yet, meaning that people assign to a place does not have to hold a universally accepted positivity and well-created environments. A place might be evaluated as ugly or non-functioning depending on the social backgrounds and interests (Hershberger 1974). However, it might mean a lot to its users. Therefore, planners and designers should take this crucial point into the consideration while analyzing the existing situation in a place.

2.2.2 Components of Place

The discussions on *meaning* and *place* orient this study to focus on essentials of place. “What makes a place, the place?, Where does “meaning” stand in place?” and similar questions can be asked to have a convincing grasp of what is being discussed thus far.

The definition of place, the links between space and place and the significance of meaning in place have been introduced till now. It is, however, aimed to gain insight for the conceptualization of place and where meaning stand in it.

First of all, Relph puts forward three components of place as “physical appearance, activities and meaning” and claims that the identity of a place is an amalgam of all three (Relph 1976, 48). Relph states that it is more difficult to grasp the meaning component than appearance and activity. It is because a person firstly perceives physical appearance of a place, and after observing it for a while he can name the activities in the physical setting, later on the meaning emerges. This process defined by Relph seems parallel with the processes of environmental perception.

Canter (1977) proposes a similar conceptualization of place. According to him, places emerge from the relationship between actions, conceptions and physical attributes. He emphasizes that every individual perceives places differently, considering places from the user point of view is crucial (Carmona et al, p.122; Gustafson, 2001, 6). Canter extends his study and identifies four facets of place: *functional differentiation, place objectives, scale of interaction and aspects of design* indicating social and cultural aspects of place (Gustafson 2001, 6). Canter, as a psychologist, argues that place should be taken as a technical term and finds Relph’s humanistic and phenomenological perspective too romantic (Gustafson 2001, 6). Still, both of the approaches consider meaning as an essential component of the place, and identify basic components of place similarly.

Other distinguishable studies related to place are that of Agnew (1987), Punter (1991), Massey (1994), Montgomery (1998) and Dovey (2010). Agnew illustrates three elements of place with reference to social relations: *locale* (setting where social relations are established), *location* (geographical area covering settings for social interaction) and *sense of place*. He argues that, for a meaningful place to emerge, it should host social relations, be interrelated to the social and economic structures, and give its users a sense of place. Punter, as well, focuses on sense of place and names *activity, form and image* for the emergence of sense of place (Carmona et al, 2010 122). Massey, on the other hand, argues that all of the approaches towards the place consider it as a closed box with a single identity related to its past and traditions. Nevertheless, places should be thought together with the outside world and the social conflicts (Gustafson 2001, 6). Montgomery and Dovey, meanwhile, focus on the components of activity, physical setting and meaning. It is crucial to state that, Figure 2.4 and 2.5 demonstrate the components of place while emphasizing the meaning dimension ad its power to create *sense of place* and to foster distinctiveness. It is clear from these studies that the arguments on place and its components are not very much differentiated although academic disciplines and traditions vary. Nearly all studies state that the essence of constituents of place results in a physical setting with entitled activities, creating meaning and emotional structures in the feelings of its users. The table 2.3 illustrates the commonalities among some authors’ perceptions on place:

Table 2.3 Components of Place

The Concept of Place	Components		
Place Image (Lynch,1960)	IDENTITY	STRUCTURE	MEANING
Place Identity (Relph, 1976)	ACTIVITY	FORM	MEANING
Nature of Places (Canter,1977)	ACTIVITIES	PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES	CONCEPTIONS
Social Place (Agnew,1987)	LOCALE	LOCATION	SENSE OF PLACE
Sense of Place (Punter,1991)	ACTIVITY	FORM	IMAGE
Sense of Place (Montgomery,2007)	ACTIVITY	PHYSICAL SETTING	IMAGE/MEANING
Experience of Place (Dovey,2010)	ACTIVITY	FORM	MEANING

Briefly, the existing literature present that meaning contributes to the formation of the phenomenon of place together with working urban forms and activities. This inference is valuable in terms of thinking the concepts of design and meaning together. It seems that the bridge is hidden inside its abutments. In other words, for a place to be a place or to be a working place for people, it needs to consist of three fundamental components one of which is meaning. Figure 2.4 and 2.5 show the relationship of the three components.

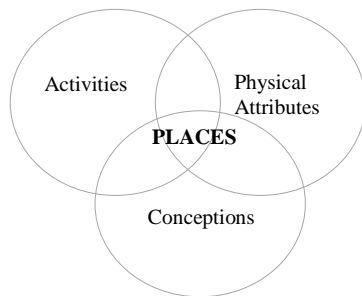


Figure 2.4 A Visual Metaphor for Nature of Places
(Montgomery, 1998)

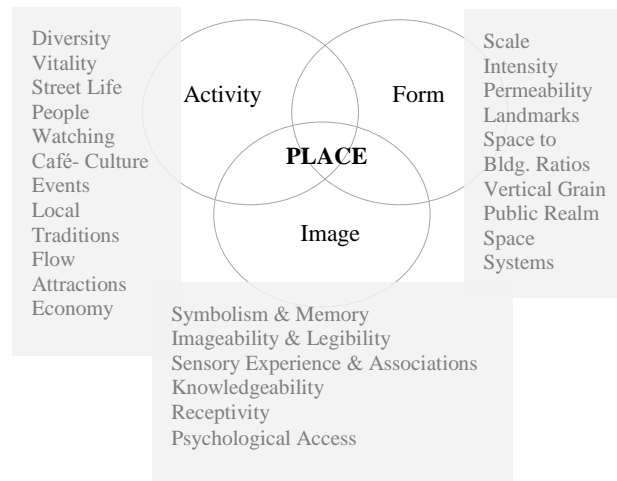


Figure 2.5 Policy Directions to Foster Sense of Place
(Carmona et al., 2010)

The upcoming sections heavily rely on these components of place (or the sense of place) and prefer to discuss the idea by using the terms as “activity”, “form” and “meaning”. Yet, as much as the theory is structured, it is still needed to find more solid factors/tools that generate meaning in urban places.

2.2.3 Components of Meaning in Place

Among the three identifiers of place (meaning, activity, and form) the notion of meaning will be elaborated further. How to understand the meaning residing in a place is the main focus of this section. There are some identifiers related to meaning in place as the notion of sense of place (Norberg-Schulz, 1984). Besides, place attachment and place identity are sometimes seen as a function of meaning in place (Casakin et al., 2008; Relph 1976).

According to Stedman (2001 cited in Casakin et al. 2008, 80), place identity and place attachment are recognized as objective measurers of sense of place. However, Lynch argues that place first needs to have an identity to gain sense of place and then place attachment (Najafi 2011, 1104). Yet, Relph (1976) state that sense of place is an attribute of the place identity. Carmona (2010) claims that place identity is approximately the same concept as sense of place, while Casakin et al. (2008) defines place attachment as a function of meaning assignment. This study focuses on sense of place as a main attribute of people while forming meaning about a place. The concepts of place attachment and identity are taken as identifiers for the meaning in place as well (Najafi 2011, 1100). Although place attachment and place identity are considered as the components of sense of place/meaning in place, all three key elements contribute to understand the meaning in place:

- Sense of place
- Place identity
- Place attachment

2.2.3.1 Sense of Place

Literature discusses the idea of meaning in place with the term *genius loci*- sense of place which emphasizes attachments between people and places. In its most basic definition, sense of place is the meanings and emotions that people associate with a particular place. Places, together with their physical characteristics, hold messages and meanings for people which they can perceive, interpret and decode through their perception channels. Basically, this notion answers the question of how meaning in place emerges and reaches to people. Other notions as place attachment and place identity are accepted to be derived from this phenomenon both describing “the quality of people’s relationships with a place” (Najafi 2011, 1100). Formation, maintenance and integration of sense of place to the human life is important for quality of place, and this can be achieved through the channels of place identity and attachment.

An individual or communal meaning association to an urban place makes it a unique and distinct physical setting. In this sense, scholars like Relph and Norberg-Schulz discuss that more attention should be paid to the notion of sense of place by urban planners, designers and architects. Relph (1976) argues that if designers ignore the meaning of places in human mind, they will cause the loss of distinctiveness and authenticity in urban places. Today, repetition of similar qualities or forms results in the unauthentic or artificial urban places all over the world (Castello 2010).

Literature discusses this problematic under the so-called globalization, which triggers the tendency of repeated and stereotyped place production.

Sense of place is a notion of feeling, an attachment towards the spirit of place and clearly a linkage towards the meanings that a place evokes in mind (Rapoport 1982, 24). For instance, a child first tries to understand what is going on at home. Then, as he is taken outside, he learns playing there, and gets familiar with the environment surrounding his home. Throughout his life, his experiences are continuously affected by where he is born and raised. Places produce meanings for us, which then help us to remember, attach, and feel something towards them. To illustrate the situation with a personal experience, when I visit my childhood home, as soon as I see the stairs that we played games around, I feel like I am at home, and remember my childhood although all my friends have already gone, and every bit of the place has changed. The feelings are related with the stairs and their belonging to that place. They hold the sense of place and my attachment to the spirit of the place. The stairs mean something else for me, and the concept of sense of place tells this “else” as my attachment to the spirit of the place. This strong but blurry notion acquires further detailed explanations.

2.2.3.1.1 Phenomenology and Sense of Place

Norberg-Schulz (1984) states that construction of meaning in space, and thus changing it into a place is the main aim of architecture. Places serve their courses when they are morphologically harmonized, functionally feasible and mean something to people. Hence, studies related to the discovery of meaning in environment are quite important. At the same time, phenomenologists emphasize the difficulties of embracing the spirit of place. Being an ambiguous and quite an intangible notion, it is only possible to give personal explanations to the concept rather than a generalized complete description. Sense of place covers “*topography and appearance, economic functions and social activities, and particular significance deriving from past event and present situations.*” Still, it is not a basic summation of all of these attributes (Relph 1976, 48).

Phenomenologist use similar concepts for “sense of place” such as topophilia (love of place), character of place, spirit of place, genius of place (*genius loci*) (Relph 1976, 48). Topophilia is used by Tuan (1974) to express the links between people and places. According to Relph, this exclusive relationship can be influenced by “personal and collective values, beliefs and behaviors” (Najafi 2011, 1011). Moreover, religions, myths, symbols and their effects on sense of place are the foci of some scholars (Relph, 1976, Datel and Dingemans cited in Najafi 2011, 1101). These symbols, consciously or unconsciously, come together and form meanings that people associate with a certain locality. Phenomenology explains that the sense of place has three stages (Gussow cited in Najafi 2011):

- First Stage: The familiarity with place. People in this level only develop an activity based relationship with the place and do not feel any linkages, bonds towards the place.
- Second Stage: An ordinary familiarity with place. At this stage people have stronger feeling towards the place. They participate in social events and pay more attention to the symbols in the place.
- Third Stage: A profound familiarity with place. This level comprises the deepest relation with the place. It is unconsciously experienced and people feel integrated with place.

Relph argues that the attachments and feelings towards the meanings of places can be formed after a long term relationship, whereas Tuan claims that it can be a sudden attachment like “love at first sight” (Tuan cited in Najafi,2011, 1101). Yet, time intervals, feelings and attachment levels are varied among people in terms of personal characteristics, cultural backgrounds and the physical setting experienced (Gifford 1987, 24-26). Nevertheless, the important point is to associate meaning to a place even if it is experienced for the first time rather than reaching the last level of familiarity.

2.2.3.1.2 Environmental Psychology and Sense of Place

Since there is a mutual and continuous interaction between people and their environments, spatial design interventions should consider psychological effects of places on people. In this context, environmental psychologists mention three significant elements sense as the location, landscape and personal involvement, and interaction of which create the sense of place (Najafi 2011, 1102). Table 2.4 summarizes how phenomenology and environmental psychology explain the stages of the process that creates the sense of place.

Table 2.4 Stages of Sense of Place

Stage No	Phenomenology (Gussow, Relph, 1976)	Environmental Psychology (Shamai, 1991)	
1	Familiarity with a Place	Feeling of Belonging to a Place	Knowledge of Being Located in a Place
2	An Ordinary Familiarity with a Place	Feeling of Attachment to a Place	Belonging to a Place
3	A Profound Familiarity with a Place	Commitment to a Place	Attachment to a Place
4			Integration with a Place Deep Attachment to a Place
5			Involvement in a Place
6			Sacrifice for a Place

The feeling of place is related to everything within the reach of human perception. The perception process starts with the understanding of overall landscape and then reaches to smaller scales like streets or trees. All the feelings are shaped by “the history, morphology of past uses, and the natural landscape” (Compendium 2007, 22). As the Table 2.4 shows, sense of place is formed through experiences of intense feelings toward places. Starting from getting familiar to a place, people develop deeper feelings and in time they get attached to places.

The last row indicates that people even sacrifice their freedom, or the life itself. Clearly, not all these stages completely function for every place and everyone, since there are necessary conditions to be satisfied such as interrelation between location, landscape, and personal involvement. Still, this categorization is helpful to enlighten a highly intangible and ambiguous concept of sense of place.

To sum up, sense of place is an important emotional and spiritual connection between people and places. The phenomenological and psychological approaches are explored to have a grip of the concept. The two approaches show similarities in their way of naming the stages and the variables that create linkage between people and places. Yet, environmental psychology is fundamentally interested in perception and experience channels, whereas the phenomenological understanding of sense of place focuses on the creation and maintenance of it. Next part discusses the natural and man-made places, since this study aims at connecting meaning and design and urban trees in public places will be looked upon as one of the significant ways of achieving it.

2.2.3.1.3 Natural and Man-Made place

Nature was the first place that man ever experienced. The environment that he lived in was meaningful for him, hence he felt “at home”. These meanings resulted in the rise of mythologies. The phenomenology of natural place can be discussed based on these mythologies (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 23). Primitive man associated his natural environment with the questions and problems he faced. The mythological understanding of the natural place is categorized into five types by Norberg-Schulz. He states that these modes have different weights in different cultures (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 25).

The first mode of understanding is related with the “thing”. It is the construction of meaning by taking natural forces as points of departure and associating them with “things”. The primary natural “things” were rocks, water and vegetation. For instance, the tree as a “thing” integrates heaven and hell, not only because of its spatial position, but tree grows continuously, and it is alive. *“Every year the tree re-enacts the very process of creation, and to a primitive religious mind, the tree is the universe, and it is so because it reproduces and it sums up.”* (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 25). The figure 2.6 shows the Ash Yggdrasil of the Norse Mythology which is a famous tree of life holding together earth, heaven and hell with its root and branches.

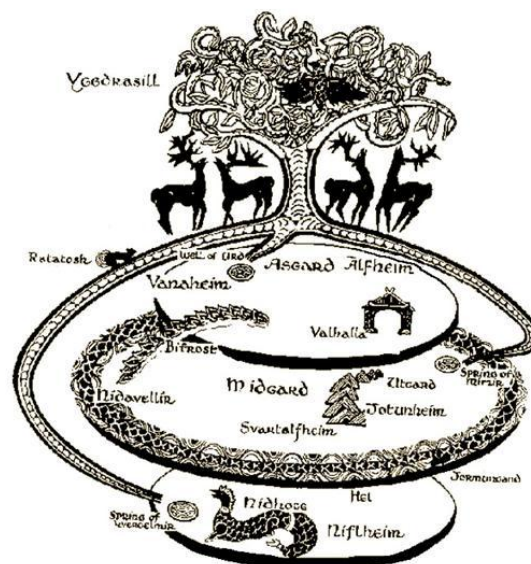


Figure 2.6 Ash Yggdrasil –The Tree of life
(<http://treeofknowledgemaze.wordpress.com>)

The second mode is the “order”, that is the cardinal directions meaning different qualities. Such as, in Egypt, Nile’s south-north direction formed the orientation of man, and the east was the place for birth and life regarding to the rise of the sun, whereas the west was the place for death (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 27). The following mode is the “character”. This mythological expression is based on the definitions of characteristics in natural areas. To assign the fertile earth to the chthonic deities in Greek mythology stands as an illustration (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 27). The last two concepts are “light” and “time”. Light was seen as a divine feature rather than the ray of the sun and it was related to enlightenment, wisdom etc. In Greek mythology light was seen as a symbol of knowledge (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 27). Time, on the other hand, was seen as the sequence, the rhythm of the man and nature.

Man-made place is based on the natural phenomenon as well. It is because man observed nature and reflected it on the physical environment he created. Thus, man-made environment is more than a coincidental practical tool, but it is embodied with meanings that are the reflections of how man understands his natural environment. Some of these places may embody deeply felt power of nature and mysteries; while other places an order is the main intention. Some places bring these two together in combination (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 56, 69).

Both phenomenological and psychological approaches to the sense of place tell that people associate personal meanings and develop emotional linkages to the place instantly or after a while. The discussion above implies that the place design should not only be interested in regular activities, but also care about providing symbolically and affectively distinctive areas for people.

2.2.3.2 Place Attachment

It was not until the 1970s that literature on place attachment was elaborated by psychological studies. The first time that the term “place attachment” was mentioned in the literature was by two environmental psychologists namely; Setha M. Low and Irwin Altman. They emphasized that “affect, emotion and feeling are central to the concept”, and these emotional elements “are often accompanied by cognition (thought, knowledge and belief) and practice (action and behavior)”. The authors did not differentiate place attachment from other place related concepts and suggested that “place attachment subsumes or is subsumed by a variety of analogous ideas” (Low & Altman, 1992, 3-5).

Place attachment means an “emotional connection between people and their surroundings.” (Low, Altman from Najafi, 2011). It develops through biological, environmental, psychological and socio-cultural processes (Altman and Low 1992, 8). Tuan (2001) argues that attachment rises out of accumulation of memories and experiences in place. According to him, unless people experience a significant personal or cultural event, they do not feel strong emotions or attachments towards a place (Najafi, 2011, 1104). On the contrary, as Low (1992) argues, people’s values and cultures can also play a role in people’s attachments to places. They may feel attached to a mythical place that they never experienced. An individual may feel bonds towards an imaginary place by relying on his former values, and through various sociopolitical, historical and cultural channels which means that there exists a symbolic relationship between people and place (Low 1992, 166). Low proposes six symbolic linkages explaining the place attachment shown in Table 2.5 (Altman and Low 1992, 166-182).

Table 2.5 A Typology of Cultural Place Attachment

Type of Space Linkage	Reasons
Genealogical	A historical identification of place. (e.g. a shared past in a place with family or community)
Loss or Destruction	The breakdown of genealogical attachment creates another linkage caused by loss or destruction of a place. (e.g. after an earthquake grief and pain can strengthen the attachments between people and place)
Economics	A utilitarian relationship that is constructed by ownership or working in a particular place. (e.g. owning a land or field)
Cosmology	Religious, spiritual, mythological linkages between place and people. Land is seen as a physical setting of humans, ancestors and gods. (e.g. a sacred space that is meaningful for its deeper meanings as a sacred groove)
Pilgrimage	Pilgrimage attachment is formed by a desire to visit a place or via participating in a celebratory event.
Narrative	An attachment occurred after telling of stories, myths, family histories related to a land.

This suggested typology of place attachment broadly refers to the cultural aspects of the environment. The first three types focus on the familial, social and utilitarian attachments to place; while the other three emphasize ideological attachments such as mythological, moral and religious bonds between people and places.

Literature underlines some features for place attachment such as; culture, memory, myths, beliefs and symbols. These are remarkable concepts in terms of their human orientation and intangibility. Urban design activities should pay attention to the ways that attachment develops and the factors influence its progress to be able to create and maintain “meaningful” urban places.

2.2.3.3 Place Identity

Identity refers to a sameness (continuity) and distinctiveness (uniqueness) that allows something to be differentiated from others (Relph 1976, 45; Lewicka 2008, 211). Identity of a place, in parallel, should encompass both aspects as a distinctive character and continuity. Place identity is a strong concept defining the relationship between people and built environment. This identity, like the meaning in place, does not have to be a favorable one. Positive or not, construction of place identity helps people to attribute meaning towards places. Since every person has its own background or capacity to make sense of a given place, it is just normal for a place to have multiple identities. In other words, being highly a psychological and experience-based term, place identity changes from one person to another (Carmona et al. 2010, 112). However, Relph (1976) argues that this process may result in the creation of a broadly accepted identity. He claims that since we are taught to look for certain things in a place, people experience objects and environments more or less the same, which in turn results in a common identity of a place. Either common or individual, identities can be defined as the images in human mind towards a place they experience.

The process of identity association with a place reciprocally affects the construction of self-identity. That is, places mean static and spatial grounds for the formation of self-identity (Mannarini et al. 2006, 203). In this sense, when they want to tell who they are, people prefer to say “I’m a Berliner.” or “I’m Turkish.” rather than “I’m an architect” (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 21). However, since it is an approach on human psychology, this research will not go into the details of symbolic extension of the self.

2.2.3.4 Construction of Place Identity: Place Image

The identity and image of a place are interrelated, but not the same concepts. The emphasis of identity of a place is on the actual appearance of a place, while the image of a place includes more of the perceptions and feelings. People filter their perceptions according to their cultural values and construct images (Montgomery 1998). Place images are formed to make sense of the living environment, since people need to simplify the facts they come experience. Place identity relates to these common elements of beholders' place images. Hence, the place image can be described as a combination of identity of a place and how it is experienced by people (Carmona et al. 2010, 112). Additionally, different people perceive same places differently which makes it possible for a place to have various meanings, and in turn different place images and identities (Montgomery, 1998). For instance, the city center of Ankara, Kızılay, may be perceived negatively by an outsider for its being crowded and complicated, hence the identity of Kızılay may have ended up a negative and nonfunctional one for him. On the other hand, for an older person who grew up in Ankara, Kızılay may be the center of nostalgia reminding his past.

Lynch (1960) discusses that for a successful place image the aspects of identity, structure and meaning should be satisfied. These create legibility, a term that is used to describe a quality in the environment that people can navigate and orient themselves easily. *Identity*, as described above, is the distinctiveness of a place; *structure* is its spatial relation and position; and *meaning* refers to the construction of a meaning towards the place.

Briefly, the unique characteristics of a place, no matter “good” or “bad”, and their durability are essential for the formation of the place identity. Although it depends on individual experiences mostly, there are arguments claiming that common identity towards a place is possible, since we are taught how to look at and see the things in our environments (Relph 1976, 45).



Figure 2.7 Ancient Rome and Pine Trees

(<http://fineartamerica.com/featured/ancient-rome-the-appian-way-viaeverett.html>)



Figure 0.8 Pine Trees of Rome Today
(Personal Archive, 2009)

Lastly, the main argument of Lynch (1960) points to the identity as an aspect of the place image. Whether image derives from identity or vice versa, there is a strong relationship between the two. Yet, when the trees are the subject of discussion the term place image is more appropriate to concentrate. Since trees can contribute to the identity of a place, and sometimes of a city. An example of a place image, the city of Rome and its famous pine trees can be presented (Figure 2.7- 2.8).

2.3 A Discussion on Meaning in Place

The discussions on the meaning held throughout this chapter were aware of the complexity and sophistication of the concept. Main emphasis is given to its theory and definition of meaning to introduce the subject. The academic approaches chosen to discuss the meaning in the built environment were to gain an initial insight into the concept. This chapter has illustrated how the system of meaning perception works, and the significance of meaning in the human environment, especially in the distinction between space and place. That is, the key role of meaning while defining the urban place has been revealed.

The notion of meaning has been introduced as both an identifier and a component of place. This finding is remarkable for the theoretical framework of this research, since it aimed at having a grasp of the meaning and its importance for people and places. Moreover, how it can be measured or understood further, depends on the level of social interaction between people and their environment. The components of meaning (sense of place, place identity, place attachment) help to determine this level.

This chapter has concluded that there is a strong interaction between people and their environment. Moreover, places embody a system of codes for people to name, classify and order, all of which can be interpreted as a concern of urban design (Rapoport 1977, 4). In other words, considering the importance of place and the indispensability of meaning in place, urban design studies should concentrate to uncover, preserve and reinforce meaning in urban places through the identification of proper design interventions. In this sense, a detailed study on the meaning and urban design will be introduced in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

MEANING IN URBAN DESIGN

This chapter investigates the role of a designer and the power of design interventions in terms of meaning formation. Besides, the problem of providing and predicting accurate values for different users of the designed space is at utmost concern since there may be great differences between the aim of designer and the perception of user for a same place. There is a problem of losing the socially-constructed meaning in an existing place as well. This important issue will be discussed within a pre-determined framework of design tools and contemporary design approaches to urban place by accepting the wide ranging context of the problem.

This chapter starts with the discussion of a reverse angle on the notion of meaning in place that is “placelessness” (loss of sense of place). How this problem can be overcome with the help of design tools and ways of generating meaning in places through urban design are the bullet points. By this way, the visual codes and physical tools to transfer meanings to people become prominent which later orients the discussion towards the role of trees in this process. This chapter presents the integrity of meaning with the urban design actions and reviews this issue by putting forward a related problem of loss of meaning. Main aim is to express the integrity of meaning and designed environment as well as putting forward tools and approaches for transferring meaning.

3.1 The Relationship between Meaning, People and Design

Urban design, as “the study of how cities have achieved their physical form and the processes that go into renewing them” (Cuthbert 2006, 1) is not merely interested in physical arrangements. Social aspects, symbolic values, meanings, collective memory and conflicts are also of utmost significance (Cuthbert 2006, 1). Moreover, urban place, as the main study ground of urban design, is composed of three elements, one of which is the “meaning” (the interpretations and feelings that people associate with a place or the essence of an urban place). The formation of places is closely linked to the culture and social aspects of a society and hence people try to “match their characteristics, values, expectations, norms, behaviors” (Rapoport 1977, 4). In this sense, urban design actions should come into the scene to provide places for people to maintain their lives and reflect their feelings. This is not an easy task, since the meaning formation requires a mutual and social interrelation between people and their environment. That is, there should be different design approaches towards an existing built space and a newly created one. Relph (1976) states that design of the lived-world should be responsive to local structures of meaning and experience and it should create places where people fit. Design decisions should be inspired by the existential significance of place and by the attachments between people and places (Relph 1976, 146). Meanwhile, Relph is aware of the possible shortcomings of this approach since, in itself, it cannot solve the problem of loss of significance in urban places. Yet, considering meaning together with design may provide some main directions and possible solutions by focusing on the meaning of and the particular activities in places. Relph (1976, 146) very aptly states that:

“...it is not possible to design rootedness nor to guarantee that things will be right in places, but it is perhaps possible to provide conditions that will allow roots and care for places to develop.”

Numerous proposals can be made in this context. However, taking this issue from a reverse perspective is more helpful to emphasize the role of meaning in urban design. Place is both a mean and aim of planners and designers to create a livable and well-functioning urban environment. Yet, when the meaning component lacks in urban places, the problem of loss of distinctiveness arises (Relph 1976; Castello 2010; Montgomery; Gustafson 2001; Arefi 2007).

3.1.1 Loss of sense of place - Placelessness

“There are at least two experienced geographies: there is geography of places, characterized by variety and meaning, and there is a placeless geography, a labyrinth of endless similarities.”

(Relph 1976, 141)

Urban places are the grounds where memories are created or summoned, needs are satisfied, and daily encounters are experienced. They are the scenes where we reflect our existences. However, *placelessness*, a term used by Relph (1976) to express the lack of significant places and the attitude that ignores significance in places, stands as a crucial problem today. Carmona (2010) argues that the problem of placelessness is becoming more and more visible due to the impact of globalization, mass culture and loss of territory. Placelessness is an erosion of identity and distinctiveness which leads to standardized landscapes (Relph cited in Carmona 2010, 123). Urban design, in this context, should take action to create meaning in the built environment.

This problem of loss of identity and distinctiveness is an outcome of a stereotyped understanding of place design which causes detachment between people and places and hence loss of meaning. The capitalist mode of production worldwide mainly pushes urban places to become visually homogeneous and serve to similar purposes all over the world. Spatial designers seem to play a significant role in this respect, and they are accused for ignoring the risk of destroying distinctiveness in places as well. There are growing arguments about the shortcomings of designers to pay attention to meaning in/of places (Seamon, 1979; Buttimer & Seamon; Relph, 1981 cited in Gustafson 2001, 6).

As Relph claims, a geography that lacks meaning is condemned to similar and stereotyped places. Distinctiveness, in this sense, becomes a prominent aspect. It is related to the preservation and enhancement of what is special about a place (Carmona 2010, 123). Distinct places leave traces in our minds which help us remember, feel pleasant or feel attached. However, the existing and contemporarily designed places seem to lose their characteristics in pursuit of economic growth and fading borders together with globalization. The similar type of places all around the world, inhuman scales of buildings, highways and the meaningless architecture, planning and design applications (e.g. Disneyfication, invented places) can be sorted as the primary visible problems related to the issue.

Increasing loss of distinctiveness in places has given rise to the academic researches on the issue. There are a few terms to express this problem, which are “placelessness”, “loss of sense of place” and “non-place”. Placelessness is the erosion observed in the identity of places that results in the sameness not only in physical appearance but also in experience of place. A similar term “non-place” stated by Webber (1964) argues that the emergence of ‘cyberspace’ has weakened the place-bound and face-to-face relationships of people and this resulted in loss of communal ties and accessibility became prominent than proximity and similarity. This shift created ‘non-places’ in cities which causes serious changes in perception of place as well (Arefi 1999, 180-181). Castello (2010) states that:

“Cities at the turn of the millennium are characterized by a growing provision of places ... Places which copy qualities found in other places, or which create what is believed to attribute quality to the urban space.”

Discussions on the loss of distinctiveness in places indicate the idea of loss of meaning in parallel. The tendency to produce similar types of places leads to similar experiences among people all around the world. The notion of sense of place is being shaped by modernity, post modernity and globalization today (Relph 1976, 90; Gustafson 2001, 5). Arefi (2007) argues that together with commodification of place, the perception of sense of place also shifted. Meaning of places transformed “from an unconscious to conscious stage, and from a conscious to a manufactured stage” (Arefi 2007, 183). This situation that our millennium is facing has observable effects on behavioral patterns of people in cities as well. Places are being organized in a certain way (mostly to foster consumption), and hence our preferences and experiments changes accordingly resulting in a shift of our understanding of sense of place.

The current ideologies on urban place in Turkish cities unfortunately represent notable examples of placelessness and loss of sense of place. This problem is visible from housing production to public place design. Although there are arguments which associate this situation with modern technology and development dynamics, it is still worth caring about the quality and meaning in place. The stereotyped, “potato print” built environment represents the clues of a placeless geography in a larger scale. This tendency is visible throughout the country and it is also problematic when human scale is concerned. The vertical developments, choice of material and site arrangements carry the risk of creating depression, alienation and fear among its users. This situation is also valid for some civic place designs as well. There is a tendency to create large-scaled projects which are almost impossible for a person to perceive. When it comes to architecture, the rising interest towards conservative building embellishments, such as Seljuk and Ottoman styles on façades and interior design threaten the feeling of place since they are not adjacent to the contemporary context at all and hence they may make people feel disconnected. In other words, these trends in spatial planning and design in Turkish cities slowly transform the urban environment, repelling the accumulated culture, social codes and what is special about our cities. The figures below are presented to illustrate this shift of “sense of place” through the hands of designers of urban space.



Figure 3.1 The Aerial Photo of the Skirts of Ankara Citadel
(Google Earth, August,2012)



Figure 3.2 The Skirts of Ankara Citadel
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 3.3 The Western Entrance of Ankara
(Google Earth, August,2012)



Figure 3.4 Yenikapı Square Design
(<http://www.arkitera.com/galeri/detay/45842/1>)

The first of the satellite images (Figure 3.1) shows the rapid transformation of a traditional tissue developed around the skirts of the Citadel of Ankara. The inconsistency of the new urban development tells that there is a strong probability for the old and new residents to feel themselves detached. This contradiction may block the psychological access to experience the place. The second image (Figure 3.2) shows this contemporary problem in a three dimensional frame. The dramatic changes between the new and the old, height differences, use of the green spaces and the in-between spaces verify the former argument of loss of sense of place. The third image (Figure 3.3) illustrates a junction area which has pulled the new settlements around it. Lack of connectedness and legibility within the built area and its disunity with the human scale are problematic issues. The last image (Figure 3.4) presents an urban design proposal for the future Yenikapı Square in İstanbul. The lack of human and urban scale and enormosity in this example indicate the first traces of a future non-place where people and the city would ever be attached. The underlying reasons behind this tendency and the problem of “loss of place” are discussed by Relph (1976, 118-121) and Carmona (2010, 124-125) in Table 3.1 and 3.2 respectively:

Table 3.1 The Reasons and Outcomes of the Problem of Placelessness

Reasons	Outcomes
1. Manifestations of Placelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other-directedness in places Landscape made for tourists, Entertainment districts, Commercial strips, Disneyfied places, Museumised places, Futurist places • Uniformity and standardization in places Instant new towns and suburbs, Industrial commercial developments, New roads, airports etc. International styles in design and architecture • Formlessness and lack of human scale and order in places Sub-topias, Gigantism (skyscrapers, megalopolis), Individual features unrelated to cultural and physical setting • Place destruction Impersonal destruction in war, Destruction by excavation, Destruction by expropriation • Impermanence and instability of places Places undergoing continuous development, Abandoned places
2. Media and Systems transmitting Placelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass communication and modes of diffusion of mass attitudes • Mass culture of dictated and standardized values • Big businesses and multi-national corporations • Central authorities • The economic system
3. Inauthentic attitude to place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes relating to technique, in which places are understood to be manipulable in the public interest and are seen only in terms of their functional and technical properties and potentials • Attitudes relating to kitsch, in which places are experienced and created only in terms of stereotyped, contrived, superficial and mass values

Table 3.2 Factors Causing to the Problem of Placelessness

Reasons	Outcomes
1.Globalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local cultures provide one-of-a-kind places• Local differences are attractive for global marketing
2.Mass Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Globalization, mass culture, mass communication, mass marketing• Homogenizing and standardizing cultures and places• Transcending and destroying local cultures
3.Loss of attachment to territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The loss of environments that people care• People do not feel they “belong” to a territory

A wide range of political decisions and physical design frameworks can be developed against this rising problem of placelessness although it is strongly a matter of mindset and powerful economic trends of modern world. This research focuses on the importance of meaning association to a place and the ways to create and enhance the sense of place through urban planning and design actions.

On the other hand, Relph (1976) argues that it would mean to underestimate placelessness if we simply focus on better planning and design actions to solve it. He argues that the solution does not neither lie in the preservation of old places, nor in the return of traditional methods of place-making. Overcoming the problem of atrophy of place is the most crucial concern according to Relph. He offers a humanistic place-making approach that creates variety of places to give *pace, orientation and identity* more than abstractions and concepts from maps or plans (Relph 1976, 80-146). In this sense, Relph (1976, 146) suggests a new understanding of spatial design which is inspired by the existential significance of place and aiming at designing places in which people fit and feel themselves attached. This recommendation does not compromise an entire method for the solution and this perspective may end up allowing people to create their own places.

On the other hand, Castello (2010) claims that it is possible to construct new places through design interventions, but an emphasis should be given to people’s preferences and needs. Relph focuses on individual or communal intervention to enhance sense of place, while Castello concentrates on participatory and empathetic physical design to create meaningful places. Taking both perspectives into consideration, this research argues that there may be not distinct approaches for such an intangible and sensitive subject. Meaning is necessary not only for the quality of physical environment, but also for the psychological experiences of people. Yet, the bridge between meaning and urban design can be reinforced through a new understanding of place-making, which stresses the importance of meaning in the built environment and illustrates solid ways/elements to achieve it.

Urban planners and designers should care for promoting identity, and enhancing distinctiveness in places to prevent the erosion of local values, culture, richness, diversity and meaning in places (Tibbalds 1992, 18; Relph 1976, 79). Regarding this, three fundamental points for spatial designers to preserve and promote distinctiveness are presented below:

- to focus on the factors that create, shape and change the place,
- to understand how people are affected by these processes,
- to concentrate on what spatial design can change about it.

3.2 Meaning in Urban Design for Whom and How

The illustrations given throughout the discussion indicate an effort to impose a sort of meaning, which makes the concept once again a controversial issue. Because, the influential size and scale of Yenikapı Square Project (Figure 3.4) may refer to the dominance or the high rise apartments may be expressing a new understanding of urbanism. Not only these meanings can change from one person to another which is defined as a crucial problem by Hershberger (1974, 147), but also it is almost not possible to measure what is positive or what is not for the users of the place. That is, a designer cannot have a complete control over the transferred meaning of the designed environment. Thus, this section of thesis provide a greater understanding of these differences in perceiving the meaning by people and creating meaning through urban design.

Firstly, Montgomery's work underlines the necessity of considering urban quality within a wider perspective rather than mere physical attributes of buildings, spaces and street patterns. He defends that Cullen's studies on physicality (Townscape, 1961) and Lynch's emphasis on the psychology of place (1960, Image of the City) should be brought together to link the social, psychological and cultural dimensions of place. Montgomery searches for possible components of urban quality or sense of place. According to him, there are a few theoreticians that managed to bridge the mentioned division. Jane Jacobs (1961, The Death and Life of Great American Cities) and Cook (1980, Zoning for Downtown Urban Design) bring activity and physical form together (Montgomery 2007, 96). However, their perspective does not offer a psychological functionality. It is possible that they would have argued that good design and the following activity will be resulted in a successful place where the users feel themselves comfortable and safe.

Secondly, "Gestalt theory" as a study of psychology, is also significant for its focus on meaning. Gestalt theory is interested in form or configuration and discusses the notion of wholeness. Relying mostly on the design dimension, Gestalt theory claims that perceiving the wholeness of forms is only possible through the existence of "order" and "meaning" (Günay 2007, 94). Moreover, Günay (2007) states that urban form and Gestalt quality should be composed together to develop the visual skills of planners. Hence, the notion of "meaning" stands out as a key concern for design actions.

3.2.1 Dimensions of Meaning in Place

The discussion on the role of meaning in urban design gives its place to the question of what makes a place meaningful. In order to comprehend where meaning stands in urban design and the ways to preserve/enhance it, the idea of place and its components should be recalled. For a place to be a successful place, it needs to compromise three fundamental components one of which is meaning. Regarding this, how urban design should consider places as meaningful entities and what are the ways to enhance this notion are the upcoming concerns. Gustafson (2001) identifies the dimensions through which meaning emerges as distinction, valuation, continuity and change.

Distinction

A meaningful place should be distinguishable from its surroundings. Distinctiveness is an essential feature of human and social cognition and is helpful for categorization, understanding similarities and differences (Gustafson, 2001, 13). Moreover, this distinctiveness is not defined upon the uniqueness of a place. It is about a set of categories related to the meaning associations while perceiving a place.

Valuation

The distinction of a place often involves valuation. The positive or negative comparisons of users to the places construct meanings as well. This pleasant or unpleasant meaning association effect individual's level of involvement to places (Gustafson 2001, 13).

Continuity

Places are connected to the human life through temporal feature as well. The length of residence, the significant events encountered, regular visits affect the meaning attached to a place. The aspect of continuity defining the historic life span of a place, the local traditions is quite significant as well (Gustafson 2001, 13).

Change

Another temporal dimension is the possibility of change in places. In time, places may gain new meanings as a response to the external events, developments or to the shifts of inner structural, activity based changes. This may be purposely handled by locals to improve the physical qualities or social relations (Gustafson 2001, 13). This duality between the dimension of continuity and change refers to the instability of formation of meaning. A place may be given a traditional meaning, yet can be changed through modern development initiatives and gain a new meaning in time.

3.2.2 Meaning in Place through Codes and Design Elements

The concept of meaning, as explained in the second chapter, is studied among various academic disciplines which forces us to concentrate on certain issues. When urban design studies are concerned, it is possible to review design traditions. Place-making idea comes to the fore as an amalgam of visual and aesthetic concerns, and social aspects. It is the synthesis of social and visual approaches in urban design focusing both on the process and the product, aiming at designing urban places both as *physical/aesthetic entities and behavioral settings*. Place-making combines “the hard city of buildings and spaces and the soft city of people and activities” (Carmona et al. 2010, 6-8).

Meaning studies on architecture also help us to understand the process of user-design interaction. Hershberger (1974) argues that an architect do not have a total control over the meaning of a building since there are various client groups sharing different system of values (Hershberger 1974, 148). He claims that the ability of an architect should be improved to predict the meaning by understanding the problem, making comparisons between the user groups and aiming at creating comprehensive semantic scales (Hershberger 1974, 154).

Even if it is for architecture or a certain tradition of urban design, the perceptual relations are of utmost importance. Because, meaning transfer occur through these mediators that is directly related to the visual perception of space. This perception process is experienced with the help of “visual cues” (Ittelson 1960, 43). On the other hand Rapoport (1982) puts forward elements such as physical, social components and activities which help the user to perceive meaning.

Together with the perspectives on place making and the studies of meaning transfer to the users of urban space the following questions can be posed: How does urban design contribute to the creation of meaning? What can be the tools to promote meaning in places to overcome the problem of placelessness? Furthermore, as a main concern of this thesis, “What is the role of trees in generating meaning in urban places? A particular attention to the related studies of Gustafson (2001), Montgomery (1998) and Rapoport (1982) is needed, since they put forward valuable ideas related to meaning discussions raised in accordance with urban design actions.

3.2.2.2 Behavioral Approach

Another study related to transferring meaning in the built environment has been conducted by Rapoport (1982). He mainly focuses on the signals that environment offers to its users to decode. These signals help people to filter environmental information and interpret it to grasp the characteristics of physical settings (Relph, 1976) and the activity system of groups (Rapoport 1982, 19). This interpretation process defines how people act in a certain environment. For instance, Rapoport states, the front yards of houses tell you something more than greenery; if they are well cared or not may indicate the level of income and a broad activity system in that area. By gathering this information an outsider may adjust his behavior and act accordingly. Rapoport deals with the relationship between behavior and the meanings of built environment. Without getting into the detail, we can focus on the elements that constitute meaning in a built environment which are fixed, semi-fixed and non-fixed feature elements.

Fixed Feature Elements in the environment are rarely and slowly change. These are the architectural elements such as walls, ceilings and floors; streets and buildings in cities. The way they come together, their shapes, sizes, locations indicate meaning for urbanites (Rapoport 1982, 88). A settlement pattern can communicate meaning about activity system and culture within the community. To illustrate, African cities appear disorganized for European people, since they have chosen to represent human relationships, religious beliefs in their cities than to follow the geometry (Rapoport 1982, 88-89). In short, fixed elements are helpful to generate meaning in cities although these meanings depend on cultural values, and someone's order may be other's disorder.



Figure 3.5 Illustration of an Ottoman Urban Tissue in Bursa
(Personal Rendering)



Figure 3.6 Sinop, The Tree, Mosque and Fountain
(Günay,2007)

Figure 3.5 is a sketch from a former Ottoman city, Bursa. It shows a mosque, a fountain and a plane tree that have been usually arranged in a close proximity in most of the Turkish cities, mostly in urban centers. The Figure 3.6 tells a similar story as well. It is an image of a Mosque yard from the city of Sinop and again there is a fountain, a mosque and a plane tree. Moreover, the verses below which belong to Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's poem of *Bursa'da Zaman* (Time in Bursa) reinforce the idea of the togetherness of plane, mosque and a fountain as well as reminding the notion of sense of place:

“Bursa'da bir eski cami avlusu,
Küçük şadırvanda şakırdıyan su;
Orhan zamanından kalma bir duvar...
Onunla bir yaşta ihtiyar çınar.”

“An ancient mosque yard in Bursa,
Water, clanging in the little fountain;
A wall from the era of Orhan...
An old plane with the same age.”

An Islamic Ottoman social complex, including school, library, bath and soup kitchen was added to this agglomeration during the Ottoman era representing cultural and communal values. The fixed elements in this example indicate the importance of togetherness, religion and education.

Semi fixed feature elements are the type and arrangements of easily changing elements such as furniture, plants and signs. These elements are particularly important in a study on meaning since they are more convenient for users of the built environment (Rapoport 1982, 92). An example is Çatalhöyük that is one of the earliest settlements. “...in Çatalhöyük, the distinction between residential rooms and shrines or ritual chambers is indicated through semi fixed elements of various sorts. If these ‘furnishings’ are removed, they would convert back to the ordinary rooms” (Rapoport 1982, 90). Briefly, these elements are used to transfer a specific meaning to the observer and they are easy to arrange.

Non-fixed feature elements are about people in a physical setting, how they interact with each other, and how their bodily postures and positions are. It is also their languages, gestures, even their clothing that tell something to the observer (Rapoport 1982, 96). Although, this human factor carries great importance for behavioral studies, this research will not go into the detail and focus on the fixed and non-fixed feature elements in meaning generation.

There is an outstanding list constructed by Rapoport which illustrates the communicating elements in the built environment. He states that by the help of these elements a designer can draw meanings in a physical setting (Rapoport 1982, 106-107):

“Physical elements:

- Vision:** shape, size, scale, height, color, materials, textures, details, decorations, graffiti, furniture, furnishings etc.
- Spaces: quality, size, shape, enclosing elements, paving, barriers and links
- Light and shade, light levels, light quality
- Greenery, presence of planting, controlled vs. natural, type of planting, arrangement
- Age-new vs. Old
- Type of order, order vs. Disorder
- Perceived density
- Level of maintenance
- Topography -natural or human-made
- Location-prominence, centrality vs. Periphery, hills or valleys, exposed or hidden
- Sound:** sound-quality-dead vs. Reverberant, noisy vs. Quiet, human-made sounds vs. natural sounds
- Smells:** human made vs. natural, pleasant vs. Unpleasant

Social elements:

People: languages spoken, behavior, outfits, physical type, occupation, age and sex

Activities and uses:

Intensity: type, uniform vs. mixed, travel moods, cooking, eating, playing etc.

Objects: signs, advertisement, foods, decor, fences, plants and gardens, possessions etc. ”

To illustrate, different planting choices in gardens indicate cultural variability; the height, for instance, is used to express status in many cultures (Rapoport 1982, 106-108). These cues can be followed in a built environment to tell about its characteristics, identities and activity systems. The identity of a place is expressed through these cues, namely: “signs, materials, colors, forms, sizes, furnishings, landscaping, maintenance” (Rapoport 1982, 181). These meanings represent information about status, lifestyle, and ethnicity and so on (Rapoport 1982, 183). What Rapoport calls “cues” are actually the hints that our built environment offers us. If these cues are legible and connote something close or familiar to us, it is easier to grasp what a place tells. The cultural structure, the organization of daily life speaks to you through these physical and emotional elements. From this speech, you understand the identity of a place, you orient yourself to behave in a suitable way, and maybe after a period of time you will still remember the words from the buildings, streets, people and from the trees and distinguish that place from others.

3.2.2.3 Urban Design Approach

Urban planning and design activities seek to improve conditions of urban places and to provide a livable and well-functioning environment for their users. Regarding this, every single touch to the place carry a potential to add or withdraw meaning from there. That is, physical arrangements, like sequences, proportions and connections of units, directly or indirectly affect the essence of an urban place and in turn urban life and culture (Montgomery 1998, 102). This means that, a designer of an urban place should consider the consequences of any intervention to the space. More importantly, creating distinctive places is possible through the intentional use of design elements. Montgomery (1998) states that people easily feel themselves attached to places if a designer of an urban place concentrate on the local, cultural and historical meanings and try to find ways to emphasize them through physical design tools. Places that succeeded to embody psychological access are said to be respected and cared more by people. Montgomery presents some elements to reinforce meaning in places as follows:

- Place arrangement: sequences, proportions, connections
- Buildings
- Landmarks
- Statues
- Place Names

Montgomery also identifies some qualities in places that make it possible for people to assign meaning to them (see Figure 2.5) :

- Symbolism & Memory
- Imageability & Legibility
- Sensory experience and associations
- Knowledgeability
- Receptivity
- Psychological access
- Cosmopolitan/sophistication
- Fear

Meaning resides in how the characteristics of a place are perceived by its users. Feelings, memories, cultural values and religious beliefs have strong influences on an individual's interpretation of a place (Montgomery 1998, 101). The meaning or the image of a place is individual's set of feelings and influences about that place (Spencer and Dixon 1983 cited in Montgomery 1998). Thus, in addition to the classifications above it is also possible for people to associate places with events and occasions they experienced. For instance, we can hear people saying "This is where I met with my wife." or "Here is the place where the prime minister made his big speech." These represent the interrelation between memory, meaning and place. Sometimes, not an entire place, but a component of it may trigger similar emotions. For instance, buildings, landmarks, statues, even place names can embody symbolic values for people and they all can evoke memories, attachments and deeper emotions (Montgomery 1998, 102).

Trees are effective tools to foster meaning in places through urban design in addition to the elements that Montgomery identified (buildings, landmarks etc.). This is because human beings are in contact with trees starting from the earliest periods of time and they can be associated with personal and communal meanings

To summarize, since urban planning and design actions aim at creating "good" or "successful" places, it should be considered how to stimulate meaning and distinctiveness. Paying attention merely physical formation of a place carry the risk of alienating sites to their users, whereas preserving some existing features or designing the site in accordance with the local preferences and choices may provide users to feel more attached and caring about these places.

Ralph offers an autonomous method for individuals and communities to produce their own places, rather than relying only on urban design. Nevertheless, other scholars like Montgomery (1998) and Castello (2010) offer an empathetic perspective in urban design. That is, physical design principles performed by designers themselves in a way to generate meaning in urban places which are significant for this research.

Table 3.3 is constructed in the light of studies of Gustafson, Montgomery, Ittelson and Rapoport. It displays factors, tools, the possible arrangements and their perceptual or observational impacts for meaning generation in urban places.

Table 3.3 Elements and Principles to Generate Meaning in Places

Type of Factors	Tools	Arrangements	Perceptual/ Observational
PHYSICAL	Buildings, Landmark, Statues, Place Names, Trees	sequences, proportions, connections	Age-new vs. Old Type of order, order vs. Disorder Perceived density Level of maintenance Topography -natural or human-made
	Vision	Shape, size, scale, height, color, materials, textures, details, decorations, graffiti, furniture, furnishings etc.	
	Spaces	quality, size, shape, enclosing elements, paving, barriers and links	
	Light and shade	light levels, light quality	
	Greenery	presence of planting, controlled vs. Natural, type of planting, Location-prominence, centrality vs. Periphery, hills or valleys, exposed or hidden	
	Sound	sound-quality: dead vs. Reverberant, noisy vs. Quiet, human-made sounds vs. natural sounds	
	Smells	Human made vs. natural smell, pleasant vs. Unpleasant	
SOCIAL			People: languages spoken, behavior, outfits, physical type, occupation, age and sex
ACTIVITIES & USES	Objects: signs, advertisement, foods, decor, fences, plants gardens, etc.	Intensity: type, uniform vs. mixed	Travel moods, cooking, eating, sleeping, sitting, playing etc.
EXPERIENTIAL	Imageability and Legibility, Sensory experience and associations, Knowledgeability, Receptivity, Psychological access		

3.3 Moving to the Meaning of Trees in Place

The concept of meaning is a far reaching issue in terms of design. To predict the future meaning of a designed urban place depends on several variables and the most important one is the values of different user groups. However, this thesis attempts at studying on this controversial issue and the analysis presented in the Table 3.3 is an initial outcome of this effort. Designers of urban space can partially manipulate meaning through these identified tools and arrangements by relying on analysis of the needs and values of the target user group. Among the presented elements, trees will be investigated in detail as mediators of meaning formation through design.

To exemplify, Figure 3.7 shows vertical aspiration in some open landscapes. Tuan discusses the expression of “height” in open landscapes, all indicating cosmos of pre-modern man. The orientation of objects to the sky signifies a metaphorical meaning provided by human intervention. Gardens have been designed in order to embody and represent a meaning that depends on the culture (Tuan 1974, 145). For instance, the enclosed walls, fountains or other water elements, use of trees and rectangular outlines mostly used to present heaven on earth and called as paradise gardens. Trees, in this context, can be both an element of paradise garden and a unit indicating different values other than itself with its verticality.

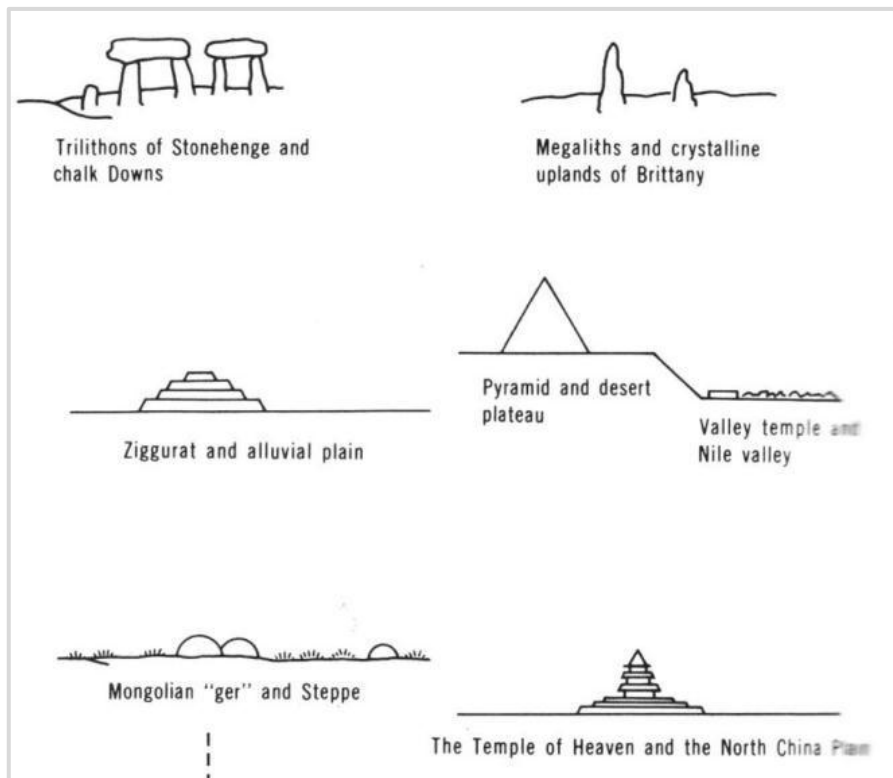


Figure 3.7 Symbolic Landscapes
(Tuan 1974, 142)

Trees can be physical tools to transfer meaning, and be arranged to evoke feelings through psychological channels. For instance, a well-cared tree group may first of all refers to a clean and nurtured urban environment, and then the arrangement, sizes or sounds of trees may evoke deeper emotions. The upcoming chapters put forward the meaning and role of trees in generating meaning in places to gain insights for further urban design applications with trees in cities.

The initial relation is shown in Table 3.4. The components of place are combined with primary related concepts, later these are intersected with the initial characteristics of trees in terms of meaning formation through design.

Table 3.4 Trees, Meanings and Places: The Relation

Components of Experience of Place	Connecting Places and Trees	Characteristics of Trees
MEANING	Religious, cultural, historical meanings Positive Psychological Impacts	Symbolic Values Psychological Effects
ACTIVITY	Aesthetics, Climatic Comfort	Physical Characteristics: Height, Changing Colors, Providing Shade and Coolness etc.
FORM	Urban Design Interventions	Location of The Tree within the Urban Fabric

Meaning as the first and most prominent component of place can be associated with the symbolic values of trees and their positive psychological effects on people. The component of activity, on the other hand, can be identified with the possible contributions of trees to urban activities. Their physical characteristics may create a certain type of activity, for instance, a monumental tree can be seen as a natural sculpture that attracts many visitors. Form, as the last component, can be analyzed in terms of the physical existence of trees within an urban fabric. The possible impacts of the location of trees to their close surroundings may help this study to reveal urban typologies. The rationale of how to make the connection between the components of place and the characteristics of trees will be discussed throughout the fourth chapter in detail.

CHAPTER IV

MEANINGS OF TREE(S) FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES

This chapter attempts to further explore and address the significance of trees in meaning formation to study an urban design tool for the creation of meaningful urban places in detail. In this context, a broader perspective about the relationship between man and trees and the usage of trees in urban places becomes prominent. This is because urban planning and design activities have perceived trees as environmental inhibitors and aesthetic embellishments until recently. With some exceptions, trees are not being used deliberately to create tree-places. Although, tree(s) are significant design elements reinforcing meaning in urban places (Arnold, 1993).

Trees appear to be one of the interesting and powerful features that contribute to the meaning formation in places. In order to unveil the sorts of meanings that trees can create, a grouping of initial studies related to trees and their significance will be provided. Thus, this chapter is dedicated to analyzing the significance of trees in several academic fields that are undertaking trees as a study subject to make inferences about their meaning beyond what we have perceived till now and relating them to urban design interventions to transfer meaning through trees in urban places.

4.1 Meanings of Trees for People and Cities

“Trees are our strongest allies.”

(Hageneder, *Meanings of Trees*, 2005,6)

By definition a tree is “a woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground” according to the Oxford dictionary. This lexical meaning tells us that trees are the plants of a certain type and urban design activities seem to use them as green embellishments of the space. Without doubt, there is much more about the meaning and the use of trees and thus this section discusses this issue in detail. To start with, trees in the urban setting have multiple benefits ranging from environmental to psychological contributions (Nadel et al. 1977; Sommer, 2003; Arnold 1993). Thus, they are extensively used in urban planning and design activities to satisfy various design purposes, such as enhancing urban environment, adding scale, dividing spaces; creating discrete spaces, rhythm and geometries when used properly (Arnold 1993). Besides, as representatives of nature itself trees enhance urban life by humanizing urban landscape with their visual powers, which in turn shape the human psychology positively (Nadel et al, 1977). Beyond the physical and psychological contributions, there exist a profound relationship between people and trees shaped by traditions, symbolism, religions, metaphors, psychological and social metaphors and perceptions (Sommer 2003). Although these attributes are associated with meaning in urban places, urban design activities seem not to have had a precise approach towards working with trees. Most of the time, they are used as mere greening elements, and their multi-dimensional benefits for meaning and space enhancement are neglected.

Briefly, when we think about the importance of trees, their ability to preserve the environment and to enhance the urban life is the first thing that comes to mind. Moreover, they are noteworthy for their visual beauty and aesthetic quality in cities. Without trees cities would become empty streets with grey building blocks (Nadel et al., 1977). Besides, trees in urban areas have positive psychological effects on people and deeper values for them (Schroeder 1994). In essence, trees provide multi-dimensional benefits for human life and for cities. Therefore, this research focuses on the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, urban design, landscape architecture, ecology, theology and alike to acquire the taxonomy of meanings of trees and to solve the complicated relationships, benefits and feelings attached to them. A classification system in this context is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Conceptualization of Trees by Different Academic Fields

TREE AS A...	GROUPINGS	FIELDS	REFLECTIONS	REFERENCE
UTILITY	Environmental	Ecology	Trees improve air quality, remove CO ₂ from atmosphere, balance air temperature, intercept precipitation, control erosion and reduce noise.	Harris et al., 2004
	Aesthetic	Spatial Design	Trees create a special ambience, beautiful and different neighborhoods.	Sommer , 2003
	Economic	City Management	Trees add value to homes and neighborhoods, a positive effect on self-image. They increase the property values of unimproved lots and homes.	
DESIGN ELEMENT	Spatial Quality	Architecture Urban Design	Trees create spatial rhythms to heighten the experience of moving through outdoor spaces. The structure and texture of trees gives urban spaces a sense of scale.	Nadel et al. 1977
	Aesthetics	Landscape Architecture	Their existence contributes to the beauty, comfort and livability of the urban world.	Nadel et al. 1977
	Distinct Places		Trees in the city are living building materials used to establish spatial boundaries. Trees make the walls and ceilings for outdoor rooms.	Arnold, H., 1993
SENSORY OBJECT	Feeling Stimulator	Environmental and Behavioral Psychology, Human Health	Trees and vegetation can have a strong, relaxing effect on people. Places of trees, as we will consider, can be places of fear as well as of exclusion.	Dwyer et al. 1993 Jones et al., 2002, 10
	Social Binder		The presence of trees can improve interaction within communities. People identify themselves more with the trees they have planted themselves.	Sommer R., 2003,180
	Healing Characteristics		The tree plantation affects positively patients throughout their healing processes.	Ulrich, 2002
SYMBOL	Spirituality & Cosmology	Symbolism Cosmology	Trees are extensively used symbols. E.g. The world tree frequently represents the axis of the universe- the axis mundi-that connects different realms of cosmos namely; heaven, earth and hell. Ancient Mexican and Mayan cosmologies picture a tree at the center of the universe, its roots in the primordial waters and its branches in the clouds.	Madkarni, 2008 218
	Religion	Symbolism- Theology	A section in Quran says “A good word is a good tree, its root set firm and it branches heaven, giving its fruit at every season by the leave of its Lord.”	Reat , 1975 ,164
	Mythology	Symbolism	The ancient Greeks called the oak the Mother Tree, because their mythology avers that after Jupiter had slain the giants the oak sprang up which is the first tree grew upon Earth.	Porteous, 2002 , 149
	Symbols of People	Symbolism Sociology	Several parallels between our images and trees as well as between our social habits as collaboration, individuality etc.	
BRIDGE to HUMAN IDENTITY	Darwinian Approach	Psychology	Myths of belief that people that were created from trees or were transformed into trees.	Sommer,R.2003
	Depth Psychology		The tree is seen as an archetype in the human collective unconscious.	
	Phenomenology		Roots, trunk, and canopy mirror the infernal, earthly, and heavenly domains, respectively	
	Ecopsychology		Beyond the individual self, there is an ecological self-nurtured through contact with and concern for the nature.	

The complexity and density of the subject is striking when different fields are studied. As the meanings of trees are examined from physical to spiritual perspectives, it gets harder to grasp and categorize the relationship and interactions between people and trees. Thus, in accordance with the above findings from a comprehensive literature review, a classification for significance of trees has been formed as follows:

- Physical – Visual Benefits
- Special Benefits and Meanings for People
- Deeper Attachments

Table 4.2 summarizes the categories showing the importance of trees in three broad meaning levels. This classification has been developed in accordance with the environmental perception and cognition process related to grasping the sense of place (see Table 2.4: Stages of Sense of Place). That is, the tree here may be an object at first sight, but as it gains meaning in time or in response to experiences, it may become a powerful phenomenon and may satisfy the need of meaning generation in urban places.

Table 4.2 Classification for Significance of Trees

Meaning Level	Classification of Meaning		Explanations
1st Meaning Level	Physical – Visual Benefits	Environmental	Trees’ benefits for urban biodiversity and climate or trees’ potential to rise real estate values etc.
2nd Meaning Level	Special Benefits & Meanings for People	Feeling Stimulator	Positive psychological and sociological effect of trees on people. Such as nurturing local identity, healing damaged self-etc.
3rd Meanings Level	Deeper Attachments	Trees in Spirituality & Cosmology	A deeper perception of trees and special ties with people. The deeply-rooted relationship between people and trees that shows itself on mythology, religion, spiritualism and depth psychology.

4.1.1 Physical and Visual Benefits of Trees

The literature review shows that the studies concerning trees are generally focused on their environmental and visual benefits. Since these are easier to measure and observe, they are considered as the first level of meanings of trees in this research. Trees, at the first glance, are the beautiful features and noble representatives of nature in urban areas. They contribute to ecology by preserving biodiversity, rainwater runoff, heat balances, gas emissions and the like. These valuable attributes they construct the initial meaning association with trees. In other words, when we experience trees in urban places, we tend to think more of their physical beauty. Their appearance can easily be an asset of aesthetics of nature. Besides, on a sunny day, we comfort ourselves along their shade, and on a rainy day we protect ourselves under their branches. Dwyer et al. (1992) categorizes these primary benefits in detail in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Assessing the Benefits of Trees

Benefits of Trees	Explanations
Energy and CO₂ Conservation	Trees can contribute to energy conservation because they help to reduce the cost of heating and cooling buildings.
Air Quality	Trees exchange the gasses with the atmosphere and capture the particulates that can be harmful to people.
Urban Hydrology	They reduce the volume of storm water runoff, flooding damage, storm water management costs and water quality problems.
Noise Reduction	Field tests have shown that properly design of trees and shrubs significantly reduce noise.
Ecological Benefits	They promote ecological stability by providing habitat for wildlife, conserving soil and enhancing biodiversity.

Sommer (2003), on the other hand, sums these tangible meanings up to three main titles and covers Dwyer’s table only under the “physical factors” category. Besides, he mentions aesthetic and economic factors of existence of trees in urban places (Table 4.4.)

Table 4.4 The Identity Effects of Trees

Type of Factors	Explanations
Physical Factors	Tree canopy affects air quality, temperature, wind speed, noise, water runoff, and other natural processes that may influence human health and well-being.
Aesthetic Factors	Trees make homes and neighborhoods more desirable, thereby enhancing individual and community self-images. Conversely, tree loss can produce grief responses, reflecting a diminution of self.
Economic Factors	Trees increase the property values of real-estate, add to the value of homes and neighborhoods, and this has a positive effect on self-image.

Another notable point is that the use of trees in spatial design can also be elaborated under this first meaning level. It is because design activities take trees as tools to enrich an urban place. However, this very topic will be enlarged throughout the next chapter showing and analyzing the existing use of trees in places.

4.1.2 Special Meanings of Trees for People

Until recently, trees were thought as mere ornamental or cultivated additions to a cityscape. This horticultural view has been accompanied by an awareness of the contribution of trees to the psychological life in the city today. (Nadel et al. 1977; Arnold 1993; Sommer 2003). Accordingly, the second meaning level appreciates the positive effects of urban trees on human health, psychology and culture.

This is because trees with their size, shape and other physical intrinsic characteristics create visual attractiveness which can easily engage our senses (Jones et al. 2002, 91). These are the sounds of their leaves, the flickering light among their branches.

Furthermore, studies on environmental psychology show stress-reducing and restorative effects of trees and landscapes on children and adults (Sommer 2003). Also, healing effects of trees which were measured by Ulrich (1981) point out that individuals who experience urban scenes with vegetation have “slower heartbeats, lower blood pressure, more relaxed brain waves” than the ones who do not. In addition to visual responses, the smell and the noise of the trees and forests have healing effects on people as well (Schroeder 1990). Schroeder (1990) classifies these effects as “Sensory Dimensions of Trees”. Trees can have strong relaxing effect on people. His studies show that people generally use the terms “serene, peaceful, restful” while describing their favorite places with trees. These psychological factors are important since they help people to restore balance between their relationships with natural environment and to heal a damaged-self (Sommer 2003).

The resemblances between people and trees could be another reason for special ties to emerge. The humane characteristics of trees such as standing up, having arms, feet, legs are mostly associated with trunk, root and branches of trees (see Figure 4.1) are the first set of reasons. For instance Native Americans call trees “our standing brothers and sisters” (Hageneder 2005, 6).

Also, trees protect people from sun, rain and wind, arousing a feeling of shelter or home creating profound bonds between man and trees (Schroeder 1990). When these similarities and psychological ties come together, trees are capable of reminding sociological meanings for communities. In other words, trees embody some social characteristics of people as well. For instance, when separately planted trees grow different than the ones that grow together in a forest. This is a similar situation for people who live alone or connected to a society. There is a well-known verse from the famous poet Nazim Hikmet that expresses the ideal life by exemplifying trees that touches upon this very context:

“Living alone and free like a tree and in brotherly love like a forest.”

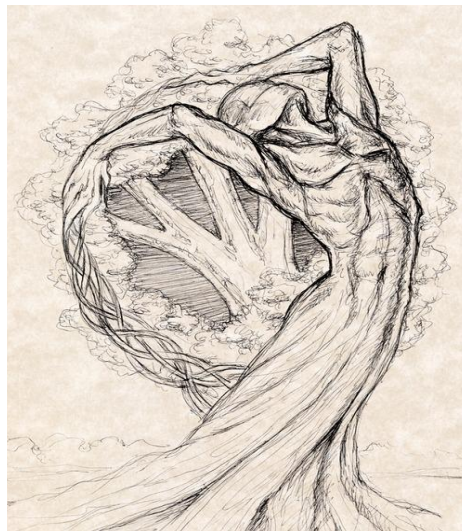


Figure 4.1 The Man and Tree

(<http://www.imagekind.com/Green-Spirits-Oak--Tree-Man-art?IMID=b8d02ee0-30fc-4f53-acd8-5b1dc9ff9744>)

Another important point is the capacity of trees to strengthen social bonds within communities. Dwyer (1992) states that, trees create pleasant and desirable environments to live and work. They contribute to sense of community by promoting social identity, self-esteem and territoriality. Sommer (2003) also expresses that the presence of trees in urban areas improves social interactions and quality of life.

Trees are the “symbols for all manner of key social meanings and practices” (Jones et al. 2002, 4) that balance the need and love of nature of people in cities. In short, trees in cities may suggest feelings of freedom, sense of belonging, comfort, peace and serenity (Nadel et al, 1977; Ulrich, 1991). They also have strong impacts on the social life of communities. Thus, the second meaning level is more intangible that it can be revealed in the long run with scientific studies and observations which make psychological and sociological implications of trees on people are an in-between aspect when compared to the first and the third level of meanings.

4.1.3 Deeper Attachments Between People and Trees

“There is something deeper, spiritual and almost ineffable about people’s attachments to trees.”

(Schroeder 1991,cited in Sommer 2003)

There are strong and deep psychological connections between people and trees that cannot be explained by measurable and concrete findings such as air purification, increase or decrease in real estate values, or the feeling of comfort along the shade of a tree as Schroeder (1990) states. That is, there are deeper bonds of people towards trees that reach to a deeper level of unconsciousness. The connections between primitive and modern man through meaningful remnants such as symbols and myths of the unconsciousness should not be ignored. Jung’s analytic psychology studies show the relevancy of ancient symbols -one of which is the tree- for modern man as well (Henderson cited in Jung 1964, 106).

This profound association is explored mostly by psychology, symbolism, mythology, and studies in cosmology. Trees and man share a common fate shaped throughout the history which resulted in rich accumulation of traditions and symbolism. Trees are one of the particular beings that affected the imaginative life of man considerably (Nadel et al. 1977, 1; Porteous 2002, 150). Almost all people regarded trees as the representatives of some deeper virtue beyond their physical existence, which in turn resulted in strong attachments between people and trees especially in spiritual and psychological dimensions (Philpot 2004, Nadel et al, 1977). Their imposing sizes, changing colors, sounds, durability and solidity may have triggered the early people’s imagination. Trees commonly were seen as an embodiment of life or a spiritual essence, the main axis of the universe, and as the center of the world connecting three realms; namely earth, heaven and hell (Philpot 2004 ; Fontana 1994). The upright position, branches reaching to the sky, changing colors through seasons and many other characteristics of trees have resulted in the experience of awe (Porteous 2002, 149; Schroeder 1992). Trees were the first temples, homes, sanctuaries for men who supplied his first food and clothing from them (Porteous 2002, 216).



Figure 4.2 The Dragon and the Hesperides from Hellenistic Mythology
(The Migration of Symbols, by Goblet d'Alviella, [1894], at sacred-texts.com , 167)

This spiritual connection between people and trees can be exemplified through the history of tree worship and its contemporary traces. There are interesting norms and daily practices of modern man that are carrying traces from this deeply-rooted relationship. For instance, evergreens are seen as the symbols of the eternal life, while the deciduous trees represent regeneration and immortality in various regions (Fontana 1994, Schroeder, 1993). Another remarkable example is the Christmas tree. Pine trees are decorated during the Christmas time as a symbol of the continuity of life even in the cold or “lifeless” months of the year (Fontana, 1994, 100). A famous turcologist Gönül Tekin (2009) states that the first traces regarding to the symbolism of a world tree and a tree god date back to the Sumerians (ca. 4500 and 4000 BC).

Furthermore, a tree of life was reaching to the sky (to sun), heralding the power of day at the date of 21st of December (the longest night before the 22th of December and also a day light defeats the darkness) is rooted to the earliest Turkish customs. It narrates the rebirth of the soil and beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere in a way. Karas (1991 cited in Schroeder 1992) states that “*In ancient Europe an evergreen tree was placed inside the house at the winter solstice - the longest night of the year - as a sign of hope and a reminder of the continuity of life through the darkness of winter.*” After getting widespread throughout the 17th century, this custom continues today in the form of “Christmas Tree”. Yet, the analogies between an archaic evergreen world tree symbol that is heralding the spring with the sun at its top and the Christmas tree that is also an evergreen symbolizing the birth of Jesus with the star symbol at the top and many alike are striking.

Trees evoke fear and hesitation in some cases. This can be associated with the respect they arouse in particular situations. For instance, in Anatolia it brings bad luck, sickness and death to speak loud and fight near juniper trees since they are sacred trees (Ergun 2004, 226). The physical characteristics of particular trees are another reason for people to associate negative meanings with them. Fig tree, for instance, grows leaving no room for other small plants and its root widens a lot. Hence, in Anatolia there is a saying as “*Ocağa incir ağacı dikmek*” (to plant a fig tree in the home) which means ruining one’s family. In some other cases, forests and woods evoke emotions such as fear, mystery and uncertainty. In psychology; forests are the symbol of unconscious of the darkest secrets or memories (Fontana 1994, 101). In Turkish mythology, a dark forest is the place for bad spirits and bright forests for the good spirits. Yet, whether good or bad, spirits are seen as fearful beings that should be avoided (Ergun 2010, 114).

Briefly, from the earliest periods of time till today, these powerful associations to the trees could have left marks in the psychological and spiritual perception of modern man. Jung (1964) explains this historical interconnection as the bridge between conscious expressions of rational thoughts and the primitive, colorful and pictorial world of instinct (Jung 1969, 48-49). Moreover, Sommer (2003) claims that the physical and metaphorical resemblances between trees and people are significant for human psychology. It is clear that this third level of meaning association towards trees is the most profound and enigmatic one. To understand the man’s deeper feelings, mythological, religious, symbolic values of trees and the relationship between human identity and trees are examined in detail.

4.1.3.1 Trees in Symbolism

“ A poem containing a tree may not be about a tree.”

(Marvin Bell, cited in Madkarni, *Between Earth and Sky*, 2008)

A symbol is a word or an image representing something other than itself. An object can stand for an intangible, indefinite idea or experience. Schroeder (1992) states that people have natural capacity to construct symbols. For instance, when people dream, they tend to create symbols representing some facts or fictions. Similarly, myths and religions use symbols to express certain incidents (Schroeder, 1992, 74). These symbols “*point to things within or beyond ourselves that may not be consciously understood, but they have tremendous importance for our sense of who we are and how we relate to the world.*” (Jung 1964 cited in Schroeder, 1992).

Trees in mythology are the symbols representing what is unexplainable for the primitive man who sought answers for what is going on around him. Therefore, these myths offered explanations by relating real life incidents to some spiritual or natural references. In this sense, trees stood for life, growth, fertility, health, regeneration, wisdom, enlightenment, wish, healing and strength almost in all ancient beliefs (Schroeder 1992, 75; Ergun 2004, 17).

Especially one ruling tree that stands in the middle of earth, with its roots reaching to underground, its trunk standing on the ground and branches rising to the sky has been a significant symbol for the cosmic or the “World Tree”, which represented hell (roots), earth (trunk) and heaven (branches) (Ergun 2004, 17). This concept of tree of life dates back to the Neolithic times (Hageneder 2005, 8). One of the famous examples belongs to Scandinavian mythology and called “Ash Yggdrasil”. It was believed that Ash Yggdrasil’s branches covered earth, and the creator made his decisions beside it (Ergun 2004, 20). There are other cosmic trees as “Hayat/Dünya Ağacı” in Turkish belief, “Irmınsul” in Germany and “Haoma Tree” in Iran and many alike. These myths indicate the similarity of perceptions regardless to the geography, since there is always a colossal tree at the center of the world, covering the three realms of the universe and ruling the life on earth. It is for sure that, symbolic values of trees go beyond the World Tree. Some of the well-known examples as the tree of life, tree of hope, tree of peace, tree of knowledge, and tree of wisdom are shown and explained in Figure 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6.



Figure 4.3 The World Tree
(Schroeder, 1992)

The world tree stands for the axis of the universe (the axis mundi, *göğün direği, universalis comumna*) reserving the forces of life and existence. It is a common symbol in numerous creation myths. It connects different levels of cosmos (Madkarni 2008, 218) The image shows a famous world tree from the Norse mythology which is the Yggdrasil. It connects the upper realm that is occupied by gods, the middle realm of humanity, and the lower realm of the dead.



Figure 4.4 The Tree of Life
(Fontana 1994, 102-103)

The Tree of Life stands at the center of paradise having twelve fruits on its branches, which represent the rewards of spirituality such as wisdom, love and beauty. The immortality is given to those who eat the fruits (Fontana 102, 1994). It is also believed that the fruits and lights on this tree are the reason for the Christmas tree decorations (Whittick 1960, 278). There is *Tooba* in Islamic paradise tree as well.



Figure 4.5 The Tree of Knowledge
(Fontana 1994, 102-103)

The Tree of Knowledge is a dualistic symbol or the knowledge of good and evil. It is known as the tempter since Adam and Eve were diverted by eating its fruit and condemned to life on earth. It is the second tree standing in the Garden of Eden besides the tree of life. There is also a serpent entwined around the tree and it symbolizes the fertility and life energy. There is also an interesting fact that, the words to present wisdom, learning and knowledge such as *witan* (mind), *Witz* (wits), *witiga* (wisdom) in some Germanic languages had been derived from the Scandinavian word of *vid* which means wood(Hageneder 2005, 8).



Figure 4.6 Specific Tree Symbols
(Fontana 1994, 102-103)

Specific Tree Symbols: Different type of trees carries several symbolic meanings for the world cultures. The oak tree, for instance, is sacred for the Celts and pre-celtic Druids. It represents the divinity and masculinity. Yet, the oak is the symbol of Jupiter for the Romans. The fig tree represents enlightenment for the Buddhists and the peach tree was the emblem of immortality for Chinese Taoism and so on.

The personification of trees is another extensively used notion in tree symbolism. The fundamental reasons can be listed as some physical analogies between branches and arms, roots and feet as well as the similarities in social structures (Dwyer et al. 1990, 280). Personification of trees can be exemplified with an age-old tradition of knocking on wood to avoid from bad consequences. This custom is believed to be a remnant act which was done to call a wood spirit or an act to prevent the spirit residing in a sacred tree (an oak or ash) which have the possibility of hearing speakers' plans and interfere them (Madkarni 2008, 190).

Trees were and are still seen mostly as beings that convey hope, wish and the good will. They are used to honor a loved one at his birth, after his death. For instance, an ancient Chinese tradition urges that planting trees near tombs would protect the souls of the dead (Fontana 1994, 100). This symbolic appreciation towards trees shows itself on rituals of today as well. In some regions when a child is born a tree is planted to present a wish of long life and hope. These trees can be called as "living memorials". Moreover, some people hang colorful clothes to a specific tree to make wishes and pray and these trees are called as "wish tree".

Planting trees, especially at the birth of a child is particularly common today. It is because, there exists a faded belief that considers the destiny of the tree and child is intertwined, meaning that the tree grows along with the child (Porteous 2002, 182). Trees are planted after the dead people to preserve and honor their memory as well. The memorial forests are also common in Turkey. Besides the environmental purposes, these forests are mostly established in the memory of dead person.

Figure 4.7 and 4.8 show examples from the campus of Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey). Figure 4.7 is the plane tree planted after the death of Kemal Kurdaş, who was a mastermind of the design and development of campus, and the blue spruce shown in Figure 4.8 was planted for a young graduate of city planning; Aras Kansay in the front yard of the Faculty of Architecture to honor his memory after his death at the age of 21.



Figure 4.7 Kemal Kurdaş Memorial
(Personal Archive, 2012)

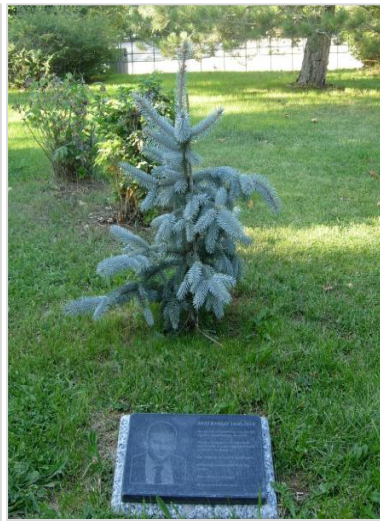


Figure 4.8 A Blue Spruce in the Memory of Aras Kansay
(Personal Archive, 2012)

Briefly, trees were and are extensively used as symbols in myths, religions and daily rituals. These symbols may not be directly understood, but they are quite important in the sense of "who we are and how we relate to the world." (Jung 1964 cited in Schroeder 1992, 74). The frequency of use of trees in symbolism shows their impact on primitive man whether by their physical attractiveness or the feelings they triggered. Hence, paying attention to these relationships and their remnants on modern man's mind may contribute to the meaning in urban environment.

4.1.3.2 Trees in Religion and Worship of Trees

“God is the experience of looking at a tree and saying, “Ah!””

(Joseph Campbell and Bill Myers cited in Madkarni 2008, 214)

Trees with their upright positions and branches reaching to the sky evoke the feeling of divinity in people. Their iconic form, steadfastness and rootedness indicate a connection between heaven and earth (Madkarni 2008, 215). Their sizes, age and color shifts in every season add them another special reverence (Porteous 2002, 150). In this sense, people attributed numerous supernatural meanings to trees throughout the history. Trees were either worshipped as deities or avoided as they were thought to be the embodiment of the demons and evil spirits (Porteous 2002; Whittick 1960, 276). In some cultures trees were the embodiment of even the creator itself. For instance, oak tree was worshipped as Zeus, myrtle tree as Venus and olive tree as Athena in Ancient Greece (Porteous 2002; Whittick 1960, 276).

The traces of tree worship and tree cult go back to the 4000 B.C. to the Sumerians. Their most important god Tammuz (Dames) was a tree and plantation god. There are rich evidences showing that starting with the known history of Summerian culture (Fontana 1994, 100; Whittick 1960, 276; Porteous 2002, 160 ; Tekin 2009; Ergun 2004, 145-154).

Trees were commonly perceived as an origin of the humankind (Porteous 2004, 160). Porteous (2002, 151) states that “*In the tree man saw such a resemblance to himself that he thought he had come from the earth like, and under the form of, a tree*”. For instance, people believed that an Oak Tree produced the first man, and some Indian tribes still believe that man is originated from the trees in ancient Greece (Porteous 2002, 157). In most of the contemporary religions trees symbolize or promise significant and divine. For instance, in Hebrew the story of creation of mankind involve the symbols of Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge standing in the Garden of Eden. Furthermore, Buddha is believed to have enlightenment under the “wisdom tree” (Dwyer 1990). Christianity can be said to have founded on a tree, for the reasons like the cross on which Christ was crucified and Christ’s occupation as a carpenter (Porteous, 2002, 210).

There exist several references to trees in Islam religion as well. Islam perceives trees as a proof of existence of *Allah*. There is a paradise tree called *Tooba (tûba)*. Quran says that there is a leaf for each living person on *Tooba* and when one dies; his leaf also falls off the tree. The fig, olive and pomegranate trees are three other symbolic trees representing the divine, whereas *zaqqum (nerium oleander)* is told as a plant of hell (Ergun 2004, 82, 161). Figures between 4.9 – 4.17 demonstrate the wide use of trees in religious rituals.



Figure 4.9 Tree Worship in Hinduism

(http://aum-in-crete-and-america.blogspot.com/2007_09_01_archive.html)



Figure 4.10 Mayan Tree Worship

(<http://sirius-bridge.blogspot.com/>)



Figure 4.11 Sumerian Tree of Life 2500 BC

(http://www.thelivingmoon.com/44cosmic_wisdom/02files/Tree_Life02.html)



Figure 4.12 Budha under Bodhi Tree

(<http://srimahabodhi.org/disanayaka.html>)



Figure 4.13 The Assyrian Tree Of Life

(<http://www.gks.uk.com/Horus-Behdety-Winged-Disk/>)



Figure 4.14 The World Tree of Norse Mythology - 1680

(Hageneder 2002, 9)



Figure 4.15 Buddhism Tree Worshipping

(<http://oldgoths.blogspot.com/2009/05/pictorial-connections-between-nordic.html>)

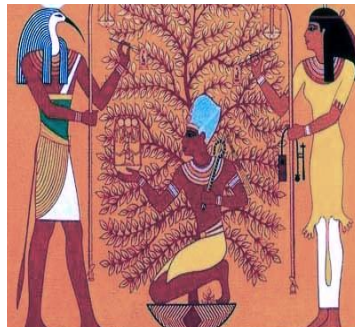


Figure 4.16 Egyptian Tree Cult

(<http://www.essaysbyekowa.com/Ohel%20Moed.htm>)

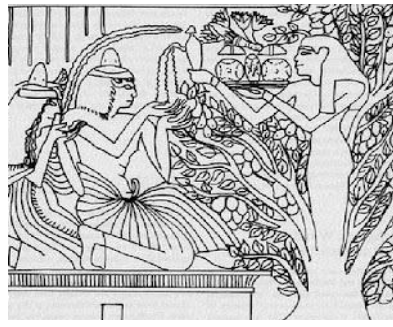


Figure 4.17 A Tomb Scene 1450 BC

<http://mostandpopular.blogspot.com/2010/10/using-of-magic-forces-in-ancient-egypt.html>

4.1.3.3 Trees and Human Identity

Humankind has been in a strong contact with trees. As clarified before, these historical connections can be traced down in several spiritual rituals, superstitious beliefs in modern religions, too. According to Sommer, this long and close interaction of people and trees are embedded within songs, poetry and religion and today, people identify trees with specific events, people and urban areas (Sommer 2003, 190). There are several theories concerning this special relationship between people and trees that can be seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Theories of the Psychological Significance of Trees (Sommer, 2003)

Theories	Explanations
Darwinian Approaches (S. R. Kellert & E. O. Wilson; J. O. Quantz)	Belief in people who were created from trees or were transformed into trees have influenced cultural practices, are embodied in stories and song. The life of a specific individual and a specific tree can be intertwined.
Depth Psychology (C. G. Jung)	With a focus on parallels between human and arboreal development, the tree is seen as an archetype in the human collective unconscious.
Phenomenological Approaches (Davies, 1988; Fulford, 1995; Tuan, 1979; Altman, 1993)	Relies heavily on metaphor between the natural and the human world. Roots, trunk, and canopy mirror the infernal, earthly, and heavenly domains, respectively; other features such as flowers, fruit, and color supply subsidiary themes relating trees to people and society.
Affordance Theory (J. J. Gibson)	Real-world perception is shaped and refined through interaction with the outside world.
Ecopsychology (T. Roszak)	Beyond the individual self, there is an ecological self that is nurtured through contact with and concern for the natural environment. A person should feel at one with nature, and if these feelings are absent or distorted, a healing process is needed.

These psychological discussions construct valuable theories about the relationship between trees and the identity of man. This, as illustrated before, is the result of strong attachments that grew throughout the history and the numerous analogies in between. For instance, Altman (1993, 7 cited in Sommer 2003, 196) connects this link to “*a primary quality in common that is found in few other beings. We both share a vertical perspective*”. People have seen trees as friends in nature which in turn shaped the image of tree as an expression of permanence, stability, trustworthiness, fertility and generosity on human mind (Sommer 2003, 196). Sommer (2003, 210) summarizes the basis of this bridge between human identity and trees in three main concepts:

- Physical and metaphorical resemblances
(e.g. verticality, growth cycles, similarity of structural parts)
- Myths and legends
(e.g. people created from trees or turned into trees, tree gods-spirits, sacred groves)
- Intertwined fate
(e.g. People’s dependency on trees for food, shelter, medicines, shade, aesthetic needs, children’s play, environmental preservation)

This psychological point of view is valuable since it puts forward the outstanding importance of trees for human existence. However, the deeper relationships seem to be the most complex and sophisticated meaning level. It requires a closer look into the relationship between man and trees and an effort to reach to unconscious. Yet, it is highly important to grasp these deeper meanings, spiritualism and symbolic values of trees since they show themselves on people’s relationship with environment today. Therefore, the notions of place identity, place attachment and sense of place can be fostered through using trees in urban design by stressing out some special characteristics of them (e.g. size, age, positioning etc.)

4.2 Trees in Turkish History and Culture

On ay on gece kayın, ışık ile sarılmış,
Bir gün tam şafakleyin,
kayın birden yarılmış.
Beş güzel çocuk çıkmış,
kayının ortasından,
Gözleri kamaştırmış,
bakmışlar arkasından.
Gün olmuş zaman olmuş,
hepsi kocaman olmuş,
Küçükleri "Böğü-Han",
Uygurlara Han olmuş.

(The Uighur Epic of Creation -*Uygur Yaratılış Destanı*)

These verses from the Uighur (*Uygur*) epic of creation tell a story about the rise of the leader of a civilization. According to this story, Böğü-Han –the leader, has been given birth by a beach tree which validates that from the beginning of the Turkic history till today, trees and tree related rituals influenced the cultural and social life. That is, the impressive appearance of trees, their benefits and the analogies between man and trees affected the imagination of Turkic peoples as well (Işık 2004, 90). Therefore, this section of the thesis briefly introduces these tree related myths, cults and their impacts on the lifestyle and urban layout in Turkic history.

Turkic history, in the sense of its historical past and roots, holds a rich accumulation of cultural rituals and traditions, and among those tree cults are considerably significant. The literature findings indicate that the earliest traces for tree cults date back to the 4th century BC to the Huns (*Hunlar*). At the end of every summer, Huns performed a ritual around a pine tree located on a skirt of a mountain in their capital city (Işık 2004, 95). This can be considered as a mark showing that the majesty of an individual tree with impressive size and shape affected the lifestyle of Turkic people. Furthermore, the most common symbol of a cosmic world tree is known as *Hayat Ağacı* (Tree of Life) holding the three realms of the universe with its nine branches representing nine levels of sky reaching to divine and as long as this tree stays green, life on earth will continue (Ergun 2004, 145-146). Similar to the other examples of world tree around the world, the branches of *Hayat Ağacı* represent birth and death. The tree of world (or life) is single, lonely, magnificent in size and shape, deciduous, life giving, old, connecting the three realms of universe and covering the whole world in all civilizations (Ergun 2004, 193-195).

Etymologically, the word *ağaç* (tree) in Turkish is derived from the verb *ağmak* which means “going higher, raising, and reaching to the sky” (Karabulut 2011, 13). This linguistic trace recalls some former Turkic rituals as believing that the soul of an unborn child waits upon the tree of life till its birth and dead souls find their way (underground-*hell* or to the skies-*heaven*) by passing through this tree (Ergun 2004, 147-148). Moreover, in some of the Turkic and Mongolian communities people buried their dead under trees (Işık 2004, 96). This may be the reason why we still plant trees after a loved one’s death or birth.

Besides, there are some specific tree symbols. The beech tree, for instance, was sacred to Shamanist Turks. Shamans’ drums were believed to be made from tree of life and hence, Shamans had to be present in all sorts of rituals to make the creator hear their will. According to an *Altay* Legend, a pine rises at the center of the world touching to sky (to god), and it is possible to see this pine drawing on some Shaman drums (Figure 4.18) (Işık 2004, 92). There is a well-known association of tree cult to shamanism, totemism and polytheistic religion of Turkic peoples. Sky God (Göktanrı), for instance, tree of life is a reflection of the creator on earth (Ergun 2004, 148).



Figure 4.18 A Shaman Drum and Pine Tree
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shamans_Drum.jpg

In short, trees are frequently mentioned in the well-known legends of Turkic history which highlights the symbolic power of certain trees. For instance, in the Legend of Oğuz (*Oğuz Kağan Destanı*), Oğuz Kağan was given birth in a tree hollow and met his wife who came out from a tree hollow. The Uighurs (*Uygurlar*) believed that humankind was created from a tree. However, the context of this subject is quite large and complex. The common beliefs of a world tree, metamorphosis from a tree, divinity of some trees confirm the idea of a rooted-meaning related to trees of Turkic past.

4.2.1 Trees in the Ottoman Era

“Gardens are rising as walls and the magnificent cypress groves crowning the hilltops. If there was a dock along the shore, without any doubt here would have been the greatest walk way in the world.”

(Moltke [1836], *Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları*, 1999)

The vivid description of Büyükdere-İstanbul made by Moltke in the year 1836 presents a lively urban fabric enriched by the existence of cypress trees. Moltke repeatedly explains the late Ottoman cities with reference to trees. Trees are frequently being mentioned throughout his descriptions related to natural or urban sites. For instance, Moltke (1999, 37) illustrates Bosphorus in 1836 by stating that:

“I always go to the great cemetery by passing through the main street of Beyoğlu. The branches of high and age-old cypress trees were bended down by the weight of the snow.”

He describes the city of Edirne in 1835 again by giving reference to the existence of specific tree groupings as follows:

“Edirne has a beautiful view as all of the Turkish cities. Its domes and minarets, city walls and towers rise above the chaos of low and red roofs between the branches of its river and group of trees along a wide and green valley. Among these, high and black cypress trees greet the eye.” (Moltke 1999, 32)

Figure 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22 illustrate the use of trees in İstanbul during the 18th century.



Figure 4.19 View of the Barracks and the Field of Pera (18th Century)

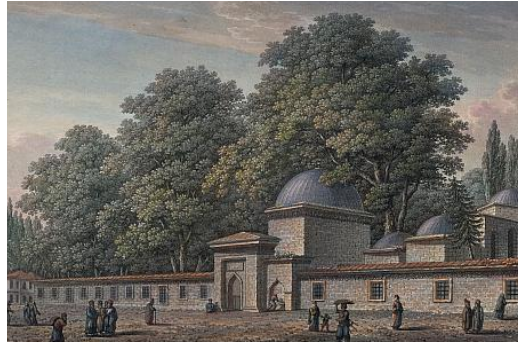


Figure 4.20 View of Eyub (18th Century)



Figure 4.21 The Cypress Trees Beside a Cemetery (18th Century)



Figure 4.22 A Recreation site with a Huge Tree - Büyükdere (18th Century)

(<http://maps.turkishpostalhistory.com/index.php/Gravurlerim/Pertusier>)

Cerasi (1985) argues that the attention paid to trees is as a consequence of Ottomans' being peasants. According to him, people were trying to bring the countryside to the city. Cerasi admits the existence of thousand-year-old customs and tree cults as well. D'Ohsson (1840 cited in Cerasi 1985, 43) clarifies this by saying that

“...by an effect of their superstitious opinions, have a sort of respect for all sorts of trees. Several of them believe that cutting one down, burning it or uprooting it without need is tantamount to inviting some grim event.”

4.2.2 Plane Trees in Ottoman Era

The descriptions of cities made by Moltke in the first half of the 19th century prove the significance of existence of trees. Moreover, the noteworthy role of plane trees worth mentioning in detail. Plane tree is known as a symbol of the Ottoman Empire, and thus they were frequently planted in urban places. The story behind this symbolic value is a dream in which the founder of the Ottoman Empire Osman Gazi saw a plane tree covering the entire sky and ruling three continents. This dream was interpreted as the forerunner for foundation of empire. It is also believed that, after this dream a dervish named *Geyikli Baba* planted an old plane tree to present the solidity and eternity of a new empire (Ergun 2001, 231). Ünaydın (1938 cited in Çınar et al. 2004, 63-64) emphasizes the link between the plane tree and Turkish identity by saying

“Plane is the very tree of Turks. It is beautiful, that much connectedness to the earth ...When it covers a square, it gives coolness and shade. It is also visible in our architecture. On one side of a mosque there is a plane trees symbolizing life and on the other a beech trees symbolizing death.”

To go further on the impacts of this tradition on the urban layout some studies of historians can be presented. For instance, Moltke (1999, 51) describes a section of a city as:

“Nobody hesitates to stop by and sit on a spot where he likes to smoke or have a coffee. There are quite lovely corners in the Bosphorus region for this. There are huge plane trees having fences under its branches. Next to them there is always a small fountain and frequently a coffee shop.”

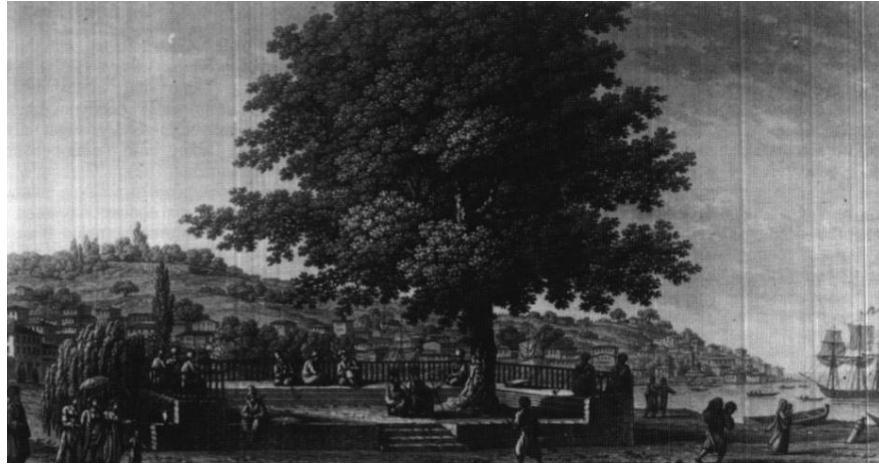


Figure 4.23 Small Raised Square with a Plane Tree
(Cerasi 1985, 45)

Furthermore, the valuable studies of Cerasi (1985) demonstrate the significance of tree and water elements for open space arrangement in Ottoman cities. He describes that in a courtyard, near a fountain or along river majestic trees were the “pivots of an urban square” defining a human intervention that generates “urbanity” which integrates culture, nature and what is built (Cerasi 1985, 43).

On account of this symbolic value, plane trees were frequently used to enrich urban places, especially in social complexes during the Ottoman era. For example, in the mosque yards plane trees provided shade and a nodal point for people to gather, creating an open public place for people. Plane trees were marking the memory of a dream that came true about a great regality and at the same time they are unique collectors of people in Turkish cities although they had lost their true meanings through years (Cerasi 1985; Lowry 2009, 97).

4.2.3 Trees in Turkish Culture Today

Every social community carries their former beliefs as it moves to another level of religious or cultural understanding. Even not fulfilled completely, these habits and customs are imprinted on the cultural codes of the society (Ergun 2004, 391). Tree cults, in this sense, can be described as meaningful remnants of a deep rooted past. Ergun (2004) argues that, today the trees with their imposing characteristics are looked upon as the reminders of the existence of *Allah* while former cults are being evolved into other type of rituals and customs.

There are over one thousand tree cults all around the Anatolian region today (Ergun 2004 ; Lowry 2009, 97). The beech tree, pine, cypress, mulberry, plane trees are the frequently seen trees carrying a symbolic value in the Anatolian geography. To illustrate, beech tree stands for the kindness and wellbeing, the pine for the uniqueness and greatness of the creator, poplar tree for the independence, plane for power and regency, cypress tree for the eternity and so on (Ergun 2004, 195-234).

As some trees are symbolizing life, it was a tradition to plant trees around sanctuaries or cemeteries. Today people plant trees on the direction of tiptoes and heads of the dead in Turkey (Işık 2004). The cypress tree is commonly seen in the graveyards (Figure 4.24). People believe that the souls of their loved ones reach to the skies (to heaven) and as long as the tree is green, the soul is believed to be in peace (Ergun 2004, 234). Besides symbolizing the peaceful eternal life, cypress trees rise straightly to the sky and have gentle roots that do no harm to the graves. As the tree for death, the form of cypress trees were linked to their moral impacts by Hisar (2006 cited in Çınar et al. 2010, 64) as: “They were always looking at the sky , as if not to see any slavishness”. A famous Turkish poet Necip Fazıl Kısakürek summarizes the perception about cypress trees by this single verse from his poem of *Canım İstanbul* as:

“Cypress, graceful cypress curtains the after-life.”

The “Dilek Ağacı-Wish Tree” is a noteworthy illustration for historical Turkish customs related to trees (Figure 4.25). The wish trees are quite widespread in Anatolia. People hang clothes up on some special trees wishing that their wills to be heard by the divine. The paragraph below explains these appealing characteristics of trees:

“When you get close to one single tree, you see some pale rags of every color hanging on the dry and puzzled branches of them. These are the vows of desires plucked from the cuffs of jackets and tied to those puzzled branches. They are the vows of beautiful desires that may never come true.”

(Birand, *Anadolu Manzaraları*, 1999)



Figure 4.24 Selçuk Cemetery and Cypress Trees
(Personal Archieve, 2012)



Figure 4.25 A Wish Tree in Cappadocia
(Oktay, 2012)

Another example is the trees which are planted next to tombs, mausoleums and mosques. It is almost impossible to think of a tomb or mosque without a tree in its close vicinity. The reason can be the meaningful remnants from the earlier rituals of associating trees with divinity and gods. Today, the trees planted near worship related places or tombs are believed to symbolize the existence of god and protect the spirits of dead ones (Işık 2004, 105).



Figure 4.26 Trabzon Square: The Mosque and Plane Tree
(Gedikli, 2012)



Figure 4.27 Edirne: Selimiye Mosque and Plane Tree
(Günay, 2007)

The symbolic value of the mulberry tree is also remarkable. It is known as the home tree and planted in front of the houses before they are built. The mulberry tree is planted to prevent bad luck, to bring happiness and luck to the home, to mark their territory and to provide shade as well. It stands for that the spirit of houses, and provides happiness and profusion (Ergun 2004, 238).

The common tradition of planting trees in front of houses can be interpreted in terms of two aspects, the first of which is the visible impact of trees on the urban layout and the second aspect is the maintenance of a deeply-rooted relationship. In terms of the first aspect, trees planted in front of houses can be perceived as an integration of green to the urban tissue. Le Corbusier, for instance, states that “A Turk, before he builds a house, makes the garden and plant the tree, while French cut the tree to build the house.” (cited in Ergun 2004, 299) although the present situation has turned the other way around. For the second aspect, there seems to be a symbolic value of these trees for the owner of houses even if it stays hidden nowadays.



Figure 4.28 Mulberry Tree and a House
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 4.29 Pine Tree and a House
(Günay, 2006)



Figure 4.30 Walnut Tree and a House
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 4.31 A Tree in Cappadocia
(Günay, 2006)



Figure 4.32 A Tree and a Cottage - Bozburun
(Günay, 2006)



Figure 4.33 A Cypress and a House - Bodrum
(Günay, 2005)

The images (Figure 4.28, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.33) illustrate the house and tree relationship in Turkey. They are from various settlements from Turkey, and in each one of it, there is a different housing and tree type which makes this tradition (or ritual) significant for the urban fabric. In spite of being a spontaneous application, this sort of tree use indicates a valuable urban feature that has a word in the organization of urban space.

4.3 A Discussion on the Meaning of Trees

Together with their primitive, pragmatic and symbolic meanings, trees have always been significant and unique objects that affected human life and imagination. Being fed from a long history and survived till today, trees harbor values in explaining the structures of a culture. Even the word tree has been derived from *treo*, *treow* in Old English which are the words that stood for oak or the thing made of wood (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2012). The importance of the oak tree in mythology and primitive religions maintains its existence through this way.

Anatolian people associated meaning to every bit of nature not only to trees (Işık 2004, 104). A specific attention has been paid to tree related customs and tree cults in Turkish culture within the context of this research. Since the past and contemporary tree cults in Turkic regions have proven this concern true, it is needed to think of tree plantations more than mere greening.

Briefly, beyond its tangible benefits trees carry deeper meanings for people and cities. This subject is exciting for urban planning and design fields, since it carries potentials to transfer meaning in urban places. Thus, with all its mentioned attributes, the main aim is to understand what trees tell to the spatial planner, and how this can be developed further. In this context, a detailed analysis will be provided in the upcoming chapter on the use of trees in urban places. This is to discuss trees as physical beings in cities and move the idea of designing with trees one step further with respect to the deeper meanings of them.

CHAPTER V

TREE-PLACES

“Trees locate us in time and place.”

(Sinden 1989 cited in Jones 2002, 73)

“Trees in city redefine the space.”

(Nadel et al. 1977, 20)

The existence of trees is an added value to urban places. They mark the time with their longevity that witness to history, and changing colors through seasons (Figure 5.1, 5.2) as Sinden (1989) emphasized. Most importantly, they are capable of making places in cities. The first consideration of this two-fold study, which pays attention to the meaning and design dimension of trees in places, has been about to what extent they are **meaningful** to people. Following this, the second emphasis is to explore their **bodily presence** in cities – i.e. how they define or mark a distinctive place. Through this elaboration, this chapter aims at making inferences from these tree-places for urban design actions.



Figure 5.1 Trees in a Public Place in Spring
(Personal Archive, Stockholm, 2010)



Figure 5.2 A Single Tree in Autumn Forming a Place
(Personal Archive, Bratislava, 2011)

In order to proceed on this matter, a study on the role of trees in making places will be presented starting with the historical background of the tree use in cities and their role in making urban places. In what follows, a grouping approach is to be followed to emphasize the wide range of possible tree use in urban places and to reveal other elements of organization in these places (water, mosque, tea gardens etc.) besides trees. This chapter distinguishes trees as place making elements within an urban context of regular users and complementary design elements. The relevant studies and analyses will provide inferences in the scope of urban design with trees.

5.1 Trees in Cities: A Historical Review

Trees exist for about 300 million years, yet it was eight thousand years ago that they emerged in human settlements, and the intentional use of trees through design actions started only two hundred years ago (Zube 1973, ed. Kaplan & Kaplan 1978, 178). The first traces of deliberate tree arrangements date back to the Ancient Egypt (Figure 5.3). Egyptians used sycamore trees (one of the most durable city trees today) purposely in a way to maintain the geometrical way they applied in their temples (Arnold 1993, 13). This regular geometrical usage of trees was also seen in Assyrian (700 B.C.) and Persian (480 B.C.) parks and gardens which are known as the first parks in history (Figure 5.4). Early prints from Ancient Egypt, India and Persia show that trees were planted along the irrigation systems, near tombs and temples; in domestic and palace gardens mostly (Nadel et al. 1977, 13). Early planners seem to use trees to extend the present geometry of urban pattern, and thus they mostly used straight lines, symmetry and rectilinear geometry while designing with trees (Arnold 1993, 13).

The gardening tradition (hence the first use of trees) in Turkish cities is not clear until the 10th century and that is the introduction of Islam. Together with Islam, a new form of man-nature relationship emerged. The gardens, mentioned in Quran, were created imitating the promises of the paradise (Evyapan 1999, 3). In the Ottoman era gardens, particularly trees and water element were used. Evyapan (1999) states that, trees were purposefully planted to provide shade and privacy in palace gardens (Figure 5.5). However, the dominance of geometry was not pursued as in western understanding for the use of green (Çınar et al. 2010, 61).

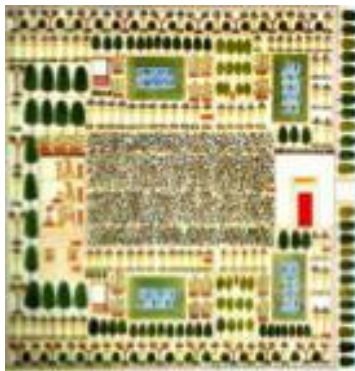


Figure 5.3 Painting of an Egyptian Garden
(Turner, 2005, 48)



Figure 5.4 Persian-style Garden
(<http://www.philographikon.com/gardenhorticulture.html>)

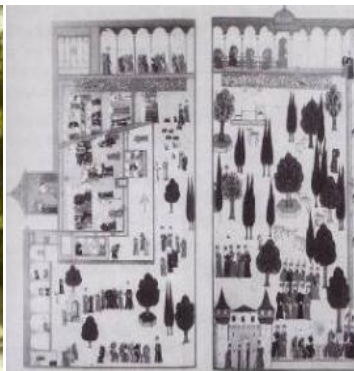


Figure 5.5 The Court of Topkapı Palace-16th Century
(Evyapan, 1999)

Medieval cities had walls for defense and growth control purposes in most of the cities of Europe. These cities were, therefore, separated from the countryside by walls and they were small in size. Hence, it was relatively easy for medieval people to access the countryside for fresh air and experience of nature. Consequently, medieval city did not appreciate tree planting (Arnold 1993, 14). Trees were seen in only two public uses: they were planted adjacent to the churches to create shade for markets, and to symbolize variety of religious beliefs. The other use was along the city walls, to provide shade for medieval market areas (Lawrence 2006, 5-6).



Figure 5.6 A German Medieval Town and Surrounding Trees
 (http://www.bergbook.com/htdocs/German_Old_Views.html)

It was not until the 17th century that trees started to be used for public purposes in cities with the appearance of baroque garden in France. This approach contained a geometrical pattern with long tree lines which later affected the 18th century town design (Zube 1973, ed. Kaplan&Kaplan 1978, 179). Previously, trees were only the extensions of the private garden (Nadel et al. 1977, 9; Arnold 1993, 15). The 18th century perspective of tree uses in French, English and German gardens, squares and boulevards exemplifies the raising concern towards tree plantation in cities. Following this, large scale urban design interventions in Paris illustrate a full expression of spatial use of trees in cities. Paris, for instance, was covered by a network of tree-lined boulevards connecting urban plazas and parks (Arnold 1993, 15). In Paris, trees were arranged to form large boulevards, streets and a network covering the entire city in the 19th century. This can be considered as the first model that would influence the future design activities with trees in cities. The avenue Champs-Élysées (Figure 5.7, 5.8) is one of the most famous examples of the late 18th century tree use in Paris.



Figure 5.7 The Champs-Élysées in 1890
 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Champs-Élysées>)



Figure 5.8 Trees in Paris - c.1850
 (<http://www.swaen.com/antique-map-of.php?id=5645>)

Another notable example is the street called as *Unter den Linden* (Under the Linden Trees) in Berlin. This well-known boulevard was formed in the 16th century to connect the palace to the hunting park. Today, Unter den Linden opens up to the Brandenburg Gate and it is one of the widest and famous streets of the city of Berlin. Figure 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12 present the historical background of the street and the trees.



Figure 5.9 Unter den Linden in 1690
 (<http://aahh-bernds-berlin.npage.de/unter-den-linden-gestern-und-heute.html>)



Figure 5.10 Unter den Linden in 1780
 (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b1/Rosenberg_Unter_den_Linden_1780.jpg)



Figure 5.11 Unter den Linden in 1935
 (<http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/galapafargo/3455859738/>)



Figure 5.12 Unter den Linden in 2009
 (Personal Archive, 2009)

At this point, main and common motives for the use of trees in cities can be summarized in three main aspects namely; aesthetics, power and national tradition. To start with the aesthetic association of trees, it is clear that the perception of aesthetics related to trees in cities changed in parallel with the changes in the trends of architecture and urbanism. For instance, the double row of trees that are known as *allée* was replaced by tree-lined streets. Meanwhile, trees were also planted to control the space, and reflect the social power, such as the Baroque tree-lined avenues for the parade of troops. Besides, during the French Revolution, people planted trees in public places against the aristocratic government that controlled the tree plantation in public space (Lawrence 2006, 6-7). The trees along Paris streets provided the military protection to palaces and constructed barriers (Nadel et al. 1977, 16). Lastly, use of trees with the motive of national tradition can be explained by national culture and preferences. For instance, the French boulevard identified by trees (Figure 5.13), the romantic view of nature in American parks and the enclosed squares of England providing all the blocks the view of trees (see Figure 5.14) are specific to those nations (Figure 5.15) (Lawrence 2006, 7; Arnold 1993, 17; Bradshaw 1995,3).



Figure 5.13 Boulevard des Italiens in Paris - 1910

(http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Boulevard_des_Italiens_1910.jpg)



Figure 5.14 The Plan of Central Park, 19th Century

(<http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2012/januaryfebruary/feature/public-parking>)



Figure 5.15 Fitzroy Square in London

(http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Fitzroy_Square_from_the_BT_Tower.jpg)

To summarize, the recent tendencies of tree use and garden design, and the use of trees in cities has been changed with respect to the requirements of planning activities starting from the second half of the 19th century. The gardens of preindustrial city had given their place to the segments of landscapes in urban fabric today (Lawrence 2006, 222). Dense urban development, excess traffic and crowd in cities have made life harder and busier for people to go to the nature, and lessened the intimacy of human contact with nature today (Arnold 1993). Still, urban green places are significant in providing comfort and leisure possibilities. The street trees as well bring warmth to sidewalks and cold pavements, providing “a sense of human scale” to the urban fabric (Nadel et al. 1977, 19). There is another significant argument of Lawrence (2006, 284) that the changes in the urban society and lifestyle have considerably affected the use of green spaces. Thus, trees are mostly used in suburban gardens, large urban parks, small city squares, and tree-lined streets today (Lawrence 2006, 222-229). In the context of Turkey, we can say that trees are mostly used in neighborhood. Also, street trees and tree groups in large urban parks, individual trees (monumental or not) are present in most of the settlements in Turkey.

5.2 Trees in Place

We move by trees along urban streets; we greet them as we step up from our houses. They are almost always a part of an urban scene. The presence of trees may be powerful or muted, intended or incidental, but they “fill our visual field, tower us, and enclose us” (Jones et al. 2002, 89). Moreover, when arranged intentionally, they have a capacity to create distinctive places regarding urban design principles -such as closeness, continuity and order in urban fabric together with their psychological, spiritual, ecological and physical effects which make them place making and place marking elements in urban design and planning activities.

Trees can form places. Their size, shape, rich materiality and longevity provide qualities for a definition of a distinctive place (Jones et al. 2002, 86). Trees are representatives of places, markers of time and memories. A tree stands in its own place, covers a space and constructs a place and at the same time it assigns meaning to the place. By paying attention to the archetypal dimension of trees, this study takes urban tree as an effective element that holds the physical design and meaning together. The two quotations above present these two-fold characteristics of trees and hence this research, namely: meaning and place design (Jones et al.2002, 87) :

“The tree... is a marker of time, of circumstance, of ongoing embedded interconnections of things and people mixing together in ways which mark each other and bind each other...Trees as bodies, as groups of bodies, and as settings for bodies, senses, and movement seem particularly vibrant, powerful makers of place.”

When the physical characteristics of trees are merged with the meanings people attribute to them, trees stand as place-making elements that can define urban places. Therefore, this study favors the term “tree-place”. A tree-place is not a concrete formation of any single tree or a group of trees, it is a term that can be used to indicate an urban place that is defined (enclosed, curtained, focal etc.) by a tree, a line of trees or tree groupings. In this sense, two significant themes that support the aim of this research (place making and meaning generating) are stated by Jones et al. (2002, 74) as follows:

- “The significance of place in the construction of the everyday world and including how trees are **‘players of place’** par excellence.”
- “The recognition that places are dynamic and shifting phenomena which somehow retain **threads of meaning** which sustain them as places.”

Jones et al. (2002) use the term “tree places” as well, and show the importance of “meaning” in place and potential of trees to make a place. The focus of this chapter falls mostly on the place making characteristics of trees.

5.3 Tree-Places in Cities

“...woods are more than just collections of trees. They are places, landmarks and communities.”
(Mabey 1980, 63, cited in Font et al. 2000)

“...trees contribute to a unique milieu, taking their part in the distinct formations of networks and dwellings which are acted out as those places unfold in time and space.”
(Jones et al. 2002,121)

This study has focused on two main channels in elaborating on trees and their presence in urban places: The first one is the “meaning” channel that was introduced as a set of feelings, memories, explanations and reactions of a person while interpreting an urban place. The second one is the “design” dimension that pays attention to the meanings and symbolic values in space design. Before going into the details of this relatively new approach of urban design with trees, it is essential to portray the current uses of trees and what sort of urban places they create. Streets and other public areas are remarkably shaped by the presence of trees with their “physical, social and sometimes religious significance.” (Watson et al. 2003, 31). Trees with their endurance in time (continuity) and impressive appearance (uniqueness) contribute to the identity of a place. As strong ties emerge between people and trees, the notion of place attachment becomes prominent as well. Trees and tree-places have the potential to create familial, social, mythological and religious impacts, all of which refer to the typological categorization of cultural place attachment (see Table 2.5).

Whether intentional or spontaneous, there are impressive examples of tree-places from the world and Turkish cities which can be investigated from an urban design perspective. Before mentioning some of these places, the profound relationship between trees and people can be expressed by the writings of two important authors on trees in Anatolian region, one of which is a non-urban tree standing alone in a steppe (Figure 5.16), and the other is a well-known monumental tree having several visitors each day (Figure 5.17):



Figure 5.16 The Lonely Tree in Steppe
(Cover of *Aliç ağacı ile Sohbetler*, 1986)

“There “is a rounded tree on the mound opposite. A single tree! A tree that watches the universe from the monotonous flatness of the plain. It is, for sure, a hawthorn. Not only on this plain, just pay attention to these lonely trees all around Anatolia, you will see the lonely, quiet and inoffensive person in them.”

(Hikmet Birand, *Anadolu Manzaraları*, 1999)



Figure 5.17 The İnkaya Plane
(<http://www.bursa.com.tr/inkaya-cinari-595.html>)

“The İnkaya Plane is sublime and gorgeous. As if we accepted it as a shelter...We look up, and see its greatness. Whomever you see, you take them as “familiar”. Because, it offers the most lively common place, which makes urban people “from there”, and “connect them to life”, What else can offer this much sincere and direct “meeting” of people?

(Cumhuriyet Newspaper - Oktay EKINCI)

5.4 The Categorization of Tree-Places

Tree-places will be categorized to analyze the role of trees in the formation of an urban place. Regardless the size of places and trees, the urban or rural characteristics they carry, or the level of privacy any example could be significant within this context. The literature survey and the personal observations mostly have shaped this dimension of discussion on tree-places. Furthermore, the groupings below and the selected cases have been determined according to three basic criteria:

1. Location: The investigation of tree places in public-private and urban – rural sites were not separated intentionally, yet the illustrations ended up being located mostly in public or semi-public places.
2. Amount of massing: The tree-places located in selected cases were divided with reference to the number of trees they acquired.
3. Urban Activity: The activity types that tree-places offer to its users were cared, as well as the current uses around them.

Considering this, four main themes are constructed and divided into sub-themes:

1. Individual Trees (The Point)
 - a. Landmark Trees
 - b. Small Tree Places
 - c. *Çınaraltı* Squares
2. Row of Trees (The Line)
 - a. Street Trees
 - b. City Entrances
 - c. Riverbed Trees
3. Tree Groups
 - a. Small Groups
 - b. Urban Parks and Squares
 - c. Networks
4. Trees and Traces

5.4.1 Individual Trees (The Point)

“I revere trees when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche.”

(Herman Hesse, *Wanderings*, 1972)

“In almost all cases, the public square has grown up around, and chronologically later than, the tree. The space beneath such shade trees is used as an outdoor classroom, a meeting place, a workspace or a covered market.”

(Watson et al., 2003, *Time Saver Standards for Urban Design*)

The self-standing trees in urban areas are eye catching elements. Especially old and imposing ones are favored both for their aesthetic appearances and historical value. The *point* trees can be defined as the single trees that emphasize a location and create a nodal place for people to gather. Certainly, scales and uses shaped around these trees are different, yet the main idea of bringing people together is still there. Moreover, the symbolic values of these kinds of single trees are also significant.

For instance, monumental plane trees are common in the context of Turkey. As noted during the previous chapters, the individual trees favored by Turkic customs and traditions and this link is visible through the dominance of them within the urban fabric of Turkish cities today. Shade, calmness and visual beauty of the sublime plane trees can be joined with the idea of “World Tree” (especially when the Çınaraltı Square is of concern).

When point trees are considered in terms of their place and activities they offer, three categories can be pointed out, namely the “landmark trees”, small tree-places, and Çınaraltı Squares - a Turkish term widely used to define public squares under massive plane trees.

5.4.1.1 Landmark Trees

The individual trees that are imposing in size and shape act as pointers and markers in urban places which allow us to call them landmark trees. Visual and symbolic attributes of these trees offer **legibility** and **ease of remembering** within an urban fabric. Since landmarks should be in contrast with the background, singular, visible and memorable (Lynch 1960, 78), some individual trees with their size, scale, **visibility** and **memorability** make them act as natural landmarks in cities. They mark places and make people recognize them easily. The plane trees below exemplify the landmark characteristics of trees in cities. Figure 5.18 is from Taraklı shows an ages-old plane tree together with a fountain and sitting places around it, also the Ünye Plane on the Figure 5.19 is a magnificent landmark that witnessed the urbanization process of the city.



Figure 5.18 Taraklı Plane Next to a Fountain, Sakarya
(Gedikli, 2012)



Figure 5.19 A Magnificent Plane Tree at the Heart of Ünye
(Günay, 2005)

The pine tree in Figure 5.20 and 5.21 was planted adjacent to the central mosque of the city of Antakya. Together with the minaret of mosque, this pine tree tells its citizens and visitors that the heart of Antakya beats around it. Walking through the small and complicated streets of the old city, one can search for the tree and orient himself/herself accordingly. Furthermore, the tree and minaret serves together with the main square of the city of Antakya as it can be seen in Figure 5.20.



Figure 5.20 The Square of Antakya
(Personal Archive, 2009)



Figure 5.21 The Pine and Minaret
(Personal Archive, 2009)

5.4.1.2 Small Tree-Places

Small tree-places can be defined as the break points shaped around a tree for urbanites to spend time. These trees may not be influential in size or appearance, and they can be either intentionally or spontaneously cared for their pleasant appearance and functions they provide. Small tree-places are valuable in terms of showing the companion of notions of meaning, activity and design in urban places, since they enrich the urban areas with their existence.

The small tree-places are helpful to create pleasant sites for resting. They can also create a small focal are within the urban fabric. To illustrate, Figure 5.22 shows a small tree close to a crowded commercial street in Stockholm. It has sitting elements for people to rest. The white flowers of tree add value to the urban scene as well. Figure 5.23 is from the old part of the city of Bratislava, a small tree dominate a relatively larger urban public place to sit, rest and observe the site. The last example of Figure 5.24 is from a small village called “Üzümler” near Tire/ İzmir. There is an old plane tree at the heart of the village. The villagers take advantage of its shade during a hot summer day. What is remarkable with this last image is that it shows a common organization of public places, particularly in small settlements of Turkey. Above all, an individual tree seems to create an urban from a Scandinavian metropolis to an Anatolian village.

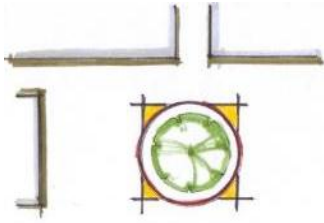


Figure 5.22 A Small Tree-Place in Stockholm

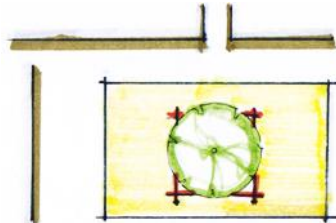


Figure 5.23 A Small Tree-Place in Bratislava

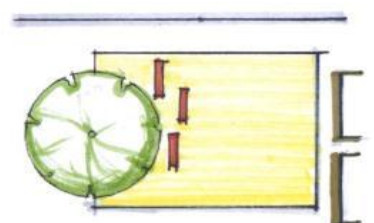


Figure 5.24 A Small Tree-Place in Üzümler

(Personal Archive & Drawings)

5.4.1.3 Çınaraltı Squares

“There is an inextricable link between people and trees, especially old trees. From all the thousands of uses we have put them to, and all the fears and desires we have projected onto them, human cultures around the world have emerged from the trees.”

(Evans, 1999 cited in Jones et al. 2002, 12)

The old and magnificent trees in urban places are always the most favored ones with their visual attractiveness, history and symbolic values. A particular example is plane trees for the Turkish case. Plane trees embody strong symbolic values as clarified before. That is, these trees were extensively used in the Ottoman era. Thus, a plane tree stands majestically at the heart of gathering places in most of the Turkish cities, townships and villages. These tree-places are called the “Çınaraltı Squares” -a Turkish term widely used to define public squares under massive and old plane trees. In other words, these tree-places exist in Turkey as a consequence of the special reverence given to them throughout the history of Anatolia and especially during the Ottoman Empire.

As one of the symbolic values, plane trees have usually been associated with the fortune of the state and growth. Therefore, they refer to the greatness, solidity, continuity and the like. Another example is the belief of a common fate between children and trees, meaning that plane trees also symbolize birth. Furthermore; they are mostly mentioned in tales referring the divinity and light. The symbolic value of plane trees may vary in every society. It is almost impossible to list every single meaning associated with the image of a plane tree even in Anatolia. In tangible terms, it is the durability, longevity and monumental nature of plane trees which make them significant for people and states.

For what they add to the urban fabric, they are mostly located near mosques and formed gathering places for communities. These tree-places marked with monumental plane trees are identified with the characteristics of a public square as well. These are mostly the fountains and mosque courtyards with plane trees, adding value to the urban quality in the former Turkish settlements. The togetherness of plane trees and fountains is an intriguing relationship in terms of explaining an urban culture that is reflected itself on space.

Alphonse de Lamartine (1971 cited in Çınar et al. 2010, 61) explains this by saying that:

“Tree branches over the head and a fountain beside, the meadows in front of the eyes, or the sea; sitting there, spending hours, days with an unknown and pensive watching, here is the life of a Muslim.”

The places like Çınaraltı Squares today in Turkish cities can be regarded mostly as the legacy of Ottoman Empire. Regrettably, contemporary urban planning and design approaches mostly focus on the design of concrete urban squares. However, there are many examples in various urban scales and functions of tree-places defined by plane trees today. Koca (2012) states that monumental plane trees define the location of coffee houses in the nodes that are called *yurts* in Karabağlar/Muğla while providing shade to the courtyards (Figure 5.25, 5.26) (Koca 2012, 89). Koca (2012, 89) depicts a spatial organization of a coffee shop in Karabağlar/Muğla region as:

“Monumental plane trees are other characteristics of the nodes. They determine the location of coffee houses. Most of them are about 500-600 years old today. They create a cool atmosphere by shading the courtyard of the coffee houses.”



Figure 5.25 Gökkiye Coffee House and Plane Tree
(Drawn by Feray Koca)



Figure 5.26 Kadı Coffee House and Plane Tree
(Archive of Feray Koca)

Three examples are selected to closely investigate a similar relationship between trees, public places and urban history. Therefore, İnkaya Çınarı/Bursa, Kunduracı Çınarı-Kaynaklar/İzmir, and Ağlayan Çınar-Gölyazı/Bursa have been chosen mostly because of their role in the formation and maintenance of the public square as well as their impact on the macroform of the cities. Moreover, the extent they have affected the urban history and culture was a prominent reason as the spatial characteristics.

The first example, “İnkaya Çınarı” (İnkaya Plane) is located in İnkaya Village near the city of Bursa. The plane is 35 meters high and its trunk has a diameter of 3 meters. Its branches dominate a significant space, and fascinate their visitors deeply (Figure 5.30).

Under the tremendous branches of this 600 year old plane tree, there are local cafes and restaurants which support nearly 85 families in the village. Another interesting point is the, foundation of İnkaya village dates back to the end of the 19th century, meaning that the plane was already almost 400 years old when today’s permanent settlers arrived.



Figure 5.27 Satellite View of İnkaya
(Google Earth, October,2012)



Figure 5.28 The Figure-Ground Map of İnkaya
(Personal Rendering)

The figure-ground presentation of the contemporary form of the village shows that overall settlement macroform has been oriented towards the İnkaya plane (see Figure 5.28). Considering other possible effects such as topographical limitations on this macroform, the known history and current orientation of spine give strong clues about the establishment of the village around and towards the monumental plane tree.

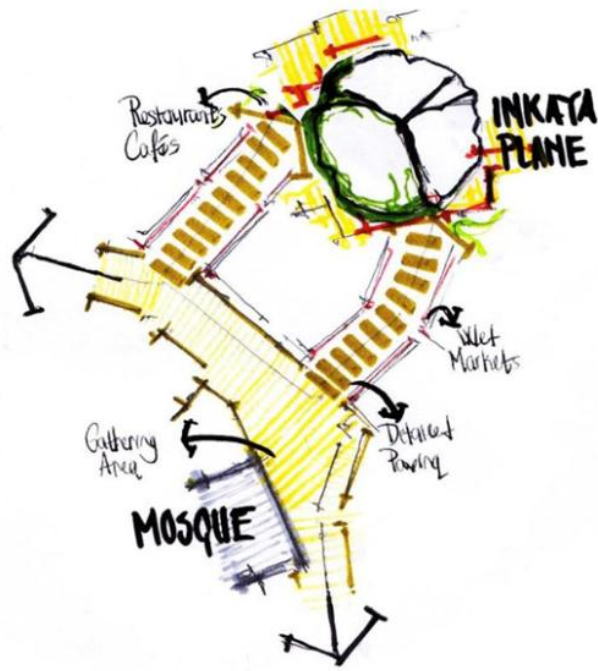


Figure 5.29 İnkaya Plane and Its Surroundings
(Personal Drawing)

There are design interventions inspired by the presence of the tree as well. The main streets towards the plane have a different pavement orienting the pedestrian movement. Another aspect is the local vegetable and fruit stands, which are commonly owned by local farmers, take place along these streets (Figure 5.29). Together with its deep visual impact, the İnkaya plane is a noteworthy example for both urban design interventions on site, and its contribution to local improvement in economic, social and cultural aspects.



Figure 5.30 İnkaya Plane and Its Place
(http://wowturkey.com/t.php?p=/tr244/MesutCa_0295_inkaya.jpg)

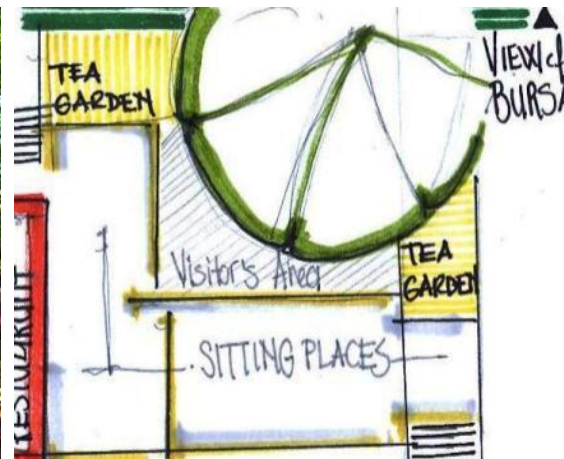


Figure 5.31 General Organization of Place of İnkaya Plane
(Personal Drawing)

The second illustration is from Kaynaklar / İzmir. There exists a monumental tree called as Kunderacı (Shoemaker) Plane. It is estimated that the tree is about 1000 years old. Legend of tree dates back to the year 1071, which is the year that Turks first entered the Anatolian peninsula. It is believed that this tree had been planted as a symbol by the saints after they arrived at today's Kaynaklar region. Hence, the plane is one of the oldest trees in Turkey, ascending some 30 meters and its trunk has a diameter of 4 meters. The name "shoemaker" was given after a shoemaker settled into the hollow of the tree.



Figure 5.32 Satellite View of Kaynaklar
(Google Earth, October, 2012)

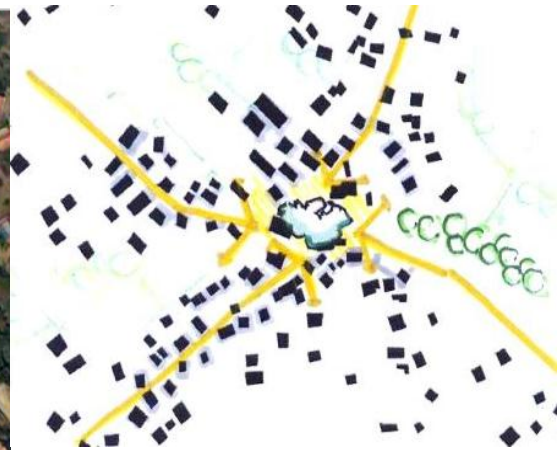


Figure 5.33 The Figure Ground Map of Kaynaklar
(Personal Drawing)

Settlement macroform of the village is strikingly oriented towards the place of plane. However, unlike a single spine sinking to the tree as in İnkaya, Kaynaklar has several spines orienting towards the plane. Again it acts as a heart of the city with complementary activities around. The town hall is located very close to plane's place and there are small restaurants and cafes as well. There are also some urban design interventions such as a stone-pool, a smooth pavement around the tree-place. Water element is used to enrich the place which provides calm and attractive area for its users.



Figure 5.34 Kunderacı Plane and Its Surroundings
(Personal Drawing)



Figure 5.35 Kunduracı Plane and Its Place
 (<http://www.egepostasi.com/m/?id=5463>)

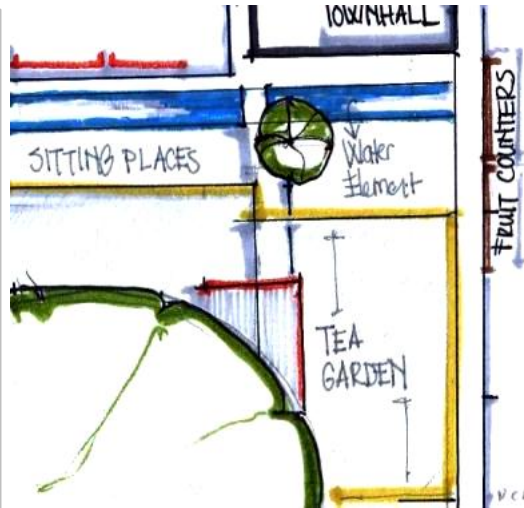


Figure 5.36 General Organization of Place of Kunduracı Plane
 (Personal Drawing)

Kunduracı Plane has fewer commercial and touristic activities around it compared to the place of İnkaya plane. Besides being a touristic attraction point, the plane seems to be more in relation with the local people and the urban fabric of Kaynaklar. This tree and its place is a notable illustration of a plane tree that brought life to an urban settlement. The legend about it dates back to the first footprints of today's settlers. Furthermore, Kaynaklar Plane is a unit of an order through which a new people has claimed its existence on Anatolia.

The third example is the Ağlayan (Crying) Plane of Gölyazı which is a small peninsula on the Lake Ulubat in Bursa. The city of Gölyazı is an ancient Roman settlement that was called "Apoloynt". This plane tree stands at the entrance of the peninsula and welcomes its visitors and presents a noteworthy example of a relationship between the tree-place and water (see Figure 5.38). The tree is believed to be almost 800-years old having an impressive shade area. The name Ağlayan (Crying) Plane, was given since it drops red dews through its trunk. Also, there are several local stories for this interesting natural fact. One of which is a love story that has ended tragically and these red dews dropping from the plane tree are believed to be the tears of the man who was made to leave his lover and turned into a tree.



Figure 5.37 Satellite View of Gölyazı
 (Google Earth, October, 2012)



Figure 5.38 The Entrance of Gölyazı
 (<http://www.timeinbursa.com/Bursa-golyazi.html>)

Ağlayan Plane (Crying Plane) stands at the entrance of the Gölyazı peninsula. The urban tissue shows the power of this tree-place in Gölyazı. It contributes to the urban macroform as a main public area, also forming an entrance to the city. This square is the starting point of the main spine of the city as well. The figure-ground representation of the peninsula illustrates how the main spine has been shaped. It extends through the place of the plane tree and reaches to an inner urban square. Another important point is along this spine the density of the tree plantation rises.



Figure 5.39 The Figure Ground Map of Gölyazı
(Personal Drawing)

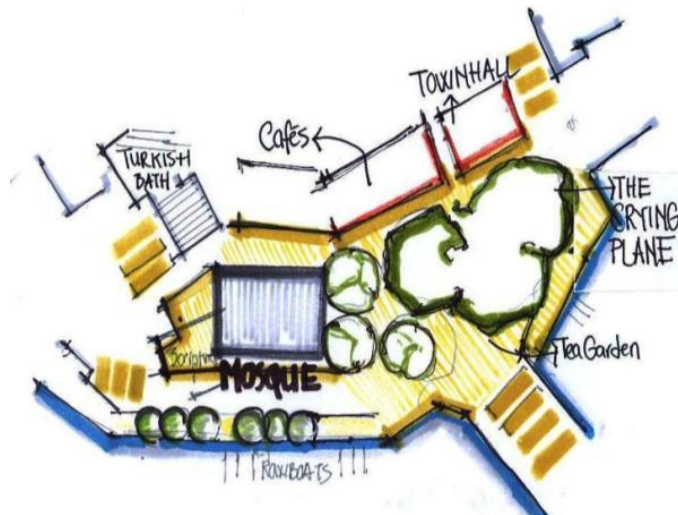


Figure 5.40 Ağlayan Plane and Its Surroundings
(Personal Drawing)

The surroundings of Ağlayan Plane serves as an urban focal area, where all the local people and visitors come to rest, meet or spend time. Together with the activities, view of Lake Ulubat, the rowboats and interesting position of the tree form a meaningful urban gathering place. The companionship of the mosque, the plane and the square illustrates a complete example of what we have discussed for the Turkish traditions of tree plantation near mosques.

In the close vicinity of the mosque, ruins from the ancient city are also still visible today (see Figure 5.42). This means that the former inhabitants also favored the site as a central place. Figure 5.41 displays the impressive appearance of Ağlayan Plane. Figure 5.42 is an illustration showing the distribution of main uses and gives clues in terms of the spatial organization of the place. The togetherness of the townhall, ruins, mosque and water support the existence of plane in its place.



Figure 5.41 Ağlayan Plane and Its Place
http://wowturkey.com/t.php?p=/tr472/Env er_Bozyigit_Aglayan_cinar.jpg

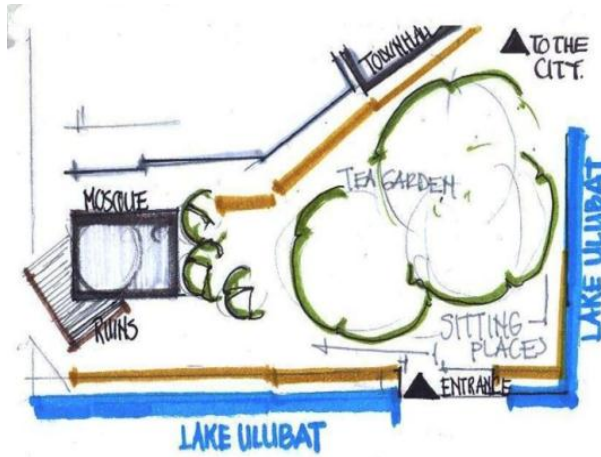


Figure 5.42 General Organization of Place of Ağlayan Plane
 (Personal Drawing)

These three cases portray the examples of vivid public open places for local people and visitors, no matter if they have been created via urban design interventions or not. These trees stand majestically as the representatives of the history of site, legends, stories and culture as well as their collecting and connecting features in an urban place. Their visual attractions alone tell us about the value they added to the place. Furthermore, orientations of the main streets in three examples interestingly indicate the power of a tree's place in the formation of the urban fabric and circulation. İnkaya's main spine comes straightforwardly to the old plane tree, and in Kaynaklar, the plane tree stands at the very core of the urban fabric and have three main streets stemming from the tree. Meanwhile, the Ağlayan Plane welcomes visitors at the entrance of Gölyazı and it is both a beginning and an end of Gölyazı peninsula.



Figure 5.43 Spine towards İnkaya Plane

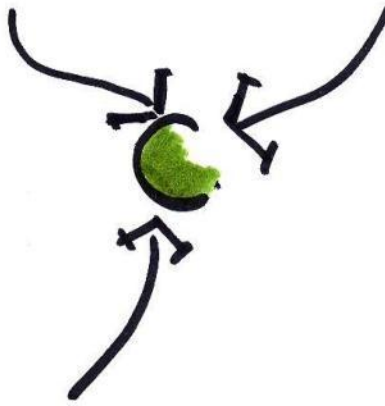


Figure 5.44 Spines towards Kaynaklar Plane
(Personal Drawings)



Figure 5.45 Spines towards Gölyazı Plane

Figure 5.43, 5.44, 5.45 show the typology between three plane(s) and three place(s). They illustrate the orientation of the main spines and their relation to the existence of plane trees. This inference is significant in spatial terms since it shows to what extent a tree has a word on the organization of space. The common elements and urban uses around these trees are also significant. The sketches showing the general organization of tree-places demonstrate that a townhall, mosque, commercial activities, and tea gardens in each example. These can be listed as some of the common uses supporting the formation of tree-places.

5.4.2 Row of Trees (The Tree Line)

Urban design favors tree alignments along rivers and main streets within a city. This is because row of trees create verticality and substantial foliage which allow them to form *columnar* or *arcade-like* directedness (see Figure 5.46, 5.47). Most particularly, tree lines express a substantial principle of urban design; *continuity*. Besides, when arranged properly row of trees provide *similarity* and *proximity* in urban places which in turn affect the *wholeness* and *legibility* within a city (Günay, 2007). Tree lines are seen as significant elements to vitalize the greyscape created by concrete masses.



Figure 5.46 Tree Rows as Arcade Street
(Personal Drawing)

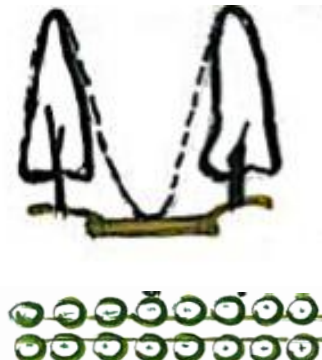


Figure 5.47 Tree Rows as Colonnaded Street
(Personal Drawing)

Tree lines appeared firstly in Persia and ancient Egypt. These civilizations used trees as precise rows along the irrigation systems (Nadel et al. 1977, 13). Nevertheless, ancient cities seem not to have cared the presence of trees along the streets or other public areas. Street trees came to the scene only by the beginning of the 18th century.

An interesting use of tree rows is that trees were planted along the roadside to indicate the course of the road from distance in Roman period. The contemporary use of street trees can firstly be seen in the 19th century. Haussmann's approach to street trees during the planning of the new era of Paris is noteworthy in this sense. He favored tree plantations directly on the street, aiming to form a tree web that entwined the city together with streets and boulevards. This was the first integration of trees to the design and function of a city (Nadel et al. 1977, 9, 14).

Street trees are powerful tools to add visual value to city streets. They create a ceiling of branches, change the scale into a more humanistic way, and provide a pleasant walk with the filtered lights and changing colors (Zube 1973, ed. Kaplan & Kaplan 1978, 184). Moreover, use of tree lines is not limited to their use along the streets. Ranging from large boulevards to riverbanks, they can be seen in several sections of a city and a landscape. Their power to express continuity, to form arcades and columnar streets are valuable design means in cities from natural and urban perspectives.

Four main themes can be addressed for the use of trees within this context. First, as the most common use of tree linings, exemplified by street trees; second, city entrances; third, parks and gardens; finally, other uses such as, riverbank plantation, specific design interventions like place identification or separation.

5.4.2.1 Street Trees

Street trees are the “scarf on the neck of the city.” (Nadel et al. 1977, 27). In addition to their design characteristics, they control the flow of wind and provide comfort along city corridors. As noted above, the very first purposeful design of tree rows in cities can be seen in Haussmann's plan for Paris in the 19th century. This approach was named as “The Boulevard”, the Parisian street development which is a wide avenue lined with trees. The allée, on the other hand, was a similar design intervention with tree lines. The 17th century garden allée was a concept of row of trees guarding both sides of a garden road (see Figure 5.48). The Boulevard was originated from the baroque avenue that is a wide street with trees on both sides but with no houses (see Figure 5.49-5. 50). Thus, the evolution of row of trees in cities can be sorted out as the allée, the avenue and lastly the boulevard that links the commerce, nature and residences and still remains as a model for modern landscape applications (Nadel et al. 1977, 19).

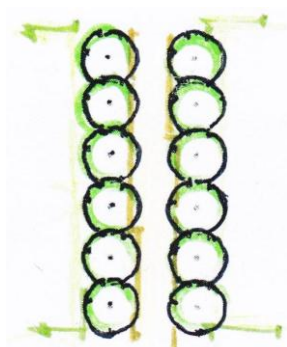


Figure 5.48 The Garden Allée

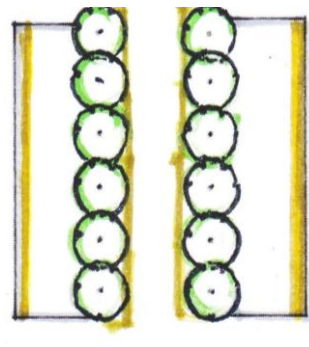


Figure 5.49 The Baroque Avenue
(Personal Drawings)

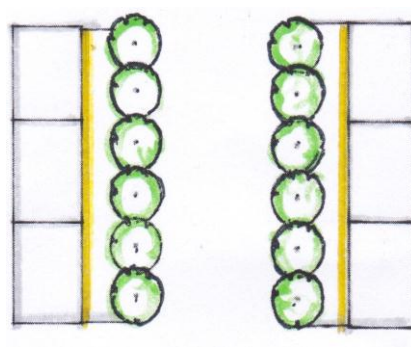


Figure 5.50 The Boulevard

Presently, the use of row of trees in cities is relatively popular. They are used along streets, within building blocks and neighborhoods, all promising a strong contribution to the sense of promenade or a defined spine, in collaboration with the surrounding masses and spaces. They soften the straight edges of buildings, provide human scale when arranged in front of imposing buildings and beautify the pavements and environments dominated by hard landscape. Besides design attributes, these tree linings are used to express “freedom, sense of belonging to the users of street” (Nadel et al. 1977, 19).



Figure 5.51 A Garden Allée in Wien
(Personal Archive, 2011)

Figure 5.52 A Garden Allée in Antakya
(Personal Archive, 2010)

Figure 5.53 A Garden Allée in Paris
(Personal Archive, 2009)

There are inspiring uses of row of trees in Turkish cities as well. The two well-known examples from Ankara are: Kumrular Street and Cinnah Avenue. Kumrular Street is located in the city center Kızılay and serves as a connector between bus/minibus stop in Güvenpark and Necatibey Street. There are age old plane and horse chestnut trees along the both sides of the street that were registered as cultural monuments in 1979. Together with public and commercial uses in both sides, Kumrular Street used to be a more pleasant milieu of urban life in Ankara compared to its current use. The trees provided a comfortable walk to the city center. Yet, today Kumrular Street is condemned to heavy flow of car traffic and narrow sidewalks. A warm and romantic section of the city center, that cannot easily be found today, was converted into a transportation focus with on-road car parks, taxi-stops, acting as a main exit of Kızılay. Still, the gorgeous plane trees improve the visual quality of the area as valuable natural and urban assets along the street. Technical failures related to the upkeep of trees and ignorance of their significance for Ankara and urbanites are major problems for this beautiful street at the heart of a capital city (see Figure 5.54, 5.55, 5.56).

Cinnah Street, on the other hand, is a main spine in Ankara. It includes public, residential, commercial, and recreational uses along. The Cinnah Street starts from the Kuğulu Park (a famous urban park in Ankara) and ends up at the Botanical Park and Atakule (a tower that can be seen as an urban landmark). Although, Cinnah Street is steeper and longer for walking, the oriental plane trees, with the sounds of their leaves and shade on both sides, make the walk pleasant and comforting. The age old plane trees are the symbols of Cinnah Street making this street what it is today. However, the excess traffic and other engineering failures pose a threat for plane trees. There were tree loses during the construction of Kuğulu interchange in 2006. Also, as in the Kumrular case, a one-way road speeds up the traffic and cause danger for pedestrians to use the street efficiently (see Figure 5.57, 5.58, 5.59).



Figure 5.55 Satellite View of Kumrular St.
(Google Earth, November, 2012)



Figure 5.54 Kumrular Street
(Personal Archive, 2012)

A STREET

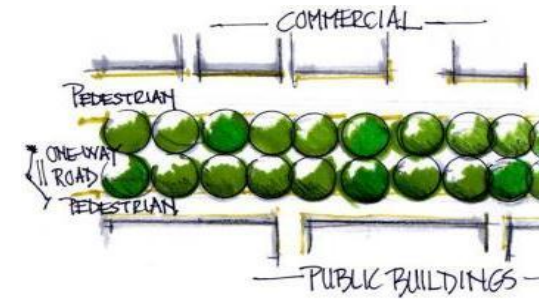
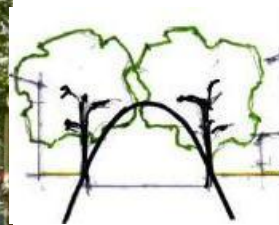


Figure 5.56 Plane Trees and Kumrular St.
(Personal Drawing)



Figure 5.57 Satellite View of Cinnah St.
(Google Earth, November, 2012)



Figure 5.58 Cinnah Street
(Personal Archive, 2012)

A SPINE

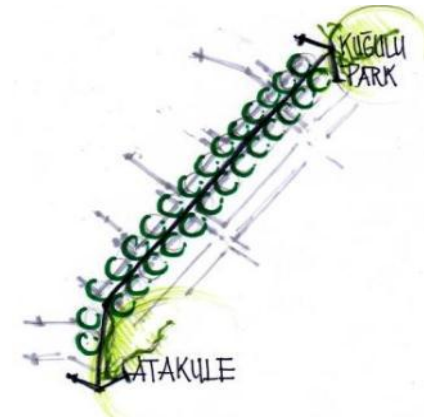


Figure 5.59 Plane Trees and Cinnah St.
(Personal Drawing)

The following two examples are from a relatively different use of street trees. They are transportation routes accompanied by tall and large trees. The first one is in Gökova region and known as “Old Marmaris Road”, also as the “Aşıklar (Lovers) Lane” connecting Gökova to Akçapınar village today. This road is lined with almost 80 years old eucalyptus trees on both sides. The eucalyptus trees were planted to drain the site. Now, this 3 kilometers long road serves as an attraction area for the visitors and is used as a recreational passage by local people (see Figure 5.60-61).

Dutluyol (Mulberry Lane) in Selçuk is also a former road connecting the city of Selçuk to the shore and to Kuşadası. Today, it functions as a pedestrian road next to the new boulevard between Selçuk and Kuşadası. It is 4,5 kilometers long, and the first 1,5 kilometers have been arranged by the municipality for several uses such as walking, sitting and picnicking (see Figure 5.62-63).



Figure 5.60 Satellite View of Gökova
(Google Earth, October, 2012)



Figure 5.61 Lovers (Aşıklar) Lane
(http://wowturkey.com/t.php?p=tr175/dj_dogukan_DSC096111.jpg)



Figure 5.62 Satellite View of Selçuk
(Google Earth, October, 2012)



Figure 5.63 Mulberry Lane (Dutluyol)
(Personal Archive, 2012)

5.4.2.2 City Entrances with Trees

The second affective use of tree rows can be seen at the city entrances. Despite being relatively a rare use of tree lines, the entrances defined by trees are noteworthy for the function and aesthetics they embody. In addition to the city entrances, these trees are used to define distinct entrances to mansions and similar buildings. They indicate the starting point of settlement and create a pleasant movement towards it. The Roman example, which was addressed before, is valuable in this respect since they planted trees to indicate the course of the road when looked from a distance.



**Figure 5.64 Entrance to A
Mention - Güzelyurt**
(Personal Archive, 2012)



**Figure 5.65 Tree-Entrance of
Üzümler**
(Personal Archive, 2012)



**Figure 5.66 Satellite View of
the Entrance**
(Google Earth, October, 2012)

The figures 5.65 and 5.66 show Üzümler village where there is a tree-line road along its entrance. The road is approximately 350 meters long and is favorable for the image it created for the village. The trees identify the place and welcome the villagers and visitors and orient them to the center. Figure 5.67 below shows a section of an entrance to an urban or rural settlement.



Figure 5.67 An Illustration of a City Entrance with Trees
(Personal Drawing)

5.4.2.3 Riverbank Trees

The tree plantation along riverbanks is seen in both urban areas and natural sites. This kind of tree rows is integrated with the natural assets of rivers and creates pleasant recreational areas in cities. Besides, like trees along boulevards, they present the continuity of nature within cities as well. These tree linings are successfully applied along the channels of city of Amsterdam and along the rivers and streams of many other European cities (Figure 5.68- 5.69). Furthermore, tree plantation along the riverbanks can be seen in Turkish cities as well. The importance of this type of tree plantation is striking when compared to a riverside without or ineffective amount of trees. Figure 5.70, for instance, illustrates a part of Asi River / Antakya that is without trees. A river, which is a valuable urban feature for a city, should be emphasized with trees both to create continuity and a natural beauty in cities as in Figure 5.71.



Figure 5.68 Amsterdam Riverside Trees
(Personal Archive, 2009)



Figure 5.69 Paris Riverside Trees
(Personal Archive, 2009)



**Figure 5.70 A Treeless Riverside –
Antakya City Center**
(Personal Archive, 2010)



**Figure 5.71 Source: Trees and Asi River,
Antakya**
(Personal Archive, 2010)

5.4.2.4 Row of Trees as Dividers

Another observation related to tree rows is their role in nature or in cities as curtains, separators and boundaries. Trees are used to divide places. They are lined whether to create privacy or to separate different uses. In cities, these tree rows can be arranged to emphasize different levels of space hierarchy or to distinguish different uses of urban places. In rural areas, on the other hand, this form is used to indicate the boundaries of the property. Fields are being separated by trees (mostly by poplar trees) in order to provide territorial segregation within an indefinite site of nature.



**Figure 5.72 Trees Defining the Space
Differentiation , Bratislava**
(Personal Archive, 2011)



**Figure 5.73 Trees Defining the Space
Differentiation , Stockholm**
(Personal Archive, 2010)

Figure 5.74, 5.75, 5.76 have been taken from different urban places that are divided by the help of trees for different purposes. In the first example (Figure 5.74) trees have located in the middle of a main pedestrian path and close to the library building. Together with the benches provided under them, the trees act as **separators** of different levels of public use. Another prominent use of row of trees in cities is for their ability to **curtain** the privacy of individual. For instance, the trees in the Figure 5.75 create a sort of privacy for the dwellers of the building by preventing the direct visibility from the street. The third illustration (Figure 5.76) expresses a different use of tree-lines. A few trees are **dividing** a pedestrian road and a car park.

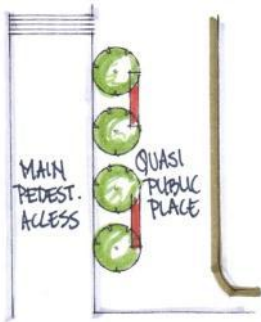


Figure 5.74 Trees as Separators

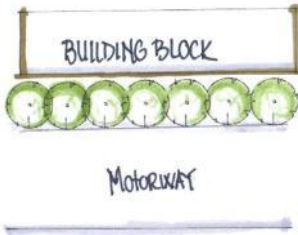


Figure 5.75 Trees as Curtains

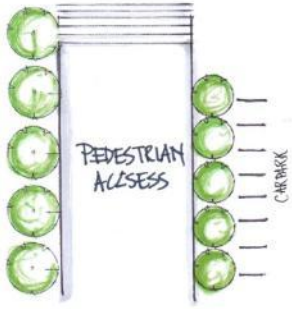


Figure 5.76 Trees as Dividers

(Personal Archive & Drawings)

5.4.3 Group of Trees

When group of trees are considered, this frequently refers to the design of gardens or networks of trees at a macro scale. Landscape architecture is the most relevant spatial design field in this sense. Together with their other uses, the history of trees in cities is closely interconnected with garden designs as well. As the scope of this study is limited to the use of trees as place-making elements, it only focuses on the use of tree groups defining a place, expressing privacy, closure or continuity within a city scale. Therefore, tree groups are divided into three main titles, first of which are the small groups of trees defining an urban place, the second one is the medium size groups that can be exemplified with urban parks or tree corners in cities, and lastly the network of trees that dominate an urban macroform.

5.4.3.1 Small groups

The small group of trees can be described as the countable number of trees that are either randomly or intentionally accumulated and form a small urban place. This grouping of trees, in fact, is a clear illustration for seeing “the tree” as a place-making object. Two or more trees can be brought together or the already existing ones can be rethought in a way to make people pause, rest, chill within urban areas. A few possible arrangements are shown in Figure 5.77.

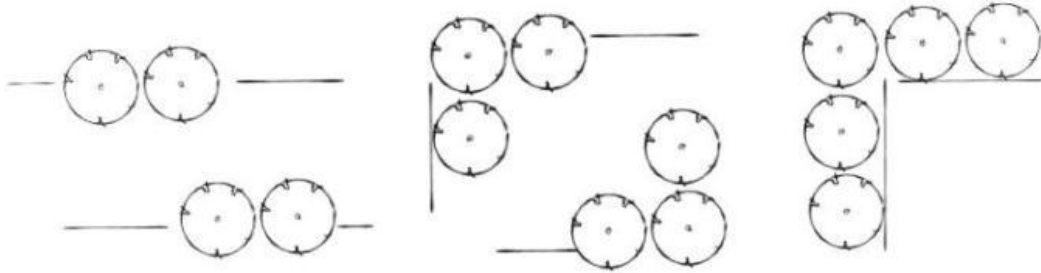


Figure 5.77 Possible Tree-Places of Small Groups
(Personal Drawing)

The pictures and drawings below belong to two small tree-places from the city of Selçuk (Figure 5.78, 5.79) and campus of Middle East Technical University (Figure 5.80, 5.81). The first example presents a tree place that is shaped with two big pine trees at the edge of a car park and it constitutes sort of an urban activity for its users. Figure 5.79 illustrates two old pine trees creating gate. Figure 5.80 shows a small tree-place that has been formed with three small trees within a semi-closed area. Together with the urban furniture such as a lamp, a trash can and benches, the site serves as a semi-public resting place.



Figure 5.78 A Tree-Place with Two Pine Trees, Selçuk
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 5.79 A Tree-Place Forming a Gate
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 5.80 A Tree-Place with Three Trees
(Personal Archive, 2012)

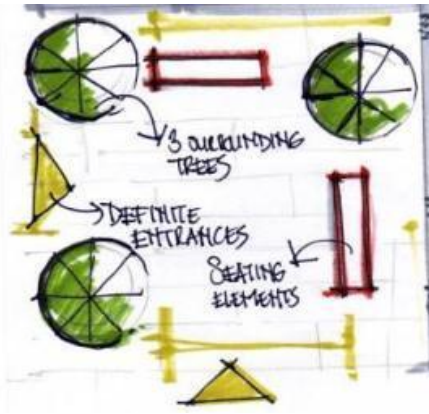


Figure 5.81 Illustration of a Small Tree-Place
(Personal Drawing)

5.4.3.2 Medium Size Groups (Parks & Nodes)

This second group of trees can be illustrated as the nodes or urban parks in cities. The characteristics of these tree places stand between that of a park and an urban feature. In other words, the selection criteria involved the tree groupings which serve to an urban use together with their park or garden characteristics. For instance the Cumhuriyet Square in Tire / İzmir there are several old pine trees. This area is the main gathering area of the locals and visitors, having a tea garden and seating elements (Figure 5.82-5.83). Güvenpark in Ankara, too, is an important section of the city. It is located at the Kızılay where the heart of Ankara is. Güvenpark collects numerous people who are resting, waiting, watching people. The trees of the park provide a calm environment within the chaotic structure of the city center (Figure 5.84-5.85).



Figure 5.82 Cumhuriyet Square defined with Pine Trees - Tire
(Personal Archive, 2012)



Figure 5.83 Satellite View of Cumhuriyet Square
(Google Earth, October,2012)



Figure 5.84 Güvenpark a Node with Trees - Kızılay
(Personal Archive, 2012)

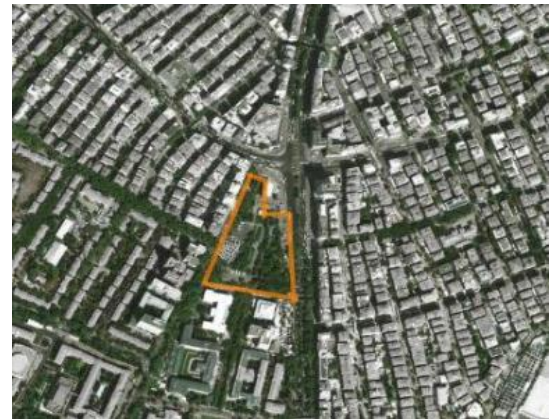


Figure 5.85 Satellite View of Güvenpark
(Google Earth, October,2012)

5.4.3.3 Trees as Networks

Trees can be designed in a way to control the layout of an entire city. In other words, when they are consciously used to create geometry, continuity, coherency within the entire urban layout, trees can define the geometric order of a city. Trees are the elements between surface and space as the buildings in a city. This makes them prominent design tools that are able to link together the parts of an entire city (Arnold 1993, 45). Yet, this certainly requires a comprehensive planning approach. In some cities, trees are very well integrated to the whole city imprinting their existence on the urban macroform. For instance, in Washington and Paris there exists an effective use of trees within the whole urban macroform. In these cities trees have been aligned along main spines of the city and at their intersection points tree groupings are found.



Figure 5.86 Satellite View of Paris
(Google Earth, October,2012)

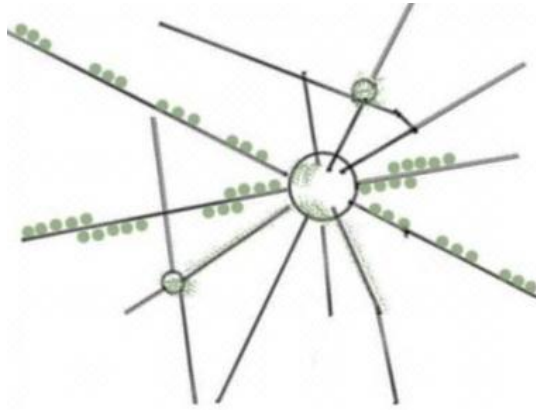


Figure 5.87 Tree Network in Paris
(Personal Drawing)



Figure 5.88 Satellite View of Washington
(Google Earth, October,2012)

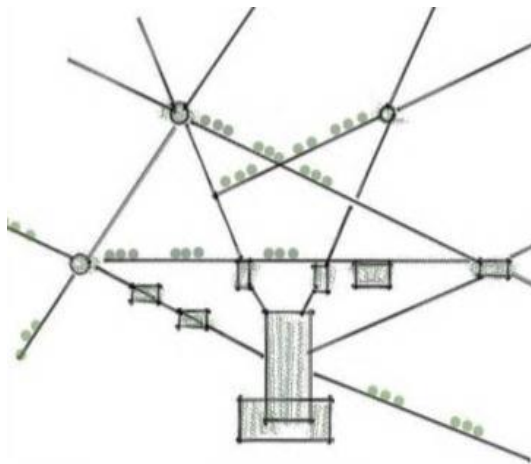


Figure 5.89 Tree Network in Washington
(Personal Drawing)

5.4.4 Trees and Traces

Trees sometimes tell us stories about the places that they are standing. Their solidarity and loneliness on an empty field or lot refer a human touch to the place. This subject may not always directly be related to the existence of trees in cities. What these trees remind us intriguing in the sense of revealing the spirit of that place. That is, tree-traces may refer to an ancient, former settlement or merely to a story about a place. A row of trees in desolated geographies may refer to a former branch of a river, a group of regular trees in cities to an old copse and so on. These examples and the like, tell the symbolic values of trees in geography as well, and create a feeling of wonder and excitement.



Figure 5.90 Satellite View of Göbeklitepe
(Google Earth, October, 2012)



Figure 5.91 Göbeklitepe Excavation Site and the Mulberry Tree
(<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/14170765>)



Figure 5.92 Satellite View of Juniper Trees, Near Salt Lake
(Google Earth, October, 2012)



Figure 5.93 The Juniper Trees on the Hilltop
(<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/48040992>)

An illustration is from Göbeklitepe Excavation near Şanlıurfa, one of the oldest sanctuaries in the world dating back to 12,000 years ago (see Figure 5.90-5.91). The German Archeologist Klaus Schmidt states his first thoughts when he came to the site in 1994 as: “The solitary tree on the highest hill is sacred. I thought we might be onto something”. The Australian Archeologist Sean Thomas also states that: “The link is becoming irresistible: a lost paradise, a forsaken lifestyle, a terrible ‘mistake’, even a solitary tree. Could there really be a connection between Gobekli Tepe and the Garden of Eden story?”

Another example is the ages old Juniper Trees at the hilltop over Salt Lake. This group of trees is standing in the middle of nothingness and embodies a notion of spirit of time and place (see Figure 5.92-5.93). Strikingly, in Anatolia, juniper trees are still believed to be planted by god (Ergun 2004, 225). It is as if god places juniper trees on hilltops to bless it. The closeness of the juniper trees in the example to water make them more significant, since there is a belief that if they are located on a hilltop and near to a water source, juniper trees reach to heaven.

5.5 A Discussion on Tree-Places

Trees in urban place, particularly the tree-places discussed above, are valuable assets in terms of their physical contributions to places as well as positive psychological effects and their potential for evoking deeper emotions in the minds of people. This is to say that, trees are essential elements in urban places, not only for their concrete existence, but also their psychological and spiritual meaning for people and places.

The discussion so far has elaborated on the current use of trees in places with this point of view. Trees have their own places, and they can form places. When explored carefully, there emerge numerous examples that demonstrate importance of trees in both forming places and attaching meaning to them. These deeper meanings –attributed to places because of trees- should be given equal attention as it is done with the spatial qualities of places with trees. The notion of meaning in place, although being a highly abstract concept, can be provided through some tools, such as sounds, smells, and design interventions. Tree comes to the fore as one of them. This chapter has shown that their physical characteristics can evoke spiritual and psychological meanings.

It is crucial to note that, a significant amount of the tree-places are spontaneous formations within an urban setting; or they are landmarks emerged as consequences of urban culture, urban myths or solely of natural processes. It is argued that, these spontaneous formations can give insights to spatial designers, showing the power of trees in creating meaningful places for people. Table 5.1 summarizes the main concepts which have been expressed throughout this chapter in terms of “meaning in places” and “urban design”.

Table 5.1 Concepts of Meaning and Urban Design Achieved by the Use of Trees

Urban Design		Meaning	
Visibility	Orientation	Comfort	Attractiveness
Continuity	Providing Human Scale	Familial	Beauty
Memorability	Soften Edges	Social	Urban Identity
Legibility	Bringing together	Religious	Longevity
Dominancy	Privacy	Mythological	Powerful
Nodes	Boundaries	Spirit of Place	Tranquility
Networks	Separate Uses		
Symbol	Aesthetics		
Uniqueness			

Tree-places can be defined as the places of trees serving for different needs of people together with the supporting urban elements and uses. For instance, townhalls, mosques, tea gardens, commercial activities can be listed as the main activities gathered from the examples. Besides, the natural elements as water, view of mountains and other trees add value to the formation of tree-places. They can form enclosed, continuous, focal, attractive areas to sit, pass, spend time, and be alone, meet people, give a break etc. A single tree can create a small break point in an urban fabric or it can be the holder of a central gathering area. Tree rows, similarly, can form well defined connections between two different urban areas or they can be used to curtain different urban uses. Tree groups or networks, on the other hand, are more dominant use of trees, and thus require an overall design approach in cities. They are quite important to obtain total design control within a city.



Figure 5.94 An Impressive Oak Tree in the Woods
(<http://sptreefarm.com/images/historic-angel-oak-tree.jpg>)



Figure 5.95 A Single Tree in the Middle of Urban Blocks
(Personal Archive, 2011)

In addition, the traces related to tree-places have been introduced as a final concept. They prove timelessness of trees in relation to urban settlements. Within a high density urban fabric (Figure 5.95) or in a forest alone (Figure 5.94), trees are powerful makers of place and markers of memories and time. The two images above show a magnificent and a small tree which are standing on drastically differentiated contexts. Despite these differences they are able to mark their places no matter if they are found in the middle of woodland or a high-dense urban development.

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY RESEARCH: YALVAÇ ÇINARALTI SQUARE

During the previous chapters, trees have been presented as making places in points, lines and groups that provide liveliness and legibility to urban places. It should be noted that in some of the successful cases the tree-places were historically there, and consequent land-use decisions have been developed taking their presence into consideration. In some of the examples, trees were purposefully arranged to define an urban exterior space and offer an activity. As a matter of fact, in some cases tree-places were formed both spontaneously and as a result of a deliberate design processes.

In this sense, a case study research has been conducted to have a closer look at a specific single tree-place, namely; Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square in Yalvaç in the province of Isparta, located in the Central Anatolian region of Turkey. This tree-place serves as a public square and an 800 year-old plane tree which is called Yalvaç Plane stands in the middle. This tree is at the heart of the urban fabric forming a gathering area for the citizens and visitors of Yalvaç. Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square is a particular example which is developed spontaneously throughout the years. That is, the existence of the plane tree had affected the spatial development of the city. People have regarded trees as focal points for years, and yet the intentional design interventions enrich the site's spatial qualities as well. In this sense, this chapter presents the methodological approach to the main research question, how it is evaluated with the case research and the related findings.

6.1 Methodology

This research expresses the need for an inquiry that deals with the role of trees in place making and meaning formation. Another emphasis is to construct a bridge between meaning and design on the basis of existence of trees and their deliberate use in cities. Regarding this, main research question has been posited as “**How tree(s) can be used in urban design in a way to create meaningful and distinctive urban places?**”, intending to find the chain between people, trees and places, and to contribute to the rationalization of further design studies related to tree-places.

The reason why a case study method has been selected in this research is that, it gives a foothold to investigate “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin 1984, 23). As this definition suggests, the meaning of a tree-place for its users can be better understood in its real-life context, where face-to-face interviews can be conducted, and the behavior of the users can be directly observed. The upcoming sections will present a detailed approach to the research process of to the case study technique, data collection and analysis approaches and later on the study undertaken in Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square, the research findings and final inferences.

6.2 Research Design

Several academic fields come into the picture while constructing the theoretical framework, although the point of departure for this research has mostly been on the studies of urban design. Relying on the findings of this variety, literature review has clarified the diversity and complexity of the subject of meaning, elaborated social, spatial, cultural and psychological contexts related to the relationship between meaning, trees and urban places. During this, four hypotheses have been constructed to investigate through this case study in accordance with the main concerns of the research which are:

-The relationships between people and trees have direct or indirect impacts on the location and spatial organization of a tree-place.

-Tree-places act as semi-public or public places that offer various activity choices and motives.

-Tree-places carry the characteristics for its users to associate meanings and to develop a place identity, place attachment and the notion of sense of place.

-There exist a profound relationship between people and trees that is shaped throughout history and experiences.

Four sub-questions about how trees affect people and places in urban areas are formulated accordingly. They are to analyze the role of trees in an urban place in three ways: meaning, activity and form -the three essential components of urban place-. These questions intend to have a grasp of how trees define urban **activities** and spatial **forms** and in what ways trees add **meaning** to places and in turn to people. The table below shows the sub-questions, related research approach, data collection techniques and data analysis:

Table 6.1 Research Design

Sub-questions	Type of Research	Data Collection	Data Analysis
What are spatial qualities of Çınaraltı Square within the urban fabric of Yalvaç?	Exploratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Municipal Archives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawings
What do the users of the Çınaraltı Square do with respect to the presence of the plane tree?	Exploratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Ended Questionnaire • Municipal Archives • Observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Analysis • Direct Quotations • Mapping/Drawings
What do the users of square perceive about the contribution of plane to the formation of meaning in place?	Exploratory	Open Ended Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classifications by using Quotations
What are the constituents of meanings that people assign to trees of common urban places?	Exploratory	Open Ended Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Analysis • Direct Quotations

The research design given above displays the methodological approach to the case study and the sub-questions it seeks to analyze. This table shows that an interpretive research approach chosen with respect to the nature of subject. Since, this approach tries “to understand the phenomena through accessing the meanings that participant assign to them” (Rowlands 2005, 81-84). The meaning of trees, its impacts on people and places are to be analyzed by exploring subjective views of the users of the site, which have developed within the specific historical and social context. In this sense, the type of research applied to the matter of case research is the exploratory perspective aiming to discover how people experience the setting (tree-place) and what meanings are embedded in their actions.

6.2.1 Variables

The literature research displayed three major categories of *meaning*, *activity* and *form* to investigate the concept of a tree-place. Yet, for this case study research *meaning* and *activity* notions are to be used by keeping the outcomes of the previous literature study. Furthermore, the *form* of place will be studied particularly with an analysis of the spatial organization of the place. The two categories of meaning and activity have been analyzed via certain variables. The variables of meaning have been extracted from the literature that is previously cited in the Table 4.1 within the fourth chapter; whereas the activity variables have been personally recommended and the open-ended questions shaped accordingly. The main attributes of concern and their variables can be seen below.

Table 6.2 Variables

Categories	Attributes	Variables
Meaning Category	Meaning in Place (with respect to th existence)	Sense of Place Place Identity Place Attachment
	Meaning of Trees for People	Utility <i>Environmental, Aesthetic, Economic</i> Design Element <i>Spatial Quality, Aesthetics, Distinct Places</i> Sensory Object <i>Feeling Stimulator, Social Binder, Healer</i> Symbol <i>Spiritual- Cosmological, Religious, Mythological, Symbol of People</i>
		Bridge to Human Identity <i>Tree as a “self”</i>
Activity Category	Activities of Users (in and around Tree-Place)	Activity Types Motives fore Visits Frequency of Visits

6.2.2 Respondents

The case study aimed to integrate respondents from different age groups, genders and occupations to the research process to minimize biases that could have caused by the dominance of a specific group. Hence, the respondents contributed to the research carried out in the Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square represent the inhabitants of Yalvaç city from different age groups, occupations and genders. However, it was almost impossible to come across local women using the Çınaraltı Square. The same problem is valid for the younger population as well. The limitation for this arises from the local culture and sociologic structure of Yalvaç city. It is a conservative city that is profoundly bounded to its religious, historical and folkloric values. Moreover, it should be noted that women in Turkish cities gathered in front of neighborhood fountains in the past. Hence, we can say that, the Çınaraltı Squares were for the men to gather and spend time, whereas fountains were the public places for women to socialize which may be affecting today’s situation.

The method of random sampling was applied in choosing the respondents. Meaning that, the respondents were selected randomly from the users of Çınaraltı Square. To collect reliable data, the interviews were conducted within the actual setting which lies under the tremendous branches of Yalvaç Plane Tree. Twenty-two participants were asked about their perception of the plane tree, the meanings they attached to it, and their activities in the tree-place. So as to provide gender equality in the case study research, the very vicinity of Çınaraltı Square was chosen to speak with local women, as they barely use the square itself.

Among the respondents, the highest participation rate is seen in the 25-45 age group (41%). Following this, the elderly population (65+) has the second highest rate with 32%, and the middle-aged (45-65) population has the lowest participation rate of 23%. Among the respondents, I had a chance to talk with five women (from the age groups of 25-45, 45-65) which later constituted the 23% of the overall participation. The table 6.3 shows the gender and age profile of the participants

Table 6.3 Distribution of the Respondents

Age Group	Gender	Number of Participants
25-45	Male	5
	Female	4
	Total	9 (41%)
45-65	Male	5
	Female	1
	Total	6 (27%)
65 +	Male	7
	Female	-
	Total	7 (32%)
Total	Male	17 (77%)
	Female	5 (23%)
	Total	22

Most of the respondents were living within 500-1000 meters distance to the research area. However, there were six respondents living away from Yalvaç city and were there to spend their summer holidays. When the occupations of the respondents are analyzed, the majority of them were retired (26%) people. The self-employed and educational professions share the same ratio with five respondents for each (23%). The rest of the population is composed of public officials (9%) and housewives (%9). The table below presents the number and ratio of respondents from different occupational activities:

Table 6.4 Occupations of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Ratio
Retired	6	26%
Self-Employed	5	23%
Educational Professions	5	23%
Public Official	2	9%
Housewife	2	9%
Total	22	100%

5.1.1.3. Data Collection

This research uses in-depth interviews, direct observations and archival records as main data collection techniques. Due to the former researches and pre-observations, in depth interviewing technique was applied to 22 respondents in the actual setting of research. Open-ended questions are formulated to grasp the participants' profound thoughts related to the subject. Considering that it has not been investigated before in the context of Turkey, the main goal was to reveal the construction of the meaning of Çınaraltı Square and the plane tree itself. Additionally, to support this, non-verbal data has also been gathered. To do that, on-site observations have been systematically conducted, and the archival records have been reviewed. Within this context, I reported and mapped out the general organization of the site, the users' behaviors in it, their route choices and the time spent. Furthermore, I specifically mapped the activity and behavioral patterns in and around where the tree is located. Archival data, on the other hand, were gathered from the municipality, which included maps, old and new photographs of the site and the documents written about the site.



Figure 6.1 On-site Interviewing Process

The open ended questions focus on the individual plane tree and the space it produced (the tree-place), aiming to understand how participants uses the space and how and through which channels they related themselves there. These questions can be grouped under three main sections: The first section introduces the subject to the participants through four introductory questions. Second section includes two questions that aim to discover main activities going on in the setting. The last section focuses on the concept of meaning by directing deeper questions about the tree and its place, trying to gather genuine emotions from the participants.

Table 6.5 Concepts and Related Interview Questions

Sections	Questions
INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS about the Place and Tree	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main reasons for you to come to Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square? 2. Can you please describe this place? 3. What do you feel when you come here? 4. What do you see around you that triggers these emotions?
ACTIVITY in the PLACE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How do you use this square? How often? Which characteristics of the square determine how you use it?
MEANING of TREE AND THE PLACE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What feelings does this plane tree evoke in you? 7. How would you describe the plane tree with your own words? 8. What does this plane tree mean to you? 9. What would happen if the plane tree were not be here? What kind of a place would this square be? How would you feel? 10. Do you have any special memories about the plane tree on the Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square?

6.2.3 Data Analysis

This research undertakes content analysis, descriptive quotations and activity mapping to analyze the data collected through in-depth interviews, archival data and direct observation during the field study. To analyze the verbal data obtained through in-depth interviews of 22 users of Çınaraltı Square, I applied content analysis technique and used descriptive quotations to support the analytical findings. That is, the keywords mentioned during the interviews are categorized to see their frequency of mentions. This technique is particularly helpful to analyze the layers of meaning of tree and tree-place.

In addition to the content analysis, the observational data gathered during the field study were used to determine the activity and behavioral patterns of the users. A selective observation of meetings, social interactions, sidewalk activities and route choices of users around the tree-place has been applied and mapped as well.

As far as the analysis of archival data is concerned, the maps of the site, old and new photographs of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square used to understand the spatial history of the site. At the same time, they have helped me to acquire the changes throughout the history of city. In short, what techniques have been utilized to elaborate each of these components can be listed as:

Form: Spatial Mapping, Descriptive Quotations, Sequencing of Visual Data

Activity: Content Analysis, Descriptive Quotations, Activity Mapping

Meaning (socially constructed meaning of the Tree-place and the Plane tree): Content Analysis, Descriptive Quotations

6.3 The Setting and Research Findings

Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square is evolved as a public place around a plane tree. Main reason for selecting this site lies in its unique urban characteristics which are strongly related to the existence of a tree. Noticeably, there are many similar case areas in Turkish cities where an old tree provides an urban function and acts as a heart of that area. Yet, what makes the Yalvaç case special is its scale. In other words, Yalvaç is a rare example, having over 20.000 people population and a relatively dense urban fabric but still preserving a significant and lively urban square which is identified by a single tree. In most of the similar situations the size of the settlement is either too small or this section of a city remains too peculiar to the overall scale. Together with the scale, the social and historical contexts of the site are the secondary yet essential reasons for selecting the Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square, as explained in the following sections.

6.3.1 The Spatial History of Site

Yalvaç resides at the northeast part of city of Isparta. Its history dates back to the pre-historic times. The first settled on the region is Antioch in Psidia of the Hellenistic period in the written history (the 3rd century BC) (Karaman 1991, 16-17). During Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, Yalvaç region continued to play a significant role as a trade, defense, religion and transportation center.

When Turkish empery begun during the 11th century AD, Yalvaç and its surroundings were the defensive areas for Crusades against Seljuk attacks, and yet Yalvaç had been conquered in 12th century BC by the Seljuk Empire. From this date onwards, Yalvaç (named after a Turkish warlord meaning herald, prophet and messenger) has become a Turkish settlement, and has been governed as a municipality since 1864.



Figure 6.2 The City of Yalvaç
(Google Earth, November 2012)



Figure 6.3 The Çınaraltı Square and Its Close Vicinity
(Google Earth, November 2012)

Today, the city of Yalvaç has a population of nearly 20.000 people living within the city center. Together with its villages, its population reaches to 52.000 people. Tourism comes to the fore as an important sector for the historical and cultural richness of the geography. Namely, Psidia Ancient City, Men Sacred Site, Limnai Island, Rock Graves, Mosques, Hammams and the Çınaraltı Square can be listed as some outstanding cultural beings.



Figure 6.4 Psidia Antiochia
(Surup Dergisi, Ekim 2011 sayı:7)



Figure 6.5 Settlement Plan of Antioch
(Kunter et al., 2006)

Moreover, there are particular characteristics of Yalvaç. For instance, it has recently been selected as one of the slow cities in the world. The “Citta slow” certificate will contribute the tourism activities within the city. The value of Yalvaç Plane and its square, in this sense, will be promoted as well. Another significant point is the emblem of city (Figure 6.6). The leaf of the plane tree in the middle demonstrates the importance given to the existence of Yalvaç Plane and its unique value to for the identity of the city.



Figure 6.6 The Emblem of Yalvaç
(<http://www.yalvac.bel.tr/index.php?p=42&l=2>)

6.3.2 The History of Tree / Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square

Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square is one of the most attractive urban areas in the city of Yalvaç. It stands out as a distinctive and lively urban area both for local people and visitors. This place is surrounded by a variety of commercial uses such as coffee houses, hairdressers and restaurants. Relying on my observations as a researcher and an urban planner, I can argue that Yalvaç Çınaraltı square has an impressive characteristic that makes the site more peculiar than others: Yalvaç Plane. This 800 year old-plane tree dominates this public square with its 25 meters height and 3.2 meters diameter. It embraces the whole square with its magnificent branches of 8 to 16 meters length.



Figure 6.7 The Panoramic View of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square
(Personal Archive, 2012)

The history of the site and tree is not clear in the current sources. However, an interview conducted with the mayor of Yalvaç city, Mr. Tekin Bayram, has revealed some clues regarding the historical background of the square. The mayor states that, history of the plane tree dates back to the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176. During this war, army of the Crusades had been defeated near Yalvaç region and Turkish empery had proven its dominancy in the Anatolian region once again under the leadership of Kılıçarslan the Second. It is believed that Kılıçarslan's brother and Emir Ahmet came near to the Yalvaç city, and Yalvaç plane tree had been planted as a sign of victory at the beginning of the 13th century A.D. The Devlethan Mosque near the plane tree was built in the 14th century in the name of the brother of Kılıçarslan the Second. According to the mayor, the Seljuk Bath, mosque and plane tree all in close vicinity give clues regarding the settlement pattern in Seljuk period.

The old pictures of the site, written documents and interviews prove that the plane and its surroundings have always been a focal area throughout the urban development history of Yalvaç. Culture of the city has been kneaded over centuries together with plane tree and the place it produced. There are numerous verses, poems, folk songs all referring to the plan, one if which is stated above and it tells the conquest of the region by Turks with a reference to the existence of the plane tree:

“Esrimişti bir kere çınar,
Büyük muştular yürümekteydi
Elceğiz yapraklarına;
Biraz ilerisinde
Kurulan görkemli otağında
Dikilmiş bekliyordu, İkinci Kılıçarslan.”

(Yusuf Büyükboyacı, *Ulu Çınarın Türküsü*)

Since this monumental plane tree has been a key feature within the urban fabric for 800 years, the spatial organization around the tree surrounding deserves a closer look. It should be noted that, there is not adequate information regarding the former situations of Çınaraltı Square. I have conceptualized the former urban characteristics of the site (pre-1990s) in sketches with reference to some old pictures, interviews with mayor and local people. Based on the data collected from narrators and old pictures, the area seems to have served for gathering and functioned as a marker of the mosque. Even back then, there were tables and other sitting elements which oriented local people and visitors to gather around the plane tree.

The Mayor explains that before the 1990s the site was already acting as the heart of Yalvaç, together with the sitting elements and socio-cultural activities (e.g. call and response duets, festivals, a cinema called ‘Çınar Sineması’ etc.). Plane tree was located at a corner of a paved street and a road was passing right beside it. Older interviewees added that there was a stream on the other side of Yalvaç plane. People would drink water from a well that was fed by this stream. Briefly, Yalvaç Çınaraltı has always been the very public place that gathers people together, makes it possible to share thoughts, entertains local people, and welcomes visitors for many years. The spatial organization of the square before 1990s has been illustrated by taking the old pictures and statements of the participants into account (Figure 6.8).

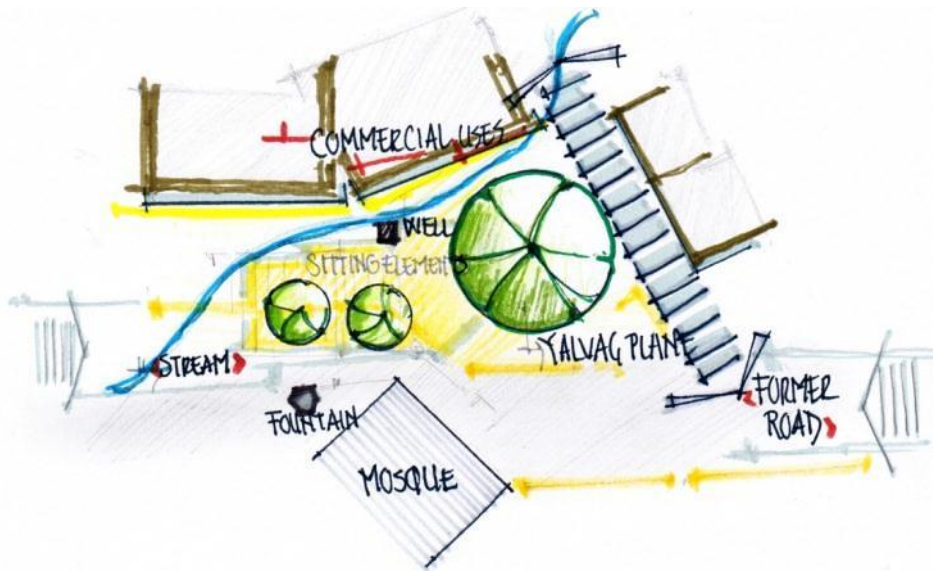


Figure 6.8 The Square Before the 1990s
(drawn by the author with respect to interviews and old pictures)

Today, Yalvaç Çınaraltı square dominates a significant urban area after some design arrangements held on site. There are 13 coffee shops, one hair dresser and two restaurants around the tree. Also, former road was canceled and added to the place. The surface of the square was differentiated than the surrounding area to indicate the “tree’s place”. There are two ottoman bazaars (arasta) which are ironsmith and shoemaker bazaars opening up to the square. Devlethan Mosque, the Mausoleum of Emir Ahmet can be listed as the important religious and architectural values near Çınaraltı.

The pictures below illustrate the changes that the square experienced along almost 100 years and the spirit of place within these years. People, buildings and the tables have changed, yet the plane tree still embraces the site with its 800 year old existence.



Figure 6.9 Çınaraltı Square in 1924
(Yalvaç Municipality Archive)



Figure 6.10 Çınaraltı Square in 1946
(Yalvaç Municipality Archive)



Figure 6.11 Çınaraltı Square in 1951
(Yalvaç Municipality Archive)



Figure 6.12 Çınaraltı Square in late 90s
(Yalvaç Municipality Archive)



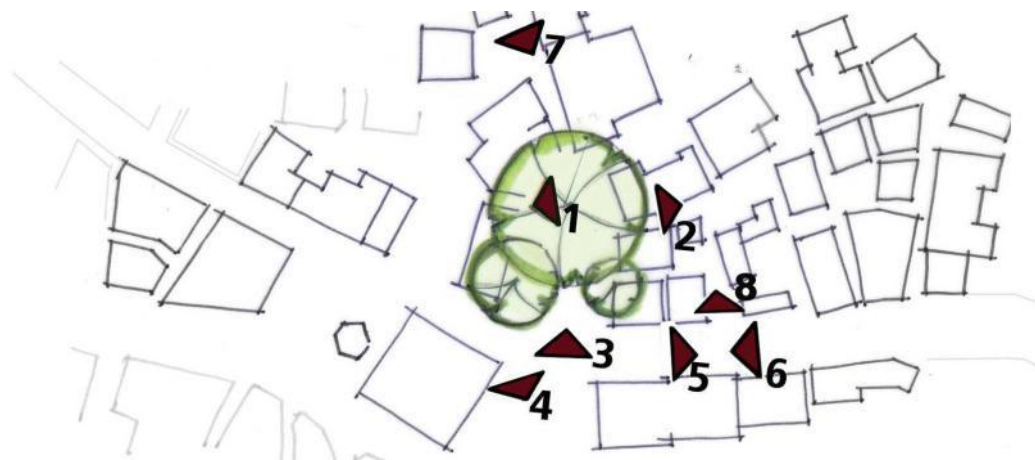
Figure 6.13 Çınaraltı Square in 2005
(Yalvaç Municipality Archive)



Figure 6.14 Çınaraltı Square in 2012
(Personal Archive)

The commercial activities control the place surrounding the tree, namely, coffee shops, hairdressers, small shops and restaurants. As far as the spatial linkages are concerned, Ottoman bazaars, Devlethan Mosque and its fountain are in a close relationship with the tree-place. Especially “Democracy Square” (a place mentioned by the Mayor, which actually is a side yard of the mosque with sitting elements at the opposite side of the Çınaraltı Square) serves together with the Çınaraltı Square, yet mostly used by the local women. Other notable urban uses are the City Hall, the Anlatan (Telling) Square, and the monumental tree at the junction. They constitute an entrance point to the main spine of the city of Yalvaç which includes the mosque and Yalvaç Plane.

Yalvaç Plane was listed as a monumental tree by the Antalya Conservation Council in 1992 for its historical, physical and cultural characteristics. With the spatial arrangements on site, it has turned out to be a powerful public place today. In order to have a detailed grasp of what is going on around the Çınaraltı Square the Figure 6.15 has been developed. It shows the view points on the map and the related pictures taken on the site.



The corner Building (1)



Entrance to Bazaar(2)



The Setting (3)



Democracy Square (4)



Main Street (5)



Main Street (6)



A Secondary Street (7)



Ottoman Bazaars (8)

Figure 6.15 The Views from the Surroundings of the Setting
(Personal Drawing & Archive, 2012)

6.3.3 Research Findings

To better display the significance of trees for places and the deep relationship between trees and man, the research findings are categorized under three main headings as:

- Form
- Activity
- Meaning

These three main components of the concept of place have been chosen to analyze the findings related to tree-place. Starting from the *form* of the tree-place an investigation related to the *activities* on the site, the *meaning* of the site and the tree has been carried out. This categorization and the variables are display in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Categorization of Research Findings

Form	Activity	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial Organization of Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Types • Motives for Visits • Frequency of Visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning in/of Place Sense of Place Place Identity Place Attachment • Meaning of Trees (Utility / Design Element / Sensory / Symbol / Bridge to 'self')

6.3.3.1 Form

The Yalvaç Plane dominates a substantial place within the urban fabric of Yalvaç. Even the best pictures from the site may not explain well enough the impressiveness of the tree and the place under its tremendous branches. The plane tree shows itself in the middle of the urban macroform and main transportation lines of the city of Yalvaç even from the satellite images. The tree says: "I'm here."

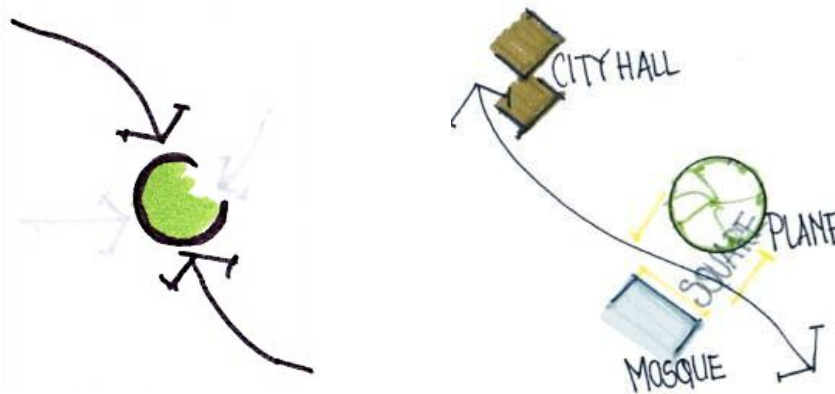


Figure 6.16 Yalvaç Plane in the City
(Personal Drawings)

While in Yalvaç, one can easily distinguish the crown of the plane even from a considerable distance. As can be seen from the drawings above, the tree-place is a nodal place. It stands like a natural landmark calling people towards it. There are public buildings such as the town hall, district hall and the city museum, as well as a recently built square namely “Yalvaç’ı Anlatan Meydan” (Telling Square) along the main spine towards the tree-place. As getting closer to the Yalvaç Plane, another monumental plane tree greets the eye at an intersection point of the main roads. It is as if this tree gets you prepared for the Yalvaç Plane in the middle of the spine.

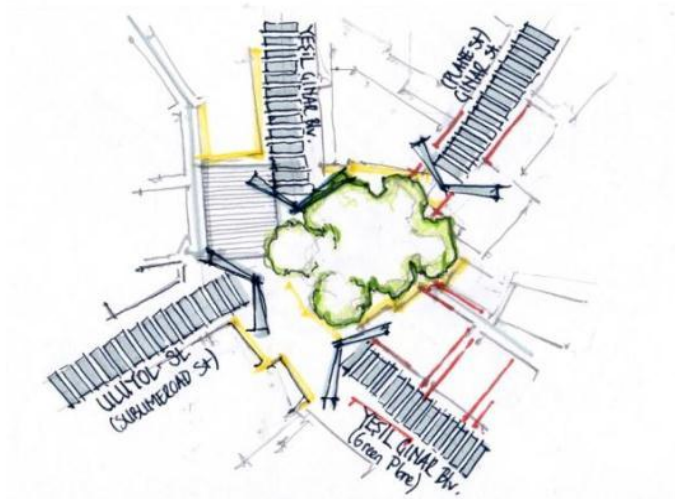


Figure 6.17 The Streets and Boulevard around the Çınaraltı Square
(Personal Drawing)

The roads that can take people near to the Çınaraltı Square are also remarkable. Figure 6.17 illustrates another impact of plane tree on the spatial perception. The names of the main streets give reference to the plane tree’s existence. For instance, the name of the road that was previously pointed out as the spine is “Yeşil Çınar Bulvarı (Green Plane Boulevard)”, the names of the other two main streets are “Çınar Sokağı (Plane Street)” and “Uluyol Sokağı (Sublimeroad Street)”. Even this example of street names indicates the gentle yet profound acceptance of the plane tree as an integral part of the city.

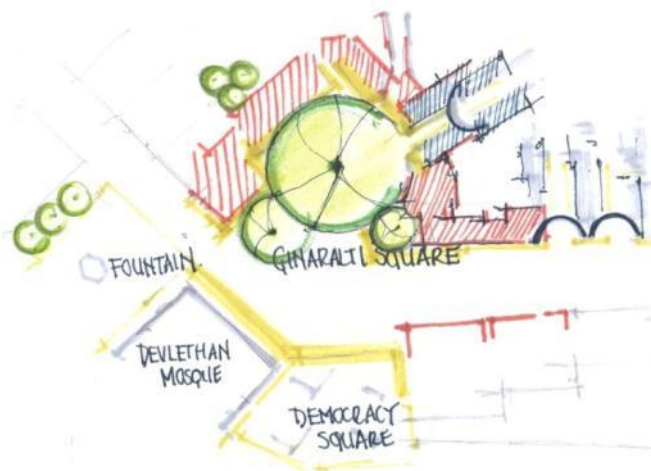


Figure 6.18 Close Vicinity of the Çınaraltı Square
(Personal Drawing)

Although one is walking towards the plane tree with an awareness of its majesty, the first meeting should be very impressive. The width of the square is narrower than the foliage of the tree. The branches hang over the roofs of surrounding buildings. There are so many people taking advantage of the shade of the tree, sitting in the cool area during a hot summer day. At the opposite of the square stands a face-stone coated Seljuk mosque and a fountain (şadırvan) next to it, both completing the definition of a square of Turkish settlements; a fountain, a mosque and a plane tree.



Figure 6.19The Spatial Story of the Çınaraltı Square
(Personal Drawing)

Figure 6.19 is an outcome of an observation process held on site. It is a fact that the tree affects you so much and for a certain amount of time, it is solely the existence of the plane and its majesty that you can focus on. Yet, after spending time within the site you can experience the users' activities, route choices, the overall organization of commercial uses and the main spatial structure. This sketch shows these features without going into detail. To briefly explain, the "Green Plane Boulevard" passes in front of the square and the tree-place connects to it with a sidewalk where several benches were positioned. There are seven entrances to the site, yet only three of them are being used frequently. There is a platform for wheelchairs and bicycles near the boulevard as well. One of the secondary entrances has been arranged to imitate the former Ottoman Bazaars near the square. The Devlethan Mosque stands at the opposite corner of the square and there is a "Democracy Square" near it for which Mayor of the city said that it is designed for the local women who thinks that the Çınaraltı Square is generally for the men.

The coffee shops are enclosing the site from three corners. The tables of these shops are dispersed to the whole place and the tables are being differentiated according to the colors of the tablecloths, by this way "the waiters know to whom to service" states a respondent. Towards the square there are several shops and restaurants along the boulevard as well.

Briefly, the form of the place can be defined as an enclosed urban place which is surrounded by coffee shops and serving to the local people of Yalvaç and visitors. The plane tree dominates the whole site with its majesty and with the super-long and wide branches. A respondent describes the site as:

"Here is a beautiful, central place. The square of Yalvaç."

Retired, M

6.3.3.2 Activity

There are 13 coffee shops, a hairdresser, two restaurants and a former cinema (now vacant) within the square, which serve to local people and provide a meeting place. During the field research, there were a lot of people present in the case area. However, the local women do not seem to frequently use the Çınaraltı Square as far as my personal observations and some respondents' declarations are concerned. Only some high-educated female visitors were spending time in the site. There were some local women, as well, who came together with their families, but preferring to sit at the very edge of the site.

To understand the activity patterns within the area, the participants were asked to explain how they use the square and how often. Moreover, an activity map has been produced according to the observations made on site. The answers reveal that people come to the square mostly to meet their friends and relatives, to chat and spend time with them.

Firstly, the respondents tend to explain their activities on the site firstly stating by the **activity types** (62.2%) as meeting, chatting, spending time and so on, then with the **motives** (30.4%) that make them prefer to conduct that activity in this place as the existence of friends, relatives, coffee shops; and finally by mentioning about their **frequency of visits** (7.4%). The contents of these three groups and the frequency of mentions are illustrated in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 shows that the users of the place preferred to state mostly the types of activities they perform on the site. The variety of these activity types (meeting, resting, observing etc.) justifies the public quality. Besides, the respondents who chose to indicate the frequency of visits stated that they go to this place every possible time they have. These findings, in a way, validate that the local people and the visitors use the place of Yalvaç Plane constantly for various reasons. Çınaraltı square can be defined as a main public place of the city with the activity types it provides and the users' preferences over the appreciation of the site continuously for many reasons.

Table 6.7 Frequency of Mentions of the Perceived Contents Related to Activity

Content Groups	Contents	Frequency of Mentions	Freq. Of Mentions in Total	Ratio %
Activity Types	Meeting	14	84	62.2 %
	Chatting	14		
	spending (good) time	13		
	drinking tea-coffee	12		
	coming together (with friends)	9		
	Resting	8		
	Socializing	7		
	discussing politics	4		
	Observing	1		
	determining things to do	1		
welcoming guests	1			
Motives	Friends	27	41	30.4%
	Relatives	4		
	coolness (plane)	3		
	coffee-shops / sitting places	5		
	beautiful / well-known place	2		
Frequency of Visits	every possible occasion	5	10	7.4%
	every season, regularly	3		
	from time to time	2		
Total			135	100%

As a second finding, an activity map has been produced after observing the site during the research process. As can be seen in Figure 6.20, most of the users that are sitting and chatting with their friends seem to prefer inner parts of the place that are close to the trunk of the plane. The most hidden corner of the place has been preferred by crowded male groups. The parts which are close to the main road have slightly being used by women who were observing the site or chatting with someone. Additionally, the red lines on the sketch indicate the main movement lines.

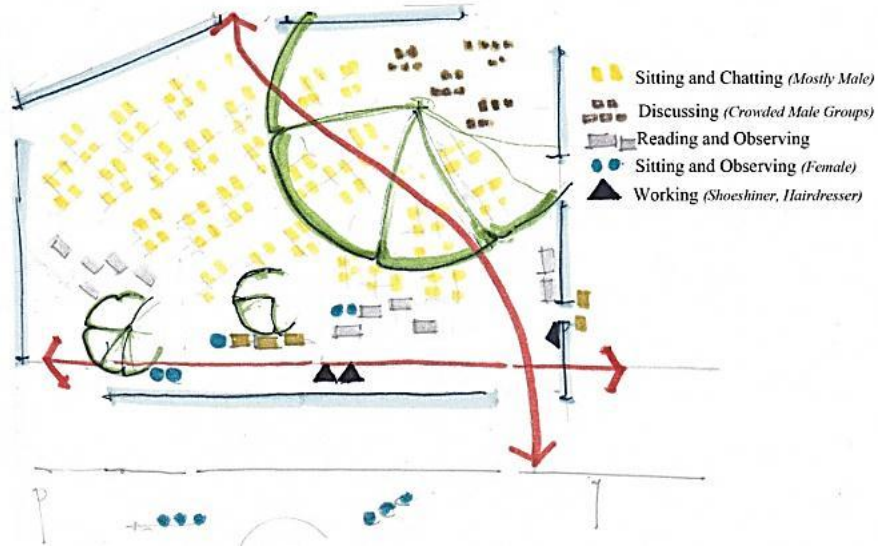


Figure 6.20 Activity Map for the Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square
(Personal Drawing)

In addition to the data acquired from activity-related questions, some respondents state specific activities that are identified with square while talking about their memories related to site. Furthermore, there arise three noteworthy activities going on in the tree-place, namely: local bazaar, festivals and funerals.

Local Bazaar:

The local bazaar is set around the tree-place. This should be counted as an important local activity since people from surrounding villages come to this bazaar besides the own inhabitants of the city. It is noteworthy to mention that before people go to the bazaar, they gather in and around the Çınaraltı Square, and listen to the prayers announced from the mosque nearby.

“Yalvaç is a religious town, and every Monday, which is the “bazaar” day for the town, some prayers are spoken through the speakers around Çınaraltı, and then you start shopping.” *Self-employed, Male*

Festivals and Other Leisure Activities:

A city-wide festival named “Yalvaç Psidia Antiokheia Culture, Tourism and Art Festival” has been organized every July for twelve years. The Çınaraltı Square serves as the festival ground. Local and foreign folk dance groups perform their activities under the plane tree. Other activities such as, theaters, concerts, handicraft sales and so on are the other activities going on near the Çınaraltı Square. The Mayor states that, in the past, there used to be call and response duets (atışma) among local singers (ozan) which can also be considered as a leisure activity.

Funerals:

Before the funeral ceremonies, the community gathers under the Çınaraltı Square. It is also because of the closeness to the mosque of “Devlethan” and opportunities for sitting and waiting.

6.3.3.3 Meaning

The meaning concept will be analyzed under two main topics, one of which is related to the place of Yalvaç Plane, and the second one is about the meaning patterns of the participants that are attributed directly to the plane tree. This separation is necessary to understand the depth of the meanings associated with a tree since it is going to be the first and a stimulating initial step on the related subject for a Turkish city.

6.3.3.3.1 The Meaning of Tree-Place

To be able to grasp the significance of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square, the interview findings are grouped under six content groups -aesthetics, spatial, historical, sensuous dimensions, nature and belonging-. They specify that people express themselves mostly by stating a **sensation** (peace, comfort, calmness, serenity, relief, etc.), a notion of belonging (feeling like home, belonging here, etc.), a **spatial** assessment (centrality, meeting point, intersection, etc.), a **natural** characteristic (green, climatic comfort, natural, etc.), a **historical** association (history, past, old, etc.) and an **aesthetic** relation (beautiful, interesting, etc.). Table 6.8 shows some expressions from the users of the square.

Table 6.8 Content Groups Related to the Meaning Attribute of the Tree-place

	Content Groups	Phrases from Respondents
1	Aesthetics	“This is a beautiful place.”
2	Spatial	“Here is the center of Yalvaç. You can see/find everyone here.”
3	Historical	“This place tells the history.”
4	Sensuous Dimension	“I find peace here. You get rid of all the sadness and concerns.”
5	Nature	“Here is green and natural.”
6	Belonging	“You feel like you are home.”

Among the content groups provided in Table 6.8, the sense-related statements hold the highest ratio of 63%. That is, people tend to describe the significance of the tree-place via their emotions. The notion of belonging follows it with a ratio of 10%. While the space-related explanations hold a ratio of 8,5% among the respondents, nature-related ones are 7,5%. The least mentions are historical (5,7%) and aesthetic(4,9%) characteristics of the tree-place (Table 6.9) . Briefly, the users of Çınaraltı plane have strong sentimental bounds towards the area as they mostly express themselves using the words such as ‘peaceful’, ‘comfortable’, ‘calm’ ‘happy’. Another significant point is that the respondents emphasize their feelings of safety and belonging frequently. Existence of familiar faces and the long stability of the site seem to make Yalvaç people feel themselves connected to the place. Çınaraltı Square, therefore, is a meaningful site for its users which contains prospering natural, historical and aesthetic characteristics.

Table 6.9 Frequency of Mentions of the Perceived Contents Related to Meaning of Tree-Place

Content Groups	Contents	Frequency of Mentions	Total Freq. of Mentions	Ratio %
1 Sensuous Dimension	Comfort	12	67	63%
	Coolness	9		
	Crowd	8		
	Peace	7		
	Familiar faces	6		
	Calmness	4		
	Getting rid of stress	3		
	Reminds past	3		
	Serene	3		
	Safe	2		
	Relief	1		
	Proud	1		
	Happy	1		
2 Belonging	Familiar faces	6	11	10,4%
	Hometown	2		
	Everyone is connected	2		
	Belongs to Yalvaç	1		
3 Spatial	Centre / central Square of Yalvaç	5	9	8,5%
	Being close to public buildings	1		
	Quite big	1		
	Interaction point	1		
		1		
4 Nature	Being green and natural	4	8	7,5%
	Coolness	2		
	A beautiful nature	2		
5 Historical	Represents history	3	6	5,7%
	Old place	1		
	Has a spirit	1		
	Different history	1		
6 Aesthetics	Beautiful	3	5	4,9%
	Different	1		
	Interesting	1		
Total			106	100%

The following quotations from the interviews present respondents' definition of the place and their deeper feelings towards it:

“I see old people, young people, and close friends all together here. There are grandfathers and grandsons sitting together. Sometimes you can see three generations side by side. You meet your past here, you feel comfortable and peaceful when you experience this diversification; it becomes a family place. When you come here no one look at you negatively, you feel like you are home, you are safe and peaceful.” *Housewife, F*

“Because all friends come together here, things to do are decided here. This place is a meeting place for us.” *Self-Employed, M*

“It is so big and old that I say to myself: If this tree deserved to grow this much, then there must be something important going around it.” *Teacher, M*

“I like being together with other people here. It is very important and nice to see that people are connected, not separated. If it is not for this place, all people would scatter around.” *Self-Employed, M*

The findings of the content analysis (see Table 6.9) and the direct quotations make it possible to move on to the components of meaning. That is, the meaning dimension of the tree-place can be studied in terms of sense of place, place attachment and place identity.

Sense of place:

Yalvaç inhabitants seem to have developed deeper attachments with the Çınaraltı Square that go beyond what place means solely in physical terms. Within this perspective, it is necessary to talk about the notion of sense of place that has been introduced in the first chapter as a feeling, an attachment to the spirit of place which is aroused by the meanings that evoke in people’s mind about a place.

Local people start talking about the functional or spatial characteristics of the place; but after a while, they tend to express their feelings towards the tree’s place. It is clear from the interviews that the Çınaraltı place has produced and is still producing profound meanings for local people which in turn make them attached, remember the ‘past’ and associate ‘profound’ feelings towards it. Some quotations can be exemplified as:

“As a child, I was running around here, I remember coming here with my grandfather who is gone now... We had never sit properly in our seats, we spent time playing, running around. Since then, as you see, the tree is here, I’m still here.” *Worker, M*

“It’s a different place; it has a spirit I think. Most probably the tree’s impact, but also the crowd, the Coolness creates a different environment.” *Educational Profession, F*

“This place is the soul of Yalvaç, the soul of a city. Also, in here all the city is represented.” *Mayor*

“I can breathe as I come here. I work outside the city and can only come here once in two or three months. All my relatives, friends and family are here. I find peace here.” *Self-Employed, M*

Place attachment:

Familial, social, political, economic linkages and religious, moral, mythological dimensions are the concepts that explain the attachment to a place (Low, 1992: 170). In other words, people, for any of these reasons may feel themselves attached to a place. It, naturally, depends on individual or cultural experiences and memories about a place (Tuan 2001).

Eight participants out of twenty-two state that they visit the Çınaraltı Square ‘regularly’ or ‘in every occasion’. This physical attachment has been supported by the narrator’s statements on their common past and profound connections with the place. The quotes below display the attachment between Yalvaç people and the square, all putting an emphasis on ‘belonging’ and ‘indispensability’:

“I feel that I’m from here.” *Educational Profession, M*

“I see old people, young people, and close friends all together here. There are grandfathers and grandsons sitting together. Sometimes you can see three generations side by side.” *Housewife, F*

“Every year I come to Yalvaç and sit under this plane tree. Even though I live in Antalya, I will keep my house here. I am from Yalvaç, this is my hometown.” *Teaching Profession, M*

“I come here regularly. Especially in summer, I come here to rest within the shades of the tree.” *Retired, M*

“Now, almost half of the town lives outside, in some other cities. But, whenever someone comes to visit Yalvaç, you run into him here. Maybe they do not own a home here anymore, but they come, stay at a hotel, and end up under this plane.” *Self-Employed, M*

“We have been working here for three generations now. So, I come here every single day since my childhood.” *Self-Employed, M*

Place Identity:

The concept of place identity is the unique and continuous characteristic of places, which differentiate them from other places. In other words, place identity goes hand in hand with the notion of distinctiveness of places.

Another issue about the place identity is that it is based on individual experiences. That is, it changes from person to person. This situation is clear in the Yalvaç example. Some of the respondents indicated that the place make them feel they are from Yalvaç, while some others specifically stated the place-related information such as the uniqueness of the Çınaraltı Square. Women, on the other hand, associate the identity of place according to their personal observations rather than physical experiencing of the place. Still, this fact does not change the distinctiveness of the place; it only affects the level of meaning of place for the women and creates multiple place images and identities.

“Here is the most well-known area in Yalvaç. Everybody comes here. I always come here to meet someone.” *Educational Profession, M*

“(When I come here) I feel like I’m from Yalvaç. This square is the most important place of Yalvaç. I feel happy and proud here.” *Retired, M*

“It’s a feeling of belonging to a stable area for years now, the symbol of Yalvaç.” *Retired, M*

“It represents the history of the city; it is a symbol, a valuable symbol. Not everywhere you encounter a place like this.” *Mayor*

“It belongs to Yalvaç; one must come and see this place. Because, this plane tree is the symbol of Yalvaç. When someone mentions Yalvaç, the first thing that comes to mind is this plane tree.” *Educational Profession, M*

“It is a beautiful place. But since I do not use it, it does not mean a lot to me. It is more like a coffee shop for men.” *Housewife*

Moreover, the plane tree was the main subject in some of the statements of the participants. They seem to accept the uniqueness of the site as a natural and historical outcome of the existence of plane tree. The related statements are as follows:

“The tree creates comfort and calm here, also I spend good time because there are my friends and the crowd.” *Retired, M*

“Peace is an outcome of the plane tree I guess. There are sitting facilities and you can always run into a familiar face, too.” *Teacher, M*

“I feel I belong here since it’s a stable area for years, it is the symbol of Yalvaç. Tree is unique to this area, it is different.” *Retired, M*

A noteworthy finding is related with the answers given to a further question: “What would this place look like, if the plane tree was removed?” The 64% of the participants argue that plane tree is the essence of the place and when it is removed or never have existed, the square would not be what it is now. They mostly express the plane’s role in making the place unique and stable. Other questions asked during the interviews are ‘What kind of emotions does the plane tree in this square evoke in you?’ and ‘How can you describe this plane tree with your own words?’ The answers reflect people's strong emotional attachments towards the plane tree. One example is as follows:

“Those times were better than today. I am talking about 60 years ago. We were young men back then. We called here as “the democratic coffee shop”, it was the time of Menderes (who was a democrat prime minister of Turkey between 1950-1960) . One day a friend of mine shouted to the crowd under the plane: “I have ‘atom’ (bomb) in my pocket”. At first no one believed him, but then he swore that he had the bomb, after a second he pulled out the chickpeas that he filled in his pocket and he chucked away them to the crowd. (he laughs) You should have seen the people! They were yelling, holding their heads and running away! After that the Çınaraltı was ours, and only ours for a while.”

Retired, M, Age:90

6.3.3.3.2 Meaning of Plane Tree for People and Place

To illustrate the attachments between Yalvaç Plane and its users the rest of the findings are concentrated around main themes that are the outcomes of literature survey and what I have found out on the site. In this sense, descriptive concepts that respondents used were picked up and grouped under five main content groups which are: utility, design element, sensory object, symbol and bridge to identity. This is to discover the relevancy of literature findings to this specific example of Yalvaç Plane and to further develop the subject with personal observations.

“This plane is the being that gives meaning to this place and it makes this place beautiful.” *Teacher, M*

“If the tree was gone, there would still be restaurants, coffee shops, but they would be scattered around. It is for sure that this place would lose its meaning.”
Worker, M

“The plane tree is the symbol of the city. If the tree was gone, this place would go away, too. We would be gone to other places.” *Retired, M*

“Maybe the place would continue to function as a square, but would not be this unique.” *Teacher, M*

Table 6.10 Frequency of Mentions of the Perceived Contents Related to Meaning of Yalvaç Plane

Variables	Contents	Frequency of Mentions	Total Freq. of Mention	Ratio
Utility Environmental Aesthetic Economic	shade coolness sound of leaves beauty clean air clients	3 2 2 2 1 1	11	21%
Design Element Spatial Quality Aesthetics Distinct Places	unique at the center different Irreplaceable covers a huge area	3 2 1 1 1	8	15.4 %
Sensorial Object Feeling Stimulator Social Binder Healer	reminds the past collecting people Relief Sadness peace	5 2 1 1 1	10	19%

Table 6.10 (Continued)

Variables	Contents	Frequency of Mentions	Total Freq. of Mention	Ratio
Symbol Spiritual- Cosmological Religious Mythological Symbol of People	witness to history	3	22	42.3%
	symbol of Yalvaç	3		
	symbol	2		
	protective	2		
	representative	1		
	religious	1		
	like a mother	1		
	upright	1		
	compassionate	1		
	living history	1		
	self-confident	1		
	patience	1		
	embracing	1		
	has a soul	1		
caring	1			
lonely	1			
Bridge to Human Identity Tree as a "self"	Immortality	2	2	2.3%
Total			52	100%

Table 6.10 presents the main content groups constituted with respect to the previously defined variables. Most of the statements that the respondents used while indicating their feelings and ideas about the plane tree concentrated on the symbolic value of the tree. 42.3% of total content units are about a symbolic association to the tree. Following this, environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits of the plane tree were mentioned with a ratio of 21%. A closer concentration can be seen in the sensorial definitions related to trees. 19% of the content units indicate the meaning of plane tree as a feeling stimulator. The statements related to the spatial characteristics of place have the ratio of 15.4%. Lastly, Yalvaç Plane has been seen as a “bridge to human identity.” Only 2% of the content units involve a concept which we can relate to tree’s being an archetype, a bridge to identity or as a self. These findings are explained below in detail:

Yalvaç Plane as a Symbol:

The respondents mostly associated human-specific characteristics to the plane. These characteristics can be exemplified as: tree’s being caring, lonely, self-confident, compassionate and patient.

“The plane is as if a mother having many children, yet still embracing all, supporting all with her own means.” *Teacher, M*

Other important symbolic associations were tree’s being a symbol of the city and a witness to the history.

“The tree is a living history, it witnessed a lot and yet it stands still. I admire its patience. And years and years after it has a lot people around.” *Retired, M*

“Plane tree is the symbol of Yalvaç. When someone says Yalvaç, the plane is the first thing that comes to my mind.” *Teacher, M*

Tree as a Sensorial Object:

Second, respondents stated that the tree evoke feelings of patience, sadness and relief. Also, it has the potential of being a social binder for the locals as well. Its role of collecting people together has been mentioned in this context. Yet, a prominent sensorial association was the feeling of nostalgia. The respondents stated that the tree reminds them of the past:

“It’s an old being, even our grandfathers’ grandfathers’ grandfathers had been here. It reminds of old times. It reminds me the past.” *Self Employed, M*

“It reminds of our elderly, and of our past.” *Housewife*

Yalvaç Plane as a Utility:

Following these symbolic and sensorial attachments, the tree’s being a utility covered an important section of the responses. Since the research was carried out during a hot summer day, some of the responses were related to shade and coolness of the tree. Moreover, the sound of the leaves, beauty of the tree and its ability to clean the air, the power of it for holding the clients together (for a shop owner) were also mentioned.

“It’s shady area. In summer time especially the coolness make people feel comfortable.” *Retired, M*

“It’s a tree, having a shade that collects all the Yalvaç people together; covering a huge area.” *Housewife*

Yalvaç Plane as a Design Element:

While people were defining the Yalvaç Plane, they have chosen to describe it with some spatial references which I could further relate them to the capacity of the plane tree to form a design object in the users’ minds. A crucial point to illustrate is that the findings related to the main discussion of this research on the ability of trees to form distinctive places. Yalvaç Plane, for instance, has developed a notion of “uniqueness” and “distinctiveness” to its users’ minds, as well as it did about its potential to create an urban place.

“It’s an old and huge tree, standing at the very center of Yalvaç.” *Retired, M*

“It is so big and old that I say to myself: If this tree achieved to grow this much, then there must be something important going around it.” *Teacher, M*

Yalvaç Plane as a “Self”:

When the “tree as a self” theme is concerned there were not much findings from the gathered data. However, since the concept cares about the deeper psychological studies, this should be seen as a normal outcome. Yet, there were clues to which I could relate a sub-concept namely the Depth Psychology of Carl G. Jung. The long-shared history of people and trees seems to have left remarks on Yalvaç people as well. Yalvaç Plane was used as an archetype which stands for the “immortality of life”. This profound psychological explanation shows us that the plane, with its age, size and appearance, affected the respondents’ unconscious.

“That I am too small and life is immortal.” *Educational Profession, F*

“This tree tells me that time passes too fast and I am immortal.” *Educational Profession, F*

Evaluations Specific to the Meaning of Yalvaç Plane:

After studying these compatibilities between the associations of respondents and the literature study, it is essential to look into the findings of other personal observations and studies. Although some of them may remotely be linked together with the literature findings, I see the need of studying them further for their very essence of uniqueness and being specific to Yalvaç Plane. Also, this kind of a research about the meaning structures of a tree for its users is being conducted for the first time, and this again makes it important to put forward some insightful findings in detail which are the extractions related to age, majesty, local identity and mystery related to Yalvaç Plane.

Yalvaç Plane and its Age:

No matter which question was directed, the participants mostly preferred to start the conversation with a reference to tree’s age and history. This makes sense when we think of the favorable works that have been applied by the local municipality as well as the history of the tree and its impacts on locals daily experiences. There is an informative board near to the plane tree and also Çınaraltı Square is shown as a tourism attraction point everywhere. The local awareness towards the existence of plane tree has been shaped together with the spirit of the place and these works of municipality. An illustration of this situation is the local people knowledge about the age of the tree. Each respondent, who mentioned about the age of the tree, indicated that the plane is 800 years old.

“Being an eight centuries being is the most significant historical characteristics of it. This place is the center of attention.” Worker, M

“It is an 800 year old plane tree. It witnessed the history of Yalvaç.” Worker, M

“I see this tree as a signature, as a seal to the history.” Teacher, M

Yalvaç Plane and its Majesty:

Tree’s majesty was another prominent concept. A considerable amount of responses were containing the words “sublime, senior, majestic, magnificent, gorgeous” and so on. This can be related to the feeling of “divinity” that tree evokes in human mind. Tree’s tallness and bigness were also used to express the feelings towards the trees. Yet, these adjectives of appearance refer to something more profound.

“It is a different place... It is not exactly a square or a coffee shop. We have the sublime plane tree here, it is old and gorgeous.” *Teacher, M*

“This plane tree reminds me of my childhood. I can say that I grew up, it got older. Back then it was still old, but now it seem more magnificent to me. And I’ve seen so many trees, plane trees everywhere, but this one is a wonder of nature.” *Worker, M*

“It’s centuries old tree. Its height and branches are quite big...When it’s summer time; you come and enjoy its coolness. When it’s winter time, it’s something different. When it snows, and covers with white...During the autumn, this place becomes “sad”, the leaves are falling, it’s also another beauty.” *Worker, M*

Yalvaç Plane and Local Identity:

The place identity notion has been discussed under the section of meaning of tree’s place. Yet, some descriptive quotations that were directly mentioned during the conversations on the feeling that Yalvaç Plane evoke are helpful to grasp the users’ feelings of belonging directly related to the tree.

“The tree is a huge and historical being. It means a lot for Yalvaç. Çınaraltı is Yalvaç itself.” *Mayor*

“This plane is the soul of Yalvaç, a soul of a city.” *Mayor*

“For me, the plane tree itself is the reason why there exist a square here. Plane tree draws people there for years now. It is also directly related to the local identity of Yalvaç.” *Educational Profession, F*

Yalvaç Plane and Mystery:

The last theme gathered from research data is the feeling of mystery. There were a few responses that went beyond the mere historical characteristics and appearance of the tree. I found this new concept of “mystery” meaningful. It actually falls near to what this research meant by the “distinctiveness” in urban places. Mystery, in this sense, emerges as a valuable concept which can be an important input to meaning formation in this Çınaraltı area.

“I wonder what and who come and pass under this plane tree?”
Self-Employed, M

“It lived a lot, who knows what it had seen?” *Self-Employed, M*

“The plane embraces its visitors. I usually think about the person who planted it.”
Teacher, M

Briefly, Yalvaç plane seems to play an quite important role for the respondents. It is clear that there are profound attachments between the plane tree and the locals. It is the symbol, identity and most importantly it is what makes the square the square of the city. The 13 respondents out of 22, stated that if the plane would not exist there, the site, too, would be vanished. Thus, Yalvaç Plane is what makes the Çınaraltı Square this much “unique” and “meaningful”.

“For me, the plane tree itself is the reason why there exist a square here. Plane tree draws people there for years now. It is also directly related to the local identity of Yalvaç.” *Teacher, M*

“There still would be a square for sure, but it won’t be the same thing.” *Retired, M*

“This plane is the being that gives meaning to this place and it makes this place beautiful.” *Self-Employed, M*

6.4 An Intermediate Conclusion

The theoretical discussions for bridging the meaning and urban design with the help of trees have been illustrated with a real life context. Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square sets a successful example for its values in contexts of space and meaning. This tree-place is an outcome of long historical processes. Once there was only the plane and earlier people of Yalvaç must have seen it substantial and acted accordingly to the tree and the place around it. These initial and spontaneous acts have merged with the purposeful design actions on the site today. That is, 800 year old existence of a being has been favored by its users throughout the years, and in turn the plane tree carried the spirit of its history, meaning and value till today, and it is quite sure that this will last as far as the tree lives.

What has been inferred from this case study shows the validity of the hypotheses produced for a tree-place scenario, that is holding the meaning of the place and the tree together, influenced urban design actions and was influenced by them. This case study research has presented four hypotheses and related four sub-questions. These concerns have been enlightened throughout this case research and can briefly be analyzed respectively:

(1) **The relationships between people and trees have direct or indirect impacts on the location and spatial organization of a tree-place.** By relying on my personal observations on the site as a researcher and after collecting-analyzing the old pictures of the Çınaraltı Square, I can conclude that there is a strong interrelation between the location of the place and the urban macroform. The 800 years of existence of tree seems to shape the design interventions and people’s acts towards the site. Consequently, Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square can be seen as a:

- **Node** carrying a nodal and discrete element of urban macroform, standing at the heart of the city.
- **Spinal Element** positioning along the main spine of the city of Yalvaç and composing continuity together with other elements near-by (such as the city hall, city museum, the mosque etc.)
- (A Natural) **Landmark** letting people perceive it from a greater distance and it is also differentiated from its surroundings with its size, nature and beauty.
- **A Public Square** collecting local people and visitors of Yalvaç by offering various activities and an ease of connection to the other main uses of the city.

(2) **Tree-places act as semi-public or public places that offer various activity choices and motives.** The activity patterns on the site indicate that there are a high number of permanent users of the site, preferring to experience the site for various reasons. The highest ratio within the variables belongs to the “activity types” according to the content analysis.

The motives for visits and frequency of visits were also underlined all giving clues about the characteristics of place in terms of public. Thus, the variables and the prominent content units that are validating the public characteristics of the site are:

- **Activity Types:** Meeting, Chatting, Spending Time, Drinking Tea-Coffee, Coming Together etc.
- **Motives for Visits:** Existence of Friends, Relatives, The Tree and its Benefits etc.
- **Frequency of Visits:** Every Possible Occasion, Regularly etc.

(3) **Tree-places carry the characteristics for its users to associate meanings and to develop a place identity, place attachment and the notion of sense of place** (Meaning in Place). The respondents indicated their feelings towards the Çınaraltı Square which helped me to produce a new framework for the matter. In this respect, the main content groups have been developed as below all referring the richness of the responses to the related question. The users of the square have multi-level meanings for the place. Furthermore, most of the statements were about the sensuous meanings of tree-place such as its being comfortable, peaceful, and crowded and so on. This group of meanings was categorized as:

- **Sensuous Dimension** (comfort, peace, coolness, serenity, happiness etc.)
- **Belonging** (hometown, familiar faces etc.)
- **Spatial** (central, close vicinity square etc.)
- **Nature** (green, beautiful nature etc.)
- **Historical** (old, spirit, representative etc.)
- **Aesthetics** (beautiful, different, interesting)

Moreover, other variables (place identity-attachment and sense of place) inferred from the literature research also supported this hypothesis. Respondents consistently expressed their feelings of attachment, belonging to the place, as well as the uniqueness, identity and symbolic value of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square. All of which emphasize the validity of measurers of **meaning in place** for the case of Yalvaç Çınaraltı.

(4) **There exists a profound relationship between people and trees that is shaped throughout history and experiences.** To unveil the meaning patterns and profound connection between people and trees was a fundamental aim of this research. It was of utmost importance to understand the meaning of the plane tree for its users by considering the fuzziness of the distinctions between the meaning of tree-place and the plane tree. Specific questions were designed in this respect. The findings of the content analysis supported the meaning variables derived from the literature research. That is, the respondents express the meaning levels in accordance with the main components introduced during the third chapter. Starting from the highest ratio of mentions to the lowest, these statements are:

Yalvaç Plane as:

- **A Symbol** (symbol of city, or as a symbol carrying humane characteristics such as being lonely, protective, embracing)
- **A Utility** (a beneficial object providing shade, Coolness; attracting clients)
- **A Sensorial Object** (a reminder of the past, evoking the feelings of sadness and peace)
- **A Design Element** (unique, irreplaceable, central)
- **A Bridge to self** (immortality of people)

After grouping content units in accordance with the variables, there were still remarkable outcomes from the data collection. These are listed under four main heading all referring to a specific detail of the plane tree that is expressed by its users. These are:

- **Yalvaç Plane and its Age** (people frequently stated the exact age of the plane tree, which shows an awareness of the local people toward the tree's existence)
- **Yalvaç Plane and its Majesty** (respondents use concepts referring to the influential size and shape of the plane)
- **Yalvaç Plane and Local Identity** (some respondents specifically stated that "the plane tree" is the soul and the symbol of the city, rather than involving the whole place)
- **Yalvaç Plane and Mystery** (the life and history of the plane seem to evoke wonder and mystery among its users)

As an intermediate conclusion, the four hypotheses of this case research have been proven positively. The tree-place of Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square sets a significant example for spatial form, activity patterns and meaning levels. Furthermore, the plane tree itself seems to place in the minds of its users and visitors deeply. Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square is a distinctive and well-defined place offering several activities as well as standing as a valuable symbol of the city.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research has elaborated the concept of meaning in place and urban design. What contributes to meaning generation in urban places, and the effective role of trees in this process were the fundamental concerns. Trees have come to the fore as valuable urban design elements that can reinforce meaning in urban places in many aspects, while helping designers in the creation of distinctive urban places. Therefore, this research has coined the concept of “tree-place”¹, where the tree (or group or line of trees) *possesses* the urban place in a way, and gives the place its distinctiveness. The analysis of such places all around the world and a closer look at a case from Turkey -namely the Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square- have provided guidelines for planners and designers on the intentional use of tree(s) in urban design.

This final chapter discusses a frame concern of the thesis which is “urban design with trees”. The analysis and discussions made throughout the study provided a foothold to defend the importance of deliberate use of trees in places. Trees have been presented as valuable beings for people to attach meanings in any dimensions and for designers to create places and add meaning to there. To take this inference one step further and make the discussion more concrete in terms of space design, this chapter proposes design guidelines for working with trees. The first section will provide an outlook to the flow of thesis and propose ways of designing with trees to meet design principles.

7.1 A Summary of Thesis

This thesis is structured around six main subjects:

- The notion of meaning
- Meaning in/of Place
- Meaning in Urban Design
- Meaning and Benefits of Trees
- Tree-Place
- Çınaraltı Square: A Closer Look to Tree-Places

First and foremost, the notion of meaning has been addressed, which can be defined as the interpretations and feelings that people associate with a place or the essence of a place. In this sense, the approaches of environmental psychology and phenomenology have shaped the discussion in terms of human-environment interrelation. The search for meaning in the built environment is an inseparable motive of people as they experience an urban place. That is why the initial concern of this study has been to understand the meaning and its role in an urban place.

The following section has focused on revealing the meaning in and of place. This is a controversial issue since the meaning is both a component and a medium for identifying the concept of place. In other words, meaning as a component is essential to turn a space into a place, and also places should be meaningful for people who experience them. This is a key point that distinguishes places from abstract spaces and creates distinctive places that are memorable for people. Place conveys three main features; namely form, activity and meaning. While experiencing a place we initially notice the physical characteristics. As we spend time or look more closely, we start to understand the activities going on. Consequently, we may perceive the meaning residing in that place. In short, place is defined as an experiential locus embodied with meanings, whereas the space remains as an abstract

¹ Jones et al., 2002 firstly uses the term to define place places “which are occupied and co-constituted by trees.”

phenomenon far from human experience. Distinctiveness is another outstanding concern since the problem definition of this research has pointed to the erosion of meaning in places. Urban places require context-specific urban planning and design decisions to foster the original meanings and enrich the experience of place in cities. The research, at this point, has discussed how we can grasp and measure the meaning in place. Three components have come to the fore:

- Sense of place
- Place identity
- Place attachment

These notions define the people-place linkages and help us to understand such an abstract and sophisticated concept as meaning. Sense of place is briefly defined as a feeling of love and attachment to the essence of a place. This notion has been accepted as an umbrella phenomenon that reveals the meaning in an urban place. Place identity and place attachment support the concept of sense of place. Place attachment is the connection of people to their environment which is a result of complicated processes of environmental perception (Altman & Low 1992, 166-182). Place identity refers to *continuity* and *uniqueness* in places which allow them to be differentiated from other places. Place attachment and place identity have been used to explain the notion of sense of place throughout the study. All three can be utilized to unveil the questions of how we can understand and measure the meaning in places.

Having discussed the notion of meaning, its significance for place formation, and the ways and tools for meaning generation in places through spatial design interventions, the research has then concentrated on a reverse perspective: The problem of loss of sense of place (placelessness). Placelessness is an epidemic of our century; similar design interventions and stereotyped understanding of spatial arrangements produce urban spaces regardless of the local cultural and historical traces, and even communal and individual preferences. The Turkish case is a valid example in this sense. The new urban-trends as “mega-projects”, mass housing practices, and “urban renewal” actions threaten the accumulated meaning in urban places. In turn spatial planners and people come up with a sea of similar places paying no or little attention to human scale, urban activities and local cultures. But what are the elements that make a place meaningful and how can urban design contribute to this process?

The meaning association to a place is a two-way process. People may experience an already embodied meaning in a place or can develop their own meanings. Urban design, likewise, should care about the preservation and enrichment of existing meaning in places, as well as the generation of new meaning by observing local tendencies and fostering the existing values. Gustafson (2001) explains variables that make a place meaningful as follows:

- Distinction : A place should be distinguishable from its surroundings
- Valuation: Positive or negative meaning association proves the value of the place
- Continuity: The lengths of experiences shape the meaning levels attached to places
- Change: The places should be open to change, in time new meaning associations may be possible

Urban design has its tools to contribute to meaning formation in urban places. Montgomery (1998) and Rapoport (1982) explain the elements and principles to stimulate meaning in places through urban design as follows:

Table 7.1 Type of Factors that Reinforce the Meaning in Place (abridged)

PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	ACTIVITIES & USES	EXPERIENTIAL
Sequences, Proportions, Connections Age-new vs. Old Type of order Perceived density Topography Shape, size, scale, height, Color, light levels, Presence of planting, <i>Trees</i> , Sound-quality ,smell	People: languages spoken, behavior, Outfits, physical type, Occupation, age, sex etc.	Signs, Advertisement, Foods, decor, Fences, plants Travel Moods, Sitting, playing etc.	Imageability and Legibility, Sensory experience and associations, Knowledgeability, Receptivity, Psychological access

The tools may be site and situation specific and surely can be developed further. The approaches of these authors have been enriched by including “trees” into this table. The main reason is to express their significance beyond the mere categorization of “greenery”. As discussed throughout the research, they can be fundamental elements that contribute to creation of distinctiveness in places when used properly. Yet, these values of trees are often neglected, and they are used as mere greening rather than place making and meaning stimulating elements. The main hypothesis of this thesis comes to the scene at this point. I have argued that trees are valuable elements for urban planners and designers since they hold the potential of defining places (as *enclosed, continuous, repeated, surprising* etc.) and at the same time evoking meaning in human mind (*psychological, spiritual, religious* etc). However, working with trees in this approach is not very common for urban design, and tree arrangements are mostly seen as the job of landscape architects. This may be relevant to some extent, but what I have emphasized here is the need of meaning generation in places, and design potential of trees is of utmost significance for planners and designers.

Following that, the research has taken a closer look into the benefits and meanings of trees for people and places. The profound characteristics of trees and what lies beyond its absolute definition were to be analyzed as well. People (urban designers or not) like to use trees; our cities are more or less covered with trees, however a detailed investigation has been conducted to understand the relationship between man and trees and hence the use of trees in urban places. The summary of the analysis below illustrates the approaches and arguments of academic fields which undertake the tree as a study object:

Table 7.2 The Meanings of Trees (abridged)

Trees as...	Groupings	Levels of Meanings
Utility	Environmental Aesthetic Economic	First Meaning Level of Trees - Tree as an aesthetic and environment friendly being, and design element
Design Element	Spatial Quality Aesthetic Distinct Places	
Sensory Object	Feeling Stimulator Social Binder Healer Spirituality Cosmology	Second Meaning Level of Trees - Tree as elements contributing positively to human and societal psychology
Symbol	Religion Mythology Symbols of People	Third Meaning Level of Trees - Trees as symbols of deeper meanings, evoking a sort of spirituality and also as a symbol of self in depth psychology
Bridge to Self	Darwinian Psychology Depth Psychology Phenomenology Ecopsychology	

The findings demonstrate the noteworthy connection between man and trees. Trees were the “things” that men experienced in his first place: nature. Trees as the first temples, shelters and food sources in nature kept their significance throughout the history. Today, there are numerous tree cults and tree-related traditions, some of which are thousands of years old. Briefly saying, from the shade they provide during summer to the Christmas tree which is a replica of a 5000-year-old tradition of tree of life, trees dominate a considerable section of human life, hence of our cities. This analysis has been held to put forward the unveiled significance of trees for people, and as the discussion is about the meaning formation in urban places, their existence is indispensable.

The section on urban design with trees has categorized existing tree-places in four main groups:

- Individual Trees (The Point) : Landmark trees, Small-tree places, “Çınaraltı” squares
- Row of Trees (The Line) : Street Trees, City Entrances, Riverbeds
- Tree Groups : Small Groups, Urban Parks-Squares, Networks and Urban Forests
- Trees and Traces

The individual trees (point trees) form tree-places around which different activities are offered to their users. They can be related to the “**nodes**” in cities. A small tree-place can collect a few people around it and create a sort of urbanity, whereas a Çınaraltı Square acts as an urban square and has the ability to collect and connect urbanites and offers a variety of activities.

The row of trees (tree line), on the other hand, indicates the line of trees defining streets, city entrances or riverbanks. This group of tree-places can emphasize “**continuity**” in cities. The tree linings make it easy to understand the *orientation*, *connections* and *continuity* within urban places and contribute to the *wholeness* in design.

The third group of trees is presented as the tree-groups of multiple sizes. Urban parks, gardens and the “**urban networks**” supported by trees have been elaborated under this category. Small and medium groups of trees form urban parks and gardens, yet the main expression here is their ability to transfer their meaning to people while defining a distinct urban place. Moreover, what is meant by urban networks is the comprehensive urban plans which are dominated by large and continuous boulevards and streets covered by trees. Trees and traces have been studied as a following grouping of tree-places. Although there is not a direct relationship between these traces and urban sites, they are significant in terms of wonder, mystery and urban stories they stimulate. The examples of “Mulberry Tree in Göbeklitepe” and “Ardıç Tepesi / Juniper Hill” have proven that trees are in every section of human life.

To illustrate how a tree-place can be a “meaningful” and “distinctive” place for its users, a case study research was conducted in Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square/Isparta. Plane trees and Çınaraltı Squares (urban gathering places under massive plane trees) are very significant not only for their symbolic values in Turkish history and culture, but also in terms of their influence on urban fabric in many Turkish cities. They are the most impressive tree-places that offer square activities to their users. They attract people for various activities going on around them and for their aesthetic beauty. Yalvaç Çınaraltı Square is a valuable illustration in this sense. It has an 800-year-old plane tree which is believed to be planted by Seljuks (Selçuklular) after the conquest of the site and today serves as a distinctive urban square. During the field study in-depth interviews were conducted and the site was observed through an urban design perspective. The respondents stated their feelings of belonging and attachment to the place. They mostly consider the plane tree as a symbol of the city as well. The square witnessed both spontaneous and intentional design interventions from local people and authorities throughout time. Today, it functions as an urban square under the branches of an impressive plane tree, exemplifying the power of tree(s) in creating meaningful and distinctive places.

7.2 Meaning, Trees and Places

We move along with trees in cities. They are in front of our houses, in urban parks and on streets. We appreciate their existence since there is a strong bond between us and trees from earlier times till today. Trees evoke the feeling of comfort and peace, and their visual attractiveness affects us in many different ways. Furthermore, our intertwined destiny with trees sometimes triggers our spiritual thinking. For instance, the old and impressive trees particularly evoke the feeling of divinity that is a

remnant on the mind of modern man from his very first home and place, namely; nature. Thus, as well as the environmental benefits they provide, trees carry significant symbolic values for people and urban places, and this is a valuable feature of trees that this research cares the most. In a modern world of concrete and steel, we should lean more on to this kind of symbolism since it offers rootedness and meaning to people in urban places. Even the smallest tree within an urban environment has a capacity to “motivate” and “inspire” people (Schroeder 1992, 82). Therefore, the values people attach to trees, their size, aesthetic appearance, changing colors and flickering lights through leaves should stimulate urban design ideas for outdoor places.

The main hypothesis of this research has stated that the trees mean more to people and places than it is visible today and this makes trees valuable urban features for spatial planners to help them generate meaning or create discrete places in urban areas. This hypothesis has been supported by the findings of the literature survey as well as the case study research. The investigation of tree-places has demonstrated the power and impact of trees on urban places and provided a framework for further design applications with trees. The problem of placelessness and loss of distinctiveness can successfully be solved through this awareness by enhancing existing tree-places or creating new examples. The concluding question in this context is how to relate these findings to the fields of urban planning and design. Below are presented the inferences design guidelines prepared in accordance with the literature survey and case study research. They are presented to create a framework for design actions through which designers can care more about the deliberate use of trees in cities.

7.3 Designing Tree-Places

“The visual contribution of trees is largely a function of design, the planned interplay between shape and texture, space and light.”

(Arnold, *Urban Design with Trees*,1993)

The fundamental idea of this research is to bring meaning and spatial design together through the intentional use of urban trees in cities. That is, when trees are used in urban areas, they should be positioned in accordance with the surrounding urban setting respecting to the overall geometry. By this way, they can enrich the outdoor design by completing the straight lines of the buildings, following the power lines of the design approach and creating tree-places within urban spaces. Main argument here is the place-making characteristics of trees which help to form a coherent urban structure since “trees greatly expand the scope and potential of urban design” (Arnold 1993, 22).

The representations and use of trees in design activities, and the concept of tree-places need further elaboration. This is for two main reasons, the first of which is a potential problem that can rise out of the over-use of trees and the second one is the indeliberate use of trees to cover the left-over spaces after design processes. Arnold emphasizes a crucial point in this sense; he states that “*Urban trees are powerful symbols, like words, they can be organized to create confusion or poetry*” (Arnold 1993, 49). In this sense, the physical contributions of trees to urban place design in terms of place making criteria will be introduced firstly by summarizing the benefits for place formation, and following this, some design strategies will be presented.

Trees should be integrated into the overall city plan with clear design principles to create “excitement by combining the art of sculpture and architecture at the scale of the city” (Arnold 1993, 60) in the urban context. Trees define urban places both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, they create enclosure and complete or create an outdoor space. Vertically, their branches and leaves form an “airy ceiling” and “canopies” (Arnold 1993, 61).

The contributions of trees to places in the context of urban design can be listed as follows (Arnold 1993; Nadel et al., 1977).

- forming distinct and discrete places
- adding scale to cityscapes
- humanizing urban posture
- beautifying and adding vitality to urban environment
- creating borders and orientations

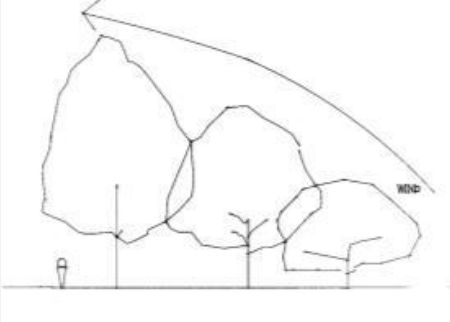
- supporting climate sensitive urban design
- creating spatial rhythms
- recording time and meteorological changes
- correcting architectural deficiencies
- softening edges
- separating different urban uses (Added by author)
- satisfying design principles as unity, harmony, repetition, continuity and visibility (Added by author)

In brief, trees should be purposefully arranged on urban places like the ways buildings/structures are arranged. The placements should follow the overall geometry of the urban areas they are fit in. Table 7.3 introduces fundamental design recommendations for the design of tree-places under the titles of “meaning, activity and form”.

Table 7.3 Design Guidelines for Creating Tree-Places

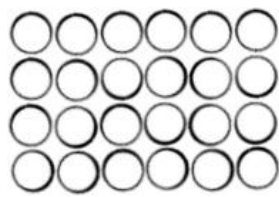
	Design Guidelines	Literature
MEANING	<p>Trees should be seen as “social binders” and “healers” of urban areas. In this respect,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal Tree Planting Programs can be arranged throughout a design process • A tree or garden view can be provided in front of each building • An easy access for children to play with trees can be secured 	<p>“The social milieu surrounding the tree is as important as the physical milieu”</p> <p>“Children feel a special affinity for trees that can be developed through environmental education” (Sommer 2003,181, 182)</p>
	<p>The outstanding power of symbolism of trees for people and places should not be ignored. Our intertwined history with trees still shows itself on contemporary uses. Thus,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree – Traces • Mythologically Significant Trees (olive, fig, mulberry etc.) • Monumental Trees <p>and their surroundings should be designed with reference to local culture and tendencies. That is, the design arrangements can be shaped with respect to these values about trees.</p>	<p>“There is something deeper, spiritual, and almost ineffable about people’s attachment to tree.” (Sommer 2003,180)</p> <p>“The emotional, symbolic, and spiritual connections between people and trees are therefore just as real and just as important as the physical and biological links.” (Schroeder, 1982, 82)</p>
ACTIVITY	<p>The activities around tree-places cannot be universally defined. The scale of the place that the trees address, the target users, local tendencies may change the activity patterns. Yet, main concerns can be listed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban furniture can be provided considering the amount of tree masses, (e.g. Small tree places with a single tree can be furnished with a sitting element around the trunk) • Every tree-place offer different uses. If a monumental tree is concerned, landmark or square making characteristics can be fostered with new land-use decisions, pedestrian connections and with urban furniture details. 	<p>“Well-treed streets are preferred over those with few trees.” (Sommer 2003,185)</p>

Table 7.3 (Continued)

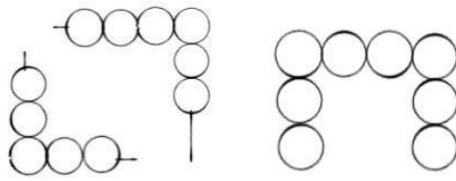
FORM	<p>Trees can form places and modulate a place’s form successfully. To create the sense of scale, discrete and distinct places and provide the spatial rhythm in an urban environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The placement of trees should follow the geometry of the place • The size and scale of the trees should be in harmony with the surrounding buildings and street widths. • The monumental trees should be preserved and seen as an opportunity that strengthen and enrich the quality of the urban place • Trees should be sited paying attention to distribution, amount and size within groups. 	<p>“Even though the major definition of outdoor space is achieved in most urban places by buildings, the most important function of trees is to define, reinforce or create spaces.”</p> <p>(Arnold 1993, 44)</p>
	<p>Trees are powerful elements that affect urban environment and aesthetics.</p> <p><u>An Example for Climate Sensitive Design with Trees:</u></p> 	<p>Trees can be used to orient wind, filter the sunlight and to protect from climatic disturbances.</p> <p>(Tanriverdi 1975, 182-183)</p>

These guidelines related to formation of “tree-place” can be deepened on the studies of urban design for it determines the order and the form of the city linking fields of planning, architecture and landscape architecture (Cuthbert 2003, 12). To develop this idea, the principles and rules for design may orient the discussion towards tree-places. For instance, main principles of design have been presented as harmony, contrast, balance, order and unity (Koerg and Bagnall 1974, 86 cited in Günay 2007,96). *Gestalt* rules, on the other hand, have been identified to provide an outlook “to achieve belonging togetherness of elements” (Günay 2007, 96). Some of these rules can be sorted as, similarity, continuity, proximity, closure, symmetry, alignment, simplicity, common fate and connectedness (Günay 2007, 96).

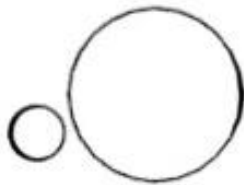
In line with this objective, the established design principles and gestalt rules should guide design elements used in a given urban space. In this context, trees, too, can be the design means satisfying these principles when purposefully arranged. For instance, trees can be sited in an urban place to foster “dominance” ,”balance”, “rhythm”, “harmony”. Also when used with respect to the overall design structure, trees emphasize “proximity”, “orientation”, ”closure” and “continuity” within a cityscape. The compositions may be varied, yet some of the proposals are presented in Figure 7.1.



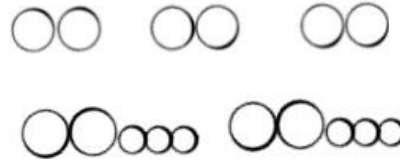
PROXIMITY



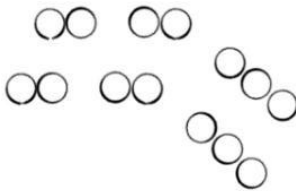
CLOSURE



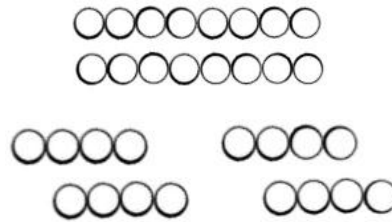
DOMINANCE



RYTHM & SIMILARITY



ORIENTATION



CONTINUITY



HARMONY



BALANCE

Figure 7.1 Designing with Trees to Achieve Gestalt Principles
(Personal Rendering)

Some initial drawings --which show the use of single tree, tree lines and group of trees in urban places-, are given in figure 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 to visualize the strategies of urban design with trees. These drawings may change according the organization of urban place, and it is possible to produce numerous variations of tree-places paying attention to the power lines of the design of the city or just to the surroundings.

Single trees: As “the point”, they can be used in an urban place to emphasize the site, attract attention and to collect people

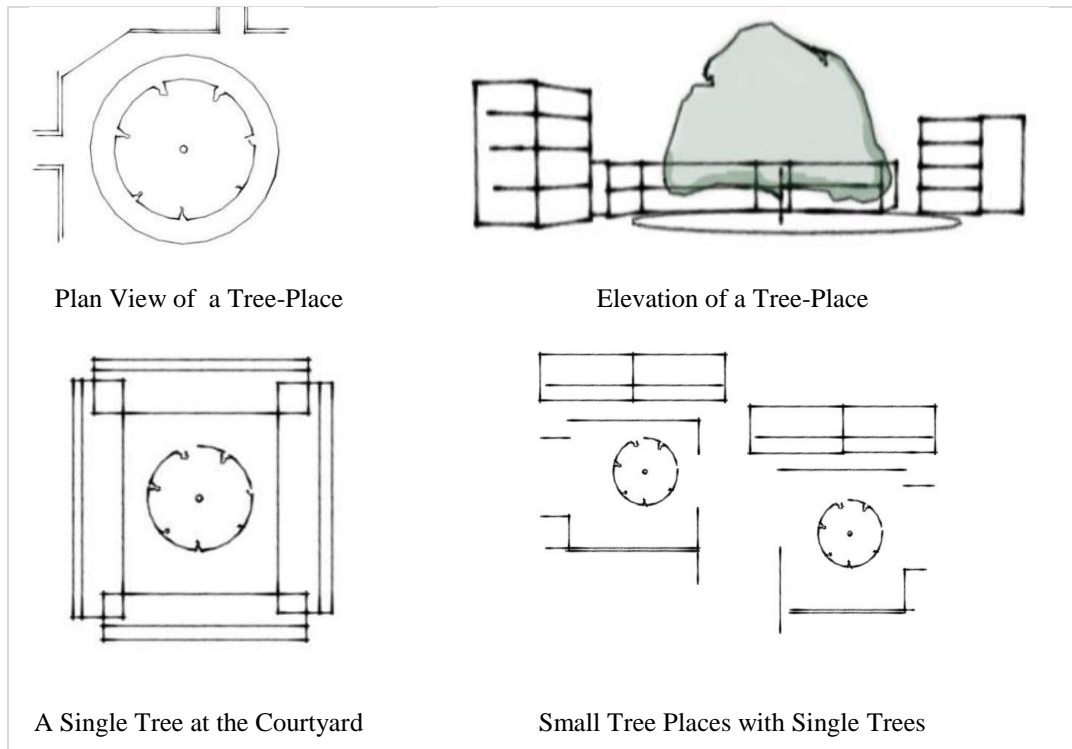


Figure 7.2 Design Proposals to Create Tree Places with Single Trees
(Personal Rendering)

Row of Trees: They have the largest arrangement potentials in an urban place. They can be used to maintain the geometry of design, to orient people and vehicles, to divide uses or different levels of privacy, and to form enclosed urban exterior spaces.

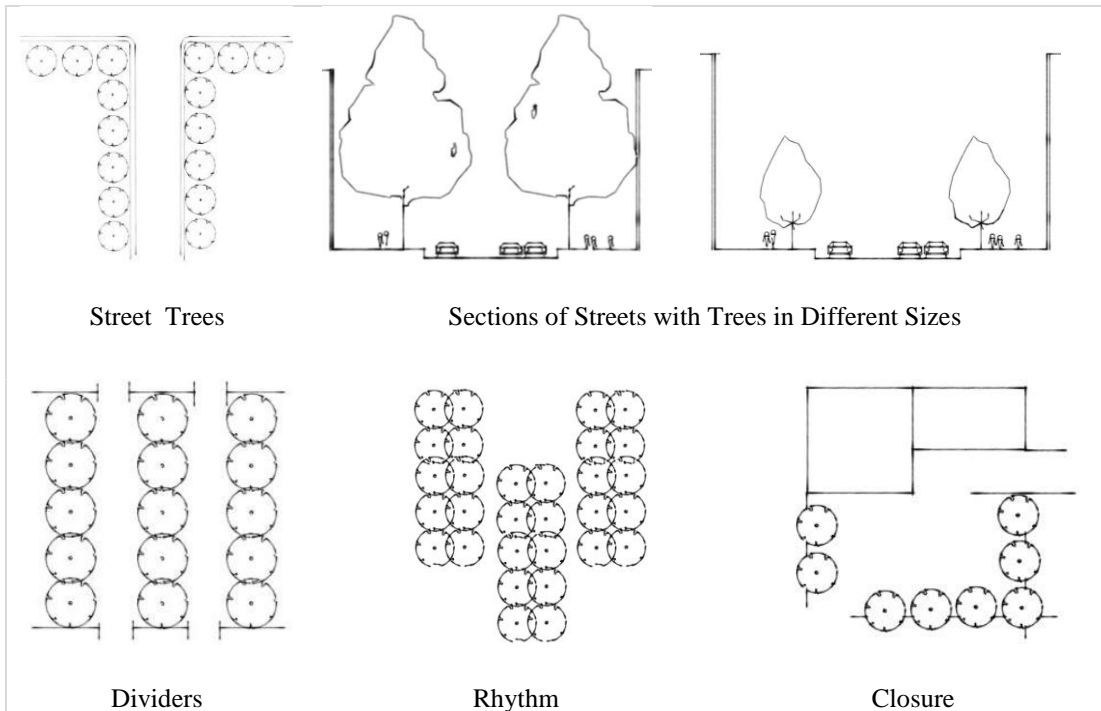


Figure 7.3 Design Proposals to Create Tree Places with Row of Trees
(Personal Rendering)

Group of Trees: There is a rich variety of uses for tree groups in cities. When trees are brought together, they can satisfy various design means such as attracting attention, forming nodes, orienting people etc.

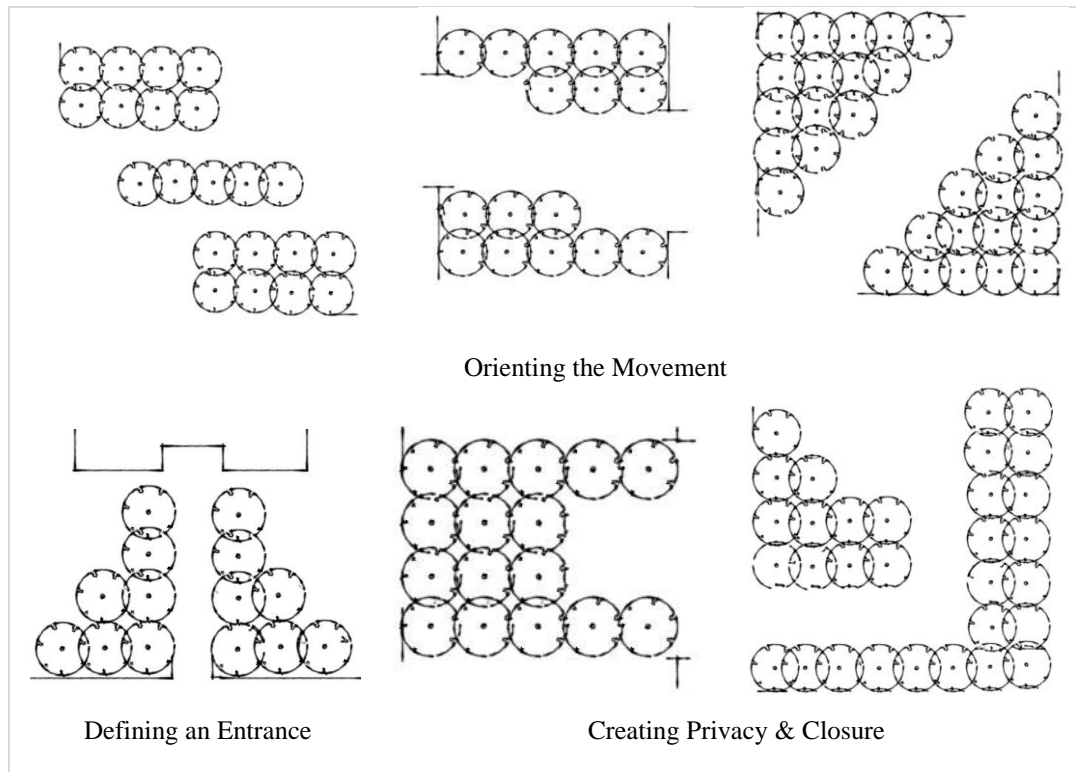


Figure 7.4 Design Proposals to Create Tree Places with Group of Trees
(Personal Rendering)

The design strategies presented above indicate a rich possibility of using trees in outdoor places to create legible urban environments. Before concluding, there are a few bullet points that are worth mentioning for the use of trees in urban places:

- Trees should not be simply seen as decorative objects to beautify the outdoor places.
- The vacant urban places or squares should not be “filled” with trees.
- The attitude should be delicate and concentrated on the integration of tree-place design to the overall design approach.
- Obviously use of tree is not an obligation to create distinctive urban places. Its use should be evaluated with respect to the context; i.e. the surrounding area, existing sculptures, water, building façades, etc.
- Surroundings of an existing (and eye catching) tree can be re-organized in a way to create a distinctive tree-places.
- New tree-places can be planned in accordance with the overall urban layout.

In conclusion, the quest for connecting meaning and design with the help of urban trees is a relatively new discussion for urban planning and design. Main objective of this research has been to put trees forward as the meaningful place making elements in cities. This thesis analyzed the system of meaning and its importance in urban place and design, and presented that it is relatively up to the designer to predict the meaning patterns towards what he/she designed. Trees have been presented as one of the design features that can stimulate meaning both for places and people.

Main argument was that trees can shape and re-create urban places as well as adding value to where they stand. This is a valuable aspect to change our recent understanding about planning and designing cities. By paying a closer attention to the deeper meanings of trees, this study sees the urban tree as an effective design feature which holds the physical design and the meaning together. Trees can be used as a network to control the order of an entire city as well as they can be used as single trees to create a node. By any means, it may be just one single tree that can change something in a place.

7.4 Further research

This research has presented the significance and ways of integrating trees to the urban design by preserving the overall geometry and meaning of place. Major emphasis has been on the amalgamation of design and meaning, and achieving this by taking trees as valuable place-making objects. However, there are a few research topics that can further contribute to the discussion on why trees are essential for people and places.

A further research can be conducted by investigating and comparing several Çınaraltı Squares to understand their impacts on urban tissue, culture and activities. However, time limitations let me only concentrate on a single case.

Another fundamental aspect of tree-place research is its social dimension. The importance of tree plantation –conservation programs for communities—is beyond the scope of this study, therefore has not been touched. However, there are noteworthy examples from the world and Turkish cities in this respect. For instance, the trees in Gezi Park in Taksim (İstanbul) were adopted by local residents, some artists and politicians during a campaign against the new design proposal of the site. Thus, this effective social dimension of tree plantation can be taken one step forward.

As a final recommendation, besides trees and tree-place recommendations, the meaning formation in urban places should carefully be undertaken together with the physical aspects of urban planning and design against the problem of loss of place and, alienation and detachment of people from urban places.

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APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL FORM OF SURVEY

Bu anket, kamusal açık mekânların oluşum ve birey-toplum için anlam kazanma sürecinde kent ağaçlarının etkisini; insanların bu tür mekânlarda bulunan ağaçlara dair algı ve duygularını, mekânları kullanım biçimlerini öğrenmek üzere hazırlanmıştır. Yaklaşık 10-15 dakika sürecek olan anket çalışmasının sonuçlarından elde edilen bilgiler ODTÜ Şehir ve Bölge Planlama Bölümü, Kentsel Tasarım Anabilim dalı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Duygu Cihanger'in tezinde kullanılacaktır. Ankete katılan kişilerin isimleri tez çalışmasında yer almayacaktır. Teşekkürler.

Yaş: 15-25 25-45 45-65 65+ Cinsiyet: Kadın Erkek

Meslek:

Oturulan Yer/Meydana Uzaklık:.....

1. Yalvaç Çınaraltı Meydanı'na gelme nedenleriniz nelerdir?

.....
.....
.....

2. Size göre burası nasıl bir yer anlatır mısınız?

.....
.....
.....

3. Bu alana geldiğinizde neler hissediyorsunuz?

.....
.....
.....

4. Etrafınızda bu duyguları tetikleyen neler görüyorsunuz? ...Daha başka ne gibi nedenleri var?

DUYGULAR	ÖĞELER
Duygu1	
Duygu2	
Duygu3	
Duygu4	

5. Meydanı nasıl kullanırsınız? Hangi sıklıkta? Bu kullanım biçimlerini etkileyen meydanın hangi özellikleridir? Burada bu kullanımınızı destekleyen ne var? ..Daha başka ne gibi nedenleri var?

.....

KULLANIM	ÖĞELER
Kullanım1	
Kullanım2	
Kullanım3	
Kullanım4	

6. Meydandaki çınar ağacı sizde ne gibi duygular uyandırıyor?

.....
.....
.....

7.Çınar ağacını kendi kelimelerinizle nasıl tarif edersiniz?

.....
.....
.....

8.Çınar ağacının sizin için nasıl bir anlamı var? Çınar ağacı olmasaydı bu meydan nasıl bir yer olurdu, ne hissederdiniz?Meydanı kullanımınız değişir miydi, nasıl değişirdi?

.....
.....
.....

9.Yalvaç /Çınaraltı Meydanı'nda bulunan çınar ağacına dair özel bir anınız var mı? Varsa anlatabilir misiniz?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX B

POETS AND STORIES ON TREES

AĞAÇ

İki çeşit ağaç vardır.
Birisi ormandaki ağaç,
Ötekisi açıklık kırdaki tek başına duran ağaç.
Kırdaki tek başına ağaç ilk bakışta göze çarpar.
İlk bakışta insanı hayrete düşürür.
Fakat bir bakarsınız, iki bakarsınız,
gözünüz gitgide alışır ona.
Onun yalnızlığındaki "kahramanlık" gitgide kaybolur,
gitgide mahsunlaşır.
Biraz daha dikkat ederseniz,
tek başına kırdaki duran ağacın
bütün basit faciası gözümüzün önünden geçer.
O, kırdaki dümdüz açıklığında komikleşir.
Kışın sıska kollarıyla bir başına titreyen,
yazın bir avuç gölgesinin başında
neyi ve neden beklediğini bilmeden dikilip duran
bu tek ağaç zavallıdır.
Ormandaki ağaç,
kırdaki ağacın büsbütün tersidir.
İlk bakışta gözünüze çarpmaz.
Fakat onun güzelliğini
her bakışta biraz daha anlarsınız.
Bütün ormanın ahenginde o ahengi
tamamlayarak fakat ferdiyetinden
kaybetmeyerek yaşamaktadır.
Orman onu, o ormanı güzelleştirir.
Kuvvetleştirir.
Kışın, kolları öteki
kolların yanında olduğu için onda
üşümenin komikliği yoktur.
Yazın, gölgesi öteki gölgelerden ayrı,
fakat öteki gölgelere karıştığı için bir büyük
yeşil serinliğin kaynağı halindedir.
İki çeşit ağaç vardır, dedim.
İki çeşidini de yazdım.
İsterim ki, oğlum
ormandaki ağaca benzesin.

Nazım Hikmet

CEVİZ AĞACI

Başım köpük köpük bulut, içim dışım deniz,
Ben bir ceviz ağacıyım gülhane parkında,
Budak budak, serham serham ihtiyar bir ceviz.
Ne sen bunun farkındasın, ne polis farkında.
Ben bir ceviz ağacıyım gülhane parkında,
Yapraklarım suda balık gibi kıvıl kıvıl.
Yapraklarım ipek mendil gibi tiril tiril.
Koparıver, gözlerinin, gülüm, yaşını sil.
Yapraklarım ellerimdir tam yüz bin elim var,
Yüz bin elle dokunurum sana, istanbul'a.
Yapraklarım gözlerimdir. şaşarak bakarım.
Yüz bin gözle seyrederim seni, istanbul'u.
Yüz bin yürek gibi çarpar, çarpar yapraklarım.
Ben bir ceviz ağacıyım gülhane parkında,
Ne sen bunun farkındasın, ne polis farkında.

Nazım Hikmet

VASİYET

Yoldaşlar, nasip olmazsa görmek o günü,
ölürsem kurtuluştan önce yani,
alıp götürün Anadolu'da bir köy mezarlığına gömün beni.
Hasan beyin vurdurduğu ırgat Osman yatsın bir yanımda
ve çavdarın dibinde toprağa çocuklayıp,
kırkı çıkmadan ölen şehit Ayşe öbür yanımda.
Traktörlerle türküler geçsin altbaşından mezarlığın,
seher aydınlığında taze insan,
yanık benzin kokusu, tarlalar orta malı, kanallarda su,
ne kuraklık, ne candarma korkusu.

Biz bu türküleri elbette işitecek değiliz,
toprağın altında yatar upuzun,
çürür kara dallar gibi ölüler, toprağın altında sağır, kör, dilsiz.
Ama bu türküleri söylemişim ben daha onlar düzülmeden,
duymuşum yanık benzin kokusunu traktörlerin resmi bile çizilmeden.
Benim sessiz komşulara gelince,
şehit Ayşe'yle ırgat Osman çektiler büyük hasreti sağlıklarında
belki de farkında bile olmadan.

Yoldaşlar, ölürsem o günden önce yani,
- öyle gibi de görünüyor -
Anadolu'da bir köy mezarlığına gömün beni
ve de uyarına gelirse,
tepemde bir de çınar olursa taş maş da istemez hani...

Nazım Hikmet

27 Nisan 1953, Barviha Sanatoryumu

DAVET

Dörtmala gelip Uzak Asya'dan
Akdeniz'e bir kısrak başı gibi uzanan
bu memleket bizim.
Bilekler kan içinde, dişler kenetli, ayaklar çıplak
ve ipek bir halıya benzeyen toprak.
bu cehennem, bu cennet bizim.
Kapansın el kapıları, bir daha açılmasın,
yok edin insanın insana kulluğunu,
bu davet bizim.
Yaşamak bir ağaç gibi tek ve hür
ve bir orman gibi kardeşçesine,
bu hasret bizim.

Nazım Hikmet

SALKIM SÖĞÜT

Akıyordu su
gösterip aynasında söğüt ağaçlarını.
Salkımsöğütler yıkıyordu suda saçlarını!
Yanan yalın kılıçları çarparak söğütlere
koşuyordu kızıl atlılar güneşin battığı yere!
Birden
bire kuş gibi
vurulmuş gibi
kanadından
yaralı bir atlı yuvarlandı atından!
Bağırmadı,
gidenleri geri çağırmadı,
baktı yalnız dolu gözlerle
uzaklaşan atlıların parıldayan nallarına!

Ah ne yazık!
Ne yazık ki ona
dörtmâl giden atların köpüklü boynuna bir daha yatmayacak,
beyaz orduların ardında kılıç oynatmayacak!

Nal sesleri sönüyor perde perde,
atlılar kayboluyor güneşin battığı yerde!

Atlılar atlılar kızıl atlılar,
atları rüzgâr kanatlılar!
Atları rüzgâr kanat...
Atları rüzgâr...
Atları...
At...

Rüzgâr kanatlı atlılar gibi geçti hayat!

Akar suyun sesi dindi.
Gölgeler gölgelendi
renkler silindi.
Siyah örtüler indi
mavi gözlerine,
sarktı salkımsöğütler
sarı saçlarının
üzerine!

Ađlama salkımsöđüt
ađlama,
Kara suyun aynasında el bađlama!
el bađlama!
ađlama!

Nazım Hikmet

MASALLARIN MASALI

Su başında durmuşuz,
çınarla ben.
Suda suretimiz çıkıyor,
çınarla benim.
Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize,
çınarla bana.
Su başında durmuşuz,
çınarla ben, bir de kedi.
Suda suretimiz çıkıyor,
çınarla benim, bir de kedinin.
Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize,
çınarla bana, bir de kediye.
Su başında durmuşuz,
çınar, ben, kedi, bir de güneş.
Suda suretimiz çıkıyor,
çınarın, benim, kedinin, bir de güneşin.
Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize,
çınara, bana, kediye, bir de güneşe.
Su başında durmuşuz,
çınar, ben, kedi, güneş, bir de ömrümüz.
Suda suretimiz çıkıyor,
çınarın, benim, kedinin, güneşin, bir de ömrümüzün.
Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize,
çınara, bana, kediye, güneşe, bir de ömrümüze .
Su başında durmuşuz.
Önce kedi gidecek,
kaybolacak suda sureti.
Sonra ben gideceğim,
kaybolacak suda suretim.
Sonra çınar gidecek,
kaybolacak suda sureti.
Sonra su gidecek
güneş kalacak;
sonra o da gidecek...
Su başında durmuşuz.
Su serin,
Çınar ulu,
Ben şiir yazıyorum.
Kedi uyukluyor
Güneş sıcak.
Çok şükür yaşıyoruz.
Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize
Çınara bana, kediye, güneşe, bir de ömrümüze...

Nazım Hikmet

BURSA'DA ZAMAN

...
Bursa'da bir eski cami avlusu,
Küçük şadırvanda şakıyan su;
Orhan zamanından kalma bir duvar,
Onunla bir yaşta ihtiyar çınar.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar

AĞACIM

Mahallemizde sensen başka ağaç olsaydı,
Seni bu kadar sevmezdim.
Fakat eğer sen,
Bizimle beraber kaydırak oynamasını bilseydin,
Seni daha çok severdim.
Güzel Ağacım!

Orhan Veli Kanık

SAKIZ AĞACI

O bir sakız ağacıydı, alelade;
Bir gün o yeşil sahile çıktı geldi,
O zaman bu zamandır memnun yerinden;
Seyreder bulutları, göğü, denizi.
Titreşirdi rüzgarla güneşli yaprakları;
Ömür sürdü öyle hoşnut dünyasından,
Aydınlıktan uyku tutmazdı bazı gece,
Motor sesleri duyulurdu uzaklardan.
Tanrı adın işitmedi ömründe;
İnanmadan da madem yaşıyor diye,
Rüzgarlı bir kıyıda, sevinç içinde,
Yaşamak dururken düşünmek niye?
Anmadı geçenleri bir defa bile;
Ne uğraşır mesut olan gelecekle?
Bir avare misali, günü gününe,
O bir sakız ağacıydı, yaşadı sade.

Can Yücel

BEN RUHİ BEY NASILIM

...
ii
ve her şey hızla yetişti sonra
sarı bir günün kahverengi yarımına.
Yıkılmış bir ağacın üstünde,
yıllarca oturdum da,
gözleri avına benzeyen bir avcıydım sanki.

Ağaç da çürümüş zaten kazımış,
oymuş bir yerlerinden gelip geçen onu.
Ağaç mı, içi yıllarla dolu bir kutu mu,
çözmek için mi acaba içlerindeki bir gizi
-gizi mi, bir giz gereksinmesini mi-
yoklamışlar orasından burasından kim bilir.
ama sessizlikten başka ne bulmuşlar,
önemsiz bir iki anıdan başka?
Ya insan kılığında ya da bir dekor taşkınlığında,

sorarım ne bulmuşlar?
Çoktan yeni bir umuda dönüşmüştür,
onlar da anılar.

Oysa bambaşka şeyler olmalıydı ağaçta kazılmış,
oyulmuş yerlerinde ağacın buruk mayhoş,
daha çok da bir zehir tadındaki bir şeyler olmalıydı.
ve sanki yıllar var ki saklamışım orda ben,
saklamışım anlaşılan,
odasında yapayalnız doğuran bir kadının
dışa vurmak istemediği,
ya da pek gereksinmediği
o iniltiyi andıran duyurulmayan her şeyi.

...
Edip Cansever

ON TREES

For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche. In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfill themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves. Nothing is holier, nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree. When a tree is cut down and reveals its naked death-wound to the sun, one can read its whole history in the luminous, inscribed disk of its trunk: in the rings of its years, its scars, all the struggle, all the suffering, all the sickness, all the happiness and prosperity stand truly written, the narrow years and the luxurious years, the attacks withstood, the storms endured. And every young farmboy knows that the hardest and noblest wood has the narrowest rings, that high on the mountains and in continuing danger the most indestructible, the strongest, the ideal trees grow. Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.

A tree says: A kernel is hidden in me, a spark, a thought, I am life from eternal life. The attempt and the risk that the eternal mother took with me is unique, unique the form and veins of my skin, unique the smallest play of leaves in my branches and the smallest scar on my bark. I was made to form and reveal the eternal in my smallest special detail.

A tree says: My strength is trust. I know nothing about my fathers, I know nothing about the thousand children that every year spring out of me. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end, and I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labor is holy. Out of this trust I live. When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me! Life is not easy, life is not difficult. Those are childish thoughts. . . . Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all.

A longing to wander tears my heart when I hear trees rustling in the wind at evening. If one listens to them silently for a long time, this longing reveals its kernel, its meaning. It is not so much a matter of escaping from one's suffering, though it may seem to be so. It is a longing for home, for a memory of the mother, for new metaphors for life. It leads home. Every path leads homeward, every step is birth, every step is death, every grave is mother. So the tree rustles in the evening, when we stand uneasy before our own childish thoughts: Trees have long thoughts, long-breathing and restful, just as they have longer lives than ours. They are wiser than we are, as long as we do not listen to them. But when we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy. Whoever has learned how to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is. That is home. That is happiness.

Herman Hesse, Wandering

“Ağaç, tabiatın ,bitkinin teknik ve sanat zekasının basarabildiği güzel ve olgun varlık , bakın, insana ne çok benziyor.Şu gövdesi bir sütun gibi yükselen muhteşem ağaç, bir sarıçamdır.Yanıbaşındakiler ve bu ormandaki onbinlerce de sarıçamdır.Fakat bakın , hiç biri ötekinin tıpkısı değil.Hepsinin, her birinin ayrı bir kişiliği var; insan gibi.”

“Hangi varlık böyle gün gören ,devran süren ,dinlerin, devletlerin, medeniyetlerin, şehirlerin kuruluşunu seyreden bir ağaç kadar bizi kendimize getirebilir?Bir zamanlar gölgesinde çekişmelerini, sevişmelerini, sonsuzluğu özleyişlerini, müsamahalı sessizliği ile seyrettiği , çılgınca ihtiraslarına gülümsediği yüzlerce, yüzbinlerce insan, adsız sansız günlük kelebekler gibi göçüp giderken , her yıl yeşeren , her yıl çiçeklenen ağacın ,o, sükununu kendi içinde bulan eşsiz büyüklüğün yanında insan ve ömrü nedir ki...İşte ormanda kavuştuğumuz huzur da belki hayatın ağaçta bi yarı ebedilik kadr süreklili ve yüzyılların hayat için bir gün kadar kısa olmasındandır.”

Anadolu Manzaraları – Hikmet Birand

İnkaya Çınarı

Yaşı 600'ü geçiyor.

Osmanlı'nın ilk başkenti Bursa 'da; Osmanlı kadar görmüş geçirmiş, Cumhuriyetin yasalarıyla da koruma altına alınmış...Yüksekliği 40 m.'ye yakın.

Ya da ortalama 12-13 katlı bir apartmanı düşünün...

Her biri tek başına nice hemcinsinin gövdesi kadar, kalın dallarının uzunluğu ise 150 m.'yi buluyor. Dakikalarca yürüseniz, yine onun "gölgesinde" geziniyorsunuz... Nereye otursanız, yine onun "himayesinde" dinleniyorsunuz...

Ve, torundan dedeye her yaştan, fakirden zengine, sakallıdan kravatlıya her kesimden Bursalı ile konuklarını, hem de tümünü kucaklayarak ve hiç kimseyi dışarıda bırakmadan koca "kollarının" arasına alıyor; kentin günlük gerilimlerinden kurtarıp "dinginliğe" kavuşturuyor. Uludağ'ın eteğinde, Uludağ gibi ulu ve gösterişli İnkaya Çınarı ...

Adını, bulunduğu köyden almış, görkemli güzelliğini de doğanın bu yamaçlara sunduğu ayrıcalıklı bereketten...

Ne kadar zaman geçti bilemem, bir günbatımında biz de oradaydık. Sanki "o" na sığınmıştık... Önce başımızı kaldırıp "yüceliğine" baktık...

Gökyüzü bu kadar mı sevdalı olur bir ağaca?.. Ya da bir çınar bu kadar mı kavuşmak ister gökyüzüne, göğün gök yüzüne?..

Sonra, sanki ona sığınanların tümüne "Hoş geldiniz" deyip "sarılmak" istercesine kıvrıla kıvrıla alçaktan uzanan dallarını seyrettik...

Yerden "insan yüksekliğinde" olmaları, herkesin onlara dokunmaları için değilse neden olabilir ki?.. O dalların arasında yürürken elinizle tutup ya da şöyle bir okşayıp altından "saygıyla" geçtiğinizde içinizde oluşan "huzur" , eminim ki onun da size armağanı...

Aynı duygu, oradaki hemen herkeste öylesine seziliyor ki kime baksanız sanki "tanıdık" ... Hem de öyle göz aşinalığı şeklinde falan da değil, "dostların arasındayız" dercesine...

Çünkü kentliyi "oralı" kılan yerler için söylenen "buluşma noktaları" arasında, insanı en çok "yaşama bağlayan" bir mekân sunuyor...

Günlük yaşam ve sosyal gerçekler ne kadar "kahırlı" anlar yaratırsa yaratsın, "inadına yaşamak" diyerek soluğu 600 yaşındaki İnkaya Çınarı 'nda alanların, birbirlerini 40 yıllık dost gibi bakışlarla selamlamalarından daha doğal ne olabilir?

Kentlinin bu denli içten ve hesapsız kitapsız "buluşmasını" başka ne sağlayabilir ?

"Günbatımında" demiştim... Güneşin oradan "uğurlanması" bile bambaşkaydı...

Aslında güneş elbette ki her yerden güzel batar. Kimi zaman hüznü verse bile ufukta anbean yarattığı renkler, ton ton kızılıklar ve ışığını alıp giderken size en güzel tablosunu sunması, en katı yüreklerde bile kim bilir kaç türlü çiçeğin açmasına neden olur...

Bir de eminim ki emeğin güllerine, sarı güllere...

Güneşin vedalaşmasını sadece birbirlerine değil, İnkaya Çınarı'na da sarılarak seyredenler, önce "umutla" buluşuyor olmalılar...

Çünkü oradan bakıldığında dağların arkasına doğru öylesine "göz göze" bir alçalışı, öylesine kibar, özenli bir "çekilişi" var ki "Yarın sabah yeniden geleceğim..." dercesine kararlı ve güven verici...

Derlermiş ki onu uğurlarken bir dilek tutarsanız ve gözden kayboluncaya kadar da susarak ve dua ederek ona bakarsanız olur...

Sadece "bakmak" mı? Dileğinizle birlikte düşünüyorsunuz, düşündükçe seviniyorsunuz, sevindikçe içinizdeki umutlar da sanki "çınarlaşıyor" ve İnkaya'nın kolları arasında olduğunuzu anımsayıp yaşama daha bir sevgiyle sarılıyorsunuz...

Evet... O günbatımında, güneşin ertesi sabah yeniden doğacağından emin olduğumuz kadar emindik, ona "susunca bakarken" ne kadar haklı olduğumuzdan...

İnkaya Çınarı'nı 600 yıl önce diken o kutsal insanın, belki de aynı yerden güneşin batışını seyrederken "tutacağından" ve kuşaktan kuşağa yaşayacağından emin olduğu kadar...

Oktay Ekinci, Cumhuriyet

(<http://v3.arkitera.com/v1/haberler/2004/07/21/inkaya.htm>)