

The Turkish-American Conundrum

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*Immigrants and Expatriates
between Politics and Culture*

Edited by

Gönül Pultar, Louis Mazzari
and Belma Ötüş Baskett

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2019

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-2428-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-2428-6

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume is composed of a selection from papers presented at two scholarly gatherings reworked as chapters. The first was a workshop entitled “Introduction to Turkish-American Studies,” organized by the Cultural Studies Association of Turkey (CSAT), which took place in June 2014 at the Boğaziçi University Alumni Society Building. The second was a symposium entitled “Turkish-American Studies,” co-organized again by CSAT and the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) Istanbul Office, in June 2016 at ARIT, in Arnavutköy, Istanbul. We therefore want to first thank all those who helped in the organization of the two meetings, all those who attended them, and all those who contributed with their presentations or participation in the ensuing discussions. Our special gratitude goes to ARIT Istanbul Director Dr. Anthony Greenwood who co-organized the 2016 symposium and opened his headquarters for the occasion.

We would like to extend our thanks to friends and colleagues Alexandra Turkington, Gönül Bakay and Eren Pultar for their research, contract, and proofreading assistance, to Anıl Gürbüztürk for preparing the Index, and especially to Mustafa Pultar for the long hours he spent formatting the text. We would also like to thank all the officers of Cambridge Scholars Publishing responsible in the publication of this volume for their expertise and professionalism. We wish also to express our appreciation to all those who submitted articles for publication in this volume; and especially to the authors whose texts were selected, for their helpful cooperation.

In preparing this collection, utmost care was taken to achieve consistency and unity among texts penned by colleagues from different disciplines, living in different corners of the world. However, one exception has been the presence or absence of the hyphen between the words *Turkish* and *American*. While some authors wrote “Turkish-American,” others chose to write “Turkish American” and as editors, we decided to respect their wishes. All deficiencies are our responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

FROM HI JOLLY TO THE BLONDE BELLY- DANCER, A MULTI-FACETED CONUNDRUM

The United States, for long labeled a “nation of immigrants,” as President Kennedy coined in a pamphlet in 1958,¹ has harbored throughout its history a multitude of groups coming from different lands, and belonging to different nations and peoples. While there is controversy over the era that Native Americans arrived in what came to be known as the Americas, and debate on whether or not Norsemen made voyages to these lands before Columbus landed in the Caribbean in 1492, it is an established fact that the first English settlement, in what was to become the United States of America, was in 1607. (Whatever its ultimate fate,) Jamestown, “the first permanent English settlement in America,” was also the first destination for cargoes of African slaves (Deans n.p.). Today, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, after the Civil War, the Civil Rights Act, and numerous alterations in immigration and naturalization laws, the American nation is established as being *multi-cultural*, and therefore *multi-ethnic*. The “melting pot” that playwright Israel Zangwill saw in the early twentieth century² appears not to exist anymore: instead, an “American salad” composed of “hyphenated” identities has surfaced, supported by impressive sociological studies, as well as a formidable body of fiction that has moreover reinvigorated American literature. American Studies itself has headed on a transnational path that both validates and consolidates the new conceptualization.

The introduction, in the late twentieth-century, of a cultural studies approach into the sphere of American Studies has opened new vistas, allowing for the birth of discrete disciplines such as African-American Studies, Asian-American Studies, Italian-American Studies, and the like, that examine the cultures and experiences of these ethnic groups on U.S. soil. One such entity that did not have a formal discipline to its name was the Turkish-American group. This book hopefully fills that lacuna and heralds in print the forging of this realm of study. The final chapter spells out the major characteristics of this new paradigm.

We discuss below the major issues taken up by the authors in the volume. After a first chapter on the “climate” that awaited Turks in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when they first started coming to the United States, the following chapters all revolve around the major theme, the conundrum that “Turkish-Americanness” represents, and that constitutes the main feature of Turkish-American Studies. It starts with the fact, first, that the term *Turk* historically conceals many ethnicities. On the other side of the coin, Turkishness as an ethnicity is an umbrella identity for peoples forming different nationalities.³ The conundrum acquires another facet as successive “waves” of migrants from what is now Turkey reach American shores: after a first wave,⁴ stunned more than anything else; and a second one known to have on the whole adjusted fairly easily; a third wave challenges the notion of Turkish-Americanness by questioning the rules of belonging and wanting to be more Turkish than American. Then the American expatriate in Turkey creates yet another conundrum, by conferring a totally different significance to the Turkish-American equation.

As the Turk Lands in America

As almost all authors in this volume make a point of reminding the reader, the first records of emigration to the United States from what is now Turkey exist from the nineteenth century onwards, whatever the earlier—or yet untapped—antecedents of such migratory moves may have been. Especially the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, encompassing the World War I years, was a time during which a surge of migration could be witnessed in the direction of the United States from what was then the Ottoman Empire. That is a period defined as a “first wave” by many, during which, whatever individual, isolated experiences may have been, Turks in America did not fare well as a whole, according to Justin McCarthy, who focuses on this time span in his chapter titled “The Turk in America.” Studying the experience of the Turk on U.S. soil, especially during the trying world war interval, McCarthy finds “that is not a happy subject.” He encounters U.S. prejudice waiting for the Turk, and searches for the reasons for it. He finds fraudulent characterizations of Turks, and misinformation concerning them, through not only anti-Ottoman propaganda in the nineteenth century by U.S. missionaries, but also the dissemination of British anti-Turkish propaganda in the United States during the war, supplemented by equally fraudulent and vilifying reports from successive U.S. envoys to Constantinople in the same period.

McCarthy does not dwell on the experiences of Turks on U.S. soil; instead, he explores the historical basis of the “climate” awaiting the Turk upon immigration to the United States, whether he or she was or is ever aware of it. “American media and schoolbooks conveyed a universally negative image of Turks and Islam. Some themes were prominent—violence, sexuality, indolent backwardness, and religious fanaticism,” he writes. He does remark that, upon the triumph of Mustafa Kemal and his forces in 1922, “even the missionaries became pragmatic, supporting the new Turkish state in the hope that their missions could continue”; yet ends on a bleak note: after “the founding of the Republic in 1923,” he writes, “Turkey was less prominent in the newspapers, but the stories of Turkish atrocities remained in the textbooks. Whenever politicians or newspapermen spoke or wrote of the Turks, all the old beliefs surfaced. The Myth of the Terrible Turk lived on.” He evidences the myth through experiences that he himself has undergone. Although hopefully such experiences have disappeared, to a great extent, we feel the previous existence of the prejudice is an aspect of the Turkish-American experience that needs to be recorded, in order to both be aware of and vigilant about any portion of it that remains, and to ensure its erasure over time.⁵ This is especially critical since, after 9/11, being Muslim, Turks (and therefore Turkish-Americans) became “racialized,” as Zeynep Kılıç maintains in her chapter “Politics of Migrant Belonging: An Analysis of Turkish Migrant Associations in the New York Metropolitan Area.”⁶

Ottomans and Turks in America

Belma Ötüş Baskett takes up more or less from the time McCarthy leaves: the last years of World War I and the period following it, in her chapter titled “Literature by Turks about the Turkish Immigration to the United States of America.” She adopts an altogether different angle, and focuses on the individual lives of particular Turks in America, reflected through works that have proven indispensable for Turkish-American history. The posthumous autobiography of a Turkish woman, the U.S.-educated leftist journalist Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi 1919-1950* (Like a Novel 1919-1950, 1969), is invaluable, Baskett finds, because it is the earliest information on Turkish immigrants in the United States, and is unique in having been written from a sociologist’s viewpoint. Baskett points out that, whatever its lacunae, it is the first scholarly work on Turkish immigrants.

Sertel was already a married woman with child when she embarked upon undergraduate studies in the United States. Although she met the Turkish immigrants at first as an undergrad doing a paper on them,

she also helped them, along with her husband, to start an association, to which she was elected founding president. The “Turkish Welfare Society,” established in New York in 1921, was the first Turkish-American association according to Veysi Akin (475, 453).⁷

Sertel’s Turkish immigrants are mostly underpaid factory workers, given the toughest jobs, yet afraid to join unions, and usually utilized as strike-breakers. Frank Ahmed,⁸ the son of a Turkish immigrant, presents a more joyful picture in *Turks in America, the Ottoman Turk’s Immigrant Experience* (1993), another book Baskett takes up. His account of the experiences of his father’s generation that includes coffeehouses, grocery stores, and picnics—for many today, a source of nostalgia for a world long since gone—was shunned by academics at the time of its publication for its lack of intellectual sophistication. It has become nowadays a primary source of information for the early days of the Turkish-American community: almost all authors in the volume have felt the need to cite him.⁹

Yet another depiction of these first-generation Turkish-American immigrants, discussed by Baskett, is the “report” by a Turkish official, Dr. Fuad Umay, head of the Society for the Protection of Children (*Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*, renamed later *Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*) of a two-month trip to the United States in 1923. Dr. Umay landed in New York, and with Sertel, then a Columbia University student, as guide, traveled inland to a number of states, meeting fellow compatriots (factory workers, as well as wealthy Jewish-Turkish businessmen settled in the United States), and American professionals. His book has since become yet another essential text for a first-hand account of the life of the Turkish immigrants in the United States during the first wave.

The major work Baskett takes up is, however, the 2004 groundbreaking *Anadolu’dan Yeni Dünya’ya: Amerika’ya İlk Göç Eden Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri* by independent scholar Rıfat Bali.¹⁰ Unless a work of greater amplitude comes to replace it, it remains for the time being the major work in the Turkish language on the subject, and the major source of reference for any study in Turkish pertaining to the subject. However, although it was translated into English in 2013, it has not yet dethroned Deniz Balgamiş and Kemal Karpat’s edited collection of essays of 2008, *Turkish Migration to the United States: from Ottoman Times to the Present*, which, since its publication, has been serving as Bali’s book’s equivalent in English.

The Bali book is noteworthy also because it has spelled out what we have called the “Turkish-American conundrum” in this volume.

What, or who is a Turk?

The conundrum starts with the question, What, or who is a Turk? For Ellis Island officials during the first wave, he or she was obviously a subject of the Ottoman Empire, full stop. So for Bali as well, for he narrates the life stories of not only Muslim ethnic Turks, which is what the term denotes for many, but also Jews, Greeks, and Armenians emigrated from the Ottoman Empire. Many, who have landed on U.S. soil as “Turks,” are/were not Turks in reality. While some did self-identify themselves out early on, many others did not. Studying these individuals uncovers a profound multiplicity of identities belonging to a fascinating myriad of nationalities, from Albanians to Arabs, besides those discussed by Bali. To illustrate, the Ottoman subject Hacı Ali from Izmir, an apparently devout Muslim, who had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca (one of the tasks expected of all the pious in Islam), was renamed Hi Jolly by comrades-at-arms in the U.S. army, because his name was too difficult for them to pronounce. Ali is celebrated as the first “Turk” having migrated to the United States, in the absence of any records of possible earlier ones. Baskett discusses him, citing Bali, as do others (see e.g. Kalın n.p.). Gönül Pultar indicates in her chapter “Turkish-American Studies: Trajectory, Trends and Future Direction” that “he is part of American folklore today with a ballad bearing his name.” Yet others, Greek-Americans and Arab-Americans, have started claiming as their own this offspring of “a Greek mother and a Syrian, Christian Arab father,” born as the Ottoman subject Philip Tedro and converted to Islam as a young man, as Pultar further points out.

What’s more, the multiplicity of identities is not confined to the nineteenth century, but has extended all the way to the twenty-first. In another, further chapter in the volume, “Contemporary Turkish-American Writers and Their Work,” Baskett feels the need to include in her discussion such authors as (Greek-American) Jeffrey Eugenides, and (the “‘Turk’ of Greek origin” as she calls him) Bora Ayanoglu. On the other hand, Kılıç discusses in her chapter a Turkish politician active in twenty-first century New York City politics without mentioning that he is Jewish.¹¹

Deterritorialized Identity, Turkish Americanness - or not?

In the next chapter, Kılıç touches upon another aspect of the conundrum as she writes that “*Turkishness* in NYC presents itself as an ‘umbrella identity,’ encompassing, for example, Balkan Turks,¹² or ethnic Karaçay

(Karachai) Turks¹³ from the former USSR. Kılıç indicates that Roberta Micalleff calls this the “deterritorialized notion of Turkishness.”

“Turkish” Associations

As a remedy to their various woes, Sertel had struggled to get the immigrant Turkish workers organized. Kılıç takes up the matter of organizations as the main subject of her chapter.

It is a fact that since Sertel, Turkish-American associations mushroomed over the years. The Turkish Welfare Society was still operating in 1937 when she returned to the United States for a brief visit, as Baskett indicates. It must have ceased existing some time later, but another association, *Türk Hars Birliği* (The Turkish Culture Union), was founded in 1933 to cater to the religious needs of Turks, as well as to provide solidarity among them and instruct their U.S.-born offspring in the basics of Turkish culture (Akın 515-16).¹⁴ Whatever other associations may have been started in the meantime, the Turkish Culture Union joined the Turkish Cypriot Aid Society, also established in the 1930s (and another one of the “deterritorialized” Turkish associations, as the Cypriots were at the time subjects of a British Crown colony¹⁵), in 1956, to establish the Federation of Turkish American Associations (FTAA). FTAA has since become one of the major Turkish-American associations in the United States, and an “umbrella” organization harboring many smaller ones. Its headquarters is in New York, in the Turkish House building owned by the Republic of Turkey, where the Consulate-General of Turkey is also located. It organizes the annual Turkish Day Parade in New York City, one of the major events in the life of Turkish-Americans in that city,¹⁶ and an occasion to which governments in Turkey attach importance and participate through the delegation of a cabinet-level minister. In fact, as Kılıç remarks, one of its leaders “would become” for a while “an established politician in the ruling AKP party in Turkey in the twenty-first century.”¹⁷

By the 1970s, Akın estimates, there were around twenty associations formed by Turks in the United States (516). Another large Turkish-American “umbrella” association in the United States, the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), was established in 1979 by the-then Ambassador of Turkey to Washington, D.C. Şükrü Elekdağ. Headquartered in Alexandria, VA, it claims on its website to represent “more than sixty local chapters—500,000 Turkish Americans and 300,000 Turkic Americans nationwide, as well as member associations in Canada and Turkey. It also aims to support strong ties between Turkey

and the United States” (“Assembly of Turkish American Associations” n.p.). It is our impression, however, that this last aim of ATAA leads it to adopt in many instances the official view of whatever government is in power at the time in Turkey, rather than to express any alternate views that Turkish-Americans among its membership may be holding.¹⁸

Kılıç’s main concern, however, is neither to write a history, nor to examine the character of the major associations established by “Turkish immigrants” in the United States. Her goal is to explore the “perspectives on belonging and civil society” of those existing at the beginning of the twenty-first century when she conducted her study. Theoreticians she cites all believe that the “host context” is what shapes such organizations, and therefore presumably their “perspectives”; so she sets out to find if this is true. She first interviews a youthful batch of individual Turkish migrants. (Their average age is twenty-four, and they are not at all interested in the subject.) Then she interviews representatives of what she labels the “organizational leadership,” going from the Consul-General of Turkey in New York, to heads of high schools, to presidents of associations such as those mentioned above and others—who have more to say, and many complaints to make about the former group.

Kılıç’s preoccupation is mainly with the degree of involvement of the Turks with Turkish associations in the geographical area she studies, and she approaches all institutions and organizations equally, without any regard apparently to their political colors, if any. For example, she talks with representatives of organizations that are linked to¹⁹—in the case of *Zaman Amerika*²⁰ published by, and with heads of charter schools²¹ run by Fethullah Gülen, the Turkish (Muslim) preacher who has been residing in the United States since the mid-1990s. Her input is important because her findings go beyond mere associations: through an examination of the behavior of “Turks” towards “Turkish” institutions and organizations in the United States during the year and a half between 9/11 (2001) and the Iraq War (begun March 2003), she provides a vivid portrait of Turkish-Americans at the dawn of the twenty-first century, at a crucial moment in the history of the United States. For Kılıç herself, that is the moment when she feels Turks in America began to be “racialized,”²² as she puts it. It is thus a key moment for Turks who are predominantly Muslim, a moment whose characteristics need to be studied in depth to understand the predicament of the Turkish-Americans in the twenty-first century. However, another and perhaps more important aspect of her study lies in the fact that it portrays, without meaning to, a time span in the life of the Turkish-American community in the United States when the Gülen Cemaat (Congregation) had complete freedom of movement. It functioned

unimpeded both within the community and the U.S. mainstream, with Gülen himself seen, according to Kılıç, as “the face of ‘moderate’ Turkish Islam in the United States.” This “moment” needs to be understood fully in order to make sense of any later “Islamization” within the Turkish-American community.

Percentage of Adaptation

In the next chapter, Parlak studies a decade and a half later a group older (with an average age of forty-five), and more learned than Kılıç’s high school student and beautician. In fact, he laments the limitation. Because the researcher was an academic in a “turbulent Turkey,” there could have been a “problem of trust” from the respondents. Therefore, he sought the support and assistance of several acquaintances in the United States, who were mostly of his own social background and who naturally passed on the coordinates of their peers. Parlak examines the correlation between the level of education of the respondents and the adaptation problems they have. He is aware that his survey does not reflect the views of the less educated.

This time it is not through the screen of institutions or organizations the interviewees are made to express themselves; it is about their own, individual experiences on U.S. soil that they are asked. Their responses cannot hide the frustration and disappointment most of them feel. Only a nonagenarian surgeon with an American writer wife who took the trouble to get involved with Turkish culture says “his adaptation to the American way of life is almost ‘100 percent’.” For most others, adaptation and integration are distant possibilities, although many have made the United States their permanent home, and must have been gradually, even if unconsciously, assimilated.

A Different Sort of Turkish-Americanness – or Downright Rejection?

The chapter following that of Parlak discusses the very “less-educated and less-skilled Turks” that he was sorry to have missed. Tahire Erman, in her “The Mosque Community of Turkish Tailors in Massachusetts: From a Project of Inclusion to a Center of Islamic Influence” recounts the saga of a group of “working-class Turks,” invited to work in the United States for their skill of tailoring, lost or very costly to obtain in the United States. Finding everything alien at first, they ended up accommodating to their new lives. Like all penniless Turkish immigrants without much education,

they had come solely to “earn a buck,” and were determined to go back as soon as they had done so—but like many an immigrant throughout the world, were staying for good.

The means by which the tailors adjusted to their new lives—becoming a mosque community—points to another important aspect of the Turkish-American conundrum. This other, second conundrum concerns the ethnic Turkish-American and the point at which he or she becomes a “Turkish-American”—or not. Authors in this volume, and theoreticians they quote, designate basically three migratory waves from what is now Turkey to the United States, as indicated above. While the immigrants of the first wave, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mostly either opted out by going back to Turkey, or assimilated in mixed marriages when not disappearing into the American mainstream, a second wave of emigration from Turkey, starting in the mid-1950s, brought white-collar immigrants, who were most-often quickly integrated. The lucky ones made names for themselves in academia, the arts, or show business, or obtained great success in medicine and business, and led prosperous lives as upper-middle class Americans, as many biographies and studies attest.²³ However, starting with the Green Card Lottery in 1990, and perhaps because of it, a different group made its appearance. While the immigrants of the third wave were not as ignorant of American culture as those of the first wave, they were less intellectually sophisticated than those of the second wave. What is remarkable about them is that they are extremely tenacious in holding on to their Turkishness, determined that their culture remain “unpolluted” by “Americanness,”²⁴ a concern that was seldom manifested by members of the second wave. The third-wave immigrants are assisted in this—guided rather, if not sternly coaxed—by the presence in the United States since the mid-1990s of the Gülen “Congregation,”²⁵ an organization often appearing more political than religious. (In fact, many of the authors in this volume felt the need to allude to its presence on U.S. soil.) It is no wonder that Kılıç, Parlak, and Erman discuss the *Turk* or the *Turkish*, rather than the *Turkish-American*. The interplay of culture and politics has led Turkish-Americanness in a direction that is very different from any Americanness envisaged either by the Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers, or by second-wave, white-collar Turkish-Americans who had been resigned to be living as Muslim *croyants* rather than *pratiquant* ones. While American Islamophobia has been on the increase since 9/11, so is this tendency among the newest immigrants from Turkey to cling to their natal identity.

The following comparison will illustrate the transformation. The “second-wave Turkish-American” Alev Lytle Croutier, née Aksoy,

discussed by Baskett in her chapter on Turkish-American writers, started studying at the age of eleven at the American College for Girls (the girls' school making up part of Robert College²⁶), and continued her education in the United States, majoring in art history at Oberlin College. She glided easily into the U.S. mainstream, feeling at home whether while writing a screenplay of *Tell Me a Riddle* (1980) based on Tillie Olsen's novella, the title-story in her collection of stories of the same title (1961), and receiving a Guggenheim fellowship for it; or while catering to the U.S. appetite for exotica by writing a nonfictional book on the Ottoman harem, *Harem: The World Behind the Veil* (1989; this edition 2014), a "breath-taking, titillating" work, as Baskett describes it, for the American/Western reader. In contrast, the second-generation Turkish daughter in Erman, "a college graduate working as a bank manager," does not shy away from giving up her job and becoming a *hidjabee*²⁷ on getting married, at a teetotaler wedding, to a newly arrived Turk.²⁸ There is of course a difference in social class: Croutier was sent to the most expensive boarding school in Istanbul, while the ex-bank manager is probably the offspring of "an ordinary peasant," as the first president of the mosque described himself. Therefore, it may be advanced, the faith made conspicuous with the headscarf and the sullen nuptials possesses a provincial, rural character, that is more parochial than universal, as Islam claims to be. Nevertheless, Erman's first-hand witnessing and recording of the "Islamization" of a Turkish-American community, one of the early works to do so, reflects an important milestone in Turkish-American history—and presages many more studies to come.

A Transatlantic Space as Abode

A third conundrum stems from the highlighting of the American element of the Turkish-American equation, in a way that is also unique. "Asian-American Studies" deals mainly with Americans of Asian origin, not so much with American experience in various parts of Asia. But in Turkey, "Turkish-American" means Turkish-American relations more than anything else, with political scientists and international relations specialists having as much a say as Americanists. Included in this collection are two representative chapters on the experiences of the American expatriate in Turkey. One is by Louis Mazzari, "'America makes me stronger': A View from the Bosphorus of American Studies in Turkey," on his experiences of teaching U.S. history in a Turkish state university—whose campus used to house the American missionary school,

Robert College, mentioned above. Mazzari recounts witnessing how politics intervened.

The other chapter, “‘One sees it better from a distance’: James Baldwin’s Staging America in Turkey” by Ralph Poole, concerns a point in the history of American letters not sufficiently known, black author James Baldwin’s decade-long stay in Istanbul where he wrote some of his best-known novels. Poole focuses on a specific moment: Baldwin staging a play, the Turkish translation of John Herbert’s *Fortune and Man’s Eyes* (1967), in an Istanbul theater.²⁹

At the time, many Istanbul intellectuals interested in American literature knew of his presence in the city. Baskett remembers: “Baldwin loved Istanbul and felt comfortable in that city. There was talk one time of him living in Istanbul [permanently] which would have constituted an example of American immigration to Turkey. He had made good friends among the theater world. His best friend was Engin Cezzar with whom he had staged his play, which was also performed in Ankara where I watched it. It impressed me as a very well-acted avant-garde play with the then-taboo theme of homosexuality. However, there were no adverse repercussions³⁰ because the audience was mostly made up of the diplomatic corps, expats and American literature experts such as myself.” Pultar recalls seeing him in the mid-1960s at a graduation ceremony at Robert College.³¹ While in Istanbul, Poole writes, “Baldwin staged [...] Herbert’s prison drama [...], wrote the novel *Tell Me How Long the Train’s Been Gone* (1968; this edition 1998) about an aging and ailing bisexual black actor, and conceived his third, as of now still unpublished play *The Welcome Table*³² [...]. These works all revolve around staging, performing and play-acting. Baldwin in turn engages with them both from a theatrical perspective and with a notion of sexuality in mind that cuts across borders of race, class, nation, and gender. Approaching the works with Baldwin’s Turkish abode in mind, Istanbul comes to serve as transatlantic queer space where such border-crossing sexualities may be tested and lived in stark contrast to Baldwin’s own American experiences.”

Conclusion, or Epilogue?

“American experiences,” it turns out, vary. Writing about the picnics described by Ahmed, Baskett reminisces on those she attended in Detroit in the 1980s, while teaching at Michigan State University, that were “Turkish” events complete with “good food, music and dancing. On one such occasion, I remember there was a young belly-dancer. After the

dance I found her in the ladies' room, changing. She had taken off her long black wig and was getting into her jeans. Her real hair was short and blond. I told her in Turkish, she had danced very skillfully. First she looked blank. Then she replied (in English) she spoke no foreign languages. She danced to pay for her college fees. She was an American student from Wayne State University in Detroit.” The blond belly-dancer’s ephemeral performance that made a travesty of borders was a replica in reverse of Baldwin’s heavily weighted staging. The conundrum is many-faceted, almost kaleidoscopic.

Or was. Donald Trump became President in January 2017. In February 2018, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, better known by its anagram USCIS, belied President Kennedy’s dictum, and changed its long-standing “mission statement,” that said the “USCIS secures America’s promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to our customers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system,” to one from which the phrase “nation of immigrants” was deleted:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services administers the nation's lawful immigration system, safeguarding its integrity and promise by efficiently and fairly adjudicating requests for immigration benefits while protecting Americans, securing the homeland, and honoring our values. (qtd. in Gonzales n.p.)

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Notes

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- 1 The forty-page pamphlet was written by Kennedy in 1958, when he was a senator. After he became President in 1961, he started revising it as a book, while also calling on Congress to undertake a full reevaluation of immigration law. He had not finished revising when he was killed in 1963. The book *A Nation of Immigrants* was posthumously published in 1964. It contains a short history of immigration to Colonial America

onwards, an analysis of the importance of immigration in the history of the country, and proposals to liberalize immigration law.

- 2 Israel Zangwill's (1864-1926) *The Melting-Pot* was first staged in 1908.
- 3 Since the fall of the Soviet Union, some scholars add the suffix *ic* (rather than *ish*) to *Turk* to distinguish those ethnic Turks who were under Czarist then Soviet rule.
- 4 The Immigration Act, also called The Johnson-Reed Act, of 1924, "limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to" 2 percent "of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census" ("The Immigration Act of 1924 [The Johnson-Reed Act]" n.p.), which halted at the time the movement from the Republic of Turkey, putting an end to the "first" wave.
- 5 McCarthy believes the "Myth," although much lessened in scope, has not vanished yet.
- 6 McCarthy's and Kılıç's views on the position of the Turks on U.S. soil, however pertaining to different epochs, present basic similarities but also major differences, inviting comparison that lies beyond the scope of this introduction.
- 7 Akin indicates that an earlier attempt had been made in Chicago in the 1910s, but the organizing group disbanded after one meeting (473-74).
- 8 As a U.S. citizen, he would work for a time as an official at the U.S. embassy in Ankara.
- 9 In fact, all the authors, very much conscious that this volume constitutes a first, have felt the need to provide the "background" scene, and thus allude to the same basic sources.
- 10 It would be translated into English in 2013 as *From Anatolia to the New World: Life Stories of the First Turkish Immigrants to America*. As Baskett remarks in her chapter, this book is scholarly while Umay's is personal and intimate.
- 11 Directing attention to a person's ethnicity is not at all politically correct in good Turkish society, where citizens who are Jews are referred to as *Musevi* (Mosaic), which points only to their religion.
- 12 The Balkans—or "Eastern Europe" as the region is labeled since the demise of the Soviet Union—were the Ottoman Turks' *patria* for almost half a millennium (see *inter alia* the many works by Heath W. Lowry for Ottoman efforts at establishing roots and creating a homeland there, e.g. his *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans* [2008]). McCarthy, author of a chapter in this volume as mentioned above, recounts in *Death and Exile: the Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (1995) how the Balkan Turks were annihilated, and the survivors of the cleansing made to flee. The descendants of those among them who were able to or chose to stay on, in what are now various sovereign states, are today the "Balkan Turks."

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- 13 The Karachais, or Karachai/Balkars, or Karachai/Malkars as they are also called, are Turks living on the peaks of the Caucasian mountains. Descendants of Huns and Cumans (Kipchaks), they were attacked by Czarist armies, alongside neighboring Circassian peoples, from 1828 onwards, and when in 1864 the whole of Circassia (in which the Karachais' land was located) was invaded and later annexed by the Russians, they were forced to leave—in fact, openly deported—in great numbers. The majority migrated to the Ottoman Empire (some of their descendants are now in Turkey, and some in Syria), but some went to the United States. (Those who remained behind in their homeland were incorporated later into the Soviet system, and during Joseph Stalin's relocation campaign in 1944, forcibly displaced to the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. After 1991, when the Soviet Union was no more, their land was included in the Russian Federation, and divided as the autonomous republics of Karachai-Circassia and Kabardai-Balkaria.) (Minahan 907-13; “Karaçaylar” n.p.)
- 14 Akin is of the opinion that by 1937, the Welfare Society had become the means by which Turkish workers acceded to union membership, and therefore possessed a “leftist” character. This may be the reason another association was felt necessary by those who may have shared his view.
- 15 A secret agreement in 1878 between the United Kingdom and the Ottoman State (known as the “Cyprus Convention” n.p.) had allowed the British to take over provisional control of the island of Cyprus, Ottoman territory since 1570, in return for their support of the Ottomans against the Russians—with the stipulation that they were to evacuate it in the case of the latter evacuating East Anatolia. Instead, the British annexed the island unilaterally in 1914 when the Ottoman State entered World War I on the side of the Germans, and turned it into a Crown colony (“Cyprus Convention”). Cyprus would become independent in 1960.
- 16 The Parade takes place on May 20 or thereabouts, to celebrate Turkey's May 19 Youth Day which commemorates the day Mustafa Kemal Atatürk set out on the journey that would culminate in the liberation of Turkey from the occupation of Western powers during World War I. The first Turkish Day Parade was organized in 1981.
- 17 He is the (in)famous Egemen Bağış. Born in southeastern Turkey in 1970, he went to New York as a teenager when his father was appointed educational attaché of Turkey there. Bağış graduated from Baruch College, worked as a security manager at a New York hotel bar, and started a translation bureau, which led to his acting as interpreter for Erdoğan. He became FTAA's president, but cut short his term when asked to join the AKP in 2002. He was elected an AKP member of parliament in 2002, 2007 and 2011. He was made Minister of State responsible for European Affairs in 2009—and in that capacity “Chief Negotiator for Turkish Accession to the European Union”; and Minister of European Union Affairs in 2011. In December 2013 Bağış was one of

four cabinet ministers, whose tapped phone conversation transcripts published in the media revealed them to be guilty of corruption (Reza Zarrab, the Turkey-based Iranian businessman currently in prison in the United States, would own giving Bağış a million and a half U.S. dollars for “assistance” in bureaucratic matters in Turkey [“Egemen Bağış’a 1,5 milyon dolar rüşvet!”] (1.5 million dollars to Egemen Bağış as bribery) n.p.). The other ministers resigned, but Bağış refused to do so, and, Premier Erdoğan had to resort to a cabinet reshuffle to oust him. In 2014, Bağış’s name would be in the news again, when another tapped phone transcript showed that this AKP MP for over a decade could not care less about Islam and made fun of the Koran. In January 2015, the parliamentary committee inquiring into the corruption charges against the ministers finally finished its work and exonerated them all, so a vote in the National Assembly decided there was no reason to prosecute them. Nevertheless, like the other former ministers, Bağış did not participate in the next general elections. (In 2017, reports from the U.S. media informed Bağış may be called to testify in connection with the Zarrab case. A little later, the Turkish media reported that Bağış, who is a Green Card holder but not a U.S. citizen, had quietly acquired Northern Cypriot citizenship.) (“Egemen Bağış” n.p.; Zaman n.p.; “Bakara Makara’ Diyen Egemen Bağış, KKTC Vatandaşı Oldu...” n.p.)

18 Two other organizations, that perhaps need to be included, were started and financed by the same person, Turkish-American businessman Yalcin Ayasli (*Yalçın Ayaslı* Anglicized): the Turkish Culture Foundation (TCF) in 2000, and the Coalition of America (TCA) in 2007. They have joint offices in Boston, Istanbul, and Washington, D.C., with aims and activities that are similar and mostly overlapping: they both award travel and research grants, provide internships, and send American teachers and/or politicians to visit Turkey. TCF works to promote Turkish culture and heritage, while the more political TCA sets out to inform “the public about Turkey, Turkish Americans and the US-Turkish relations” (“Turkish Cultural Foundation” n.p.; “Turkish Coalition of America” n.p.; “Yalcin Ayasli” n.p.).

19 For example, “The Light Millennium,” self-described on its website as a “non-governmental (NGO), independent public benefit multi-media and culture organization. Formed in 2001, based in Queens, New York,” it publishes the on-line publication of the same name, and organizes talks, etc. (“The Light Millennium” n.p.).

20 *Zaman Amerika*, the U.S. edition of Istanbul daily *Zaman*, began publication in 1994 as a weekly, became a daily in 2004, then reverted to being a weekly in 2011, to become an online publication in 2012, before being shut down for good in 2016. (*Zaman* itself began publication in Turkey in 1986 as a serious newspaper with an Islamist agenda, with journalist Fehmi Kuru, known as “Erdoğan’s brain,” at its helm. When, as stated in a note above, transcripts of tapped phone conversations

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- published in the press in December 2013 revealed four cabinet ministers to be guilty of what amounted to gross corruption, the Turkish government suddenly discovered *Zaman* was run by the Gülen apparatus, and after the aborted military coup of July 2016, which Gülen was accused of having orchestrated, *Zaman*'s offices were seized for being connected to what the authorities called "Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü" [Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, FETÖ for short]. A government decree published in March 2016 put an end to the newspaper's existence.) Emrah Ülker, *Zaman Amerika* news coordinator ("Zaman Gazetesi, Amerika'da Günlük Yayına Başladı" [The *Zaman* Newspaper Started Daily Publication in the United States] n.p.) during the period Kılıç did her interviews, who must have returned to Turkey since, is today (in 2018) a fugitive from justice, "wanted" for being connected to FETÖ ("FETÖ'den Aranan 24 Gazetecinin İsmi Belli Oldu" [The Names of the 24 Journalists Wanted in Connection with FETÖ Revealed] n.p.).
- 21 For Brooklyn Amity School, founded in 1991, see e.g. Otcu (118); and for Pioneer Academy of Science in Wayne, New Jersey, founded in 1999, see "Charter School Watchdog" (n.p.).
- 22 Kılıç maintains Turks are racialized in Germany and elsewhere in Europe as well. It is a fact that some of them are, just because they happen to be Turks, stigmatized, vilified, or become the "*ganz unten*" (the lowest of the low), as German journalist Günter Walraff put it in his 1985 book of the same name; but whether this means they are racialized, in the sense of *not* being accepted as Caucasians/Whites (which is what the term denotes in everyday parlance) is debatable.
- 23 Just to give an idea, see, *inter alia*, the documentary movies *Atlantic Records: The House that Ahmet Built* (2007) (shown during the 2016 symposium) on record producer Ahmet Erteğün (1923-2006); and *The Greatest Ears in Town: The Arif Mardin Story* (2010) on music producer Arif Mardin (1932-2006). For Erteğün, a legendary figure who was featured (i.e., played by actors) in, e.g., the "biopic" *Ray* (2004) and *Beyond the Sea* (2004), see also Wade and Picardie; and Greenfield; as well as Erteğün's own *What'd I Say: The Atlantic Story* (2001). ("Atlantic Recording Corporation," known as Atlantic Records, is a record company founded in 1947 by the Erteğün brothers, Ahmet and Nesuhi [1917-1989]. Specializing in jazz, rhythm and blues, and soul recordings by African-American musicians such as Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and Otis Redding, it became one of the most important U.S. recording labels in its first twenty years, and later expanded into rock and pop music with releases by bands such as Led Zeppelin. A. Erteğün served as its founding chairman until his death at age eighty-three ["Örnek Alınası Bir Başarı Hikayesi: Atlantic Records ve Ahmet Erteğün" (An Exemplary Success Story: Atlantic Records and Ahmet Erteğün)] n.p.).