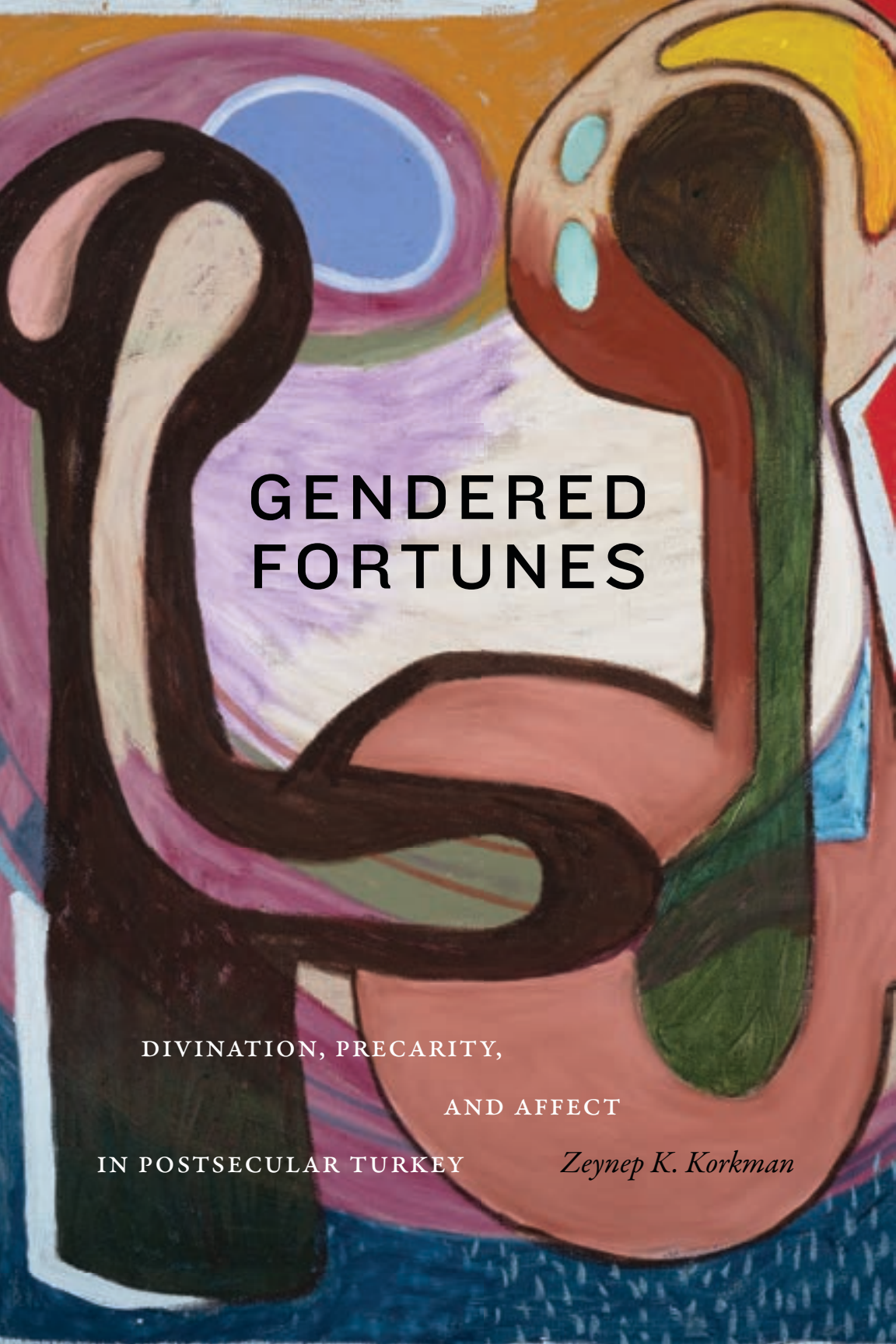




GENDERED FORTUNES

DIVINATION, PRECARIETY,

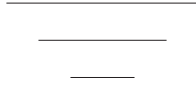
AND AFFECT

IN POSTSECULAR TURKEY

Zeynep K. Korkman

GENDERED FORTUNES

BUY



GENDERED FORTUNES

DIVINATION, PRECARITY, AND AFFECT

IN POSTSECULAR TURKEY

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TO MY MOTHER,
FATMA MEFKURE BUDAK

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Introduction
GENDERED FORTUNES

“You’ll achieve your goals in two years’ time. It’s incredible.” I listen intently to my fortune being read by an articulate middle-aged woman whom I have met only moments ago but who now engages me in a private conversation about all the hopes and disappointments of love, marriage, parenthood, work, family, and health that can make or break the gendered promises of life.

Are you married yet? Well, I do see a boy. Do you have a son? You will have a son. Your partner, is he a Capricorn or a Virgo? Okay, a Virgo. I did sense an earth sign. Well, I see he’s troubled. Why is that? He’s a fighter and puts a lot of effort into his work, but his love for you is pure, I can see that. He’s a sensitive person and can sometimes become rather pessimistic. He’s also fond of his freedom, almost like a child. I do see a balanced relationship with mutual understanding, like soul mates. Are you in the same industry? Is he abroad? Well, I ask because I see that you’ll be traveling soon. And who is this older woman with health issues? Your mother or your mother-in-law?

She is interpreting the shapes the coffee grounds have dried into inside my recently consumed cup of Turkish coffee to divine my past, my present, and, importantly, my future. Giving voice to the many worries and hopes she feels I must be quietly harboring as a newly married, secular middle-class woman, the coffee cup reader is still talking energetically, adding a few more comments on health and family. As I observe her blow-dried hair starting to frizz and her makeup beginning to run in the beads of sweat on her face, I imagine the long workday ahead of her on this already hot and humid summer morning in a downtown Istanbul café. She is preparing to end our session, making a

final inquiry to see if I have any last lingering questions. She needs to move the queue along, I suppose.

I return to my seat in the next room of the café, surrounded by less than a dozen women. Most have arrived in small groups; only a few are sitting alone. Some are waiting for their turn for a reading; others stay to think or commune after their session. There is only one young man, seated with a woman. I wonder if he will be getting a reading, too. In the air, the quiet pace of the ordinary mingles with a sense of anticipation that is at once evoked and eased by the intimacy of this feminized community gathered around divination. We are, after all, in no ordinary café. This is a fortune-telling café (*falkafe*), one among hundreds of similar establishments that have since the turn of the twenty-first century become a regular feature of secular middle-class neighborhoods in Turkey.

THIS BOOK APPROACHES the proliferating fortune-telling economy of millennial Turkey as an affective window onto the gendered contradictions of (post) secularism, Islamist authoritarianism, and neoliberalism. It demonstrates how secular Muslim women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) individuals navigate the anxieties of the postsecular condition, the vulnerabilities of gendered marginalization, and the precarities of neoliberalization through the medium of divination in twenty-first-century Turkey. As such, the book forwards attention to feeling as a way into the disregarded realms of the minoritized, both as a feminist analytics and as a methodological strategy for bringing into relief how gender and sexual minorities traverse broader social formations.

Criminalized by the early twentieth-century laws of an ambitious secularist state and disdained by the reinvented religious puritanism of today's Turkish Islamist government, commercial fortune-telling has, despite these obstacles, boomed in millennial Turkey. This postsecular divination economy provides its largely secular Muslim, cisgender, heterosexual women participants, as well as its LGBTIQ participants, with an opportunity to make a living amid precarious labor conditions intensified by neoliberalization. In this context, fortune-telling provides its practitioners with a form of affective labor through which gender and sexual minorities attune to their gendered vulnerabilities and to each other. Fortune-tellers are lay sociologists, so to speak, who have a feel for social types marked by habitual tones of voice, gesture, clothing, and body language, as well as common life experiences, aspirations, and frustrations. Well attuned to the intimately harbored yet collectively formed wishes and worries of diverse classes of strangers, fortune-tellers successfully ventriloquize the gendered desires

and troubles of their clients. It is in this way that fortune-tellers' labors of divination conjure up safer publics in which to articulate gendered hopes and fears that are otherwise disciplined in a larger public sphere dominated by a religiously inflected gender conservatism that aggressively pushes back against a vibrant feminist and queer movement. In a transnational milieu where women (imagined as pious) and LGBTIQ people of the Muslim Middle East have been the favorite subjects of Islamophobic discourses that dress themselves up in the guise of a (colonial, pseudofeminist) concern to "save" them, this book shines a spotlight on how secular women and non-heteronormative men acclimate to and survive a global tide of religiously accented gender conservatism, secular hegemonic decline, political authoritarianism, and economic neoliberalism through gendered practices of divination.

Drawing on extended ethnographic research in the flourishing niche of commodified divination in Istanbul, this study asks how and why women and LGBTIQ minorities who identify as secular Muslims seek their gendered fortunes in divination. The key setting is fortune-telling cafés, innovative business arrangements where readings are provided as a free or promotional service upon the purchase of an overpriced beverage in order to sidestep a ban on the sale of divination services. Given the practicalities of attaching a reading to the sale of a legally permissible commodity, reading coffee grounds for divination (*kahve falı*) is the most convenient form of fortune-telling provided here. Soon after the opening in 2001 of the very first fortune-telling café in Beyoğlu, Istanbul, other cafés began mushrooming; first in the same street, but very soon throughout the neighborhood, the city, and eventually across the entire country. Over the next two decades, this divination economy would expand to include a variety of fortune-telling and supplementary services (Reiki, lead-pouring sessions, life coaching, and others) and a range of locations (fortune-telling houses, cafés, offices, and online platforms). Today the Turkey-based divination economy is increasingly globalized and digitalized, recruiting tourists from the Arab Gulf who get readings at stylish cafés, Syrian refugees and returned migrant workers who translate for them, labor migrants from post-Soviet republics who read fortunes in their native languages, and, the most significant development, a plethora of online fortune-tellers and clients from around the globe who meet in a flourishing sector of digital divination platforms.

Thanks to an early twentieth-century law passed in the service of an ambitious secularist project, commercial fortune-telling is a criminal offense in Turkey. In the early period of the Turkish Republic, fortune-tellers, along with a host of other religious and divination practitioners, from the heads of religious orders to amulet writers, were judged too traditional, too religious, and too irrational to



FIGURE 1.1. Customers waiting for a reading at Angels Café (Melekler Kahvesi), the first fortune-telling café in Turkey.

suit the secular Western modernity the country aspired to. Externalized from the new Turkish nation-in-the-making as the products of an Arabic influence that had been corrupting Turkish culture for centuries, fortune-tellers and other practitioners associated with religious orders were banned beginning in 1925, first in Turkey's Kurdish region and later throughout the country. They were otherized in accordance with ethnoracial hierarchies; refracted through the prism of civilizational differences that in the Turkish case were articulated as a doubled Western/Eastern and secular/religious axis. Through criminalization, they were pushed out of a public sphere now reorganized according to the imperatives of Turkish nationalist secularism.¹

After the ban, fortune-telling was funneled through the gendered politics of secularism and religion into a criminalized underground economy of male practitioners and a tolerated domestic economy of housewives. Peopled mostly by male *hodjas*, this underground economy circulated divining and healing modalities that drew liberally upon Islamic imagery and symbolism, such as praying and the conjuring of *jinn*. These *hodjas* were painted in the popular secularist literature and media as ignorant, malicious, and perverted men who sexually and financially took advantage of susceptible women. A mirror to their vice, their female victims were depicted as in need of rescue by heroic secular men, often a policeman or a journalist who would ceremonially unmask the *hodja* as a charlatan in a news story, novel, film, or, later, a televised show. These narratives reasserted the secularist project and a secular masculine subject. In contrast, women engaging in popular practices such as reading coffee grounds or wearing evil eye charms were perceived as practicing little more than mundane elements of heteronormative domesticity. Unlike *hodjas*, superstitious housewives were insignificant, not threatening enough to require intervention yet different enough to mark ordinary men as secular and rational by comparison. While *hodjas*' divinations and cures became the persistent subject of scandal and criminalization, parallel feminized practices were demeaned, disregarded, and ultimately tolerated as a marker of feminine irrationality.² The continued presence of superstitious housewives and the incessant persecution of *hodjas* served to demarcate (urban, educated, and ethnoracially Turkish) masculinity as secular, with irrational femininity and overreligious masculinity set as its others.

Today, fortune-telling is still looked down upon within Turkey's dominant discourses: within secularist critique; within the body of knowledge produced by the Turkish Republic's official religious institution, the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Presidency of Religious Affairs, hereafter *Diyanet*); and within the reinvented religious puritanism of contemporary Islamism. In all these discourses, fortune-telling figures as a superstition incompatible with being a secular citizen and/or a proper Muslim. Yet this is not to say that the Turkish politics of secularism and *İslam* has stood still. Indeed, it has shifted significantly in the many decades since the early twentieth-century criminalization of fortune-tellers, posing here in the twenty-first century a postsecular condition wherein secularism has proven institutionally and ideologically durable but no longer hegemonic, given Islamism's increasingly authoritative dominance. In an irony of history, the secular and even secularist citizens of Turkey flock in the early 2000s to fortune-telling cafés to find relief whenever their personal fortunes seem limited by, among other things, the waning prospects of the very

secularist political project that criminalized fortune-tellers in the first place.³ In this context, more and more working- and middle-class women and a minority of young and gay men are drawn into the postsecular economy of divination, only to insistently claim secular Muslim identities, not despite but through their engagement with fortune-telling.⁴ Fortune-tellers take advantage of the gendered line separating tolerable from intolerable divination practices and concentrate their services around the feminized practice of coffee divination. This focus on feminized divination forms highlights the centrality of gendered logics to the politics of secularism and in the negotiation of the increasingly volatile distinctions between the secular and the religious in contemporary Turkey.

Informed by the gendered contradictions of secularism and religion, coffee fortune-telling emerges as the most popular form of fortune-telling in Turkey's millennial divination economy. Coffee fortune-telling refers to the reading of residues left at the bottom of a ground-rich cup of Turkish coffee. After the coffee is served and consumed, the drinker places the saucer on top of the coffee cup, thereby closing (*kapatmak*) the cup in the lingo of divination, shakes the cup and saucer together, and turns the whole thing upside down in one quick motion. This allows the coffee grounds that have sunk to the bottom to stick to and dry on the cup's inner surfaces, while the remaining liquid drips into the saucer. When the cup has cooled, the grounds can be safely assumed to have dried into idiosyncratic shapes for interpretation. The cup is then "opened" (*açmak*) and turned upright, providing an inside view of the intimate fortunes of the person who has just drunk the coffee. The residues are read so as to offer comments about the recipient's mood and character and about the past, present, and future, including matters of the heart, family, health, education, work, and money.

Coffee readings foretell gendered fortunes, providing an affective genre of femininity through which those disadvantaged in the heteropatriarchal hierarchies of age, gender, and sexuality attune to their intimate feelings. As coffee cups are filled with boyfriends who have not called but are still thinking of their partners, husbands who have been distracted by their deteriorating businesses or by other women only to return to the embrace of their wives with improved prospects, and pregnancies long awaited and soon to happen, coffee fortune-telling predominantly tracks women's tenacious yearnings as cultivated within the heteroromantic fantasy. But if, as evidenced by the almost universal inclusion of predictions about marriage and parenthood, divinations routinely place the recipient in normative scenarios prescribed by heteropatriarchal imperatives, they also regularly address the fragilities and distresses of



FIGURE 1.2. Stenciled ads for the online divination website Binnaz Abila on an apartment building wall in Moda, Kadıköy district, a few blocks away from the many fortune-telling cafés populating the neighborhood: “It is true my child, if Binnaz says so” and “Binnaz Abila: Real Fortune-Tellers.” Binnaz Abila’s ads blend in with political stenciling and graffiti urging the public to get out the vote in the coming 2019 Istanbul municipal election for a secularist mayor after over two decades of Islamist party municipal rule, which began with the 1994 mayoral election of Turkey’s current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

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such gender conformity—as well as the diversions and departures from it. Lesbian women, gay men, and, less often, transgender women taking part in divination as readers and clients often make room for the non-heteronormative desires that have limited visibility in the larger public sphere. Whether they avoid naming the gender of a prospective suitor, point to a tarot card with the client's own sex category as a potential love interest, or more explicitly acknowledge the gender-nonconforming feelings of their clients, divinations provide ways to chart both heteronormative and queer desires through veiled metaphors, generic truisms, and clichéd but alluring scenarios. Fortune-telling sessions traverse competing scripts of femininity (and to a lesser extent, of masculinity) as fortune-tellers invite clients into gender normativity and track its escape routes.

Providing a genre in which to process the feelings of precariousness that attend the gendered vulnerabilities of the feminized, coffee reading has long served as an everyday mode of care.⁵ Cup readers describe divination as a way of “spending good time with” (*güzel vakit geçirmek*) someone as well as “relaxing” (*rahatlatmak*), “entertaining” (*eğlendirmek*), “improving the morale” (*moral vermek*), and “pleasing the heart” (*gönlünü yapmak*).⁶ Echoing the readers, recipients explain that they value the chance to share their troubles and to be comforted in the gendered intimacy of fortune-telling. In the domestic economy of feminized divination, this specific form of caring is provided overwhelmingly by women for women as they read each other's fortunes in family gatherings, neighborhood visits, and friendly get-togethers. This domestic and neighborhood practice has now been thoroughly commercialized in a new divination economy of cafés, businesses, and even online platforms, where the readings are displaced from embedded social relations and locations.

The commercialization of coffee cup readings allows urban poor women and young and gay men to make a living amid a labor precarity that has been intensified and generalized to include secular working and middle classes under neoliberalization executed by an Islamist government in the twenty-first century.⁷ Channeled into an informal economy of fortune-telling where high unemployment and informal and insecure work are normalized for youth and women, readers are rendered precarious workers via a threefold process: a secularist ban criminalizing divination; an Islamist stigmatization of unorthodox religious practices; and a neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish economy. This new niche of fortune-telling draws mostly racially and ethnically unmarked workers, leaving Roma women, who have long read fortunes on the streets, excluded from the marketplace, only to have their names and clothing be stereotypically appropriated for online fortune-telling avatars. At divination cafés

and online platforms, readers work flexible hours without any guarantee of income or job security as they perform the presumably unskilled and devalued work of fortune-telling.

The gendered practices of divination constitute a labor of “feeling” (*bissetmek*), as readers describe it. Feeling the client and making the client feel depends on the conjuring of an enchanted intersubjective space in which the client can explore, experience, and engage with a range of affective intensities and emotions. This allows the client to affectively inhabit the gendered scenes of bliss and desolation fortune-tellers conjure and to explore, experience, and articulate their personal wishes and apprehensions in the idiom of divination. The feeling labors of divination thus provide a medium through which to process the affective demands of the compounded conditions of anxiety and precariousness secular Muslim women and LGBTIQ individuals must contend with, from the anxieties of an increasingly Islamist postsecular terrain, to the mundane and intersectional layers of gendered vulnerability, to the neoliberally exacerbated depths of labor precarity.⁸

Drawn more and more deeply into a therapeutically inflected neoliberal terrain, divinations join energy healings, evil eye treatments, and a host of therapeutic new age modalities designed to help their anxious secular Muslim subjects attune to precariousness and invest in themselves, thereby replenishing their capacities for (affective) labor. Fortune-telling here becomes a vehicle for a self-entrepreneurial mode of working and living, providing an alchemy that turns the struggle to survive labor precarity, gendered vulnerability, and postsecular uncertainty into a quest for personal meaning and a refueling of care and hope for workers and clients alike. A new generation of divination business owners and workers reframes fortune-telling as a spiritual venture in which economic and personal goals magically overlap, even touting it as an enchanted remedy for the wounds neoliberalism inflicts at both the individual and societal levels. Increasingly provided at online fortune-telling platforms that recruit workers and clients from around the world, the feeling labors of divination are transformed under the pressure of performance and pay scales derived from customer reviews, inciting readers to continuously self-monitor and self-improve and to direct their feeling labors toward themselves in order to manage the ensuing anxiety. In this context, self-entrepreneurship is deployed as an economic, moral, and affective response to precaritization under neoliberalism at the same time that it reproduces the precarity of the now digitalized and transnationalized work of fortune-telling.

While fortune-telling labors are devalued through precaritization, secular disavowal, Islamist condemnation, and feminization, only to be increasingly

funneled toward capitalist circuits of value, their productivity and potentiality cannot be fully captured or accounted for by the economic, political, and gendered formations organizing them as a form of commodified labor. Feeling labors produce more than profits; they conjure the social. In the case of divination labors, they generate the social relations and spaces through which gender and sexual minorities craft lifeworlds that are shaped under but are irreducible to the logics of neoliberal capitalism, secularist and Islamist authoritarianisms, and heteropatriarchy.

The feeling labors of divination not only render labor precarity habitable, propelling neoliberal subjects, they also summon hospitable publics in which anxious secular Muslim gender and sexual minorities can feel intimate and comfortable in one another's presence under the shadow of a broader public sphere that is increasingly dominated by Islamist authoritarianism. Made up of a majority of women and a minority of young and gay men and exclusive of heterosexual adult men, divination publics are populated by those disadvantaged and feminized in heteropatriarchal relations of domination and subordination.⁹ In these publics, secular Muslim gender and sexual minorities mobilize feeling labors as a way to articulate ordinary yet deeply felt gendered desires and anxieties like losing a romantic partner or finding a job.

In millennial Turkey, gendered norms and expectations have been thoroughly destabilized. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, an increasingly vibrant feminist and queer social movement presence was accompanied by a host of gender equality policies and discourses that were undertaken, if surprisingly, by none other than the Islamically accented Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, hereafter AKP) government, which in the early 2000s challenged the formulaic equation of Islamism with gender conservatism and authoritarianism. But by the 2010s, the AKP government had stepped back from gender equality policies, launching violent attacks on the country's strong feminist and LGBTIQ movements and harnessing the power of the state apparatus alongside a growing network of progovernment NGOs to promote its reinvented "Turkish family values" (Kocamaner 2019; Korkman 2016; Mutluer 2019; Savcı 2020). Today, at the start of the third decade of the twenty-first century, the government still encourages youths to avoid flirting, marry early, have more children, avoid divorce, and closely follow the prescribed life script of a reinvented traditional family life. Such prescriptions are to little avail, however, as women (and men) become more and more likely to remain unmarried, get married later in life, get divorced (slightly) more often, and have fewer children (Engin, Hürman, and Harvey 2020). The neoliberal ideals of individual self-fashioning through choice in romantic love and sexual

desire pull young men and women potently toward, as well as away from and beyond, such heteronormative scenarios of the good life (Özyeğin 2015). In this milieu, secular Muslim women and young and gay men have instead been divining their frustrated gendered aspirations in fortune-telling publics.

In conjuring the social, the feminized practices of divination disrupt the dominant conceptions of gendered space and sociability set by the fault lines of secularism and religion in Turkey. Historically, the Turkish secular public sphere was constructed by the production and display of mixed-gender socializing against a background where practices of gender segregation had come to stand for the harmful excesses of tradition and religion. At the same time, segregated spheres and intimacies continued to shape the social fabric, albeit with a self-conscious sense of their incompatibility with the femininities and masculinities prescribed by Turkish secularism. Indeed, the skirmishes between Islamism and secularism have been and are still played out most spiritedly around the issues of women's public presence and mixing with men. In this context, postsecular fortune-telling publics destabilize the given terms of the dually conceived formulas of gender and publicness: they are neither exactly gender-mixed, as proposed by secularist recipes, nor are they strictly gender-segregated, per reinvented religious precepts; rather, they remain tightly nestled in Islamicate notions of gendered intimacy (*mahremiyet*) and secularist notions of publicness (*kamusalılık*) that are layered together to constitute the heteronormative order in the country.

Divination publics provide a novel sociospatial arrangement that combines the joys of feminized intimacy with the benefits of public anonymity. In commercial fortune-telling businesses, mostly women and some men exchange coffee readings in an intimate encounter among strangers who are partaking in a transient commercial transaction. This is a particularly valuable recipe for those whose personal lives are otherwise disciplined in the context of familial and communal relations, as well as in the larger public sphere, where the intimate is more thoroughly debated and prescribed than ever. Despite the growing impetus to subject the intimate to public discourse, for gender and sexual minorities, revelations of nonnormative intimate behaviors can be highly costly. Commercial readings are refreshingly unbound from the otherwise attendant social controls of familial and neighborly relations because of the anonymous and disembedded nature of social relations in the cafés and online platforms. They also exist at some distance from the pressures of the political public sphere. As such, they provide the feminized with a safer space in which to manage their intimate feelings. This is particularly significant in a context where gendered aspirations are simultaneously incited and marginalized by the neoliberal promises

of abundance contradicted by ever-deepening precarity, the threat posed by an authoritarian Islamist government to individuals' enduring attachments to the gendered promises of secularism, the vocal choir of feminist and queer voices provoked and quelled by a religiously accented gender conservatism, and the eruption of juxta-political and counterpublics in proximity to a public sphere stifled by political authoritarianism.

The research set out in this book is situated against the backdrop of the downwardly mobile secular Turkish working and middle classes' tenacious hopes and persistent anxieties over their economic precaritization and cultural and political marginalization because of rapid economic restructuring and an increasingly religiously inflected and gender-conservative political and cultural landscape. Anxieties over ever more precarious futures are felt most acutely by youths and gender and sexual minorities, whose chances of economic mobility and personal autonomy are stifled in a country whose president chastises college students for feeling entitled to land a job upon graduation but urges citizens to marry early, have many children, and simply trust that God will bless and provide for them and their families if they are pious. The political uprisings of 2013 in Turkey to which feminist and queer movements centrally contributed their critiques of masculinist state power exercised through aggressively intimate controls over the lives of the feminized provided a highly visible but fleeting chance for these populations to voice their discontents and collectively reclaim their futures through an oppositional political language. But the political developments, especially of the late 2010s, including the crushing waves of state violence and mass persecution that followed the 2013 uprisings and the 2016 coup attempt, thoroughly suppressed dissident voices, the persistent resistance of feminist, queer, and other oppositional groups notwithstanding. In such a milieu, *Gendered Fortunes* attests to how those disempowered along the heteropatriarchal hierarchies of age, gender, and sexuality come together, outside the political spotlight and away from oppositional political languages, to express their anxieties about and hopes for their futures in the language of divination.

Taking as its object of inquiry a seemingly minor practice that is looked down upon as a feminine foible at best, this research asserts that feminized and marginalized ways of relating to the self, others, and the world provide an important window on understanding macrolevel social, economic, and political processes from the perspective of the minoritized. Indeed, it is through the feminization and devaluation of these individuals, feelings, spheres, and labors that these formations enact their power even as it is through the same disregarded affects, realms, and practices that gender and sexual minorities make sense of and

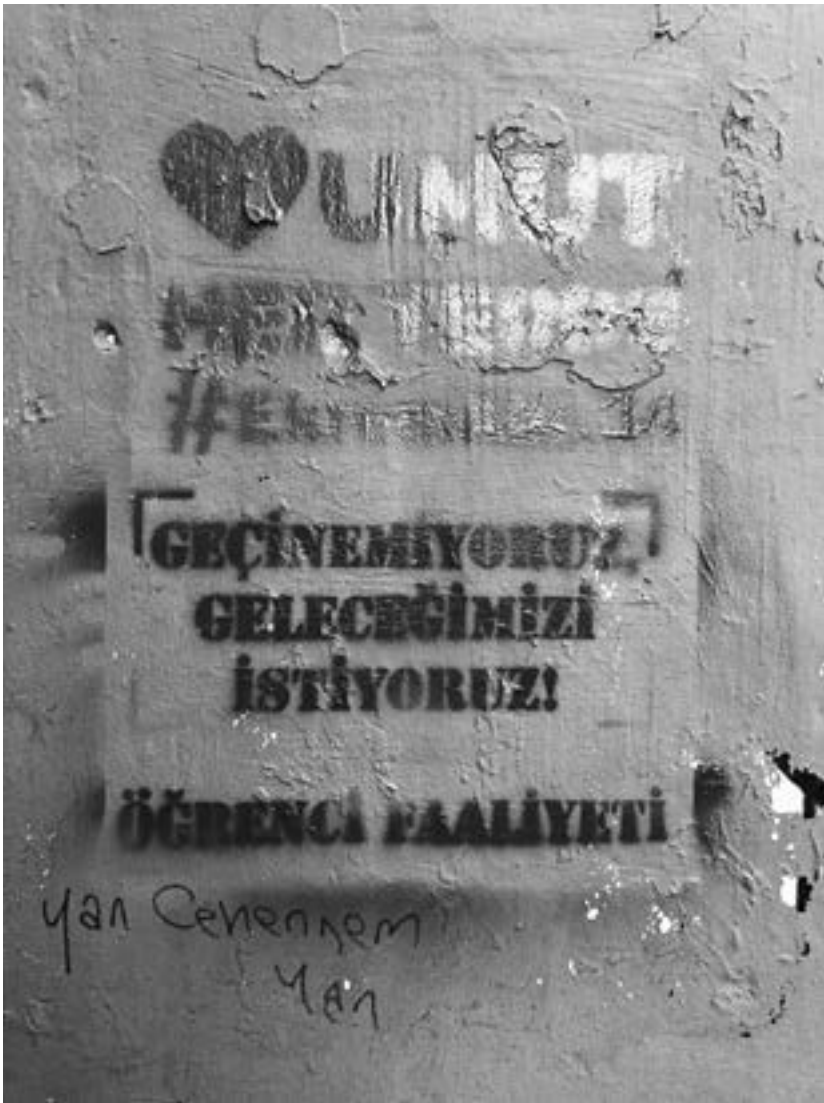


FIGURE 1.3. Stenciling by the youth organization Öğrenci Faaliyeti on a wall in Moda, Kadıköy district, on a main street that houses fortune-telling cafés: “We can’t make a living. We demand a future!” The slogan sits below another that reads, “Hope is everywhere,” in support of secularist mayoral candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu in the 2019 municipal election in Istanbul. Someone casually scrawled “Burn, baby, burn” (*yan cehennem yan*) to index the affective tone of the political and economic issues the slogans addressed.

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make their way through these formations. Despite and ironically through its energetic disavowal, fortune-telling remains central to the gendered politics of secularism and religion in that it has come to stand for a feminized irrationality and superstition that marks masculine secular reason and enlightened religion. Similarly, while they are criminalized and jettisoned outside the secular public sphere, divinatory practices also sustain the very femininities and intimacies that the secularist project and its heteronormative gender regime depend upon. Moreover, although thoroughly dismissed, devalued, and irregularized, divination also plays a central role as a feminized affective labor that reproduces the depleted precarious and anxious subjects of neoliberalism, guiding them in the business of reinventing their labor and their selves. Taking gendered practices of divination seriously therefore offers a feminist window not only on the affects and sociabilities that surface feminized subjects but also the gendered logics of neoliberalism, (post)secularism, and the public sphere under and in excess of which these practices and subjects emerge.

Focusing on gendered divinatory practices further poses an opportunity to reckon with feeling as a mode of relating to the self, others, and the world. Long held at a distance from the modernist secularist project as a way of knowing the world and displaced as irrationality onto gendered and racialized others, orienting toward feeling holds feminist methodological and epistemological potential. Inspired by my research participants' insistent descriptions of their divination process as "feeling" (*bissetmek*), this book takes up feeling as part of the academic and feminist endeavor. In this book, *feeling* narrowly refers to the subterranean deployment of divinatory practices as a way to register and navigate at the affective level otherwise distanced and occulted social processes.¹⁰ As a broader analytic, feeling highlights a way to attune to macrolevel processes and formations in all their (in)tangibility as they are felt diffusely yet strongly in everyday life by gendered subjects. Feeling as a conceptual lens magnifies how ordinary people navigate terrains inflected by large-scale formations like neoliberalism, secularism, Islamism, and gender conservatism, feeling their way into, through, and away from them. Alongside the questions of how gendered precariousness, secular identities, and public spheres are shaped by accumulated and systemic influences, this book asks how it feels for women and LGBTIQ individuals to be secular Muslims navigating a postsecular condition, how it feels to find feminized intimacy in an increasingly stifled public, and how it feels to perform precarious labor under neoliberalism. Here, the emphasis on feeling, in particular on the structures of feeling that ethnographic and cultural inquiry track, enjoins the kind of holistic understandings that complement structural analysis.

The book is composed of three parts that together build toward the main substantive argument that gender and sexual minorities of millennial Turkey navigate their secular anxieties, gendered vulnerabilities, and economic precarities through divination. The analyses in these parts forward the book's theoretical and methodological arguments that the otherwise elided and trivialized because feminized individuals, feelings, spheres, and labors are central to the many heteronormative formations and transformations of secularism, the public sphere, and the capitalist economy and that a focus on affect renders that centrality visible. In part I, "The Religious, the Superstitious, and the Postsecular," chapter 1 situates divination in a historical context and tracks its consignment during the making of the Turkish secular to the sphere of superstition, highlighting how the disavowal of superstition in the figure of fortune-tellers was vital to the making of the secular. Chapter 2 places secular Muslim fortune-tellers in an ethnographic present animated by the ongoing negotiations of the gendered dynamics of Turkish secularism to illustrate how heteropatriarchal secularist economies of desire and contempt fix femininity to irrationality. Chapter 3 characterizes the emergent postsecular condition in which secular Muslims paradoxically negotiate their persistent attachments to secularism through their engagements with divination. In part II, "Femininity, Intimacy, and Publics," chapter 4 situates divination publics in the context of the historical emergence and gendered transformations of the public sphere to demonstrate how a novel, sociospatial, intimate public is conjured in fortune-telling cafés through the negotiation of Islamicate logics of intimacy, secularist logics of publicness, and neoliberal incitements to public intimacy. Chapter 5 argues that contemporary divination businesses broker a new type of public intimacy that is distinguished by anonymity and relative safety in the context of an increasingly intimate public sphere that proves risky for the feminized. In part III, "Feeling Labor, Precarity, and Entrepreneurialism," chapter 6 analyzes the affectivity and commodification of feminized labors of divination and details how feeling labors help secular Muslim readers and their clients manage the compounded gendered anxieties, vulnerabilities, and precariousness of the present historical juncture, albeit at the expense of precarious divination workers. Chapter 7 examines the newly digitalized and transnational incarnations of feeling labors as they are reconceived as a spiritual/economic self-entrepreneurial endeavor for healing the impossibility of postsecular neoliberal selfhood. These three parts build upon each other to reveal how the minoritized practices and feelings produced through feminized divination are key to the coconstitution of a heteronormative gender order in which secularity is premised upon a disavowal of feminine irrationality, the public sphere is built

upon the dismissal of the sociabilities of women and LGBTIQ peoples, and neoliberal capitalism depends upon the devaluing of feminized labor.

Mixed Feelings

I came into this research with mixed feelings. I first visited a fortune-telling café in 2002, on my way back from taking the Graduate Record Exam in support of my application to doctoral programs in the United States. After the test, all I could do was wait to hear back, my future prospects now bound to tests, forms, letters, and a host of unknown dynamics outside my knowledge or control. Standing still on the threshold of what might or might not turn out to be a great change in my life, I was filled with anticipation and a mix of joyous expectation and fear of both outcomes. The testing office was on Nişantaşı Avenue of Istanbul, host to upscale boutiques, stores, restaurants, and cafés. As I walked away from the testing station, I noticed a café advertising free cup readings with the purchase of Turkish coffee and free tarot readings with the purchase of a cappuccino. I would later learn that this was one of a growing number of fortune-telling cafés that had started mushrooming around the city over the previous year.

Curious and agitated, I entered, ordered, and drank a cup of Turkish coffee. After a short wait, a server walked me over to the table of a middle-aged female reader in a separate room. I cannot remember much of what she told me that day. What I do remember distinctly, however, is my mixed feelings. I felt affirmed when she recognized me for who I was with accurate descriptions of the challenges I then faced, but I was also unnerved that she painted my future in such picture-perfect gender-conformity colors with marriage and children. While I treasured the way the reader moved me from feeling uneasy and nervous to feeling supported and encouraged, I was disturbed that this intense and personal interaction was commercial and nonreciprocal. On the one hand, I enjoyed the communication between two women who were complete strangers yet able to share a moment of closeness. On the other hand, I felt guilty for having indulged in this intimacy for a temporary moment by purchasing it from a meagerly compensated, poorer woman. If as a secular feminist woman I felt self-conscious about having paid to have my fortune read and having listened to the reading with great interest, I could not deny the enjoyment I felt while getting my cup read, a feeling evoked by other, seemingly insignificant practices deemed superstitious, such as wearing evil eye charms or reading my horoscope in the newspaper or other, supposedly petty practices deemed feminine, such as watching soap operas or indulging in gossip. This was a refreshingly

engaging and comfortingly familiar experience that nevertheless left me with nagging doubts. My investments in femininity and feminism left me confused. The sense of inner conflict and subsequent curiosity I had following this first encounter motivated the research this book is based on.

The research subject matter and the analytical focus on affect demanded multiple research and writing strategies. For the book's ethnographic research, I explored the proliferating gendered practices of divination by following coffee cups as they circulated among friends, relatives, neighbors, and increasingly among strangers, both in the privacy of homes and in the emergent public spaces of fortune-telling cafés. The location was Istanbul, the cultural capital of Turkey and the birthplace and capital of fortune-telling cafés. After my initial visit, I returned to the fortune-telling cafés, now the focal venues of my ethnographic fieldwork, first in 2005, spending two years at over twenty of the hundreds of fortune-telling cafés Istanbul then hosted. I updated this extended fieldwork with annual summer visits between 2008 and 2015, and again in 2019. During this time, I talked to amateurs who read cups and anyone who had had their cup read. I accompanied friends of friends to get readings from fortune-tellers working from their homes. I attended fortune-telling parties at peoples' homes, where readers had been invited to perform their services. I systematically observed and took ethnographic field notes on daily life at fortune-telling cafés, interviewed fortune-telling café owners and workers, witnessed fortune-telling sessions, and had my fortune told countless times.¹¹

To be able to parse the various temporalities and spaces in which the structures of feeling I was studying become palpable and to track feelings through their internalizing, individuating, and, importantly, publicly circulating forms and forces, I drew upon an extensive ethnographic and autoethnographic fieldwork augmented by archival research and deployed a variety of analytical and representational strategies. Given the anonymous nature of readings at cafés, most fortune-telling sessions I could directly and closely observe were my own. The research thus took an autoethnographic turn, as my own experiences and feelings became a significant source of data. Over time, this autoethnographic quality, initially a result of issues of access and convenience necessitated by the nature of my research topic, grew into a conscious methodological and analytical strategy. I came to appreciate autoethnographic attunement as an invaluable opportunity to attend to the affective processes that gave fortune-telling and the relationalities around it their force. Furthermore, while my field research took me to various intimate publics conjured in fortune-telling locales, from private homes to divination businesses, I also found myself taking research notes during my time away from my designated field sites. Leisurely

watching television or reading the news become another scene of immersion into intimate publics, blurring the boundaries between ethnography, autoethnography, and cultural analysis.

Cultural analysis was more than a mere supplement to the ethnographic scenes I sought to affectively conjure; it was a substantive component of research that allowed me to trace the broader circulation of public feelings around and beyond the divination sites I frequented. To this end, I built upon various registers of public culture, including social media, where people collectively interpreted personal and political divinations; television series in which the right and wrong kinds of fortune-telling were construed and segregated; and legal dramas/sex scandals in the media, where the gendered and sexualized tensions of secular Muslim identity were negotiated time and again. The diverse array of materials I pulled together did not cohere into a complete or representative picture of a singular cultural universe in which my interlocutors operated; instead, they constituted a fragmented yet evocative affective archive in which to trace the public feelings that thickened around the unfolding social worlds in which divinations were exchanged.

I complemented these modes of inquiry with qualitative research into the historical, religious, governmental, and juridical contexts shaping and regulating divination. I drew upon secondary historical sources and very limited primary data so as to place the millennial café fortune-tellers of Turkey within the genealogy of fortune-telling men and women and then situate them within the historical coimbrications of religion, secularism, and the public space that preceded and produced them. I surveyed the various by-products of state efforts to contain and control divination, including articles of law, higher court decisions criminalizing fortune-tellers, and Diyanet press releases and sermons condemning divination. I also explored the ideological foundations of the criminalization of divination through a discourse analysis of select texts of state ideology. Together, this data allowed me to further place the voices and feelings of practitioners of divination today within their larger historical, political, and legal contexts.

In an ethnographic context where respondents lived with the risk of criminalization and the cloud of stigma, trust was an ongoing negotiation complicated by privilege and vulnerability. My urban, secular, middle-class status, amplified by my ongoing studies at an American university and my international mobility; my identity as a straight, cisgender femme; my white-looking body; and my Istanbul accent worked to differential advantage, at times widening and at other times narrowing the social distance between me and my differently located research participants. As I introduced myself to prospective

research participants, often shaky with anxiety and caffeine in my body, and weighed them up in an attempt to determine the best way to frame who I was and why I was there, they returned my observational gaze in search of answers to the same questions, reading my fortune first and deciding what to do with me only once I had properly introduced myself as a researcher. The threat of persecution of my interlocutors by competing businesses, disgruntled customers, state prosecutors, and the police was uncommon but ever-present. Television shows and newspaper articles regularly featured fortune-telling cafés with interest, but the on-screen busting of similar practitioners working from their homes, and occasionally from their offices or fortune-telling cafés, was still a popular media genre. Quite a few informants could not help but inquire if I might be an undercover spy or police officer. Social scientific research into fortune-telling was hard to make sense of, not only for my research participants but also for many academics. My institutional relationship to an American university and research procedures designed to protect subjects, such as the use of pseudonyms and the omission of identifying information, sounded rather suspicious. Some readers remarked that they did not use their legal name anyway, having taken a chosen name in their fortune-telling persona and/or as queer folk. Others, hoping to gain publicity from my research, were disappointed that their names would be changed. In the field, risk and benefit were calculated in ways too complex to fit nicely into the discrete categories of human subject protocols; building research rapport required attuning to those complexities.

Reflexivity in this research involved not only recognizing how my positionality shaped the ways I navigated the world; reflexivity also entailed a growing (dis)comfort with the self-reflexivity demanded by how centrally and explicitly my own intimate gendered hopes and qualms became part of my data and analysis. The data I collected included the life narratives and work histories of readers and intimate if transient pictures of their clients' lives, as well as the divination readings I was offered about my own life. These readings were filled with volatile promises bundled into reader-concocted scenarios of starting a career while navigating the vulnerabilities of the marriage market, searching for relationship stability while striving for meaningful intimacy, marrying timely enough to have children, and giving birth to twins, understood by most fortune-tellers and customers to mean undergoing fertility treatment likely because of older maternal age. As the broad array of fraught desires possibly attending a middle-class straight woman in her thirties not wearing a wedding ring filled my field notebook, there was no avoiding my identity as a constitutive part of the research process and data analysis.

Native status in the field did not come readily by sheer dint of being a woman born and raised in Turkey. At first glance, I did look like I belonged in a fortune-telling café. As a thirtysomething woman embodying a Turkish, secular, middle-class habitus, I was remarkably similar to the majority of the customers in age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and class. But I was in fact not as familiar with cup reading as others assumed me to be. I was raised by a devotedly secularist grandfather who looked down upon the world of feminized superstitions and a feminist mother who did not immerse herself in the social world of normative femininity, where relatives, neighbors, and friends exchanged cup readings. Growing up, my encounters with coffee divinations were sporadic. Once in the field, however, I was often upgraded from the status of stranger to being included in the social relations of the café as a regular, a guest, a friend, a niece, a daughter, or a pseudo-worker. I was given ample opportunity to become proficient in properly preparing and serving Turkish coffee and getting my cup read.

Ethnographic conversions came in many shades and temporalities. I became more open and playful about matters of faith and practice, learning to be a secular Muslim who “doesn’t believe in fortune-telling but doesn’t do without it either,” as the popular saying goes. I grew more comfortable in the feminized intimacies of divination publics, coming to terms with the strong pulls, claustrophobic closures, and scattered escape routes of heteronormativity as a straight cisgender feminist woman. I gradually learned to see, hear, and feel the labor involved in fortune-telling. It is within this larger habitus that my feelings grew, so to speak, and I started reading cups, albeit not commercially.

My many conversions notwithstanding, my mixed feelings stayed with me.¹² My idealization of feminized subterranean practices as resistant or subversive of heteropatriarchy was brought down to earth by the persistence of heteronormative dreams revealed in and gender conformity espoused by the readings. My desire to approach fortune-telling and related popular religious practices as feminized forms of relating to the world was dampened, even as I grew suspicious of both the secularist critique of believers’ fatalism and the postsecular romanticization of the oppressed’s spirituality. My excitement about the feminized publics readers conjured for gender and sexual minorities was stifled by the ways neoliberalism and neoconservatism inflected publics by putting the intimate thoroughly to work in the service of neoliberal accumulation and masculinist restoration. My appreciation for the strength and initiative with which urban poor women and young and gay men repurposed a feminized domestic activity as an opportunity for paid work was in conflict with the deep precarity and criminalization of their labor. My romantic investment in

a vision of women and LGBTIQ individuals supporting each other competed with the presence of grave inequalities that situated them unevenly in their most intimate encounters. In the end, these dilemmas were not resolved but instead inhabited as tensions that animate this book.

Gendered Negotiations of the Postsecular

As a Muslim-majority country well known for its past radical secularization and present Islamization, both of which have been articulated in gendered terms and have been fought over in the public lives of (un/veiled) women, Turkey provides the perfect context in which to analyze the gendered discontents of secularism and religion. Part I, “The Religious, the Superstitious, and the Postsecular,” explores the gendered negotiations of the secular and the postsecular in Turkey. It situates the secular in historical analysis and ethnographic observation to ask what the secular signifies across time and place, as well as what the secular feels like when it is no longer normative, as when the nagging anxieties and insistent hopes of today’s secular Muslims are refracted through the gendered practices of divination. Inspired by Connolly’s (1999) critique of the secularist idolization of reason at the expense of the visceral, I highlight the affective in my inquiry into the postsecular.

The conundrum of secularists who mobilize a medium otherwise associated with superstition and irrationality in order to coagulate secularist feelings and secular identities provides an opportunity to explore how secular(ist)s affectively attune to the postsecular condition in which the category of the secular is neither normative nor stable. It is in this context that those secular(ist) citizens of Turkey who feel threatened by the ruling party turn toward coffee readings in divination cafés and virtual spaces. In these spaces, through feeling labors of divination, they find breathing room away from worry and hopelessness, feelings that often characterize their relationship to their personal and national futures. The affective conjuring powers of divination give shape to secularist feelings and subjects by providing a productive medium in which secularist hope and faith, as well as pessimism and doubt, can circulate. This secular foray into divination and the affects it thickens illustrates how feeling secular has been structured through the contingency, instability, and contradictions (not to mention the versatility and persistence) of the category of the secular itself.

The postsecular is a suggestive term that may help destabilize conventional ways of understanding a country whose future has long been fought over and analyzed (locally and globally, politically and academically) in terms of a secular/religious dichotomy. Whether described as an age of return to religion, an

increasing presence of religion in the public sphere, or a new acknowledgment of the religious in what has come to be presumed as secular modern life, the concept *postsecular* communicates the pervasive sense that secularism no longer holds its unquestioned position in social and critical theory, nor indeed in the public sphere (Bradiotti 2008; Gorski et al. 2012; Habermas 2008; McLennan 2007). The term *postsecular* has been used in explanations of the Turkey of the early 2000s to point out the interpenetrations of the secular and the religious (Göle 2012; Rosati 2016) and to highlight how the category of the secular has been denaturalized and its normative position destabilized (Parmaksız 2018).

Islamic values and practices articulated at the level of Turkish state and popular ideology grew powerful in the 2010s, but were not yet securely hegemonic. While secularism as the foundational state ideology and a popular basis of identity and mobilization remained alive and well in the same period, it was increasingly on the defense. In an irony of history, to lift their spirits, disheartened secular and even secularist citizens now flock to divination businesses under the threat of a secularist law dating as far back as 1925 that outlaws commercial fortune-telling. On their end, the fortune-tellers negotiate for themselves secular Muslim identities as they mix and match a range of divination and other therapeutic modalities with Islamic and new age resonances to craft fortune-telling profiles that will be attractive to their clients but still not attract criminal complaints. Recruiting a secular(ist) worker and clientele profile around a practice that is seemingly at odds with the secular values of reason and skepticism, fortune-tellers and their customers blend secular and secularist identities, Islamic beliefs and rituals, and new age ideas and practices around divinatory practices. In the process, they produce novel constellations of the secular and the religious that disrupt their previously taken-for-granted distinctions in an atmosphere where these categories are increasingly mobilized and fused together by various actors to render even their presumed separateness futile (Göle 2012; Kandiyoti 2012).

As an analytic, the postsecular thus prompts an epistemological stance from which to critically scrutinize the concept of the secular, especially in its assumed difference from the religious. This complements genealogical approaches to the emergence and attempted closures of the concepts of the secular and the religious (Asad 1993, 2003; Mahmood 2005; Scott and Hirschkind 2006). Chapter 1, “Crimes of Divination,” addresses the complexities of the secular by tracing the historical construction and gendered afterlives of divination in relation to the constitutive outsides of the secular, namely, religion, tradition, and superstition. The chapter reveals how the disavowal of fortune-tellers was central to the making of the secular through a civilizational project premised upon

gendered, classed, ethnoreligious, and racialized exclusions. Turkey is well known for its unique brand of active, authoritative, and militant secularism (Keddie 2003; Kuru 2007; Özyürek 2006). Turkish secularism has depended upon the construction of a masculinized reason that paternalistically protected the people by disciplining those who are feminized via their proximity to superstition, including the female, illiterate, non-Muslim, Arab/Black, “ignorant,” and “corrupt” practitioners of divination. The historical detour in this chapter explores the processes by which fortune-tellers were pushed outside the secular national and came to function as a node through which feelings of dismissal, disgust, and abhorrence could be circulated to affectively cement the secular itself. This gendered affective politics of secularism prepared the grounds on which fortune-tellers were criminalized in the early twentieth century, only to be bifurcated into an Islamic underground economy of outlawed and heavily persecuted male hodjas and a domestic economy of trivialized and tolerated housewives.

Showcasing in genealogical fashion a feminized group of secular Muslim fortune-tellers and clients negotiating a postsecular condition in a Muslim-majority Middle Eastern country with a secularist history and a religiously accented government in the present, this research both provincializes dominant conceptions of the secular and makes legible their gendered characterizations. Studies examining the secular beyond its taken-for-granted location in Western Europe have demonstrated that secularism is appropriated and remade in relation to other projects of social transformation: postcolonialism, nationalism, modernization (Asad 1993; Cady and Hurd 2010; Dressler and Mandair 2011; Warner, VanAntwerpen, and Calhoun 2010). Particularly in contexts of (almost postcolonial) nationalist modernization such as Turkey, the politics of secularism and religion are closely tied to an uneasy relationship between the remaking of gender relations and the remaking of the nation, where a specific brand of femininity gets tasked to carry and resolve the paradoxical goals of becoming modern and secular while remaining distinctly Muslim and national (Chatterjee 1993; Kadioğlu 1996). Under the weight of this paradox, contestations over the ideal shape of gender relations serve as a central arena for articulating secular and religious identities (Çınar 2005; Kandiyoti 1991; White 2014).

While feminist scholars of Turkey and the larger Middle East have pondered the relationships between religion, secularism, and gender (Çınar 2005; Deeb 2006; Göle 1996; Mahmood 2005; Saktanber 2002), the focus has been primarily on pious Muslim women and politically engaged pious Muslim subjects. This book focuses instead on the multiple ways nonpious Muslim women

relate to the supernatural in everyday life, identify with various positions along the spectrum of the secular and the religious, engage with the gendered logics of secularism and Islamism, and craft nonpious and secular Muslim identities. It also broadens previous research's focus on women with a more inclusive understanding of gendered marginalization that includes sexual minorities.

Moving the postsecular debate beyond its initial focus on national and international politics and into other social and cultural realms, I join recent interrogations into the gendered and quotidian discourses and experiences of the postsecular (Gökarkınel and Secor 2015) with an eye for affective constellations that contour secular subjects. I ask how the postsecular condition feels in the textures of everyday life as I explore the exertion of feeling labors of divination as a way to soothe the anxious subjects of a postsecular condition. In the process, I shift the focus from the recently emphasized aberrant pious subject of feminism to the largely taken-for-granted normative secular(ist) subject and engage with the postsecular turn in feminist studies and its critiques (Abbas 2013; Bradiotti 2008; Jamal 2015; Vasilaki 2016).

Chapter 2, "The Gendered Politics of Secularism," continues the critical inquiry into the category of the secular by turning to the gendered subjects that traverse secularist attachments and postsecular negotiations. Tracing hodjabashing narratives in the media and in everyday accounts both past and present, this chapter explores how secularist economies of desire and contempt animate gendered conceptions of tradition, religion, superstition, and secularity. The chapter demonstrates that, throughout the shifting and volatile parameters of the secular and religious, the effort to fix femininity to irrationality and superstition persists as an amalgam against which masculine authority is constituted. The persecution of hodjas and the tolerated presence of housewives bestows legitimate authority upon secular men and the secularizing state in their patriarchal rule over women, non-heteronormative men, and the people, constructed as objects of rescue from traditional and superstitious influences of religion. From conventional stories in which secular men save victimized women from malicious hodjas to their postsecular remixes where fortune-tellers themselves become the heroes, this chapter highlights how cup readers and their clients subvert normative categories by mimicking the gendered conventions of secularism.¹³ As contemporary secular Muslim fortune-tellers redirect the feelings of disdain and contempt attending the generic figure of the fortune-teller away from themselves and reclaim the deference and admiration once securely commanded by secular masculine figures for themselves, they gesture affectively and figuratively toward the postsecular.

Chapter 3, “Feeling Postsecular,” provides a fresh perspective on a well-trodden debate by introducing secular Muslim women who confess to an individualized belief system defined less by orthodox Sunni ritual and dogma and more by a flexible and eclectic set of feelings and sensibilities. These women pray but also insist on wearing short skirts. They drink alcohol but not during Ramadan. They engage in popular religious practices such as fortune-telling but with a grain of rational salt. This chapter demonstrates novel postsecular brokerings of the supernatural that sit alongside nonpious articulations of secular Muslimness, such as may be seen in coffee divination, in which the silhouette of Atatürk can appear in a coffee cup to reassure concerned secularists about the continued political future of Turkish secularism. Situating coffee divinations in the context of ongoing contestations over the legality and legitimacy of fortune-telling, chapter 3 sketches those emergent assemblages of the secular and the religious that destabilize the long-established terms of the gendered politics of secularism, affectively and discursively surfacing in the process the secular Muslim subjects of a postsecular condition. This section of the book takes particular issue with the dichotomy of secular versus pious Muslims that so often subtends studies of gender and Islam, contributing instead a nuanced account to analyses of the persistent centrality of various politics of gender and sexuality within ongoing contestations over secularism and religion around the world (Abu-Lughod 2002; Puar 2007; Razack 2008).

Gendering Publics and Intimacies

This book focuses on divination publics constructed for and by gender and sexual minorities as a way of challenging dominant perspectives on the nature of the modern public sphere (Habermas [1962] 1991) in favor of a pluralized, gendered, and queered reconceptualization of publics. As such, it contributes to feminist and queer scholarship that brings gender and sexuality to the center of analyses of the public sphere by counterbalancing the emphasis on the political public sphere with a curiosity for a multiplicity of unequally situated publics (Berlant 2008; Fraser 1990; Warner 2005). With this twofold aim in mind, part II, “Femininity, Intimacy, and Publics,” probes how the gendered practices of fortune-telling conjure feminized publics in which women and LGBTIQ individuals find care and recognition in each other’s intimate company.

Chapter 4, “Feeling Publics of Femininity,” explores how divination publics are summoned through the circulation of a genre of femininity that uses an affective vocabulary to express and negotiate feminized pleasures and discontents.

My conceptualization of divination publics here is in dialogue with works that emphasize the mutual productivity of affects, subjects, and publics (Ahmed 2004, 2014; Mankekar 2015; Papacharissi 2015). It pushes models of cultural analysis inspired by literature, linguistics, and communications beyond their original scope in order to scrutinize genres and publics that differ radically in their mediums and styles of expression (Warner 2005), stressing the affective performativity of an irrational, nontextual medium. As such, this study foregrounds the fact that publics are tucked into and constitutive of social relations and places. Like other genres of femininity embedded within the socio-spatial arrangements of their production, circulation, and consumption—the shooting of a daytime women’s show in the television studio or the meeting of a book club’s members to discuss a chick-lit best seller—divinations are embedded in women’s domestic gatherings in the living room and in their visits to the fortune-telling café. Feeling publics of divination thus conjure an intimate affective terrain of femininity through the spatialized sociabilities they operate in.

In Muslim Middle Eastern contexts, the gendered relationship between genres, affects, and publics is brokered through a specific spatialized social formation of gendered intimacy. This formation has often been conceptualized as sex or gender segregation or seclusion (in reference to the separation of males/men and females/women as an organizing logic of social space and relationships) and interpreted as a religious, repressive, and unbending structure. For the secularizing elites of early twentieth-century Turkey, this formation signified a harmful religious tradition that would come to serve as a counterpoint against which they envisioned modern public life. In this context, similar to neighboring modernization processes across the Muslim Middle East (Thompson 2003), the modern public sphere in Turkey emerged as the product of an authoritarian reformist state marked as secular by the presence of unveiled women and mixed-gender socializing (Göle 1997). Importantly for this research, at the heart of a modern domesticity constructed to complement this secular public sphere lies the publicly denigrated social practices of same-sex intimacies and fortune-telling. These remain constitutive of normative femininities, attesting to the fact that an Islamicate model of gendered intimacy is neither external nor antithetical to but coconstitutive of modern gender formations in Turkey.

This book takes feminized publics of divination as existing nestled inside the complex constellations of gender, space, and sociability. As such, it approaches what has been commonly conceived of as gender “segregation” as instead an “institution of intimacy” (Schlikoglu 2016, 144) that maps gendered affinity in spatial, embodied, and relational terms; an adaptable formation that is subject to historical change and is self-reflexively engaged with. Chapter 4 thus

establishes the novelty of feminized publics of divination, in which a majority of women alongside a minority of young and gay men gather around coffee cups in a social terrain long reduced to a binary schema of gender-segregated versus mixed-gender sociabilities. This chapter traces the gendered and spatialized historical trajectory of coffee sociabilities in which a bifurcation between male-only coffeehouses and mixed-gender cafés emerged and tracks the ways different actors from secularist nationalists to feminists have politically engaged with these sociospatial arrangements. It further explains how fortune-telling cafés are preferred locations for secular, but often not pious, Muslim women, who also engage in (coffee) fortune-telling but mostly in other venues.

Gendered Fortunes thus controverts the ways feminized social worlds have been over- and misrepresented in Orientalist imaginaries and self-Orientalizing modernist representations of “the harem,” not least as a reified space/place one can(not) enter or leave. These representations are accompanied by colonialist (feminist) assumptions of women’s exceptionally severe oppression in Muslim-majority societies, assumed to be self-evident in their bodies covered under veils and their lives constrained behind latticed windows (Ahmed 1982; Mernissi 2001). To sidestep this overdetermination of gendered space and lack of (liberal) agency, I shift the terms of analysis from gender segregation, exclusion, and oppression to the relationships between femininity, intimacy, and publics.

Chapter 5, “The Joys and Perils of Intimacy,” highlights the significance of divination publics as spaces where the feminized can explore their lives at some distance from the disciplining imperatives of an increasingly intimate public sphere. Here, feminized publics of fortune-telling are set against a larger public sphere, where the intimate is increasingly incited to public discourse and where public intimacies abound, from a political public sphere in which government and feminist and queer discourses on gender and sexuality explode to popular culture with television shows in which ordinary women continuously display and dispute their homes, marriages, and relationships. In this milieu, commercial divination brings together secular Muslim women and young and gay men to share intimately in the relative safety of the urban anonymity afforded by fortune-telling businesses. Exploring a mother-daughter cup-reading episode, a café divination session, and an online fortune-telling interaction, where revelations of the intimate create differential results, ranging from betrayal and violence to trust and protection, this chapter enumerates the circumstances under which the anonymous intimacies of commodified fortune-telling provide safer spaces in which to air and work through intimate issues for those whose personal and especially sexual lives are closely regulated by their family, community, and government through public policy, shaming,

gossip, and violence. Inspired by inquiries into the gendered genres and affective blueprints that mediate both national and minoritarian publics, I highlight divination publics that are oriented away from the political public sphere, but which nevertheless hold feminist potentiality.

Together, these two chapters situate contemporary divination publics of femininity within a number of contending sociopolitical formations: Islamicate formations of intimacy (Göle 1996; Schlikoglu 2016, 2021), predominantly conceived as a principle of gender segregation that prevents women's entry into the public sphere; the secularist politics of the public sphere (Göle 1997; Kandiyoti 1991), often regarded as a significant if limited inclusion of women in public life; and the recently cemented postsecular neoconservative politics of intimacy that dominates contemporary Turkey's political public sphere (Acar and Altunok 2013; Korkman 2016), often viewed as a threat to the secularist politics of the public sphere and a return to Islamicate formations of intimacy. Against this background, this study moves beyond a discussion of gendered publics narrowly clustered around questions of exclusion and segregation to examine the productivity and potentiality of feminized publics.

The book thus provincializes the Western-centric feminist insight that the modern public sphere was and is primarily constituted by the gendered exclusion of women and femininity (Fraser 1990). It reveals this feminist analysis not as a universal, but as a particular critique requiring realignment in Muslim-majority and/or postcolonial contexts of modernization, where women's public visibility, if not inclusion per se, is central to the formation of the modern public sphere and to the gendered projects of nation building. As such, it puts the US-based feminist and queer theories of publics in conversation with Middle East feminist scholarship on the public sphere to invite an exploration of the multiple genealogies of the secular public sphere. By attending through ethnographic research to the minoritarian publics, sociospatiality, and everyday practices that arise within these multiple genealogies, it calls for a nuanced inquiry into the variability of gendered intimacies and sociabilities around which different types of publics are organized, with an eye for their differential political stakes and potentials.

Gender, Feeling Labor, and Neoliberalism

Gendered Futures engages with feminist debates on how formations of capitalism and heteropatriarchy coconstitute gendered lives and livelihoods. The book explores the central role feminized affective labors play in the global economy under neoliberalization (Boris and Parnas 2010; Dedeoğlu and Elveren

2012; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002) by investigating the contexts, terms, and costs involved in recruiting gender and sexual minorities into the thoroughly commercialized and increasingly digital and transnational divination economy. More specifically, it joins inquiries that situate feminized, embodied, and affective engagements with the supernatural at the very heart of an analysis of gendered labor: for example, Silvia Federici's (2004) historical analysis of how the persecution of witches accompanied the relegation of women to unpaid housework during the emergence of capitalism in early-modern Europe, Aihwa Ong's (2010) ethnographic study of the spirit possession-induced seizures through which female Malay factory workers experienced and negotiated their enlistment into the ranks of the late modern proletariat, or Attiya Ahmad's (2017) inquiry into South Asian migrant women's conversions to Islam that mediate their domestic labors in the Kuwaiti households where they take work.

Part III, "Feeling Labor, Precarity, and Entrepreneurialism," explores the gendered feeling labors of fortune-telling. While attention to gendered labor is long-standing in Turkish studies, with the issues of women's low labor force participation and their high concentration in the informal sector at the forefront (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2010; Ecevit 2003; İlkkaracan 2012; Tunalı, Kırdar, and Dayıoğlu 2017), the account here is informed by ethnographic explorations of the gendered processes of labor (Akalin 2007; Dedeoğlu 2010; Isik 2008; Ozyegin 2000; Sarioğlu 2016; White 2004). In a field often focused exclusively on women's labor at the expense of a more inclusive understanding of gendered labor that includes sexual minorities, this book also joins research that turns to LGBTIQ subjects (Yılmaz and Göçmen 2016) and, in ethnographic settings, to transgender sex workers (Güler 2020; Özbay 2010, 2017; Zengin 2020).

In the tradition of earlier Marxist feminist analyses of reproductive labors (Dalla Costa and James 1972; Federici 1975) and housewifization (Mies 1998), and in dialogue with more recent studies of emotional and affective labors, chapter 6, "Feeling Labors of Divination," explores fortune-telling as a form of feminized labor. It demonstrates how fortune-tellers conjure an affective space in which clients can explore their gendered hopes and disappointments (Korkman 2015b). While divination requires work at various levels, the dominant mode of labor is affective/emotional. Here the emotional dimension refers to the socially constructed processes of identifying, managing, and displaying emotions, while the affective dimension refers to the unstructured, precognitive, and embodied intensities underlying emotional experience itself (Massumi 2002). I coin the term *feeling labor* to denote this dual work of inciting, identifying, and expressing cognitively articulated, culturally meaningful emotions

and at the same time attuning interpersonally to the underlying affective intensities in all their amorphousness, fluidity, and contagiousness. The term *feeling* is grounded in the language fortune-tellers themselves use to describe their labor process: readers frequently use the word *feeling* as a verb (*bissetmek*), a pertinent reminder of the manner of labor involved in reading fortunes. The concept of feeling labor synthesizes the insights of feminist and critical scholarship on emotional and affective labors (Ducey 2007; Freeman 2011, 2015; Hall 1993; Hardt 1999, 2007; Hochschild 1983; Kang 2003; Lively 2000; Negri and Hardt 1999; Paules 1991; Pierce 1999; Weeks 2007; Wissinger 2007) while emphasizing what has not been adequately engaged by theorists of affective labor: the gendering of affective labor (Freeman 2011; Shultz 2006) and the rich genealogy of feminist thinking on reproductive and emotional labors (Federici 2008; Weeks 2007).

Approaching divination as a medium through which to feel precariousness and its attendant anxieties, *Gendered Fortunes* provides a window onto the central role feminized affective labors play in containing the contradictions of neoliberal capitalism. Chapter 6 details how the feeling labors of divination render precarity inhabitable not only by providing much-needed work, but also by affording a type of labor designed to process the affective experience of precarity. Readers find in divination a precious opportunity for paid work amid labor insecurity exacerbated by the intersectional inequalities that render their lives precarious. Feeling precarious under the neoliberal impetus for becoming a self-making and ever-anticipatory subject paradoxically fuels divination economies on both ends. Secular middle-class clients are also often precarious economic subjects who either fear or suffer through cycles of insecure employment, unemployment, and underemployment and who feel anxious in the face of the postsecular condition they find themselves in. This labor precarity and secular anxiety are further compounded by the gendered feelings of precariousness as the intimate attachments to femininity stir up emotions of vulnerability, directing gender and sexual minorities into the postsecular neoliberal divination economy as workers and clients. *Gendered Fortunes* thus contributes to scholarly inquiries of the affective imprint of neoliberal capitalism (Beer 2016; Berg, Huijbens, and Larsen 2016; Berlant 2007, 2011; Cossman 2013; Isin 2004; Molé 2010; Muchlebach 2011; Neilson 2015; Pettit 2019; Scharff 2016) with an ethnographically situated analysis of the processes that allow gender and sexual minorities to attune to precarity by working (on) their feelings.

As neoliberal economic transformations encounter local contexts around the world, the therapeutic spirit of neoliberalism travels transnationally with it, only to be variably translated and appropriated (Freeman 2015; Kanna 2010;

Ong 2006; Takeyama 2010). In this context, cup readings are sucked into a larger postsecular neoliberal terrain of therapeutic modalities that alternately feed into and on the anxieties of precariousness (Foster 2016, 2017; Peck 2016; Rose 1990). The millennial allure of fortune-telling is thus informed by the multivalent, local, and gendered experiences and idioms of precarity and possibility in Turkey; by secularity, religion, and tradition; by intimacy and publicness. It is only through these multilayered and overlapping vectors that people are able to navigate their gendered fortunes in dynamic relation to the global ascendancy of neoliberalization and its selective affinity with occult ways of understanding and responding to socioeconomic marginalization (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 2000a, 2000b).

Chapter 7, “Entrepreneurial Fortunes,” considers close-up how feeling labors become increasingly self-entrepreneurial as they are mobilized to craft and heal the impossibility of postsecular neoliberal selves that are subjectified into an ideal of individual mastery of their own fate under conditions that render personal fortunes thoroughly unstable. Selectively harvesting new age discourses alongside Islamic ones, the feminized practitioners of divination enchant the self-entrepreneurial and thoroughly integrated processes of making a living and a self. The expansion of transnational and online divination economies further entrenches the precarious labor conditions of and self-entrepreneurial demands on cup readers. At the same time, the owners of this booming industry are paraded as the poster children of a happy union between neoliberal and new age economic/spiritual understandings of work as an enchanted activity of self-realization. *Gendered Fortunes* thus adds to inquiries of self-entrepreneurialism (Foucault 2008; Rose 1992), particularly of the feminized kind (McRobbie 2009; Ringrose and Walkerdine 2008; Scharff 2016; Weber 2009), with an emphasis on the role of gendered affective labors in crafting self-entrepreneurial responses to precariousness (Freeman 2015; Ouellette and Wilson 2011).

While the transformation of feminized divination practices into a form of precarious labor directs (re)productive capacities toward capitalist circuits of value, the productivity of affective labors is not exhausted by these circuits. Feeling labors of divination produce more than profits. They produce a variety of social relations among the feminized, from supportive ties workers cultivate as they read each other’s fortunes noncommercially to the broader gendered intimacies and feminized publics fortune-telling fosters for secular Muslim women and LGBTIQ individuals. In conversation with the autonomous Marxist emphasis on the potentiality of the social factory, with a dose of feminist criticism of its romanticization of affective labor (Gill and Pratt 2008), I provide

a gendered account of the ways in which affective capacities are put to work, but without reducing the feelings, subjectivities, and sociabilities produced to a mere function of capitalist, secularist and Islamist, and heteropatriarchal domination.

Feeling Femininity

Animating this book's multifaceted inquiry into the gendered practices of divination is an abiding interest in feeling femininity. The project thus joins long-standing inquiries in feminist cultural studies to ask how femininities take shape via genres and practices that are devalued as petty and insignificant, for example romance novels and gossip, yet are invested with strong feelings and partialities. Feminist and queer cultural studies draw attention to the many ubiquitous genres through which femininity is felt, produced, consumed, and subverted (Berlant 2008; Cvetkovich 1992; de Lauretis 1999; Radway 1983), analyzing subjectification beyond identitarian gender and sexuality categories and examining the processes of identification (Muñoz 1999) with the aim of troubling conventional analyses of the relationship between representation and identification. These interventions deconstruct gender categories as fixed social roles or identity sets and recast them as the effects of the discursive and performative process of subjectification, a process that is re/destabilized via active reiteration (Butler 2011). Informed by this theoretical legacy, I conceptualize fortune-telling as a genre that provides affective surfaces and discursive spaces through which the desires and trials of heteropatriarchal subordination are felt and articulated. Approaching femininity as a node of affective coagulation and subjectification, I do not take women as a self-evident category. Instead I focus on those who are summoned as feminized subjects through the affective intensities generated by the circulation of divinatory scenes of femininity.

In Istanbul, the affective genre of cup reading coagulates feminized subjects. Participants in the divination economy are neither passive consumers of a hegemonic culture industry nor romantic subversive figures of a resistant subculture, but are produced through and in excess of the larger formations of power and inequality shaping the terrain of their subjectification. Building upon a rich cultural studies legacy that explores the social and material production, circulation, and consumption of culture in general and of popular culture and subcultures in particular as terrains of meaning making and subjectification (Fiske 2011; Hall 1997, 2001; Hebdige 1995), *Gendered Fortunes* complements textual analyses of mediatised cultural products in British and American contexts that have long constituted the bulk of the research in the field by looking

at a recently commodified nontextual practice though ethnographic analysis conducted in an understudied context.

Informed by the feminist insight that the devaluation and marginalization of those practices deemed feminine is key to understanding how gendered power operates, I insist on the significance of feminized divinations that are disdained but that reveal on closer analysis the centrality of quotidian realms and labors of the feminized to larger formations. Joining Middle East feminist scholarship in its inquiry into how processes of nationalist modernization, secularization, and Islamization operate in gendered ways, particularly at the level of everyday culture (Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002), *Gendered Fortunes* explores femininity at the junctures of state projects writ large, from nationalist modernist secularism to neoliberal Islamist conservatism, that shape the terrain in which gendered lives and livelihoods are made. Positioned centrally in this way, the gendered practices of divination recounted here provide a window through which to explore the transformation of three related world historical processes: secular modernity, the modern public sphere, and capitalism. When taken in such a frame, the feminized practices of fortune-telling are revealed as multiply imbricated in larger formations. They are criminalized praxes excluded by the secularist project, only to emerge later as central to feeling the postsecular condition. They are mediums through which to feel intimate in feminized publics embedded in a larger public sphere that is constituted via the disavowal of the very gendered intimacies that sustain heteronormativity. They are devalued and irregularized labors of feeling that are nevertheless key to reproducing the neoliberal economy. Such a feminist analysis lays bare the discontents of larger formations that are sewn together and pulled apart daily though the feeling labors of the feminized.

Feeling comes to the fore as an analytic that informs each of the multiple strands of analysis in this book. In conversation with feminist and queer scholarship on public feelings (Ahmed 2014; Berlant 2011, 2008; Cvetkovich 2012, 2003; Stewart 2007, 2011), *Gendered Fortunes* deploys feeling as an analytic with which to attune to the gendered affects and sociabilities of divination. This book takes up the term *feeling* for its very ambiguity, which simultaneously conjures the social and embodied life of emotion/affect (Cvetkovich 2003). In so doing, it inherits the attention by earlier Marxist cultural studies theorists to “structures of feeling” (Steedman 1987; Williams 1977), which emphasizes the merely felt and emergent and yet deeply social and structuring/structured nature of emotion/affect.¹⁴ With an eye to provincializing the affective turn in the social sciences and humanities (Clough and Halley 2007) by turning to non-Western sources to think affect with (Navaro 2017), including earlier thinking

on gendered emotions in Middle Eastern studies (Abu-Lughod 1986), and in dialogue with the more recent turn toward affect in Turkish studies (Açıksöz 2019; Bilal 2019; Biner 2019; Gill 2017; Korkman 2015b; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Parla 2019; Stokes 2010; Yıldırım 2019), the book probes how femininities that take shape at the intersections of secularization, Islamization, and neoliberalization are felt affectively on the surfaces of everyday life.

Fortune-tellers overwhelmingly describe divination as a process of feeling, understood as an affective, intuitive way of attuning and knowing. Feeling also constitutes an otherized form of knowledge that has been excluded from secular Western modernity and consigned to its ethnoracial and gendered others and their traditional and superstitious ways of (not) knowing (Lloyd 2004). While affectivity is ideologically excluded, it remains central to heteropatriarchal colonial capitalist domination and exploitation of feminized bodies and labors. Devalued in the secular public sphere, in the formal capitalist economy, and in the modern gender regime, feelings are nevertheless mobilized to rally, comfort, and care for citizens, workers, and family members. Indeed, the very presence and othering of feelings remains key to the project of constructing the differences between secular rational (masculine) and superstitious emotional (feminine) citizens, public (masculine) and private (feminine) spheres, paid and valued (male) and unpaid and devalued (female) workers, and, more broadly, masculine and feminine subjects and sociabilities. Centralizing feeling within our understandings and analyses of these formations in a thoroughgoing fashion provides our analyses with a feminist impetus with which we may destabilize the metanarratives that frame the heteronormative gender order, the secular public sphere, and the capitalist economy. And as a feminist endeavor of revaluation, it takes its cue from the very ways of attunement that the feminized themselves use to navigate these formations.

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

- 1 By the term *secularism* (*laiklik*), I refer to, in the Turkish case, a historically state-sponsored modernist nationalist ideology and social engineering project, as well as a basis for social and political identity. By *secular*, I refer to a sociocultural construct that is historically contingent, contested, and dependent upon its other, the religious.
- 2 I use the participle *feminized*, as opposed to *women's*, *female*, or *feminine*, to emphasize that feminization is an active, accumulated, and ongoing relation of power and subjectification.
- 3 In the context of this research, I use the term *secular Muslim* to refer to those for whom religion does not constitute a central or significant reference point for living and narrating their lives, even as they identify as Muslims and/or believers, and for whom secularity operates as a marker of a particular (socioeconomic class) habitus and lifestyle. I deploy the term *secularist* to refer to those who are aligned with secularist politics in Turkey, which might mean voting for the secularist Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), following secularist news media, and/or harboring strong secularist attachments to nationalist symbols.
- 4 All the readers I talked to but one, an Armenian Christian man, identified as Muslim. Of those identifying as Muslim, only one man asserted himself as an atheist, while others negotiated versions of nonpious and secular Muslim identities.
- 5 Here, by *feminized* I mean those women, LGBTIQ individuals, and young men who gather together in the intimacy of fortune-telling by virtue of their feminization within the heteropatriarchal hierarchies of gender, sexuality, and age. See also note 8.
- 6 Cup readers, whether amateurs or workers, tend to emphasize the worldly functions of their practice and de-emphasize its religious dimensions, which can be read as a secularizing gesture.
- 7 I deploy the term *neoliberalization* to refer to political and economic restructuring processes such as liberalization, deregulation, and privatization, and the term *neoliberalism* to refer to the ideological and governmentalizing rationales that legitimize

neoliberal economic transformations and that prescribe the institutional and individual techniques of (self-)governance facilitating these transformations.

- 8 Here I use *precarious(ness)* in multiple ways: first, to connote a labor condition that is generalized, intensified, and normalized under neoliberalism; second and more broadly, to convey the larger (existential) sense of insecurity and vulnerability of (intimate) life that is unevenly and intersectionally distributed across populations along the axes of gender and sexuality as well as race/ethnicity, religious and secular identity, and class; and third, as a structure of feeling. I frequently deploy the phrase *labor precarity* in reference to the first sense of the term. For a discussion of the different ways in which precarity and precariousness are defined in the literature, see Puar (2012).
- 9 I use the adjective *young* to refer to men who populate fortune-telling cafés as clients and workers. These are men primarily in their teens or twenties, and less often in their thirties, who are single, do not have children, and who struggle to make a living. In this work, *young* therefore refers less to a category of biological age and more to a social construct informed by the relational power differentials intrinsic to heteropatriarchal domination. Here, the term *young men* refers to males who are not (yet) admitted to heteronormative adult masculinity as associated with breadwinner status, marriage, fatherhood, and so on. Based on this definition, I use *young and gay men* repeatedly as a single phrase to describe heterosexual and gay young men together to emphasize their affinity in terms of their exclusion from masculine privileges tied to hegemonic adult masculinity and their feminization in relations of heteropatriarchal subjection.
- 10 See Gürsel (2009, 2012) for a highly perceptive take on coffee divination as a means by which Turkish people negotiate and process the uncertainties and ambiguities produced by Turkey's decades-long bid for European Union membership. Also see Seremetakis (2009) for an insightful discussion of cup readings and associated practices such as evil eye treatments and dream interpretations and related involuntary bodily gestures as somatic registrations of and the means for reading the effects of broader social transformations on the individual.
- 11 The research took me to many locations hosting commercial fortune-tellers, including websites, offices, restaurants, bars, and even campgrounds, as well as the houses of fortune-tellers who worked from home. But my main site remained fortune-telling cafés. I spent many months at the first fortune-telling café I gained entry to, and I acquainted myself with the rhythms and patterns of daily life at a divination business and the practices of divination itself. Following this extended entry, I expanded my research to other businesses where fortune-tellers worked, which my initial interlocutors had introduced me to, and later to other fortune-telling cafés I sampled because of their size or location to reflect the diversity of divination businesses available. I returned to these individual fortune-telling cafés several times over days or weeks to acquaint myself with the owners and the readers, observe the interactions between owners, readers, and clients, and immerse myself in the sociabilities that the cafés hosted.

While I talked to many clients and owners of fortune-telling businesses, the main interlocutors of this research were the readers. Although I interviewed and regularly

interacted with a number of café owners, some of whom doubled as readers, my relationships with owners were often limited to obtaining their permission as gatekeepers to conduct research at their café. Similarly, while I regularly engaged in casual conversations with café clients, barring a few exceptions where I conducted interviews, these were usually one-off, passing interactions typical among clients at a café. Similarly, because of the built-in anonymity café divinations offered, with few exceptions, I observed the fortune-telling sessions of others only from a distance. At the cafés, I belonged to the circle of readers, with whom I had tea, ate, and hung out waiting for customers. From them I heard about the intimate troubles that brought clients to the café and the challenging demands owners placed on their labor. My sociabilities and loyalties lay with the readers, and I familiarized myself with the world of divination businesses from their standpoint.

- 12 Here I am inspired by Ann Cvetkovich, who discusses her “mixed feelings about a feminist politics of affect” (1992, 1), so as to distinguish between her scholarly and political investments in the feminist reclaiming of affect as significant and the overly optimistic and co-opted promise that articulations of feminized affect in the political and public realms are necessarily transformative.
- 13 See also Korkman (2021) for an extended discussion of subversion via mimicry of the gendered conventions of Turkish secularism and the attendant destabilization of the coconstitutive binaries of secular/religious and male/female.
- 14 See chapter 6 for an in-depth discussion of the distinctions and relations between the terms *affect*, *emotion*, and *feeling* in relation to my conceptualization of divination labor.

I. CRIMES OF DIVINATION

- 1 Law No. 677, “The Abolition of Dervish Lodges, Cloisters, Shrines, and Related Titles,” enacted by the Turkish parliament on November 30, 1925.
- 2 “Savcılık fal kafelerin peşine düştü!,” *Haber 3*, December 8, 2005, <https://www.haber3.com/guncel/savcilik-fal-kafelerin-pesine-dustu-haberi-40922>. All translations in this book are my own.
- 3 Fortune-telling cafés had already gained nationwide visibility in the media, but until December 2005 were typically covered in a lighthearted tone as human interest stories.
- 4 Within Turkish criminal law, prosecutors have the right and the duty to investigate any crimes against the public committed within their jurisdiction, even when there is no grievance or no injured party, or when the injured party does not resort to criminal prosecution. Despite his track record as a zealous guardian of the secular nation, Türkaslan had not understood the infraction against secularist laws these fortune-telling cafés posed until the issue was brought to his attention by İsa Güven, the chair of the Ankara Association of Coffeehouses. Arguing that the emergent fad of fortune-telling in cafés amounted to unjust competition that threatened the economic livelihood of coffeehouses, Güven demanded that the municipality intervene to protect the interests of the constituency he represented as guild organization chair by limiting these cafés’ services to those legally specified within municipal