

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Containing the Future: Modern Identities as Material
Negotiation in the Urban Turkish Ceyiz**


by

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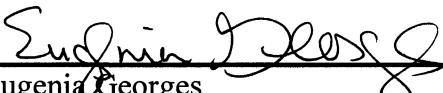
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ABSTRACT

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in the Urban Turkish Çeyiz

By

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The Turkish trousseau, *çeyiz* in Turkish, connects contemporary brides to the traditions and responsibilities of women from previous generations while demonstrating how greater access to education shapes young women's choices as consumers, spouses, and daughters. An emotionally laden collection, the *çeyiz* entails intergenerational negotiations between mothers and daughters who collaborate to organize the bride's future furnishings, crystallizing their respective desires and differences. A variable collection of bedding, tablecloths, curtains, and embellishments, the *çeyiz* serves as the bride's contribution of domestic furnishings for the new couple's house. An analysis of the trousseau engages with the past and the present revealing how young women's lives are being transformed over time. By comparing mothers with daughters, I demonstrate that, within one generation, young women have greater agency over their futures. At the same time, however, they are expected to comply with the traditional roles of marriage, suggesting that their gains are not permanent.

The trousseau's material and affective contents reveal the shifts—and continuities—in family relationships, marriage, and consumption engendered by Turkish modernity. Drawing on the analytical works of Annette Weiner, who researched

Samoans, Trobrianders, and the Maoris, I approach the *çeyiz* as an “inalienable possession,” connecting generations of women, mothers and daughters, who reproduce through it their expectations for marriage (Weiner 1992). This dissertation also considers the subjective implications of the *çeyiz*; it serves as a technology of self, honing women’s skills and tastes in preparation for their future. The urban Turkish *çeyiz* reveals that young Turkish women desire new subjectivities, which they display through consumption and acquire through education. This research demonstrates that increased education influences how Istanbul brides select the contents of their *çeyiz* and envision their futures as wives. More than a symbol for marriage, the rapidly changing bridal *çeyiz* envelops Turkey’s participation within the global economy, national identity, and investment in equalizing gender relations.

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Introduction: Unpacking the Trousseau

At the 1st Alliance of Civilizations Conference in Madrid, 2008, Mayor Kadir Topbaş of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality called Istanbul “the trousseau of the civilizations” (Topbaş 2008). His statement underscores the symbolic currency of how the bridal trousseau is a reservoir for cultural values and practices that captures Istanbul’s complexity. Identifying Istanbul with the bridal trousseau illuminates how two of Turkey’s critical cultural sites, Istanbul and the *çeyiz*, constantly undergo renovation and renewal.

As Ottoman buildings are being replaced with Ottoman-style and contemporary architecture, Istanbul’s brides substitute homemade crocheted tablecloths with washable Ikea furnishings. For Istanbul and the *çeyiz*, cultural significance depends on memory and its dynamic transformation. For the mayor to compare Istanbul with a collection of traditionally handmade items necessary for a bride to enter marriage casts the city in a fascinating light. The trousseau is both ornate and useful, traditional and modern as it transforms to meet the needs of women. The trousseau, like Istanbul, balances the intricate heritage of the past with contemporary relevance. The trousseau’s material and affective contents reveal the shifts—and continuities—in family relations, marriage, and consumption engendered by Turkish modernity. My fieldwork demonstrates that increased secondary school and higher education influences how Istanbul brides organize their trousseaux and envision their futures as wives. Women’s increased education is creating a population of literate women who participate in the school, and for some, in the workplace alongside of men, rather than doing mostly domestic work alongside of other women after puberty. Education gives women greater mobility and allots them less

time to cultivate their domestic skills. At the same time, when education leads to work, it provides women with more financial independence, autonomy regarding time, and potentially more decision-making power regarding household decisions. Beyond symbolizing marriage, the rapidly changing bridal trousseau envelops Turkey's participation within the global economy, potential for EU membership, and investment in equalizing gender relations.

As Turkey aspires for European Union membership and Islamists populate government ranks, Turkey's current transformation is palpable, particularly in the 2010 European cultural capital, Istanbul. As the AK (Justice and Development) Party's diplomatic decisions emphasize Turkey's Muslim identity gradually weakening the military (who had been deemed protectors of Turkish secularism by Mustafa Kemal) in favor of more governmental power, Turkey embraces a competing and sometimes conflicting, national identity as secular and Muslim. Some of the many significant changes the AK Party has enacted include: allowing the military to be tried in court instead of tribunals, reducing the military's power to overthrow the government, making the dissolution of political parties by courts more difficult, and loosening the ban on veiling in public institutions. The AK Party's overwhelming success since 2002 is attributed to its embrace of both global capitalism and Turkey's Muslim character, and the party serves as a model for moderate Muslim political leadership, in the midst of revolt, moving toward democracy.

No population experiences this complicated mapping of traditional values and modern ambitions more strongly than women. Women's roles were central to modernization projects during the early Republic years. For example, in contrast to

Shari‘a, the adoption of the Swiss civil code in 1926 gave men and women equal to divorce, outlawed polygamy, and equalized inheritance shares. In this way, Turkey’s modernization project was conflated with raising women’s status. The civil code, subsequently amended in 2001, now gives women even more rights, raising the age of marriage for women from 15 to 18, giving children born out of wedlock equal rights to inheritance, and allowing divorced wives a share of the property acquired during marriage (Arat 2010, 235).

Deniz Kandiyoti and many other Turkish scholars suggest that gender, and more specifically women’s domestic and public social positions, has been inextricably linked to Turkey’s modernization and state building projects, since the beginning of the republic. Kandiyoti suggests that women’s roles in Turkish society are dynamic and politically inflected.

The ways in which women are represented in political discourse, the degree of formal emancipation they are able to achieve, the modalities of their participation in economic life, the nature of the social movements through which they are able to articulate their gender interests are linked to state-building processes and are responsive to their transformations.

(Kandiyoti 1991, 2-3)

What informs Kandiyoti’s statement is a deep knowledge of how women have been used to further varying modernization or religious projects throughout Turkish history, and that the nature and context of the Turkish corollary to American women’s liberation has occurred within the domestic realm perhaps even more than outside of the

house. For example, the move from polygamy, as sanctioned by both Islam and the Ottoman Empire, emerged within the framing of Turkish nation-building so that women's rights were deeply intertwined with secularism and state formation. When the Turkish civil code was adopted in 1926, "[p]olygamy was outlawed and marriage partners were given equal rights to divorce and child custody," which gave women considerable rights (and legitimate subjectivities) compared to the past (Kandiyoti 1991, 22). The formalization of the rights of women to divorce and marry in Turkey corresponded with the formation of modern Turkish society and the intentional distancing from Turkey's Ottoman and Muslim past.

Crafting Turkey into a modern, secular republic demanded raising women's status. Kandiyoti succinctly observes: "The transformation of the 'woman question' in Turkey between the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century has involved progressive distancing from Islam as the only form of legitimate discourse on women's emancipation, in favor of cultural nationalism appropriating emancipation as an indigenous pattern" (1991, 23). Kandiyoti and others refer to the work of Ziya Gökalp, who helped to foment the Turkish republic based on pan-Turkism, shifting Turkey's identity from Muslim to its central Asian roots to attempt to naturalize secularism, gender equality, and the idea of citizenship over piety. The goal was to displace Islam as the origin of Turkish identity in favor of an older set of beliefs based on Turks' central Asian ancestors, who were exogamous (Vergin 1985).¹

¹ The fabrication of a narrative to build a nation and unsettle power is nothing new, when we examine the examples of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992). But a family-focused nationalism shaped Turkey. Indeed Mustafa Kemal, Atatürk father of Turkey, utilized the family metaphor to establish his place in the country.

However, bridging the past with a vision of the future, women's newly prescribed roles called for an almost impossible balance of character. Emphasizing strength and virtue, the images of a modern Turkish woman presents a confusing picture of someone who remains modest yet fiercely involved in reproducing strong citizens. Özsü suggests that the new republic burdens women with promoting nationalism, "saddling the 'Turkish woman' with the responsibility of satisfying significantly heightened standards of professional self-realization so as to win respect as the 'world's most enlightened' without abandoning her role as the guarantor of social cohesion, custodian of public morality and nurturer of future generations" (Özsü 2010, 69). Thus, the republican Turkish woman was expected to fulfill two reproductive roles, both civic and essential. Although the 1926 civil codes made strides to equalize women's status in contrast to Shari'a, it did not address all structural inequalities, preserving, for example patriarchal language deeming men heads of household, and it stipulated that wives needed husbands' consent "to participate in trade or profession" (Özsü 2010, 72). The civil code perpetuated women's subservience in marriage, but it did not see reforms regarding women's rights for almost eighty years.

The 2001 amendment of the Swiss civil code reveals how women's rights still embody "the terrain over which the nature of Turkish modernization is fought" (Arat 2010, 236). In particular, the most recent changes reflect the call to improve human rights in Turkey's move toward European Union accession. Arat (2010) provides a thorough discussion of how women's groups, which began to distill their platforms in the 1980s drew on the support of international conventions to propose the new changes. Coinciding with Turkey's 2001 National Program, an outline of its plans for reform in order to reach

accession, the revision of the civil code to expand women's rights was an explicit requirement. This reform included annulling the institution of head of household and giving women more protection from domestic violence. According to Arat, the timeliness of the constitutional reforms in the context of EU negotiations suggests that politics demanded the reforms.

Women today symbolize and experience, the simultaneous contradictory forces of Turkish modernity. When women fight for the right to wear headscarves in public institutions and gain mobility in the workplace, their everyday practices reveal much about their changing roles and the larger social forces shaping Turkey's national character, such as human rights reform influenced by the drive for European Union memberships. My dissertation research investigates Turkish women living in Istanbul at the center of this profound cultural transition.

The bridal trousseau, or *çeyiz*, a collection of household items required for marriage, reveals the continuities between contemporary Turkish women and the past. As a tool for understanding Turkey's engagement with modernity, the trousseau signifies enduring domestic expectations for women, and evidence of their dynamic transformation. Begun at a daughter's birth, the time-honored *çeyiz* historically embodied a girl's labor, worth, and only possible future as an adult: marriage. Today, however, parts of the trousseau are purchased rather than made; manufactured goods compete and cohabit with family heirlooms. My many months of fieldwork, in Istanbul's diverse residential neighborhoods, trade schools, and open bazaars, confirm the bridal trousseau as emblematic of Turkish identity, yet most of my informants approached it with ambivalence. The trousseau shows current ruptures with the past in terms of taste, work,

and desires; marks the reconfiguration of gender roles, domestic life, women's education, and cultural heritage as a result of Turkish modernity.

This dissertation incorporates the *çeyiz* into an analysis of daily life, particularly in urban Istanbul. Because the trousseau furnishes the bride with the objects needed for her to maintain a household, it embodies her expectations about her responsibilities as a wife, which often differ significantly from the household of her upbringing, contemporary fashions, and urban trends. The trousseau entails planning, shopping, negotiation, dreaming, and coordinating a number of mundane tasks reflective of the brides' tastes and values.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 orients the reader to ways of considering the trousseau. An analysis of how objects and people relate, chapter 1, describes, embellishes, and questions objects as analytical tools. This chapter stimulates questions about the poetics of objects, about the descriptive nature of ethnography, and it allows me to situate my perspective as an observer and a subject. This chapter contains much of the theory framing my ethnographic research, and it embodies the interdisciplinary, experimental work I had expected to do when joining the Rice department.

Chapter 2 addresses the trousseau in relation to the relevant anthropological literature, setting it up as both an object of study and analytical tool. I present a targeted history of the trousseau as part of dowry to provide context for the Turkish case. The next section addresses generally some of the trousseau's functions and values, considering literature on value and subjectivity. I assert that the trousseau shares a unique subjective link with the bride, whose identity and spousal choice may be fashioned through the

trousseau's contents. After providing some theoretical framework, chapter considers the Turkish trousseau's specificity as the bride's property after marriage and as the creation of mothers and daughters. The next section investigates how university education competes with the *çeyiz* and serves Turkish women as a technology of self. Since women in Turkey are increasingly seeking college degrees and joining the workforce after college, they enter marriage with incomes, careers, and even aspirations for future work. This changes the domestic scene significantly. My research suggests that education and the trousseau are rhetorically framed as opposites in describing how young women spend their time. As legitimate crafts, skills, and time investments, the trousseau and education compete for young women's attention and autonomous time. Additionally, the trousseau and education frame a woman's offerings to the conjugal household, and they inform her aspirations for future life. However, education clearly provides women with more choices for their future than does a collection of household items, and it has significant consequences for their ability to select a spouse, their expectations about household gender equality, and their identities as workers and wives.

Chapter 3 explores the current status of Turkish women through the shifting notions of public and private. Because women's status has been so important to Turkish political projects over time, their dynamic relationship to the domestic and nondomestic spheres warrants further attention. The first section provides background on their education and contributions to work outside of the home. The second section draws from my ethnographic fieldwork to represent some of the complexities of women's daily lives. Traversing the public and private spheres, the trousseau figures importantly as an object, especially as contemporary women purchase more of its contents.

Chapter 4 addresses how urban Turkish mothers and daughters negotiate their decisions regarding the contents, and even existence of the *çeyiz*. This analysis of ethnographic interviews situates tradition of the trousseau in terms of the reproduction of femininity, suggesting that young women resist the trousseau and its related constellation of expectations regarding gender roles, marriage, and domestic life. These ethnographic anecdotes locate

Chapter 5 locates the *çeyiz* within an ongoing discussion of tradition and modernity. Previously cast as binaries, these terms have the ability to overlap and shape each other rather than compete, even within the trousseau itself, in Turkey's current state. Just as engaged women living in Istanbul choose costumes from their families' villages for their henna nights instead of formal more cosmopolitan dresses, the conscious adoption of nostalgia brings some aspects of the trousseau into a modern context. I will make the case for the trousseau's enduring future as a historically contingent, that is, one that is simultaneously historically significant and changing according to the contemporary political economy, maintaining both relevance and recognition to older generations but mutable enough to encompass meaning for today's young women. This work provides examples of its current dynamic forms.

Ultimately, this work will use the trousseau to index multiple social and cultural registers in urban Turkey and delineate societal changes. Because the trousseau is both virtually required for marriage and connected to women's transition into brides, it reflects the multitude of changes related to domestic organization, consumption, and symbolic capital in urban Istanbul. Although I had expected class to emerge as an important factor in determining tastes regarding the trousseau, it was difficult for me to broach this subject

with my informants; it was not comfortable to discuss things such as income and finances, and the demands of domesticity constrained the differences between households, homogenizing them to some extent. Instead, my research organized informant data based on education level, marital status, ethnic origin (when possible), and generation.

Note on Field Sites

The following note provides background information on my informants. Because of Istanbul's size and demographic diversity, my research, by design, was not meant to be representative, but it does reveal recurring themes among brides, merchants and housewives about the *çeyiz*. And these themes demonstrate generational differences in the perception of the *çeyiz*. My fieldwork spanned a number of sites and neighborhoods in Istanbul. I conducted interviews of merchants and consumers in the merchant district Eminönü, which merged with the district of Fatih in 2009, where the covered bazaar is located, and where brides of all economic statuses and from all over Turkey make their purchases. The merchants and customers I interviewed in Eminönü came from all over Istanbul and abroad, and ranged in class. Located close to Eminönü I interviewed brides, merchants, and families in Sultan Hamam, where many brides make their *çeyiz*-related purchases. This is a more working-class and culturally homogenous site, receiving little foot traffic from foreigners.

Additionally, I interviewed a number of merchants and brides in Fatih, a very old, conservative municipality in Istanbul, of which Istanbul is now a part. Considered part of the city before expansion in the eighteenth century, Fatih is convenient for much of Istanbul. Because I visited Fatih close to Ramadan, after the wedding season, the shops

were mostly empty, so the merchants talked with me freely in the absence of customers. Built on the ruins of churches, where Ayasofya still resides, Fatih has a rich history as a Muslim neighborhood. Due to its centrality in Istanbul, however, Fatih is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan, and is described in depth and problematized as a conservative neighborhood (Henkel 2007). However, Fatih houses many mosques and historic sites, and does accommodate many conservative Turks. To present a contrast about conservative and progressive Istanbul neighborhoods, showing that a new and seemingly progressive neighborhood might hold more pious residents, Henckel compares Fatih to another neighborhood in Istanbul, Ümraniye, located on the Asian side. Ümraniye, according to Henckel, is a planned development, contrasted with the squatter settlements or *gecekondu*s, “built overnights,” housing recent immigrants to Istanbul (2007, 60).

Anthropologist Jenny White lived in and studied Ümraniye for her book, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, which presents a portrait of the dynamic mobilization of conservative neighborhood politics (White 2002). She points out that Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan resided in Ümraniye while she was living there, a testament to the grassroots nature of the early AKP Justice and Development Party. This planned neighborhood on the outskirts of Istanbul is enjoying rapid growth, with new apartment buildings going up, and it appeals to conservative migrants from Anatolia, embodying the emergent Islamic middle class. Home to Istanbul’s first Ikea, Ümraniye is clean, newer than most Istanbul neighborhoods, and conservative. I interviewed an extended family, including grandparents, parents, and adult brothers, and recent brides living in a very new and well-attended apartment here.

I also conducted interviews in Kasımpaşa, an area in the Old district of Beyoğlu, known for Roma and migrants from the Black Sea. Within the dilapidated but tidy apartments, I interviewed many families here who were from Rize, in the Black Sea, known for its tea leaf production. The husbands of the women I interviewed were living in Rize seasonally, picking tea leaves while the wives stayed in Istanbul. Women in this neighborhood identified as housewives, perhaps doing piecework for trousseaux, however, a few months out of the year they enjoyed relative (albeit financially compromised) autonomy from their husbands and served as household heads. Compared to my other sites, Kasımpaşa was very conservative, more economically depressed, replete migrants struggling to find work.

I also conducted many interviews in Kadıköy, where I often lived during my stays in Istanbul. Located on the Asian side, Kadıköy, which became a district of Istanbul in 1928, has a reputation for being quieter, cleaner, and more progressive than most neighborhoods on the European side. It is also considered fashionable; hipsters flock to Moda to live or at least smoke a cigarette and enjoy a *filter kahve* (French-press coffee) overlooking the Bosphorus. O'Neill and Güler characterize Kadıköy as perceived by residents as "more cosmopolitan and unaffected by large influxes of internal migrants, thus typifying "old" Istanbul" (O'Neill and Güler 2009, 160). O'Neill and Güler also note that Kadıköy regularly hosts leftist protests and celebrates May Day (160). The center-left CHP, or the Republican People's Party, has had strong representation here. Kadıköy has a reputation for ethnic diversity representative of the Ottoman times, and Armenian Churches and Jewish synagogues are still visible there. Many of the brides I interviewed

in Kadıköy had grown up in Kadıköy or nearby Princes' Islands. Some informants moved to Kadıköy after university, drawn to its less frenetic pace and hip atmosphere.

Chapter 1: Gendering Material Culture: From Superficiality to Density

An analysis of the *çeyiz* shows a dense object in action coupled with a real shift in Turkish women's subjectivities within a mother-daughter relationship, reflecting how young women are both agents and consumers in ways that weren't available to their mothers. Historically, young Turkish women put their energies into developing their *çeyiz*, or hope chest, in anticipation of marriage. A symbolically and affectively dense object, this collection of items has received less critical analysis than the veil, which will be discussed shortly. Because it connects to the bride's past, the *çeyiz* materializes the bride's material connection to her natal home and encompasses some of her mother's tastes and expectations for marriage. The changes in the *çeyiz* trace out regarding expectations for marriage, aesthetic choices, and consumer capital among mothers and daughters; the *çeyiz* embodies generational difference, showing how young women today develop their *çeyiz* within a different ethical framework. No longer relegated to domestic work and mothering after leaving their parents' home, educated young women do not view their *çeyiz* as the sum of their capacities and responsibilities as an adult. The following anecdote shows how a mother and daughter are oriented differently to wedding preparations.

I was fortunate to interview the mother of an acquaintance who had been visiting Istanbul, from her town Isparta, in the Fall of 2008. My friend Maya's mother was very beautiful, in her fifties, with hazel eyes and a quiet intensity. She reminded me of a very young girl. I climbed the many flights of steps to Maya's apartment overlooking the Bosphorus and felt ready to collapse but needed to interview her mother. My friend Maya, having embraced Istanbul's cosmopolitan lifestyle poured us French-press coffee,

rather than the çay, or hot tea, usually offered to guests. Three young women, who knew each other from college, sat quietly smoking, with their dark-framed glasses, disaffected dark clothes, sending slightly brooding, critical looks toward me. I was nervous interviewing Maya's mother in front of them because I knew that they thought my project on bridal hope chests was terribly conventional. They were self-described feminists, who cared nothing for crocheted doilies, precisely what mothers make for their daughters and what I wanted to study—they spent their time attending protests and producing feminist 'zines. But Maya was excited to hear what her mother had to say about marriage because she was now engaged and this was not something they talked too much about, fearing it would create conflict.

I began to ask Maya's mother to tell me about her wedding. And she began speaking about herself in the third person. "On the wedding day the bride awoke early," she began, distantly and cold. Her daughter interrupted, "Mother, who are you talking about?" The mother looked at her daughter, "The bride, me." I had not questioned her use of the third person because it was typical for mothers to speak of brides in the ideal sense, rather than personally. But for Maya, it was strange to hear her own mother recount the details of her arranged marriage in the third person, as if narrating someone else's story. So, we moved the conversation back to talk about Maya's mother's life before the wedding. She was engaged at fourteen and married at eighteen. She quickly transitioned from high school graduate to young wife and mother in a new city while her husband worked as a judge.

We paused and drank some coffee, and I asked for more details about the engagement—she became very happy and animated speaking about her friends before

marriage. “We made carpets and lace for our çeyiz, hope chest in Turkish; we went to the cinema. We talked about everything. My mother never told me about the wedding night; she was very cold and distant. I had some friends who weren’t engaged and I learned from them. While were making the carpets, the girls explained what they did. One was pregnant, and then ran away and got married.”

So for this woman, the act of making carpets to sell and prepare for marriage entailed gaining specific sexual knowledge with her peers. The task of weaving rugs for Maya’s mother’s bridal hope chest became an occasion for her to sit with her peers and to dream. During this time of weaving and sewing Maya’s mother and her friends would dream about their futures, with their fantasy lovers and with their potential future husbands. She was more invested in the lives the films offered her than her real life because she knew that her real life consisted of preparing for marriage with a partner she did not choose and moving to a new city, preparation for a life unknown. However, she religiously paid money to watch and memorize the films. She bonded with her friends while they were sewing, and while they were preparing materially for their futures. In this respect, the kind of work she did with her hope chest was a not just the gender-sanctioned work with cloth that young girls were expected to do before marriage, to demonstrate their skill and industry, but the çeyiz occasioned a kind of dream work, where women fantasized about who they would become and how their lives would be. Maya’s mother also told, with her daughter’s blushing friends in the audience, that making the çeyiz gave the young women an opportunity to discuss their sexual knowledge As they sewed, those women experienced in kissing and dating real, not celluloid, men, gave the other women instruction in preparation for their weddings.

She continued: “Everyone had a lover from the actors—we each had a lover in the cinema. A card used to give you a description of the film...we would all go together. Everyone would memorize the film.” The cinema was the highlight of her week and gave her friends fodder for conversations, supplying them with information on Western-style courtship, as opposed to the arranged marriages or quick elopements that were customary. Her friendships with these women have lasted her entire life and they have met over time to update their advice on sex, as wives with children, and to exchange patterns for their daughters’ hope chests.

She discussed her relationship with her mother (Maya’s grandmother) and her hopes for her relationship with Maya, telling me that her own mother had been cold and uncommunicative. Maya’s mother said, “I wanted things to be different from my mother. I wanted to talk openly with my daughter so we would be closer... Youngsters today are more educated, more free—I wish I was born today.” She looked wistful and sad. When I asked her if she had a hope chest for her daughter she said, “It’s the daughter’s will whether or not to have a *çeyiz*.” Maya intervened to tell me that she had no *çeyiz* because she did not want one. But I asked her mother if she had made any items. Maya’s mother smiled sheepishly, “I made some pieces secretly, *dantel*, bedsheets.” Maya smiled, surprised that her mother had made something for her in secret, and she was interested in what those items were, and was perhaps flattered to be given something handmade for her upcoming wedding.

In my previous conversations Maya had always insisted that she did not want anything to do with a hope chest, the embellished, handmade bedspreads, tablecloths, and ornamental covers for furniture; she would rather buy her preferences from Ikea. When I

asked her what she wanted from her parents for her wedding, she insisted, “I want money for a video camera.”

In analyzing the emotional landscape of this interview the discussion of the mother’s wedding resulted in her dissociation. The mother spoke of herself in the third person while describing her hope chest preparations caused enthusiastic engagement among the group. Talking about the cinema became meshed with lace, dreams, and strong friendships in describing the hope chest. And the counterpoint was that her daughter did not want a *çeyiz*; rather she wanted to craft her own films using her own video camera. Maya’s mother’s very emotional connection with the cinema deepened an understanding of why Maya wants to make films. Films were the medium for her mother’s dreams, her happiness, and her desires before marriage. But Maya wanted to produce her own films. Maya wanted to craft and narrate the images that once fed her mother’s dreams. Maya wanted to be the agent of her own imagination, and her own reality, through film.

Drawing from this discussion I want to outline how the terms of density and superficiality relate to the hope chest, or the *çeyiz*, which I suggest is a dense object. Weiner (1994b) thus describes symbolically dense objects:

As cultural constructions, some objects become symbolically dense—so dense with cultural meaning and value that others have difficulty prying these treasures away from their owners. Such density accrues through an object’s association with its owner’s fame, ancestral histories, secrecy, sacredness, and aesthetic and economic values. Thus objects that are especially dense circulate

exceedingly slowly in comparison to less dense ones, which can be exchanged, sold, or traded with impunity. (394)

So, in Weiner's account, dense objects connect to family relationships, move slowly within markets, and are difficult to analyze. Unpacking this density complicates ethnographic research. First, these objects are difficult to find—since they are not sold regularly on the market they move through different systems of exchange, through families, for example. Secondly, the time frames in which they are exchanged differ from more easily replaceable items. For example, the hope chest is begun with a daughter's birth, and moves with her to a marital household. Observing a *çeyiz* in full would entail observing a mother aware of her pregnancy through her daughter's wedding day. Although fieldwork can be long and grueling, lifetimes are not realistic time frames for study. In this respect, dense objects have subjective and affective value; David Graeber suggests how heirlooms emerge with individual subjectivities, and thus the subject and the object are co-constitutive (2001).

Weiner contrasts these objects with other items of lesser and more easily studied value. Based on (Simmel 2004) Weiner posits “ a continuum along which objects may be ranked according to their symbolic densities. At one end of the continuum are inalienable possessions—objects that should be kept within the closed context of family, clan, dynasty, or corporation, for example. Other, less prized possessions vary in their symbolic densities and, therefore, in their degree of interchangeability. Like commodities, things at the other end of the continuum without much symbolic density are exchangeable merely in terms of value of their replaceability” (1994b, 384).

Thus, objects that are less symbolically dense are replaced more easily, and distributed more easily within markets. Weiner calls these objects less prized possessions, which clearly don't take lifetimes to create. Symbolically dense, or inalienable possessions, as she calls them, are intrinsically linked to their owners, making them important to keep and they "resist exchange." Their exchange value is difficult to determine because they are irreplaceable, and invaluable. But she also reminds us that all things wind up on the market and eventually have a monetary value. But what kinds of extra-market value do dense objects have?

I argue that these symbolically dense objects have affective value, they are the objects of grief, of family relationships, of nostalgia and time, not just in the past but for the future. In terms of the past, hope chests remind brides of their natal homes, and each time a tablecloth is used they recall those origins. I am reminded of the woman I interviewed, whose situation I will analyze more fully in chapter 4, who began her daughter's hope chest with her mother and had to finish her own mother's work on her daughter's hand towels: "This one, she said, this one is made of my tears." She lovingly pointed out an orange fringed hand towel amid a set of many embellished towels. In this respect, dense objects contain not only memories, sometimes the biological and substances of emotional subjectivity: tears and grief. Dense objects can memorialize the history or identity of communities. Maya's mother and her friends have rugs made in those moments of intimate exchange, laughter; they have lace patterns named after the films and actors they viewed together.

As a physical object that contains women's labor, their skills and tastes sewn into contents, the *çeyiz* is an object of collective memories. Historically, women worked on

their *çeyiz* together, talking about their future husbands and sharing patterns and styles. Memories are housed in physical objects, ephemeral odors, and events. In this respect the *çeyiz* produces, and, when given to a daughter, memorializes her mother's skills, preferences, background² and life history. As Pierre Nora (1996) points out, memories are housed in physical things: "Memory is rooted in the concrete: in space, gesture, image, and object" (3). In this respect the *çeyiz* produces, and, when given to a daughter, memorializes her mother's skills, preferences, background and life history. But the *çeyiz* is not just a subjective display of a mother's tastes—it reflects her background and the forces informing her life. For example, the amount of time a woman can allocate to the *çeyiz* is contingent on her household responsibilities, and the structure of the household. A *çeyiz*, as the physical embodiment and transmission of skill, contains more than traces of the past. Especially for women from villages, an object like the *çeyiz* is created in social gatherings and its meaning depends on the mutual recognition by other women. "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its coherent body of people, it is individuals and groups who remember it" (Halbwachs 1980, 1:48). Thus, the *çeyiz* signifies both group and individual identities. As Halbwachs claims, "The collective memory, for its part, encompasses the individual memories while remaining distinct from them" (Halbwachs 1980, 1:51).

As a material object the *çeyiz* affects and informs specific and collective identities. Unlike other wedding-related items, the hope chest comes into being with the birth of a daughter. Thus, the *çeyiz* is created specifically for an individual. Historically,

² Handiwork patterns vary across regions in Turkey, and trends move through communities and places, so pattern choices reflect mothers' exposure to patterns (Onuk 2000).

the *çeyiz* and the daughter developed slowly in anticipation of marriage. As a liminal object, the trousseau contributes to the formulation of the young girl's burgeoning identity as a bride. The process of creating the trousseau, whether crafting or purchasing its contents, may be considered as a microcosm for the buying, crafting, and general work required of her in her new position, while giving her a taste of domestic life. Victor Turner thus describes the effect of liminality: "it has ontological value, it refashions the very being of the neophyte" (Turner 1995, 103). Historically, the *çeyiz*, while schooling the bride in her future responsibilities helps to connect her to her past.

As a connective object the *çeyiz* moves with the daughter from her natal household to the conjugal home, tying her to her past. Unchanged by this passage from place to place, the hope chest could be seen as an anchor for the bride in flux. Because the trousseau belongs to the bride, it has a quality of permanence compared to other wedding-related goods. Annette Weiner suggests that, "Keeping things instead of giving them away is essential if one is to retain some measure of one's social identity in the face of potential loss and the need to give away what is most valued" (1994a, 210). When the bride relinquishes her family for her husband's, the hope chest serves as a reminder of her family and her previous life, providing her with physical reminders of her family's expectations and conveying their enduring authority. Consumption and creation occur with knowledge of these expectations. Paul Connerton compares clothes to reading and writing, and as embodied social memories:

To read or wear clothes is in significant respect similar to reading or composing a literary text. To read or compose a text as literature, and as belonging to a particular genre of literature is not to approach it without

preconception; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for or how to set about composing. (1989, 11)

At times, these memories are made private, turning into meaningful mementos rather than public displays. During one interview, an informant, Arzu, told me that her mother would not let her children open the hope chest she had prepared for her marriage and look at its contents because “it contained her entire life.” It was her only private space, a record of her past life before marriage and children, to store and occasionally view her memories and mementos. For this woman, the hope chest included letters from her past as well as objects produced for her wedding. Not so much a collection, but a recollection, the *çeyiz* reminded her of her family of origins.

As one explanation, the trousseau fits within Weiner’s concept of keeping-while-giving because the bride retains it for her household while it confers her new matrimonial identity. Before marriage, the hope chest served as a measure of the bride’s worth, helping her to secure a husband of the appropriate status. During marriage, it connected her with her family and demarcated her responsibilities as a wife. In the absence of the trousseau, the bride loses her familial ties: “For to give up these objects is to lose claim to the past as a working part of one’s identity in the present” (Weiner 1985, 210). The *çeyiz* thus maintains a connection with the bride’s past.

In symbolizing the bride’s identity the trousseau refers more broadly to generations and group histories; her identity entails an accumulation of expectations from the women around her. Working with the Maori of New Zealand, Weiner suggests that

this process of reproduction through an object is necessary for the maintenance of group identity. “Persons and groups need to demonstrate continually who they are in relation to others, and their identities must be attached significantly to those ancestral connections that figure in their statuses, ranks, or titles” (Weiner 1985, 210). As a signifying object, the trousseau marks all of these differences: ethnicity, region, and status (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003; Hart 2005). Although Weiner refers to the representation of “groups” through certain objects, this particular object also separates men from women. It would be interesting to study how the trousseau as a practice contributes to the regulation of gender difference and how women continue to identify with the tradition as other gendered divisions dissolve with the effects of modernity.

Hope chests have very significant future-values. They are crafted to provide women with the material means to have productive futures. The forward-looking aspect of the hope chest and other household items women make or purchase warrants further attention. Not only does the hope chest provide the material goods to begin a household, but it also furnishes the bride with the stuff that her dreams will be realized from. The occasion of the hope chest becomes an opportunity to anticipate the future—this tablecloth will be on my table when I marry X, and we will eat a meal of lamb and rice here. Beyond helping the bride to imagine what her life will be like, the hope chest also provides her with an occasion to reflect on who she wants to be, who she wants to become. Who has not bought a bread-maker or a mixer, at a great sale price, because she expected to become the kind of woman who baked bread?

What has gone under-explored, with Weiner as a great exception, is the gendered value of these dense objects. What does a hope chest say about women’s expectations or

resistance to marriage? How do the parameters of femininity unfold within the bedding of a hope chest? I have noted elsewhere the pastel colors of the bridal bedding, yellow, pink lavender, never primary colors. And the fabrics have tended to be fragile and difficult to maintain. When you are speaking of an object that develops with the life of a daughter, it seems safe to infer that the quality of the fabric and its care reflect something about the expectations of that daughter's comportment. She should be precious, proper, delicate, and display herself modestly. But, interestingly, the *çeyiz* has not been an object studied with much emphasis on its connection to reproducing and embellishing gender.

Which leads to the contrasting quality of superficiality. In my course, "Gender and Islam," we have looked exhaustively at the veil. And I appreciate my students' ongoing engagement with this literature. We have encountered the veil as a marker of Muslim identity, as resistance to age hierarchies, as instrumental in creating migrant identities, as a tool for both fundamentalism and feminism, and as the sign of a new modernity, to name a few. The analytical treatment of the veil has been broad, epidemic even. The definitions that have fascinated me the most have been Saba Mahmood's suggestion that the veil assists women in their process of becoming more modest, that it allows them to attempt to exercise and thus fortify their strength in acting modestly (Mahmood 2001, 2005). Rather than a barrier to expressing their true selves, the veil becomes the means for women's self-conscious self-cultivation. Mahmood states: "one veils not to express an identity but as a necessary, if insufficient, condition for attaining the goal internal to that practice—namely the creation of a shy and modest self. The veil in this sense is the means both of being and becoming a certain kind of person" (2001, 215). Thus the veil serves women's subjective aims, working as a technology of

self, in Foucault's terms. But does it operate this way because of its proximity to the body? Is it a rich analytical tool because it is dense?

I bring up the veil in relation to Weiner's continuum of objects because the veil lacks density. It is easily replaceable, bought and sold easily, and easy for outsiders to observe. In my estimation, the veil is entirely superficial, a covering that allows analysts to superimpose meanings onto it. The veil is an obvious marker of religious and cultural difference—it stands out in the social landscape, directing gendered traffic. In effect, though, the veil is a formless piece of fabric that gains its meaning through its relationship to women's subjectivities. I believe the continued interest in the veil and the fixation on its meaning presents a barrier to investigating the meaning behind more salient, time-consuming objects closely associated with women's subjectivities. If you ask a Turkish woman about the "special things" she owns, she will point you to a cabinet or under her bed where her hope chest sits. But these objects have gone ignored or been overgeneralized, grouped together as basically the same, and anthropologists have spent more time looking at items on the market because of their easy access to them.

Gender has not been the main organizing category for approaching material culture. Beyond Annette Weiner's, the theoretical insights about the relationship between material culture, consumption, and subjectivity (Benjamin 1969; Bourdieu 1984; Appadurai 1986b) completely exclude gender from the analysis. In fact, their analyses presume a certain kind of subjectivity afforded only to men at the time. For example, Walter Benjamin's work on collections, "Unpacking My Library" discusses the collector's will. "Inside him there are spirits or at least little genii. Which have seen to it that for a collector—and I mean real collector as he ought to be—ownership is the most

intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him, it is he who lives in them” (1969, 67). According to Benjamin, the art of collection is both classed and gendered. “He,” the collector, must be of a certain status to be able to collect. The aficionado must also have the leisure time to expand his collection, and only because he is a whole, agentive subject can he be infiltrated by geniis who guide his tastes.

I am reminded of a collector I met in Brazil, a very poor maid who still suffered from the impact of childhood polio. I was lucky enough to visit her room, full of keychains, decorative key fobs, and pictures of happy children. This collection clearly reflected her tastes and that she spent what little money she had in order to further it. But, because of her status, disability, and the limited size of her means and space (the room was quite tiny) her collection would have been deemed pathological. To me, it looked like the home of one who had dreams. All of those key chains could have held keys to her many mansions, so that she could escape her life of servitude. And, for the childless woman, who had probably never had a lover, the pictures represented the kids she would never be able to have. This maid, who was also illiterate, would not have been considered a collector by Benjamin. Analyses on consumption and the social lives of things often elide women, unless they are elite, as collectors, or even as subjects.

The issue of women’s subjectivity came up during my dissertation defense. When I discussed hope chests in terms of the technology of self, considering the process of organizing the hope chest as a means for brides to become wives, honing their skills and tastes, my committee member asked me if this was a correct assessment. “Are Turkish women subjects, or merely subjugated in the fathers’ homes and subservient to their husbands?” I asserted that my informants were subjects within the confines of their lives,

and I was struck by this question. Are subjects still the same kind of male, Western, liberal subjects of John Locke's time (2010)? To ignore the subjectivity of women prevents us from being able to investigate how the objects they surround themselves with inform and assert their identities. To discount their subjectivity keeps us from analyzing how a bride resists and transforms the expectations laid out for her, for example, by refusing to wear a nightie selected by her mother-in-law to be for her wedding night. But most of all, refusing to take into consideration the subjectivity of women in relation to material culture places them in the position of objects, where they have been placed historically since the beginning of time.

In fact, I argue that women have deeper affective connections to material culture because they were the original objects; women were exchanged by men in marriage. The exchange of women grew empires and expanded property ownership among families. Gayle Rubin suggests this in her work: "If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the women being the conduit for the relationship rather than the partner to it" (Rubin 1975, 174). Rubin goes on to suggest that women are "given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favors, sent as tribute, traded bought, and sold. Far from being confined to the primitive world, these practices seem only to become more pronounced and commercialized in civilized societies" (175). Strangely, even Annette Weiner's work about selling ancient tapestries tells the story of the collector acquiring these priceless tapestries—and the owner's wife. In the literature on material culture women continue to be objectified, and they need to be seen as their own agents, particularly as their earning and consumption powers increase in economic markets.

But what prevents acknowledging women as subjects and as consumers in relation to material culture? I assert that the domestic realm, the site of women's interactions, production, and consumption, does not have much appeal to Western feminists. Western feminists prefer to analyze women's activities in the public sphere, hence the attention to the veil regarding Muslim societies. Attention to homelife, where women remain wives and mothers, does not demonstrate change or freedom as dramatically as external markers of progress, such as education. For example, Carol Delaney's ethnography *the Seed and the Soil* addresses women's roles in public life, connecting those roles to women's essential reproductive capacities, and all of women's activities are subsumed under this gender cosmology (1991). Public and private life are reduced to gender with no real analysis of the practices or objects involved in reproducing those gender roles. Delaney does not develop how women's access to material resources are changing or how the aesthetics or patterns of domestic goods reflect temporal specificity.

Since families are involved in creating the *çeyiz* and mothers prepare them for their daughters, an intergenerational study makes the most sense. While early assessments of the *çeyiz* (Delaney 1991; Stirling 1965) present its contents as relatively static, the availability of goods, economic changes, and changes in trends make it increasingly dynamic. While the basic contents have indeed remained the same, the *çeyiz* is customized and personalized according to trends, financial means, and time. Hart suggests that the *çeyiz* has always been fluid and insists that a study of it must be intergenerational: "Without considering *çeyiz* across generations in a single place it is impossible to see how it has transformed in relation to shifting ideas of property,

consumption and wealth...by looking at the changing nature of *çeyiz*, therefore, we can see how a notion of a daughters' property developed, as well as an expectation that they needed property" (Hart 2005, 252). An intergenerational study brings out very specific changes in materials and values across generations (Borneman 1992; Yanagisako 2002; Collier 1997; Georges 2008). It reveals cultural continuities and fissures within families, and it allows for a focus on the minute material changes in the *çeyiz*. Additionally, limiting a study to one particular location helps the analyst to map out sources of influence according to that place's history.

In her intergenerational assessment of the Orselli *çeyiz*, Hart asserts that its main purpose to show status:

Clear *çeyiz* practices show that the role and status of women: daughters, mothers, and mother-in-laws, has changed dramatically. Daughters, who are wage earners, have become a worthy investment in funding the household goods of her future home. Mother-in-laws strive to create relationships with their daughter-in-laws through massive outlays in gifts. Parents, especially mothers, command more control over household resources and are willing to buy things for their daughters. (2005, 286)

The contents of the *çeyiz* reflect women's heightened household power associated with an increase in income and daughters, as future wage earners, deserve more investment than in the past. These changes resonate with modernization via urbanization and migration (Abadan-Unat 1977; Ong 2010). Since the village *çeyiz* already demonstrates these effects clearly, the *çeyiz* emerging within the city of Istanbul offers an entirely different perspective. My research incorporates intergenerational study but focuses on the

çeyiz in the process of urban transformation to see it at its most elemental. An urban study reveals different motivations and expectations involved in the making and maintenance of the çeyiz under new pressures and in different contexts. The mothers I interviewed were either living or visiting Istanbul, but none were natives. Meanwhile, the daughters were mostly migrants, arriving for college or work and staying. I explore the çeyiz as an object embodying memories and projected futures, negotiated in concert by mothers and daughters. In this respect, my analysis considers it between generations, not as it has been viewed and created within individual generations because, especially in the city where women may have more income, mothers and daughters work on it together or at least share input about it.

An analysis of consumption, and particularly women as consumers deepens an understanding of women's agentic relationships with items, from clothes to handiwork. And, in emerging markets women are moving forward as workers and consumers, but the scholarship has not quite caught up. Domestic analysis serves as an important site for this change.

For migrants to both Istanbul and Europe, the çeyiz materializes belonging, pointing to familial and national origins, showing how consumption promotes ideas of citizenship (Holston 1999). The merchants I interviewed (in Kapalı Çarşı, the Covered Bazaar, and Fatih) told me that many of their customers were families of Turks living abroad in Europe, who traveled to Istanbul to make purchases for upcoming weddings. In returning to Turkey to purchase items such as bedding, tablecloths, and lingerie, families physically connected with their country of origins, meeting with relatives for shopping trips and consulting with local experts on the most up-to-date designs. Enfolded within

this travel is the assertion of identity. Through the very act of purchase and consumption they maintained their identities as Turks. As Mary Douglas states, “Consumption is an active process in which the social categories are being continually redefined” (Douglas and Isherwood 1996, 68). Especially for brides who have grown up in Germany, a return to Turkey to make wedding purchases shapes their future as Turkish brides.

“Consumption is the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape” (Douglas and Isherwood 1996, 57). Thus consumption entails conscious group membership.

For example, I am reminded of running into an informant who told me that her educated cousin from Istanbul had just had her henna night, her *kına gecesi*. When she participated with relatives from Izmit in a party before her wedding she wore a dress typical of that area. Her family exclaimed, “Now you are a real Turkish girl!” With that statement, she fully belonged to her family’s village. For migrants and city-dwellers who have more capital because of work, purchasing becomes an important means for the assertion of identity, and women with incomes make additional expenditures of this sort (Abadan-Unat 1977). Thus, culture becomes conflated with the act of consumption, and the next step is to address consumption as resistance to cultural belonging.

Back to Maya, the daughter of the mother I interviewed. This young woman clearly resisted the reproduction of femininity through her refusal of a *çeyiz*. She also insisted on being the arbiter of her own dreams and fantasies. Does she have a hope chest, yes, but it is not as dense as the one her mother had—it symbolizes her mother’s love and the effort she has put into raising her. However, it does not contain her dreams, like her mother’s did. It does not contain hours of labor and gossip with other women. Maya

insists on crafting her own dreams, as a subject, and author, and a producer, not just an object or a reproducer, as the women who came before her.

In conclusion, density and superficiality refer to more than the qualities of object moving within human relationships. Density and superficiality provide a continuum of anthropologists' analytical scope, of where and how hard they are willing to look for subjective connections between gender and material culture. However, as long as women are not treated as subjects, it remains difficult to analyze the density of their subjective and affective associations with things.

Are there any ways of expressing and accessing the emotional, sensual, and affective implications of material culture without folding into psychoanalysis or symbolic analysis? What skills or experiences are necessary to understand those meanings successfully? What form does work that engages with these emotional qualities take on? The section questions how to analyze an affective object like the trousseau, employing a range of theoretical orientations to this task. A combination of analysis and creative writing undertakes these issues, with particular attention to the relationships between peoples' identities and their things.

Crafted by women, including brides, their mothers, and neighbors, "writings" are displayed before the Turkish village weddings to show the bride's skill as a future wife and they are given to her as gifts. The writings to which I refer are called *yazma*, literally translated into English as "writing." An outsider might label these objects embroidered headscarves. The bride accumulates these pieces for her new home. But these writings are not read in private. Rather they are exhibited in the bride's natal home where waves of people, kin and company, visit for their viewing. They are not read silently, but aloud,

perhaps in quiet tones if the viewers criticize the bride's work. Women comment on their quality, comparing them with past work. Although they are on display, they are not simply read visually. The bride's work is evaluated, or read, for beauty and accuracy. These pieces may be touched, felt between the hands for a particular kind of quality that only skilled fingers know.

Walter Benjamin suggested that unwritten objects have been read since the beginning of time, a process that would entail cultural intelligibility, collective understanding, and discernment. "'To read what was never written.' Such reading is the most ancient: reading before all languages, from the entrails, the stars, or dances" (1969, 336). The examples Benjamin uses span cosmology, ritual, and divination, but what about domestic daily life?

Understanding *yazma* as writing reveals important aspects about headscarves and other pieces of material culture as encoded crafts, objects which are "written" and "read." In *Oya Culture Since the Ottomans* (2000), Taciser Onuk chronicles the dynamic designs of needle crochet in Turkey, providing their region, date, materials, techniques, colors, subject and source of inspiration, which are mostly pastoral but also include the hotel room, bicycle wheel, the railway, and the Milky Way.

Handicrafts have been one of the most important vessels through which the Turkish peoples could easily express their feelings and focus on the paths of their lives. Besides preserving traditional culture for new generations, handicrafts provide the most vital, significant, and expressive proof of a nation's cultural identity. Therefore handicrafts provide testimonies of the events occurring in the eras in which they were created.

Handicrafts not only furnish economic benefits but they engender a favorable atmosphere for occupation and the use of manpower allowing for social development in both tangible and in tangible (sic) ways.. (sic). Since traditional handicrafts are generally produced collectively, friendship, public solidarity, and sharing increase with time and become significant. (Onuk 2000, x)

The designs of the needle crochet are recognizable among communities of women skilled (or literate) in the craft, and, in terms of their creation and reception (in being worn or exhibited) are social in nature, which links to reading and writing.

Penned with a needle and thread rather than ink, these writings convey meaning about the author's identity as a future wife, her mastery of specific signs and trends, including embroidered expertise, village traditions, and gendered expectations. Both the reading and authorship of *yazma* and other culturally inscribed objects entail literacy, resulting in successful understanding and implementation of the social codes that give this craft comprehensibility and meaning. So how are these cultural objects, or artifacts, "read"? What are the elements of reading and writing material culture and how do they differ from reading words? What kinds of literacy are involved that we, as anthropologists and outside readers, should be privy to? The tools for reading *yazma* and other material objects include collective experience (Boyarin 1993), a cultural context of tradition, and sensual knowledge.

Like embroidery shared among Turkish women, comprehending literature requires an "infrastructure" which frames how people read (Long 1993, 191). In her work

on U.S. reading groups Elizabeth Long brings into relief the collectivity of reading, emphasizing its minimized social elements. She points out that, historically, certain kinds of reading have been collective, although this notion of collectivity has been suppressed in favor of an image of reading as private (192). The ability to read texts and objects is generated from collective experience, values, and modes of communication, all of which stem from culture. Although anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz suggest that cultures can be read (1977), this reading requires a form of everyday expertise precipitated by embeddedness in a culture, from lifetime exposure or extensive fieldwork.

While Long credits social institutions as forming the content and manner in which books are read, cultures also create reading tools for comprehension and influence the choice of objects serving as reading material. Reading as a collective process suggests that societies and cultures can determine what is and is not readable, Long also notes. Discriminating between works is typically understood in terms of literary canon creation or book publishing. However, the very act of media selection privileges scripted over material objects as readable. But, as Boyarin suggests, “we should be aware of the important ways in which ‘reading’ is also unreflective, tactile, and not only cognitive response to the presence of all sorts of fragmentary, conventionalized, or telegraphic texts in our everyday world” (8). Reading, especially reading handmade objects, constitutes a cultural practice. In other words, cultural collectivities and knowledge-generators have left out cultural practices and material objects that serve as information for communities, which are analyzed, “read,” experienced, and rated in ways that reflect values, meanings, class, and culturally inflected practices.

Interpreting *yazma*, the patterns of lace named after popular film stars and worldly experience, depends on collective memory. Integrating collectivity with meaning-making, the literature on memory explores the conditions for experience's intelligibility. As Maurice Halbwachs suggests, collectivity enables groups to think about certain objects, and being part of a group is necessary for both thought and identity (1980). As noted above, collectivity provides a shared context for interpretation of literature, but it also lends meaning to objects, historical events, and self-understanding. In other words, collectivity creates intelligibility by providing a shared context, memories, spaces, and objects, which develop into a framework for understanding the world. According to Halbwachs, collective memory is grounded in the material, whether objects or spaces. He states "place and group each receive imprints of the other" (1980, 1:130). His commitment to memories as group-driven and spatialized suggests that material objects and places encapsulate and embody group histories, and that group identities are inseparable from these physical "things." Physical spaces create the conditions for a group's knowledge, influencing their daily habits and experiences.

Traditions reside in and continue through the perpetuation of objects and places, according to Halbwachs' schema. Materiality creates continuity with the past, serving as sites of societies' reproduction. Thus, spaces charge memories, not just in the sense of historical events, but memories of traditions, desires, and ways of knowing. Collective spaces also hold sensual memories of smells, rainstorms, the footing required to step into a certain building, which all feed into a group's identity and comprehension of the world. Paul Ricoeur (1984) locates the meaning of time, and thus the experience of being, within the "datable and public character of the time of preoccupation" (63). This sense of time is

always ecological, “borrowed from the natural environment and first of all from the play of light and of the seasons” (63). Thus an understanding of the present emerges from what Ricoeur calls “preoccupation.”

Pierre Nora echoes the necessity of materiality for memory: “Memory is rooted in the concrete: in space, gesture, image, and object” (Nora, Kritzman, and Goldhammer 1997, 3). While Nora focuses on the relationship between history and memory as they are constructed through important events, he sees collectivities as generations of people with shared experiences. For Nora, generations grow out of, as he calls them, “mnemonic sites.” He states, “These mnemonic sites generate or become charged with unfathomable powers of symbolic evocation, passwords, and mutual signs, all endlessly revived by narrative, documents, firsthand accounts, and the magic of photography” (Nora 1996, 526). While these sites may be unpacked, developed, and read through media, which could then be interpreted privately, their publicness makes them meaningful and accessible. Recollection may be private, but for Nora and Halbwachs memories are made and interpreted in public. These memories are founded on continuity, perpetuation, and tradition. Harold Bloom expands this argument to suggest that a knowledge void occurs without tradition. “You cannot write or teach, or think, or even read without imitation, and what you imitate is what another person has done, that person’s writing or teaching or thinking. Your relation to what informs that person *is* tradition, for tradition is influence that extends past one generation, a carrying-over of influence” (Bloom 2003, 32). For Bloom, tradition is constituted through relationships over time. These arguments suggest that knowledge and memories require specific social (and material) components.

Considering language as the materialization of memories allows for an analysis of the plasticity of objects that serve collective memorializing and linguistic functions. According to Susan Stewart, since memories are conceptualized into language and writing, signs remain empty without the group's interaction with them. She states: "It is not through any intrinsic quality of the sign but through the interpretive acts of members of a sign community that the sign comes to have meaning. Hence, the transmutability of all signs, their capacity to serve as signified or signifier, independent of their physical properties. The semiotic universe is an abstract and interpretive universe constructed by means of concrete social practices" (Stewart 1993, 32). For Stewart, then, writing is a vehicle: "Writing gives us a device for inscribing space, for inscribing nature...writing seems to capture the world, defining and commenting on the configurations we choose to contextualize" (1993, 31). Thus, Stewart values writing for the formlessness and flexibility it uses to articulate the world, and I suggest that the embroidery within the *çeyiz* constitutes a kind of writing historically shared among Turkish women.

Like a cloth or handkerchief thrown over an object, writing takes on the shape of the thing beneath it. And like the cloth in the description above, writing only becomes comprehensible with cultural knowledge used to decode its narrative purpose. At the same time Stewart acknowledges the art and skill involved in crafting a good written description. Stewart states, "in describing these forms, my text has become embroidered with details, ornaments and figurations" (1993, 43). Interestingly, Stewart employs the material to express the intricacies of literary description, to "get at" writing's capacity for embellishment. While materiality serves narrative description it also describes, although understanding the work of objects requires special attention.

Stewart shows how certain objects, such as miniatures, explode their own form by containing information on a gigantic scale. Mementos, as she sees them, convey personal value, “becoming emblematic of the worth of that life and of the self’s capacity to generate worthiness” (1993,139). Stewart’s important work expands out perceptions of objects by reading them according to their intentions. What do mementos do? How do miniatures relate to other scales of size? These questions could have motivated her work, while putting objects into a space for literary, almost psychoanalytic, critique. This work places objects into play with interpretation, investigating enduring and endearing materials that function to represent nostalgia, longing, selfhood, desires. She also shows how these objects defy the bounds of language. “For the miniature, in its exaggeration of interiority and its relation to the space and time of the individual perceiving subject, threatens the infinity of description without hierarchization, a world whose anteriority is always absolute, and whose profound interiority is profoundly unrecoverable” (1993,44). Perhaps some objects have gone unstudied because of how they physically challenge and remodel universal concepts of time and space.

In my own experiences with meaningful objects, I remember seeing the contents of a hope chest for the first time, watching a cabinet door open and its insides unfold and unfurl; it vibrated with women’s labor, a display of time spent during their youth. When I saw a relative’s *çeyiz* in 2002, I was struck by the intricate detail of the needle crochet or *ince oyası*. I saw a tablecloth of milky lace practically buzzing with human effort and could feel hundreds of hours of handiwork in my hands, through the tight little loops and taut suspension-strings, each hole a respite from stitching. Such a tablecloth is usually appreciated only for the duration of a meal and then put away again. For cultures valuing

virginity, the time encapsulated in a bride's tablecloth is also pure time spent not flirting, not studying but physical working on objects of beauty and household completion. The tablecloth could be read metonymically as the bride's preparation for marriage, as her homemaking abilities, as the materialization of loyalty to her future.

While Stewart's work begins to "read" things for their social functions, this project of reading deserves development in specific cultural contexts and through other lenses besides the visual. How does the hand feel roaming inside the miniature dollhouse? How does a small-scale biscuit or tea party taste to a child? To me, it tasted like mastery; eating a thimble-sized biscuit meant that small things could be alimantal, and that I, a small person, could be a giant in some version of the world. It also showed that a person loved me enough to meticulously cut and bake perfect little bites for me. Surrounded by ever-shrinking objects of the 1980s in the evolution from 8-tracks to Sony Walkmans, though the scale of tiny has certainly shrunk since then, small things had efficiency and compactness. How do our other senses understand material objects, and how do those understandings reflect cultural values?

The traditional Turkish engagement ceremonies show how memories and affection are materialized in the prospective groom's family's visit to the brides' home. The two families, minus the bride, who is in another room, negotiate a possible marriage. Does the groom drink alcohol? What can he provide for the wife? Will a bride price be included? The bride is silent and absent from this meeting, only appearing at the end of the bargain to serve Turkish coffee. At the moment of her entrance the stakes are high. The coffee must be perfect. My respondents emphasized the teeny, tawny bubbles floating atop the two ounces of coffee in each cup. It must be frothy; it must be just right.

The prospective bride serves the coffee to the groom's family, who knows how to read it, how to see her quality as a future wife through her caffeinated presentation; her contribution to the meeting resides in her preparing, pouring, and presentation of coffee. And the groom's cup contains a special message. It can be read for her consent or rejection of his offer. A tacit communiqué exists in each sip. If the coffee is sweet, the bride concurs with the marriage; if it is bitter or salty (*tuzlu*), the groom discerns the bride's dissent. In this case objects in circulation connect subjective identities with specific exchanges. A poetics might best express the meanings surrounding the exchange; the cup's contents imply an almost unbelievable scope—marriage. The following section considers the subjective and gendered possibilities of material exchanges.

Michael Taussig invites an embodied analysis that entails “a more accurate, a more mindful, understanding of the play of mind on body in the everyday” (1991, 147). He calls his descriptive mode “tactility and distraction,” a mode that does not objectify the physical world through abstraction, but one that apprehends it through the body. Following from the work of Walter Benjamin, Taussig attempts to restore a more concerted relationship between the individual and the world. Benjamin looks for the “social fitting around” things (1991, 150), and particularly emphasizes sites, such as collections, which heighten the individual's value of particular objects. Taussig assimilates Benjamin's theories and attempts to embody them through his own writing. He criticizes “allegorizing modes of reading ideology into events and artifacts, cockfights and carnivals, etc...in which surface phenomena stand as ciphers for uncovering horizon after horizon of otherwise obscure systems of meaning” (147), stating that “its weakness lies in assuming a contemplative individual when it should instead, assume a distracted

collective reading with a tactile eye” (147). Taussig’s sense of distractedness is derived from everyday encounters with the world, seeing street signs over and over and noticing them from a side-view, as opposed to distancing, objectifying consideration. However, is it possible to create some kind of second-level theorization according to Taussig’s prescription? Although this question remains, tactility seems to me the next crucial part of reading objects, by the act of noticing their sensual content.

Considering how objects’ sensual content leverage critical analysis. Nadia Seremetakis’ engagement with the senses in *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* privileges the senses beyond sight as arbiters of meaning. She suggests that “the senses are also implicated in historical interpretation as witnesses or record-keepers of material experience” (1994a, 6). The senses become the means for both understanding and remembering. While the mind and senses work in tandem to experience the world to create a corporal sense of meaning, bodies living within the same communities, among the same produce, bus stations, and oceans apprehend the world through collective sensorial experience, one that defines perception and taste, which as Bourdieu reminds us, also reflects class (1984). While senses produce and perpetuate meanings, the absence of sensual awareness may create gaps in understanding. Seremetakis notes: “When new forms and items of an emerging material culture step in between a society’s present perceptual experience and its residual social-cultural identity, they can be tasteless because people may no longer have the perceptual means for seeking identity and experience in new material forms” (8). According to Seremetakis, the loss of sensual awareness results in a dulling of memory and taste. The senses, thus, serve as both analytical and data-recording tools. These ecological tools are endangered

“because the cultural instruments for creating meaning out of material experience have been dispersed with the now discarded past landscape” (8). Thus, physical changes in surroundings, markers of modernity, compromise our sense-driven memories.

Gendering Things and Materializing Subjectivity

According to his thesis in *The Social Life of Things*, the exchange should be the focus of studying objects because “meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things” (Appadurai 1986a, 5). In Appadurai’s framework, the analyst would get the most information about a thing by observing it within the social fields it flows through. But we would not focus on the people; rather, we would focus on these moments of exchange and the people inasmuch as they illuminate information regarding these moments. For Appadurai, this type of study can free things from the contexts of kinship or whatever analytical frame that typically constrains an understanding of them, unburdening them from personal relationships, to stand alone and to move across different contexts. Appadurai states, “Thus, even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view, it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” (5). While he acknowledges the importance of people in the signifying process—we are, after all, the ones who give things value—his methodological perspective would yield information about the “politics” of exchange (Appadurai 1986a, 3). Eventually he streamlines the discussion from “things” to “commodities,” which helps to concretize his argument for approaching things in the process of exchange.

Appadurai's argument presents a pressing temporal problem. What happens when things stop moving? Do they stop having social lives? Do their stories become more of social life history? Since movement is foundational to tracing the trajectory of things as he explains it, it would seem that things die, or become something else once they are grounded out of circulation. His argument also precludes an evaluation of things which don't move too much and yet have very active social lives. For example, an heirloom watch might move from parent to child, to bank safety deposit box, to estate sale, to antique store—or it might stay in the hands of the parent and then move within the household according to family negotiations of the will. Either way, it is laden with significance although it might not move far in the context of exchange—and might stay in its particular environ of exchange for long stretches of time without losing value. What matters about an heirloom watch is precisely who owned it, who it was passed onto, what kind of status that handing-over conferred onto the new recipient, how heavy it is with human identity.

Appadurai's methodological suggestion leaves out the significance of the people surrounding the things. Something about the way the thing is placed into the realm of the social erases the individuals who participate in the exchange and identify with the items in meaningful ways. However, to "follow the thing" does not accommodate the participants' histories, which supply the things with significance and inspire the exchange. The commodity orientation shows how in material cultural analyses, sometimes things get dehumanized or alienated, wrested away from their human connections, and thrown into the market. However, even with commodities, socio-political activity occurs in sweatshops, before goods go into circulation, as Aihwa Ong

explains (2010). The emphasis on commodity exchange as a point of entry into material culture alienates people from things, from the mode of production to the final exchange. While attending to the thing is a crucial part of material cultural studies that can yield informative ethnographic data, it is not okay to disconnect things from identities, or to assume that disconnection as the primary methodological approach—because some important ethnographic details get lost.

For example, gender as an analytical category loses salience when highlighting exchange. Because the object is dis-identified, or dissociated, from its owner (or producer), gender cannot function as a category marker when approaching things. How does a thing retain a gendered inflection when, as Appadurai says, “its exchangeability (past present or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant feature” (1986a, 13)? And exchange as a forum for highlighting sociality leaves out potential players who do not have the adequate “bargaining power” in the market. Women’s objects, such as mats or bridal trousseaux, may not have the same kind of value, in terms of exchangeability, as weapons for example, so their things and their things’ stories may be elided from this methodological process—and from the market. Women who may not have access to the public domain, or the capital to participate, or the right to be physically be present in “the market” may circulate items which appear incomprehensible or simply insignificant according to Appadurai’s method—but there are other possibilities.

In contrast, Annette Weiner settles her analysis on the human relationship between people, things, and time. Weiner locates her research in the same places as Malinowski and Mauss, revisiting Samoa and the Trobriand Islands, noticing the way that

women make cloths and banana leaf mats. She fleshes out Mauss' (1954) concept of *immeuble* as follows, showing how time becomes an important qualifier for value:

Age adds value, as does the ability to keep the object against all exigencies that might force a person or group to release it to others. The primary value of inalienability, however, is expressed through the power these objects have to define who one is in an historical sense. The object acts as a vehicle for bringing the past into the present, so that the histories of ancestors, titles, or mythological events become an intimate part of a person's identity. (Weiner 1985, 210)

She notices, importantly, that reciprocity is not the only form of exchange. Keeping certain objects contributes to personal status, identity, and personal history. The thing serves to connect a person to his or her family's past, having outlasted its previous owner, and presumably outlasting its current one. As a container of personal and familial histories, a thing has indelible value. In this sense, holding onto the thing, rather than giving it away, maintains its value. Weiner explains the importance of holding onto chieftains' cloths which must not be given away. "By creating such physical densities that objectify authority and power, a social person is transformed into a body politic" (1994, 399). For Weiner, these things, mostly cloths produced by women, both document family histories and solidify individual identities. They are substantive in that they contain important pieces of information—evidence to certify identity. At the same time, they are symbolic and mythical, connecting people to the lives of their ancestors,

interweaving the generations which possess them. Weiner shows, through a reanalysis of Mauss' work, that certain items kept out of circulation or reproduced function in conjunction with individual lives, accreting "life" when passed among a lineage. Not only do some things move along a different timeline, creating a veritable lifeline for families, they also have feminine underpinnings.

One of these inalienable items is the fine mats mentioned in Mauss' book *The Gift*. Weiner's reading of Mauss rekindles his qualification of the fine mats as "'feminine' property" (Weiner 1985, 213). She states, "What Mauss emphasized in making this discrimination [between fine mats and expendable wealth] was that fine mats were more valued and were held in higher esteem than these things called *oloa* and that the former things were associated with women and the regeneration of some fundamental aspect of kinship" (1985, 213). Weiner's observations of Mauss point to the feminine identities of certain sacred objects.

She takes this connection between goods and women a step further by associating fine mats with banana leaves and barkcloth, linking them together as primitive forms of cloth (1985). In a later work *Cloth and Human Experience* co-edited with Jane Schneider, the introduction genders cloth as a medium for women's labor and for asserting their power in society. It states that, in terms of cloth:

Women are by no means the universal producers, but, in many societies they monopolize all or most of the manufacturing sequence, giving them a larger role than men. Most societies also assign women rather than men, to exchange or give the cloths that tie the living to the dead, the bride's

groom to the groom's family, the politically dominant to their dependent clients. (Weiner and Schneider 1989, 3)

In calling these plant-based creations cloth, Weiner links these anthropologically significant objects with a global history of women as arbiters of cloth. Her work reveals the enormous theoretical differences one semantic shift makes by calling mats cloths, by looking at the objects women hold onto rather than those given in exchange. She opens up a space in the field of material culture to view the contribution of goods made by women that do not circulate in commodified ways, to the ability of objects to act as evidence for lineages or as the containers of pasts and futures, simply by being held or put away. She also shows that women use material goods to participate in creating status—they may withhold items so that another leader may rule—in ways that typically go unnoticed as patently political. Perhaps the feminine implications of certain goods just remained unanalyzed due to impediments in access, or perhaps these slow-moving things did not command as much attention, but they are valuable and warrant attention.

Weiner's research sensitizes the discipline to its blind-spots and constraints, and reevaluates, most basically, how we conceive of value. This reconceptualization of value sometimes uncovers the sentiment of certain objects—death shrouds, for example, are powerfully infused with the departed's spirit. Annette Weiner's research reveals the connections between things and people—people need things for status and identity and things accumulate peoples' imprints. Some markets, and anthropologists, recognize these types of value by studying how things embody people over time and how peoples' touch lays inalienable meaning onto things. Certain objects power agencies and extent embody

agency in enduring ways. But how do we begin to write about those things? How can we animate such objects through writing?

The next section attempts to realize this poetic value through writing and by expanding the topical terrain of this paper into literary representation. Perhaps poetry and fiction offer models of representation accessible to anthropologists.

Strings Too Small to Keep: The Poetic Life of Everyday Things

“The work necessary to produce social identities in things and people is a tremendous burden, creating a political dependency on inalienable possessions.” (Weiner 1992a, 39)

Poetry sensitizes the reader to imagined found objects. It remembers the sweater worn in wintertime and boxed up in spring. The arena of words personalizes objects and objectifies persons—in a sustained, swapped, conflated and collapsed interplay that does not belong in academic writing, where theories maintain distinctions to justify the action between the characters. Theory plots; poetry imbues. But does poetry exclusively promote this sensitivity? What happens when the weight of the material bleeds into descriptive nonfiction?

Elaine Scarry explores the method and achievements of materialist writing through John Donne’s works (2001). Scarry notes that in depicting the material through words, Donne invigorates words with bodily substance. For Donne, the pages of the book become body, become matter:

Words only acquire material attributes of the world—mass, weight, substance—through their referential transparency out to that world, and Donne pictures this transparency as a cross-inhabitation of one another’s

interiors: matter inside the body (tears, blood, hearts, brains) is relocated inside of some language-soaked artifact to whose material form it now contributes; alternatively, that language-soaked artifact will at times itself be transported back into the inside of the body. (Scarry 1990, xv)

Thus, words gain consonance with the things they represent, and in turn affect human perceptions of the external world. For Scarry and Donne, writing engages the world in a dialectic with particular attention to the body's materiality. Words and the world contemporaneously exist in the plane of writing. But what writerly skills make "language-soaked artifacts"? "Soaking" implies detail, awareness, presence. Scarry notes Donne's preoccupation with the "way a vehicle of representation acquires the material form and force of the object represented—that is, acquires the negotiating power of the material world" (1990, 83). To give his writing this power, Donne often implicates bodies, his own in particular, into his poetry, dipping into the effects of sensory experience to call out raw lived existence.

The habit of poets and ancient dreamers to project their own aliveness onto nonalive things itself suggests that *it is* the basic work of creation to bring about the very projection of aliveness; in other words, while the poet pretends or wishes that the inert external world has his or her own capacity for sentient awareness, civilization makes this so. What in the poet is recognizable as fiction is in civilization unrecognizable because it has come true. (Scarry 1990, 286)

The world that the poet materializes through writing is not so separate from the world that inspires it. The things we have contact with, that move between us, have weight and value, located both in their physical characteristics and their emotional “know-how.” Often this weight gets overshadowed by the literal system that defines it—Marx’s commodity fetishism, Benjamin’s aura, Mauss’ gift exchange, myth, or poetic conceit. However, without those interpretive glosses to make sense of the value, it still remains harder to discuss. Likewise, an acknowledgement of these types of values of things makes them more difficult to appropriate, control, and separate from, problematizing our relation to them and, ultimately, our identities.

But the quality of this value is not intrinsic to the thing: it accrues through the thing’s interaction with people. Scarry uses the origin of this value to point out the difference between a Marxist and a reist: “the reist takes the apparent-aliveness as a basis for revering the object world; Marx takes that apparent-aliveness as a basis for revering the actual-aliveness of the human source of that projected attribute” (1990, 286). A true analysis of the spirit of things will take us back to people, to cultures and societies.

Encrusting Things with Social Relationships

The following creative passage explores affect through household items within my own life. Representing such moving materials requires a different kind of engagement, which I seek to illustrate through my creative description to serve as a model for scripting the affective implications of the trousseau.

Pincushions

Nannie’s pincushions incubated potential, from the accidental pop of flesh to the baroque waves of newly pleated curtains. These cushions captured the possibility for error and

accuracy. Something between piecemeal and perfection itself, it seemed all of her pincushions were made of the same mossy green velvet, more opulent than her clothes but always cloaked in a functionalism that forgave their decoration. Not so pragmatic as denim or those tomato-pincushions, they suggested her love of finery. The prick of the pins and the texture of the velvet contradicted each other, sharp edges versus fuzz. The cushion temporarily neutralized the stinging pins, and kept arguments at bay about the lengths of Mom’s hemlines: “You want your skirt too short,” “pants should come *to the ankles*.” They muted manifestations of conflicting values between mother and grandmother. The padded havens buffered the sparks between them, until the pins were released to assert, assert, assert my grandmother’s tastes over my mother’s purchases. The pillows exuded perfection—because as long as they were safely pushed in, the pins could not disappoint. Cushy and undecided, pincushions protect from injury—the peaceful place preceding Nannie’s insertions. For, once Nannie donned the thimble on her thumb and took to the skirt/trousers/blouse framing Mom’s body:

She-----set-----things-----straight-----Mom-----
 ---lost-----her-----will-----

Building on Scarry’s suggestion of “language soaked” artifacts, this dissertation shows how the çeyiz is steeped in relationships and how people are shaped through the çeyiz. The location of the personal in the things moves this project beyond a descriptive exercise to one that is engaged in constructing and imagining relationships between

people and things. Weiner's writing on inalienable possessions recognizes how things and people are co-constitutive: "An individual's role in social life is fragmentary unless attached to something of permanence. The history of the past, equally fragmentary, is concentrated in an object, that with, age, becomes increasingly valuable" (Weiner 1992a, 64). People develop identities through their relationships with things "encrusted with meaning" while objects develop value through their exchanges between people (Weiner 1992a, 155).

Writing self-consciously makes explicit how people's engagement with things reflects onto them. In other words, the endeavor to engage, extrapolate and embellish the things undeniably draws from one's presence, which is informed by my history. If the objects could speak for themselves they might have a different story to tell from my interpretations. If their original owners were alive to talk, the stories would be spattered with differently formulated histories. In *A Valediction: of My Name in the Window*, John Donne comments on his implication into the scene in these stanzas:

My name engraved herein,
 Doth contribute my firmness to this glass,
 Which, ever since that charm, hath been
 As hard, as that which graved it, was:
 Thine eye will give it price enough, to mock
 The diamonds of either rock.

'Tis much that glass should be
 As all confessing, and through-shine as I,

'Tis more , that it shows thee to thee,
 And clear reflects thee to thine eye.
 But all such rules, love's magic can undo,
 Here you see me, and I am you. (Donne 2001, 21)

The author, the subject-object and the reader communicate through triangulation. Donne's image, imprinted on the subject, the window he describes, is immutable from the viewer's perspective of the object. Scarry recognizes a three-part structure here as a "word-image-object triad" (Scarry 1990, 82). While Scarry and I focus on different parts of the poem, the three-part nature remains. For me, the significance lies in the triangulation of the thing, existing on its own, mediated by the author's description, and changed again through the reader's interpretation. Abstracted through human contact, the thing shifts to story (poetic description) to theory (reader's interpretation). Writing about writing brings into relief the "humanness" embedded in creative processes surrounding all things.

Authentic objects acquire identities through "new meanings, fictitious memories, altered genealogies and imagined ancestors" (Weiner 1992a, 42). Like writing, objects can be subjective and intricately intertwined with peoples' lives. The value of things relates to individuals' histories and fabrications.

Fabricating Stories: Strings Too Small to Keep

The following anecdote about a box of strings illustrates how some items leverage meaning in connection with personal histories.

In a nearby house sits a cardboard box labeled "Strings Too Small to Keep." This box has enticed me. I want to see these strings, to measure their worthlessness and their

continued existence. Why would someone put so many strings in a box if they were too small to keep? How long are they; what cutoff determines whether or not to keep them? And why were they kept? I reckon they are not long enough to sew on a button. They are not long enough to pull out a tooth when tied to a doorknob. They might have come from hotel sewing kits, depleted over the years to barely winding around the slit cardboard, but fear that you might need *that* string sometime.

In my own home, Nannie had a box of string too small to keep started by her mother. Whenever the bobbin had barely enough string, she would unwind it and place the string in a small wooden box. No matter how negligible the length, she would always hang onto them. *Because you never know when you won't be able to afford more string.* Ostensibly, someone could have tied the string together to make a string legitimately long enough for keeping in dire circumstances. So this box contains a kind of potential energy dependent on its complete transformation. Strings, shoulder pads, rubber bands abounded in her collections—nothing essential but certainly enough to keep.

“The many examples of wrapping cloth around people, statues of gods or even human bones illuminate the way cloth represents all manner of human and cosmological connections” (Weiner 1992a, 60) Both as analogy for the process of making words “material” and as subject for my own exploration of embodied writing, sewing emerges. Little by little, stories give shape to new surroundings. Like a dress-fitting, words slowly suggest form, self-contained as stories strung together (the artifice of the dress), while fashioning the world, the body, to which they refer. An overlay of words fleshes out and accentuates the material of the everyday. Sewing’s feminine implications as well as its contribution to the products of exchange chalk-mark it as timeless site for anthropology’s

analysis of social processes. It is a “gender-encoded space,” which makes “these possessions encrusted with meaning of identity and pride, that energize the processes of exchange and bear active witness to the paradox of keeping-while-giving” among the Maoris (Weiner 1992a, 155). She distinguishes famous, heirloom-like cloths from less important cloaks, which serve as currency.

The most dramatic political difference between cloth and bones, however, is the replicability of cloth. Whereas a famous cloak is protected from loss, other less valuable cloaks are produced and exchanged. Because cloth is like body yet, unlike bones, not the body, increasing production leads to stockpiling of cloaks—the development of a currency that, although still expressive of social factors, enables those in power to trade and exchange more widely. (Weiner 1992a, 60)

Like the stockpiling of cloaks, an excess informs the economy of everyday things. Perhaps the drive to replicate, recreate these things kissed with human meanings derives from our intuitive apprehension of this value. We make things and replicate them because of their density. Scarry notes that

...not only the most celebrated but the most ordinary and routine artifacts are characterized by excess. This is true to such an extent that one may accurately say that an artifact *is* the capacity for excessive reproduction; what the human being has *made* is not object *x* or *y* but this excessive power of reciprocation. Thus the normative model must be one in which the total arc of action has as its second half a largesse not present in the

first half: the total act of creating contains an inherent movement toward self-amplifying generosity. (Scarry 1990, 318)

Excess circulates through the everyday things in this text. It is as if the strings need each other to remain important; they reproduce by themselves, but in actuality, the people in contact with them need to group them together. The piles of pencils, stockpiles, mark and validate human existence, and empower their owners in subtle ways; they show the passage of time, the ongoing, multiple scope of contact people have with the world.

In a world that recognizes the human imprint on things, bodies become vulnerable, able to be impacted by the world. The body becomes penetrable, permeable. The senses, not the mind, instantiate identity. Pores, mouths and openings reveal the body's unavoidable contact with the external world. The body becomes passive, dangerously entangled with the stuff of the world. Encased, protected, the mind filters these experiences. It makes sense to me that this is where we have traditionally located individuality and identity: it is the only place where we are safe. The risks of privileging an embodied identity are clear:

And yet, although rethinking essentialism marks an avowed return to the body, it is not an easy homecoming. Perhaps commerce with the body is risky business because the border with the mind-body split, the border across which interpretations of the body might be negotiated, just cannot be secured. The fear of being unwittingly discovered behind enemy lines, caught in the suffocating and powerful embrace of that carnal envelope, menaces all conciliatory efforts...And any exchange between the mind

and body will demand explanation, a minimal reassurance that incursions to the body's foreign spaces will be temporary and provisional, a "tactical" or "strategic" necessity that justifies the risks. (Schneider 1985, 88)

John Donne struggles with this mind-body situation in *Paradox XI: That the Gifts of the Body are Better than the Minde*. He states: "the body makes the mind...our soul...is enabled by our body, not this by that. My body licenseth my soul to hear pleasant things through mine ears, and affords it apt organs for all perceivable delights" (2001, 288). Donne's writing continuously vacillates between the body versus the mind—his sustained celebration of our senses is always tempered with consideration of morality and judgment.

Temporary in the sense that it does not exactly transform the physical world, fiction serves as site for "corporealism" writing. In not representing real people, writing through the body in fiction does not endanger the bounded, thinking subject. At the same time, such writing charges the imagination and affects how people perceive their worlds. Bakhtin believes Rabelais achieves this.

But simultaneously he is accomplishing a more positive task, one that gives all these word-linkages and grotesque images a definite direction: to "embody" the world, to materialize it, to tie everything in to spatial and temporal series, to measure everything on the scale of the human body, to construct—on that space where the destroyed picture of the world had been—a new picture. (Bakhtin 1982, 177)

Like Stewart, Rabelais recontains the world by manipulating scale. Through the grotesque, he recasts the landscape of meaning. While his work occurs in a fictional context, Marie Cardinal uses her history of mental illness to re-scope the world. In her autobiography of recovery from mental illness, Cardinal does not reorganize the entire world, but circumscribes her identity through a specific awareness of her body:

I had begun to think, as never before, of what it meant to be a woman. I thought of our bodies, mine, my mother's, the others'. All the same, all having holes in them. I belonged to that gigantic horde of penetrable beings, delivered to the invaders. Nothing protects my hole, no eyelid, or mouth, or nostril, or grating, or labyrinth, or sphincter. It hides the hollow of soft flesh which does not obey my will, and is naturally incapable of defending it. Not even a word to protect it. In our vocabulary, the words which designate this particular part of the female body are ugly, vulgar, dirty, coarse, grotesque or technical. (Cardinal 2000, 259)

In this passage Cardinal maps out her womanhood in physical terms that focus on her female anatomy in relation to her other orifices. Rather than writing about her breasts, the characteristic that commonly defines women, she centers on the vulnerability and openness of her vagina. This sense of her body presents her as wholly vulnerable, penetrable, easily betrayed.

Therapy makes this realization possible; her recovery from mental illness allows her to narrate this conception to the reader for its retrospective, therapeutic value. As Kirby notes above, Cardinal's reconfiguration of the body serves her strategically to

promote her ultimate sense of integrity and self-possession after healing. Contained in a narrative of redemption, Cardinal's tale only temporarily explores the figuration of the body as open, revealing the "functions of the life of the body, of eating drinking, defecating and sexual activity" (Bakhtin 1982, 192). But, unlike the "heroization" of the mundane that Bakhtin believes Rabelais describes, Cardinal's body-centered narrative is demeaning, dehumanizing, grotesque. The feminine, grotesque body is located within a gendered system privileging masculinity.

This problem of complicating the interchanges between the body, the material world, and the world's subsequent remaking warrants more exploration. This creative chapter confounds individual subjectivity and the identity of things in bodily ways. Working through the structured body of the poem, the abstraction of theory and the personal of prose, things (such as pincushions and strings) embody bodies, while bodies (visceral, structural, and imagined) incorporate things, forever extending the relationships between structure, description, imagination and embodiment. As metaphor, as the site for intimacy with the everyday, and as the container of external things, the body narrates through disruption, interruption, accretion, and excess. Like the body, the *çeyiz* materializes subjectivity, connecting brides to their families and to their futures. My research extends from both creative and ethnographic projects.

This next chapter situates the *çeyiz* within the literature on inheritance, finally focusing on its Turkish context.

Chapter Two: From Hope Chests to Higher Education: The Changing Technologies of Turkish Women

The trousseau, a component of the dowry, has been used predominantly throughout the Mediterranean and in Eurasia. Although its contents have ranged according to brides' status and region, textiles continue to figure prominently across cultures. The trousseau's contents have transformed along certain trajectories, and over time it began to include manufactured luxury items in addition to handmade common goods. While the objects and origin of their manufacture have varied over time, the trousseau most basically consisted of bedding and household linens. In Italy, for example, until the 1920s, the trousseau consisted of a number of "beds"; "a cluster of whitewear (*biancheria*) that could include tablecloths, napkins, towels, doilies, pillowcases, and intimate apparel" (Schneider 1985, 81).

Schneider's exploration of the Sicilian trousseau's changes exemplified how the dynamic trousseau has interacted with social forces such as the emergence of industrial capitalism and globalization. In the Sicilian trousseau of the late 1800s through middle twentieth century, embroidery signaled its maker's status, and the emergence of factory-produced fabrics—as opposed to hand woven ones—engendered a greater emphasis on embellishments through needlework. Schneider shows how, in Sicily, even as the trousseau's contents changed, it required a certain amount of time investment, for example, embellishing store-bought linens. "In addition to offering a marker of leisure status, embroideries and lacework conferred prestige by removing the materials to which they were applied several more steps from their natural state as fibers, and from the natural, bodily functions which they were intended to transform" (Schneider 1985, 88).

Thus, the trousseau's creation required labor and material for its production, transforming them from natural material to functional, beautiful objects. The labor involved decorating items after their purchase added to their value.

Dedication to embroidery was, in the long sweep of things, "an interim arrangement." Not only did it evolve naturally out of the earlier domestic role of women, and descend with equal ease from the consumption styles of the rich, but its development also conformed to a pattern for which history has many parallels: the pattern of creating value through intensification of labor, when control over rare and desired things declines. If the wealth is thus created (from whole cloth, as it were), was inferior to more liquid forms of gold, this was somewhat beside the point. (Schneider 1985, 112)

Schneider's study showed that the trousseau, inherently adaptable, reflected social, political, and economic changes, variations in style, and the availability of goods.

Today, however, the trousseau has lost import and value in most cultures, and purchases for the bridal household occur less formally, rather than as an exhibit of familial responsibility toward the bride in the concrete form of the trousseau. Domestic and economic changes are central to a discussion of the trousseau's contents and function.

The Trousseau's Function in Marriage

Because the literature on trousseaux is limited and trousseau is encompassed within the term dowry, I will first discuss dowry more broadly and move into the specific

case of the trousseau. In terms of inheritance the trousseau served as one component of dowry, which is defined as “a payment made by the bride’s family in cash, goods, or property to the groom” (Kaplan 1985, 1). However, the dowry was also considered a pre-mortem inheritance “‘diverging devolution’, a type of property inheritance in which both sons and daughters inherit some share of the parental estate. Dowry is simply that mode of diverging devolution in which daughters receive their share upon marriage” (Harrell and Dickey 1985, 105). Goody called dowry “a part of a familial or conjugal fund, which passed down from holder to heir, and usually from the parents to the daughter” (1973, 17). In this sense, the dowry consisted of money, property or material items while the trousseau referred specifically to a collection of goods to serve the wife during marriage. In terms of geographical location, the dowry occurs as a Eurasian custom, with a stronghold in the Mediterranean. Since it is given before the parents’ death, it serves as a “pre-mortem inheritance to the bride” (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 11). As opposed to simply a monetary payment toward the cost of the wedding, the material investment of the trousseau is a form of “direct dowry” (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 191). Hughes suggested (1985) an evolution in the function of the dowry corresponding with social change: “Initially, as we have seen, dowries had about them the scent of disinheritance, consolation for an exclusion from succession that was increasingly secured in Mediterranean Europe by entail fortified by female renunciation. Yet where wealth and status were not balanced dowry often came to secure for some daughters a larger slice of the patrimony” (Hughes 1985, 43). Thus the dowry provides for the daughter when economic disparities prevail. Goody and Tambiah characterize complex, stratified cultures as those employing dowries.

Dowry has been contrasted with bride-price, payment from the groom's family to the bride's family. The discussion of the relationship between bride-price, also called bridewealth, and dowry is complex in anthropology, and arguments abound regarding their relationship. Are they meant to be equal payments? What do they pay for? And, most importantly, who pays for them? The literature on bridewealth and dowries is inherently conflicted. While some authors have claimed that the dowry and bride-price oppose each other and are complementary gifts, others state that they differ in value and travel through different family lines, since the dowry moves with the bride and bride-price is received by the bride's family as payment for her.

The dowry's variations reveal differences in economics, kin relations, and the treatment of women over time, and these particularities seem meaningful as a means to comprehend localized changes in power relations. In their study of dowry, Harrell and Dickey find that it does not occur in Africa and that its range and variation within Eurasian cultures are difficult to comprehend. Drawing on Harris' suggestion that dowry functions as disinheritance (1979), Harrell and Dickey note: "The problem remains as to why the complex Eurasian societies settle their claims by giving them anything at all; that is, why does it take some kind of dowry to disinherit them while in African societies the daughters are disinherited from the very beginning, getting very little anywhere and nothing whatsoever in most societies?" (Harrell and Dickey 1985, 107). The dowry has been interpreted as disinheritance, inheritance, a show of wealth, and compensation for the "non-productive" bride, a new family member who requires care and will produce little, if any, income. Often the dowry occurs in conjunction with other forms of payment,

namely, money and furniture (Rheubottom 1980). However, the trousseau, with little economic value, provides for the bride.

In terms of familial relations, the dowry solidifies the parents' support for their daughter. Goody connects certain outcomes and functions with the dowry, depending on the origin of its contents. For example, if the dowry is provided for by male relatives then the family typically has more concern and control regarding the bride's selection of spouses and more interest in protecting her virginity before marriage. Goody and Tambiah state, "...when women were receivers of property of males as well as females, special attention would be given to the marriage (and other unions) into which they enter" (Goody and Tambiah 1973, 25). However, they do not mention the circumstances or stipulations placed on women inheriting property from other women. Likewise, Hughes suggests that the husband's family's contribution to the dowry ensures their involvement with the grandchildren (Hughes 1985, 42). Thus, the dowry serves to control and concretize certain relationships and the bride's behavior. But it also raises an interesting question for the Turkish trousseau, which is provided primarily by the mother, which I will discuss in chapter 5.

In Mediterranean societies the dowry of which the trousseau was a component, demonstrated familial wealth, providing an opportunity for families to exhibit both their material support for the bride and their own status. Kaplan described trousseaux as "objects of significant liquidity, [which] functioned like dowries. They enhanced the social status of the bride and her kin and supported codes of chastity and leisured womanhood by keeping women busy (and therefore 'virtuous') but not employed, before marriage." (Kaplan 1985, 6). In considering the dowry as a reflection on families' wealth,

Hughes contends that it is “the practice of the dowry as distinction that still sets the Mediterranean world apart” (1985, 15). Over time, perhaps gender inequality within families and economic challenges prompted families to transform the trousseau into a collection of handiwork, as opposed to luxury items. These items could be produced rather than purchased, saving the family monetary expense and mostly costing women time. As families sought to maintain their resources for themselves, they expected the groom’s family to provide for the bride. These trends of reducing resources slated for the bride in favor of preserving familial wealth had broad ramifications. “Dowries were not only affected by political and economic developments, they, in turn, influenced broader and social economic patterns...The dowry was the foundation of the family economy...” (Kaplan 1985, g). For example, during the Ottoman Empire princesses received dowries consisting of money and material goods (Peirce 1993), but they were not given land in order to control the distribution of resources. “By the end of the 15th century, the problem of stopping the outflow of power and resources through princesses was solved by the adoption of endogamous marriage policy through which princesses married either cousins, or, more often statesmen who were considered slave members of dynastic households” (Peirce 1993, 22). The suggestion that marriage patterns changed in an effort to control the resources allocated through inheritance related to marriage shows how critical the dowry was to marriage negotiations.

Problematizing the Trousseau

The trousseau, and women’s property more generally, have been under-theorized in anthropology (Moors 2003; Schlegel and Eloul 1988). Perhaps because it involves exclusively women and furnishes the very mundane domestic sphere, the trousseau has

not been as interesting to theorists as other wedding-related transactions. However, as an expression of habitus created at the axes of multiple social forces (Bourdieu 1984), the trousseau reflects particular codings of wealth, family relationships, and opinions regarding the treatment of women. Additionally, as a dynamic object that is regularly reconfigured in the context of economic and social change, it displays families' negotiations with modernity and gender (Hodgson 2001). The trousseau gives a glimpse into cultural constellations of power, wealth, and gender relations.

A view of the trousseau in circulation, passed from mothers to daughters or purchased by families, shows not just how it moves through people, but elucidates the relational contexts in which it moves. "Economic exchange creates value. Value is embodied in commodities that are exchanged. Focusing on the things that are exchanged rather than simply on the forms or functions of exchange, makes it possible to argue that what creates the link between exchange and value is politics, construed broadly" (Appadurai 3, 2001). The same can be said of the items of the trousseau, though they are not conceived as commodities. The trousseau thus serves as a tool to comprehend linkages among individuals, families and, their larger political economic contexts. Zelizer argues that, in drawing together the family with the economy, the intimate sphere of the household makes marked economic contributions that are often overlooked. "Relations tinged by intimacy often do figure crucially in economic activity, for example, in remittances within migrant families and household production. At times, only an understanding of cultural distinctions permits us to explain the patterns of connection between economic activity and intimacy, such as in the payment of dowry" (Zelizer 2005, 32).

As a form of dowry in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the trousseau reflects the familial context in terms of wealth and status (Harrell and Dickey 1985; Schneider 1985). Particularly when displayed before marriage, the trousseau served to demonstrate the family's wealth. The bride and groom's families were expected to contribute to the household, so the trousseau was the bride's family's contribution while the groom's family provided money or big ticket items, and Mediterranean cultures expected a kind of parity between the two (Harrell and Dickey 1985; Schneider 1985) and materially invested in the bride's domestic resources, contributing to her readiness to manage the household (Harrell and Dickey 1985). The trousseau's contents demonstrate material wealth.

Symbolic Value

In linking persons with things, the things are made into more than their own materiality, for the things themselves stand as a means through which individual mortality is transcended, ensuring some measure of the person's or group's immortality. (Weiner 1992a, 499)

The trousseau, a collection of monetarily valuable and pragmatically useful goods, such as bedding, is also replete with symbolic value. As Schneider states, the trousseau has many purposes and meanings. "To focus on trousseau as treasure is not to abandon the understanding that embroidery was an important status symbol, nor does such an emphasis contradict its association with chastity and purity. It does, however, suggest that symbols which are material may be multifunctional" (1985, 107). I will suggest that the trousseau moves with, and symbolizes, the bride in a number of ways.

In terms of subjectivities, my analysis of today's trousseau incorporates relations of kinship and intimacy (Schneider 1985, 107). Because mothers begin to make trousseau items at their daughters' birth (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003), the trousseau is inextricably connected with individual and relational identities. In this respect, it is an "inalienable possession" (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003). The transfer of products of her mother's labor and family's purchase forever connect the bride or, in Turkish, *gelin* to her natal home. Signifying a bride's transition into marriage and adulthood (Delaney 1991), the trousseau is also "constitutive" of a young woman's identity (Faubion and Hamilton 2007; Graeber 2001). Annette Weiner's work, which I describe in further detail in subsequent chapters, provides a theoretical framework that is central to the design of this project. Weiner's work considers the subjective dimensions of particular objects, linking them to specific people.

At first glance, the historical and contemporary trousseau illuminates the bride's status. The quality of the goods, whether bought or made, suggests something about her background and the wealth she brings to the marriage. Wherever used, the dowry has profound implications for family life and young women's lives. Kaplan suggests that "The dowry was the most significant factor in a young woman's marriageability, and, hence in affecting her future. Through the dowry, the political, economic and social determinants which limited women's agency are revealed" (Kaplan 1985, 2). Secondly, the trousseau represents the bride's purity and sexual restraint (Schneider 1985, 96). The solitary nature of embroidery, as opposed to factory work, encourages isolation. The sheer time commitment involved in embroidery limits its producer's participation in other activities, like courting men.

Linking the identity of the bride with her trousseau, an object begun at her birth in many cultures, helps to uncover its various meanings and significance in social relationships.

The embroiderer, alone or with other women, borrows and elaborates the designs of others in the form of exchange. She is externalizing pieces of the self to make it public. Women circulate knowledge through multiple designs and spaces, which they cover, protect and ornament. It is the transfer of the self into substance that disseminates a history of the person into dispersal. (Seremetakis 1994b, 15)

The trousseau links up with the bride's personal history and future and often goes on display, days before she herself goes on display during the wedding ceremony. The made objects contained in the trousseau symbolize and embody the bride's labor, skills, and future; indeed, they are externalized "pieces of the self." Weiner suggests that these objects, when set aside as heirlooms accrue or absorb even more value connected with persons. Weiner on Oceania emphasizes the absorbency of cloth when kept as an heirloom:

Keeping an object even for ten years or over a generation demonstrates some success in sustaining permanence. Cloth absorbs time, giving it a visible form, but cloth does not merely describe or circumvent time. Rather, for these Oceanic societies, cloth gives to time a range of possibilities while keeping the political world anchored in kinship. (Weiner 1991, 64)

By materializing the bride's virtuous and hardworking manner, the absorbency of time also occurs during the process of production. The trousseau, as domestic and artistic work, symbolizes culturally and temporally informed notions of femininity. It is women's work and the main material contribution the bride brings to marriage. The continuance of the tradition of the trousseau thus ensures the perpetuation of feminine roles; its production reproduces culture. Additionally, at the level of styles and people involved in its creation, the trousseau symbolizes (and materializes) the bride's link to her natal home. As a form of (dis)inheritance it shows that her parents both claim and let go of her, sending her into a new life with her husband. The trousseau connects with the bride in subjective ways; it is, as Graeber calls it, "constitutive property" (211).

The value of an heirloom is really that of actions: actions whose significance has been, as it were, absorbed into the objects' current identity—whether the emphasis is placed on the inspired labors of the artist who created it, the lengths to which some people have been known to go to acquire it, or the fact that it was once used to cut off a mythical giant's head. Since the value of the actions has already been fixed to the physical being of the object, it is perhaps a short leap to begin attributing agency behind such actions to the object as well, and speak, as Mauss does, of valuables that transfer themselves, from owner to owner or actively influence their owner's fates. (Graeber 2001, 105)

While the trousseau does not have agency of its own, it clearly embodies aspects of the bride's agency, including her choices of styles and objects, perhaps her (lack of) spousal

selection, and her future dreams. My research explores how the hope chest connects with, both by representing and materializing, women's subjectivity to show changing trends in their behaviors and availability of choices. The *çeyiz* reflects changes across generations and allows brides to begin to make their own decisions for their future household. No longer a family object, the *çeyiz* is intimately connected to the bride and her possibility for a future.

Beyond its economic function, the *çeyiz* holds rich sentimental significance, an under-explored quality in the literature on material culture (Graeber 2001) that invites analytic innovation. With specialized attention to narrative descriptions, internal experience, and object relations, psychoanalysis enriches ethnographic research's understandings of affective identifications (Seremetakis 1994b, 15), central to my project's aims. Psychological theories of mother-infant relationships, particularly Benjamin's development of intersubjectivity, helps elucidate how the *çeyiz* is negotiated between mothers and daughters. Additionally, the anthropology of emotions deserves further development in Turkey, and the historical depth and history of the *çeyiz* serves as a good site for thinking about this (Hart 2007, Gilmore 1982). A dense object filled with folded items which will cover beds, tables, and television sets, the physical and emotional scale of the trousseau, like a miniature playhouse, so small and so densely packed with details about domestic life, affords a unique space for analyzing the attachments between objects and people (Stewart 1993). What types of value, meanings, and emotions are associated with the trousseau—and what happens to them as the trousseau is retained, reconfigured, or rejected?

The trousseau, and its related literature, materializes political, economic, and social relations associated with marriage. Like other meaningful objects of consumption, the trousseau operates within the political economy, responding to issues of citizenship, nationalism, continuity, and change (Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002, Navaro-Yashin 2002). An aesthetic form, it performs nostalgic and fabricated idealizations of national identity (Mukerji 1997, Taylor 1998). Turkish modernization projects addressing marriage and gender roles (Arat 1997, Kaya 2004) directly relate to the *çeyiz*. The historically specific *çeyiz* displays intergenerational differences (Borneman 1992, Collier 1997, Kendall 1996) and engagements with tradition and modernity. This project will investigate the trousseau's implications within both political and kinship-related economies. The intergenerational interview, an important method of study in Chapter Five, bring out issues of modernization at the level of the family (Kendall, Rosaldo, Borneman, Collier).

The Turkish Çeyiz

In Turkish there is a saying, which I was reminded of each time I told informants about my research topic: *kız beşikte, çeyiz sandıkta* (daughter in the cradle, a trousseau in the chest). Historically, the birth of every daughter occasioned a hope chest. My interviews suggested that mothers were pleased to have female children and to begin considering their *çeyiz*, unlike the dread associated with accumulating a dowry in India. Mothers with sons told me they had been sad because they wanted to put together a *çeyiz*, so in the absence of a daughter, they put together a little one for their anticipated daughter-in-law. While Turkish infants have a different trousseau comprised of blankets

and socks, like the layette, the bridal trousseau begun for an infant daughter will be used for her marriage. According to Stirling, who studied Turkish villages in the 1960s,

The girl's household is responsible for preparing the trousseau (*çeyiz*). Preparations begin at a girl's birth, and as she grows up she must know how to weave prayer mats (*kilim*) and saddlebags (*hebe*). Nevertheless, much has to be bought, and a special expedition made to Kayseri just before the wedding. In Elbasi, this expedition provides the cue for the father of the bride to send a message to the groom's father asking for money to buy the trousseau. (Stirling 181)

The exact contents of the Turkish trousseau vary by region and follow various rules, however certain items, including crocheted covers, bedding, and bedroom slippers remain constant. The monetary and material investments of the groom's family also vary by region. Traditionally, however, the groom's family furnishes the living room, or salon, while the bride's family purchases the bedroom furniture and furnishings. Melissa Chase Maley Zinn's Master's thesis (2002) provides a succinct chart of items; however, my fieldwork in urban Istanbul revealed many variations in content. Additionally, I have found that both informants and the literature vacillate between an ideal trousseau (what they believe should be contained, a kind of gestalt of what they have seen over time) and real exemplars. Carol Delaney suggests that the trousseaux of her studied village vary little, calling them "fairly standard," suggesting that larger variations occur within urban settings and across regions and generations, rather than within individual families or villages at any given time (1992, 104).

The following list enumerates the historic trousseau:

The traditional trousseau contained satin quilts stuffed with wool, mattresses, feather pillows, sheets, silver bath sets, silver embroidered towels, a sewing box, coffee set, crystal glasses, a dozen patterned socks, embroidered satin prayer rugs, prayer beads, lace edged scarves, house slippers and dressing gowns for the bride and groom, nightdresses for the bride wrapped in a gold embroidered wrapper, tablecloths, napkins, crochet and lace mats, and crocheted curtains. So the marriage begins with the delight of arranging these in the couple's new home, and enjoying all finery so carefully collected and created over the years. (Önal)

Within some regions and families, the trousseau includes *bohca*, a series of gifts wrapped in fabric envelopes and given to the groom's family. These gifts usually include pajamas and cologne for the groom and makeup for the mother-in-law.

Central to the trousseau, especially in villages, is its exhibition before the marriage. Delaney describes this display:

Girls and women begin to show up in the afternoon with small gifts. They will view the *çeyiz*, comment, and criticize. The occasion is an opportunity to show off their own handiwork, and they wear the fanciest Yemeni (scarves). In fact, the party is a viewing of different types of covers! One whole room is taken up with a display of the *çeyiz*, which includes Yemeni, often as many as a hundred, that a girl has spent years decorating with lace, *mekek* (tatting, and beads). (Delaney 1991, 126)

In Stirling's village, "[t]he trousseau...is publicly inspected, first at a ceremony held in the bride's household, for her close kin and neighbors, and again three days after the consummation of the marriage, by the women of the groom's household" (Stirling 1965, 182). The display of the trousseau reflects the bride's capabilities and class, as well as her ability to keep up with the latest trends through her handiwork. Delaney suggests that the exhibition of the trousseau judges more than the bride's handiwork; it reveals the value she brings to the marriage. "The viewing of the *çeyiz* is very important, for it is a public validation of the girl's worth, in terms not only of the kind of items, but also in the quality of her own handiwork" (Delaney 1991, 125).

The specific examples above serve as just that, examples, and it must be underscored that regional differences abound in Turkey. Harrell and Dickey (1985) describe three variations in Turkey, among villages in eastern Turkey and a southwestern village. While all three areas maintain the tradition of the trousseau, perhaps the most important finding is that differences abound. Their analysis contextualizes the trousseau in terms of other marriage-related items: bride-price, property, and furniture. The examples suggest that, since property inheritance occurs after death in the village, giving the bride and groom a home would occur more often in the city because it is assumed that they will not return to the village to claim their parents' homes. Additionally, they note that "[t]his town-country difference is another example of the association between dowry and economic stratification as a basis for prestige" (Harrell and Dickey 1985, 116). These characterizations are consistent with my research, suggesting that large difference between town and country trousseaux exist. Harrell and Dickey suggest that dowry has developed in tandem with a market-based economy and has gained importance in modern

times, suggesting that its popularity has moved from cities to villages. Additionally, few countries have both modalities of payment, but Turkey and China are exceptions. In China, which has both bride-price and dowry, Anderson's contemporary analysis of dowry and bride-price (Anderson 2007) notes that bride-price continues to exist in rural areas but are rare in urban China (2007, 153). According to Harrell and Dickey, trends in the Turkish dowry move between urban areas and villages, with immigrants to cities bringing with them traditions and urban influences permeating village customs, for example, increasing the desire for readymade items in the village and popularizing design trends from the villages in Istanbul.

As a repository for the social reproduction of skills, tastes, traditions, and decisions, the trousseau has affective value for the families. Historically, mothers oversee the trousseau's preparation, emotionally investing in its embellishment as a display of their parenting (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003). Especially in Turkey's poorer or more rural regions, girls terminate their education at school to dedicate their adolescence toward trousseau-making. "In addition to housework and caring for siblings, in the years before their marriage young girls prepare elaborate trousseaux, which involve skilled and intensive needlework, including fine stitching, crochet, and embroidery" (White 2004, 2:7).

Signifying young women's worth, the trousseau's quality may determine young brides' financial future by affecting spousal selection (Delaney 1991). In this respect, the trousseau encompasses multiple identifications and projections. For parents, the trousseau contains hope for their daughter's marriage, reflects their worth as parents, and displays material wealth. For daughters and grooms, it embodies a set of material possibilities for

future marriage, certain kinds of familial obligations (or their rejection), engagements with tradition, and the potential for self-definition. How, then, does the *çeyiz* mediate expectations across generations regarding traditions, individual choice, and kinship-related responsibilities, especially in contemporary urban Istanbul?

The *çeyiz* materializes the reproduction and production of gender (Delaney 1991, 126). As a domestic object, it contains and reproduces a series of customs, responsibilities, and expectations for brides (Delaney 1991). The more ornate aspects of the *çeyiz*, including beading and lace, incorporate skills passed on from generations of women and are evaluated for their quality (Delaney 1991). Filled with critical items for furnishing the home, especially the kitchen and bedroom, the trousseau reinforces the household's underlying gendered structure (Bourdieu 1977) and demarcates the bride's movements and identity (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). Since power relations and definitions of gender play out in seemingly apolitical arenas like the house, the trousseau serves as an unlikely, though important, site for analyzing changes in gender roles.

While objects such as bedding and silver may be included in the Turkish bridal trousseau, some traditional items are now substituted with washing machines, refrigerators, and other "white appliances." Although brides and their mothers historically supplied the handiwork, as the *çeyiz* expands to incorporate the purchase of appliances, both the bride's and groom's families may contribute to it, demonstrating changes in gender and kinship roles and expectations for wedding provisions. The trousseau critically furnishes the domestic lives of newlyweds while reflecting familial and personal investments of time and skill into the future of the bride, or *gelin*, translated as

“she who comes.” However, as higher education increasingly becomes necessary for brides of particular classes, investments in tuition, rather than household items, may ensure daughters’ future success.

Istanbul’s Wedding Culture

Filled with weddings, wedding goods shops, and Turks migrating from other areas, the cosmopolitan city of Istanbul offers a particular vantage on today’s trousseaux. Istanbul’s commercial and demographic diversity will allow for a rich, though not comprehensive, representation of practices and orientations related to trousseaux and, more generally, weddings. A study of the trousseau within Istanbul helps to elucidate a culture in transition. The *çeyiz* reflects changes in wedding preparations, serving as a touchstone for change. Because it is organized around a woman’s entrance into marriage it has particularly gendered implications.

Women’s property, like women, moves between families of men (Rubin 1975). In Turkish society, the trousseau, an evolving cultural artifact, directly relates to female subjectivity. One of the possibilities of this analysis is to explore changes in kin relations through a study of the trousseau. For example, as white goods, such as washing machines, become more popular as wedding gifts for the bride, how does this reflect change in familial investments in the bride and groom’s future? What does it mean when both fathers and mothers contribute to their daughters’ wedding preparations as opposed to solely mothers? In the Turkish context where love marriages gain popularity, perhaps Goody’s observation that investments from both male and female relatives imply stricter expectations about virginity explains the change in wedding gifts. Now that daughters have more mobility and their virginity requires more protection, fathers invest monetarily

in wedding preparations to exert more control over their daughters' whereabouts and quality of life. Virginity continues to remain an important virtue or even marriage contribution for Turkish women, in both conservative and more progressive households.

One site for assessing the importance of virginity might be the use of the red ribbon tied around the waist of the white wedding dress. In my interviews the topic of virginity was not one I felt comfortable approaching; however, some brides disclosed their status to at the time of marriage to me while others clearly associated their virginity with their choice to use (or not) the red ribbon. However, even among very progressive brides with seemingly progressive families it seems that no discussion of virginity before marriage occurred. For a more in-depth discussion of virginity, where it is valued and regulated more intensely than in Istanbul, in Turkey see Parla's work on honor killings (2001). Beyond the *çeyiz* virginity seems to be a woman's primary offering within marriage; however, perhaps eventually potential financial contributions will supersede it in importance.

In terms of offerings made to the bride, the trousseau is unique in the sense that it is made of handiwork and given to the bride for the bride's use. But the trousseau represents only a portion of the exchanges made during marriage, and the trousseau's definition is changing to encompass some of these other items. Gold, (*takı*) given to the bride by the groom's family as a means to support herself if the marriage fails, is not protected as women's property. Historically, the bride and groom were pinned with gold coins during the wedding by relatives, and the bride was given bracelets and necklaces of monetary, not aesthetic value. Often couples convert it into a downpayment for an apartment or trade it in to buy more attractive jewelry.

My interviews in Istanbul suggest that the practice of giving gold is changing rapidly and yet that it is also flexible. The trend away from gold to cash (Turkish YTL and sometimes Euros) is increasing. According to the *Hurriyet* newspaper, Turkey was the number one importer of gold in 2009 but the rising price of gold has forced Turks to buy less in 2010 (Paakkinen 2010). Additionally, Turks are holding onto the gold they have rather than selling it. Gold's current high price and volatility are making it less feasible for Turks to purchase gold for weddings. More elite brides complained that the tradition of pinning gold to a red sash placed on the bride and groom's body was gauche, and they preferred to carry around a small purse, matching their wedding dress, to the individual tables, socializing with the parties on their own terms. While the brides would be obliged to visit each table this choice of collection does not put them on display, allowing the families to give money more discreetly. In lower class or more traditional families, the practice of pinning money and some gold to the sash of brides and grooms still occurs during the wedding while someone announces the name of the donor and the relation to the wedding party. A record is kept of who donated and how much, not for the sake of writing a card of gratitude, but to be sure that the recipients or their kin reciprocate in a parallel situation. This practice bears resemblance to the practice of women meeting together once a month for tea and to give a small gold coin to the hostess. As the women alternate locales, the money is recirculated. Both wedding gold and these parties are less gifts than a system of investment.

Because gold holds its value, it has been preferred over money as a long-term investment; however, couples' use of gold appears to be changing in favor of short term purchases. My interviews revealed that few couples reserved their gold for an emergency

or as some kind of security against the dissolution of their marriage. Instead gold was used for downpayments on apartments, to get buy during economic troubles, or even for the purchase of preferred purchases, such as flat screened televisions, wearable jewelry, or other high-end items. The changing use of gold could speak to the loosening of family ties; couples may not feel they can depend on their families during small financial trials or they may feel that the gold is theirs to use. The instability of Turkey's economy has created a market and dependence on gold, which is now in transition as Turkey's economy grows and gold becomes a less stable investment. One of my informants suggested to me that weddings were at the center of the Turkish economy, and in Istanbul weddings factor as a large part of the economy.

The other possibility surrounding the trousseau's transition into appliances as opposed to handicrafts is that wedding gifts have become more responsive to issues of class, status, and conspicuous consumption over time. Instead of serving a pragmatic function of serving the new family and as an ornamental display, the change in the kinds of goods could correspond with higher expectations for families to invest money, as opposed to time, signified by the lace typical in traditional trousseaux, in wedding gifts. Has the trousseau changed into a more explicit show of familial wealth as other wedding gifts have in Greece (Argyrou 2005)? The contents of the trousseau extend beyond demonstrating familial investment to marking status, class, and regional differences, functioning as an access point for understanding these forces at play.

The trousseau clearly exists within a context of other wedding-related objects. Historically, conversations about the trousseau have accompanied issues regarding bride-price. Where bride-price was seen as payment for the bride to her family by the groom, as

compensation for her lost labor in the natal household or for her virginity, the dowry has been more difficult to define. Anderson characterizes bride-price as payment to the bride's parents, and he associates with homogeneous, polygamous, societies in which women contribute to agricultural work (Anderson 2007, 163). Additionally, Anderson posits that "bride-price could be interpreted as the explicit recognition and valuing of women's productivity and contribution to marriage; in practice, it often serves to limit women's control over their bodies" (2007, 170). In this regard, bride-price anticipates the form of labor a bride will contribute to the household and assumes her virginity. In contrast, dowry payments occur within monogamous societies where "women have a relatively small productive role" (2007, 263). While dowry serves as inheritance, its use, both as a household item and as a liminal object, something created for the bride, deserves further exploration. It could be argued that the collection of objects is meant to make the bride's life easier, not by providing for her financially, but to ensure that she is prepared for the household so that she does not need to gather these items upon arrival to the house. On another level, the trousseau's contents may affect the bride's future; a good trousseau may allow her to attract a husband who will provide well for her, so investing time into collecting an impressive number and quality of objects could help her find a suitable spouse. While bride-price has been criticized and made illegal in Turkey, the dowry does not appear to have come under the same scrutiny. How do Turks describe the trousseau—is it payment, investment, a gift, or a measure of a woman's worth?

When dowry expands to describe appliances or college tuition it importantly points to changes in values surrounding gender and marriage. A number of my informants referred to their educations as their *çeyiz*. For example, one woman getting

her Masters in graphic design said that her parents paid for her education, not for items related to her home with her husband. It reminded me of the “golden bracelet,” an idiom in Greek and Turkish, which refers to the investment of education given to children by parents. The conflation of material objects with skills helps to expand the definition of the *çeyiz* beyond the material and into the realm of a monetary/symbolic contribution to an individual’s self-formation. As the combination of material items and household skills needed to run a household, the *çeyiz* could serve as a golden bracelet; women develop the skills needed for marriage in the process of accumulating their *çeyiz*. But as women’s responsibilities shift to outside of the home increasingly, it makes sense that families’ monetary investments into education or property would constitute the *çeyiz*.

In conclusion, when parents save money for the bride’s college tuition instead of household items, it implies cultural changes regarding women’s work, expectations for women’s time, and the composition of households in general. If both spouses work, inside or outside the home, they can ostensibly purchase what they need for the household, so tuition may point toward an equalization of male and female roles. As a liminal object, the trousseau accompanies brides into their new marriages and the republic of Turkey into an era of economic growth, development, and heightened global participation. The trousseau has endured and helped to normalize traditional gender roles and now functions for young brides with more heterogeneous roles and future household possibilities.

My dissertation investigates how the trousseau reflects changes in values and how it bridges kin and economic contexts, as both an heirloom and a commodity. As commodities and handmade items trousseau objects span both consumer and household

contexts. In villages where items were displayed for women to view and comment on, the trousseau had a public/private quality, moving between the domestic sphere and the public domain. Today, this public aspect of the trousseau takes place on the market in trade shows, shops, websites, and magazines. Expanding the social context of its analysis provides important information about the trousseau and its changes.

The *çeyiz* offers a critical point of entry into three dimensions of modern Turkey that have heretofore been treated separately in ethnographic research: political economy, gender, and the transformation of kinship-related practices. With the largest wedding industry in the world,³ and as a major regional center for *çeyiz* purchases, Istanbul brings into focus the hope chest's manifold political, ethical, and familial identifications.

Taking up these questions in the urban context of Istanbul, chapter 3 locates an analysis of the *çeyiz* within mother-daughter relationships, showing how it demonstrates belonging, prescribes versions of femininity, and accommodates social changes.

Shopping: "Where Life Begins"

I conducted interviews in Sultan Hamam, a section of town a few blocks away from Eminönü, a famous district for bazaars in Istanbul, which will be described below. A few merchants snapped at me telling me that they were too busy with "real" customers to interview with me, since my pregnancy marked my limited spending capacity for purchasing wedding goods. Some merchants accepted an impromptu interview between answering demanding customers' questions. One man was sitting outside the shop on a low square stool, which he offered to me. His items looked fairly inexpensive, typical of

³ According to the Association for Wedding Professionals International, Istanbul holds the most weddings, 166,000, per year of any city in the world.

the rest of the area, with classic designs of Ottoman motifs, such as the tulip, in pristine white or unbleached cotton, and contemporary, colorful, imported polyester fabrics embroidered with gold-colored abstract designs. I asked him what was contained in a hope chest—he provided an extensive list outlining bed coverings, linens, pillowcases, table coverings, lace, eating utensils, and crochet. The *çeyiz* can also describe other household items, such a washing machine or coffee pot, but this discussion will focus on the textiles. We talked about a fictitious bride preparing the hope chest and he told me: “Her hope chest is finished—and life begins” (*Çeyiz bitti, hayat basladı*).

This single, male merchant’s description of the hope chest suggests that a bride’s life begins when she is materially prepared for marriage and that her life lacks legitimacy without the requisite wedding preparations. Most women do not complete their hope chests until they have a partner in mind, a wedding date set, and an apartment to live in. Effectively, life does begin for a bride when the hope chest is complete, because it signifies the beginning of her married life. In her ethnographic study of a Turkish village, anthropologist Carol Delaney relates marriage to becoming a person, to gaining social power, and leaving the natal home. She states, “Most girls want to marry since it is the only means of achieving something like a social identity” (Delaney 1987, 42). Marriage has been critical for a Turkish girl’s transformation to adulthood, and it is the means for possibly having a male child, the ultimate achievement for a Turkish woman. However, my informants, who spent years away from home living in dorms or apartments without solid plans for weddings, vehemently proclaimed that their lives had already begun. This chapter explores the process of compiling the *çeyiz* as a form of domestic apprenticeship that now competes with two alternative means toward adulthood, consumption and

education, which illuminate different constellations for home life, work, and love. Although the *çeyiz* remains an important technology of self, it (and, inferred within it, immanent marriage) is no longer the solitary site upon which adult female identity is constructed and maintained. In urban Istanbul, young women rhetorically contrast the *çeyiz* with their studying, suggesting that there is a direct substitution of time spent on education. Additionally, the skills acquired during education, as preparation for employment or marriage,

In Eminönü, most tourists visit the Grand Bazaar, with its wide hallways, historic tiles, and pushy vendors. The Grand Bazaar has a global sophistication. The vendors, who speak five to seven languages, sell evil eye talismans, Ottoman-style trivets and tiles depicting scenes of Istanbul. They also sell Turkish specialties, such as hazelnuts, apricots, and figs, and high-end jewelry including gold holders for baby pacifiers. In my primarily English-speaking, ungilded American imagination the possibility of such people and items seemed impossible. But they exist in the well-trodden halls of the Grand Bazaar. However, the wares sold at the Bazaar serve mostly touristic purposes; few Turks use super-sized coffee mugs painted with Ottoman Istanbul. For domestic (referring to both home life and Istanbul proper) use, Sultan Hamam offers more affordable goods for brides.

Past the bazaar, into the open air, is to Sultan Hamam, more local and working class than the bazaars at Eminönü, where brides and female relatives visit for their wedding preparations. Textile and household good shops line the street, and handmade signs, luring in customers with sales, hang in the windows. The household goods include teapots and other kitchen accessories, and all manner of coverings contained within the

çeyiz, or bridal hope chest to include pillowcases, tablecloths, bedspreads, and doilies. Here you see handmade, readymade, imported, spangled, beaded, sequined, plain coverings for tables, television sets, etc. Here is where I began to ask mostly male merchants about the çeyiz.

As a transitional object, the çeyiz embodies the work involved in preparing for the assumed beginning of a woman's adult life, marriage. It entails designing a household and selecting readymade items, which reflect the brides' taste and social standing. Both decorative and functional, the hope chest furnishes the house with beauty while keeping surfaces clean. The hope chest was born with a girl and developed along with her, first by her mother, and then by herself.

The skills used for the hope chest have historically indicated a bride's success as a wife who knits, sews and selects patterns for her home, and who provides the furnishings for her future home. This development of the hope chest, the compilation and craft of goods, occasions the bride's refinement, her evolution into a wife. I assert that the techniques she employs are, in Foucault's words, the care of the self. Although Foucault's work on the care of the self addresses men's self-cultivation, his descriptions can parallel Turkish women's work in preparation for marriage.

Michel Foucault outlines these practices.

The precept according to which one must give attention to oneself was in any case an imperative that circulated among a number of different doctrines. It also took the form of an attitude, a mode of behavior; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices,

and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected, and taught. It thus came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions. (Foucault 1988, 44-5)

While much of the care Foucault describes deals with men's hygiene, self-analysis, and sexual practices, I contend that the female counterpart would look something like the work required to prepare a Turkish bride for marriage. It could be argued that Turkish women do not constitute subjects since historically they have been subjugated within their paternal home and subservient within marriage, however, assigning them subject status illuminates how their choices about wedding preparations inform their lives, in relation to women before them. Within the constraints binding their lives, including compulsory heterosexual marriage, the expectation of maintaining virginity until marriage, and doing the bulk of domestic work upon marriage, young women exercise their will within an array of choices, choices which had been unavailable to the mothers and brides before them. This care of the self collapses into "care of others" as noted by James Faubion during a conversation, because women complete the *çeyiz* in the service of becoming married and serving the family. However, the work involved in compiling a *çeyiz* reflects a woman's tastes and personal anticipation of her future; it is a material exploration of her future involving the intentional cultivation of skills to serve that future. My informants who had a *çeyiz* and were interested in their *çeyiz* approached it as a reflection of their identities and their aspirations, and never mentioned how it would serve them as wives.

But the pervasive obligation of marriage situates the *çeyiz* as a technology through which women can succeed as wives and as people; it is a material space women can dedicate to their preferences, a space not available to them within the natal household and, depending on how marital domestic decisions are made, or at marriage. Crafting the *çeyiz* serves as an apprenticeship in wifedom, but today it competes with more public, overt kinds of education, such as schooling and market trends and their related, though more diffuse, models for womanhood. Historically, the *çeyiz* served as a technology of self, a means for self-improvement and self-definition, and as a material space for self-development before marriage.

Labor interweaves with the performance of modesty in making the *çeyiz*. Since the premium of female virginity remains high, the extreme dedication, labor, and time involved for the hope chest serve as a kind of channeling of that sexual and personal energy, a diversion from sex. And, as Foucault describes, the care of the self can occur both collectively and individually. In *Oya Culture since the Ottomans* by Taciser Onuk, she describes the value of *oya*, which is crochet done by Turkish women with a very fine needle.

Handicrafts have been one of the most important vessels through which the Turkish peoples could easily express their feelings and focus on the paths of their lives. Besides preserving traditional culture for new generations, handicrafts provide the most vital, significant, and expressive proof of a nation's cultural identity. (Onuk 2000, xv)

As the means to focus on the path of life, *oya* and other handiwork required for the hope chest produce the material necessities for marriage and qualifying for marriage. As a social project, this kind of work entails transmitting designs, styles, and information about marriage between women. Historically, young Turkish women worked on their hope chests together; women who did not receive secondary school education might labor together weaving rugs and work on their hope chests during breaks, sharing stories about films, dreams about marriage, and designs for their goods. Thus, the hope chests embodied their futures: physically, symbolically and emotionally. Some of the care of the self done in this setting was the work of imagining and wishing for a husband, thinking about the responsibilities of marriage, and comparing notes with other women about their dreams and lived knowledge. The patterns for lace had different names, like “cancer” for extreme difficulty. The patterns also displayed flowers, such as carnations and the rose, geometric designs, or the names of contemporary movie stars or musicians. The knowledge built into the hope chest was not simply stitches but contextualized cultural knowledge, passed among peers and across generations.

Beyond showing skill and beauty characteristic of handicrafts, lace conveys information about current styles, popular culture, and historical designs. Additionally, *oya* reflects the taste and emotional state of its creator through color choice and pattern. Onuk submits that the lace literally speaks for women when oppressive household conditions after marriage prevent her from sharing her feelings:

Today in some regions of Anatolia, according to longstanding traditions, when the bride enters the groom’s house, she cannot talk whenever she wishes. Oya sewn around the edges of dresses, printed material, and small

headscarves is significant and carries a message. The oya edging on the scarf of the tongue-tied bride is her wordless speech. For example, in the villages of the Taurus mountains, oya worked in various shades of green means that the bride is happy with her home and her husband; whereas yellow oya on the headscarf means the opposite: unhappiness. During the traditional, religious ceremony held one day after the wedding, the “burdock” oya worn for the mother-in-law indicates the message, “don’t prick me like a thorn.” If the bride covers her head with pepper motif oya on printed material, it means, “Our relationship is as hot as pepper.” (Onuk 2000, x)

To clarify, a pepper shows the tension between the mother-in-law and bride. Thus, these handicrafts become technologies for self-expression, not just self-development; the lace can signify the status of the wearer’s emotions, family relationships, and marriage. Like a well-wrought Tweet, the lace on a handkerchief can convey to the world a significant amount of personal information. I am particularly interested in the lace expressing personalized messages among populations of women who were primarily illiterate. The lace on the headscarf, first developed for the hope chest, served as a language between women, as a form of emotional expression, of both joy and discontentment. The traditional handicrafts of the *çeyiz* signified cultural expertise.

Anne Swidler’s description of culture as a repertoire resonates with the cultivation of skills required to make a trousseau, as well as the interplay between public interaction

and the development of individual skill (i.e., women teaching one another, judgment of the quality, and exhibition).

Perhaps we do best to think of culture as a repertoire, like that of an actor, a musician, or a dancer. This image suggests that culture cultivates skills and habits in its users, so that one can be more or less good at the cultural repertoire one performs, and that such cultured capacities may exist both as discrete skills, habits, and orientations and, in larger assemblages, like the pieces a musician has mastered or the plays an actor has performed. It is in this sense that people have an array of cultural resources upon which they can draw. (Swidler 2001, 25)

In consulting with experts (older women and brides further into the planning process) to hone the skills needed for self-improvement, care of the self becomes social, and in the bride's time alone, doing the work requires actual growth to include contemplative time for planning out her married life and dreaming about the future. Beyond the obvious gender differences, part of what differentiates Foucault's care of the self from the bridal self-cultivation I describe here is that the project of women's improvement as an individual depends on the expectation of marriage. Indeed, sewing, crocheting, selecting patterns, and shopping for quality were required to gain any modicum of power in brides' future households, and, more importantly, to leave their natal homes, where they would always remain girls. The cultivation of skills is predicated on the anticipation of marriage, necessary for turning girls into women, whereas the men described by Foucault achieve their goals more autonomously.

Women's self-development has been constrained by the demands and responsibilities of marriage, yet historically marriage has been the only possible future for females as agentive adults. Rebecca Bryant's "The Soul Danced into the Body" addresses young male students learning the *saz*, a stringed instrument used for traditional Turkish music (2005). Bryant's work touches on the issue of how the development of particular skills or practices contributes to the development of selfhood, specifically ethical formation, through apprenticeship. Bryant suggests that "[a] body disciplined within particular conventions becomes a means to realize a particular kind of self" (2005, 224). Bryant explains how students learning to play the *saz* undergo a transformation, rather than just acquiring the skills necessary to play the instrument. She states: "The process at work in this self-formation is neither the mind training of education nor the unselfconscious learning of socialization. It is, rather, apprenticeship, a technique of learning that entails a self-conscious molding of the self (2005, 224)." Bryant continues to define the word apprenticeship within her *saz* study as "that technique that teaches one how to become the type of person who can do X" (2005, 224).

The *saz* is a male domain of apprenticeship, while the *çeyiz* serves as a female apprenticeship in Turkish households. In the case of the *çeyiz*, apprenticeship takes place as women learn and model skills from older women, either their relatives or other women preparing for marriage. This apprenticeship hones brides' understanding of designs on the level of creation and consumption and their awareness of marital responsibilities (see chapter 5 for further details). Thus, the implications for learning certain techniques inform the apprentice's positioning in terms of gender and national identity.

In learning to play the *saz*, traditionally played by men, Bryant finds herself, as an educated, foreign female, able to cross traditional gender boundaries, to acquire more skill and status as a *saz* player, than she would have as a native Turkish woman. Her status as a foreign professor gives seriousness to her commitment to learning, allowing her to practice in the company of serious mentors and musicians. Additionally, an important point I will elaborate on in the final chapter, Bryant connects this self-formation with national identity. “This process of self-conscious self-making also takes one, I believe, to the heart of the imagined nature of the nation,” which she goes on to call “empersonment” (2005, 224). Learning certain culturally salient skills contributes to a person’s articulation of self, which feeds into and perpetuates national identity, solidifying social ties with other participants in the craft and a connection to historically valued traditions. In the case of the *çeyiz*, a successful apprenticeship provides the appropriate material results to be placed on display while contributing to a sense of accomplishment and cultural belonging, clearly a feminine form of empersonment.

According to Sandikci and Ilhan, compiling a hope chest reflects a bride’s adherence to local values and aesthetics as well as provides her with the symbolic capital necessary to give her value as a bride. Thus, demonstrating skills this particular set of skills shows membership to a community and self-development.

These informants’ discourses and practices indicate that adherence to traditions enable them to assert their belonging to the community they live in and register their compliances to the expectations of the others. For these social groups, dowry not only valorizes marriage but more

importantly operates as an indication of the worth of the bride. (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 157)

While the literate men of Foucault's studies wrote letters to their lovers, recounting their meals, activities, desires, and longings, these headscarves served as an important means of communication for village women over centuries. But today's literate Turkish women have more varied means for self-expression and self-development, and their sense of belonging to their village may not have as much valence as their belonging to a work environment or a marital partnership fueled by choice. Young women today rely less on sartorial embellishments, like the lexicon of embroidered flowers used historically by village women, to exercise choices and reflect on their lives. Today, education provides another arena for personal development before marriage.

To Higher Education: Changing Values among Educated Women

In the same urban setting where Turkish women purchase their household wares, young, educated women attend college, often relocating to an urban setting to live in a dorm, where life has already begun before marriage. For women who select housing, which they furnish, prepare their own meals, and live somewhat autonomously away from their parents, the threshold of marriage, and the hope chest, as the material preparation to cross that threshold, does not entail the first break from the family. The pervasive notion that the marriage mediates the transition of a girl to a woman overlooks the reality that some women today live independently before marriage, cultivating their own interests, professional careers, friendships, and skills beyond handicrafts related to marriage. Additionally, the September 2010 referendum permitting headscarves in public

institutions has allowed for education and modesty to converge; young Islamist women may pursue their education while maintaining their religious expression without risking expulsion⁴. I propose that there is a huge gap between the tradition of the trousseau and contemporary Turkish women's lived experience of adulthood—foreshadowing their radically different expectations about marriage.

The *çeyiz*, the symbolic collection of goods required for marriage, enfolds within its contents all of the ambivalence and change contemporary young women are experiencing. In my interviews with college women educated in Istanbul, the views of the hope chest ranged from an atavistic practice, consuming time when girls should be playing outside or attending class, to an important emblem of Turkish culture, a piece of heritage passed between mothers and daughters. Many of the women I interviewed even tried to refuse their mothers' efforts to make hope chests for them. One pursuing a doctorate told me that she wanted to save up her money for a video camera to make *avant garde* films. Another bargained with her mother not to spend her time making a hope chest because the mother had already made one for her sister. Although the daughter, with a Master's degree from a prestigious university, cast the argument as wanting to save her mother the trouble, the truth was that she wanted autonomy over her household; she wanted to choose the latest styles and colors from modern European stores like Ikea. One friend from the island of Büyükada, a short ferryride from Istanbul, explained to me that her parents had invested in her education, as opposed to materially preparing her for marriage: "This is my trousseau," she said. With her family's contribution to coursework

⁴ The headscarf's politicization in Turkey has an incredibly rich history of analysis. See (Göle 2002; Mandel 2008; Saktanber 2002; White 2002) for salient discussions related to Turkish secularism.

as a graphic designer, she could purchase what she wanted for the house, and she could use her time working on her career rather than knitting for a domestic life she did not plan to have. This also suggests that parents recognize that educating daughters serves as a legitimate investment into their futures, rather than simply buying them household items, because they may earn money both before and after marriage.

A recent study suggests that 37.7 percent of both Istanbul women (born in Istanbul) and migrants from the countryside interviewed had jobs, and these working women “see their income producing activities in the context of their roles as good wives and mothers.” (O’Neill and Guler 2009, 162). In their study, “relatively-educated women born in Istanbul were the most likely to be working” and 54 percent of those women worked (O’Neill and Guler 2009, 162), but that women with young children worked less outside of the home until the children reached school age. The authors of this study suggest that despite national idealizations that depict Republican women as working women, their subjects prioritized motherhood over work. Increased education has created increased working opportunities for women living in Istanbul, however the lack of infrastructure (few daycares combined the enduring expectation of women to perform the bulk of the housework) to support families of working women limits the possibility of work after bearing children. O’Neill and Guler also point out higher rates of single women, fewer children after marriage, higher divorce rates, and more support for love marriage among educated Istanbul women, which contributes to changing expectations regarding the marriage contract (2009, 168-9). They boldly state, “only education seemed to be a factor that made an impact [in gender equality] as it significantly affected women’s decisions when to marry and have children and whether to have children at all”

(2009: 169). In this regard, education has challenged norms for what young women do with their time before marriage but it has also begun to change the dynamics and economics of marriage, since having fewer children would give families more income.

Education, not class or migrant status appears to be the main factor transforming women's subjectivities in relation to maintenance of the tradition of the *çeyiz*. For example, White shows that the practice of the *çeyiz* is very much alive in Istanbul among lower-class women who migrated with their families to live in Istanbul shantytowns (2002). Likewise, elite women continue the tradition of the *çeyiz*, investing their parents' money into just the right purchases for their new households. And even high school and college educated women from all walks of life have a *çeyiz* in Istanbul, however, those pursuing graduate degrees, whether born in Istanbul or not, were the most likely to eschew the tradition. One might argue that those with the least economic dependency or intimate relationship with their parents might show the least interest in the *çeyiz*, however, my research suggests that education is the greatest factor determining their decision to have a *çeyiz*. A higher level of education also correlated with expectations in more egalitarian marriages.

Part of this transition from hope chest to higher education points not just to a change in women's time spent before marriage but in their marital aspirations. Since the rate of marriages for all adults in Turkey remains very high, it is assumed that marriage remains compulsory, and this analysis assumes marriage to be an inevitable outcome for my informants. I interviewed a family of sisters in their twenties, whose family was Laz, Muslim, and from Rize, in the tea-growing Black Sea region of northeast Turkey. When I asked them about what they wanted their houses to be like, they told me that they didn't

know. Indeed, how could they know what their houses might look like when they did not have husbands or boyfriends? For these women, furnishing a home should be done with a husband since the couple would live in the house together and share the space—and the domestic responsibilities. The home was not an extension of their domestic identity as wives but it was imagined as a shared and mutually negotiated space between two people, who live in it while working on their careers.

The twins, who both had undergraduate degrees and planned to pursue graduate degrees, felt strongly that their homes should be created in conjunction with their future husbands, rather than in consultation with their mother, who had not had the same kind of autonomy in setting up her home because her mother had prepared her *çeyiz*. They desired to select their own furnishings, and to choose to infuse their new home with things they had used during college, rather than moving into a house full of entirely new things chosen by their families. “Why would we want to live surrounded by new things without memories?” Their faces turned into a grimace. They wanted the ability to both choose their goods according to their tastes and to use things they had already selected before. For these women, newness was less of a priority than individual choice, and their decision to buy even used furniture reflected their decision-making autonomy from their mothers in furnishing their new homes. Refusing to reproduce the homes of their mothers, educated, young women insist on being part of the shopping process, even using their own money to furnish their home. Indeed, they also desire input from their future husbands, rather than relying on their mothers’ guidance in purchasing decisions. Having lived away during college, young women may have begun to acquire things that reflect

their tastes before marriage. Increased work also provides them with capital to realize their tastes through purchases before marriage.

Ayşe Öncü mapped out the combination of capital and urbanization as a “distinctive cultural space for the ‘young’” in Istanbul (Öncü 2002). She looked at how young men consumed satirical and sexualized images before marriage, but the consumption patterns of female youth, beyond their veiling preferences, warrants further attention. Drawing on the previous discussion of literacy with urban women’s consumption, I link Öncü’s article with how educated women consumer wedding items. Öncü suggests that these graphic magazines, *mangada*, “provide a continuous stream of conversation, in graphics and words, which constitute a running commentary on adult life, one that is based on a shared sense of fun, enjoyment, and the ridiculous” (2002, 176). For young men, a negative, satirical response to marriage and adulthood has been codified, presented graphically within these juvenile texts, but for young women the same sort of medium to critique their expected future does not exist. Young women’s negative critique of adulthood is captured in their ambivalence toward the handmade items in the *çeyiz* and in their preference for and consumption of store-bought items, a tactic of resistance (Certeau 2002). For example, I interviewed an engaged late-twenties college-educated administrator, Irem, who told me that all of her wedding-related purchases “reflect me, my personality. These are who I am.”

Young women’s strong interest in selecting items for their personal use also resonates with Esra Özyürek’s work which suggests that the home becomes inhabited with political identity (2006). She asserts that neoliberalism has allowed for the privatization of Atatürk memorabilia, such as small Atatürk buttons or posters of his

image, pointing to the increased value on individual choice. In comparing Atatürk paraphernalia from the past with the items that became popular in the nineties and beyond, Özyürek notes the miniaturization of Atatürk images, suggesting that the change in scale has also changed the public's personal relationship has shifted toward him.

In such miniature forms, Atatürk's representations, although still icons of the state, become part of the bourgeois subject's domestic sphere.

Significantly, these images are privatized through the act of purchase on the market by individual citizens. Possessing and displaying a miniaturized and commercialized Atatürk image in private indicates a personal relationship with the state and an individual chooses to activate it through the market mechanisms of consumer choice. (Özyürek 2006, 105)

Özyürek's research shows a growing trend of Turkish youth to prefer personally chosen and purchased images, in the form of small and manageable Atatürk buttons and pins, as opposed to large posters. This information suggests that personal preference and purchasing power give consumers a sense of mastery and agency over these icons. And, although the *çeyiz* is not considered overtly political, I believe that a woman's selection of items and whether or not to have a hope chest to begin with reveals their opinions about women's roles in society, their work status, and their perceived roles in the household. That educated women prefer to consume rather than create household items puts them into the realm of consumers who exercise their power of choice among a selection of readymade items. And it suggests that they prefer the convenience of readymade items of their choosing over handmade and more fragile objects. This

example shows that the axis of personal investment has shifted from creating objects to selecting them through shopping and imbuing them with memories.

For young Turkish women, household furnishings take on a political cadence, not necessarily overtly nationalist, but the house becomes a scale for demonstrating the desire for partnership in marriage, independence from their parents, and, as a testament to freedom before marriage. The refusal to only have new items in the marital household connects women to their lives before marriage, not just as gestures to their connection to their mothers, as tradition would enforce. Additionally, the refusal to buy entirely new items and the possibility of cohabitation before marriage de-emphasizes the value of both material and physical newness, privileging choice over novelty (virginity).

These educated women thus transform the work of the self into a more academic task by honing skills for a professional career and aspiring to contribute as a more equal partner in a relationship, rather than the main contributor to the domestic space. They choose to live in homes of their own choosing and furnishing, replete with memories, rather than austere places, like hotels, without any personal undertones. Some of their distaste to new things could link to the extreme emphasis on virginity and newness.

In the same way that “new” (unused and tied with a red ribbon to denote their novelty) objects are conflated with brides’ virginity, young women who reject those new things tacitly reject the paradigm of virginity in favor of testing out and individually selecting things, objects, furnishings, and sexuality before marriage, so that marriage is chosen between two contributing individuals whose relationship has evolved to the point of commitment rather than being thrust together in order to reproduce.

The chest dowry of the village and shantytown informants is composed exclusively of white embroidery and lace. The color white symbolizes the innocence of the bride-to-be and the insistence of white pieces indicates the significance placed on her “purity.” People living in villages and shantytowns tend to be highly conservative in moral values and especially when they take part in arranged marriage, premarital sexual interaction between parties is not permitted. The white embroidery that the bride-to-be takes with her, thus, symbolizes her virginity. (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 163)

The interplay of red and white of the Turkish bride’s wedding attire conjoins the style white of modern Western brides with the more traditional red ribbon to symbolize a bride’s virginity (White 1993). Coded as the color of marriage within the Middle East (Abu-Lughod 1993) and Asia, red signifies the loss of virginity. But in Turkey, this sash, ritually wrapped around the bride by a close male relative (brother or father) also signifies the agnatic tie. The use of red for sacrifice and to mark new wedding gifts also marks brides as more than virgins but as gifts representing the father’s household. Beyond these less dense symbols of virginity, the objects within the *çeyiz* encode the history of women’s interactions, and those interactions are diminishing as gender segregation decreases.

Just as Foucault’s work on technologies details the homosocial, or gender-segregated, aspects of Greek life, a study of the history of the hope chest deals mainly with women’s work regarding marriage preparations. However, the consideration of education as an emergent technology for women’s development, and as a substitution for

the time and effort put into developing the hope chest, brings into question women's changing identities and the domestic space and public spaces where gender roles are negotiated. Additionally, the space of higher education is gendered as male, so young women participate but are excluded as subjects in some respects. For example compulsory military service for young men adds to their education and recognition of citizenship responsibilities, while women are elided from this connection between masculinity and military participation (Altınay 2005). Despite this exclusion (from being recognized within course on citizenship) and perhaps due to their coeducational education, young women do not conform to the same homemaking practices as women who were educated primarily at home.

Young women who don't make hope chests advocate for different kinds of relationships with their spouses than their mothers did as a function of how they spend their time and efforts, and the expectations they place upon themselves about their household contributions and spousal involvement in the household.

The explanation for this difference centers on education; Turkish women today receive more schooling and participate in the workforce more than women of previous generations, particularly in the city. Sandikci and Ilhan describe the how urban living influences how young women use their time in relation to the hope chest:

In cities, the state enforces schooling more strictly than in rural areas, and most shantytown families need many members of the family to have paid employment outside the house in order to finance the higher cost of living in the cities. Because these girls do not have too much free time at home, they do not learn how to do needlework. The modern lifestyle of the city

enables them to acquire an education, and, to an extent, deviate from traditional female roles and responsibilities. However, their rural roots still dictate a traditional dowry. (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 162)

Changing laws and greater availability dictate that Turkish women and girls increasingly participate in secondary education and are attending college in higher numbers. According to the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2008-2011:

For women who successfully pass the primary and secondary levels of education, access to higher education is comparatively less problematic. In total there are 6.5 million people, who are 18 to 22 years old (the age group at university) and 2.49 million of them enter university: 43 percent of all university students are women...

When the net schooling rate in higher education is concerned, the total rate was 10.3 percent in 1997 and it raised to 20.1 percent in 2007. (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry 2008, 29)

The report shows that increased education leads to increased labor force participation and, I observe, increased economic-decision making.

The level of education is directly related to the economic participation of women. Of all female university graduates 70 percent is gainfully employed. This rate is only 22 percent for women with an education below higher education” (National Action Plan on Gender Equality p.29).

[The report then mentions that single women participate more in the labor

force than married women. Another factor of importance is marital status.]

The labour force participation rate of single women (not married or divorced) is higher than that of married women. In 2006, the labour force participation rate was 23.1 percent for married women, 34.2 percent for single women, and 42.1 percent for divorced women. (2008, 35)

The emergence of single, educated working women is stunning both for the economy and for the women, who are trailblazers of a new sort. My research addresses this emergent population of educated single and recently married women who experience, as a result of their education and the time spent away from their families before marriage, an array of new desires, both material and physical, differently from previous generations of women.⁵ Their research shows a distinct change in reactions to the hope chest among single, “modern” women, as opposed to married ones. Sandikci and Ilhan’s study on the contemporary hope chest points out that the word “to marry,” *evlenmek*, “literally, acquiring a house” (2003, 173), contains within it the expectation that a young couple will move from their natal homes to their own homes at the advent of marriage. However, this study shows a degree of resistance to the dowry by this population of women who have experienced independent living before marriage.

⁵ Ezra Özyürek’s *Nostalgia for the Modern State Secularism and Everyday Politics* (2006) adds significantly to a discussion about the how neoliberalism influences and informs consumption and political identities in Turkey. She also shows how women’s bodies have been strategically gendered to promote political agendas (Kemalism and conservatism, respectively) but she does not iron out how the array of choices of political affiliations has expanded for women. However, she shows that privatization, consumption and choice drive political affiliation, for Turkish men and women, in ways women would not have had access to previously.

These [single and divorced] women, who are experienced in living alone and define their identities as “modern,” distance themselves from dowry and its “traditional” connotations. However, this distancing does not necessarily lead to rejection. Rather, these informants strategically reconstruct dowry as an heirloom or an aesthetic object. (Sandikci and Ilhan 173-4)

Most of my college-educated informants did not want hope chests and did not take active roles in completing them; however, they allowed their mothers to do the work to appease them, and simply stored away the goods received upon marriage. Some spoke of the goods derisively, calling *dantel*, a form of traditional Turkish embroidery, “*dantel mantel istemiyorum*,” as North Americans sometimes repeat a word followed by a gibberish variant to show their disapproval. In this particular case the woman followed her pejorative description of *dantel* with “I don’t want,” which is interesting in the context of discussing marriage. Historically, the groom’s family would use the same verb to discuss selecting the bride; the groom’s family “comes to want the bride.” Instead of suggesting that she did not like this form of embroidery, she used the same verb, an agentive, active verb, that a groom’s family would use in choosing a bride. Having witnessed her sister’s depressive reaction to her arranged marriage, not wanting *dantel* signifies a more global refusal to participate as a passive bride or consumer.

My informants, both mothers and daughters, cast their educations in direct opposition to the trousseau. “I didn’t sew, I was studying,” was a phrase I often heard, as if the time girls might have used for their hope chest was directly transferred to their

studies. It seems notable to me that these two occupations are linked over and over and presented dichotomously, perhaps in the same way that housewives and working women were dichotomized in the United States before working mothers emerged.

In her Melissa Chase Maley Zinn remarks this difference: “Whether a woman purchases or has her *çeyiz* textiles made for her or whether she makes them herself is directly linked to 1) whether the bride is an ‘*aile kiz*’ (family girl) or an ‘*okuyan kiz*’ (school girl) and 2) the bride’s position in her life cycle” (109). Zinn suggests that for this “*aile kiz*” bride, sensitivity to changes in fashion and the ability to devote time and money to her *çeyiz* textiles reflects her sense of self as a homemaker (wife and mother) (Zinn 2002, 109). Zinn posits that the schoolgirl has more options, including hiring out the work necessary to have a complete hope chest or rejecting the tradition altogether.

Less frequently, women may pointedly reject *çeyiz* and *çeyiz* textiles. This could reflect purely practical considerations such as saving money, or personal preference (e.g. disinterest in textiles), but it is often a way of making a personal statement of what they believe. If a woman specifically rejects *çeyiz*, she may for example be rejecting what she may see as a frivolous tradition that does not reflect a modern reality for working women or students. (Zinn 2002, 110)

However, my fieldwork suggests that rejecting the *çeyiz* is more than a form of disapproval of a tradition—it is a disavowal of an entire lifestyle of patriarchal order, of family relationships, and women’s roles. And it entails a simultaneous assertion of a different kind of belonging.

My friend Maya invited me to interview her friends, two roommates and a third friend. The roommates lived in a very posh, beautiful neighborhood on the Asian side of Istanbul, Moda. We took the ferry to Kadıköy, and then walked up a slowly ascending hill through throngs of people. The next part of the trek involved window shopping at all of the hip stores, such as Mavi Jeans, a popular brand. Then at the Bull, an intersection where buses and the tram converge, we took an old tram up to Moda. The apartment buildings were mid-century modern. Some were short with an Asian sparseness and careful attention to lines. Most trips to Moda involved first tea and people-watching overlooking the Sea of Marmara, and ending with a stop for Turkish ice cream.

But we were late and in a hurry to meet these women before they left. Their sophistication reminded me of *Sex and the City*; I could see how I could easily fit them into stereotypes: the sexy jaded one, the everywoman, and the quiet one, but I resisted the urge. All were college educated, one was engaged, one single, and one almost engaged. I interviewed Sibel, a young college-educated woman in her thirties, whose family lived in Çannakale, working in finance. As she puffed her cigarette, we ate *şeftali* (peach) Danone yogurt on her balcony. The smoke was bothering me but I knew it would make her more comfortable. She talked about the tradition. “In the past, the groom’s family bought everything. My sister got married—they said they were going to buy everything together.” She then described the wedding preparations and how the bride took over shopping and organizing and the groom was left out of the process, reasserting the fact that, despite the couples’ intentions, the domestic remains the bride’s domain and that gender disparities pervade marital relations. She told some stories about her sister’s wedding preparations, and she discussed how the groom is absent from the wedding

preparations as the female family members doing the work. She discussed women's lives and responsibility with a kind of distaste, suggesting that the kitchen remains the domain of women. We began to discuss whether an equal relationship was possible. When I asked her what she thought, she took a deep puff, scratched her tousled honey brown curls, and reflected, "There are few men you can have an equal relationship with, but I'll find one." This moment of dreaming about futures, thinking about inequality and the traditional expectations that define and constrain women's lives brought a shift in the tone of the conversation. The quiet roommate, with long black hair, responded. She was nearly crying as she started to talk.

I can tell you something about the *çeyiz*. It's an emotional issue. We had a neighbor, a beautiful woman, but she had a disease when she was eighteen. There was a problem with her leg, a disability, so she lived with her parents. She wanted to get married, and she tried to complete her *çeyiz* for years. She is forty-five years old and not married. Whenever I go to that house I feel sad because you see all these items that are not used for years and will stay in the house.

The story of the beautiful and unmarriageable neighbor points to an unused hope chest, which signifies an unfulfilled life, an unfulfilled future. The dark-haired single woman complained, "Even I feel this in the same way. My mom has prepared some items for me. I have a life, I have a house, but my mom won't let me use them because I'm still not married." I asked, "Does it feel like your life still has not begun?" She laughed at my naïve question incredulously—of course her current life was legitimate without being

married. Maya brought up the same issue because her boyfriend's mother would not give him any household items unless they were married. They young women asserted adamantly, and with a bit of laughter, that their lives had already begun. They were in the midst of pursuing their careers, dating prospective husbands, living urban lives— marriage would only punctuate the lives they have already started.

These self-supporting independent women, who lived away from their parents and furnished their homes with the items of their choosing all point to a paradox: they have autonomy and responsibility within their lives because they are not married. However, their lifestyles were not considered valid by their elders because they were not yet married; although they made homes for themselves, they did not deserve the trappings of a real house. But when asked if they felt any urgency about getting married they say “no” in concert. Successful single Turkish women do not get recognition for their accomplishments or the kind of material support that married women do, not because they are so accomplished that they would not benefit from that support, but because their lives do not count, according to their society.

The curly-haired smoker described another example of how achievement and wedding preparations are set at odds. When her father died she had access to some money through his insurance policy, which was to be used explicitly for her wedding preparations. However, working full time prevented her from gaining access to the money. This put her in a bind. Was the amount of money worth not working for, or would it be better to achieve her best professionally so that she would earn more, and lose more, because it would entail paying for her own *çeyiz*? Ultimately, she chose to work and to prepare a modest hope chest with her earnings.

At first glance, these women's different orientation to their lives and to marriage looks like Judith Butler's version of disavowal. By rejecting the premise of the *çeyiz*, they reject marriage as the ultimate signifier for women's identities. As she describes homosexual identities, she suggests that they exist in opposition to and in tension with straight identities.

Here it should become clear that a radical refusal to identify with a given position suggests that on some level identification has already taken place, an identification that is made and disavowed, a disavowed identification whose symptomatic appearance is the insistence on, the overdetermination of, the identification by which gay and lesbian subjects come to signify in public discourse. (Butler 1993, 116)

While this might be a more complicated comparison than I should make here, I am suggesting that educated Turkish women draw on the conventional definition of marriage and womanhood as a point of departure, as a place to contrast their own life choices and choices for relationship dynamics, and as Butler later suggests, in terms of their desires. The contrast between family girls as described by Maley Zinn (2002) above, gains power by presenting two opposing identities. In the example I am using, these single women reject the hope chest and the life of patriarchal subservience attached to it. "The fact that dowry is prepared only for the bride and is required as a condition of marriage can be read as an expression of patriarchal authority" (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 173). Young women's departure from traditional married life does produce kind of

incoherence—older generations do not perceive their single, working lives as permanent and expect them to get married, quit working, and keep house.

This raises the political question of the cost of articulating a coherent identity-position if that coherence is produced through the production, exclusion and repudiation of abjected specters that threaten those very subject-positions. Indeed it may be only by risking the incoherence of identity that connection is possible, a political point that correlates with Leo Bersani's insight that only the decentered subject desires. (Butler 1993, 113)

These women could be seen as incoherent or de-centered subjects, or perhaps their decision not to marry and collect their hope chests is still in development and they will eventually capitulate to society's demands that they marry. However, I believe that whom they desire (an equal partner) and what they desire (a more egalitarian household) for married life conflicts with previous generations and directly relates to how they choose their hope chest items.

In conclusion, women's increased education directly relates to changes in their *çeyiz*. These educated women's lives contrast sharply with their mothers', yet the *çeyiz* and marriage remain compulsory for them. Their protests and resistances, which I will develop further, point to a desire for different material and marital roles.

Chapter 3: Scarlet Ribbons: Making Privates Public

Julia, an instructor on foreign cinema at a private university, was engaged. We talked outside of a campus building, as she spoke between puffs of her cigarette. Her style of dress was Western, disaffected, feminine (like virtually all Turkish women I'd befriended) and just a bit gothic. She wore bright red lipstick, a black A-line skirt, and a black cap-sleeved lace blouse and no other makeup. We talked about wedding traditions. Since I had recently been to a conservative and low-budget wedding at a salon in Bahçe Evler, where the bride looked tearful, during the festive occasion, I wanted to hear her opinions of the red sash worn by conservative brides. When I asked her what she thought about the red ribbon, she looked disgusted. "I don't want to be wrapped up like a present, like a refrigerator! They also tie the red ribbons around the lambs about to be sacrificed." She found this tradition to be dehumanizing, and she reacted to it very strongly. This young woman found the tradition of the red ribbon to be objectifying, and she resolved not to wear one. Instead of looking at the decision not to wear one as an insult to her family, she believed that wearing one was an affront to her subjectivity.

Like the *çeyiz*, the red ribbon serves as another emotionally dense, wedding-related site where contemporary urban brides' choices differ from their mothers', and where the emotional effect of the decision reflects their personal desires rather than their families'. The red ribbon created passionate discussions among my friends and informants in private but was not something they could actively rebel against, leaving their (and by extension, their family's) honor vulnerable to scrutiny. My informants described planning the entire wedding as an ongoing negotiation, or bargain between children and parents. While some of this bargaining occurs overtly, with the bride vying

for a vacation or a small kiss with her husband at her parents' approval, other aspects happen tacitly.

The red ribbon is tied around the waist of the bride's white gown, by a male family member on her wedding day (and subsequently shredded and eaten by single women at the wedding, according to one informant from Izmir), to signify that she is a virgin. Like the tea pots, pans, and white appliances, which are also adorned with a red ribbon to show that they are *yepyeni*, or brand new and unused, the bride's status is on public display. For some brides, virginity must be exhibited in this way. The red ribbon publicly affirms the bride's, and thus her family's, honor on her wedding day.

The color red is used throughout the Middle East to denote fertility, but this particular coding of red as symbolizing virginity is hailed as an Anatolian tradition by my informants. Abu-Lughod describes the use of red among the bedouin community she studies:

Red is the color of fertility and sexuality, the color of the henna women and girls put on their hands on the eve of wedding celebration, the color of the belt every married woman wears, the color of the blanket draped on the old bridal litter or the current bridal Peugeot, the color of the blanket draped on the tent to mark where a circumcision celebration (likened to a wedding in a variety of ways) is taking place. (Abu-Lughod 1993, 190)

In the Egyptian case above, red marks sexuality, the loss of virginity and a bride's entrance into womanhood, whereas in Turkey, red serves as more of a transitional color, suggesting marriage and its subsequent consummation. Red is used in ritual rites of

passage, such as the wedding, the henna night, and the circumcision ceremony (also referred to as a wedding), but, unlike Abu-Lughod's description, it is not used by married women to reiterate their married status. The traditional henna-night dress is red, as is the coin-shaped henna circle marking the bride's palm, and the traditional sash worn for a boy's circumcision is also red. In the case of the henna night, I suggest that the color signifies the bride's home, the color of her blood ties, particularly her mother. The ribbon for the wedding marks a transitional color, moving in both directions; it reminds the bride of her natal family and reminds the audience of her impending wedding and loss of virginity. Brides claim that it proves their virginity, but its significance seems deeper than that, especially in looking at who ties the ribbon (a male family member) and that red resonates with the full costume of the previous night, the henna night.

Additionally, the marking of sacrificial animals and new wedding gifts as red suggests that red marks the bride's transitional status, her movement from one household to the next, while the white dress suggests her virginity. However, as the color of blood, of sacrificial animals, circumcised boys, and the virginal bride, red clearly connects to the bride's imminent sexual activity. The recent adoption of solely white dresses by brides (aside from brides who have lived in Istanbul their entire lives) is a Western-inflected innovation, a fashion choice. However, for today's brides who have experienced sexual freedom, the choice not to wear the red ribbon also sometimes corresponds with their desire not to display the status of their virginity.

While its presence makes the bride's virginity clear, the red ribbon's absence is left vaguely undefined; some bridal shop owners regarded it as fashion choice, while some brides described it as an intentional public disclosure of not being "brand new."

One bride, pursuing her Master's degree, who did not wear the ribbon, told me she believed that, amid the bustle of wedding preparations, "probably my family just forgot about [the red ribbon]." ⁶ But for brides with more traditional families the ribbon signifies the bride's worth, exteriorizing her virginity. ⁷

Only one informant, Özge, whose parents both immigrated to Istanbul from Albania and, Egypt, told them that she would not adhere to that tradition because it did not make sense to her. She said, "I told them that I would not wear it [the red ribbon]. My husband and I had already been living together so it was obvious that I was not a virgin." This woman had a very close relationship with her parents, and relayed to them her status without judgment, but she also had non-Turkish background, which would serve to buffer the wedding guests' conjecture about her choice not to wear the ribbon. The decision not to wear the red ribbon also reflected Western tastes or urban influences, although, like the henna night the red ribbon is coming into fashion for city-dwellers.

Although it would not have been appropriate to discuss it explicitly unless my informants mentioned it first, I believe that all of the women I interviewed who opposed the red ribbon were not virgins at marriage, and while some argued against it because of its implications about the bride's status and the falsehood it would convey, others simply thought it was a backward tradition. Ceren, a newlywed, told me she would never have

⁶ As mentioned above in terms of couples' claiming to have received an item by another family member as an excuse to reject the initial item, this bride's "forgetfulness" resulting in her omission of the red sash serves to resist the expectation of a display of virginity.

⁷ A number of television channels in Turkey, from Germany and France air shows, including DüğünTV, of Turkish weddings abroad. And the red ribbon is present on the vast majority those brides, suggesting that virginity becomes an even more important feature for Turks living abroad, especially when it is on double display, first at the wedding and secondly as filmed for international consumption.

worn such a ribbon because it was a tradition from the köy, the village. Her husband chimed in and said that it was an ugly tradition and not fair to women. As only children, both born in Istanbul, marrying in their late twenties they had some bargaining power regarding the wedding and insisted against the red sash. For them the sash was not modern, neither as a symbol nor a fashion choice.

A combination of fashion and an aspiration to be modern allowed many young women to escape wearing this ribbon, perhaps wearing it for a picture and not for the ceremony, when a male relative would wrap it around her waist. One bride and graduate student, Burcu, recalled not wearing the ribbon. I asked what her family said. And she replied, “They didn’t say anything. It was so busy, I think they forgot about it.”

Another college-educated woman explained, “The ribbon means virginity. It’s an Anatolian tradition—the father or brother of the bride should put a red ribbon to bride’s waist. I hate it. Wearing it depends on the view of life of the people, their ideologies, how open-minded they are. Nobody asked why I didn’t wear one.”

Among my informants, especially those who attended college, the red ribbon sparked intense reactions and conversations, sometimes even nervous self-incriminating laughter. I believe these reactions came because the ribbon symbolizes the most dramatic departure in young women’s lives compared to previous generations: premarital intimacy.⁸ Young women, who likely enjoyed freedom before marriage, suddenly found their choices and actions reduced to a symbol worn on their bodies for their relatives and friends to see. Less a symbol of pride than a scarlet letter, the red ribbon sometimes symbolized deceit and shame for women who felt compelled to wear it, or disavow it,

⁸ Temporary or trial marriage did occur in the past, but it usually resulted in permanent marriage. But agentive dating is a new phenomenon (Hart 2007).

when it did not signify their chastity. At the same time, deceiving parents regarding dating does occur, and I met many informants who lived with their boyfriends before marriage without their parents' knowledge. But, unlike the ribbon, the choice to cohabitate was contained to a display of the domestic space and not the public wedding ritual of donning the red sash. Young women today demand a reconfiguration of public and domestic space, sharing their sexual experiences with their husbands or partners and considering the responsibilities of marriage through the lenses of consumption and education.

Turkish women living in Istanbul participate in public life through shopping, and daily interactions on the street, in an environment that is not sexually segregated. That is not to say, however, that all Istanbul women have the same degree of mobility, but even the most conservative women I interviewed were able to leave the house without their husbands' permission to accomplish what they needed to attend to their needs. Additionally, this anecdote points to the public arena of shopping as an opportunity for a young girl's discovery, and, subsequently for her admonishment by her mother. The public can become a field for teaching and learning, modeling appropriate behavior and controlling inappropriate choices. Women's refusal to wear the red ribbon and their preference for manufactured over handmade household items provide phenomena to assess how much change has occurred in the study of the public and nonpublic in the last few decades.

In his 1982 review of the anthropological literature on the Mediterranean, David Gilmore lays out the problems of studying the Mediterranean, especially with regard to gender as it relates to the representation of private and public arenas. He mentions how

studies conducted in this sexually segregated region present “an unbridgeable gulf between a male public and female private sphere. These are often described as complementary and discontinuous” (Gilmore 1982, 194). This gulf, often discussed in early research on the Mediterranean, places researchers in a position of presenting one-sided studies, focusing on the lives of either sex, which is associated with either domain. Gilmore then suggests that privileging of the public in research is changing because more scholars are researching domestic daily life. An increase in female social scientists has created an opportunity to turn the focus onto women, which has enriched Mediterranean studies.

Until recently most anthropologists tended to focus on the public sphere, both because it is more accessible and seemed more important. Subsequently, a somewhat distorted male-oriented image of both worlds has emerged. This is not to say that female roles have been neglected, but rather that they have been treated in an unidimensional fashion as a residual “world apart” of limited social significance...they are presented as being alienated from the society which they, in large measure, maintain, nurture, and reproduce. (1982, 195)

Gilmore points to the then-emergent gender-focused studies of the Mediterranean, which “delved into the invisible world of womenfolk” (195). Gilmore’s treatment of this literature still assumes that the Mediterranean region relies on two separate spheres, public and private, which are gendered and unequal. He suggests that women work to

perpetuate and tend to society, even as they are sequestered away from the public. His overview also shows the limitations, and thus epistemological gaps, that (male) anthropologists have produced in these studies because they have not had access to women's private lives. "Simply to be seen in these societies conveys powerful exotic overtones, and there is a strong element of both voyeurism and its converse, unconscious exhibitionism, in Mediterranean culture by which public 'exposure' means violation of the body...Much of this may have to do with female seclusion. For where the opposite sex is hidden from sight, then sight itself becomes invested with erotic meaning, 'libidinized', as Freud might say" (Gilmore 1982, 198). The resulting mystification of women has left tremendous possibilities, and undoing, in research about Mediterranean women, in particular, demystifying women's lives.

Gilmore shows how research began to problematize the categories of public and private and considers the possibilities of further work, particularly on manufacturing, to expand beyond the fixed realms of public and private. "Previously the standard male view of women as restricted to nonproductive domestic chores was often blithely accepted, but it is becoming increasingly clear that women do work outside the home and in domestic manufactories, contributing to production in terms of both use value and exchange value" (1982, 196). In highlighting the male view, he demonstrates that sexual segregation, and its essentialist trappings, is perpetuated through study of men exclusively. He invites a synthesis of larger questions about globalization with regards to women and family structure: "Regional analyses and studies of the world capitalist system are not enough, although they do give the necessary background. To make this background come to life we need to populate it with communities, families, and living,

working men and women” (Gilmore 1982, 200). In this respect, he believes that studying families will bring life to economic research, like a human-interest piece in the business section of a newspaper.

However, research on families does much more than bring vitality to analyses of complex global systems; it witnesses economic interactions and negotiations within an everyday context (Zelizer 2005). Critical analyses of families help make power visible. Calling for interventions into the study of kinship, Collier and Yanagisako criticize its past fixation on reproduction. “So, for example, it [kinship as it has been construed] overlooks how families in our society both reproduce and recast forms of gender inequality along with forms of class inequality at the same time that they nurture their children” (Collier and Yanagisako 1987, 3). The authors look beyond reproduction to models of analysis that view the family as dynamically engaged with and informed by the public. In her chapter, “Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship,” Yanagisako cites Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984) as an example of a scholar who does not dismiss home life as free from societal influence: “Bourdieu’s framework thus suggests that gender relations and child socialization—far from being insulated from changes in ‘meanings, values, and categorical relations’—are implicated in those changes” (Yanagisako 1987a, 28). From a methodological standpoint, the premise that private life is not immune to social forces and that it is structured and informed by the public gives meaning and legitimacy to everyday domestic activities, which is especially important in sexually segregated societies. The wedding industry, for example, allows for a dynamic perspective on the reproduction and reconfiguration of gender and capital.

Generations of women participate in the wedding economy, amassing items for their future households, through decision-making, purchases, and familial negotiations, while social structure critically shapes their lives as wives and workers. The consideration of marriage and family in the Middle East and Turkey yields important information on women's positions: how they are valued, how they gain power, and how they move within society. This literature on Turkey⁹ and the Middle East reveals that kinship and marriage for the most part define women's identities in the villages and make available social networks for women to utilize. Because, historically, Turkish brides moved into the groom's family's home, the development of such networks appears critical for women's productivity, socialization, and growth. While these networks provide avenues for women to attain and offer support, kinship still motivates spousal choices and operates within the groom's household to dictate power relations. At this point in analysis the possibility for women to attain any power seems dismal—they must marry who their families choose and align with whomever they can based on proximity.

Increased urbanization and modernization, however, bring changes to social structure, breaking open some of the traditional sutures of family. Modernity, which I will discuss in chapter 6, imposes challenges to the traditional rural social order. Weddings, like circumcision ceremonies, traverse the two spheres as public events that publicize and perform private social orders, and are informed by both traditions and contemporary trends¹⁰ (Kendall 1996). The hope chest figures in a discussion on the

⁹ An ongoing problem in analyzing Turkey and relevant literature from its proximity is how to locate it. I have focused mostly on the Middle East and the Mediterranean, to better assess Islam, and the Mediterranean for its proximity to my field site.

¹⁰ Van Gennep's (2004) and Victor Turner's work (1987) on rites of passage and ritual contribute to an understanding of these events, and a focus on consumption and family

public and private because it is first created privately, but is displayed publicly before the wedding. Additionally, the hope chest is becoming increasingly more public as women work outside of the home to make money to purchase items for it and shop in merchant areas for its contents. An analysis of the hope chest requires first an understanding of the private and public, as treated in feminist anthropology, and then within the local cultural context.

Feminist Analyses of Publics Privates

“What do these oppositions *do* for social relations, and, conversely, how do people encounter these oppositions in their practice of social relations?” (Yanagisako 1987, 18)

During the 1970s and 1980s the feminist debate in anthropology focused on the public/private distinction, linking those separate realms with gender. Feminists used this dichotomy as a means to investigate sexual asymmetry across cultures (Comaroff 1987; Michelle Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974), to question biological essentialism (Locke 2010) and to link it to other structuring dichotomies, such as nature and culture (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Rosaldo (1974) and Fortes (Fortes 2005) contributed the enduring framework of the debate. Yanagisako summarizes Rosaldo’s institutional rendering of public and private as “[a] division of the social world into an inward-oriented, particularistic sphere and an expansive, universalistic sphere is conflated with a less explicit division of human activities into functionally differentiated domains: that of the ‘domestic’ (reproductive) activities and that of ‘economic’ (productive) activities” (Yanagisako 1987b, 112). In comparison, Fortes sees the distinction as a heuristic model

highlights some of the political economical aspects of these rituals (Faubion and Hamilton 2007)

and thus “limits the range of relationships shaped by moral conscience and sentiment but traces them to the same source, namely, the mother-child bond (Yanagisako 1987a, 113).” Yanagisako’s analysis of Fortes states: “[a]ffect extends into society only far enough to bound the sphere of relations that is not constructed by political-jural principles. To put it another way, the affect, extending from biological reproduction, limits the external authority into familiar relations—whether that external authority is the lineage or the state” (1987b, 114-5). Fortes thus limits the affect discussion to the domestic space, and asserts that authority exists outside of the domestic space so that these spheres do not influence each other. However, in the case of Turkey, marriage has been politicized since the Ottoman era, and, as women’s participation in society moves beyond the house, affect increasingly influences decisions outside of the home, so the demarcation of spaces corresponds more with Bourdieu’s configuration than with Fortes’.

Yanagisako’s ethnographic research, which rejects Rosaldo’s public/private distinction, introduces new metaphors based on first-and second generation Japanese Americans (Issei and Nisei, respectively). The first generation employs the inside-outside metaphors to designate the homespace from beyond it. The second generation, Nisei, uses work and family to gender work-related responsibilities. She asserts that “inside” and “outside” are the metaphors of gender oppositions with different normative implications. “Inside” and “outside” are the core symbols of a metaphor of socio-spatial opposition with an inherent hierarchy of authority. “‘Work’ and ‘family’ are the core symbols of a metaphor of functional differentiation of labor that says nothing about authority” (1987b, 104). Yanagisako’s research shows how two generations employ two sets of metaphors to describe the opposition of the domains associated with male and female (94). As an

example of the scholarship melding gender with kinship, Yanagisako's analysis shows the malleability and context-driven nature of the distinctions. "Each generation's model of gender domains...was learned along with an institutional model of society—more specifically, an institutionalized model of family and society. That institutional model was, in turn, inherently gendered" (1987b, 109). Her presentation of different metaphors shows how they are influenced by labor patterns and household dynamics within the generations. I rely primarily on Yanagisako's work to illuminate the Turkish case because the transformation of metaphors from inside/outside to home/work resonates with the categories I witnessed in the field. Yanagisako suggests that

[t]he shift from a cultural model of socio-spatially differentiated gender domains to one of functionally differentiated gender domains has indeed resulted in kinship being increasingly defined as "women's work"; but it has also undermined the authority of men in the family at the same time that it has reconfigured the relationship between family and society. In other words, the shift has caused not so much an increasing separation of male and female spheres and of private and public spheres as a reconceptualization of what constitutes those spheres and structures those relations. (1987b, 116)

Yanagisako then investigates the causes for these shifts and the lost perspectives involved in using a particular metaphor over the other. For example, the shift from inside-outside excludes men from household work. The literature on Turkey shows the specific dynamics of the country's historical sexual segregation and politicization of the public and private, and it entails a similar shifting of terms among young women. Yanagisako's

work-family distinction resonates with the school-family distinction made by my informants, replacing the traditional characterization within the open-closed opposition. Open women, as Göle (1996) highlights are immodest, public women and modest women dress modestly but also limit their participation outside of the house. The school-family contrast made by Turkish women today denotes not where they spend their time or how they move in public, but it addresses how they spend their time in relation to their future. A studying girl expects to do well in school and when she is at home she is working on her schoolwork rather than spending time on household work. A family girl spends most of her time doing domestic work, and even her forays into public concern that work, purchasing things for the house, such as food. Thus, this new orientation reflects the harnessing of young women's attentions, whether in pursuit of good grades or securing a good husband through diligent housework. Understanding these configurations as changing according to shifting social dynamics is particularly useful for my work. The next section explores more broadly implications of public and private in geographically situated explorations of gender and Islam.

Muslim Publics and Privates in Ethnography

The following section provides a comparative analysis of three books, which contribute significantly as frames for my study, analyzing how Muslim women situate their bodies and subjectivities within their cultural contexts. Serving as models or precedents for the research I have executed, these texts contribute to an embodied understanding of Muslim women's subjectivity in relation to publics and privates, however my study moves beyond physical embodiment to material embodiment through

the çeyiz. My research incorporates the themes of public and private space, the body, and agency, into an analysis of a material cultural object, the çeyiz.

Openings and Enclosures: Reviewing Models

Wombs and Alien Spirits by Janice Boddy (1989), *The Forbidden Modern* by Nilüfer Göle (1996), and *Politics of Piety* by Saba Mahmood (2005) address Muslim women in Northern Sudan, Turkey and Egypt, respectively, and investigate experiences particular to women, as opposed to the male-dominated society at large. The largest shared contribution of these works is representing women's experiences within feminist frameworks. The following section will analyze the books in terms of the nature of the studies, their methodologies, their relationships with feminism, the cultural contexts in which they were written, and how the authors' subjectivities are implicated into the books. The organizing categories are the most salient ones for the sake of my research. All three books deal with materializations of Muslim feminine selfhoods that are context-driven and historically relevant. These texts consider women's bodies in relation between publics and privates, serving as models for my own work. But my work builds on two missing components an analysis of the domestic realm and a consideration of the connection between consumption and subjectivity.

Boddy's book, *Wombs and Alien Spirits* (1989) investigates women living in a village in northern Sudan who are members of the Zar cult. In terms of organization, Boddy's work moves out from the realm of human relations to the integration of humans and spirits, and then to the more ethereal spirit world. The beginning of *Wombs and Alien Spirits* assesses daily life for her female informants. She details labor involved in a typical day for a woman, from breakfast to sundown. These descriptions of the mundane

contribute to the book's thorough analysis of women's experiences. Her ethnography relies heavily on participant observation, and the reader remains aware of reading the events through Boddy's eyes. Beyond participating in everyday life, Boddy attends ceremonies within the area, from births, to weddings to female circumcisions, to occasions where spirits are called. The wedding and female circumcision ceremonies deal with both the reproduction of gender and the population (because circumcision transforms a female child into a Hofriyati girl, while weddings are necessary in order for a girl to transition into a viable, potential mother). Meanwhile, the religious ceremonies transgress the norms of everyday, affording women a different kind of presence and power than they have in the everyday. More than a general analysis of the culture, this research also contains individual stories. In addition to providing descriptions of ceremonies and events illustrating the local culture, Boddy also gives personalized accounts. One section of the book also describes cases of women who have been possessed by spirits, describing their professions and personal experiences.

Göle's 1996 work addresses the veil, both as an historical object and as a political and religious symbol for contemporary young Turkish women. This work combines historical research, including an analysis of culture and media through magazines, newspapers, and novels, with data from group conversations. The veil is analyzed in relationship with modernity and Islam. Her book begins with a discussion of women in relation to westernization and as "touchstones for westernization." Göle's work is premised on the notion that the position of women organizes both Islamist and modernist-Westernist discussions about Turkey. Women's dress and position within society remains the most dynamic and contested site of both fundamentalist and progressive movements

in Turkey. Space figures importantly in her study, as Göle contrasts *mahrem* (private) with *namahrem* (public). The second section deals with Turkey's transformation into a republic, particularly with regards to gender and civilization, among the most prominent political actors of the era. And the final section addresses the contemporary relationship between Islamists, women, and veiling.

Saba Mahmood's book *Politics of Piety* (2005), the most recent of the three, investigates women's involvement in the Islamist revival, specifically through their attendance at Quran lessons and modification of their behavior according to their sense of piety. After a lengthy analysis of the feminist literature regarding subjectivity, Mahmood's book then discusses concepts related to piety from a scholarly perspective and compares three mosques where women meet for Quran lessons. Mahmood's book shows how piety extends beyond prayers and holidays to committing to life practices appropriate to Islam. The next section describes the teaching of varied lessons women participate in order to integrate Islam into their lives. Mahmood then investigates the anthropological theories of ritual practice. In the final section, the book combines feminist theory with ethnography to illustrate her theory of agency and ethical formation.

Open-Closed

In terms of comparisons, though these books span almost twenty years, they all center on Muslim women's experiences. One way to access and compare the pieces is to think about how their works relate to and draw on the relationship between inside and outside with regards to their female subjects. Women's access to the outside world is still a matter of discussion in Muslim societies, where traditionally they were confined to the domestic realm. Additionally, all three books address how women are constructed as

gendered subjects within Islamic societies, a construction which still dichotomizes the public and private spheres. Each of these books discusses, in its own way, how women maneuver both within their traditional realm (inside) and in public.

Boddy maps this discussion of inside-outside onto the body of women. She works her way through material objects as well as women's physiology, both through metaphors and in concrete ways. For example, through her explanation of female circumcision she shows that Hofriyati women are made into women through circumcision, removing their clitorises and labia minora, and leaving just a small opening. This surgery limits men's access to their bodies until they are married and also increases visible sexual difference; through this important surgery, women's bodies are closed. But this enclosure is also necessary for a young girl to be socialized into the responsibilities assigned to women. During the wedding ceremony, the bride is symbolically loosened up for opening as family members begin to untie the strings around her. Boddy notes that because all orifices dangerously expose people to the outside world, enclosure (keeping one's mouth closed) is the proper sign of modesty for women. At the domestic level, certain pots with small openings are compared to women. Additionally, Boddy shows that a woman is in particular danger when her closed body is compromised; she is susceptible to spirit possession or death after having a child and usually is not possessed by a spirit until after she has married. Certain life passages, such as childbirth and marriage threaten women's bodily integrity and leave them in intimate contact with another human being, vulnerable to attack.

Wombs and Alien Spirits also utilizes the linguistic symbolism within the author's studied culture (1989). For example, *hosh* can refer both to the enclosed yard of the house

and a woman's womb. The gendering of the Muslim home space was explored extensively by Bourdieu (1977) and problematized by (Vom Bruck 1997). Like the womb, the *hosh* in everyday life defines the most intimate household sphere: it is where special bread is made, where babies are born, and where the bulk of women's daily activities takes place. This inner realm of the household is indeed women's domain; Boddy mentions that men and women have separate entrances to the house as well. However, because so few men live in Hofriyat, women have considerably more mobility and visit each other frequently during the day. On the level of kinship, closeness is emphasized. It is more desirable to marry a close relative than someone from the outside. And even on the spiritual level, openings in physical space, such as doorways, can leave people vulnerable to spirits and must be addressed. Thus, proximity and enclosure are preferred.

Thus, in Boddy's book (1989), the issue of opening and enclosure pervade their daily lives, demarcating and defining ideal marriage partners, the proper houseware for cooking specific items, the proper protocol for protecting oneself from spirit possession. Thus, in Boddy's field site, open and closed are more than matters for debate; they are the terms on which survival of the culture is achieved. Reproduction, kinship, and the daily workings of life are all defined through this distinction. Is it any wonder that the most closed members of society, women, are the most "open" (that is, receptive) spiritually? The possibility of spirit possession, according to Boddy, affords women a space to act outside of their proscribed daily lives: when possessed, they may dance licentiously, drink, smoke cigarettes, and make demands for goods they would not ordinarily have the right to ask for in daily life. Although she does not cite literature on the carnivalesque, or

transgression, when women are “open” their daily worlds are turned upside down. At the same time, this opening of spirit possession makes women the center of attention, where they might be healed for illness, or get help from neighbors for particular problems.

Boddy’s book suggests that being closed is of utmost importance to women’s compartments and physiology in Hofriyat.

Similar to Boddy’s assertions about the emphasis on open and closed bodies (1989), spaces, and compartments, in Turkish an “open woman” in Turkish lacks modesty, dresses inappropriately, and has a bad reputation. Göle builds her work on the notion of open/closed in Turkish culture through the terms *mahrem* and *namrahem*, which spatially refer to private and public but also connote modesty and immodesty. According to Göle, “[m]ahrem literally refers to intimacy, domesticity, secrecy, women’s space, what is forbidden to a foreigner’s gaze; it also mean’s a man’s family” (1996, 7). How to define and demarcate women’s involvement in private versus public spaces has been the source of debate for Turks over time. When the goal of civilization arose, women’s presence became one of the most important markers of this progress. According to the reformists of the Tanzimat period, women should gain an education and move freely in the world, unveiled, like their Western counterparts. Meanwhile, traditionalists felt that women should maintain their domestic role that was being so threatened by Western influence. Historically, all of the arguments regarding civilization and modernization coalesced around the women’s mobility, visibility, and, participation in the public sphere. The veil serves as an important component of this argument; by maintaining women’s modesty in front of unfamiliar men, it can allow women to have more movement. However, those in favor of modernizing during the twentieth century

perceived the veil as the relic of a traditional past, preventing Turkey from becoming Western.

Göle's work shows how the question of women's progress was central to both imagining Turkey's future during the twentieth century and reimagining its past to justify one trajectory over the other (1996). Interestingly, she shows how conservative and progressive visionaries used both the history of civilization and pre-Islamic past to justify women's continued subjugation or the need for gender equality. Conservatives stated that allowing women to move into the public arena would result in Turkey's ruin, since non-patriarchal cultures have declined over time. Meanwhile, modernists argued for the sheer necessity of women's education, mobility, and success in the public arena. Without women's education and the adaptation of Western dress, the Kemalists argued, Turkey would remain in the past while the rest of the world became modern.

Central to the argument about women's liberation or public mobility was the veil. The argument for veiling historically stemmed from the sense that women needed to be protected from men's gaze, that an uncovered woman would provoke lust. Additionally, a woman roaming freely in public threatened the solidity of the family, since a woman's remaining at home helped to maintain the unit. But the veil could help women transgress the boundary of home and move into the public without either threatening male identity by downplaying her difference and, thus, becoming like a man, or overemphasizing her femininity by moving through the world completely exposed. However, over time veiling evolved into more of a sign of a woman's character: a veiled woman was virtuous. Much more than an article of clothing, the veil exposed aspects of women's character, and the

suggestion of banning the veil threatened women's modesty, the solidity of the family, and, thus, men's identities.

More than an historical account, Göle's work shows the extreme complexity of the veiling issue in the 1990s. Because it had been banned in public places, such as universities, young women felt they had to choose between their piety and the education. And while some women argued that gaining a good education was necessary for them to fulfill their duty as good mothers to their children, the prohibition from veiling made religious dedication and the best education mutually exclusive. In an important recent turn Muslim women have claimed their right to wear the veil, as opposed to viewing it as a hindrance to their appearance in public. Additionally, women from small towns seeking an education in larger cities found themselves adopting the veil, sometimes in contrast to their practices at home. Thus, the veil has evolved into a political issue for women, who choose to don it on their own accord.

In *The Forbidden Modern*, the issue of inside and outside deals specifically with women's movements outside of the home as extensions of Islamic and modernist agendas (1996). However, a larger argument about inside and outside circulates within Turkey regarding modernization and Westernization. In other words, Islamists struggled to consider and respond to the threat of outside influences, including encroaching Europeanization. They fought to maintain traditions and values, staving off external influences. Meanwhile, modernists fought to incorporate trends from the outside while trying to justify their familiarity; i.e., the argument that gender equality predates Islam and Turks simply need to return to their roots. Today, the arguments of inside and outside still involve veiling but also globalization and Europeanization. As the issue of veiling

gains more global media exposure, it symbolizes national as well as religious identity. As a form of protest against Western versions of modernity, the veil does more than give women the means to move through public daily life with modesty—it allows them to redefine modernity to fit their Islamic cultural context.

In *Politics of Piety*, the issue of inside versus outside returns to the level of the body and again draws on the use of the veil (Mahmood 2005). This time, the issue of interiority versus exteriority has more to do with individual consciousness. In one account, Nama, in her thirties, discusses wearing the veil. She recounts wearing the veil with some apprehension at first because people would judge her for looking unattractive. Slowly, she begins to feel incomplete without wearing it. In the previous passage another woman discusses becoming shy by adopting a more modest demeanor, although it does not reflect her natural self. However, over time, Amal integrates the reserve: “Eventually your inside learns to have *al-haya* too” (Mahmood 2005, 156). Through these examples Mahmood illustrates how enacting a change in behavior or appearance produces an internal change within the self. For her informants, these seemingly superficial decisions become interiorized or incorporated into the informants’ beings. Challenging concepts of the self that are premised on the interior experience of the thinking being, Mahmood shows how a change to the outside actually creates a lasting change in these women’s sense of self. The women’s initial sense that their outside behaviors do not match their interior feelings does not produce a sense of hypocrisy or dis-integrity for long; over time they suggest that their interior feelings change to match their exterior choices. Mahmood’s work does not cast these women’s choices to change their external appearances on account of eternal social pressure; rather they make personal decisions to

become more pious and begin with these performances. Just as the veil allows women more mobility within public environments without compromising women's modesty, these external choices moderate between and ultimately modify the women's concept of self and their external appearance in the world. Mahmood's analysis gives women more agency over their choices, showing how seemingly superficial choices or choices which could be perceived as resulting from outside pressure are manifestations of personal desires and ultimately make important changes within women's identities.

Three women working on Islam deal with the relationship between women and interiority and exteriority on the different registers of the body, the legal and social world, and the concept of self. Additionally these books span the issues of daily life, with all of its mundane, spiritual, and legal ramifications. A more detailed look at the books' comparable and disparate contributions will address their relationships with feminist scholarship and subjectivity.

How these books relate to feminism pertains, in some cases, to their theoretical outlook, and in others to the representation of female subjectivity. Boddy's book (1989) could be called a conventionally feminist piece. Mahmood (2005) cites Boddy's book in her introduction as an example of a feminist work organized around resistance and subordination. Specifically, Mahmood suggests that "when women's actions seem to reinscribe what appears to be the 'instruments of their own oppression', the social analyst can point to moments of disruption of, and articulation of points of opposition to, male authority..." (2005, 8). Mahmood's critique of Boddy maintains that her work, as well as many feminist texts, still functions within a masculinist paradigm, with women periodically taking control but always under the finger of patriarchy. Their submission

and resistance are always defined by male domination. However, the real strength of Boddy's feminist perspective lies in its her treatment of embodiment. The description of inside and outside, which I detailed in the previous section, shows how the need for interiority is replicated at the level of the body, social organization, and the organization of space. She shows the home to be a space of feminine order, and focuses the bulk of her research on this female universe. Additionally, her work is organized around women's rites of passage, including, birth, weddings, and spirit possession. In my opinion, Boddy's commitment to feminism is more complex than a discussion of submission and resistance, it lies in her ability to inhabit and articulate the world of the women she studies. She gives women primacy in the text and reflects the primacy they experience as the arbiters of values in daily life. I know that essentialism is out of fashion, but it fascinates me. Boddy's essentialism also contains an element of complexity because women are constructed through surgery, that the category of woman demands an alteration of girls' bodies. Claiming essentialism while making the reader aware of how it is constructed seems like a revolutionary move to me. On the other hand, it is difficult to read Boddy's description of female circumcision without any judgment in her tone or any real analysis of her own difference from the women. While she does recall being considered a spirit in a larger city because her physical appearance is so different, she could have spent more time analyzing what she really has in common with these because that commonality does not reside in anatomy. Boddy's book carefully combines cultural relativism with feminism, creating a work that is both theoretically interesting and culturally authentic.

As a native sociologist, Göle has different stakes in her study (1996). In the introduction she mentions that she originally published the book in Turkish under the title “*Mahrem Modern*.” Apparently her work incited both Islamists and secularists because she did not take a personal stance on the matter. She notes that in the book she practiced “nonengagement” (24). By refusing to take a side on the matter of veiling, Göle loses credibility among her peers. Göle’s refusal to take a stance on the matter seems as complicated as the veiling issue stands today. Can a veiled woman be feminist? Can a woman who studies veiling but refuses to take a stance be a feminist? I still puzzle over these questions. However, I believe that Göle’s contribution to feminism resides in restoring women as central figures in both the secularist and Islamist movement. As opposed to presenting women as marginal entities, who are unimportant to how Turks define progress, Göle shows through historical accounts and group interviews the important position women hold in this debate. And they are not simply placeholders, either. At this time, women protest by wearing headscarves to public universities, and, where scarves are not allowed, an assortment of wigs or hats. Women are not passive pawns in this hot issue—they are activists. Göle ultimately suggests that women are defining modernity and Islam for themselves by choosing to veil as autonomous actors. While the Western feminist in me is still suspicious of this logic, the fact that she assigns women agency to choose and uses data to reinforce it does seem like an important contribution. Göle’s comparison between the Islamic movement and “Black is Beautiful” and other countercultural movements (1996, 138) was wholly unconvincing, particularly because although Turks adopted a secular government, Islam still dominates their worldviews. However, Göle’s historical research still bears merit.

And finally, Mahmood's contribution to feminism and overall orientation is more didactic; however, the true students are other feminists (2005). Mahmood's work teaches Western feminists that their models of self are not universal. Instead, selfhood and modes for self-creation must be developed according to the studied population. Additionally, Mahmood rescues performance from Judith Butler; she refuses the notion of performance which is fleeting and leaves subjects as simply hollow beings until the next time they perform and rearticulate themselves. Instead, Mahmood stresses selves as "sedimented and cumulative" (163), which gives the theory of performativity so much more substance and effect. While in the context of queer theory Butler's work had a special salience, but within the context of women in the Islamist revival who are dealing with a richly historical religion, sedimentation of character helps to reflect their experiences of identity. Mahmood calls on feminists to develop frameworks closely related to their research populations instead of superimposing an understanding onto them. Additionally, her ethnographic passages reveal something special: pedagogy among women. I found these sections to be particularly elucidating and special because they showed women as assertive, astute scholars who are impassioned about their religious dedication. Perhaps these descriptions are Mahmood's best contributions to feminism, representing women communicating within their own sanctioned spaces, full of fervor and intelligence. Her subjectivity gives her more access to her subjects than Boddy's; however, Mahmood still experiences a degree of repugnance (37). Just as she encourages other feminists to delve into their judgment and interrogate it, she does the same. Overall, these three books will inform my future research; they remind me of feminism's kaleidoscopic vibrance—and enkindle me as a feminist to make careful and passionate contributions.

Turkey's Public and Private Spaces

This section addresses the most relevant literature on Turkey and the Middle East to elucidate the relations between gender and social and domestic life, beginning with consideration of village life. Does the social sphere generate and prescribe private domestic gender relations? Or is the social sphere structured on relations governed by procreation? The early research on the Middle East and the Mediterranean recurrently deals with the relationship between gender segregation and social reality. Do men and women really live separate lives? How do they come together (or not) in the household? Bourdieu's 1977 essay addresses this issue with all the complexity that the situation entails. He maps out the space of the Kabiliye Berber household, aligning the parts of the house, including top and bottom, light and dark, along the gender divide. What at first seems like a facile separation gains complexity as he continues. According to Bourdieu, while men may dominate the social sphere, women are the light of the household. In this way, the relationship between the organization of the house and the social sphere is inverted as women dominate the domestic sphere. On the other hand, the organization of the house reflects the social organization because the social realm commands the household order. He associates the house with the intimate aspects of life imposed by biology. However, because in his view, culture is always privileged over bodily functions, the house remains secondary to the outside social world. This house takes on this secondary valence—but to me what lies outside of the house, especially agricultural work, combines biology with the social. But, in his study the house is an ordered and controlled space—it is not unkempt and overgrown. This distinction is complicated in the Turkish case where women's household work does not always result in women's

protection and cloistering from society when it involves agriculture; women may tend the fields alongside men and move freely outside of the house to perform this kind of work. Clearly, women do not have the same status outside as they do inside the home. How does women's mobility complicate these dichotomies? The overlapping and mirroring of the outside world and the household presented by Bourdieu may help to resolve some of the seeming contradictions between the works below.

The ethnographies discussed below provide more insight into Turkey's gender and social organizations within villages. These ethnographies addressing family structure importantly organize the literature on Turkey, from village life to urban life. Gender, modernity, and politics overlap as issues in Turkey's development as a country in its transition from the Ottoman Empire, and these organizational categories still hold weight.

Paul Stirling (Stirling 1965) shows how the social imposes itself on all aspects of life, such as by controlling marriage partner choices and limiting men's time at home. Paul Stirling's edited collection volume on Turkey provides a comprehensive view of two villages in Anatolia (Stirling 1993). The book uses an organismic approach to highlight aspects of village life, including the economy and social structure, citing kinship as the most important form of social organization. Stirling intentionally investigates traditional life, eschewing previous researchers' fascination with Turkey's modernization, and he highlights the household cycle in Turkish villages, which begins with a senior agnate. Stirling's conventional and traditional ethnography covers all of the main themes in social anthropology through village life. His treatment of women remains equally conventional. Resonating with Rubin's critique of the study of kinship (1975), women in the Anatolian villages of Stirling's study have little agency or choice over their lives.

Overall, his work privileges public and aspects of Turkish village social life of how marriage does not evolve from love but from social contracts. Indeed, Stirling frames marriage in the service of political affiliations and presents arranged marriages as functional for families, not couples. Although his study evidences that love relationships formed through elopement do occur, he privileges the public village space, perhaps due to his lack of access to anything else.

Amid growing feminist critique of male-focused anthropology, articles in Peristany's (1976) volume problematize the generalizing thrust of the early literature on Turkey, revealing evidence that the ideal family postulated by Stirling does not represent the majority of families in Turkey. Fallers' article explicitly addresses the role of women in village life. Fallers contribution to the article suggests that women in her site experience more autonomy than in Western cultures. Through a series of ethnographic vignettes, she touches on issues of inheritance, affinal relations, and women's society. While women's society consists of women paying visits to each other, women also make public appearances through professional employment and education. Thus, this article presents women as actively moving into the public sphere while articulating and developing the activities involved in their private sphere. Using a "separate-but-equal approach," the author suggests that women and men inhabit the private sphere differently, while men clearly command the public. Turkish women participate in some decision-making (about their children's education or spousal selection), share meaningful relationships with each other, and perhaps even choose their husbands. This piece suggests and highlights that women enjoy a certain amount of autonomy in village life, a focus that is taken up further by Delaney (1987, 1992).

Delaney (1987) demonstrates how procreation underlies social and sexual interactions in everyday life; she highlights how private life determines aspects of their public participation, especially concerning women's mobility. Delaney purposefully problematizes the prioritization of the public over private, suggesting that in Turkey marriage and procreation are the main concerns of daily life. Put into contexts with other analyses of representations of Turkish public and private spaces, her work explains domestic life in useful detail.

Delaney draws on the well-established themes of honor and shame to map out a cosmology of Turkish culture, which she later develops in *The Seed in the Soil* (1992). She constructs an argument, based on the terms used for procreation in Turkish, which ultimately links women with fields and men with seeds. In this way, women's very existence is subsumed to men's—they serve as the conditions for men's development, their honor only at stake in how it reflects on the men who claim them. Through this metaphor of seed and soil, Delaney points to and illustrates the dynamics of life in Turkish villages. She differentiates the representation of women from other ethnographic work on the Mediterranean by suggesting that Turkish women are not wanton and insatiable but that they are presented as indiscriminate if left alone with men. Her argument ultimately conflates this ecological discourse on gender with endogamy and with Abrahamic monotheism, using the seed and the soil to justify and situate these practices. Delaney's move from idioms of sexuality to an ultimate justification for kinship practices and religious orientation seems overly broad—is it reasonable to collapse a culture into the dichotomous categories of “man” and “woman,” showing how men are privileged, and using this to infer a loyalty to Islam? While her ultimate move

does not seem particularly well-founded, Delaney does show how covering women's bodies in public functions to protect women from dishonor and how the private issue of procreation defines women's absence (through covering and sex segregation) from the public sphere.

Committed to psychoanalysis and feminism, Delaney's research on Turkey addresses the ideology of village experience. Her book begins with the monogenetic theory that procreation and monotheism emerge from the same source in Turkish culture. The book itself is organized around the five pillars of Islam, representative of the book's essentialism and pairing of forms with cultural evidence. She provides an alternative view of the Turkish village: one that is forever embodied, gendered, and religious. By revisiting discussions of kinship, honor, and shame, Delaney infuses the data on Turkey with this gendered perspective, expanding definitions and complicating the cultural landscape. However, her commitment to local idioms and practices seems at times overdetermined in order to fit into her cosmology of endogamy, which is questioned by Vergin (1985) and the conflation of the womb with the soil, among others. She relies on the distinction between the home and the rest of the world, a gender and spatialized organization of the world. Delaney's ethnography "stresse[s] the significance of the notion of inside-outside, which defines the physical boundaries of the village, of the house, and to a lesser extent the *mahalle* (neighborhood). The source of these analogies... is the female body, symbolically understood, and the male's relation to it. These structures and relation are gendered; the world becomes an icon of gender as constructed within a specific ideology of procreation" (1992, 238). Delaney later shows how these gender and spatialized distinctions relate to labor and the unknown. As my

fieldwork shows, these boundaries still operate for women regarding where to eat and childcare, presenting as dangerous anything from outside of the home.

My educated informants and their mothers, however, referred less to inside-outside or home-outside than home-school, which I explain further in chapter 5. They spoke about the distinction often as a justification for not working on their trousseaux: “I was too busy studying,” “I spent my time at school.” This distinction does not work to organize space as much as to detail how they spent their time and invested their energy as unpaid work, similar to how Bourdieu presents Algerians’ treatment of time as moral and cosmological, rather than incremental (Bourdieu 1963). Additionally, it could correspond with authority dictating their choices and futures. Although home was still associated with women and as a domestic space, my informants privileged their work at school as more meaningful than the handicrafts they would have been expected to make if they had attended school. This changing of metaphors resemble Yanagisako’s generational distinctions, and is associated with gendered city life, where education is available and compulsory (1987b).

Hart’s research shows how contemporary village life is dynamically influenced by urban culture yet retains some of its enduring elements of gender segregation, arranged marriage, and the trousseau (Hart 2005, Hart 2007, Hart 2010). Her work also addresses how young couples’ desire to leave the village results in more egalitarian marital relationships. *Arabesk* music, infused with Arabic themes analyzed with Ottoman-style classical music, analyzed at length by Martin Stokes provides a nice example of a cultural medium traversing the village/city divide, providing a vocabulary and access point to young love (Stokes 1989, 2010). Especially because previous generations experienced

arranged marriage, dynamic popular music allows for different templates of how even private thoughts about love are conceptualized. Informed by urban trends and complicated by new desires, village life is rapidly transforming, moderating between traditions and change.

Beyond the Village

Feminist anthropologists have cautiously approached modernity as liberatory, particularly in the Middle East and Turkey. Because women have experienced relative autonomy where work is segregated, increased urbanization and sexual mixing has caused the oppression and isolation of some women. However, Lila Abu-Lughod's study in the Middle East reveals this does not always happen. In her discussion of the relationship between the sexes within an Egyptian Bedouin community, Abu-Lughod (1999) attributes intensified gender segregation to modernization. A nomadic lifestyle means that the divisions between the sexes were temporary at best. However, as tribes began to settle down and erect buildings, women and men become divided by firmer partitions. Beyond the structural differences brought on by modernization, Abu-Lughod asserts that the nature of work further separates the sexes. As men conduct work away from home and an influx of strangers arrives, women must exaggerate their separation from men and patrol their boundaries. Who crosses this sexual divide? Old women, children, and female anthropologists—and perhaps poetry from time to time were permitted to cross the sexual divide to interact with men and women. (Lack of) sexual accessibility appears to dictate the boundaries. Additionally, the author shows how globalization intensifies a generational, not gendered divide, as young women purchase synthetic nighties for their trousseaux.

The legacy of anthropologists' conversations about the public and private has been to politicize the private sphere and legitimize it as a site of study. Additionally, it has encouraged a proliferation of models, dependent on cultural context and time, that are responsive to the particularities of the economic, political, and gendered contexts of daily life.

Part of the legacy this analysis has had is to politicize kinship and to legitimate as a field of study the relationships women often work hard to support and solidify. Understanding marriage in economic terms, not just for families but couples, brings out its social significance. "In marrying, people 'make families,' but they also contract debts, change residence, stir enmities, and establish cooperative bonds" (Collier and Rosaldo 1981, 278). Thus, the whole set of kinship relations warrants study for its economic, political, and social significance. As Rayna Rapp explained, "Kinship has become more overtly politicized as the material conditions of sexuality, marriage, and maternity are transformed." (1987, 131). Some of this transformation results in urban migration, women's increased education, and the dissolution of kinship ties, producing different fields of gender study.

Beyond village life, (Beck and Keddie 1979)'s volume contributes much to an understanding of (mainly) Middle Eastern women (1979). This volume expands the language and data on Muslim women as it addresses women's labor in the fields and the city. Throughout the articles, marriage serves as a unified frontier where women's worth depends on her ability to bear male children. While the book aims, overall, to promote diverse images of Muslim women, the experience of the bride moving into her husband's household and achieving status through childbirth is represented as a universal fact of the

Middle East. The book almost requires this story of marriage to unite such a diverse group of people. Class appears throughout the book as at least partially determinative of women's status, in conjunction with the more traditional association of women's status as completely tied to their husbands' position.

In terms of discussing women's place in Turkish society, Coşar (1978) moves between village and urban life, with a focus on the factors contributing to changes. Coşar emphasizes the impacts of the Republican civil code (1926), which made polygamy illegal, showing how this law meshes with the tradition of polygamy. Women living in cities may have benefited from these reforms, but peasant women experience continued limitations due to the demands of the agricultural economy. This piece interrogates the political economy of Turkish village women, revealing their crucial involvement as economic actors and the extraordinary limitations they endure within a male-dominated system of landholdings. Coşar also carefully denies the location of villages, small towns, and urban areas onto a continuum of progressiveness, contending that small urban areas actually limit women's movements more than village life. This observation helps to complicate the structuring binaries of urban/village, traditional/modern.

Abu-Lughod's collection, *Remaking Women* (1998), problematizes modernity's progressive reputation, particularly regarding Middle Eastern women. Instead of giving modernity a value judgment, she invites analysts and the contributors to observe modernity's subtle workings and effects in specific locales. She links the question of modernity to post-colonialism in order to evaluate origins of cultural transformations, whether internally driven or externally imposed. In acknowledging at least these two approaches to feminism, Abu-Lughod also shows how aligning as Islamist may

complicate exhorting a national identity, while identifying as secular may ignore local iterations of feminism involving religious practices.

Assessing the relationships between Islamic revivalism, modernity, and the Turkish nation, Ayse Saktanber (Saktanber 2002) casts Islamic fundamentalism as a responsive and productive to critique the Turkish state. The increased visibility of women, the widening of the private sphere, and the proliferation of the middle class are all attributed to this movement. When I saw women dining outside in 2006, wearing headscarves, which were described as a threat to national identity by the liberal press, a Turkish friend pointed out that these women have not grown in number but that, by prohibiting drinking in some outdoor dining establishments, conservative women have gained more public presence.

Studying a conservative neighborhood in Ankara, Saktanber discusses the alienating effects of the top-down modernization campaign by the Young Turks on the rural and religious (2002). Linking the civilization project back to Islam, as opposed to describing its origination in the West, this book associates Islam with the civilizing and nationalistic elements of the Turkish Republic. Additionally, right-wing politics melded this image of the Turkish Muslim with a culturally responsive notion of modernization, in contrast to modernization founded on assimilation of Western ideals.

In Turkey's case, the constitution of private life has been political since Ottoman times, so this change is not entirely new, and current marriages continue to contain elements of arrangement. An analysis of household organization from the beginning to the end of Ottoman times shows how the household represents a restructuring of both kinship and love, informed by class. For example, housing costs in Istanbul made it

difficult for families to include sons and their brides within their household, so houses began to thin out. Additionally, women in Istanbul had considerably less children than their village counterparts because the cost of living and available work did not make large families sustainable. But the most significant change was within the realm of love as a possibility available to young people, and as a motivating factor for marriage.

Duben and Behar, in *Istanbul Households* (1991), point to the significant politicization of love, attending to the transitional period between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic through a look at family and household demographics. Emphasizing the disparity between Muslim city dwellers and their rural contemporaries, Duben and Behar employ data to reflect the comparatively lower population growth in Istanbul. The most fascinating chapter for my purposes deals with the emergence of the French Revolution ideals, including liberty and love, at they appeared in Turkey during the end of the nineteenth century. In this way, love, national identity, and the nuclear family get ideologically linked under the umbrella of modernity, but love also created anxiety as a threat to both the family and social order.

Love apparently was a big issue during the beginning of the Republic; however, the movement towards a nuclear family structure had already begun to happen. Particularly because true love could undermine Islam and social relations, the revolutionary Ziya Gökalp struggled to theorize the possibility of a love that would not destroy the ideals of a nation. This section also blurs the categories of love and arranged marriages, suggesting that arranged marriages entailed agreement between the prospective couple and love marriages relied on the families' consent.

Love or *amour*, as it was often referred to by privileged Ottomans, came to stand for so much more than just an intense personal relationship. It came to be associated with a political passion at the same time. The state was equated with the father, and autocratic, backward political arrangements with patriarchalism and restrictive marriage. *Amour* and *liberté*, then, went hand in hand with a wave of liberalism that swept Istanbul intellectual society in the politically oppressive decades before the turn of the century. (Duben and Behar 1991, 88)

The idealization of love between two individuals came to symbolize personal freedom, not just in romantic terms but freedom from the strictures of family and government. Ziya Gökalp and the Young Turks utilized the rhetoric of love to foment revolution (Duben and Behar 1991). Interestingly, the family metaphor carried so much weight that it was reincorporated by Atatürk, who was depicted as a compassionate, less authoritarian father of the Turkish republic (Delaney 1995, Özyürek 2006). The effects of Turkey's nation-building played out through the reorganization of family and the concept of love, especially in Istanbul.

The turbulence felt in the economy, society and culture of the late Ottomans came to focus particularly intensely on the smallest, most private social institution—the family and the intimate relationships between men and women. This upheaval and the questioning of age-old ways of relating were articulated in various views about the meaning of love, women, marriage, and family in that society, views which appear to

have played a formative role, paradoxically, in both fomenting the crisis and providing points of orientation for individuals by connecting them to larger systems of ideas within which the new directions made sense. At the same time, there was, quite naturally, a defense of the traditional values and relationships by the spokesmen of the offended. (Duben and Behar 1991, 88)

What Duben and Behar have referred to as the “domestication of love” (88) has had a lasting impact on family structure, resulting in the dissolution of the extended family in favor of smaller family units in terms of the possibility of autonomous spousal selection. Hart’s (2007) article on spousal choice outlines transformations of courtship in the village of Örselli and suggests that even where arranged marriage still exists, it is actually a blurry intermingling of personal choice and family appeasement. She states that, “With the ‘new marriage ideal’ young men and women assert their agency and independence in order to find each other, but parental restrictions and beliefs about reputation require that they conduct their relationships in secret. The rituals of marriage create the appearance of arranged marriage, even when the bride and groom are in love and have instigated their relationship in private, as in fact their parents claim they should” (Hart 2007, 354). Thus, the balancing of personal interests with familial interests and urban and European-inspired conceptions of love creates conflict for youth in terms of solidifying a possible contract for marriage and then fulfilling its requirements.

Hart’s study of the village reveals an interplay of familial public and secretive, contractual private conduct among young couples. My fieldwork reflects a similar negotiation within the urban Istanbul; however, urban women, who received a public

education, were more outspoken in their desires and had more negotiating power.

Additionally, many of my informants exercised in college the opportunity to date, and to sexually explore before marriage, suggesting that intimacy (though not necessarily sexual intercourse) occurs before the marriage. Thus, my work reveals the inception of women's private lives beyond reproduction, a private life that includes a chosen partner. However, their consumption practices related to marriage reveal that their kin continue to have clout and actively work to weaken the brides' privacy.

Public vs. Private in the Field

My fieldwork presented many opportunities and challenges to gaining access to interviews and witnessing privates. Finding couples to willingly and enthusiastically speak about their wedding preparations and investments was difficult, and I found discussing wedding purchases especially challenging. I located a few brides and grooms who told me about their home furnishings, and I learned that private negotiations about home furnishings were not really private. Brides and grooms who did not accept specific items from their families simply told some members of their family (the groom's side for example) that other members (the bride's side) had purchased items for them—while they secretly bought what they wanted for themselves. This was also the approach suggested to me when you did not want a gift someone had offered you. Instead of saying, “Thanks but I'll buy what I want,” it was easier to say that someone else had already given it to you. It was easier for my informants to disguise their purchases as gifts presented by other family members, which resonates with de Certeau's concept of everyday resistance (2002). A gift, unlike a personal choice, could not be replaced or overruled. Their families, understanding the special nature of family gifts, accepted this excuse.

Discussions about wedding purchases provided data on perceived structure and desired structure of conjugal relationships. Unmarried, college-educated women told me that they expected to make home-related purchases with their husbands, explaining that furnishing a household together was the first step toward having an equal relationship, which they often presented in contrast to their parents' relationship. They described their future homes as a place apart from their families' wishes and as a shared domain of work, love, and parenting with their imagined husbands. However, many of the married women of varying educational levels did not feel they had that exclusive decision-making power, or a kind of open but private communication with their (now) husbands. Having first interviewed single women, I had assumed that brides and grooms shared the kind of intimacy that transcended their family relationships, and that they could make these decisions together privately.

However, just as Hart's research on arranged marriage in the village showed urban influences and an appeal to autonomous choices (2007), my fieldwork shows that the domains of privacy in urban Istanbul were more complicated and less free than I had imagined for a modern, cosmopolitan city. In relation to some Istanbul marriages, these very seemingly private fronts—the body, subjective experience, and choice—emerge as enduringly public.

Nilufer Göle (2002) offers a complex reading of the construction of the traditional Turkish dichotomies of private/public, secular/religious, and modern/traditional, through women's bodies. First, she suggests that the Turkish public and private are different from Western constructions: "The public sphere in a non-Western context is neither identical with its counterparts in the West nor totally different, but manifests asymmetrical

differences as it is continuously altered by a field of cultural meanings and social practices” (2002). Similar to Judith Butler’s work (1990) *Gender Trouble*, Göle asserts that the public is dynamic and actively negotiated and redefined by the individuals who participate within it.

Because the public sphere provides a stage for performance rather than an abstract frame for textual and discursive practices, the ocular aspect in the creation of significations and the making of social imaginaries becomes of utmost importance. Social imaginaries are carried by images. The body, as a sensorial and emotional register, links the implicit nonverbal practices and learned dispositions (namely habitus) into a public visibility and conscious meaning. Public visibility refers to the techniques of working from inside out, transforming implicit practices into observable and audible ones. (2002, 177)

Göle’s assessment of the Turkish public sphere takes into account its very conscious renderings of modernity over time and the emphasis on visibility and the ocular posited by Gilmore. Thus, the public sphere is a field for the reiterative performance of particular identities, and it is deeply related to bodily comportment, dress, and mobility. Bodies traverse the public and private, asserting identifications and affiliations over time. The veil, which has been analyzed extensively, serves as the most obvious example of how bodies instantiate identities over time in this region of the world.

Women’s participation is central to the constitution of the Turkish public sphere, which serves to reiterate versions of modernity, for both secular and Muslim Turks. In

Göle's words, "Women are symbols of the social whole; home and outside, interior and exterior, private and public. They stand in for the making of the modern individual, for the modern ways of being private and public. Women's corporeal and civic visibility as well as the formation of heterosocial spaces underpin the stakes of modernity in Muslim society" (2002, 185). Since the formation of the Republic, women, and their bodies, have signified Turkish modernity for both secular and nonsecular factions (Arat 2010).

Women's importance in making claims to being modern cannot be overemphasized.

Turkey, in particular, has opened up possibilities for piety and modernity to be performed in public through women. "The central stakes of the modern subject are worked out in tension with Muslim definitions of self; consequently the access of women to public life and gender acquires a more salient signification of the public imaginary of Muslim societies" (Göle 2002, 177). The right for women's education and the right to wear a headscarf in public institutions encapsulates this tension, and shows how the modernity has changed in Turkey, from the right to have a secular public, to the right to embrace an Islamic cultural and religious identity in public.

Although Göle's examination and complication of women's participation in public with respect to modernity reframes older conceptions of the public as primarily masculine, she does not provide an adequate assessment of the private, and how, just as in public, these embodied choices about dress and other modes of articulation of identity (like consumption) have political and personal underpinnings. In Göle's work, the private remains undertheorized and is only emphasized as it emerges within the public. It is important to consider how the homespace reflects and enacts identities and affiliations.

Household items deeply connect to women's identities, choices, and imaginaries within an everyday context. These items, placed on the table or the bed, are also chosen to reflect a person's identity. Özyürek's work connects the private to the public, demonstrating how Atatürk memorabilia has been privatized and populates households; my research synthesizes this insight with particularly gendered identities and imaginaries. However, my fieldwork also shows that these categories are not finite or discrete.

The apartment building I first lived in during my fieldwork in Kasımpasa, near the old city of Beyoğlu, was bright orange and blue, paint chipping everywhere, and the streets smelled like rotting fruit. Nights were loud and restless, an unsettling cacophony of the call to prayer, domestic disputes with yelling men and screaming women, and the pounding bass of a nearby nightclub. Despite how rundown the building was and the fact that many of the apartment dwellers were unemployed and thus, had little family income, the apartments were always clean. Most of my female neighbors came to Istanbul from Rize, a lush tea growing area in the Black Sea, but their styles of dress varied as much as the city of Istanbul itself. The woman I lived with, Feliz, was incredibly modest—she hesitated to uncover her head around me and prayed at every opportunity. She let me know that she did not approve of my dress (which I very consciously tried to moderate for her when we left the house) and barely tolerated my bare hair and arms inside the house in summertime.

When Feliz's sisters visited we discussed hope chests. The sisters, between the ages of 28-45, varied in level of education, from some years of high school to a Master's degree. The oldest one, who did not finish high school, said that her hope chest was less colorful than her sisters' because things were not as colorful in her day. Her youngest

sister, the most educated as a student at a very prestigious public university, was also the most outwardly conservative, wearing dark clothes to cover her whole body in public. Although these sisters of varying ages exhibited in their hope chests the evolution of trends, their life choices in no way reflected a continuum of traditional to modern. Indeed, they exhibited a proliferation of styles and lifestyle choices, signifying the difficulty of doing representative research in a cosmopolitan city.

These sisters socialized with another neighbor, Deniz, from Rize, who was always dressed lightly colored in track suits, with frazzled (uncovered) tinted blond hair. Although her clothes were not markedly conservative, she did not don “over-the-top heterosexist drag” as my former professor Julie Taylor would have called it, a popular fashion on the streets, a hyper-feminine look that included long hair, bright red lipstick, skirts with heels and a very feminine tight-fitting blouse. During one of our visits, a friend of hers passed by with her teenage daughter before heading off to prayer class. I was surprised and comforted by the daughter’s outfit, which was almost revealing: tight boot cut jeans embellished with rhinestones, a turquoise camisole, and turquoise eye makeup that matched her shirt. Her clothing was borderline provocative in the era of Britney Spears. The mother and daughter socialized for a long time and began to get ready to go. In the span of a few minutes, this happy, confident teenager transformed into a demure girl, washing off most of her makeup and donning a bright yellow shalwar and matching scarf. She also changed into baggy pants. Clearly, her choice of clothes outside the house reflected Muslim modernity, as Göle describes it. “In a Muslim context, women’s participation in public life, corporeal visibility, and social mixing with men all count as modern. The modern gendered subject has been constituted through women role

models and repetitive performances, including language styles, dress codes, modes of habitations, and modes of address” (Göle 2002, 177). How, then, does her private dress relate to this outside performance?

Prior to this visit in Deniz’ house, I had only ever witnessed this night-and-day transformation at the dorm of a local university. There, the young laundry woman arrived in one carefully matched jacket and scarf only to descend into states of undress through the day, her hair uncovered and eventually hanging loose, her tee shirt stripped down to a tank top. Through the day, moving off the street and into the confines of a dorm, she transformed from demure and composed to sweaty and unkempt, her updo slowly coming undone with hard labor within the windowed laundry room. The connection between hair and sexuality pervades Turkish culture, maintained through the custom that village brides cut their hair after marriage because their sexuality has been contained (Delaney 1994). The young worker explained that she wore the more formal, modest street clothes because she liked the fashion and it made her parents happy, and that she stripped down at work because it was hot. However, she could have moderated her dress with a light, long sleeved shirt and lightweight headscarf instead of practically disrobing.

But strategic unveiling is not limited to one university laundry room. A colleague in my Turkish language study program told me that her Turkish sisters-in-law, who normally chose modest dress in Germany, were encouraged by their aunts to take off their headscarves in Istanbul as they approached marrying age. The uncovering was an effort to allow the daughters more freedom—and exposure to potential suitors. Although the girls were not left alone with men, they were allowed to socialize and be looked at without their headscarves, which they would use to signify marriage. The laundry

worker's chosen site to experiment with secular dress, a liberal university of bright students, could have contained a similar intention.

These women did not perceive these chosen modes of public and private dress as in conflict with each other nor did they create conflict for their identities. One might argue that this stripping down occurred in private, but a dorm in an institutional setting does not constitute private space, as the worker encountered strangers, especially men, regularly. Another argument could be that their decisions to cover were driven by fashion and not religious affiliation. However, their head coverings corresponded with a newer form of Islamic dress, signifying not just modesty but an Islamic identity. Although these transformations may seem like imaginaries in conflict, they reveal the complex and sometimes overlapping cultural forms available to women. Modern fashions play out on the body, demonstrating the intertwining of public and private, secular and Muslim, which overlap and manifest in different formations. Like fashion, the urban çeyiz is informed by complex subjects and choices.

Mutually inclusive categories create not binary oppositions, counterdiscourses, or emulations, but multifaceted, intertwining modern performances. This ambivalence operates basically through crossing over, losing one's positionality, and circulating in different spaces, categories and mental mappings. Rather than resulting in peaceful juxtapositions, hybridities, and augmentations, it is worked out in double negations (neither Muslim nor modern), ambiguities (forbidden and modern), resulting in fragmented subjectivities and transcultural performances. New

social imaginaries are shaped by these circulatory, transcultured, and crossover performances. (Göle 189-90)

In her book, *The Forbidden Modern*, Göle characterizes the veiling issue in the 1980s not as a continuation of local traditions but as a break in tradition characterized by a new commitment to Islamic fundamentalism. She likens Islam to other movements of repressed social identities, including the women's and civil rights' movements. However, the situation seems more complicated than this because although Turkey is secular, Islam is still the dominant, operative religion. In this respect perhaps this movement could be compared with evangelism or white supremacy as exaggerated performances of normative behaviors. However, in the context of modernity as Europeanization, the Islamist movement does have minority status. The book does point to localized and divergent forms of Islam, and it points to women's status as pivotal in bolstering Islamist movements. Conjoining modernity with Islam, this book centers on Turkish women's experience of veiling as a hybrid and politically significant activity showing how individual will, religious symbolism, and nationalism in light of Europeanization combine.

But even on a micro-level, Turkish women's everyday decisions invite these kinds of negotiations. From veiling to selecting wedding fashions, they have an array of choices, especially in the wedding capital of the world, Istanbul. The next section investigates the complexity of these decisions.

The Social Life of Lingerie

Underneath the red ribbon and the wedding gown exists an artifact of public-private negotiation. Bridal lingerie, the final frontier before the consummation of marriage, is traditionally chosen by the mother-in-law. Although the contributions of mothers-in-law depend on the region, and, in some cases provide a good deal of household items and handiwork for the bride's use (Hart 2010), my informants routinely suggested that mothers-in-laws provided jewelry and bridal lingerie. The lingerie shops I visited throughout Istanbul described their clients as whole families, specifically brides selecting pieces with their soon-to-be female in-laws. Many of my informants told me that their in-laws offered to buy their lingerie, and took them shopping, reassuring them that they could buy whatever they wanted. One bride described the items her sister-in-law offered to buy as much racier than what she chose for herself, and she ended the shopping trip because the situation was uncomfortable for her. But I also visited a soon-to-be-married couples' home for the hope chest exhibition before the wedding day. On the nightstand, still boxed up and emblazoned with a sexy blond woman in the same attire, was the mother-in-law's fantasy for her son's wedding night. This so-called "intimate apparel" would not be chosen by the bride for her wedding night only for her husband's purview. I did not look closely at the lingerie box on the nightstand or at the pommed-pommed Lucite heels and feathered sheer robe in the closet—they seemed too private—but they were on display for our viewing. How does the mother-in-law's choice of lingerie impact the wedding night? Does it remind the groom of his mother? Just as the red ribbon on the outside connects the bride to her male family line, perhaps garter belts are family ties, connecting the bride to her new in-laws. The pressure to please the family

runs deep, all the way down to the herringboned corset, for some young Istanbul women. Family obligations still trump personal and the bride-groom's tastes. And, perhaps in the absence of displaying a bloody sheet (which none of my informants alluded to, although the practice still occurs in rural parts of Turkey and did with some of their mothers generations ago), exhibiting the lingerie before the wedding night helps to de-privatize that anticipated private moment.

Beyond lingerie, I have met multiple women who plan to let their families choose their future husbands for them. While arranged marriages pervade rural parts of Turkey, they still exist in Istanbul, where youth come for opportunities in education and professions and experience some freedom from their families' control. One high-school educated woman, whose father will not allow her to work but who hopes to marry a man who will let her have a career, said, "I trust my family's judgment." For some women, high-school educated women, business owners living independently from their parents, the need to satisfy their family's wishes overshadows their own. But perhaps they really have no choice. The alternative, of eloping with a man she loves, would result in social death, the loss of her trousseau and family support.¹¹ At the same time, acquiescing to an arranged marriage sometimes results in the bride's existential death—she becomes alienated from her new home, her new husband, and her belongings because they do not reflect her personal desires and choices.

Spousal selection in Istanbul combines private, personal desires with familial and broader societal expectations, ranging from arranged marriages, blind dates, evolving friendships, and internet dating. But, in the worst-case scenario, there is only one truly

¹¹ Jenny White's article "Two Weddings" poignantly shows the long-term economic effects of elopement on couples (White 1993).

private space for a woman whose virginity is on display: her entire future is hijacked for her family's sake, her underwear is not even of her own choosing. Hers is a public so oppressive it whittles down her life to allow a space so small that it only holds thoughts, and puts her body, experience, reality, future, and objects on display and in the service of others.

Desire as Private

One hot day in October my friend Maya and I trekked from the Besiktas iskele, past the busy market and pastry shops and up the hill to Nişantaşı, close to my father's birthplace. The buildings were tall, gray, and beautiful. We saw the most upscale transnational stores with billboards as big as their reputations, and she began to knock down their public facade. "Turks think they remade this area, that the architecture is European. This place is not European. I've been to Italy—these are just ugly buildings. And they are the same buildings in my neighborhood in Kadıköy. But those have been neglected and these have been renovated because this area's rich. What a waste." As we continued up the hill we decided to stop for a tea and *börek* at one of the few places open on this Saturday. We found a very small place with outdoor seating and a nice woman, offering to wait on us between cigarettes. The woman who worked at the stand was in her early thirties, and her skin was the golden brown color of *un helvasi*, halvah made with roasted flour, a eaten on Muslim holy days and at the funeral of loved ones.

I thought she was cold at first but her story revealed a sadness and intensity. Over my many cups of çay and her multiple cigarettes, I asked if she was married, and she said that she was engaged and would marry in the summer. She explained that she was to be married in two months' time. Excited that the storeowner could be an informant, I asked

about her age, education, and city of origins. A thirty year-old high school graduate, she was from a city in eastern Turkey. My excitement about an interview clouded my other senses—I ignored her passivity and sadness and continued asking questions.

She explained that her parents had chosen the groom, who was living in Istanbul and from their hometown. We started talking about wedding preparations: the apartment was rented and completely furnished, the houseware chosen and bought. The house had knitted slippers, crocheted doilies, and the other standard items for her use. Her family was furnishing the kitchen and bedroom and the groom's family purchased the apartment, the salon, and the *başlık parası* (or "head price"), an officially outlawed form of payment for virginity. I asked if there were any parts of the house she was particularly excited about and she said, "No. I haven't been to the apartment." Having spoken with many brides, this woman's attitude was clearly different. Most brides take an active role in selecting the curtains, furniture, the apartment itself, in tandem with the groom's family and their own mother. I asked why she wasn't interested and she explained: "I had someone I loved and if it was with him, things would be different."

This woman, Sevda, did not participate actively in planning her future home or choosing her husband. She served coffee to both families in the traditional engagement talks while the families debated until the early morning hours the value of her virginity, which side furnished which room, and where they would reside. Sevda explained that she anticipated having an equal relationship with her husband because he "was a good man who loved her very much" but that she did not care about the house. We circled around this question a few times, I asked if there was something that she was excited about, if not the *çeyiz* then perhaps the wedding dress. She repeated that if she were marrying

someone else she would be much more involved in the planning of the wedding and her house. Sevda never told her family about her true love because it would not have made a difference; the match was beyond her making. She could not have changed her future—eloping seemed out of the question because she could not trust the man she was in love with. And elopement would have resulted in familial strife, or worse, honor killing.

Sevda differed from the majority of the women I interviewed, who engaged in preparing the goods for their weddings, who were looking forward to the future with spouses of their choices and who were empowered by their level of education or by living away from their parents to make choices for themselves. But my informant's choice (to accept her family's wishes and to cease her relationship with her love) resulted in her abnegation of self. This savvy woman with a successful business could not escape the demands of her family. I believe that she had no personal investment in the preparation of the çeyiz because she has no investment in her future, and no power to make a decision. Even her wedding night was to be consumed in someone else's fantasy: the groom's family chose her lingerie and dress. Sevda's entire identity had been subjugated by the demands of her family and future family. If she is still allowed to work after the wedding, the work, not her home life or married life, would be her domain of control. But she will likely become pregnant quickly and stay home to care for her children.

Parts of the interview were unspoken; although she never mentioned it, this woman was Kurdish. Her city of origins, combined with her looks and her impending future illuminated her ethnicity. Unlike the other women I interviewed, who contextualized descriptions of their families and their traditions with a statement about their ethnicity as Tatars, Arabs, Laz, and Armenians the elision of her ethnicity was

telling. Her decision not to participate in purchasing decisions regarding the home that she will manage and live in suggests to me that she feels erased from this future.

Home Space

Another way to consider modernity with regard to public and private is to ask about men's private lives. When I visited my close male friends, sometimes for tea, sometimes as an overnight guest, when it was too late or too far for me to travel back to my apartment alone, they always served prepared food, including little biscuits, cheese, and bread. Additionally, they always spread out a newspaper to dine on. Without fail, the *Hurriyet*, or some other newspaper, would come out and they would apologize, "it's neater this way." This set-up reminded me of doing craft projects on newspaper as a child. But, although they did not use a tablecloth, they were still offering a different hospitality as their female peers. After eating, all of the crumbs would wrap up nicely in the paper and we would continue our conversation.

The domestic space of the bachelor household is different from any other place I visited. While I visited single female friends' flats, their habits mirrored married women; their homes were neat, tidy, with cooked food on hand. But the bachelors inhabited an entirely different place with a different standard for neatness; some of their mothers still bought their groceries and did their laundry, despite their advanced degrees and graying temples.

However, domestic space is also changing for men. As women expect more equal relationships with their partners, men are also expected to participate in domestic decision making, for example, in selecting furnishings. However, few of my male informants seemed equally interested in this shopping process than their partners. I

perceived a real slippage between women's expectations for marriage in relation to household decorations and work and men's. But, male informants, husbands and boyfriends of women I interviewed did remark on a difference in their time. Unlike their forefathers, who spent most of their evenings at teahouses or coffeehouses playing cards or backgammon, these men chose to spend time with their partners. One man, recently married, told me that his friends complained initially because he rejected their offers to spend time with them during the evenings in favor of spending time with his wife. But, eventually, he explained, they accepted his decisions. In other words, women's increased expectations and desires for partnerships are having an impact of men's time and social investments.

In terms of my domesticity I was an anomaly. I was a woman who did not cook and cleaned only for hygiene's sake, not for neatness. My friend Can referred to me as a "bad housewife" when I stayed with him and my neighbors. Housewives, warned me about the dangers of eating away from home *disarda* (outside). I found a restaurant, seemingly safe, and endorsed by a male friend who did not cook as *ev yemekleri* (homestyle food) and told a neighbor that I had eaten there a few times and was going to learn to cook from them. She told me that she would cook for me whenever I wanted and that I could not trust the restaurant food, and she proceeded to offer me food regularly. "Who knows that's in that food? It's not good." This extreme distrust of outside food was a function of lack of funds for the expense of dining, a fear of being replaced, and a categorical suspicion toward all things outside of the house (Bahloul 1995; Delaney 1991; Douglas 1984; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984). Likewise, in terms of childcare I was told not to trust anyone, not even my neighbors, with my daughter. To find a sitter would be

impossible, they told me, because how would I know if they were safe. This apprehension toward the outside restaurants and industries which could help women seemed to reflect a strong adherence to expected gender roles, the reliance on kin for child care support, and women's domestic competence. This apprehension toward the outside, especially in performing or replacing domestic tasks, resonated with Delaney's presentation of inside and outside, where the outside is dirty and unsafe.

The expectation that women keep a pristine house endures. My neighbor was perpetually tired, perpetually worrying about money, and always inviting me over to eat because she feared for my health from eating outside food. We were talking about how difficult life was and she said that she always had work to do "*iş hala iş*" (work, always work), reminding me of all that it took to keep the house together, vacuuming, dusting, cooking, buying groceries, and taking care of the children. I nodded emphatically, although I was less concerned with the dust on the windows than whether or not my next interview would work out, when I noticed a loose hair falling off of my head. She noticed, too, and as this hair began to float from my body my neighbor got very close to my face, tracking the hair. She caught it in her fingers before it hit the floor. Why did she catch it? Why didn't she let it fall to the floor? She had not let it fall to the floor because she would have had to vacuum it up, a needless extra step. My neighbor's work and responsibility entailed cleaning up every hair that fell onto that apartment's floor, every single hair. Her job was to oversee all dirt, to purge what did not belong on a regular basis, as quickly as it accumulated. Sometimes she lamented having boy children¹²

¹² I see a distinct shift in child rearing among my educated friends, who believe all children, including boys, should have the skills they need to be independent. I do not see these mothers as explicitly working to change women's roles (since an independent man

because they did not do anything to contribute to the house—neither did her husband. At meals, she poured their drinks, broke their bread, and left her meal for what was needed in the kitchen. While different levels of domestic freedom and responsibility exist among men, the standards of cleanliness deviate for women; it is their job to purge the dust and dirt, maintaining a spotless abode in contrast to the filthy street.

This chapter has considered the complex configurations of the public and private from the early ethnographic literature on Turkish villages to complicated hybrids and disavowals among young Istanbul women. The less-developed private spaces I allude to are dreams and emotions, which deserve further study.

would rely less on the women around him) but that they feel strongly that all young people should have the tools to keep house.

Chapter 4: Mothers and Daughters

A *çeyiz* exhibition in Ümraniye was buzzing with excitement and enthusiasm. The bride's mother-in-law showed her relatives the apartment excitedly, while the bride and her mother walked with me through the apartment. It looked like a showroom without the price tags, like a model home, but with more real, homey touches. The kitchen cabinets were open, lined with new small appliances, the hourglass silhouette of an immersion blender tied with a red ribbon, echoed the slim waistline of the virgin bride accented by the red ribbon, her virginity. The bride's mother showed me her handiwork, the doilies accenting the shelves in the kitchen, the baubled hand towels in the bathroom, pointing out which designs were from Bursa, where she lived. The bride proudly showed off the living room furniture, decorated in the disposable fashions and bright colors of a college dorm room, and then we moved into the bedroom. I asked her who selected the furniture. She told me that she had by herself, without her husband or mother's input. The bedroom closet was open, revealing bedspreads her mother had made in the traditional pastel colors, yellow and pink, carefully stacked up and tied with red ribbons. I asked the young bride to show me the most special item from her *çeyiz*. She pointed to the dusky purple cover and pillows on the matrimonial bed, where she would lose her virginity in a couple of days. "This one. I bought it. It's chic, modern." She admired its style and expensive look. It was dark, not pastel as the covers, and it was machine made.

Both involved in compiling the *çeyiz*, the mother and daughter had different preferences and investments. The mother's salt-dried hand towels marked by her grief over her mother's death and inability to share in her daughter's wedding shopping

adventures demonstrated a nostalgic, emotional investment into her daughter's marriage, her handmade contributions reflected her family of origins. Meanwhile, her daughter's affection for the trendy, store-bought *çeyiz* items reflected her tastes, brand recognition, and individual identification with the items. The bride's favorite pieces reflected her personal styles as a consumer, not her mother's legacy.

Çeyiz is Women's Work

Women link the *çeyiz* of the past to the *çeyiz* of the present, however, their personal investments into the custom are changing. Aside from cases in sub-Saharan Africa (Faubion 1996; Goody and Tambiah 1973), and rarely argued Northern India (Tambiah et al. 1989), the *çeyiz* stands out in terms of female inheritance because it is accumulated and maintained predominately by women, remaining the bride's property after marriage or divorce. It serves as a mother's material investment into her daughter's future. This unique object illuminates social, familial, political and economic relationships in real time, reflecting women's status (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003). In the spirit of Annette Weiner's work, an analysis of the *çeyiz* apprehends Turkish culture, through a study of women, in ways previously overlooked but no less meaningful (1976). It focuses on material investments, not exchanges, by women for younger women. My focus on the modern, urban *çeyiz* reveals the elemental aspects of the custom in concert with a culture at the height of change.

Urban Çeyiz: From Competition to Consumption

Another aspect that distinguishes a village çeyiz from an urban çeyiz¹³ is the motivations involved in making it. Hart asserts that village women labor to produce the same number of items as their peers, but of better quality, and that it is fueled by “deep social competition which represents çeyiz practices among daughters and by extension mothers” (283). In the village, competition between women drives the process of craft and accumulation. Thus, the exhibition of the çeyiz reflects the family’s prestige. Hart also suggests that such exhibitions invite criticism of the families. Thus, the village çeyiz occasions praise and criticism of the bride’s family according to local standards.

However, in the diverse city of Istanbul, where extended families have dissolved, and readymade, both imported and local, goods are plentiful, çeyiz exhibitions are rare. Few of my informants had witnessed or expected to have exhibitions of their own, and most preferred to store their items rather than use them daily. While the goods might be displayed to interested relatives, there is usually not a time before the wedding when the apartment is opened up for familiars to view it and all of the items hung up or made visible for judgment and praise. This lack of display and commentary on the bride’s family, important components of the village çeyiz and the means through which its value has been evaluated, calls into question how and why the tradition is operationalized in Istanbul. Without an exhibition, the idea of competition does not hold.

¹³ I refer to an urban çeyiz because it is made for daughters living in Istanbul and composed of readymade materials from Istanbul.

Çeyiz is for mothers

The next section outlines mothers' relationships to the çeyiz, both historically and in the present, suggesting that as an extension of self, a çeyiz produced for the daughter extends the mother's influence into her daughter's new home.

I interviewed a young woman pursuing her Master's degree in Istanbul. She had lived in Istanbul the last six years and visited her family a couple of times each year in Eastern Turkey. She was soft-spoken and dressed very modestly, she did not cover her head or wear exclusively long sleeves, and had the most beautiful twinkle in her eye. I was excited about interviewing her. Unlike most of the educated women I had met, she was actively interested in cultural preservation. Arzu sang in a Turku group, a group that performed and recorded famous Turkish and Turkic folk songs. Her awareness of traditions, and the importance of maintaining them contrasted with most of her peers who wished to be liberated from these limiting practices.

When I asked about her mother's hope chest, she discussed her relationship with her mother, who had taught her all of the skills she needed for her own hope chest, and who protected her own hope chest by not wanting her children to look through it.

My mom got angry when we looked at it. We got very curious. It's very important and special for her. She buys some parts of it from the city, at the local stores, and some of them are traditional [handmade] things.

There's a very famous kind of blanket [*yorgan*], she got some of them and makes them.

My mom taught me, some of these things are really enjoyable.

"OK do this and I'll put it in your çeyiz."...She loves doing them—the

never uses them, but puts them in her sandık There are some things she doesn't touch. [It has] *all of her memories from her past*. She uses them or takes them to people in every kind of event. It's not like you go to a store and pick something out. She says, "a lot of people bought presents for me." They do it. Some of it she still keeps, "they were mine. I never used them so I'll give them to you." She keeps them. Her mother gave them to her. This will go on. She keeps them—her mother gave them to her.

Although some women continue to add to their çeyiz after marriage, most put away the special items and use what remains, and for Arzu's mother, the çeyiz functioned as a precious time capsule, an encapsulation of her life before marriage. My informant's depiction of her mother's relationship to her çeyiz reflects its deep connection to her subjectivity and her history. The mother's adamant privacy surrounding the trousseau seems poignant because mothers constantly share their bodies, space, and time with their children. I suspect this was the only site she could try to keep private.

The mother's treatment of her trousseau, though primarily not comprised of wearable pieces, resonates with Catherine Allerton's (2007) depiction of the Indonesian sarong. She describes them "[a]s artefactual extensions of the wearer's body [that] absorb substances and intentions, offer comfort at times of upset or illness, and transmit social and emotional messages" (22). The ability of material pieces to store this emotional content, dreams, and history depends not on their everyday use (which is the sari's case) but their cultural prevalence and perhaps even their gendered use. Allerton goes on to demonstrate that a sarong "is ultimately entwined with, but not reducible to, the biographies of both its primary wearer and weaver" (25). For example, for women who

weave them for their (future) husbands the “sarongs are a material sign of a woman’s love and remembering” and that “sarongs are not only valued for the female labour that has gone into producing them, but also for the ways in which they embody loving protection, central to their significance as everyday objects” (26). Just as the hope chest becomes a composite of both the bride’s and her mother’s tastes and future expectations, the sarong’s textile patterns reflect more than the wearer’s status, containing within it an emotional communication between the creator and the user. At times this message of love is palpable.

When I visited a *çeyiz* exhibition, viewing an entire newly furnished apartment for the bride and groom’s use, I witnessed the interactions between mother and daughter as the wedding approached. Both had been working on the hope chest for about one year. The mother, stately and quite young, had spent most of her time embellishing hand towels with beads and crocheted lace while the daughter shopped all over Istanbul. When we entered the bathroom with the fixtures and cabinets decked out in pastel skirts, pom poms, and ribbons, the mother showed me mounds of neatly folded white towels with colorful flowers and paisley designs. She picked up one with elegant orange fringe, and explained that she had started making it before and through her own mother’s death. She held it over her hand, almost cradling it. “This one,” she said, “is made of my tears.” Surrounded by one year’s worth of labor, of materially preparing her daughter to embark on marriage, this particular towel struck her, salty with dried tears of grief over her mother’s death. Like Allerton says, “As super-skins that absorb tears, sweat and other bodily substances, sarongs are an artefactual extension of their wearer’s body” (2007, 35). While most of the *çeyiz* is not worn, aside from slippers, headscarves, and purchased

lingerie, clearly the mother is furnishing her daughter's apartment with her labor, memories, hopes, and grief. Thinking about this exchange, I asked the daughter if she ever felt sad or heavy that her new apartment would be furnished with her mother's tastes and labor, and she told me no. She explained that she was happy to be reminded of her mother, but at the same time, in showing me the house, she privileged the items in the *çeyiz* she had chosen and purchased, which did not include her mother's extensive handiwork. Thus, the *çeyiz* reminds daughters of their mothers and their life before marriage.

Another soon-to-be bride said that her *çeyiz* was an emotional reminder of her mother. "During that process [of preparing the *çeyiz*] you laugh, you fight. Before you use those things you remember those times." This bride suggested that the *çeyiz* encapsulates the mother daughter relationship through the process of shopping, selecting styles and designs, and negotiating together.

Happy Henna Nights and Empty Trousseaux: Recoding Customs

While the henna night, traditionally a sad occasion, allows mothers and daughters to grieve ritually their changing relationship, the *çeyiz* populates the new household with a mother's presence. Arzu and I discussed the henna night, which occurs before the wedding, and it was typically sexually segregated and full of overwrought expressions of grief, common to the Middle East. The henna night, which fell out of favor in urban eras with the inception of the Republic, has seen a reemergence in Istanbul in the fifteen or so years (Ustuner, Ger, Holt 2000). Some of the re-emergence can be explained by the migration of more traditional Turks from villages, however, the tradition has also been adapted by modern Istanbul. The traditional henna night allowed the bride and her

mother to grieve their parting and for the bride to spend time with her mother-in-law, and through a payment made by the mother-in-law to the bride, she was ritually transferred between women. This somber even was held at the bride's home and women joined together to cry and sing bleak songs about the bride's anticipated distance from her natal family.

For some brides, it has become a kitschy performance of nostalgia. In the context of the Bedouin community she studied, Abu-Lughod recounted how gender roles are mapped and constituted through lamentations (1993). "Lamenting, as in many parts of the world and other parts of Egypt, is strictly a woman's activity" (1993, 189).

The sad henna night allowed the mother to say goodbye to her daughter and the bride to mourn leaving her family. However, the henna night adopted by urban brides transforms many aspects of the event, including the location, gender participation, and emotional tone. Modern henna nights occur in clubs and restaurants and thus take place in public, not private. They may include men, from the groom to the bride's friends and family, thus taking place in a gender inclusive public space. While some of the old songs might be sung lamenting the bride's departure, the mood is generally happy, not one of sadness. Thus the night has changed focus from grieving the loss of a mother-daughter relationship to celebrating in public the bride's last days before marriage. The emotional mapping of both the wedding night and the henna night is significant. Historically, happy brides have been criticized as not caring about their families, suggesting that the mournful henna night works to depersonalize and decenter the bride's excited anticipation of her new life.

These powerful changes in the emotions and location of the henna night (aside from the songs, ritual of the gold coin and henna, and the red dress) suggest a reframing of the entire night by urban brides. Some of the brides I spoke with did have henna nights but they insisted that their grooms be present and did not want a gender segregated, sad event. “The new urban henna night is not a rite-of-passage using religious symbolism to reproduce patriarchal relations. Rather it informs a new articulation of so-called modern identity in Turkey” (Ustuner, Tuba, Ger, Guliz, and Holt, Douglas B. 2000, 9). Today’s henna-night performs a ritual from the past through a new emotional and commercial framework. Similarly, an important aspect of *Düğün TV*, a show of traditional Turkish taking place in Germany is that it reproduces marriage by hosting personal ads for brides at the bottom of the screen. Interestingly, nearly every German-Turkish bride depicted wears the red ribbon, perhaps more of an important signifier of Turkish identity than virginity. The red of migrant brides living in Germany encodes Turkish identity, the color of the Turkish flag.

Thus, by recoding the affective, locational, and gendered elements of the tradition young urban women recast the henna night into a “playful consumption activity.” Those authors analyze the changes in the night as an “experimentation scene” but they deny that the night remains a rite-of-passage for women (Ger, Ustuner, Holt 2000). However, I believe that the henna night does serve as a rite-of-passage, allowing young urban women to assert their autonomy as consumers (who plan the event), their desire for greater gender equality, and as arbiters of their own emotional landscape, rather than re-enacting sadness. To consider the event as a rite of passage demands an analysis of the kinds of subjectivities these women are resisting and how they choose to replace them. By

reinterpreting the context of the tradition, young urban women instantiate a transition into married life on very different grounds than their mothers.

A *çeyiz* helps the bride to complete the transition, and, for current brides, the absence of a *çeyiz* is a real cause for concern.¹⁴ The lack of a *çeyiz*, even in Istanbul, can reflect a poor upbringing, and it is considered a deficit by those who feel it is a necessary object for the transition to married life. My informants discussed the implications of not having a *çeyiz*, a perspective repeated in multiple interviews.

[not having a *çeyiz*] is a kind of shame and it shows your family's wealth and skills, since your family may be poor. You can be poor but you can still be a good wife...

Even making Turkish coffee is a sign of her skills. Being respectful to older peoples is important in our tradition. If the bride goes to the groom's house and does everything they want it shows that she's going to be a good wife.

The suggestion here is the necessity of the *çeyiz*—there absolutely must be something collected in preparation for marriage.

If, on the other hand, parents do not provide enough dowries for their daughter, they face the risk of being blamed and put down by the groom's family. Dowry-related criticism received from the groom's family not only weakens the status of the bride and her family but also signals deviations

¹⁴ Daughters whose fathers are deceased before their wedding have access to a *çeyiz* allowance provided to them by the state to pay for their wedding preparations. However, they forfeit the money if they work, so some young women are forced to decide between their ambitions and monetary support before marriage (Anon. 2005).

from norms. In order to avoid potential conflicts, the bride's mother takes control of the dowry process. It is mainly her responsibility to decide what the dowry will include and when it will be ready. (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 158)

Although in my interviews, compiling the hope chest occurs in negotiation between mothers and daughters, its existence is a necessary part of wedding preparations, and its absence results in judgment on both the bride and her family. It is, as de Certeau describes, a tool. "These tools compose a series of objects whose purpose is to inscribe the force of the law on its subject, to tattoo him in order to make him demonstrate the rule, to produce a 'copy' that makes the norm legible" (2002, 141). While the degree of individual effort used for the preparation has mostly shifted from making items to shopping for them, the implication is that the *çeyiz* is proof that the marriage has been premeditated with familial involvement in both the spousal selection and preparation. The accumulation of the *çeyiz* serves as proscription against the kinds of marriage that occur without it: the elopement without familial approval or a quick marriage when a couple discovers a pregnancy out of wedlock. Not having a *çeyiz* is a shame because the contexts when a marriage occurs without preparation do point to sources of shame. A marriage without a *çeyiz* is still perceived as illegible and illegitimate. The act of preparing the trousseau enfolds the bride into her cultural station, into her existence. De Certeau describes this process:

The act of suffering oneself to be written by the group's law is oddly accompanied by a pleasure, that of being recognized (but one does not know by whom), of becoming an identifiable and legible word in a social

language, of being changed into a fragment within an anonymous text, of being inscribed in a symbolic order that has neither owner nor author. Every printed text repeats the same ambivalent experience of the body written by the law of the other. (2002, 140)

In furnishing their daughters' trousseaux and future apartments, mothers take part in this inscriptive work, while at the same time reinscribing themselves as contributing, loving parents. Perhaps the ambivalence de Certeau describes plays out in the stereotype of mothers feeling dissatisfied with the amount and style of goods and feeling compelled to make and buy more.

Reproducing Domesticity

Historically, before young women departed for their new home with the hope chest, their mothers had a deep attachment to its production and development. During my fieldwork, informants mentioned that mothers typically felt dissatisfied with the trousseau and continue to add items to it because it does not seem sufficient—because it reflects on their skills as parents. “Dowry not only represents the embodiment of the mother’s love, but is also an indication of the competency of the mother in preparing her daughter to the role of a wife.” (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 167). Its fullness embodies mothers’ parenting and efforts to prepare their daughter for marriage.

Apart from symbolic and ideological reasons underlying the continuity of dowry practice, socially accepted norms about the parent-child relationship are influenced by perseverance of dowry. Children of both genders typically live with their parents until they get married...From this

perspective, dowry serves a very practical purpose, helping children to set up a new household. (Sandikci and Ilhan 2003, 173)

At first glance, mothers' investments into brides, and the insecurities involved in the process, appear as reflections of the mother's worth. Parents feel an obligation to contribute to their children's lives after leaving their house. However, if this were the only reason, women could find ways to collect money (perhaps by selling the very wares they produce for daughters), or choose less time-consuming or more useful items (oven mitts or pillows) to produce. Another argument Schneider has made about the evolution of the trousseau to include embellished and ornate items to reflect or create an illusion of women's leisure time. In discussions about the hope chest contents, a number of informants told me that they could not use the things their mothers made for them, especially the white crocheted *dantel* embroidery, which must be hand washed and ironed. *Dantel* cannot be used every day because it gets dirty and is extremely difficult to take care of because it can lose its shape if not washed properly; it is labor-intensive and difficult to use but most women have pieces of it in their *çeyiz*. Certainly, ornate items such as *oya* and *dantel* reflect large investments of time and dedication to a daughter, but they also impart style and beauty of a particularly feminine quality. Although mothers always claim they labor for their daughters' sake, Istanbul-dwelling daughters often view it differently, asserting that they do not care for these items. And, yet, at least for now, they endure.

These particular hand towels, tablecloths, and bedding materializes Chodorow's concept of "the reproduction of mothering," which she explains as "...the basis for the reproduction of women's location and responsibilities in the domestic sphere. This

mothering, and its generalization to women's structural location in the domestic sphere, links the contemporary social organization of gender and social organization of production and contributes to the reproduction of each" (1999, 208). By populating a daughter's marital household with domestic items of her own making, mothers perpetuate an environment of specific expectations about the daughter's identity as a wife (and future mother). According to Chodorow, this helps to maintain the division of household labor.

The *çeyiz* certainly contributes to the reproduction of how a household is expected to look and run, supplying a bride with what she needs to fulfill these parameters appropriately. Additionally, the qualities of the items within the *çeyiz* promote a particular brand of femininity. If just household roles were at stake, mothers could give daughters their own goods or buy them starter sets of readymade items (similar to parents buying items for college dorms in the U.S.), but the handmade contents of the *çeyiz* (both historically and today) are dainty, unused, ornate, and fragile. Historically, they were white but they are often in pastel colors now, showing stains and imperfections, and they remain difficult to clean and care for. These items envelop and signify a delicate, proper femininity. And many of the items, especially headscarves and house slippers (which demarcate the home from outside spaces), *örtü* (coverings for all kinds of appliances and furniture) and hand towels for the bathroom, are usually collected in large numbers. Produced in large numbers, they appear to both proliferate and reproduce femininity.

In terms of the qualities of these items, their light colors and embellishments convey an aesthetic of decoration and opulence, literally gendering the domestic space

(see attached figures). Annette Weiner offers an explanation for a similar situation among Trobriand women at marriage, positing that their womanness gives them value.

The power of a Trobriand woman, from a cultural view, is not merely a fact of biology. Rather, the value of womanness is identified through the cultural symbols of her wealth—skirts and bundles which serve to objectify this transformation. The value of womanness, not women, is what men gain at marriage, and this value is now exploited in a positive sense by women themselves at every level. (Weiner 1976, 230)

The accumulation of these particular items in large numbers, conforming to traditional designs, established a very formulaic kind of femininity for a bride's house, and, more broadly, the psychodynamics of the house. My research suggests that urban brides' rejection of the *çeyiz* in Istanbul entails a refusal of these specific qualities of femininity represented by the *çeyiz*. However, the preparation of the *çeyiz* also involves close family relationships with the person a daughter identifies with the most: her mother (Chodorow 1999). In this respect, the *çeyiz* embodies a negotiation between the two women, a reckoning of their desires and limitations, and it often occasions transformation.

Çeyiz as Interpersonal and Material Transformation

The trousseau practically and ideologically reproduces gender, which is critical to the object's continuity in Turkish culture. However, it also dynamically changes with different generations; as gender roles shift, so do its contents. A unique object shared between mothers and daughters in anticipation of the daughter's transition into a new life,

the trousseau invites comparison with pregnancy as a special stage in mother-daughter subject formation. Like pregnancy, the trousseau marks the threshold of change. Like pregnancy, it incorporates doubled subjectivities. Susan Stewart's writing on pregnancy, and the subsequent separation of mother and child, resembles the bride's emergence through the creation of the trousseau. "Out of this dividing—this process of differentiation and relation—the subject is generated, both created and separated from what it is not; and the initial separation/joining has a reproductive capacity that is the basis for the reproductive capacity for all signifiers" (Stewart, 1993, x). Reproducing the past, including gendered household responsibilities for the future, this object provides a special view of mother-daughter negotiations in the construction of gender roles. This negotiation involves the two women listening to and responding to each other's needs and desires.

The following example shows how mothers and daughters displayed their identities in tandem through interviews with me. In Kasımpaşa, the neighborhood full of migrants from Rize, I visited the neighbors, in a lower-class neighborhood comprised of mostly Black Sea immigrants, to discuss their *çeyiz*. There were three daughters, all excited to meet me, and my daughter. The mother was anxious for the eldest to converse with me in English. "Is it good? Can you understand? Does she speak well?" she asked, and I felt I had to say yes, or else I might hear the daughter screaming from a beating, along with the other female neighbors at night, where domestic violence pervaded. The daughters were in high school; the oldest was about to start university. They happily accommodated their mother in showing me their *çeyiz*. She began to show me each of the daughters' *çeyiz*, but since they were basically identical, she focused on her eldest

daughter's. The daughters dutifully assisted her in showing off their items; the only difference between the three was that the bedspreads had different main colors, of pastel yellow, blue and green. The mother said she had been working on these since the daughters were born, and she expected them to use them. She said some items had been bought from an aunt who makes these difficult things, and that she made some of them, too. She did not attribute the items to one person or another while showing them, but at one point picked up some oya and held it softly. "This is good work, do you see?" She asked. And she showed it to me. I asked her if I could photograph it and she agreed but began to search for something black as a foil underneath it. She used my sweater to hold the fine, round lace at the right angle over my sweater to show it off. "Isn't it beautiful?" she asked. When I finally asked who had made it, she said coyly, "I did." Although the mother had not tried to take credit for any of the items, she set up this scene, this display of one particular piece for my admiration. Her insistence on a response about her daughter's language prowess resonated with how she showed off objects displaying her crochet skills. There was a palpable heaviness in the moment before I answered both of these, as if these skills were metonyms for their value as people. My task in acknowledging the *çeyiz* and the daughter's English was to affirm their skills and prowess. The mother and daughters participated in showcasing these skills for each other, honoring and accentuating each other's investments.

The above anecdote and the following passage from an interview show how mothers' and daughters' display of their identities function intersubjectively, moving between mutual support and identification and dis-identification. In Benjamin's terms, they demonstrate mutual recognition, which entails emotional "attunement, mutual

influence, affective sharing, sharing states of mind” (Benjamin 1988, 1:11). For example, the graduate student below bemoans the tradition of the *çeyiz* and yet does not refuse her mother’s offerings. Her mother in turn makes a multitude of things but allows her daughter to choose what she wants. An interesting dance of obligation and agency, “assertion and recognition” (1988, 25), mothers and daughters often accommodate each other and their respective different opinions about the *çeyiz*.

Women make these [make embroidery and hand towels] when they give birth to a girl, at 5 years old or at birth. [They make] tablecloths, sheets, oya, yazma, anything you can use in the house. My luck was that my mother had done such things. Mothers always produce such things or buy them. When a girl gets married they just show up and put them everywhere. *Women like me* don’t want them. They are out of date, not modern, not fashionable. You can find readymade garments—usually white. My mother did them (oya, etc.) for my sister. [When my mother began to make more of these for my wedding] I thought of my sister and said, ‘you have done those things for her so you don’t need to for me.’ She said, “you can take whatever you want.” [Picking up a small crocheted tablecloth] This is all lace, it’s the only one I have. I didn’t keep [the rest of the *çeyiz*]. In the summer, all girls learn how to sew. I’m hopeless. I used to prefer reading books.

This bride named Sema, educated in Istanbul but born in the southern part of Turkey, adamantly disliked the *çeyiz* and distinguished herself from her mother and other women

who committed their time to the craft because she was a studious girl, an intellectual. At the same time, the interview showed how mothers and daughters converse about the *çeyiz*; in this conversation she chose to keep one very ornate large tablecloth, something she might save for a future child but that did not fit with the style of her home.

Most of the daughters I interviewed felt that the *çeyiz* had more import for their mothers than themselves, although it was also important for them emotionally. Many women described handmade *çeyiz* memories of their mother and their time together before marriage but one central component of the urban *çeyiz* is that daughters choose what they want and mothers give them that decision-making power. Some daughters demand elaborate and fashionable items, putting strain on their relationships.

A woman of Tatar origins with identical twin daughters in their twenties met me in a machine embroidery class at a public education center. She was learning embroidery, computer basics, machine embroidery, and fashion design, and she was taking the handiwork classes for her (engaged) daughter's hope chest and the computer course for herself. She explained that she had made many items for her first daughter's marriage and now the first daughter, in seeing the preparations the mother was doing for the other twin, requested another set of items. She talked about how she spent most of her time laboring over these items, that her daughter's demands were very strong, and that she had to keep up with the latest fashions to accommodate them. She could not start working on the *çeyiz* before the daughter was engaged because the items would have faded out of style before the wedding. I interviewed the mother and daughter together in the classroom, while the groom-to-be sat in the back texting friends and acting disengaged. I asked the mother about why the hope chest was so important to her. She said, "It's a privilege, and

advantage. There is a dissatisfaction with what you did not have and you want your daughter to have them.” I asked what things she wanted for her daughter that she did not have for herself. “White goods, gold.” She paused. “A house”.¹⁵ Completing her daughters’ *çeyiz* thus became a remedy to her own household deficiencies, suggesting that she is reproducing domesticity through the *çeyiz*.

I asked her if she thought her daughter’s life would be different from her own and she said, “No life is the same. The scenario is the same. Now I understand what my mother was feeling about me. It’s about love for your mother.” She continued, “When we were engaged my mother was commenting on my husband’s behaviors. I was young and didn’t know what it meant.” Her mother had understood aspects of her future husband’s behavior as indicators as how he would treat her, and she tried to alert her daughter to potential problems, but her daughter would not listen. But she said she would not do the same with her daughters. “They have to experience the future. I can’t say anything—you should give them a chance to see if even if they make a mistake—they should feel it.” We then discussed the *çeyiz* and its changing significance. I asked her how the *çeyiz* was different today and what skills a woman needed to be a capable wife since these crafts were not as critical as they had been in the past. She said that the *çeyiz* was about the economy now if a young woman was working and that a young woman “must stand on her own two feet. She should be independent from the groom’s family and her own. “In the past all they wanted me to do was to obey rules...men today still want an obedient

¹⁵ The house has been written about extensively in anthropology (Bourdieu 1977; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Miller and Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth. Conference 1995; Vom Bruck 1997)

wife.” She said that women have more rights today and she whispered under her breath that she was a feminist.

This mother’s story illustrates some of the critical changes imposed on the *çeyiz* when moving from the village to the city. She stressed her daughters’ independence and autonomy; she accepted her daughters’ choices and preferences, giving them the space they needed to figure out their lives. Docility was not important to her children; rather, she emphasized their abilities to perceive their own lives and make judgments accordingly.

Daughters as Mothers

The *çeyiz* reconfigures the role of women both as daughters and as future wives. Mothers often use the *çeyiz* as an opportunity to provide for their daughters what they did not have, perhaps particular items or a sense of fashion and currency that they felt their *çeyiz* lacked. But more significantly, the *çeyiz* structures the possibility of giving daughters more decision-making power. Even though working daughters may automatically demand more say in such matters, at the same time mothers who bore children in arranged marriages and abusive relationships use the *çeyiz* as an opportunity to acknowledge and honor their daughters’ preferences. Through the *çeyiz* mothers give their daughters more agency and autonomy in allowing them to select styles and patterns or to deny most of what the mothers have made.

Daughters, in turn, recognize the importance of their hope chest for their mothers and may accommodate their wishes by accumulating goods. An informant explained to me that although she has no interest in the hope chest she plans to have one in order to secure the love of her parents. She knows that they want her to have one, so this gesture

will honor her parents' desires and secure their love. She stated, "I want a *çeyiz* because I want my parents to love me." Sensitive to how traditions reflect onto parents' status and honor, her interest in accumulating a trousseau centered on serving her parents' wishes. As I have already mentioned, another informant maintained that she bargained with her mother in order to not accumulate goods, asserting that there was no need to furnish a hope chest for her since her older sister already had an elaborate one. For the daughter, the fact of her sister's hope chest rendered her own hope chest a waste of energy; it was redundant work for her mother. Her mother gave in and did not continue to make the goods. This particular informant plans to buy her wedding goods, linens, and furniture, from popular stores, such as Ikea. While she acknowledged her mother's intense interest in making one for her, the informant refused to encourage her mother to spend time producing and purchasing goods that she would never use.

These anecdotes illustrate that the hope chest contains multiple significations reflecting family relations. Negotiated between mothers and daughters the trousseau dynamically enfolds within it the desires of both generations. It thus embodies this responsive interplay and transformation, materializing women's roles over time and working out their relationships, where mothers and daughters, who identify intimately with each other's pasts, prepare for the daughter's marriage. More than transitional, the *çeyiz* transforms daughters into agentive brides and mothers into skilled providers. It also gives both women the opportunity to acknowledge their similarities and differences, a reflexive recognition of each other (Chodorow 1999, 21). It also transforms a bride's material circumstances in ways that mark her differences from her mother on account of changing trends, technologies and family roles. In this respect young brides approach the

çeyiz and the responsibilities of marriage in novel ways; they see the çeyiz as an opportunity to exercise their will over their domestic space and they see marriage as another life stage, not as the sum of adulthood. This shift in perception makes the task of compiling a çeyiz more of a personal one, since it is not seen by daughters as a reflection of their mothers' upbringing, but it is something more immediate and trendy. However, for daughters who recognize their mothers' investment in their çeyiz as deeply personal, compiling the çeyiz becomes an attempt to maintain a tradition or maintain a relationship with the family. Arzu later reflected on her own çeyiz in relation to her mother's, settling into the idea that she wants to have a çeyiz for the sake of adhering to traditions, respecting the items as if they were heirlooms.

She keeps them [her handmade items]—her mother gave them to her. I feel differently and sometimes think that it's better if I don't do any of them because I'm sure I will not use them. I like the traditions. If I get married one day it will be a traditional one. She [my mother] thinks that a wedding without a çeyiz sandik is not a real one. I don't think living in a big city or getting used to modern life means getting rid of traditions—they're sincere. I'll keep the çeyiz thing.

Values regarding marriage and women's status have been reproduced through the çeyiz, but today young women are opting to keep have a çeyiz, not necessarily to conform with traditional expectations of femininity, but to participate in a tradition that still matters to their mothers. Although the tradition of the çeyiz is being reproduced to some degree, its meaning and contents have changed dramatically. An analysis of the

çeyiz from the perspective of cultural reproduction suggests that wives are not being reproduced as they had been in the past, however some qualities, such as the delicate beauty of needle crochet, are maintained through the çeyiz objects.

Today, Turkish femininity is reproduced through, technology, and education, and innovation. For example, rather than borrowing pieces of oya from other women, urban mothers send their daughters to the print store to photocopy the lace, to make the patterns available to other women without damaging the original. One daughter commented on how difficult it was to run to the copy machine and figure out how to copy fine lace, which was usually white and thicker than paper, onto white paper. Thus, modernity witnesses a genuine transformation in the technologies and practices involved in wedding traditions, especially the çeyiz.

Chapter 5: Traditional and Modern—*Geleneksel ve Modern*: Renderings

When I interviewed Sema, who moved to Istanbul from Izmir for college and graduate school at a prestigious university, we talked about her past and her future. She reminisced about the wedding preparations and shared with me local wedding traditions, *adetler*, and she shared with me her nervousness about becoming a parent. My informant mentioned, smiling proudly, that it was common for women to write the names of their single friends on the bottom of their wedding slippers. I asked if she had done this for her wedding, expecting that she would dismiss it as backwards or too traditional. Her smile widened, “Yes, but I took a scientific approach; I wrote the names of my friends very lightly in pencil, only on the parts of the shoe I would walk on,” ensuring that their names would wear off during the course of the night as she danced and socialized.

Sema’s scientific approach illustrates her modern spin on the tradition, showing that while she was mindful of the tradition, she did not deploy it unquestioningly. Rather, she customized and innovated it. By limiting the area of the names on the shoes to the area where she knew she would tread, this educated bride combined a tradition with her perfectionistic need for mastery. This anecdote illustrates the kinds shifts in orientation available to women who choose to adhere to traditions, the ways in which they might justify to themselves practicing something their mothers did by retaining and innovating the tradition. The next example reveals the similar approach to the *çeyiz*, expanding the definitions and blurring the boundaries of traditional and modern.

Urban life increases distance between families, creates economic and educational circumstances that disrupt the patriarchal order, and offers career possibilities for women. It allows (or forces) youth to leave home sooner and potentially stay in the city. By

increasing the possibility for chosen marriages and greater individual autonomy, modernity stirs up and complicates the very foundation of Turkish society: marriage. The hope chest materializes these influential factors. This concluding chapter illustrates aspects of the modern urban trousseau and its implications, pointing also to future research. Through descriptive scenes, snapshots of the complexities of Turkish daily life in relation to the trousseau, I contextualize the urban *çeyiz* and other wedding traditions within the particularities of Turkish modernity.

The Tradition of the Çeyiz is Plastic

I visited a family's apartment for a *çeyiz* exhibition in Ümraniye, the field site of Jenny White's *Islamist Mobilization* (2002). I asked an older generation of women (grandmothers between fifty and seventy-five) and recently married women in their late teens and early twenties, if it was possible to be both modern and traditional. The oldest woman said, "Of course. Watch." She showed me a beautiful crocheted table covering covered in plastic; the other women nodded and began to help. One peeled back the plastic and announced, "Traditional." She then put back the plastic. "Modern." This simple anecdote challenges the dichotomy that often structures discussions of tradition and modernity, suggesting that they interact, coexist, and work as overlays. Plastic and transparent, the modern accentuates and preserves the traditional. The traditional is made visible, not obscured, by the modern. In this sense they are dialogical and not competing, but rather interdependent and co-constitutive.

Jenny White's book *Islamist Mobilization* focuses on local politics, particularly in Ümraniye, where some of my interviews took place. Her book attempts to describe Istanbul's complexity, through political organization, in ways that reverberate with my

own project. She demonstrates Istanbul's cultural and economic diversity through street scenes and interviews. Revealing how different classes commingle as neighbors, White describes the diverse landscape of immigrant squatters, arriving from villages, merging with middle-class urban development.

But even here the operative word is change, as dress and behavioral norms metamorphose in different directions among all sectors of the population. This metamorphosis can lead to (perhaps unexpected) convergences, as when a veiled young woman in jeans kisses her boyfriend in the park, or a secularist university student takes the veil. It leads to hardened oppositions, as when a veiled woman is refused a job because of her clothing and what this is believed to imply about her social and political views. The cityscape, in other words, may be ephemeral, but the population's drive toward an urbanity of its own making is powerfully pushing up new buildings and generating new styles and relations among residents. This is demonstrated in the political arena as residents of poorer neighborhoods unite with merchants, industrialists, and the intellectual elite in new, hybrid social movements. (White 2002, 15)

White's description of the city provides an ecological resonance with the social movements she studies, particularly the AK (Justice and Development) Party, the dominant party in Turkey, which is both religiously conservative and supportive of Turkey's economic growth within the global market and European Union membership. According to White, cultural and classed "convergences" and "hardened oppositions" occur in close proximity, which represent accurately urban life in Istanbul.

These contradictions take the form of veiled Turkish woman in the sheerest gossamer chartreuse dress, long sleeved and generously cut, intimating the outline of a dark g-string, and very public displays of affection with modestly dressed veiled women. White's book gives the readers a sense of these opposed and sometimes confounded terms, religious and secular, Kemalist and Islamist, educated and family oriented, that have structured both emic and etic analyses of Turkish culture. However, these binaries seem incredibly facile and unsuccessful when applied to the contexts of everyday life. In the last part of this section White suggests that the new political parties are a hybrid, a term she uses throughout the book. But I am left to wonder: is hybrid really the right descriptive term? Perhaps plastic describes the malleability and multiple (as in polymers) characteristics of urban life.

My research shows how certain sites, like marriage and the hope chest, contain cultural currency across generations, and that each generation (or "genderation," a term appropriate to this dissertation) get resignified. There is something recursive about these sites; the terms get recast by different parties (political parties and generations within families) while changing very little. For example, the headscarf (like the fez) was initially depicted as a symbol of Turkey's inability to modernize and Westernize by Mustafa Kemal, while today it is seen as a critical symbol of religious expression, a "mobile honor zone" in White's words (2004, 2:220), enabling women to participate and move more equally within society. This makes the *çeyiz* interesting to study: it changes over time but is also marked with lasting significance from its previous iterations.

The *çeyiz*, the veil, and historical sites retain complicated cultural memories and identities. Showing how secularism and Islam, tradition and modernity intersect, Meeker

analyzes two architectural monuments, Atatürk's tomb and Kocatepe Mosque, both located in Ankara. While the modern monuments symbolize seemingly separate aspects of Turkey, nationalism and Islam, the structures cut across dichotomies. The Kemalist memorial tomb, a celebration and personalization of Mustafa Kemal, extends beyond the leader's life to refer back to Turkey's cultural history, with Hittite lions lining the hallways. Meeker suggests that the tomb does less to characterize Atatürk than to delimit national boundaries. The mosque engages with modern architecture (such as the addition of electric elevators to the minarets) while exaggerating the style and interior of imperial mosques. In these respects, the concept of modernity clearly responds to and incorporates tradition while acknowledging and engaging Turkey's history and social structure.¹⁶ The urban *çeyiz*, no less of an historical site than a monument, but more dynamically individualized through women's preferences, synthesizes women's historical value within the current political economy. The *çeyiz* is thus responsive to women's increased education and the availability of consumer products, as well as Turkey's heightened awareness of both a national and Islamic identity. However, the synthesis of the *çeyiz* with both the current circumstances and past traditions occurs at the same time. The *çeyiz* thus becomes a complicated hybrid of traditional symbols and new forms.

A conservative young woman of eighteen wearing a dark teal animal print headscarf, heavy black kohl eyeliner, and jeans, proudly showed off her latest work at a sewing class, at Halk Eğitim, a government-sponsored organization where I conducted interviews. Her piece consisted of embroidered traditional, flowers on brightly colored fabric with metallic filament running through it. Everyone in the class raved about her

¹⁶ New properties, purchased by high-ranking officials on the Roma settlement of Sulukule incorporate Ottoman architecture while displacing the Ottoman's predecessors.

work. It was so creative. But part of what made it noteworthy was its honor of convention. She was not making new motifs but applying old ones, very conventional tulips¹⁷, onto new household accessories or clothes. A further innovation would be to use these on clothes rather than in households. She was making a pillowcase, a traditional site for this kind of work, yet her innovation occurred through her use of fabric. The fabric also created visual tension with the embroidery because it did not set off her embroidery as a lightly colored, traditional pillowcase would have; rather it called attention to the pillowcase. The interplay of brightly colored flowers and dark, sexy animal prints reminded me of Betsey Johnson's clothes in the US, which combine tackiness with timelessness. Many of her mid-century styled clothes, cut conservatively, pop out with striking fabrics with even more striking embellishments.

A rehashing of old forms, motifs, and styles characterizes nostalgia, but the insistence on new fabrics typifies the *çeyiz* as modern. Weddings, intentional displays of particular identities, are informed by class. Informed by Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction*, Argyrou writes of Cyprus that "wedding celebrations have been transformed from rites of passage to rites of distinction" and emphasizes the change in focus from individual to the larger social unit (Argyrou 2005, 1:11). Weddings serve to reify and reveal generational differences, emphasizing divisions and negotiations between age groups. But what about cultures, such as Turkey, that have always privileged distinction over individual transformation in weddings? Additionally, in Turkey, the henna night, a tradition

¹⁷ The tulip, or *lale*, was an important symbol of Ottoman extravagance. It pervades the touristic areas of Istanbul. At the same time, Ottoman designs dominated the teachings at ISMEK, a conservative, locally supported, trade school that held classes in many of the form of handiwork found in the trousseau. In contrast, Halk Eğitim, a government funded trade school, emphasized newer forms of art and independent design. I conducted participant observation and interviews at both sites but have not included the data here.

embraced by middle and upper classes employing traditional village costumes, represents a traditional identity while these same people may have European-style weddings. Wedding traditions could take on symbolic significance, reflecting national identity, while benefiting from upper-class embellishments, which for the elite also include playing against traditionally gendered codings of masculine and feminine through heterosocial gatherings or bisexual objects.

A popular Turkish jeans company posted a big billboard outside of its store. Very typical Calvin Klein looking models (young, male, clean shaven and slightly androgynous) were happily piled together, playfully grinning into the camera as if horsing around. But the light-eyed men wore necklaces of oya, traditional needle crochet. Oya has gained popularity in jewelry recently, but I have not witnessed any males actually wearing it. The gender of those wearing the jewelry bolsters how the Mavi brand sets trends while keeping cultural icons in circulation.

This label often includes evil eyes, attached by safety pins, with ethereal quotes or observations, with its sales tags. Like shopping in the Grand Bazaar, where expensive purchases often come with free gifts (*hediye*), these upscale clothes offer the purchaser protection from bad spirits, however mockingly. Clearly, these uses of traditional ornamentations are self-conscious, exoticized, and ratified, applied in novel ways but still recognizable.

The *oya* designs, traditionally associated with bridal and young women's accessories, adorning the necks of sexy young men, do a couple of things. Perhaps the use of *oya* serves the same decorative function as it has in traditional contexts—it embellishes women's goods. And in this case, actual men, rather than headscarves, serve

as the accessories. Perhaps these ads are telling women that they have choices as consumers—and as lovers. Instead of choosing the designs of the lace or selecting fabric for its qualities, they are choosing the best looking men, who are adorned and displayed in the same fashion as the *çeyiz*. In this sense, young women exercise their purchasing power and choice not in terms of household goods but with regard to spousal selection. The conflation of single-looking men with typical headscarf decorations intentionally conflates consumption with the fantasy of romance and marriage, but it recasts the objects involved. Here, the female consumer is the spectator.¹⁸

Although this poster comes from an edgy company, it reflects gender fluidity and the deployment of symbols into different contexts common to Turkish culture. Kandiyoti's (1997) article asks how definitions of gender and gender codes are specifically deployed and redefined through national modernizing projects in Turkey, evaluating transformations in Turkish male and female gender roles from the reformist period to the present. Committed to identifying localized intonations of identities, Kandiyoti shows how veiled men and pajama-clad villagers at the beach reflect transitory interpretations of gender informed by their historical contexts. For example, janissaries wore veils when they were viewed as vulnerable to attack by elder men. Kandiyoti also posits that gender roles are contested and constantly recoded; often these recodings (such as the emergence of the veil as a politicized female identity) are viewed as transitional before groups settle into more modern and broadly comprehensible identities (1997). She does not acknowledge the impact of global images and consumption on the production of

¹⁸ Laura Mulvey (2009) provides a useful way to look at this scene and consider who and what is being objectified, showing the brand Mavi as hip and transgressive by strategically playing with conventional norms. But this billboard definitely left women in the position of spectator.

gender until the end of the piece—which seems problematic to me because one could argue that the Turkish subjects addressed in her article have always been influenced by outside cultures.

As more Turks migrate to Europe, the *çeyiz* takes on an even more nationalizing significance. I visited a *çeyiz* store in Fatih, a conservative neighborhood in Istanbul, right before Ramazan. Cruising around and unaccompanied by men, I was very sensitive about feeling out of place and tried to dress appropriately and not linger outside. My assistant, however, did not share my concerns, so we stopped for cigarette breaks on the street between shopping and interviews and entered a store. This *çeyiz* store revealed an aspect of the *çeyiz* I do not attend to as much in my dissertation: feminine things. It contained the wedding related items for the bride and the female relatives, specifically makeup and lingerie. It is common for the bride to give perfume to her mother-in-law and for the groom's family to select the lingerie, so this place, with the same atmosphere as a sex shop, is really a family store. The lingerie came packaged, with a combination of Turkish and English written on the outside. Light-haired models often showed off the styles. Bustiers, corsets, and thigh highs dominated the offerings. Also available for purchase were little wooden trunks (*çeyiz*), adorned with flowers and gold details for storing jewelry or lingerie. I asked the women who worked there, all tastefully made up with headscarves in the most modern designs, who usually purchases items. "Brides," they responded. "We have brides come in from all over Europe to purchase our items. They prefer the Turkish quality. These items have quality." I asked about the styles: "Our styles are European, the most current." In other words, my merchant-informants suggest that Turkish brides living in Europe fly to Turkey to buy Turkish-made, European-styled

undergarments. They also told me that the bra was the most important piece (and most expensive) and that the mother-in-law usually purchased the bridal nightgown.

Europeanization could be seen as the thrust of the Kemalist modernization project but takes on a different valence within the context of the developing European Union. Like modernization, Europeanization emphasizes, delineates and reshapes particular individual identities and territories. Borneman and Fowler map out the effects of Europeanization on different fronts, including tourism, sexuality, and sports (1997). While the linkages between Europeanization and Turkish nationalism warrant further study beyond the scope of this paper, some of its impacts resonate with Turkey. For example, Borneman and Fowler point to the market as an understudied prospective site for cultural production, although the Euro has been neutralized from a marked cultural identity. The market serves as a fruitful place to think about cultural identity production, particularly when traditional identities become marketable. They analyze tourism and the recreation of time periods for touristic activities, and Potuoglu-Cook provides a nice analysis of bellydance in the context of Ottomania (2006). Additionally, they note that local life has become marketable as opposed to seeking out elite tourist experiences. So, how does the market (in particular the wedding industry) galvanize particular national identities?

Potuoglu-Cook (2006) provides a specific case of Europeanization specific to Turkey. A once-disparaged lower-class tradition now signifies cultural capital as Turkey moves closer to European Union membership. The author accounts for this activity's change in status to "neo-Ottomania," which connects political economy and capitalism to Turkey's "self-Orientalism." The dance thus becomes a commodified performance of

identity available to upper classes. This shift in class and status as an aesthetic form rather than seedy profession seems crucial to the practice's transition. How many other traditions (such as the once rustic henna night) may fall under this category, and what classifies it as Ottoman rather than Oriental? Fed by tourism, the belly dance has made a critical reappearance in the urban and extraordinarily sophisticated city of Istanbul. However, what seems interesting here is less the performance of the belly dance for tourists than its increased instruction and popularity among locals. Potuoglu-Cook suggests that, although the upper classes already know the moves, the ability to afford classes shows status. Additionally, as the dance becomes more popular it becomes encoded as a dance form.

As Europeanization influences Turkish identities and forms within Turkey, how is the *çeyiz* reified and imagined among Turkish emigrants living abroad, particularly in Europe? As their access to particular goods is limited, what aspects of the *çeyiz* remain important? I would like to learn how these emigrants procure items, and which specific items and designs remain important to keep the *çeyiz* legible. This research depends on an investigation of demographics and geographical origins of emigrants in European centers with a high volume of Turks, particularly Germany and the Netherlands, whose work programs have invited Turks over time. This study would show the meaningful negotiation of Turkishness, as related to gendered expectations and family roles from abroad. If women are returning to Turkey to purchase wedding lingerie, that the European *çeyiz* would reveal meaningful information about how concepts of Turkishness are maintained or distilled across cultures—especially regarding these feminine arts, which I suspect maintain their integrity over time. However, moving from one country to

another gives the consumer some creative latitude to reconstruct and imagine the homeland.

For example, I interviewed a young woman pursuing her doctorate in sociology and her fiancé. We met at one of Istanbul's oldest confectionaries, which was very busy and not very conducive to interviewing. She explained that they had met in Italy and began dating when they returned to Turkey. He was Kurdish, she told me. I asked her if she was preparing for their wedding and she told me that she was not very concerned about her *çeyiz*. Since they were moving to Italy, they would not be able to take many things, but that she might take with her a few special items handmade by her mother or aunt. I asked her if they would follow any special traditions. "We will make our own traditions," she said naively and emphatically. My assistant later remarked that the bride seemed more interested in Kurdish culture than her husband was. She studies immigrants and certainly valued culture differently from most of my informants. She saw it as mutable, and with her partner, something that could be created or fabricated, out of love. Since the couple planned to move to Italy they were free to some extent to fabricate a Turkish identity through the items they planned to pack and the traditions they chose to uphold. This imagined Turkish identity also allowed them to dissolve the very significant ethnic difference and discrimination they experienced in Turkey; in moving and marrying they could promote their own version of Turkishness.

However, the malleability and creative aspect of imagining a Turkish identity espoused by the above young couple gives merchants of *çeyiz* goods extreme identity; they don't understand their consumers' tastes and they cannot convince them of what to buy. Bound by individual tastes instead of more general markers such as quality or label,

neoliberal consumption poses a difficult problem for merchants. At a *çeyiz* shop in Üsküdar, which has been open for thirty-five years, the mustachioed owner sold a variety of goods, from plastic tubs and hardware to the usual assortment of towels and tablecloths and rugs. His description of the *çeyiz* today was marked by a nostalgic tone, lamenting both the goods and the consumers. “Now everything’s readymade. The quality was better in the past.” He said the materials were not as good so brides don’t expect to keep things for a long time. At the same time, he explained that brides are oriented to the *çeyiz* differently. “Couples are working; women don’t have time to make things.” Also, he said that, “in the past the *çeyiz* had meaning; now it doesn’t. Now technology is more important.” He explained that his own daughter was engaged and is in the process of purchasing towels and bedding. “In Turkey we are not conscious consumers. [My daughter] is even buying things she’s not going to use.” What remains the same with the past is that everything must be new and ready for their marriage. But another change he points to is women’s increased power. “Women have more control than in the past. A bride can even refuse things her parents got for her.” This merchant seemed mesmerized by the huge changes in consumption and his lack of power as both a father and a salesman, especially in relation to his own daughter’s wedding preparations.

This interview reflected nostalgia for a time when mothers told their daughters what to buy and their daughters capitulated. Mothers somehow innately recognized quality whereas today’s daughters might be motivated to buy something for any number of factors including convenience, cutting edge style, and difference from the past. My informant was responding to two larger issues: daughters have purchasing power that is individualistic and more difficult to satisfy. In addition, globalization has caused a

surplus of lesser-quality and less expensive items to compete with the older and better-made ones.

When youth are regarded as fickle and only self-interested, their knowledge of traditions, values, and quality gets overlooked. For example, I asked the older women at the *çeyiz* exhibition in Ümraniye if there were any special lace from their hometown and they said no, but that there were particular *adet*, or rituals. They began to discuss loudly, all talking at once, and finally concluded that families hung a flag outside of the new home and tied apples to it. I asked why apples and they did not know. The older women spoke at length about how they did not know, and then finally the oldest of the brides (who was in her mid-twenties) came in and said, “Fertility. The apples are for fertility.” It struck me that the younger woman was able to describe the meaning so quickly. I do not believe that the older women were being cagey or that they were intentionally avoiding the answer, but it struck me that the younger woman was able to end the debate confidently.

Later, with the microphone off we spoke with the eldest man, husband to one of the oldest women, about the *çeyiz*. He said it was so different today that everything was bought and that the women all don't know how to make things anymore. When asked what explained the change he said, “We are becoming European.” The young wife on the sofa across the room raised her hand and said, “I made my *çeyiz* myself.” She said that it was important for her to make the things that she was going to use; her mother did not make her *çeyiz*, so she fashioned the items according to her tastes and expected uses. In fact, each of these fair-featured brides had displayed their trousseaus replete with handmade items.

In both of these cases the younger women defied the assumptions that the older generation had more cultural knowledge or that the traditions were dying out, lost on the youngest brides. Indeed, the brides were aware of and perpetuated the traditions their elders were forgetting. Perhaps their awareness marked their age—since they had been recently married they were schooled in traditions, which were fresh in their minds. But I think to retain that information and to reproduce it (in the form of the hope chest) shows that these traditions are not dying out. And the story, especially the portion about the older brother/husband of the aging wives lamenting that the new generation lacked interest in the hope chest, shows the anxiety about the traditions being lost, even when they are being preserved.

Drawing on the same themes as Argyrou (2005), Kendall's study of weddings in Korea explores how Korea's relationship with the US brings about the possibility of tradition to work as cultural critique (1996). Additionally, she shows that social changes, particularly in women's status, influence how weddings operate, from planning to the event. In this analysis of weddings, repetition and replication of particular texts give the event meaning; however, it continues to be dynamic and current. Nostalgia characterizes recognition of separation between the current moment and the past, so tradition, in this nostalgic sense, is an artificial recreation. Kendall notes that the reemergence of tradition corresponds with a surge in national pride. The use of the term "traditional" suggests a reflexive division of the present from the past, a past that in this case, has been selectively reconstituted and reformed over time. This fluidity is presented by the maintenance of gift-giving practices while the gifts themselves, such as a dowry of household items, reflect the current ideals for brides and grooms. As the contents of traditions envelop the

present, the actual traditions may not be in as much danger as older generations perceive, however the traditions' symbolic meaning may change. In the case of the *çeyiz*, it exists to connect women to their families and to signify Turkish heritage rather than actually materially preparing the bride for marriage. But does this change make it less of a transitional object, helping brides move away from their single status?

Young women's preferences for practical, easily replaceable items are both functional and ethical; they want to make contributions beyond ironing difficult fabrics; they want more autonomy in decision-making than their mothers, and the traditional *çeyiz* symbolizes constraints they no longer accept. I spoke with a woman, Evren, who worked at a home cooking restaurant, about the *çeyiz*. She said that she had made many things for her daughter, and she learned how to make them from her mother when she was a child. She tried to teach her daughter but she didn't want to. "They don't want to learn." She said. They would rather read books (which, I refrained from pointing out, entails another kind of learning). She said that today women have more work outside of the house so these skills are less important. "What brides want today," she said, "is practical things, prepared things that you can just put in the machine and iron, not fine lace." She said households were less beautiful without the things of the past but that they are more practical. Times are better now because women get to choose what they want with their husbands rather than having to take what their mothers-in-law insist on. She said when she was a bride she wanted particular things that she couldn't have because they were not the things her family chose for her. Today women can choose for themselves. "Today, women make more money they have more equal footing with their husbands. In the past husbands had more power over these purchasing decisions but

women and men are more equal today, and that's good." I asked her if the families felt left out now (of the process of preparing for the wedding) and she said "yes, but it is better this way for the bride and the groom." Evren remarked that said she had many things for her daughter just standing still, *duruyor*. I asked what she would do with them: throw them out? Sell them? She said just wait and that perhaps her daughter's daughter would want them since it would be a different time. I asked her whether the fact that the *çeyiz* items she had made were not important to her daughter made her sad and she said, "This is not my life; this is her time. It's different now." In her assessment of the past from the present, Evren asserted that young women have more choices and more power to make choices today, and that her daughter's rejection of the *çeyiz* exemplified this surge in choice. At the same time, Evren's refusal to sell or rid herself of her daughter's *çeyiz* suggests a belief that her daughter may change her mind to embrace these items in the future.

A comparison between the meaningful but rejected homemade items with handmade items sold in a store shows that the value of the *çeyiz* varies in households across generations and in the market. I visited a trousseau shop, which has been operating for 25 years, that sold *hazır* (readymade) items next to handmade items. The vivacious female owner, in her fifties, explained that that having bought things in the *çeyiz* was a status symbol and that women without money made their own but that all women definitely preferred to buy handmade items. Evren said that a new and trendy *çeyiz* shop would tell you that handiwork did not exist anymore but obviously her business said otherwise. She said that she knew how to make things but didn't anymore, and her business employed local women doing piecework—she would give her pieceworkers the

materials such as thread and fabric, and they would crochet. We talked about how time-consuming some items were, taking days and weeks for individual pieces. Some customers arrived, an upper-class conservative-looking mother and daughter, to view the goods—they felt it was very important to *buy* handmade items. For the businesswoman, the *çeyiz* was not important for a woman's identity—it was just stuff. She said that the handmade items were objects of beauty—but if you expected to use things you might not get the really ornate stuff because it would be so hard to iron. We looked at both readymade and handmade items, comparing the differences.

The saleswoman showed us a plain hand towel without beaded fringe or flowers and said, “*boş*, (empty) you see?” It looked devoid of effort, beauty, or anything. Although it was white and she said most brides preferred white, it seemed dead compared to the other objects there, which were emblazoned with designs or dangling baubles. We talked about brides in the past and today—and she said they should be smart. Another woman remarked, “but men have always preferred dumb women,” who were senseless and empty, like the plain hand towel. The owner reiterated that Turks living in Europe were buying her things—because they were pretty, not meaningful. The storeowner clearly valued her products for their quality and labor, and she appreciated the *çeyiz* industry as the source of her profit. But, as an independent woman, it was hard for her to say that women needed the *çeyiz* to feel complete. Her business suggests that there a market exists for handmade items in the *çeyiz*, but that these handmade pieces, separated from the women who made them, lack the affective value connecting the women who historically worked on them together. The difficulty of the labor involved in the handmade items translates into their beauty and their expense, but these handmade items

sold in stores do not retain the emperment, the density of items held by mothers for daughters. The contents of the çeyiz, in Evren's opinion, have become pretty, expensive things.

This merchant suggested, as did many of my informants at the trade schools, that the çeyiz is becoming art, objects of beauty very different from items actually used for the household. As çeyiz items morph into art objects, they are consumed by elite women and stored for different reasons. This reflects Weiner's suggestion that all items eventually get sold, but that the value of a dense object is difficult to determine. This transformation of the çeyiz into art creates a market for the designs and items from the past, bolsters national identity, and innovates the patterns for new audiences beyond brides. One machine embroidery teacher told me that she makes huge tapestries with her skills to promote environmental causes, infusing the embroidery with political significance. But this transformation to art only occurs as a function of the devaluation of the çeyiz in its traditional setting, the household. As the çeyiz moves through cultural registers it loses its coherence and legibility among the women who once interpreted its symbols very clearly. The coding of the çeyiz has become more diffuse and creative, and, as the introduction points out, it has become linked with Turkish urban and national identity, not just women's work.

My research has shown how the items of the çeyiz are moving out of the domestic realm and into festivals and the art world. The example of the oya necklaces on the Mavi jeans billboard and my own survey of oya-as-jewelry at high-end galleries shows how the craft is migrating into the aesthetic realm. Future research would investigate what aspects of the çeyiz are popular as art, and who is doing this work. I interviewed an established

teacher of handicrafts in Kadıköy, who taught and received awards for her machine embroidery, which she contends is a language for women as it integrates new motifs into the craft.

When I was strolling through my neighborhood on the Asian side one afternoon, I met a young mother with a beautiful child. We became friends and she allowed me to interview her. Melihe was twenty-five, and graduated from college in Istanbul. Her family lived in Antalya, in the South, but they had lived in the Netherlands during her childhood. She spoke English, Dutch, and Turkish fluently, and had a high-level job translating at a company, until she was fired for being pregnant. At home, Melihe worked hard as a parent to provide her child with stimulating toys and patience, but she was bored. She wanted to go back to work, but daycare was seen as inherently dangerous and companies would be nervous about hiring her because she might have another child. I asked her to show me her hope chest and to talk about it. She excitedly pulled out her collection in long, shallow boxes, perfectly arranged, from under her bed.

She pulled out her preserved slippers, headscarves, and tablecloths, all neatly folded and cared for, and told me, “They have no meaning because they will not be used. They will only sit. I don’t like them. I don’t like them.” She then described, in Turkish, how traditional married life looked for the bride, who lived with her mother-in-law, a life of servitude. And then she broke into English: “The world is changing. Everything’s changing.” She described her childhood, “*hem okul, hem ev*”—part school, part house. Although she had the skills to make her own *çeyiz*—she showed me beautifully knit and crocheted items, Melihe did not consider that kind of domestic work part of her identity. “I didn’t want to be part of my old culture, so I chose something different.” In the midst

of exhibiting her very impressive *çeyiz*, Melihe asserted to me that she with her very modern husband had chosen a different lifestyle for herself from that of older Turkish women. She explained to me that she and her husband had their own friends and that they went out separately at night sometimes. Instead of living with his family or her family, the couple functioned as a nuclear unit in a large city. While her husband worked, Melihe cared for her child at home without familial support or many friends, living, according to her, a very modern, isolated life.

Although some Istanbul women disapprove of the *çeyiz* or call it meaningless for contemporary women, they still own them, take care of them, or even sell items for them as a profession. The *çeyiz* helps to structure their narrative of how their values are different—how they are modern women with more choices in their lives. Although these modern women quickly distinguish their lives from housewives who are not educated and have spent their youth amassing *çeyiz*, the difference between *aille kız* and *okul kız* (house girls and schoolgirls) is narrow. Unfortunately, the lack of infrastructure, including labor laws to protect women from being fired for maternity, affordable and accessible daycare for young children, and paternity leave for men, transforms schoolgirls into house girls upon marriage and parenthood. While I see that women have more power in selecting life partners, dates, and careers before marriage, their choices diminish over time because marriage remains compulsory. The *çeyiz* incites debate among women but it endures. Perhaps the traditional codings, the relevant minutiae stitched into a pepper or a flower are meaningless to most young women today, but the *çeyiz* is still nominally required for marriage, a few ‘special things’ are necessary.

The Agentive Single Turkish Woman

My readings and research on Istanbul always located marriage as an endpoint to youth and a beginning of adulthood. But what about single women who remain single? How are they perceived? How do they move through the world? It was clear that the hope chest mattered less to single women, but according to my research as soon as they become engaged, the hope chest became important. Currently, remaining single is not a viable, permanent social identity. Perhaps opportunities for remaining unmarried and being perceived as an established adult for men and women will emerge over time. I would like to ask these singles about the *çeyiz*—and about love. I would like to see how their homes are arranged and if their parents have given them items.

Another figurative investment into a child's future by Greek and Turkish parents is the *altın bilezik*. This bracelet symbolized the education and skills a child had acquired over time through both education and upbringing, and perhaps the golden bracelet idea will replace the *çeyiz* in terms of parental investment into children's lives. Parents increasingly invest money into their daughters' education so that they might find paid employment, making the material investments less significant than helping supply the skills for a successful career. I anticipate that marriage will become less important for men and women, that marriage will become less compulsory, but that this will take time. A long-term study of the urban *çeyiz* will reflect these changes in values, investments, and dreams of the future.

Final Notes

My research began with a heated conversation about formulating a project, and a whole duck, with my colleague from Rice anthropology Michael Adair-Kriz. We were taking a course together about cultural diasporas, taught by Dr. Hamid Naficy, who encouraged me to conduct my dissertation research on something to which I had a personal connection. The films, including Turkish, German-Turkish and Iranian combined with readings on lost and imagined homelands. I tried to ignore Dr. Naficy's words, clinging to a project on Brazilian Carnival, which was fast becoming less viable. As we spoke about the challenges of planning our projects, I drank water with lemon in it and recalled that my Turkish grandmother, who had a fourth grade education and had moved to Istanbul from Edirne, communicated with me over lemonade on my first trip to Istanbul, when I was four. Lemonade seemed to be the only word in English she knew, and so it became our currency. During that visit, I drank a lot of lemonade. Suddenly, with lemon water in my mouth at a Houston restaurant, I knew what to study. That particular moment, of revelation, bitterness, and sweetness, was a harbinger for how this project has evolved.

My project took off from there. As it turns out, scholars and funding agencies like boxes and cabinets. The *çeyiz* was intriguing as an object of study because of its symbolic openness; it could contain any number of theoretical possibilities. It was also startlingly conventional—who studies hope chests these days? But, like other open, richly filled, unsealed boxes, it threatened to overwhelm.

During the summer of 2006, when I lived in Istanbul for language study and preliminary fieldwork, every older woman (my relatives, neighbors, shop owners) I spoke

with told me that there were no hope chests there and that I would have to go to the villages to find them. I returned from the field disappointed, thinking the urban study I had conceptualized had fizzled out. When I told George Marcus, chair of Rice Anthropology during my first year and very central to postmodern anthropology that my informants told me I would have to go to the villages he shook his head, smiled, and replied, “But we did all this work so that you wouldn’t have to go to the village.” Marcus’ and his contemporaries’ work in the 1980s and 1990s did open up anthropology to new field sites, new methods, new modes of study, making room for different kinds of research (Clifford et al. 2010; Marcus et al. 1992; Marcus and Fischer 1999). So I listened to him, but I should have listened to my informants’ warnings. A village ethnography would have dealt with the *çeyiz* succinctly, tracing out contents, physical and emotional, across generations within the same space and people. That kind of work understands the *çeyiz* in transition across generations, which would allow for a good assessment of the material conditions surrounding those changes. In villages, the *çeyiz* is still important to young girls.

But my interests led me to investigate a tradition under duress, a tradition subject to the stresses of migration, the influences of globalization, and the threats of changing gender dynamics. This project pursued something that is clearly transforming dramatically in order to see, touch, and comprehend what of the trousseau persists, which is a way of understanding what of the trousseau is elemental, and what must continue to exist for it to be recognizable to past generations. Jean Baudrillard poses a similar question in his speeding trek through the cultural desert called America, “The only question in this journey is: how far can we go in the extermination of meaning, how far

can we go in this non-referential desert form without cracking up and, of course, still keep alive the esoteric charm of disappearance?” (2010, 10). The urban *çeyiz* is an investment (monetary or material) by a mother for her daughter’s future, a few handmade items, and a few store bought goods in the latest designs. Many of my informants stated that the *çeyiz* would die out and would not continue to exist, but as long as mothers have the means to provide for their daughters it will remain in some form, as a currency of care and hope.

As a homecoming, this research has provided me a glimpse of what my responsibilities might have been if my father had not immigrated to the U.S. to avoid an arranged marriage. And now thanks to my incredible informants, my daughter, whose first foods were lentil soup and Turkish bread, whose first steps occurred at Aya Sofya, and whose first word was *limon* (in Turkish), has the beginning of her own *çeyiz*.

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