

*Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*

Deniz Kandiyoti

On the subject of the rather unexpected outcome of the Turkish elections, a US-based commentator remarks: "The elections marked the latest step in the ongoing fractionalisation of the Turkish system and the decline of the centre right once considered the 'natural' party of government." He adds, ominously, that "there may no longer be a 'mainstream' in Turkish politics".

It is partly to this theme of fragmentation and fractionalisation, though not necessarily in electoral politics, that I would like to address my talk today. I would like to take this opportunity to present a collective project, embarked upon some two years ago with mainly Turkey-based social scientists, aiming to analyse different facets of popular culture and social transformation in Turkey in the post-1980s. A book bearing the same title as my talk, *Fragments of Culture*, is due to appear in the course of next year. This group of scholars joined me in a shared sense of dissatisfaction with the major paradigms deployed in analyses of modern Turkey and the relative lack of vitality and novelty in empirical research.

One of the manifestations of the limitations of scholarly works can be found in a persistent and disabling lag between academic writing and the concerns expressed locally through debates in the press, television or general commentary about what we might call the 'quotidian'. This often results in cutting edge commentary becoming the province of newspaper columnists or popular Turkish language texts such as Nurdan Gurbilek's *Vitrinde Yasamak*, Istanbul: Metis, 1992 (Living in the Shop Window) or Cem Kozanoglu's *Pop Cagi Atesi*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 1995 (The Fire of the Pop Age) that have tried to capture the cultural and political mood of the post-1980s, as does to some extent journalist Tim Kelsey's *Dervish: The Invention of Modern Turkey* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996.

There are a variety of reasons behind this state of affairs. On the one hand, conventional social scientific analyses often remained state and institution-centric in ways that were rather limiting, focusing either on policies (for instance, macro-economic policies such as structural adjustment) or political movements and institutions (such as political parties and Islamist movements) as if these were acting upon a seemingly inert society. Nowhere has

the study of patterns of social stratification and of culture remained further apart than in Turkey, a fact that is itself in need of interpretation. At a time when the sociology of Western societies was theorising the connections between the production of styles and tastes and the reproduction of class and status, and while students of sub-cultures were explicitly referring to the dynamics of hegemony and resistance, scholars of Turkey, and more generally the Middle East, were utilising the blunt tools of modernisation theory attempting to fit a myriad of complex and contradictory cultural phenomena into the conceptual straight jacket of 'tradition' and 'modernity'.

On the other hand, the very success of critiques of modernisation theory and the rise of post-Orientalist scholarship has unwittingly skewed, and narrowed, our field of vision by privileging the themes of Islam vs. the West. The turn to post-colonial scholarship undoubtedly introduced a more imaginative language to talk about cultural production, jettisoning the earlier binaries (of tradition and modernity) in favour of more nuanced terms such as hybridisation. However, the colonial encounter, however loosely defined, remained at the centre of most analyses with an implicit centre-periphery model of power and the dissemination of knowledge. This often made local cultural forms appear as necessarily reactive, making more self-referential analyses of political and cultural processes difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, post-colonial criticism, in conjunction with post-structuralism from which it partly derives its inspiration, firmly inscribed critiques of 'modernity' as a political project and of nationalist developmentalisms into the canon of the social sciences.

In Turkey, this critique took the specific form of questioning the Kemalist legacy and the nation-building project of the early republican period. The major themes of this debate are well represented in S.Bozdogan and R.Kasaba's, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. The editors of the volume situate these debates in the context of 'the globalising trends and high technologies of the market that are finding their way into Turkey' and assert that 'as these global trends ensnarl the country with all their energy and unruliness, official modernisation, with its singularity, austerity and paternalism, appears woefully inadequate both as a source of inspiration and as a mechanism of control in economics, politics and cultural production' (p.5). They steer a difficult and delicate course, trying to establish distance from 'both the self-righteous authoritarianism of Kemalist nationalism and the anti-individual and anti-modern authoritarianism of certain aspects of Islamist politics'.

In my own contribution to this volume, I argued that the polemical perspectives adopted by both apologists of Turkish modernisation and their critics have restricted our conceptual horizons by falling short of interrogating the notion of the "modern" itself and charting its specificities within the Turkish context. The limiting influences of modernisation and Marxist theories in the formative years of Turkish social science must also be acknowledged here. The assumed inexorable march of society from traditional, rural and less developed to modern, urban, industrialised and more developed, or alternatively, from feudal to capitalist, meant that the complexities on the ground could be dismissed as "transitional" forms, often absolving the social scientist from engaging in

serious cultural analysis. I concluded by calling for detailed “ethnographies” of the modern. In particular, I thought it important to probe into the ways in which subtle codes of class and status were produced, reproduced and politicised as competing cultural styles, preferences and orientations. The political economy of post-1980s liberalisation has transformed not only the economic but also the cultural landscape in Turkey, precipitating both a greater fragmentation of social identities and an increasing complexity in their public articulation. The mutual “culturalisation” of politics and “politicisation” of culture could only be interpreted through a serious engagement with emerging arenas of sub-cultural expression and cultural production. Although this conclusion had a distinctly programmatic ring, I was, as yet, unaware of the number of scholars who were able and willing to rise to this challenge. Fortuitous meetings and an ongoing process of dialogue culminated in a two-day workshop organised by Ayse Saktanber, coeditor of the volume, at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara in March 1998. It is some of the sense of discovery and intellectual stimulation that I experienced on that occasion that I hope to share with you today.

The theme of social differentiation and new axes of social stratification in Turkey runs through several contributions to *Fragments*. This is a subject which has, by and large, received a great deal less attention than it deserves. As someone who has witnessed in her own lifetime the shift from a country with a mere 15% urban population to a hyper urbanised one, who was born into an Istanbul with less than one million inhabitants and left it with over twelve million, I am struck by the relative paucity of empirical studies on changing urban stratification. There are, of course, notable exceptions. Sencer Ayata is an incisive observer of the Turkish middle-classes who goes beyond indicators of socio-economic status and income distribution to probe deeply into lifestyles and cultural preferences. In his paper titled ‘The Middle Class and the Joys of Suburbia’ he focuses on community and culture in the new middle-class suburban areas of Ankara. The growth of the *site*, suburban housing estates that involve a mix of high and low rise apartment blocks, terraces, semi-detached and detached houses as well as luxury villas, has been remarkable over the last decade and they have become an ubiquitous feature of the Turkish urban landscape. These self-contained communities may feature not only roads, parking lots and green spaces but in the case of the more affluent *site* tennis courts, swimming pools, shopping areas, schools and convention centres. This represents a significant departure from the dual structure of *gecekondü* (squatter) settlements on the outskirts and middle-class residential apartment blocks in the centre of the city that characterised an earlier phase of urbanisation. Noting similar developments earlier among Istanbul upper and middle-classes Ayse Oncu (1997) also comments on the creation of the “ideal home” mediated by images of high-tech Western style consumerism as a marker of middle-class status and Aksoy and Robins (1995) note the deleterious consequences for civic life of the escape of the rich into homogenous settlements.

Ayata analyses the emergence of the new middle classes whose higher disposable incomes boost the demand for bigger houses and private motor vehicles. The inhabitants of the *site* in Ankara interviewed by Ayata revelled in the homogenous, single-class nature of their community, their sense of order and civility and most of all in what they were able

to exclude: "city life and its vulgar mix of lower classes, the new rich and the Islamists". The city is portrayed as a place of chaos, disorder and pollution where one is forced to rub shoulders with the masses. The *site* is appreciated for its orderliness and for housing 'people who are like us' (*bizim gibi insanlar*). The *site* is also a strongly gendered space dominated by women in the daytime where women's important role in the management of family consumption gives them a special role in the production and display of the insignia of middle-class status- usually through home decoration and the display of household goods. To the extent that impressing others derives not only from wealth but also from styles of consumption as Bourdieu (1989) asserted in his work on distinction, women emerge as key actors in the competition over status. Another consequence of *site* life is an increase in the autonomy and domestic seclusion of the family as a result of increased physical and social distance from relatives and friends in the city, freeing them from community control. Here Ayata makes distinctions which I believe are crucial to comprehending the life-world of this stratum. He states that suburbans distinguish between three kinds of social control : 'The urban mass is believed to have little self-restraint, to be guided by instincts and emotions, high-tempered, ill-mannered and therefore insufficiently civilised. The second group constitute the strongly communitarian, who under the pressure of external sources of authority tend to behave in a uniform fashion. The reference here is mainly to Islamists, people who are believed to lack both self-autonomy and the capacity for rational, critical thinking. The truly civilised are regarded as those who have developed their individualities, those who can think and act autonomously, who have powerful mechanisms of internal control, people with self-restraint who know how to behave in public'.

This phenomenology of social control may have unexpected ramifications. I would like to highlight this through an anecdote provided by a friend in Istanbul, residing in a *site*. He related that when the Islamist Refah Party won the municipal elections in Istanbul the hitherto atomised and apolitical residents of his *site* got together to collect money and erected a bust of Ataturk in the main square. My friend, who had previously been on the political left, found this a laughable exercise, one that implicitly entrusted the protection of their life-styles to non-civil forces, more an act of exorcism than an engagement with real politics. It does, however, raise the issue of the deeper and more complex sources of perceived threat for the secular middle-classes and the intricate interplay between lifestyle choices perceived as mutually antithetical.

Indeed, Jenny White who analyses the symbolism of a Virtue Party political rally in her paper titled 'Performing Virtue' comments on an opening video clip where affluent lifestyles portrayed through a reception featuring the leader of ANAP, a political party of the centre right, showing elegant guests, women in low cut dresses and wine flowing freely were counterpoised to the misery of children with close shaven heads picking their way through garbage. The populist message conveyed is one of alienation of the secularist ruling classes from the people and Virtue's authentic claim to represent their concerns. On the basis of her ethnography, White challenges the spurious distinction made between political Islam and identity politics demonstrating, instead, the intimate links between

cultural identity, socio-economic class and politics in the everyday context of political action.

Not all middle-classes have access to or choose the suburban option. The vast majority continue to live in apartment housing in the city. Gul Ozyegin in 'The Doorkeeper, the Maid and the Tenant: Troubling Encounters in the Turkish Urban Landscape' analyses the role of cross-class encounters between the *kapici* (doorkeeper or janitor) and their families with apartment residents in the maintenance of middle-class status of the latter. Instead of residing in the *gecekondu* districts, where most rural-to-urban migrants live, the *kapici* lives cheek-by-jowl with his middle-class employers, creating an arena of interaction where projections of stigma and pollution are deployed to keep these dangerously close "outsiders within" in their place. Ozyegin suggests that social distancing from the doorkeeper families is a typical practice in the self-definition of the identity of the middle-classes. She also points out that waged domestic labour, provided by the wives of doorkeepers, is central to the process of both the reproduction of class and of traditional gender roles. As middle-class women allocate more of their time to what Papanek once called 'family status reproduction' activities, such as close supervision of children's homework in preparation for competitive school entrance examinations, driving them to ballet, piano and foreign language classes or allocating personal time to private gyms, diet centres and other beautification activities, they are able to pass on the toils of bodily domestic labour onto their maids. Ozyegin sensitively describes the tense, antagonistic intimacy that unites and divides maids and madams in Turkey and provides perceptive examples of what she calls "class work"- the mending of what employers perceive as class wounds and dealing with a sense of guilt which is shrewdly manipulated by their domestic workers. She concludes that the polarity between modernity and tradition is unable to accommodate the complexity of the cultural practices of these groups, although it is used as the means of the self-conscious articulation of their differences.

There is little question that the diversification of consumption habits and access to varied types of consumption has come to play a pivotal role in the definition of social identities. This holds true not only for middle-class *site* residents but also in the case of Islamists whose fashion industry is examined in exquisite detail by Yael Navaro-Yashin and of German-Turks' consumption preferences perceptively analysed by Ayse Caglar. We shall return to their work in greater detail later. A sociology of Turkish consumerism still remains to be written. However, we are offered some valuable pointers on this question by Ayse Durakbasa and Dilek Cindoglu in 'Encounters at the Counter: The Gender Dimension of the Shopping Experience in Contemporary Turkey'. They analyse the shopping malls that have proliferated in the big cities in the 1990s as sites for the articulation and accentuation of distinct tastes for the middle and upper classes and the socialisation into urbanity of youths from the lower classes. Their ethnography of shopping describes encounters which reflect both the fluidity of a post-modern consumption culture and the structural inequalities of class and gender in urban Turkey. They trace the 'feminisation' of shopping in the large urban centres through a series of historical shifts, moving from the exclusively masculine world of the traditional market (*charshi* or *bazaar*) through the creation of modern department stores (*Bonmarche*)

catering for the needs of the modernised upper class at the turn of the century to the rise of mass consumption after the 1960s. The advent of the shopping mall has created a site where global images are put on display in an open and accessible space, a new space for recreation and the creation of new desires.

Another crucial institutional arena for the production of new forms of social differentiation is that of education. Public mass education had been the major engine for the formation and recruitment of cadres in republican Turkey. It was a democratic force that propelled large numbers of people from rural and provincial backgrounds into the ranks of the professional middle-classes and the state bureaucracy. However, a variety of factors acted to fragment, limit and diversify educational provision, creating unprecedented discrepancies in opportunities for social mobility. The increasing demographic pressure of the younger age groups, the decrease of public funding for education, the privatisation and politicisation of educational institutions all contributed to a process of 'educational deregulation'. Yet there has been surprisingly little attention paid to new forms of educational provision and to their social implications.

In a rare study of the educational culture of secondary education institutions, titled 'Discipline, Success and Stability: Gender and Class in Alternative Cultures of Turkish Secondary Education', Ayse Ayata and Feride Acar compare three types of schools in Ankara: an Imam-Hatip Lycee, a private Lycee and a public Lycee. The Imam-Hatip Lycee enforces strict sex segregation both among its pupils and teaching staff. The school culture is dominated by the overarching importance attached to discipline and the need to control sexuality. Girls' life options are constrained by what is presented as their biological destiny-*fitrat*- a vocation for motherhood. On the other hand, the segregated female teaching staff are accessible to their students, open to discussions of sexuality in an Islamic context and the teachers' common room is described as an informal space open to students' veiled parents as well. The private lycee is an established elite college catering to the children of the upper and middle-class where the teaching medium for certain subjects is English. It has an excellent track record of success at the University Entrance Exams, in competitive sports and in international science and maths competitions. The accent is very much on competition and individual achievement and the valorisation of sports and maths and science subjects introduces a masculinist bias which unwittingly marginalises girls, despite an ethos of complete gender equality. Dating and flirting among students is considered as quite natural although these topics are never linked to sexuality and students are almost treated as asexual beings. The public lycee is an inner-city school where the majority of students come from deprived backgrounds and are children of first and second generation migrants to the city. The cash starved school has crumbling infrastructure, no extra-curricular activities, double-shift teaching because of numbers and a demoralised teaching staff with a high turn over rate. Discipline problems are of a more severe nature including incidences of alcohol and drug abuse. Containment and the maintenance of a semblance of order appear to be the top priorities. Interestingly, girls are higher achievers than boys in this context since their more home bound existence encourages greater attention to study. Whereas a 'we-feeling' is induced in both the Imam-Hatip and the private lycee, the public lycee appears to be anomic and identityless. The study

demonstrates quite clearly how class and gender orientations are reproduced in these establishments and how they determine very different social trajectories .

The social and cultural cleavages referred to so far find some of their most graphic expression in cultural products such as films, graphic arts, dance and music. Issues of identity are articulated and worked through at different levels in popular culture in ways that both reflect and mold public taste. Secil Buker's 'Sultana's Film Does Not End with an Ecstatic Kiss' treats stardom in Turkey as a social phenomenon acting as a barometer of shifting moods and ideologies. She sets up parallels between the modern identity which was imposed by the early ideals of republicanism, crystallised in the Greta Garbo look-alike Cahide Sonku, and the phenomenon of rising capitalism and the new icon it gave birth to, Turkan Soray. The populist nostalgia that displaced earlier elitist leanings were reflected in Turkish film production especially in the comedies of the 1960s. Turkan Soray came to epitomise the beloved of the people, the dark girl new urbanites could identify with and take to their heart.

Hakan Yilmaz, who was himself a member of a musical band, traces the emergence of new musical genres in the culture of the Turkish left since the 1960s in his contribution titled 'Music in the tune of Politics'. The first attempts to create a new genre consisted of a revival of a traditional genre, that of the Anatolian folk minstrel (the *asik* or *ozan*). Several aspects of the ideology of the left conditioned this revival; an intense Third-Worldist opposition to Western "cultural imperialism" and a particular strand of Kemalist populism with strong peasantist overtones. These influences were mediated by a new genre consisting of a hybridisation of the vocal performance style of Western opera with Turkish folk songs, exemplified in the work of Ruhi Su. By the end of the 1970s, a second musical genre labelled as "original music" (*ozgun muzik*) provided a translation and legitimisation of Western musical styles and instruments for a left-wing audience, much as *arabesk* music had done for the urban lower class. From the late 1980s the translation-legitimisation function of *ozgun muzik* was also appropriated by Islamist and to a lesser extent nationalist audiences, so that it became identified with political music in general. Thus *ozgun* music is not so much a genre but an open-ended process of translation, the future trajectory of which we may speculate about.

Satirical graphic humour and the art of caricature in Turkey has a long tradition of biting social commentary since Ottoman times. More recently, satirical cartoon magazines such as *Girgir* and its more recent successors have played a central role in socialising and entertaining youth. In 'Sensuality of Globalised Images and the Banality of Everyday Experience' Ayse Oncu offers a reading of a particular genre of graphic humour, so-called '*maganda*' cartoons, where the '*maganda*' portrays a particular style of lumpen and unsocialised masculinity. These cartoons gained immense popularity among the readers of weekly satirical magazines towards the end of the 80s and the early 90s. Oncu who interviewed the main producers of these cartoons analyses the new meanings conveyed by these portrayals.

One of the arenas where national belonging is demonstrated and articulated in Turkey is that of folkloric dance performances which have become a ritualised part of public life from school graduation ceremonies to political rallies. In *"I Dance Folklore": The National, the Urban and the Social of Folk Dance Clubs* Arzu Ozturkmen contextualises folk dance as a genre within the cultural history of modern Turkey. She traces its evolution from its discovery by Young Turk nationalist intellectuals such as Selim Sirri Tarcan through its dissemination during the early republican period via People's Houses ( *Halkevleri* ) to their later appropriation by private banks and university clubs. The growing commercialisation of folk dance after the '70s and the expansion of its market had a great impact on the socialisation of young people from conservative family backgrounds for whom folk dance appeared to provide a legitimate medium for cross-sex encounters. However, the popularity of this medium meant that local genres of dance did not survive intact and melded and merged into one another with more popular forms gaining ground and others being forgotten. The canonised folk dance repertoire in urban Turkey acquired a uniform character and became standardised as a totally new cultural form which could only have come into existence in the cultural milieu of the nation-state. The folk dance experience that arose after the seventies was 'national' by its *nature* in contrast to the earlier folk dance genres which were *imagined* as 'national'.

In the same way that folklore acted to help imagine the nation, language became a major arena of contestation and social engineering in republican Turkey. In 'Playing Games with Names' Serif Mardin offers a critical historical perspective on this issue starting from the language reforms of the nineteenth century which attempted to create a Turkish literature in the vernacular, closer to the language of the "people". The main thrust of this effort was the "purification" of the so-called Ottoman idiom, the language of the elite and administrative cadres which used many Arabic and Persian roots in their elaboration of a literary canon. The vernacularisation of Turkish initiated by Ottoman intellectuals was taken over by the elite of republican Turkey and language simplification became one of the foundations of Kemalist ideology and practice. Mardin suggests that it is the continuity between Ottoman and Turkish- rather than their much vaunted difference- that made the transition at all possible. He shows that successive layers of vernacularisation had already taken place before the republic but that the last step- the adoption of the Latin alphabet- achieved the double target of delinking from Arabic, and hence Islamic culture, and the creation of a national self- a bifurcation the effects of which are still unresolved today.

The proliferation of new social identities and rise of identity politics in Turkey is a subject of special concern for many contributors to *Fragments*. Three articles tackle the issue of Islamist identities from different perspectives.

In 'The Market for Identities: Secularism, Islamism, Goods' Yael Navaro-Yashin situates the politics of identity between secularists and Islamists within the context of a consumer market for goods and draws attention to the close links between consumer culture and the politics of identity in Turkey. She analyses the markets for 'veiling apparel' led by fashion companies such as Tekbir Inc. and for secularist paraphernalia, like the Ataturk lapel button and badges, that became extremely popular. Far from



representing antithetical values, she claims that despite variations within secularist and Islamist modes of consumeristic practice, commodification is a shared domain rather than one that divides them. She uses a fashion show for 'veil-wear' ( *tesettur* ) complete with catwalk and glamorous models as a metaphor for some of the central contradictions that create internal divisions within Islamist constituencies and that also make the rise of modern shopping malls a matter for moral, evaluative judgements.

" We pray like you have fun": New Islamic Youth between Intellectualism and Popular Culture' by Ayse Saktanber analyses the characteristics of an emerging youth culture in Turkey in the context of Islamist political sub-cultures. This new youth shares many common features of any youth culture with their search for an alternative way of life but differs not only in terms of its religious orientation but with regard to the popular culture they try to create. Saktanber suggests that this popular culture cannot be described only in terms of consumption, the buying and selling of commodities, but also involves a circulation of different meanings and pleasures. She analyses the codes and conventions of Muslim intellectuals, the new genre of Islamic cinema and 'green pop' ( Yesil Pop) as examples of a parallel stream of cultural production. However, rather than being totally novel many activities engaged in by Islamic youth appear as duplications of forms prevalent in Turkish youth culture more generally. For instance, Islamic youth have followed the protest tradition that first appeared in leftist circles- solidarity sessions in large venues with live music, poetry, posters and slogans- with the difference that young men and women sit separately and never dance ! There are also variations among different Islamic tendencies. But sentiments of anti-secularism, anti-Kemalism and anti-westernism constitute the common core which unites them.

Jenny White, whose work I alluded to earlier, also points to some areas of contradiction in Islamist political practice, as evidenced in the Virtue Party. These contradictory impulses crystallise around the erasure of class and status cleavages in the party, the attempt to situate itself as the party of the poor and disadvantaged while at the same time attempting to reclassify Islamic symbols as elite cultural markers. There are also contradictions between female Virtue activists' bid to carve out new areas of autonomy for themselves within the traditional expectations of their community and male cadres who express a desire to reinforce traditional female roles and enhance their own autonomy by , for instance, supporting polygamy which is illegal under Turkish law.

My own contribution to *Fragments* titled 'Pink Card Blues: Trouble and Strife at the Cross-roads of Gender offers an ethnography of male-to-female transsexuals in Istanbul who inhabit a world of entertainers and prostitutes. Although the visible presence of transsexuals in urban space is an ostensibly global phenomenon, as is their international circulation in search of jobs and surgery, Turkish transsexuals come up against the administrative-legal apparatuses of the state in their search for a new identity and the pink card that confers it official confirmation. What motivated my choice of this seemingly marginal subject was precisely the possibility of capturing the nexus of interactions between the ideologies of gender, state and market in Turkey as they play themselves out

in the lives and bodies of so-called *travesti*. The interactions of the *travestis* with state apparatuses at critical junctures of their lives, when applying for new identity cards, trying to avoid military service or being handled by the police force, communicate powerful messages of their stigmatisation as a deviant minority. There is even evidence that some may have been 'coerced' into choosing sex-change operations in a society that is deeply intolerant of gender ambiguity. On the other hand, the images of fast-track living, glamour and consumption that they project, as well as the market networks in which they circulate, from chic boutiques to society surgeons, encapsulate the mainstream of the post-1980s with its emphasis on material success and making it fast (*koseyi donmek*) to an uncomfortable degree. The discomfort they elicit is therefore multi-layered and tells us as much about the malaise of Turkish society as about their own troubled existence.

No account of social identities would be complete without a recognition of the diasporic dimension of Turkish existence. Turkish migrants in Europe have not only become a stake in the multiculturalist policies of the countries that host them but have also remained tied to their country of origin in multiple ways, hoping to reinsert themselves in Turkish society through eventual return. They often own apartments and houses in Turkey, which they use infrequently but lavish great care upon, invest in a variety of businesses and participate in expatriate politics.

Ayşe Caglar in 'A Table in "Two" Hands: German Turks and Consumer Goods' analyses the way in which goods and consumption practices become a social arena for the social positioning struggles of German-Turks both in Germany and in Turkey. She takes as her point of departure the fact that the decoration and organisation principles of their homes in Germany and Turkey are strikingly different from one another. The same object- a coffee table- elicits totally different criteria of choice in the two contexts. The functional, tile-topped coffee table which doubles up as a dining table and is desirable in Germany becomes totally inappropriate in the Turkish context where dainty, single-functional and decorative coffee tables are favoured. Caglar relates these preferences to the contrast between the 'introverted' living rooms in Germany with weak concern with display and fashion and more with biographical continuity with objects from Turkey, to the 'extroverted' Turkish ones where the display of conspicuous wealth encourages the choice of matched furniture sets and the appearance of a busy display room. Caglar suggests that regardless of their economic standing a severe deficit of symbolic capital thwarts German-Turks' aspirations for mobility in Germany. Their aspirations to middle-class status may be equally thwarted in Turkey where their status as *almancis* carries negative connotations. The returning migrants try to detach their living room decoration from the negative symbolism of an *almanci* life-style by means of a particular array of furniture in their homes through which they try to assert and emulate a middle-class life style.

Finally Lale Yalcin Heckmann's 'Turkish Migrants in Europe and the Construction of their Collective Identities' raises the issue of the extent to which these identities are constituted as being hybrid and fluid, given that they are historical reconstructions and the extent to which extrapolations may be made from individual migration histories and narratives to the collective component of their identity.

As I conclude, I am aware of having bombarded my audience with a bewildering array of fragments, like so many turns of a particularly complicated kaleidoscope. If that has left you reeling, then I have adequately conveyed the real-life texture of modern Turkey. Let us toss out the cardboard cut outs that are so often offered to us in analyses of so-called non-Western societies and settle for nothing less than painstaking, and sometimes painful, cultural analysis.