

AN ISTANBUL TALE

A RESEARCH
ON
IDENTITY AND BELONGING

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ABSTRACT

This research and project questions 'How Can the Practice of Narration and Storytelling be Woven into Cultural Identity?' with the focus on the themes of migration, belonging, identity, traditional Turkish folk art. The research, centred on Istanbul, focusing on the themes of migration and displacement gives a brief history of the city. Each word comprising the research question is examined individually for its meaning within the context of mentioned themes. Traditional Turkish art focuses on the weaving and storytelling traditions, by giving few examples from Turkish artists. The study explores how various artists have applied these keywords and the mentioned themes to their own practices. By presenting examples from the practices of weaving and storytelling, this research offers a proposal on how the concepts of migration, belonging, and identity can be adapted from folk art to contemporary practices. Furthermore, it explores how these two practices might interact under the light of these keywords and themes. With the final work and methodology, it offers a way of adapting these arts into a contemporary practice. Finally, it suggests that the concepts of identity and belonging are fluid and subject to change, thereby inviting the individual to question their own sense of belonging.

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to all my grandparents
who inspired me with their lives

INTRODUCTION

As Orhan Pamuk says about Istanbul, every city produces its own sound. For each city it is different. My Istanbul is winter, its dark and cold and its colourful. It's a city that it is falling apart. The old culture, the history is falling apart. He explains how Istanbul feels like. A city that is falling into a darker place. This project and thesis are inspired by migration and led to research on identity and what belonging is. This led to explore these subjects through storytelling and weaving. Telling a story about Istanbul when the city had still its pieces together. Through the question 'How can the practice narration of storytelling be woven into cultural identity?' an attempt was made to offer an interpretation of identity. The first step was to understand what each words means. The connections between each key word; 'practice, narration, storytelling, weaving, cultural identity' was searched through free association method. Later, each word was analysed by their meaning. The thesis is structured by three main chapters. The first chapter covers the historical background of Istanbul with some personal quotes that has an influence on this project. Since Istanbul is the focus of this project, it is important to read about the city before delving into the literature review. The second chapter analyses literature study. The study is supported by artists' approaches to these topics, illustrated with examples of their works. The third chapter explains the methodology that is adapted. First, the story was written; then, through a step-by-step analysis of the story, colours and patterns for the weaving were researched. The entire project represents the time spent on both the story and the weaving. Every thread woven and every line written tells the story of a part of an irreplaceable moment—whether spoken or lived.

One element that connected each keyword was traditional Turkish folk arts, being weaving and storytelling. An undervalued field of study in Turkey. Chapter two explains what these practices are and chapter three shows how it is adapted to the project. There are few artists like CANAN, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu who values folk art and adapts to their practice. Except CANAN, two of them being deceased there aren't contemporary adaptations of folk art neither literary neither in art field. Literary works don't go much beyond being a compilation of stories. Art works; weaving, miniature drawings, especially under current political circumstances is done under 'Islamic art'. In this study, an attempt was made to adapt traditional storytelling methods to a contemporary narrative.

In recent years weaving is shifting towards digital ways of weaving, like the loom TC2. Even though this machine offers immense way of creating a textile, there is still a lot to learn by hand, and then maybe adapting the essential knowledge to digital might have more meaning behind the weaving process. With this project weaving by hand and researching different weave patterns, trying to find a way to connect them through the rhythm of the story was the challenging part. It was also a way of crossing the traditional way of weaving. In traditional way usually weaver chooses a draft weave, selects their colours, dresses the loom and weaves according to the few colours they've selected. Here the weave pattern is in constant change just like time.

PREFACE

AS

the BEGINNING

to EVERYTHING

Unlike what nationalist demagogues claim, belonging is not a once-and-for-all condition, a static identity tattooed on our skin; it is a constant self-examination and dynamic revision of where we are, who we are, and where we want to be. Groups and tribes, just like communities and nations, in as much as they exist, should be imagined as complex, heterogeneous, diversified and fluid entities that continually evolve, change and adapt. Sometimes, where you genetically or ethnically seem to fit in most is where you least belong. Sometimes you are at your loneliest among people who physically resemble you and seem to speak the same language. There are many citizens across the world today - and their number is growing - who have a hard time recognising their countries, walking like strangers in their own homelands.

-Shafak, 2020, pp. 35-36-



Hand embroidery, by grandmothers grandmother probably around 1920s (Kilisli, n.db.)

The journey of thought - shaped this research and project - began with the detachment from homeland (Istanbul), in pursuit of freedom, better life in the dreamt place. Yet, this 'dreamt' place that promised freedom and better life revealed how constrained — as a Turkish individual — my liberty still was. This realisation led to a series of questionings.

One of the key notions of these questionings – significant for this project/research – was fear. Through many reflections at the 'dreamt' place, it became clear how deeply fear has shaped my daily experiences: the fear of the refusal of identity card, the fear of not belonging, the fear of living as a stranger. The fear of returning to a place, where freedom of speech barely exists. Also, over time it became clear that most of these fears were not personal. It is a collective feeling amongst people who have migrated. When one moves away from home, even the place that is called home also becomes a stranger.

'Detaching' from Istanbul made the values that shaped me clearer. Moving out from a country which flows towards oppression, violence each passing time, where one doesn't feel free, illuminated what had long remained hidden. A big part of who I am was connected to Istanbul. It is the place -together with all the encounters- that shaped me. As any other big cosmopolitan city, it was the meeting point for many people including my ancestors.

Since childhood, amongst people in Istanbul, one of the questions people would ask to get to know one another was, 'Where are you from?'. Because for many people who lived in Istanbul were people who had migrated there from different cities in Turkey, or neighbouring countries, all other places the Ottoman Empire once occupied. As it comes to my ancestors, they come from the 'Balkans'. My mother's father's side migrated from Montenegro, Podgorice, my mother's mother's side of the family from Bursa, Turkey and both my father's parents are from Bulgaria, Haskovo. But when it was asked to them, they would always say, Istanbul. Only after my questionings they started to talk about where they came from. I started to think my grandparents never talked about their heritage to protect themselves. I thought they had to adapt to the country that they moved in, become as Turkish as possible.

In fact, it was by 'detaching' from the familiar culture and geography, standing in opposition to it — by confronting it or even rejecting it — some realisations emerged. I say 'detaching' and 'standing in opposition', as a reference to Edward Said's Orientalism "Anyone who writes about the Orient has to locate himself in relation to the Orient" (Said, 2010). I got inspired only when I put myself in front of Istanbul. I examined the city and my experiences through the judgement of my own belonging. Orientalism, which is an academic text -research, and/or a term- helped me confront the geography I lived in and the roles it assigned to me. Also confronting the geography and culture I moved to. People that I met in Belgium, also asked where I 'originally' come from because I didn't look Turkish enough, or dress Turkish or behave like a Turk (what does it mean to be, to look like, to dress like, to like, 'Turkish', 'Belgian'...). These experiences and the migration of my ancestors made me question the notions of belonging, identity for years. I thought I can only understand these only by working about it, searching it, writing about it. That's why I started working on this project. Finally getting out of fear and facing these questions.

There was a question that I asked myself: 'What drove them to Istanbul' and 'What bound them together?', 'Where do I belong?'. Perhaps, it was the results of war that drove them to this city. The rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in the Balkans. A safer country to Muslim majority. Probably they had feared, of not belonging in Istanbul. Their fears almost seemed to mirror my own – fear of not belonging, fear of not being safe- This process of questioning, led me to see that: these stories, these shadows of history — what we can call intangible memory, which is also connected to lost intangible heritage — were preserved and inherited in me. Just like the fabrics that the woman of my family had brought with from the lands that they migrated from.

The question 'What bound them together, what were the elements that united them?' became the focus of my project. It made me realise that the elements that united them were the city Istanbul, the pieces of fabric they brought from the places they migrated to and the stories they told. Those fabrics that my grandparents inherited, decorate the walls and tables of my grandparents' house. Some exist now only in photographs.

Another realisation was: it was almost always the women who told these stories, and it was women who made the fabrics. Weaving and fabric embroidery was done by women in nearly every geography. Likewise, in many corners of the world, women were the storytellers, the weavers. The result of patriarchal structures, women's 'arts' was limited inside homes, most commonly exploited by men, their husbands or landlords. Women created works as a way of expression – in Turkish cultures women were also forced to produce as an income. Therefore, the fabric or the woven element became a way of communication amongst women. They passed their memories from generation to generation as a practice of living archive, an intangible heritage. All the questions I asked myself and their incomplete answers inspired me to weave and write a story. The work is shaped around a story. The story begins with a long idiom and continues as a day Istanbul (as a reflection to the times when the city still allowed freedom, when there was still a sense of safety, when the bells of oppression was just beginning). The story is written in the form of concrete poetry, and the narrated story printed on a fabric is also translated into fabric through weaving on an eight-shaft loom.

This work, through which I also try to understand what belonging is, is a journey of confronting my fears. I confront my fears because I am stepping into crafts I do not know, I connect with my roots by asking questions. I create by drawing strength from my ancestors' migration, by investigating what they kept hidden. As far as I have realised, the way I define my belonging is shaped by the fact that I am an Istanbulite. By the realisation that I belong not to a country but to a geography, being woman, and connecting my act of making to the art carried by women for generations.

With this project and thesis, I wish the person who will read it or will touch the woven fabric will think about their identities and belonging or think about migration. Accept their own different parts. Because the feeling of belonging can both restrict and liberate. Think about what is belonging, what are the imposed identities that we live in. To think about the boundaries created by the society we live in. Especially current social fabric we live in most often pushes one to alienate each other,

makes us think of the 'other' or the 'different one' which creates a division even within oneself. Just as much as the questions that rise from within — can open the door to liberate from these restrictions. There is not one true identity. One can feel belonged to many places. I wish to arise questions about migration through the story which will allow to walk along with it, remind people that textiles and stories are always around us. We wear the textiles, we dry ourselves when we are wet, we cover ourselves when cold. We tell stories to each other daily. We share our experiences with people which are all a form of a story.

CHAPTER 1:ROOTS

*When we move about, we carry with us, above all else, the clothes
we wear and these have always been of material,
textile in its nature, if not actually a textile.
-Albers, 1959, p. 18-*



*On the right paternal grandmother and a part of her
family 1953 (Kilisli, n.d.a.)*

This chapter discusses Istanbul's history briefly in the context of migration. It introduces Istanbul's ancient history shortly to give an understanding of rich culture of the city. The key moments in recent history will be underlines. It will also include the personal history migration details, which is relevant into shaping this project and thesis. Furthermore, the context of migration, personal history will be filled with personal quotes and mouth-to-mouth stories.

1.1: THE PLACE OF UNITY AND DISSONANCE

ISTANBUL
and
the BOSPHORUS

Memory creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation.
-Benjamin, 1969, p. 98-

The connection of memory with place is not peripheral nor is it contingent. Place and memory are integrally connected such that one cannot understand one without reference to the other.
-Malpas, 2012, p11-21-

Istanbul has been habited since 750-550 BC, has been known with different names over the history. Istanbul wasn't always Istanbul. It has been Byzantion, Constantinopolis, the second Rome. In the mid-Byzantine period, it was simply Polis. In the Ottoman period it was Kostantiniyye, Islambol and Dersaadet, and many others; but it was never just Istanbul. During the first half of the 20th century, these other names were almost completely wiped out (Derviş, P., Tanju, B., & Tanyeli, U., 2015). It was founded by the ancient Greek king from the cities Megara, Argos. Emperor Constantine declared Istanbul as the capital of the Roman Empire around 330 AC. In 395 the Roman Empire was divided to two, the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire lived until it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1453 (Avcı, 2001; Kuzucu, n.d.).

Istanbul being one of the oldest continuously habitant and largely populated city in the world, was always a point of migration throughout the history. After the first Balkan Wars -1912-1913-, Istanbul had huge migration waves from the Balkans (Erarslan, 2026). Many people who forcefully migrated from the Balkans to Turkey are called muhacirs. The word refers to Muslim refugees of the territories once ruled by Muslims who are now seeking refuge in lands ruled by Muslims (Erol, 2023). The family discussed in this thesis is one of those defined as muhacir. By the state, muhacirs were placed in areas depending on which country they migrated from. Most of the families who migrated from the Balkans were placed in the Fatih district, the Historical Peninsula. One of the oldest regions in Istanbul, which was already inhabited by Greek Istanbulites, Armenians was one of the centres of the city' where different cultures meet.

'Our parents prepared to leave their home in one night, from Montenegro. The night before they left a Christian neighbour came and warned them and said, they are going to come and kill you soon. You must leave somewhere to be safe.' (K. Alp, personal communication, 2025)



Muhacirs (Levantine Heritage, n.d.)

Many people from the Balkans, forcefully migrated from their homes with what they could carry and what they have valued the most, since they migrated to a far land by foot. As with many other daily objects and food, what people carried was most commonly textiles; the clothes, the carpets, the quilts that they would be protected with

'One of the only inheritances from them is this very old Kuran which is covered with hand embroidered fabric by a great-great-grandmother who pretend to be mute. The other one is handwoven and embroidered sheet. It was repurposed later by my grandmother as a tablecloth.' (Y. Dağaltı, personal communication, n.d.)

Since the recent years -since 1950s- there have been major happenings that shaped the city's collective memory. The city's population demographic has changed over the years with the wars in Iraq, Syria, Islamic reforms in Iran and Afghanistan. Also, with the Istanbul Pogrom; a government-instigated series of riots against the Greek minority of Istanbul in September 1955 (de Zayas, Alfred, 2007). During those riots lots of business -together with their houses- owned by the Greek minority -together with Armenian and Jewish too- were looted, destroyed, and people have been killed. The minorities which were engraved in the cultural memory of Istanbul were displaced. Many migration stories held painful memories in them. Many people leave the place that they call home from various reasons. One important reason is that 'home' has become somewhere inhabitable for them. It can be politics, discrimination, economics, war.

People feel most of the time that they have to give up something of them. Most of the time the first thing is to give up is the language one speaks. You either give it up or hide it. If you don't give it up then mostly the mother teaches the children, the language in secrecy. To begin with, every human being needs a language with which to identify, and which is related to his sense of his own identity. That language may be common to hundreds of millions of individuals or just to a few thousand. Numbers are unimportant; what matters is the sense of belonging. (Maalouf, 2000, p109).

'My grandfathers' parents mother language was Serbian. When they migrated to Istanbul and became muhacirs, my grandfather's grandmother pretended to be mute and deaf. Elders of the family told that she never learned Turkish. She didn't teach Serbian to her grandsons, but her granddaughters. My aunt only spoke Serbian before she passed away, and no one understood her words' (K. Alp, personal communication, n.d.)

Maurice Halbwachs argued that there is no such thing as a purely personal memory. We shape our memories through the everyday communication with others (Ekman). Reflecting on what Halbwachs thinks, it can be said that the place one lives in, the language one speaks, one's interaction with their surroundings shapes one's memory. Not only visually but with the stories one reads, hears about a place in a city shapes the 'personal' memory. Most of the time these stories about famous districts, or famous shops, movie theatres, gardens are stories that are told from mouth-to-mouth, from generation to generation. Therefore, the traces of the people once lived in a city are visible or experienceable around the city. From its shops to its streets, to its trees, to its cemeteries, and to its architecture. In a city, in its every corner, there is always a story to tell.

The city housed three long lived big empires, the city brought people together from different cultural back grounds as well as it separated them. Many languages were spoken; Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Greek, French, Italian, Armenian, Romani, Kurdish... During Republican years an identity of "Turkishness" was pushed amongst people, one culture, one language, one memory nevertheless peoples' traditions still lived together with them (Derviş & Tanju & Tanyeli, 2015). Due to its rich cultural history, language, music, food, clothing was all influenced by each other. Because of these reasons current Turkish language consists of many foreign words. These unifying characteristics of the city are one of the key elements that shaped this research and project. Chapter 3 discusses the story and its methodology in light of these qualities of the city.

CHAPTER 2

how can

the PRACTICE

of NARRATION & STORYTELLING

be WOVEN

into CULTURAL IDENTITY

What do walking, weaving, observing, storytelling, singing, drawing and writing have in common? The answer is that they all proceed along lines of one kind or another. On closer inspection, threads and traces appeared to be not so much categorically different as transforms of one another. Threads have a way of turning into traces, and vice versa. Moreover, whenever threads turn into traces, surfaces are formed, and whenever traces turn into threads, they are dissolved.

-Ingold, 2007, p1-2-



Grandmother who narrated her story through making her own dress (Kilisli, n.dd.)

This chapter discusses literature research, connecting the notions to be discussed with practices of selected artist and their work. Chapter 2.1 will examine the notion of practice. Chapter 2.2, the relationship of weaving and storytelling-narration will explain as one element and their connections then, it will be divided into two chapters. 2.2.1 Weaving and 2.2.2 Narration & Storytelling. In 2.2.1 the methodology of weaving will be briefly explained with images of loom and its elements. In 2.2.2 Narration & Storytelling, the practice of storytelling will be explained through Turkish storytelling techniques, important key points will be given about storytelling traditions. In Chapter 2.3 Cultural Identity will be analysed though the lens of Identity and will be discussed through two books. Artists work to be discussed will focused on how these artists have addressed the topics covered in each chapter within their own artistic practices.

The woven and printed story pieces, explained in Chapter 3, are linked to each other and each heading of this chapter. Both elements need practice, as to do it in repeat, as a skill to learn. One gets better by doing it, studying it. They are related to identity. A story is told, written in the language of the narrator, it includes the traditions, practices, memories of that person. Weaving is a practice that is tactile, it is also a form of heritage. A handweaver weaves their knowledge, style on fabric. Over time, the craftsman incorporates elements of their own. Storytelling and weaving thus can be elements that mutually enrich one another. A hand-woven fabric which has the same pattern, colour will have different feeling, tactility if the weaver is different. Even if the weaver is the same person the fabrics quality will change from day to day, as every day is different from another the weaver will also have different force of using the reed -explained in 2.2.1-.

2.1 PRACTICE

These memories were not simple ones; each visual image was linked to muscular sensations, thermal sensations, etc. He could reconstruct all his dreams, all his half-dreams.

-Borges, 1964, p. 63-

The working material into the hand, learning by working it of its obedience and its resistance, its potency and its weakness, its charm and dullness.

-Albers, 1959-

For sociologist Richard Sennett practice is a form of knowledge that begins as an explicit knowledge that becomes tacit. Meaning that one begins doing 'the practice' by consciously thinking on. Then it becomes something that is done without thinking, it becomes natural. The knowledge becomes habit, once you learn a craft you don't think about the things that you must do to do it. He says that when we develop a skill, by practicing, we learn many ways to perform the same kind of activity. All practice; craft is slow thus you surrender to it. Slow means you think more, you must be patient; in order to be patient, you surrender (MAK Museum Wien, 2016).

The other meaning of practice defined by Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) is 'a job that involves a lot of skill or training'. Practices of weaving, storytelling, narrating are all notions that one must internalise their ways. To weave one needs to learn how to moderate the loom, how hard to pull the reed. It defines everything about the textile that will be woven. The storyteller needs to know words and how to use them. He/she should be able to read the atmosphere of the room the moment of narrating.

2.2 WEAVING as STORYTELLING & NARRATING

Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn.
-Benjamin, 1969, p. 84-

Traditional weavers weave items featuring the same motifs, passed down from mother to daughter to granddaughter. That's the way of tradition. In weaving villages of Anatolia, all the women in a village weave the same pattern. That's because they have learnt it from their mothers and grandmothers.
-TRT 2, 2024-

When I weave a kilim, I travel back to my childhood and return; a kilim is love, it is passion and sorrow; a kilim tells the story of all our sorrows. Sometimes, the love I couldn't express to anyone else, I confided in the kilim.'
-TRT Belgesel, 2018-



Young girl and two children working on loom (Salt Research Archive, n.d.)

The first woven textile remnants were found in Turkey, Çatalhöyük, a large settlement in southern Anatolia dates back 9000 years. Archeological study shows that a mother goddess was worshipped together with male gods, equality seems to be important amongst people of Çatalhöyük (Lambert, 2026; Çatalhöyük Research Project, n.d.).

Giving the example from the study 'Kuzeybatı Anadolu (2003) motifs used in carpet weaving in Anatolia carry traces left by the ancient people who lived there. These traces of the ancients- shapes, symbols, plants- were passed on through weaving by Anatolian women. That can be said many of the symbols, the weaving techniques used in Anatolia is like the voice of the people who lived in this geography and the weavers' ancestors. The text points out the motifs that were used, mainly on architectural columns, in that geography by Ancient Greeks who once lived there.

'A conversation I had with a villager while I was in northern Aegean region of Turkey; We have so many coins, bracelets, stones from the ancient Greeks and the Ottomans in our houses. Our grandparents found them while they were working in their field to plant vegetables.'

Just like the weaver explains what weaving is for on TRT Belgesel, people have been weaving their stories, heritage on textile. The patterns they learn from their mothers reflect their geography. With the colours and the weave pattern combinations they use, they tell their stories through textiles.

Apart from weaving, storytelling tradition and practices have a very long history in Turkic cultures and Anatolia. It is still practiced in some villages. Like many crafts and traditions, storytelling was passed from generation to generation by woman to woman. People gathered around town square to listen stories -by male storytellers-. People gathered in each other's homes -by woman storytellers- to listen to stories, fables. Children were put to sleep by storytelling. In Anatolia the storyteller has different names depending on the gender. This project focuses on the woman narrators-storytellers -way of telling- whose voice was rarely heard, that was etched into peoples' memories.

Woman storytellers consist of storytellers known as "fairy-tale mothers" and "fairy-tale grandmothers." In Anatolia, the role of storytelling is predominantly carried out by female narrators. The "fairy-tale mother" is typically the village's elderly woman. It has been a practice that is passed down from mother to daughter; storytellers travel from village to village, telling traditional fairy tales to the public in village squares and courtyards, and they stay in the places they visit, subsisting on the food and small allowances provided by the local people (Aydemir, 2021).

'When we were kids, in Bursa, in our neighbourhood there was an old woman, we use to go there with my big sisters and listen to folktales in front of the wood burning stove. While she baked chestnuts she used to tell the stories. (Y. Dağaltı, personal communication, 2019)

Spanish weaver from USA, Sara Collazo Romay who has a migration background, is one of the artists that expresses her stories in her practice. In her artworks she explores her memories from her childhood and from her homeland to her woven textiles. Her practice includes art pieces and functional textiles works that can be used daily. She explores the concepts of immigration, place, identity through her personal memories, combining them with historical facts, she translates her stories into woven textiles. In her work 'Que Salga el Sol' she transcribes the nursery rhymes into a woven fabric that she and paternal grandmother used to sing together. She translated the warm feeling she felt and the feeling of the sun into the textile. Through her work 'Born from love' she explores her heritage through her individuality and her sense of self identity by weaving the patterns from the country she migrated to and the word that has an emotional meaning to her. She shows how her emotions, memories, stories can be adapted in an abstract way by using weave patterns and colours (Lapeque_textiles, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; Romay, n.d.).



(Lapeque_textiles, 2025a)



(Lapeque_textiles, 2025b)

Turkish feminist artist Canan creates textile, mixed media works. Her practice is focused around the societal and patriarchal roles in Turkey. She defines her practice political rather than feminist. She puts emphasis on societal norms in Turkey. In some of works she infuses story and folktale imagery of the region as well as the traditional arts of the country. While she names her pieces, she makes references to traditional fables, stories, cultural norms and taboos defined by religion, family and judicial system in Turkey. Her textile works create spaces within spaces where the viewer can, in some way, experience can engage with the piece. Her Series of Endearment and Falname she uses fable imagery also she uses traditional way of drawing, miniature (Canan, n.d.). She adapts traditional arts into contemporary pieces where one can find imagery from our current societies' problems.



(Canan, 2019)



(Canan, 2020)

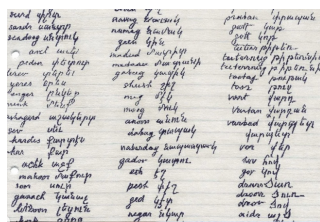


(Canan, 2017)

Artist Mekhitar Garabedian; Armenian by descent, born in Aleppo, raised in Belgium, his ancestors come from Anatolia who were displaced by genocide. He describes in his interview on loophole that he has many presences within him; Anatolian, Syrian, Lebanese, Middle Eastern, Belgian. His work covers notions of language, heritage, memory. He examines how displacement and inherited narratives shapes identity. He works on drawings, texts, installations, photography, textiles. He explores his families' archives and creates works that reflects all these notions. His works also questions belonging and longing coming from living in diaspora and describes it as being in between cultures, times, places. He mentions that people who lives in diaspora are often occupied with questions of how to translate different pasts into the present. His work, on figure x, 'a comme alpabet (shabeeg-parag)' the carpet that is woven consists of text written in Armenian and Dutch. Two languages that he speaks but reflects on different belongings. The woven fabric, figure xx, 'For God's sake, keep it away from candle and oil and hold it with a white cloth, I beg you' has imagery from old Armenian manuscripts, he has referred to these manuscripts a reflection on displacement over the years (Martinović, 2026). He is one of the artists like Amin Maloouf, who somehow doesn't 'compartmentalise his identity' but takes it as a whole and tells his story through his pieces. His art works makes one reflect on their own questionings on belonging and identity.



(Loophole magazine, 2026)



(Martinović, 2026)

2.2.1 WEAVING

Weaving is an example of a craft which is many-sided. Besides surface qualities, such as rough and smooth, dull and shiny, hard and soft, it also includes color, and, as the dominating element, texture, which is the result of the construction of weaves.

-Albers, 1959, p. 52-

This chapter covers weaving methodology. Firstly, definitions of weaving terms will be given. It will follow to the brief technicality of weaving that is used in this project. It is important to briefly understand how the system works to be able to grasp the connections between the threading-draft-design and the translation of it to the written story. These methodologies will be explained in Chapter 3.2. The Woven fabric.

"Weaving is three dimensional, one must think from every perspective. Loom is the instrument. Musicians use 5 lines, stave-pentagram, to create the melody; weavers use the squares, 4-8-12-16, in proportion to the number of the shafts, they use. In weaving we write the music with the squares when we design a fabric. We create melody and translate it to a three-dimensional object of tactility. In weaving, square empty and square full is the music." (L. de Cesare, personal communication, June 2025)

Everything in the world had its own language, own way of communication. If one's a cook one must know the tools you use, knife, fire, plant. If one's a weaver one must know the machine in use, the loom, its limits, how to design with it, its language. If one is in a foreign city, one must know how to get along in that city. The way of living in that city, becomes important. If one doesn't listen the language, it gets easier to be lost, but if one follows the rules-the language it gets easier to find the way. The methodology of weaving, the threading, drafting, choosing the threads, knowing how every element effects the fabric is a language to learn.

Heddles: Thin pieces of metal or texsolv that are held by a shaft. They have a hole in the centre through which you can thread a warp end.

Reed: The reed acts like a comb, it creates the order, separates the warp, pushes the weft threads that passes through the warp threads to put them in correct order. It arranges the warp in the desired order at the desired intervals.

Shaft/harness: It is the frame that holds the heddles. Four-shaft looms have four separate frames, which can be lifted together or separately to create different weave structures. Every thread that is warp thread passes through these heddles. The shafts contain the two movements. Up and down.

Threading: The process of putting your warp threads through your heddles. The draft that is designed to pass through the shafts and heddles is used as a guide.

Warp: The yarns that passes through the loom, held under tension on the loom. It is the diagonal threads that determines the length of the fabric.

Weft: The threads that weave between the warp threads. They are horizontal on the cloth.
(Gather Textiles, 2026)

Weaving is the medium that connects the act of creating of the deceased ancestors. It is a tradition that connects us to 9000 years ago. It is an act of remembering the tactility of everyday objects and the labour behind it. As mentioned in the former chapter women used weaving, textile art to express themselves, imperial court used it as a tool to express their richness through the materials, through colours and through images that was woven (Topkapı Museum, n.d.). An example to power, good luck and sultanate is the motif called *çintamani*, and colour associated with it on clothing is usually red (The Met, n.d.b). Creating a textile from the beginning till end through the light of a story is a practice that reminds one the value of the passing time, how precious every single thread is. It is the practice where one adds the texture and depth to a story by literally creating a 3D object.



(The met, n.d.a)

2.2.2 STORYTELLING and NARRATING

The storyteller takes what he tells from experience -his own or, that respond by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale.

-Benjamin, 1969, p. 87-

For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to.

The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory.

When the rhythm of work has seized him; he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself. This is how today it is becoming unravelled at all its ends after being woven thousands of years ago in the ambience of the oldest forms of craftsmanship.

-Benjamin, 1969, p.91-

No story is like a wheeled vehicle whose contact with the road is continuous. Stories walk, like animals and men. And their steps are not only between narrated events but between each sentence, sometimes each word.

Every step is a stride over something not said.

-Berger, 1982, p.284-5-

Just as in other languages, stories and fairy tales in Turkish also begin with certain set phrases and idioms, called *tekerleme* in Turkish. Storytelling was an oral tradition because of that there aren't many recordings on it just like traditional weaving, it was passed from generation to generation. It is one of the under-explored genres of Turkish folk literature and children's folklore. In the book *Tekerlemeler* the writer explains *tekerleme* as abstract poetry and he emphasises Turkish arts' inclination towards abstraction (Duymaz, 2019). Turkish art from weaving, to painting and storytelling is commonly practiced in an abstract form.

Tekerlemes takes different forms depending on the storyteller. A storyteller may adapt and use well known *tekerlemes* according to the traditions in that geography, region. Differing from European traditions Turkish *tekerlemes*, despite being abstract contain elements that could be real, and can be found in long forms. *Tekerlemes* are typically found at the beginning, end, and middle of the stories. The first *tekerleme* prepares the listener for the story, acts as a reminder that the story to be told is not real. The second one serves an attention moment. It tries to bring back the listener to the moment. The third one is the one that ties the unfinished, conclusion-less story to an end, and helps bring the narrative to a piece (Boratav, 1963).

Like Walter Benjamin writes the active act of storytelling is almost coming to an end. In our current society it has found different forms, commonly as books, Instagram posts, magazines. The stories that have been known for decades are becoming traces of heritage in our lives. We have and always have an active form of storytelling which is sharing our lived experiences with each other. By telling each other what we have done or what we have seen, or by gossiping. Contemporary storytelling has different forms. The art of storytelling and narrating lies in the writer's ability to use the words, idioms and grammar of the spoken language.

The story told in Chapter 3 was written under the influence of both the philosophical and artistic views of two Turkish authors, as well as their literary styles. In philosopher Oruç Aruoba's literary work word play is prominent as well as creating imagery by poetry. While Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu writes his poetry using wordplay, influenced by folk narrative forms, everyday idiomatic expressions that artists had previously overlooked—his visual art and in his literary works. The colours he uses in his visual art reflect the colours of the geography and culture.

*"Armudun iyisini ayılar
Elmanın soyulmuşunu
Kibarlar yer"
-Eyüboğlu, 2003, p. 339-*

The best pears are eaten by bears
Peeled apples
Are eaten by the well-mannered.

In the poem *Elmanın Kabağı -apple skin-* Eyüboğlu refers to the Turkish proverb 'Armudun iyisini ayılar yer' -the best pears are eaten by bears- which means people who come into possession of something beautiful that doesn't suit them. Him being an artist spend most of his time in inland Anatolia in different villages and coming from a smaller town from northern Turkey one may consider as him referring to people from cities that have become rich from nothing but has no knowledge and taste.

*"İçmişim armut rakısını
Satmışım şeyin anasını
Ya olduğun gibi görün demiş birisi
Ya görüldüğün gibi ol
Dol karabakır dol
Dol karabakır dol"
-Eyüboğlu, 2003, p. 271-*

I have drunk the pear rakı
I have sold the things mother
Someone said either seem as you are
Or be as you seem
Full, dark copper, full
Full, dark copper, full

In the poem Turnel Köprüsü he refers to two sayings. Firstly, well-known saying amongst Turkish culture from Mevlâna Celâleddin Rûmi, 'ya olduğun gibi görün demiş ya görüldüğün gibi ol' – Either seem as you are or be as you seem. Secondly, 'anasını satmak'- selling his/her mother, which is a formulaic expression used in different meanings such as don't care, don't mind, don't worry. Rakı is a strong %45 alcoholic drink. This poem can be paraphrased as; the writer is getting drunk and he says to himself I am drunk so be it and let it go. Don't pretend to be drunk, don't pretend to be drunk so be it.

*Salak Karabatak
ne arıyorsun
Martılar katında?..
-Aruoba, 1999, p. 119-*

Silly Cormorant
What are you looking for
among the seagulls?

Oruç Aruoba's, Turkish philosopher and writer, main literary interest was Japanese haikus. Haiku, Japanese poetry, is the shortest text form in world literature. Haiku captures a moment in life and explains through three short verses, without embellishment, only explains what that moment is in a poetic way (Ak, 2020). Here Aruoba uses the image of cormorant and seagull, one of the most common birds in coastal Marmara Sea, to express a daily happening. In Istanbul or any coasts of Marmara Sea one can see cormorants and seagulls flying in the sky.

2.3 cultural IDENTITY

I began my work by recognising that the Orient is not a static natural phenomenon. Just as the West itself is not a particular place, the Orient is not a particular place either. Vico's important observation that man makes his own history, and that what he can know is what he has made, should not be taken literally, but applied to geography...

-Said, 2010, p. 14-

Would I exist more authentically if I cut off a part of myself? Identity can't be compartmentalised. You can't divide it up into halves or thirds or any other separate segments. I haven't got several identities: I've got just one, made up of many components combined in a mixture that is unique to every individual.

-Maalouf, 2000, p3-

Language is bound to remain the mainspring of cultural identity, and linguistic diversity the mainspring of all other diversities. To begin with, every human being needs a language with which to identify, and which is related to his sense of his own identity. That language may be common to hundreds of millions of individuals or just to a few thousand. Numbers are unimportant; what matters is the sense of belonging. Each one of us needs this powerful and reassuring link.

-Maalouf, 2000, p. 109-

According to Zygmunt Bauman, on Identity conversations with Benedetto Vecchi (2004), there are roles that are adjusted to each one of us in the current society we live in. By the countries we live in, the schools we go to, the belief we have they all have a constructed identity to be adapted. There are also groups -lower in the power hierarchy- that have no choice to adapt an identity, but an identity is given by the society. Identities such as; a former drug addict, beggar, a single mother on welfare, or other categories left out of the authoritatively endorsed list of those that are proper (Baumann, 2004). He also says that asking 'who you are' makes sense to you only once you believe that you can be someone other than you are; only if you have choice, it is the choice to be 'real'. Just like Bauman, Maalouf also argues about the imposed/constructed identities. He argues that if we can accept the components of our identities, on the parts we have difficulties accepting or parts that makes us unique, we can come to a point where we can also accept others easily. Being aware of constructed identities helps us understand under what societal norms we live in.

CANAN, the feminist Kurdish-Turkish artist mentioned in Chapter 2.2 Weaving as Storytelling-Narrating, she created her own identity by renouncing all the surnames was given to her by Turkish Law. When she was started to get known in the art scene she was known as Canan Şenol, a surname she got by marriage. When she read the law; when a woman gets divorce, she can only keep the surname if it will not harm the former husband (Canan, n.d.). That can be said that she changed her name to pure Canan as an act of denying the norms and 'identities' that are imposed by the society. The nature of her practice is about questioning identities and belonging, and she creates her works by narrating stories each time with a new story.

CHAPTER 3

ISTANBUL as a TALE

*I scour my memory to find as many ingredients of my identity as I can. I then assemble and arrange them.
I don't deny any of them.*
-Maalouf, 2000, p. 14-

Identity isn't given once and for all: it is built up and changes throughout a person's lifetime.
-Maalouf, 2000, p. 20-

*By giving different colours to the differently functioning threads, the structural character of the weaving
will be intensified. In addition, colour, more acutely than texture, conveys emotional values. When colour
in weaving moves into a first place, suppressing the main textile ingredients, we find a regression
of the art of weaving.*
-Albers, 1974, p. 75-

*They are shadows that tag along with us to the four corners of the earth, sometimes they walk ahead of us,
sometimes they fall behind, but they are never too far. That is why, even long after our migrations and
relocations, if you listen carefully, you can still detect traces of our motherlands in our broken accents
half-smiles, uncomfortable silences.*
-Shafak, 2020, p. 43-



(Piri Reis, 1465-1555)

This chapter discusses methodology that is adapted on the artistic practice. It is divided to two chapters, The Story and The Woven Fabric. The Story discusses the style, the language of the story, the visual elements used, and the wordplay. It will be explained by giving references to the previous chapters. The Woven Fabric explains how the story was adapted for the weaving process. The woven fabric and the written printed fabric is a way of questioning the relationship between what is written and what is woven. The intention is to search their way of communication through material, both being fabric, but also rhythm

The project stems from the migration stories of my great grandparents and mine. It focuses on the city of Istanbul as it was the connection between my great grandparents. The whole work, weaving and the story it represents the passing time. Each line that is written and each thread that is woven represents time, a moment we cannot change anymore. Just like the weave patterns, the beginning of the story that begins with a map of Balkans and Istanbul, is inspired from Ottoman manuscripts. With the aim to adapt these ancient images into a contemporary language.

3.1 THE STORY

Stories bring us together; untold stories keep us apart.

We are made of stories - those that have happened, those that are still happening at this moment in time and those that are shaped purely in our imagination through words, images, dreams and an endless sense of wonder about the world around us and how it works.

-Shafak, 2020, p. 9-

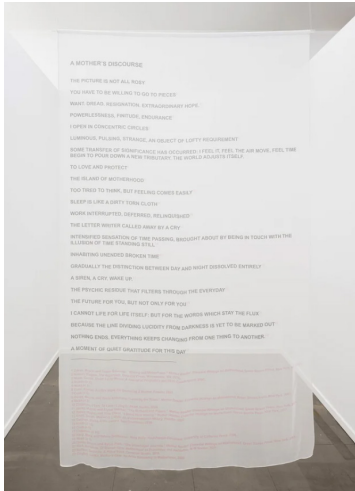
The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original.

-Benjamin, 1969, p.76-

Fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original. For sense in its poetic significance is not limited to meaning but derives from the connotations conveyed by the word chosen to express it. We say of words that they have emotional connotations.

-Benjamin, 1969, p.78-

These verses 'Aç kapıyı bezirgânbaşı, bezirgânbaşı. Kapı hakkı ne verirsin, ne verirsin?', 'Head merchant, head merchant open the door. What do you want for the door fee? What will you take? What will you take?' are from a children's game that, it is a version of tekerleme that exist in children's plays. Different from its traditional use here it playfully refers to the diplomatic difficulties faced by someone who is not from the European Union.



Francesca Capone, *A Mother's Discourse: Cento Poem*, digital print on translucent silk chiffon
(Nationale, n.d.)

The process of writing the story goes as follows; the words are imagined as how each sentence or phrase might move through the void and positioned then according to those movements on a five-metre-long space. The story is printed on a fabric rather than paper to make a reference to the textile's way of behaving. The idea came in three parts; firstly, through the natural behaviour of textiles, secondly from a memory and, thirdly by inspiration from another artist. Firstly, textile is something we carry every day. It has been part of human life longer than paper. It was/is our form of protection. Secondly, when I was 8 it was when we have visited with school the house-atelier of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. His works were full of familiarities from daily life, the patterns that exist on our carpets and the words -tekerleme- that surrounded us. He worked a lot on textile. He had scrolls of fabrics everywhere and the whole atelier was full of his wood block prints. Every student had printed a fish with the wood blocks that he carved on a scroll fabric,

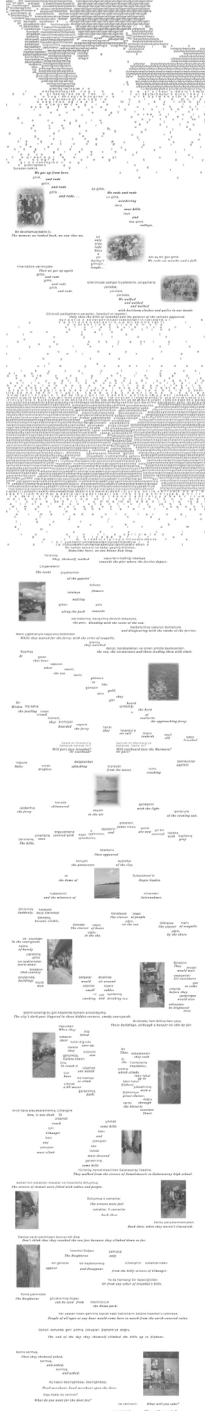
and we signed our names under the fish. Later, it was cut into pieces to be given to each one of us. For this project to keep the story as a long piece the intention was keeping the story as a whole without breaking up into separate parts as one would do in a book. American artist, writer, Francesca Capone has done a similar work. For her exhibition 'A Mother's Discourse' together with embroidered weavings she has printed a cento poem on a fabric (Franny Capone, n.d.). The written story is also accompanied by photographs. The photographs at the beginning of the story, are family photographs of my great-grandparents. The photograph on the far right is from Montenegro, the one in the middle is from Bulgaria, and the one on the far left is from Turkey. Except for the final photograph, all the others are taken in Istanbul. The final photograph is one I took of myself with my back turned whilst working on the project at the Industriemuseum, as a reference to Belgium. As Elif Shafak says 'Stories bring us together, untold stories keep us apart.' Here is the written story of Istanbul. The image is the 5-meter written version.

Buradan kalktık gittik, gittik, gittik...
Az gittik, uz gittik, dere tepe düz gittik.
Altı ay, bir güz gittik.
Bir de arkamıza baktık ki
bir arpa boyu yer gitmişiz.
Yine kalktık yerimizden gittik, gittik, gittik.
Ellerimizde yadigar kıyafetlerle, yorganlarla yürüdük,
yürüdük, yürüdük...
Göründü padişahların sarayları, Konstantiniyye'nin
tepelere
Bir zaman sonra ki ne kadar geçmiş bilinmez
Yürümüş, vapurların kalktığı iskeleye.
Çingenelerin çiçeklerinin kokusu iskeleye giden yolu
sarmalamış.
Karşırmış denizin kokusuna, kaybolmuş vapurun
dumanıyla.
Martı çıgıllarıyla vapurunu beklerken izlemiş denizi,
karabatakları ve onları simitle besleyenleri.
Duymuş gelen vapurun sesini, deniz ve güneşin altın
gibi ışıladığı o saatlerde.
Bir itiş kakış, insan kümesi, binmişler vapura.
Tarihi İstanbul'a doğru seyr eden.
İskele mi İstanbul'a bakacak sancak mı
Sancak mı Marmara'ya bakacak iskele mi?
Vapura vuran dalgalardan
sıçrayan tuzlu damlacıklar
ışıldamış havada akşam güneşinin ışıklarıyla.
Servilerle, çınarlarla erguvanlarla kaplı o tepelerin
yerini gri bir tabaka kaplamış şimdiler.
Sanki tek yeşil yer; görülmüş Topkapı Sarayı'nın ku-
leleri İstanbul'u koruyan Ayasofya ve Sultanahmet'in
kubbelerini minareleri.
Görülmüş kalabalık Eminönü,
Denizde vapur, sandal yığını, Karadaysa insan yığını,
Gökteyse martı yığını.
19. yüzyıldan kalma, yıpranmış zor ayakta kalan
binaların avlularında küçük sehpa lar etrafında adam-
lar sigara ve çay içermiş.
Binaların önceki yaşayanları gibi onlar da yerlerinden
edilmeden önce müşteri beklercesine.
Şehrin karanlığı bu gizli köşelerde dumanlı avlar-
daymış.
Bu binalar, hem atılmış hem çarşı.

Vapurdan inip kafasını kaldırdığında Galata kulesini
görmüş.
Ona ulaşmak için 63 metreyi çıkmak gerekirmiş.
Bu sebeptendir ki Fünikülerle çıkmış.
takır tukur takır tukur yükselirmiş Şişhane'ye doğru
tarihi tünelden.
Artık hava alacakaranlıkmiş.
Cihangire inmek için bazı yoluşları çıkmak bazı
yoluşları inmek gerekirmiş.
Yürümüş Asmalımescitten Galatasaray lisesine.
Asmalı'nın sokakları masalar ve insanlarla doluymuş
Doluymuş o zamanlar sokaklar, kimsenin öteki olma-
tan korkmadığı o zamanlar.
Denize vardı sanılmasın bunca indi diye
İstanbul Boğazı yalnızca
bir görünür bir kaybolmuş
Cihangirden sokaklarından.
Ya da herhangi bir tepeciğinden.
Roma parkından gözükmüş Boğaz kesintisizce ve
her yaştan insan gelirmiş İstanbul'u izlemeye.
Toprak kaplı bu kalıntıların üzerine oturur, sohbet
edilirmiş denize karşı.
Günün sonunda geri çıkmış bütün yoluşları,
Şişhane'ye doğru. Bir sonraki hafta aynı şeyi tekrar-
lamak için.
O haftadan sonraki haftaya ve sonraki
Ta ki her şey değişene kadar.
Sonra sormuş, sormuş, sormuş,
Aç kapıyı bezirgânbaşı, bezirgânbaşı
Kapı hakkı ne veririsin, ne veririsin

We got up from here
 and rode and rode and rode...
 We rode and rode wandering over hills and valleys.
 We rode for six months and a fall.
 The moment we looked back, we saw that we,
 Only rode a barley's length...
 Then we got up again and rode and rode and rode.
 We walked and walked and walked with heirloom
 clothes and quilts in our hands.
 Only then the hills of Konstantiniyye and the palaces
 of the sultans appeared...
 Sometime later, no one knows how long, they them-
 self walked towards the pier where ferries depart.
 The scent of the gypsies' flowers wafting along the
 path towards the pier, blending with the scent of the
 sea, and disappearing with the smoke of the ferries.
 While they waited for the ferry, with the cries of
 seagulls, they watched the sea, cormorants and
 those feeding them with simit.
 At that hour when the sea glitters like gold, they
 heard the horn of the approaching ferry.
 Within the jostling crowd, they boarded the ferry
 that set sail towards old Istanbul.
 Will port face Istanbul?
 Or starboard?
 Will starboard face the Marmara Sea?
 Or port?
 Salty droplets splashing from the waves crashing
 against the ferry shimmered in the air with the light
 of the evening sun.
 The hills, once covered with sycamores, cypresses
 and judas trees, are now covered with grey.
 Then appeared the protectors of the city, the dome
 of Hagia Sophia and the minarets of Sultanahmet.
 Suddenly, the busy Eminönü became visible.
 The clutter of boats on the sea the clutter of people
 by the shore the clutter of seagulls in the sky.
 In the courtyards of barely alive worn-down 19th
 century buildings men would sit around small tables
 smoking and drinking tea.
 They would wait for customers to come before they
 would also be displaced, like the residents before
 them.
 The city's dark past lingered in these hidden cor-
 ners; smoky outyards.
 These buildings, although a bazaar lie idle by far.
 When they lifted their eyes, they saw Galata tower.
 To reach it one would have to climb the 63-meter
 path.
 Thus, they took the Füniküler which climbed up to
 Şişhane with a great clatter through the historic
 Tünel.
 Now, it was dusk.
 To reach Cihangir, one must climb some hills and
 one must descend some hills.
 They walked from the streets of Asmalimescit to
 Galatasaray high school
 The streets of Asmalı were filled with tables and
 people.
 The streets were full back then. Back then when we
 weren't fractured.
 Don't think that they reached the sea just because
 they climbed down so far.

The Bosphorus only appear and disappear from
 the hilly streets of Cihangir. Or from any other of
 Istanbul's hills.
 The Bosphorus can be seen from the Roma park.
 People of all ages at any hour would come there to
 watch. People sat in front of the sea, on the earth
 covered ruins.
 The end of the day they themselves climbed all the
 hills up to Şişhane, which had been descended in
 the afternoon, to be repeated week after week
 after week
 till the week until everything changed.
 Then they themselves said
 Head merchant, head merchant open the door.
 What do you want for the door fee?
 What will you take?
 What will you take?



*The written story in two languages
written in concrete poetry
(Kilitli, 2026c)*

3.2 THE WOVEN FABRIC

We touch things to assure ourselves of reality. We touch the objects of our love. We touch the things we form. Our tactile experiences are elemental. If we reduce their range, as we do when we reduce the necessity to form things ourselves, we grow lopsided. We are apt today to overcharge our grey matter with words and pictures, that is, with material already transposed into a certain key, preformulated material, and to fall short in providing for stimulus that may touch off our creative impulse, such as unformed material, material 'in the rough'.

-Albers, 1974, pp. 62-63-



Weavings done in Pisa in 2025 (Kilim, 2025b)

The loom that is used is an 8-shaft table loom located in the Industrie-museum Gent on 3rd floor textile department. To make the woven fabric. First the written story was analysed step by step. It is divided into parts visually by concrete poetry. To select the colours of the woven fabric, the route narrated in the story was retraced step by step, and photographs were taken at the locations or moments mentioned in the story. The photographs were then edited, and three primary colours were selected for the warp threads. Shown in the image at the end of the chapter. These colours represent the threads that remain constant and run vertically—that is, the threads that span the entire length of the story. For the changing moments in the story, three or four different colours were chosen colours that reflect the existing hues of that space and evoke a distinct atmosphere. These selected secondary colours are the weft threads. They run horizontally and are woven in rows. These are the colours that follow the changing moments in the story and shift along with them. The photographs are few inspirations from earlier weavings, illustrating how the warp thread goes through the whole textile, and the varying rhythm of the weft. Below its an example from Catskill Weaving School, the works of students. It clearly shows the changing rhythm of weft yarns.

At the beginning and end of the story, the selected weave patterns were chosen based on historical texts. The first pattern selected is the most well-known weave pattern, the plain weave. This is the basic weave that gradually forms the fabric. Later, as we approach Istanbul in the story, the pattern shifts to one used during the Ottoman era. Found from an Italian drafting book from *Manuale Compositore Di Tessuti* (Hoepli, 1910). Finally, the chosen draft references the unknown in Belgium, drawing on a weaving pattern specific to that region—taken from an old Flemish book in the library of the Industriemuseum Gent. Among these, the woven patterns are those I compiled from weaving patterns I learned in Italy from Laura de Cesare and adapted to fit the story. The threads in the woven fabric consist of some purchased threads, some threads used by my grandmother—who has Alzheimer's—during her time and she hasn't been able to use for the past 10 years, some threads gifted to me during my travels last year, and wool threads provided to me by the Industriemuseum Gent.



*Catskill Weaving School students works
(Catskill Weaving School, 2023)*



*Map of Istanbul showing the colours
to be used in weaving (Kilisli, 2026a)*

Usually the main weave patterns, plain weave, satin and twill they all have their traditional-conventional ways of using such as, twill for denim and plain weave for bed sheets or kitchen towels. In this project rather than their conventional use, it was focused on their relationship when woven together. different variations of these weave patterns are used. The weave patterns that are used are different variations of these three main weaves. When the threads were put through the reed it was chosen to make spacing in between threads to create a porous fabric.

CONCLUSION

Those who can accept their diversity fully will hand on the torch between communities and cultures, will be a kind of mortar joining together and strengthening the societies in which they live. On the other hand, those who cannot accept their own diversity may be among the most virulent of those prepared to kill for the sake of identity, attacking those who embody that part of themselves which they would like to see forgotten.

-Maalouf, 2000, p. 31-

Each of us should be encouraged to accept his own diversity, to see his identity as the sum of all his various affiliations, instead of as just one of them raised to the status of the most important, made into an instrument of exclusion...

-Maalouf, 2000, p. 129-

'Identity' is revealed to us only as something to be invented rather than discovered; as a target of an effort, 'an objective'; as something one still needs to build from scratch or to choose from alternative offers and then to struggle for and then to protect through yet more struggle-

-Bauman, 2004-

Longing for identity comes from the desire for security, itself an ambiguous feeling.

-Bauman, 2004-



*Weaving in Industriemuseum Gent
(Industriemuseum Gent, 2025)*

Maalouf and Bauman's views may come together in this sense: what we call identity ceases to be a source of unease—whether in questioning it or in living with it—only when we discover our true selves, when we clean ourselves from constructed and imposed identities and accept the true fragments of ourselves that we have found.

If we start to question what is identity each one of us will find fragments of already constructed pieces, also pieces that truly belongs to oneself. Maybe even fragments that are difficult to accept. In the end if one accepts their own fragments, it will be easier to accept others'. Maybe, no one would have to hide their fragile fragments.

By telling a story that is constructed by my memories from Istanbul a decade ago, I have shared with others the thoughts and emotions I had kept to myself here in Belgium. In reference to those times when I felt compelled to hide my true self here, I have found the courage to share who I am today, embracing all my differences and similarities with Belgium. Everyone who created the space -even if not in a visible way- for my story to be heard - especially my teachers here and everyone I connected with at the Industriemuseum Gent, the entire team and the visitors- gave me the confidence to tell this story.

While writing Chapter 1, gathering and arranging all the information I've gathered, it became clear that every migration, every separation from home has pain within. It is important to know about the history to understand what causes the crisis of an individual has.

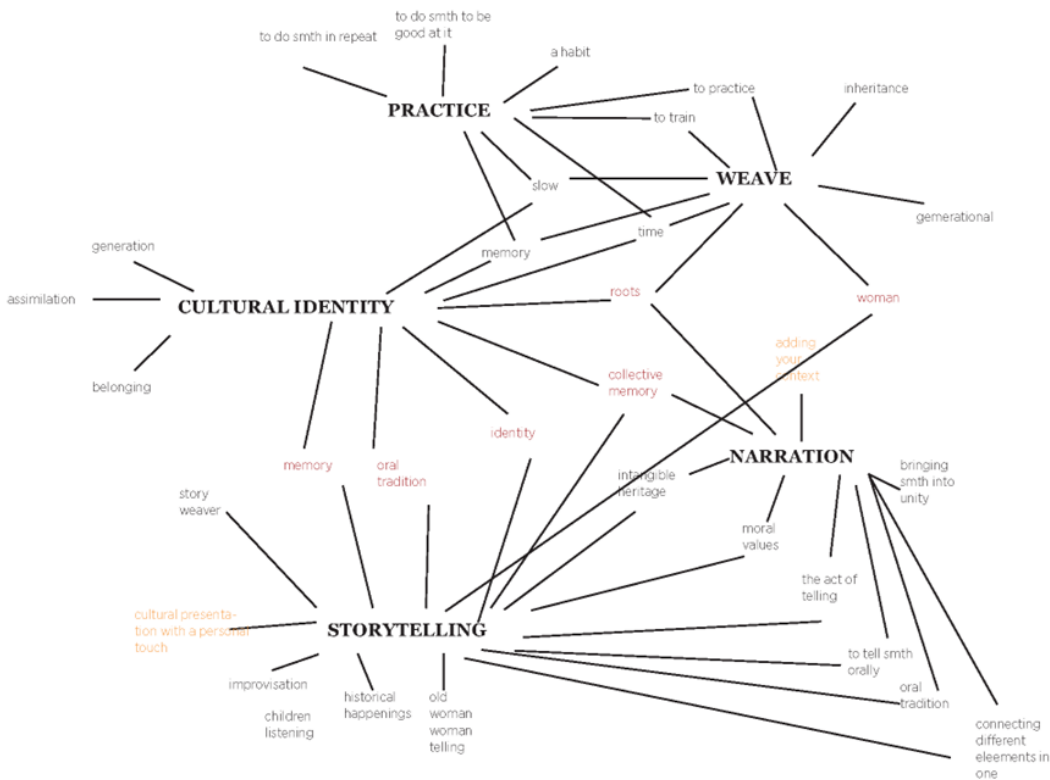
Chapter 2 gave the answers to my questions. But also created more questions. It is clear how people connected each other through textiles and stories; in our daily lives we do connect with each other them. In a different way. We consume more than we listen. We value the number of things we have rather than their meaning. A designer's or artist's role is to find a communication through stories and objects. Give meaning to things. A study was conducted to investigate how this meaningful communication is achieved, using examples from artists.

Chapter 3 shows a different way of approaching, heritage and storytelling. Every step has led to another connection. The story was a way of giving homage what my past has offered, but also remembrance to a time where the country still felt free. By weaving I was able to find the value of time and patience. It showed that such an ancient craft still and always will have an importance in our lives. Still fabrics for big fashion houses are designed by hand weavers. Weaving is still done all around the world in small villages and storytelling continues to be our way of communicating with each other. It is important to not be scared to tell our stories. I believe it leads to doing research and thus helps each other to understand better. I hope that everyone who hesitates to share their stories will reconsider. Perhaps, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, by beginning to accept or acknowledge our own differences, we will take another step towards understanding others.

GLOSSARY

What a marvellous book one would write by narrating the life and adventures of a word! Undoubtedly a word has received various impressions of the events for which it was used; depending on the places it was used, a word has awakened different kinds of impressions in different people; but is it not more grand still to consider a word in its triple aspect of soul, body, and movement?

-Said, 1979, p. 131-



Free association, connection of key words (Kilisli, 2025a)

This glossary includes subjective definitions of the key words of the research question; 'How can the Practice of Narration and Storytelling be Woven into Cultural Identity?'. These definitions were written using 'free association' technique. It is a thinking technique in psychology in which one reports, "the first thought that comes to mind in response to a given stimulus - such as a word" ("free association").

PRACTICE

is,
 a habit
 to do something in repeat
 to train
 to do a craft, an art
 slow
 time consuming
 to do something to be better at it

NARRATION

is,
 the act of telling
 to tell something by orally
 collective
 to tell something in detail
 interpretation
 adding your own context
 connecting different elements in one
 bringing something into unity
 construction
 story
 roots

STORYTELLING

is,
 intangible heritage
 improvisation
 moral values
 cultural preservation with a
 personal touch
 collective
 historical
 oral tradition
 story weaver
 woman telling
 roots

WEAVE

is,
 time consuming
 to tell secrets in secrets
 inheritance
 heirloom
 generational
 to practice
 slow
 roots
 memory
 to make an object of protection

CULTURAL IDENTITY

is,
 belonging
 defining
 roots
 geography
 memory
 collective
 creating

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