

Cultural Studies in Turkey: The State of the Art

By Gönül Pultar

Abstract

Recent socio-political developments have rendered cultural studies of the Republic of Turkey an ever-widening field of study, as they lead apparently to a probable paradigm shift in a society that was once thought to be purely Western-oriented. The analysis of this transformation is before all else a cultural studies task. Accordingly, this paper has two aims: one, to make a brief survey of cultural studies work that has been done so far in Turkey; and two, draw attention to the various problems encountered by the instruction and practice of cultural studies in the country.

Keywords: Cultural studies courses, Ege Cultural Studies Symposium, Cultural Studies Association, university programs, problems encountered.

Introduction

Recent socio-political developments have rendered cultural studies of the Republic of Turkey an ever-widening field of study. Since the accession to power of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (JDP) in the autumn of 2002 (-present), cultural allegiances and pacts of forgetting, whether they be ethnic, religious or ideological, are being realigned, restructured or renegotiated. These are leading apparently to a paradigm shift in a society that was once thought to be purely Western-oriented. Questioning both the foundational maxims and the insistent new requests has become a cultural studies task.

This leads perforce to another, even more immediate task, that of taking a close look at cultural studies in Turkey. This essay aims accordingly to present the current state of cultural studies in the country. It discusses the history of cultural studies instruction and practice and notes the existing university programs, then examines the major problems facing the practice of cultural studies in Turkey today. It is hoped that the information it provides will serve as reference for anyone interested in the subject.

This essay argues moreover that the current state of cultural studies in Turkey renders it incapable of appraising fully the present situation in which Turkey finds itself.

From its Beginnings to its Present State

1. British Council Courses

As noted at the beginning of an article on the education and practice of cultural studies in Turkey by Gönül Pultar and Ayşe L. Kırtunç, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact time when cultural studies began in Turkey as scholars who became cognizant of the “cultural turn” applied its methodology in the courses that they gave long before any formal departmentalization, or opening of courses so labeled occurred (see Pultar & Kırtunç 2004). It is a fact, however, that the British Council representation in Turkey began in 1992 in Istanbul “British cultural studies” courses. As Laurence Raw, who organized the courses and was himself one of the instructors, explains, the courses were

9-month courses on British and Comparative Cultural Studies, including units on nationalism, multiculturalism, class, gender and race. Very British-focused, with topics of little interest to local audiences; however, the Council did offer scholarships for students to go and complete an MA in Warwick.¹

The courses were given by, besides the Briton Raw, employed at the time at the British Council, two Turkish academics, Cambridge-educated Cevat Çapan, professor of English language and literature currently at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, and Cem Taylan (1946-2001), also a professor English language and literature, who was teaching at the Western Languages and Literatures department of

Boğaziçi University (see Raw and Taylan 1993/1994 on their experience of teaching these courses). The British Council started in 1993 courses in Ankara, taught by Can Abanazır (1953-2012) of the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. Then in 1995 the British Council started such courses in İzmir; these were taught by Oxford-educated Pete Remington teaching at the time at the American Culture and Literature² department at Ege University, and Andrew Fletcher. These courses were “organized in collaboration with the U of Warwick, Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies (which later became the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies before being closed in 2007),” as Raw indicates (e-mail message to author, 26 August 2011).

Along these courses and “initially planned as a resource for comparative cultural material” (Raw, e-mail message to author, 26 August 2011). the British Council representation in Turkey started a cultural studies website entitled “CSSG Cultural Studies Study Group” (<http://warlight.tripod.com/>) maintained by [the Turkish] Cenk Erdil, and last updated on 16 September 1999. Listed at the top of the webpages of the site is “Cultural Studies in Turkey.”

“The program came to an end in 1999,” as Raw puts it, “when the then Director of the British Council decided to put all their money into English Language Teaching, and opened a Teaching Center in Istanbul” (Raw, e-mail message to the author, 26 August 2001).³

2. *Ege Cultural Studies Symposium*

The American Studies Association of Turkey (ASAT) organized in the spring of 1995, on 10-11 April, a two-day “cultural studies” seminar at Ege University, in collaboration with the American Culture and Literature department of that university. The beginnings of cultural studies in this country, for the writer of these lines, is thus the work initiated by Americanists, among them the then three active members of ASAT: Gülriş Büken (then member of the Department of History at Bilkent University, president of ASAT 1994-2011), Ayşe Lahur Kırtunç (then member of the Ege University American Culture and Literature department, and later its Chair), and Gönül Pultar (then member of the Department of English Language and Literature at Bilkent University, vice-president of ASAT 1994-2000, founding editor-in-chief of *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* [JAST], and later founding president of the Cultural Association of Turkey 2005-present). These scholars were cognizant of the cultural turn through not only their individual interests and international contacts but also their association with such colleagues as Raw, who taught at Bilkent University before integrating the British Council, and Remington, teaching at the Ege University American Culture and Literature department, as well as younger colleagues who were returning from postgraduate studies they pursued in universities in the West where they had specialized in cultural studies.⁴

The Ege April 1995 seminar took place in one auditorium only, with solicited presenters delivering papers to an audience made up of interested faculty members, guest faculty from neighboring Eylül University, and students probably compelled to attend. Titled “The Red, the Black and the White,” it was an exercise in US ethnic studies.⁵ By common accord, it was decided it would be repeated on a larger scale, and Ege University through the person of Prof. Seçkin Ergin, then Chair of its Department of American Culture and Literature, agreed to play host to it annually. Kırtunç took over the responsibility of the organization of what was to become a full-fledged conference, and the next year, tapping into her own international contacts and network of colleagues, announced it worldwide.⁶ The number of participants of this first Ege University International Cultural Studies Symposium, organized in 1996, immediately rose to almost 150.

Dubbed CSS - Cultural Studies Symposium, and organized in the month of May annually until 2005, the conference has been organized biannually since. Titled “Change and Challenge,” the “Ege University 13th International Cultural Studies Symposium” took place on 4-6 May 2011. All conference proceedings are being published.⁷

CSS was focused at first on Anglo-American topics, and conducted solely in the medium of instruction of the organizers, i.e. English.⁸ However, the Turkish element seeped in quickly. Papers on Turkish themes found a place in the symposia, and subsequently in their proceedings – a state of affairs that was only natural for a discipline such as cultural studies that is by definition inimical to boundaries. Thus, an audience basically made up of Turks found themselves listening to papers in English on purely Turkish topics. A case in point is the paper presented by sociologist Nuran Erol in 1999 on *arabesk* music⁹ (see Erol 2000). The discussion that ensued, on a purely Turkish predicament, was conducted in English by Turkish participants – and seemed incongruous.

It is basically to remedy this incongruity that a group of scholars got together in the fall of the same year in Ankara to form a “Group for Cultural Studies in Turkey.”

3. The Group for Cultural Studies in Turkey / Cultural Studies Association (of Turkey)

As noted above, the formation of this group originated from the İzmir conferences, and among its (eleven) members¹⁰ were several scholars who had been organizing and/or attending CSS. The feeling that led to forming a group was that if cultural studies is to be pursued in Turkey on matters to do with Turkish culture, it should be done first and foremost in Turkish.

One other consideration may have been, although this was never openly voiced as far as I know, the wish to extricate cultural studies in Turkey from the monopoly of the British. None of the members, except for Laurence Raw, could have known that the British Council had terminated its courses. The webpage was there

(and still is), provided by the British, with the ambiguous “Cultural Studies in Turkey” heading.

Almost all the members of the Group had had prior experience in associations, and the general feeling at first was that this inter-university group could – and should – hold out without formalizing its existence. This was without counting with the need to obtain financial support. When The Turkish Science and Technology Foundation (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknik Araştırma Kurumu - TÜBİTAK) started to give out funds for which the Group could apply for its conferences, they believed however that there was no way but to be institutionalized. Thus *Kültür Araştırmaları Derneği* (KAD, Cultural Studies Association) was founded in March 2005, in Istanbul where Gönül Pultar, who had been elected Chair of the Group at its second meeting in November 1999, had moved (see www.kulturad.org). As there was no radical break from “group” to “association,” this essay will consider the activities of the two together (see the chapter “Recognizing Difference: Interdisciplinarity and the Cultural Studies Association” in Raw 2011).

Conferences and Collections of Essays

The Group, which started meeting once a month, began its activities very modestly with a two-day seminar, with solicited speakers and invited participants, on the subject of migration in early summer 2000 at METU, organized by Group member Yıldırım Yavuz. It then launched what was to become biannual conferences, with the one in Kemer, Antalya in fall 2001 entitled, as translated into English, “Modernity and Culture.” The book which came out of it is *Kültür ve Modernite* (Culture and Modernity), edited by Pultar, Emine O. İncirlioğlu and Bahattin Akşit (both Group members) and published in 2003.

This was followed two years later by the, as translated into English, “Cultures of Turks / Cultures of Turkey” conference organized in the southeastern city of Van in 2003 jointly with Yüzüncü Yıl (Hundredth Year) University. The book to come out was *Türk(iye) Kültürleri* (Cultures of Turks / Cultures of Turkey), edited by Pultar and Tahire Erman (Bilkent University), and published in 2005.

It is as KAD that a conference was held in 2005 jointly with Koç University (Istanbul) entitled, as translated into English, “Identity and Culture.” Two books came out: *Kimlikler Lütfen: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Kültürel Kimlik Arayışı ve Temsili* (Identities Please: Quest for and Representation of Cultural Identity in the Republic of Turkey) in 2009, and *Ağır Gökyüzünde Kanat Çırpma: Sovyet-sonrası Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Kültürel Kimlik Arayışı ve Müzakeresi* (Flapping Wings in Heavy Skies: Quest for and Negotiation of Cultural Identity in the Post-Soviet Turkic Republics) in 2012, both edited by Pultar.

KAD also organized in Istanbul, in the fall of the same year (2005) a two-day English-language seminar in collaboration with then Heidelberg-based MESEA (Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas) entitled “Ethnic

Identity?: (Trans)National and (Bi/Multi/Poly)Cultural Aspects.” The book that came out of it, the collection of essays entitled *Imagined Identities: Identity Formation in the Age of Globalization*, edited again by Pultar, is forthcoming from Syracuse University Press in the fall of 2013.

The next year, KAD organized another conference, in the city of Kütahya (the ancient Kotyaion/Cotyaeum) in Western Anatolia, in collaboration with the municipality of that city. It was focused on a specific subject, “Idil (Volga)-Ural Studies” as translated into English, on the culture of the ethnic groups of the Volga-Ural region (home to the three autonomous Turkic republics of Tchevastian, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan) within the Russian Federation. The working languages of this international conference were Turkish, English, Russian and Tatar.

The next biannual KAD conference, entitled “E/Im/Migration” as translated into English, took place in 2007 in Şile, a suburb of Istanbul, organized with Işık University, boasting of a campus directly on the sea in that popular sea resort town. It was followed in 2009 by a conference in the Black Sea city of Zonguldak (famed for its coal mines), in collaboration with the Karaelmas (Black Diamond) University (since April 2012 “Bülent Ecevit University”¹¹) in that city, entitled, as translated into English, “Black Diamond 2009: Media and Culture.” Its proceedings were published the same year as *Karaelmas 2009: Medya ve Kültür*, edited by Nurçay Türkoğlu (Marmara University), the KAD member who organized the conference, and Sevilen Toprak Alayoğlu (Marmara University).

The last biannual KAD conference to date was organized on 8-10 September 2011 by the current vice-president Emine O. İncirlioğlu (Maltepe University). Entitled “Space and Culture” as translated into English, it was co-organized with Istanbul's Kadir Has University and took place at that university (situated on the Golden Horn, and housed, in much the same way as the Norrköping campus, in the buildings of a tobacco factory). Over 250 participants attended. The proceedings were published as *Mekân ve Kültür* (2011), edited by İncirlioğlu and KAD member Barış Kılıçbay (Abant İzzet Baysal University).

Two activities are planned for 2013. A workshop on Turkish-Americans, co-organized with Kadir Has University, will take place in June at that university; and the biannual conference, entitled “Memory and Culture” as translated into English, will take place in September in Ankara, co-organized with Bilkent University. And a bilingual online publication, titled *KULTUR-e*, is planned for 2014 if not earlier.

Cultural Studies Programs in Turkey

It is also in the fall of 1999 that cultural studies formally appeared in the country's universities with the opening of two graduate programs, at Istanbul Bilgi and Boğaziçi universities, and one undergraduate program at Sabancı University. Another graduate program opened in 2002 at Middle East Technical University. My

discussion of these programs will be very brief as the Pultar and Kırtunç essay of 2004 (www.kulturad.org/images/practise2.pdf), of which this essay is in a way a follow-up, has examined their aims and the courses they offer at some length; a nine-year interval is too short in the life of a university department for major developments that would justify a brand new report that would not be repetitive. These programs have been followed since by the addition of a graduate component of Sabancı's undergraduate program, and the opening of another graduate program at Şehir University, to both of which I devote more space.

Istanbul Bilgi University

The privately-owned Bilgi University (established in 1996)¹² opened an MA program in cultural studies. The medium of education of this university is English, but the program is announced as “bilingual” on its website (see “Program Structure” at “Istanbul Bilgi University MA in Cultural Studies”). It is the only cultural studies program to be avowedly so, a trait that distinguishes it from the other cultural studies programs in the country. It features among its faculty Kevin Robins from the U.K., and Turkish intellectuals such as Murat Belge and Mete Tunçay, and the Armenian of Turkey Arus Yumul, as well as Ferda Keskin, organizer of the 2006 Crossroads conference in Istanbul and later chairman of the Association for Cultural Studies (ACS) from 2008 to 2012. It is being “coordinated” in succession by members of its teaching staff.

Among the courses offered (besides the basics), “Religion, Culture and Globalization” surveys “the historical and social landscape of religion in Turkey” and is recommended for international students. “Politics and Biography,” conducted in Turkish, is “designed to develop [an] in-depth understanding of the process of social and political change by studying memoirs in Turkish.” Strangely enough, “Political Philosophy,” a course analyzing “major concepts of political philosophy in the period between ancient Greece and the mid-nineteenth century,” with texts from “Aristotle, Aquinas, Spinoza, Hegel, and Marx” is also given in Turkish.¹³

Crossroads Conference

One of the achievements of Bilgi University has been the organization of the “Crossroads in Cultural Studies” conference in 2006. With a reported participation of 600, and a world-renowned keynote speaker, Partha Chatterjee, it was a highly successful conference, as good as any international conference organized by top establishments anywhere in the world. As mentioned above, ACS then elected its organizer, Keskin, to head the association. The wrap-up session was memorable for a heated discussion on the use of English in cultural studies.

Cultural Studies Journal

The program started publishing a cultural studies journal in 2011, the only one of its kind in Turkey at present. However, the bilingual (Turkish-English) *KÜLT* appears at present more of a review than a purely scholarly journal, and moreover seems to have halted publication at the end of 2011 after one inaugural issue in June devoted to “canon” and one double issue in November devoted to “culture.” No other issue is mentioned on its website (see *KÜLT Kültürel İncelemeler Dergisi*).

Boğaziçi University

The Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University, a state university also with the medium of education in English,¹⁴ opened an MA program in Critical and Cultural Studies (see the “Boğaziçi University Graduate Program in Critical and Cultural Studies”). The teaching staff of the program is made up of the department faculty. The program has been chaired since its inception by Işıl Baş, an Anglicist, and member of the department faculty.

Besides compulsory basic courses, “[s]tudents whose undergraduate degrees are not in English Literature are required to take at least one elective course from the English Literature pool.” The other electives may be taken from the other departments of this 150-year old university offering a wide range of courses on both Western and Turkish/Ottoman cultures, but the set-back is that these courses may not, as a matter of course, have been designed from a cultural studies approach.

Sabancı University

A undergraduate program was opened simultaneously at Sabancı University (also established in 1996), whose medium of education is also English. Its faculty features the American Annedith Schneider who penned her initial experiences in an essay published in 2002 entitled “The Institutional Revolutionary Major? Questions and Contradictions on the Way to Designing a Cultural Studies Program in a New Turkish University” (for another look at cultural studies in Turkey by yet another “expat,” see Raw 2004). The program is within the university's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), and is chaired by members of its teaching staff on a rotating basis. As the website of that faculty indicates, it is “[d]epartment-free by design” and “an interdisciplinary home to degree programs that range from visual arts and visual communication design to cultural studies, social and political studies through conflict analysis and resolution, economics and history” (see “Welcome to FASS”). In other words, the students enrolled in this faculty do not major in any particular discipline, they receive a diploma in “arts and social sciences” at the end of four years.

Graduate Program

The Sabancı cultural studies program then started in 2006 an MA program with “thesis” and “non-thesis” options,¹⁵ presented thus on the university's website:

The Cultural Studies Program brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars with a commitment to fostering new ways of analyzing and participating in contemporary cultural dynamics in Turkey and around the world.

The program covers a wide range of topics and theoretical approaches, with particular emphasis on: literary and cultural theory; gender and sexuality, transnational mobility and migration; ethnic identities and citizenship; politics of representation; memory studies and oral history. (“Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Cultural Studies”)

Of the courses offered may be seen, beside the basic ones, such courses as “Modernism/Postmodernism,” and “Cultures of Migration,” showing an emphasis on the “around the world.” In another course entitled “Gendered Memories of War and Political Violence,” which “explores the different ways in which war and political violence are remembered through a gender lens,” Turkey is in dubious company alongside Argentina, Germany, Hungary, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. The only course that is devoted to Turkish culture is “Thematic Approaches to Contemporary Turkish Culture,” which is presented in this way: “Based on readings of urban space as well as analyses of visual and written texts, this course will trace and map current cultural dynamics and ambivalences of contemporary Turkey ... emphasizing the ways in which politics and culture are articulated in present-day Turkey.”¹⁶ The European reader may be interested in “Anthropology of Europe,” whose content is announced thus:

Anthropology is conventionally perceived as the study of non-European societies, however, recent critical approaches have stressed the importance of turning the anthropological gaze to western societies, and in particular, of “provincializing Europe.” ... [T]he course will examine historical and contemporary constructions of “Europeanness”; debates over multiculturalism, cultural citizenship and “Islamophobia”; migration and ethnicity; and the uneasy relation of Eastern Europe and post-socialism to Western Europe and the EU. (“Graduate Courses - Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Cultural Studies”)

The titles of the MA theses submitted during the time frame 2008-2012, also listed on the website (“Theses - Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Cultural Studies”),¹⁷ show a great diversity in both theme and line of approach, and give a good idea of the direction and scope of the program.¹⁸

Middle East Technical University

An MS program in Media and Cultural Studies was opened in the fall of 2002 at Middle East Technical University (METU – Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi [ODTÜ] in Turkish), also a state university whose medium of education is English. The program has been chaired from its inception by Raşit Kaya, a professor of political science who obtained his doctoral degree from the “Institut Français

de Presse en Science de l'Information" of Paris University. The teaching staff includes practising journalists with doctoral degrees such as Uluç Gürkan and Doğan Tılıç. The scope of the program is narrower as it focuses on various aspects of the media, and it offers MS degrees with and without thesis. Thus, alongside courses such as "Ethical Issues in Journalism" or "Mass Media Discourse from [an] Ethnocultural Perspective" (besides of course the "basics"), it offers "practical" courses such as "Introduction to Video Production" ("Courses - M.S. Program in Media and Cultural Studies [thesis and non-thesis]"). The only course pertaining to Turkish culture is the "Issues in Turkish Cultural History: Popular Culture, Power, and Subalternity," a "core course," which traces "the historical formation and transformation of Turkish popular culture," with "[p]articlar emphasis ... on the distinction and relation between the official-high culture and the folk-popular culture ..."19 Its long reading list contains works in both English and Turkish ("ADM 5117 Issues in Turkish Cultural History: Popular Culture, Power, and Subalternity"). However, "students can take any relevant graduate course offered by other departments upon the consent of the advisor" ("Courses - M.S. Program in Media and Cultural Studies [thesis and non-thesis]"). To approve of courses designed from a cultural studies approach seems here to be the responsibility of the advisor.

Istanbul Şehir University

The Istanbul Şehir (City) University, yet again an English-medium establishment, was opened in 2008 by a foundation (Bilim ve Sanat Vakfı – The Knowledge and Art Foundation).20 It started accepting its first students in the academic year 2010-2011. It has opened a graduate program in cultural studies, chaired by Mahmut Mutman, a professor of communication studies, and has collected scholars, among them Ferhat Kentel and Mesut Yeğen, professors of sociology known for their pro-Kurdish stance, as well as promising young Ottomanists. Under the heading "Cultural Studies at Istanbul Şehir University: Approach and Philosophy," the program is described as being "an interdisciplinary program established with the contributions of various departments and faculty ... offer[ing] a rich variety of courses that covers all major areas of research in cultural studies and teaches its most well-known theories and methods ... for studying various aspects of cultural life."... It ... puts a special emphasis on cultural plurality as [an] essential aspect of cultural life." The website also notes that the program has "two major areas of special emphasis"; namely:

1. Critical analysis of the increasingly industrialized, commercialized and spectacular contemporary cultural scene; theories, methods and debates in this field; cultural texts, meanings, identities and differences; hegemony and resistance; globality and locality.

2. Modern Ottoman-Turkish cultural history, especially a critical and analytic grasp of Turkish cultural modernity; Orientalism and Westernism; nation-state, political culture and social and ideological movements; a dynamic and pluralist approach to various modern cultural histories of literature, cinema, music, visual arts, media, popular culture, religion, ethnicity and everyday life. (“Cultural Studies: What does it Study and How?”)

Besides the basic courses, and such “international” courses as “Gender Theory” and “Globality, Culture and Identity,” the program offers many courses focused on Turkish as well as Ottoman culture: “Istanbul in Ottoman Texts,” “Comparative Analysis of the 19th Century Armenian and Turkish Literatures,” “Modern Ottoman-Turkish Literary and Cultural History,” “Aesthetics and Gender in Ottoman Culture,” “Crises of Masculinity and the 20th Century Novel,” “Empire, Colonialism and Orientalism in Modern Turkish Literature,” “Identity, Culture and Ethnicity in Turkey,” “Late Ottoman Intellectual History,” “Narrative and Narrativity in the Ottoman Empire,” “Religion and Politics in Turkey,” and “Mass Media and Power in Turkey.” Especially noteworthy is the course “Modern Turkish Political Thought,” which discusses thinkers of the right, from the late Ottoman era up to the current period, usually ignored or categorically disregarded by leftist-oriented academics and intellectuals.²¹

Among the programs, this one appears to be the most geared to the local scene without neglecting the prevalent (international/Western) “theories, methods and debates in this field,” though of course one must wait to see how it fares over time.

“As this essay is being written (June 2003), none of the ... programs have produced any graduates. ... So any evaluation of these programs is premature,” Pultar and Kırtunç wrote (Pultar & Kırtunç 2004). Today, this can be relevant for the Şehir program only; sad to say, the four programs established earlier, including the Sabancı graduate program that appears to have been the most productive, have yet to make an impact nationwide. Perhaps one needs to wait for the opening of doctoral programs and their output for these cultural studies programs to acquire clout outside of the confines of the English-medium academia in the country.²²

Problems Facing Cultural Studies in Turkey

With an active association regularly organizing biannual conferences and more; a(n other) biannual conference already become traditional organized by a major state university; graduate programs at four universities churning out each year new would-be scholars in the field, another newly-opened graduate program that has started instruction, and a journal devoted to the field that has been launched (whatever its ultimate fate is to be), cultural studies in Turkey appears to be “all

set,” as the American colloquialism has it. In fact, the truth is far different, and cultural studies in Turkey is facing a number of problems that are summarized below.

Of course, cultural studies is currently faced with problems everywhere it is taught and practiced, as was quite apparent from the many papers from European scholars at the June 2011 ACSIS conference in Norrköping. I try below to highlight those that are particular to Turkey, that arise from the characteristics of Turkish society. As will be seen, some of these problems are intertwined. Some are important, some are less so (and may even be considered purely formalistic, while some may be seen as afflicting social sciences and the humanities in general), but together they hinder the development of a much-needed perspective that only cultural studies can provide. I list seven which I believe need to be debated upon, even if no solution is found for them in the short term. These may be termed briefly as the lack of any “chair” in cultural studies, confusion in the terminology, the perception of the objective of cultural studies as “frightening,” the mis/use of “culture” as a term, the language divide, the Turkish predicament of being both the *hegemon* and the *subaltern*, and the abundance of material.

1. *The lack of any “chair” in cultural studies.* Although five universities carrying weight in different ways in Turkish academia have opened the said programs, there is at present no “chair” in cultural studies. Academic promotion in Turkey runs thus: universities hire Ph.D.s and will confer on them the title of “assistant professor” at their own discretion. However, to become an “associate professor” (*doçent* in Turkish, from the German *Dozent*) a Ph.D., whether employed or not, is required to pass a state examination after a certain period of time following the reception of his/her doctoral degree.²³ “Cultural studies” does not figure among the disciplines in which this examination may be entered. Governed by rigid hierarchization and departmentalization, Turkish academia is wary of theoretical hybridity, and refuses to acknowledge work that is cross/trans/interdisciplinary. Those teaching cultural studies courses, whether in the above-mentioned departments/programs or in other departments/programs, pursue their formal careers in those disciplines that are recognized (i. e. sociology, anthropology, literatures in different languages, etc.). They would have adopted the cultural turn / acquired a cultural studies approach during the course of this career; nevertheless it is the demands of that career that take precedence at all times. Cultural studies is either neglected or altogether abandoned. A case in point is the example of the above-mentioned Raw who was one of the first ever instructors in cultural studies in Turkey: by his own confession, he turned to film studies and adaptation studies when the British Council

ended its cultural studies courses (e-mail message to author, 26 August 2011).²⁴

2. *Confusion in the terminology.* There is moreover the issue of terminology: “cultural studies” is translated into Turkish in various ways. From the beginning KAD adopted *kültür arařtırmaları*, a noun phrase formed according to long-established Turkish language rules; the five universities employ the adjective *kültürel* where the suffix *-el* is for Geoffrey Lewis (1920-2008) an imitation of the French *culturel* (2009: 124) which apparently sounds more “Western.” For *studies*, in opposition to KAD's *arařtırmalar(i)*, Sabancı, Boğaziçi, METU and Şehir employ *çalışmalar*, while Bilgi uses *incelemeler*. These words all mean “studies” and are alternately used at all times, with, however, *arařtırmalar* first of all meaning *researches*, *çalışmalar* first of all meaning *works*, and *incelemeler* first of all meaning *examinations*.²⁵ This situation creates a cacophony of a sort, as no one central fulcrum can be established. Boğaziçi University and METU each offer degrees in one aspect of cultural studies, and the other four (KAD and Bilgi, Sabancı and Şehir universities) are apparently doing different things, neither one wishing to seem to defer to any of the other(s).

3. *The “frightening” objective of cultural studies.* On a more intricate level, it is the objective proper of cultural studies which frightens laymen and officials alike. As is known, just like with women's studies, the aim of the discipline of cultural studies is not merely to do scholarship but to reach the community, as cultural studies also inheres political criticism and activism. In other words, the work done should ideally be directed towards a political project, towards an improvement of the power relations that are taken up, questioned and more often than not decried. The “overt political engagement” of cultural studies (Schneider 2002), is near to impossible in Turkey, as such a stance is immediately seized upon as anarchism or extremism. Academics in Turkey have generally been “expected to stay out of politics,” as Schneider puts it, or else leave academia to pursue directly a political career.

4. *The mis/use of “culture” as a term.* There are also problems with deeper ramifications. One has to do with the term *culture* itself. The word is disquieting because ideologues of various hues in the country have been and still are presenting as “culture” much material that is purely political. Consequently, the man in the street tends to consider the concept of culture as heralding subversive agendas, of being a veiled synonym e.g. for separatism, or for some other obnoxious topic. The layman's attitude finds itself reflected in gatekeepers' be-

havior when e.g. allocating funds, deciding on the publication of texts or allowing for the organization of conferences.

The association (KAD) is faced with additional problems. Ever since the military regime instated after the September 12, 1980 coup closed down all associations, declaring them breeding grounds for terrorism and thus “harmful” to society, the average citizen has been steering clear of all of them. New ones were later allowed to be established, and today, in 2012, there are over 85 000 associations (*derneks*) in the country according to the information given by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (“Türkiye’de Dernek Sayısı 85 bin’i Buldu” [The Number of Associations Has Reached 85 thousand]), but career-oriented academics have been sharing the sensitivity of the man in the street, and, unless it directly profits their advancement,²⁶ shying away if they can help it from any involvement with organizations. The AKP regime, which has imprisoned during its decade in power a horrifyingly vast number of authors, journalists, scholars, and intellectuals for having criticized it, has accused each one of them with having “ganged up” with would-be coup makers. This attitude of the government, especially its interpretation of “gangs”, has only served to exacerbate the already existent phobia concerning involvement with organizations.²⁷

5. *The language divide.* Cultural studies in Turkey is characterized by a phenomenon: there is a pronounced “divorce” between “Anglophone” Turkish scholars and “merely Turcophone” ones. Western-educated Turkish scholars teaching (cultural studies or any other West-based discipline) in English-language media universities mostly dwell in a world of their own, and have no time or interest in anything published in their subjects of specialization in Turkish, especially as some of these publications lack a theoretical framework and are “wanting” in APA or MLA rules.²⁸ The disdain appears reciprocal, as scholars whose professional formation is basically turcology (which embodies various branches of Turkish studies), and who publish in Turkish only, tend to consider the authors of publications in English, whose formation is usually *not* related to Turkish studies, mostly ill-equipped to tackle such subjects. They consider moreover the publications themselves, when they are able to read them, as more often than not demonizing Turks and Turkey.²⁹ As long as there is this rift, which perhaps for some is as much a divide in academic background and ideological commitment as it is linguistic, cultural studies in Turkey cannot develop adequately. I believe this is the most important hurdle cultural studies of Turkey needs to overcome.

My experience while teaching at METU, Bilkent, Boğaziçi and Bahçeşehir universities (all of them English-medium) respectively, between 1982 and 2012, has time and again shown me that the “Anglophones” will mostly look down on work done in Turkish, as they look down on Turkish codes of dress or behavior that are alien to the Western *Weltanschauung* with which they are imbued³⁰ but also because the texts are uninformed of the theories of Western luminaries. But even more importantly, because the work in Turkish (whatever its intrinsic merit) has not received the stamp of approval, the recognition and legitimization of the West. By extrapolation, any cultural studies work written in Turkish is vested with the same stigma – and ignored, or downplayed as negligible. There is the danger, however, that the stigma attached to work done in Turkish and published in Turkey may eventually act as a deterrent to original cultural studies work that is in its infancy but has the potential to engender novel theories pertinent to the Turkish situation.

It is *only work that has obtained its titre de noblesse* by being published in English, in the West, which acquires validity in Turkey, for example in a Turkish translation, which is then regarded much more highly than any original publication in the Turkish language; although, to be “palatable” to the Western publisher, the text probably had to be adjusted, and is not any more part of the Turkish narrative, or is a mere one-sided view of it. For example one can easily get published in the West writing about Turks oppressing Kurds but one wouldn't easily get published writing about Kurds in Northern Iraq oppressing the Turks in the region, the Turkmens.

6. One issue that is not given due importance is *the Turkish predicament of being both the hegemon and the subaltern*. Depending on their political stance, scholars will adopt either one or the other view, but that is seldom the whole picture, so something is always missing, and the work ends up being not totally satisfactory. For example, had the Turkish parliament not vetoed it, what would have the Turkish army's entry into Iraq in March 2003 signified? Turks' return to the land that was theirs for over five centuries which the British unscrupulously accaparated from them during World War I, or, as the Bush administration expected, their attending to the US army as minions?

Those Turkish scholars writing in English see Turkey as a Third World country and treat its society as such in their studies – and/or, additionally agree with their Western or Western-oriented colleagues who acknowledge Turks as hegemons only to denigrate them as having been, and in certain instances still being, brutish despots. On the

other hand, those writing in Turkish start from the premise of the “glorious past” – of not only the six centuries of the Ottoman Empire, but also that of an *ethnos* that goes as far back as the times of the “Golden Man” of the fourth century BC,³¹ if not much earlier.³² Both attitudes may be justified in different cases, but the existing dichotomy is detrimental to the development of cultural studies in Turkey. Because of the confusion it generates, a master paradigm cannot be developed.

7. *The abundance of material.* As cultural studies as a matter of principle sets no boundaries, the tacit understanding is that any scholar (provided s/he is academically adequately “equipped”) can do cultural studies work on any topic. The cultural studies scholar, whether a Turk or a foreigner, who would like to do work on any topic related to Turks and Turkey finds him/herself confronted with an abundance of material. This state of affairs stems from four main factors of divergent nature: there is still a lot of “catching up” to do; there is still a lot of untapped material; the population of Turkey includes very many ethnic groups; and there are very many peoples who are Turks. While this wealth offers a myriad of opportunities, it also seems at times to act as deterrent. The first two tend to hinder with their call for immediacy, and the last two bewilder almost with their multitude.

First of all, Turkey, a latecomer to industrialization, has still got catching up to do in many areas, including scholarship, long before the questioning stance of cultural studies can be brought in. Just to give an example, one cannot start work on criticizing museums (questioning their particular display of material, etc. and the motives behind that selection) when studies on how museums should be organized have not been fully developed first. This is so in many fields.

Secondly, there is a lot of material that has remained untapped that needs to be seen to – descriptively, to start with. So, many scholars who could be doing cultural studies are led to and distracted by this body that needs to be handled initially in a traditional manner. For example, Ottoman-bashing – started in the nineteenth century with Western powers calling the Ottoman Empire “the sick man of Europe,” a labeling the founders of its successor state, the Republic of Turkey, espoused in order to justify then consolidate their endeavor – continued for a very long time, and it is only in the last quarter of the twentieth century that the Ottoman era has started to attract genuine interest and be examined dispassionately.³³

Parenthetically, perhaps such a “moratorium” is normal after the demise of any empire, but this particular one had a lot to do with the

brainwashing the generations of Western-educated Turks underwent. In a way, for those Turks who were adults in the 1990s and beyond, it was most salutary, if I may so put it, to see the Saddam-bashing of the 1990s (culminating with the acts committed during the war in Iraq that started in 2003), and the Kaddafi-bashing of the 2010s: they were able to see for themselves how Western (neo-)imperialism works and visualize how Ottoman-bashing must have taken place. (I have of course in mind the Western-educated Turkish intellectuals abreast of the development of historiography in the West; classical Turkish history-writing glorifying the “Sultanate,” with perhaps even an anti-republican undercurrent, has always existed.) It must be said that in this respect a formidable task, and a cultural studies one at that, awaits the scholar of Ottoman studies and of Turkish studies in general, whether s/he be a Turk or not: as William du Bois (1868-1963) pointed to the *double-consciousness* of the Black in the United States, so must the scholar of Ottoman and/or Turkish studies, alongside pursuing his/her own travails, muster such a double-consciousness in order to revisit and if necessary revise the clichéd image of the Turk in Western and Western-influenced discourse.

Thirdly, the abundance of material stems also from the fact that the Ottoman State was a poly-cultural society. The residue is still to be found within the confines of Turkey. Albanians, Arabs, Armenians, Bosnians, Bulgars, Circassians, Georgians, Greeks, Kurds, Jews, Laz, Pomaks, Roma, Syriacs, Zazas are only some of the ethnic groups which compose the population of Turkey besides the ethnic Turks. The latter themselves are more composite than may be imagined at first: there are not only the descendants of the Ottoman Turks, whose generations have been native to the land for more than seven centuries now, but also those Turks from other lands: not only those who “stayed behind” in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Middle East, but also the Crimean Turks (also known as Crimean Tatars), the Kazanlıs (also known as Volga Tatars), the Azeris (of both Iran and Azerbaijan), the Kazakhs, the Kirghiz, the Turkmen, and the like – those whom the English language distinguishes as *Turkic* as opposed to *Turkish* but who share the same cultural heritage. Many of these migrated to Turkey in or after 1917 if not before.

It is a fact also – and that is the fourth element constituting the abundance of material – that the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 has brought to the fore the cultural and ethnic ties that bind the Turkic peoples, as they are thus labeled, and the Turks of Turkey, in-

roducing at once compelling issues of nation-building and renegotiation of identity. Azerbaijan in the Caucasus; and Kazakhstan, Kirghyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia, made nominal republics by the Soviet regime, are now independent nation-states. Turks of Turkey share a common culture with them: the mythology, epics and classical works of literature are common, and so is a history going back to ancient times. The present cultural tribulations of these “new” nation-states, zigzagging between a post-Soviet rejection of Russian culture, the still “dominant” culture as Raymond Williams would put it, and a just as poignant retention of it, and the simultaneous hesitant return to and re-espousal of Turco-Muslim culture, that is just as emergent as it is even more residual, perforce fall within the area of interest of Turkish cultural studies.

Conclusion

Cultural studies started in Turkey in the 1990s as a soft colonial project on the part of the UK couched as British Council activities. It was utilized in turn by the USA operating through its USIS office (since then become the office of the Cultural Counsellor of the US Embassy), especially through the annual American studies conferences it organized in “collaboration” with ASAT (whose foundation it had instigated), not only as a function of its propaganda machine, but also for its ulterior motives: the writer of these lines remembers many an American studies conference wrap-up session during the 1990s where suddenly the “Kurdish issue” flared up, seemingly out of nowhere, without even the aid of “transitional” terms indicating a comparison could be made with such and such American issue. (With the demise of the Soviet Union, the attention proffered on Turkish scholars waned almost abruptly in favor of “East European” and other post-Soviet colleagues, and Turkish Anglicists and Americanists, feeling left stranded, now reminisce on the largesse and consideration they used to receive in different ways from the British Council and the USIS.)

Reclaimed soon enough by Turkish scholars themselves, cultural studies developed over the years in Turkey, but encounters today a number of problems it needs to cope with if it is to develop further. Humanities and social sciences have been undervalued for long in a society that is trying to catch up on the Industrial Revolution. So, an offshoot such as cultural studies naturally also possesses a low status. Grants and funds easily available for “science” subjects are inexistent for humanities and social sciences, and consequently for cultural studies. However, the case of cultural studies presents a graver matter. Whether cultural studies is and should remain merely an approach or whether it is and should be a full-fledged academic discipline is an ongoing debate even in those Western centers where it first saw the light. Be that as it may, it is a fact that in Turkey an academ-

ic cannot pursue a career in cultural studies. Attracted at first by the intellectual challenge it offers, many bright young men and women soon seek fame and glory elsewhere, and they cannot be blamed. Turkish society rests on *power*, not *achievement*, and pays great importance to hierarchy and titles. The Ottomans, from whom evolved present Turkish society never instituted hereditary titles; titles – of whatever character – need to be earned, and quickly, during one’s own lifetime. Thus all academics doing what would be defined as cultural studies make sure their work also suits the (mostly rigid) requirements of other, well-defined disciplines – which is more often than not the loss of cultural studies. As Schneider points out, even students themselves “show little inclination to take a course of study that, to their eyes, does not lead to a career” (2002).

Moreover, cultural studies in Turkey possesses a heterogeneous character. One reason seems to be that it seems to follow a two-track path, as an apparently insurmountable rift exists between those practitioners of it doing academic work in English, and those doing academic work in Turkish. The two “sectors” are to a great extent non-cognizant of each other’s work, so there is no adding up, no accumulation of scholarship. KAD was born out of the necessity of doing cultural studies in one’s mother tongue, of examining everyday life in the everyday language of Turkey,³⁴ and of coining terms that were until then inexistent. Yet those academics teaching in English-medium universities have been shunning it for the very same reason.³⁵ Turkish seems the “vulgar” language as opposed to their “Latin.” Also, because their abstraction has been in English, they find it bothersome to have to translate or to coin new terms. Furthermore, those teaching in English-medium universities need to continue to do work i. e. to publish in English, as in order to be promoted in their universities they need to be figured in journals indexed in the United States.³⁶ Which automatically prevents any accumulation of knowledge and scholarship in cultural studies in Turkey.³⁷ This covert neo-colonization of the Western-educated mind is overlooked in the current discourse on globalization, and the implementation of such projects as the Erasmus program which assumes that all instruction under the sun may somehow be conducted in English.³⁸

One practical result is that those scholars who may not know English never have the benefit of the scholarship in English on their subjects, thus never become truly cognizant of the “cultural turn” and continue their production of theory-free work³⁹ – for which there is more than abundant untapped material, as mentioned above. Yet the bulk of material that is the subject matter of potential cultural studies work is in their possession, so to speak. Most Western-educated academics teaching cultural studies in the English-medium universities where such programs exist are not graduates of Turkish history or literature or related subjects (as may be easily seen from a survey of the faculty lists of the programs I discussed above).⁴⁰ They only bring the method, and the theoretical framework serving as basis for their work. But again, this framework is founded on Western theoretic-

cians' ideas, and what they propound is not always relevant to the Turkish situation (see Pultar 2005 for a treatment of this and related issues).⁴¹ So somehow the material and the methodology cannot be brought together and no novel formulation, no new theorization is able to emerge from cultural studies in the country.⁴²

Yet a more important point is that these ideas do not emanate from within. There is as yet no cultural studies textbook in Turkish, nor perhaps is there any need for one. The five universities where it would/could be used as a regular student textbook are all English-medium universities which stress the interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies and the need for the students to acquire a critical, questioning stance. When one surveys their curricula, one sees that their main concern is, as Pultar and Kırtunç indicated, “training the students in the theories of the major figures of Anglo-centric cultural studies (with that of the ubiquitous French as part of its corpus) to allow them to 'perform,' namely, do research, teach, participate in the international academic arena, as masterfully as all other international scholars” (Pultar & Kırtunç 2004), rather than having as their primary aim forging Turkish cultural studies / cultural studies of Turkey. One cannot but sense in this stance a whiff of neo-colonization – in which all of us West-educated non-Western intellectuals find ourselves in, whether we like it or not, or are aware of it or not – that translates in action into unconscious neo-colonialism.

Yet as one does work in cultural studies in Turkey, one realizes how imperative it is to generate new, original theory and methodology. What emerges in the West does not address the same issues and predicaments: Turkish society is not as “industrialized” as Western societies; so, statistically speaking, media and the culture industry have not reached the proportions at which Western theory would bring elucidation. Post-colonial theory, broadly speaking developed mainly by non-Western scholars from former British and other European colonies or ethnics within the United States, constitutes too much of a response to Anglo-Euro hegemony to address Turkish society's Janus-faced position of being both a hegemon itself and a victim of Anglo-Euro neo-imperialism.

In the meantime Turkish society is changing fast. It is changing fast in the twenty-first century and requires analysts and theoreticians to make sense of the transformation, at a time when, it may be argued, the radical alterations brought about by the Kemalist revolution and the establishment of the Republic in the twentieth century have not yet been sufficiently analyzed and put into perspective. The necessity of shedding long-standing familiar stances, however cozy these may be, of moving beyond titles and labels, and doing substantial cultural studies in Turkey remains an acute issue.

Gönül Pultar is the founding president of the Cultural Studies Association of Turkey. She has taught at Bilkent University and METU, and was a fellow at Harvard University. She has held various positions at ASA, IASA, MLA, and MESEA, and was the Vice-president of ASAT. Her area of specialization is the twentieth-century Western novel, especially the American ethnic novel. She was the founding editor of *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*. Her published works, in both English and Turkish, include, besides many essays, the monograph *Technique and Tradition in Samuel Beckett's Trilogy of Novels* (1996); and various collections of essays, among them *On the Road to Baghdad or Traveling Biculturalism: Theorizing a Bicultural Approach to Contemporary World Fiction* (2005), and *Imagined Identities: Identity Formation in the Age of Globalization* (fall 2013). She is also the author of the short story "Leda and the Swan" (2001), and of two novels in Turkish. E-mail: gpultar@kulturad.org

Notes

1. One of the students, Derviş Zaimağaoğlu, received one of these and completed his MA degree in Warwick (Raw, e-mail message to author, 26 August 2011). Cyprus-born Boğaziçi University graduate Zaimağaoğlu would go on to become, as "Derviş Zaim," a well-known director, with such award-winning feature films as *Tabutta Rövaşata* (*Somersault in a Coffin*, 1996), *Filler ve Çimen* (*Elephants and Grass*, 2000) and *Gölgeler ve Suretler* (*Shadows and Faces*, 2010). He would also co-direct with Greek Cypriot Panicos Chrysantou the documentary *Parallel Trips* (2004) "in which the two directors, from opposite sides of the divided island of Cyprus, recorded the human dramas that unfolded during the war of 1974 and the legacy that remains today" ("Derviş Zaim"). For an interview Raw conducted with his former student, see in his *Exploring Turkish Cultures* (2011) the chapter entitled "Derviş Zaim: 'To Return to the Past Means Embarking on a New Journey'."
2. This is what American studies is formally called in Turkey.
3. Raw remarks that the English language "Teaching Centre" in Istanbul "was closed three years later, as the Turkish government objected to a British Embassy-sponsored organization challenging their language schools. Since then the Council has done absolutely nothing to promote British interests, while Cult Studs has lost a lot of its edge within UK, especially after the closing of the Birmingham Centre & the Warwick Centre" (e-mail message to the author, 26 August 2011).
4. Such a young scholar was Boğaziçi University graduate İrem Balkır (1965-2006) who received a doctoral degree in Cultural and Critical Studies from the University of Pittsburgh in 1993 and joined the Department of American Culture and Literature at Bilkent University in 1994. Balkır was immediately adopted by the American studies community in Ankara, made an ASAT member and elected to its executive committee. She attended and presented many papers at ASA and MELUS conferences in the USA, and also served as Acting Chair of her department from 1997 to 1999. Yet she was adamant to her dying days of *not* being an Americanist but a cultural studies scholar.
5. Five scholars, among them the writer of these lines, presented papers on Native Americans and African Americans.
6. It was organized by, besides ASAT and the Ege University Department of American Language and Literature, the Department of English Language and Literature of that university, with the British Council through Raw and the USIS (United States Information Service), as it was called then, through contacts the ASAT presidency had among its officials,

- acting as sponsors, funding the trips to Turkey of keynote speakers from their respective countries.
7. Proceedings volumes to have come out so far are *Crossing the Boundaries: Cultural Studies in the UK and US* (1997) edited by Raw, Büken and Günseli Sönmez İşçi (then Chair of the Ege University Department of English Language and Literature, and co-organizer of CSS the first few years, now Dean of the Faculty of Science and Letters of Yeni Yüzyıl [New Century] University [Istanbul]); *The History of Culture: The Culture of History* (1998) edited by Raw, Büken and İşçi; *Popular Culture(s)* (1999) edited by Büken, Raw and İşçi; *Dialogue and Difference* (2000) edited by Raw and Kırtunç; *New Cultural Perspectives in the New Millennium* (2001) edited by Kırtunç, Büken, Raw and Rezzan Silkü (Ege University); *Globalization and Transcultural Issues in the New World Order* (2001) edited by Remington, with İşçi and Büken as advisory editors; *Selves at Home, Selves in Exile: Stories of Emplacement and Displacement* (2003) edited by Kırtunç, Atilla Silkü, Kenneth W. Rose and Murat Erdem (the last three Ege University); *Inside Outside In: Emotions, Body and Society* (2005) edited by İşçi, Dilek Direnç and Züleyha Çetiner Öktem (the last two Ege University); *[City in (Culture) in City]* (2005) edited by Kırtunç, Eleftheria Arapoglou (Aristotle University [Thessaloniki]) and Erdem; *When Away Becomes Home: Cultural Consequences of Migration* (2007) edited by İşçi, Direnç and Gülden Hatiboğlu (Ege University); *Memory and Nostalgia* (2009) edited by A. Silkü, Erdem and Patrick Folk (Ege University); and *Proceedings of [the] Thirteenth International Cultural Studies Symposium "Change and Challenge"* (2012) edited by Erdem, Lois R. Helmbold (Ege University) and A. Silkü. The first four volumes were published by the British Council; the fifth one (*New Cultural Perspectives in the New Millennium*) was co-published by ASAT and the two departments involved; and the remaining ones were published by Ege University Press. The titles of the proceedings are also the titles of the symposia.
 8. The biannual conferences and their proceedings feature papers in Turkish as well.
 9. A type of music generated on the fringes of the mainstream, reflecting the woes of the migrants from rural areas to big cities.
 10. Besides the already mentioned Büken (since then retired from Bilkent University), Kırtunç (later editor of JAST for a time, and since then retired from Ege University), Pultar (since then retired from Bilkent University, currently the president of KAD) and Raw (who moved to Başkent University [Ankara] after his job at the British Council was over, and is currently the editor of JAST), there were: professor of sociology Bahattin Akşit (at METU at the time, now at Maltepe University [Istanbul]), Central Asian studies scholar Çiğdem Balım Harding (at Manchester University at the time, now senior lecturer at Indiana University), Mutlu Binark (at Gazi University at the time, now professor of communication studies at Başkent University [both in Ankara]), anthropologist Emine O. İncirlioğlu (at Bilkent University at the time, now professor of sociology at Maltepe University and currently KAD's vice-president), professor of Turkish literature Talat Halman (Chair of the Turkish Literature department at Bilkent University, and now additionally Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Letters), professor of English language and literature Himmet Umunç (at Hacettepe University at the time, now Chair of the Department of American Culture and Literature at Başkent University), and professor of architectural history Yıldırım Yavuz (METU). Some of them have then become members of KAD.
 11. Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006), the left of center political leader who became prime minister four times between the years 1974 and 2002, represented Zonguldak as an MP for many years.
 12. It was founded by Bilgi Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı (Bilgi [Knowledge] Education and Culture Foundation) established in 1994 for that purpose, but was sold later to the Laureate International Universities Network (founded in 1998, headquartered in Virginia, Maryland, USA). Laureate has since been trying to turn it into a profit-making vocational college shorn of any academic pretense, which means the future of cultural studies may not be too bright at that university.

13. Also, already mentioned in the Pultar and Kirtunç essay, is the course “Studies in Cultural Diversity I” which aims to “study the multicultural demographic topography of Turkey within a historical, sociological and cultural background. What have the ethnicities that have inhabited this geography experienced throughout history? How did they contribute to the cultural patrimony of Anatolia? What problems have been faced at what points of break?” The participation of guest lecturers and representatives of ethnic groups is planned.
14. Robert College (RC), the first American educational institution operating abroad was opened in Bebek, on a hill overlooking the Bosphorus, in 1863 during the Ottoman era. Along with its “sister” school, the American College for Girls situated on a hill in the neighboring Arnavutköy district, RC (incorporating a secondary school for boys and a school of higher education, at first for boys only but later made co-educational) was allowed to remain functioning after 1923 when the Republic of Turkey was founded. In the 1970s, the American board running RC decided to split it: a co-educational secondary school (Istanbul Amerikan Robert Lisesi) is still functioning on the Arnavutköy campus, but the higher education facilities in Bebek were turned over to the Turkish government who opened there the Boğaziçi University.
15. Ayşe Öncü, the professor of sociology who chaired the program until recently, said she had strived for years to obtain the graduate program as this would mean that the cultural studies program was no more merely servicing the faculty, but was a department in its own right (private conversation with the author on 10 September 2011 at Kadir Has University, during the “Space and Culture” conference).
16. Its reading list may be of significance to the reader interested in cultural studies within the Turkish context: it includes two collections of essays and one guest-edited special issue published in English, namely *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (1997) edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba; *Fragments of Culture: the Everyday of Modern Turkey* (2001), edited by Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (a member of the METU cultural studies program faculty); and *Relocating the Faultlines: Turkey Beyond the East-West Divide* (2003), a special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, edited by Sibel Irzik (one of the instructors of the program) and Güven Güzeldere.
17. Starting with the latest submission these include the following:
 - Mixed Feelings over an Unprecedented Election: Contestations of Ethnicity within the Suryani-Keldani Community
 - Symbolic Boundaries, Imagined Hierarchies: A Case Study of 'Soviet' Female Domestic Workers in Istanbul
 - Remembering Armenians in Van, Turkey
 - Armenians Living in Turkey and the Assassination of Hrant Dink: Loss, Mourning and Melancholia
 - Breaking the Silence, Easing the Pain: Efforts, Challenges, and Hopes of Feminist Organizations in Turkey and India Working with Survivors of Incest
 - Between National and Minor Literature in Turkey: Modes of Resistance in the Works of [Kurdish author] Mehmed Uzun and [Armenian author] Mıgırdiç Margosyan
 - Elite Perceptions of Self, Nation and Society in Contemporary Turkey
 - Exploring the Intersections: Subordination and Resistance among Kurdish Women in Aydınlı, Tuzla
 - New Muslim Male Subjectivities: Masculinities in the Hizmet [read Fethullah Gülen] Movement
 - Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: [The] Case of the 1980 Military Coup
 - Living to the Tell the Tale: Reading [the] 12 September Coup d'État through the Novels Written by Socialist and Nationalist Authors
 - State Violence and Human Rights: The European Human Rights Court Cases Submitted Against Turkey on Detention

- Global Professionals in Turkey: Personal Narratives of Professionals with MBA Degrees
 - Working With and Against Stereotypes: Representations of Honor Among Turkish Immigrant Women in a Migrant Association in Berlin
 - Censorship in Visual Arts and its Political Implications in Contemporary Turkey: Four Case Studies from 2002-2009
 - Violence and Freedom: The Politics of Kurdish Children and Youth in Urban Space
 - Mothering the Army, Mothering the State: Being a Soldier's Mother in Turkey
 - The Politics of Women's Empowerment: The Transformative Struggles of KAMER and MOR ÇATI Against Violence
 - Manifestations of Gendercide [adjectival form of a neologism meaning “the genocide of a gender”] Trauma in the Short Stories of Kirkor Ceyhan
 - The Meaning of Discovery: Tourist Gaze and Tourist Narratives in Southeastern Anatolia
 - Forms of Relation: The Western Literary Canon and Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* [and] Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*
 - The Stomachache of [the] Turkish Woman: Virginity, Premarital Sex and Responses to Ongoing Vigilance Over Women's Bodies
 - The Role of Memory in the Historiography of Hatay. (“Theses - Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Cultural Studies”)
- 18 They appear to reflect an almost defiant attitude that does not stop at critiquing received wisdom and ongoing trends, but goes further to openly confront the Republican Establishment.
- 19 From the “Course Description”: “Particular emphasis will be put on the distinction and relation between the official-high culture and the folk-popular culture, the formation of cultural distinctions and hierarchies, popular representations of the state, subalternity vis-à-vis power, and the questions of legitimacy and cultural hegemony”. Among the topics to be explored are “folk religion” and heterodoxy, Turkish shadow theatre, folktales and folk stories, coffeehouses, modern discourses on “the people” and popular culture, cultural politics of Kemalism, popular music and the arabesk debate, football, and popular cinema.
- 20 This foundation has been established by the Ülker company, known for its ties to the JDP government.
- 21 “This course aims to discuss the main political issues and schools of modern Turkish political life with special reference to the ideas of leading Turkish intellectuals. The late Ottoman intellectual life will be examined on the basis of main currents of thought: Young Ottomans, liberalism, Turkism, Islamism and socialism. First, it focuses on the various forms of Kemalism; *Kadro* journal, Yön Movement and its rightist versions. Secondly, it explores the different representations of Turkism in the ideas of Yusuf Akçura, Nihal Atsız, Remzi Oğuz Arık, [and] Erol Güngör in the Republican period. While examining the conservative political thought, it puts an emphasis on the ideas of Yahya Kemal, Mustafa Şekip Tunç, Peyami Safa, Mümtaz Turhan, Ali Fuad Başgil, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and journals like *Dergah* and *Hareket*. Thirdly, different manifestations of Islamist political thought will be explored with reference to the writings of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nurettin Topçu, Sezai Karakoç, Ali Bulaç and İsmet Özel. This course also deals with liberal intellectuals and circles: Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Kazım Berzeg, and Liberal Düşünce Topluluğu. Lastly, this course turns its focus on the leftist intellectuals, Kemal Tahir, Mehmet Ali Aybar, İdris Küçükömer and *Birikim* journal” (“Cultural Studies Course Descriptions”).
- 22 I have deliberately refrained from making comparisons and/or evaluating the programs, as firstly, the trends they exhibit are not substantially divergent as to be able to differentiate and delineate major, singular traits, whether in curricula, theoretical and practical tendencies, or degrees of commitment to the field, other than those I have indicated. On their websites they all seem to be using the same vocabulary, those buzz words intended to demonstrate how

cutting-edge they are, how on par with all other cultural studies programs of caliber in the world. This makes their descriptions of their aims almost generic, although they themselves may not have intended it that way. Secondly, the oldest of the programs is barely a little over a decade old, which is a period of time too short for any fair evaluation of an academic program. In other words, these programs are still in the budding stage, busy building a core curriculum in the basics of cultural studies, an arduous task as the subject matter of cultural studies does not have precisely delimited boundaries. It is too early to criticize them for their lacunae. For example, although more than twenty years have passed since the fall of the Soviet Union, none of the programs seems to have given much thought or spent any efforts working on the newly-independent Turks (or on the not independent ones, as in the case of those within the Russian Federation).

²³ The period depends on the legislation of the time.

²⁴ However, his publishing recently *Exploring Turkish Cultures* (2011), a collection of his essays on various facets of Turkish culture, shows he has retained interest.

²⁵ Established in the early 1980s, ASAT is called in Turkish “Amerikan Etüdleri Derneği” where *etüdler* (a Turkish word derived from the French *études*) is employed for *studies*. It is interesting to note that the sensitivity developed since then concerning language has been such that the blatantly foreign sounding *etüdler*, which would have prevented any terminological confusion, is out of consideration for all parties concerned.

²⁶ The September 12 regime also promulgated a law governing academic life (called “Yüksek Öğretim Kanunu” [Higher Education Law] - YÖK). Acting according to its precepts, most universities have adopted a method of promotion based on a credit system that attributes “points” to the work done: e.g., authorship of an article published in a citation-indexed journal in the United States will earn more points than, say, participation in a local seminar, however cutting-edge the latter may be. The “worth” in “points” of work done in an association, even a scholarly one, is nil. What’s more, as Turkish society rests not on *achievement* but *power*, as will be pointed out in the Conclusion, collective work, because it is not conducive to individual distinction, can never be widespread; so team work, characteristic of associations, is next to impossible in many instances.

²⁷ Needless to add that this is a far cry from the state of affairs in Europe and the United States where such work is encouraged, appreciated and even expected, with scholars (among them Turkish ones as well) vying each other for positions within such associations for clout and prestige. It is telling that Keskin, the philosophy scholar who, as mentioned above, was the chief organizer of the Crossroads conference in 2006 in Istanbul and who went on to become the chairman of ASC, is not a member of KAD.

²⁸ The scholars in the Turkish-medium universities, however knowledgeable in their own areas of specialization they may be, tend at times to be innocent of Western theories. They also tend to produce work that is descriptive rather than analytical or critical; academic selection pushes the bright minds into the more prestigious English-medium universities.

²⁹ The issue of foreign scholars residing in the country and writing on Turks or Turkey although possessing only a superficial knowledge about them, yet vilifying them with great abandon and pleasure, has been discussed in the 2004 Pultar and Kirtunç essay, so I do not go into that subject here.

³⁰ I would hope of course that due to the very nature of cultural studies, the members of the faculty of the cultural studies departments/programs in the universities mentioned above do not only refuse to take such a position, but are also vehemently and publicly critical of it.

³¹ A burial mound (*kurgan*) dating from the fourth century BC, discovered in the late 1960s near the town of Esik (Issyk) in Kazakhstan, contained the skeleton of a young man, probably a prince, clothed in a suit of gold, known since as the “Golden Man.” Among the artifacts found interred with him was a vessel which contained writing that connects him, scholars believe, to the Saka Turks, known as Scythians (“Issyk Kurgan”). This is much earlier than the seventh and eighth centuries AD Orkhon (Orhon) Inscriptions (discovered in what is

- today Mongolia and deciphered at the end of the nineteenth century), containing the runic-type writing which had been thought to be the earliest examples of writing by the Turks (“ Orhon Inscriptions”). Of course, Western and Western-educated scholars find this approach problematic as for many of them Scythians are not Turks.
- 32 For example, a theory, espoused by Adile Ayda (1912-1992), Kazım Mirşan and Haluk Tarcan and their followers, advances that the Etruscans, who had a distinct culture already in 1100 BC, were Proto-Turks (for Etruscans as Proto-Turks, see e.g. Ayda 1985).
- 33 The turning point was the year 1999 when the 700th anniversary of the founding of the Ottoman Empire was observed in the country with various celebrations and conferences. A year earlier, the country had celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the republic in great pomp; so perhaps it was felt the republic was sufficiently secure to confront old demons. Since then, the “bashing” of the Ottoman Empire has given way to ever-extending studies. This shift has created its own cast of characters: Halil İnalçık, who had been living quietly in the USA as a retired professor of history (emeritus, Chicago University), was launched into a new career upon being invited to teach at Bilkent University. İnalçık is now known as having introduced a dimension of economics to Ottoman history; he also insists Ottoman history is very much part of European history and should be studied thus. Although he still teaches in the mornings, the 1916-born widower İnalçık leads a secluded life; the real star is the much younger İlber Ortaylı, who is not only a prolific author but also a tv personality, appearing on various programs, never tiring of recounting various facets of Ottoman history. For their part in sustaining Ottoman studies in the United States, historians Cemal Kafadar (Harvard University) and Şükrü Hanioglu (Princeton University) have been conferred the Presidential Grand Award for Culture and Art in 2010 and 2012 respectively.
- 34 It eventually did introduce English partially as a working language, as foreign scholars working on Turkish subjects who were not in full command of Turkish yet wished to attend the conferences it organized started sending abstracts. Young Turks of Germany who were born in Germany and did not know academic Turkish were also allowed to present their papers in English. In 2005 (at the “Identity and Culture conference), the plenary lectures given by Jacob Landau and Geoffrey Lewis (on pan-Turkism and the Turkish language reform respectively) were translated simultaneously for the participants. In 2011 (at the “Space and Culture” conference), when Edward Soja and Setha Low spoke in English, the funds allocated by TÜBİTAK did not cover (the high-priced) simultaneous translation, but no one in the audience objected.
- 35 Schneider (Sabancı University) is the only one so far who has become a KAD member.
- 36 The extreme in this conduct is that of Bilkent University in Ankara which does not deem publications in Turkish by its faculty worthy of consideration, and so does not list them on its website.
- 37 The worldwide pressure to publish cultural studies work in English has been discussed in many Crossroads conferences, among them the 2006 Istanbul one, already alluded to above, so I do not touch upon that subject here.
- 38 And, naturally, it is only those scholars based in the West who possess legitimacy, and are considered as worth listening to. It is telling that at the 2006 Crossroads conference, Bilgi University chose as Turkish respondent to the keynote speaker an academic living and teaching in Paris, and not one of the many just as eminent Turkish scholars from Turkey itself.
- 39 Some observers see a massive activity lately of translation into Turkish of the theoretical work used in cultural studies as well as in social sciences in general, and find that the translated texts are being used by a considerable number of authors working in different fields, and thus believe that ignorance of the English language need no longer be an impediment.
- 40 There are of course exceptions, such as Abdülhamit Kırmızı (who holds a Ph.D. in Ottoman History) at the Istanbul Şehir University cultural studies program, to give just one example;

but the prototype is Murat Belge, a Ph.D. in English Literature become a professor of comparative literature, now one of the prominent members of the Bilgi University faculty and of its graduate cultural studies program.

- 41 Some of the faculty in the cultural studies programs believe that the dissertations coming out of their programs have already started bridging this gap, with their students utilizing Western theoreticians' ideas in a way that is relevant to the Turkish situation; if true, one can only rejoice at it and patiently wait for the publication of these texts.
- 42 Although ideally speaking, the situation should or could have led to a crossfertilization.

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