INTRODUCTION

From Harlem to Istanbul

"Perhaps only someone who is outside of the States realizes that it's impossible to get out," James Baldwin's voice-over proclaims in a short film by the Turkish director and photographer Sedat Pakay, *James Baldwin: From Another Place* (1973). Pakay's little-known cinematic gem records the writer's movements through the city of Istanbul over a three-day period in May 1970 and frames Baldwin's assertion with seductive photography of private interiors, city streets, and a boat ride on the Bosphorus. Like no other existing documentary, the black-and-white film captures the profound paradox of Baldwin's transatlantic vantage point by showing how he both belongs and remains an outsider in the teeming half-European, half-Asian Turkish metropolis. Baldwin's work has occupied an oddly similar position in American literary history and African American studies, as it has been woven in and out of the sometimes overlapping and sometimes discrete canons: American, black, and queer. Like Pakay's camera, this project attempts to bring the conflicting and often contradictory depictions of Baldwin's person and writings together.

In eerie ways and from an unlikely location, Pakay's compelling portrait of the black gay writer in Istanbul echoes the paradoxes of how African Americans were represented in the United States from the middle of the twentieth century onward. Caught between the hypervisibility of racist and oversexualized heterosexist images of African American bodies pervading popular culture and the political invisibility resulting from systemic discrimination by the state's institutions and the population at large, American Blacks were erased and displaced, often violently so. Having to fight for their most basic civil rights in the country that prided itself on the ideals of democracy yet allowed rapes and lynchings to go unpunished, they were trapped in, and simultaneously exiled from, their homeland as "undesirable subjects." While this predicament shaped James Baldwin's life and career to a large degree and forced him to leave the United States in search of writing havens, it also provided a powerful subject for his works that recast blackness, nationhood, and the erotic in a transnational context.

One of the most important American writers of the last century, James Baldwin was marked by his lower-class background, his blackness, and his homosexuality and for much of his adult life found life in semi-exile in France and Turkey easier than in the United States.[1] His illegitimate birth in poverty in Harlem in 1924, his struggle to attain education while helping to raise his eight siblings, and his conflict with a preacher stepfather who disapproved of his intellectual aspirations and berated him for being "ugly" compounded his perception of himself as an outsider and interloper.[2] His parents' slave ancestry and migration north from Louisiana and Maryland added to his sense of displacement and entrapment and, in addition to his illegitimacy, provided powerful and challenging subjects for his works.[3] Baldwin's early passages within New York City, down and up along the island of Manhattan, suggested the shape of his travels to come. As a teenager, he commuted every day from Harlem to the Bronx to attend high school, and then to New Jersey to work at menial jobs. Soon afterward he moved away from Harlem to Greenwich Village, where he began his career as a writer and struggled to come to terms with his sexual identity.[4]

Young Jimmy's journey from the uptown storefront churches of Harlem, where he served as a teenage preacher, to the predominantly Jewish and secular De Witt Clinton High School in the Bronx, where he apprenticed as a poet, writer of short stories, and editor of a literary journal, the *Magpie*, was dramatic. As his long-term assistant, friend, and biographer David Leeming stresses in his 1992 biography of Baldwin, the young man's Bronx journey involved tough lessons about surviving and deploying his excessive visibility as one of the few Blacks at the school, and the only one who represented the Fireside Pentecostal Assembly Church: "[His congregation] would have been scandalized had they been able to watch their favorite boy preacher prancing about with a tambourine in front of several laughing Jewish boys, imitating in song and dance the saints stricken by the power of the Lord at the foot of the cross."[5] While at De Witt Clinton, Baldwin formed friendships with Emile Capouya, Richard Avedon, and Sol Stein that later flourished into important connections and collaborations: Stein edited Baldwin's first essay collection, *Notes of the Native Son*, for Beacon Press in 1955 and became a lifelong friend; Avedon became a famous photographer and collaborated with Baldwin on a unique photo-text volume, *Nothing Personal* (1964); Capouya, who became a publisher, introduced Baldwin to the painter Beauford Delaney, whom Baldwin considered his artistic and spiritual father.

His second important transition, to Greenwich Village, where he worked as a waiter and occasional musician while trying to publish his early writings, took place after stints doing menial labor in New Jersey, or "New Georgia." This move also implied performances of a new identity and another betrayal, as he moved away from home after his stepfather's death, thus abandoning his mother and siblings for what his guilty conscience considered the narcissistic career of a writer.[6] The poet Harold Norse, whom Baldwin met when he was nineteen, evokes Greenwich Village after World War II as "an oasis of liberation to which, from all over America, young men and women flocked to express their socially unacceptable lifestyles."[7] Norse, older by a few years and white, immediately placed Baldwin in a hierarchy of racial stereotypes: "His half-starved, gaunt face . . . looked much older" (111), and his "wild eyes bugging out alarmingly" gave him the "crazed look of a junkie about to kill for a fix" (110). Despite Jimmy's small frame, he saw him as "ready to cut our throats for a quarter" (110). But Norse soon realized that Baldwin had approached him and his friend with similar apprehension: "I was worried. . . . Two white men skulking in the mist in the early hours can only mean trouble for a defenseless black boy" (110). Baldwin's comment evoked the brutal history of American race relations, which made Norse adjust his reading of him from pathological to pathetic, from a potential assailant to a victim, who was "discriminated against by both races," caught up "in a ghetto, outside the mainstream . . . an oddity in Harlem" and an "alien in the white world" (111).

Black, small, queer, and crazy-looking, Baldwin appeared to Norse the uttermost foreigner, out of place even in the bohemian Greenwich Village, and in a sense exiled long before he actually left his homeland. "Being queer was even worse than being black, Jewish, and poverty-stricken," Norse stresses, because "among bottom dogs gays were the bottom" (112). But while Baldwin's skin color made him a victim to Norse, his racialized queerness made him exotic: "His brown parchment skin reflected a silvery glow like an ancient African mask" (112). Still, Norse would often get tired of Jimmy's "desperation [over racism, which] was so intense that I felt guilty for being annoyed" (174). This comment would echo two decades later in his critiques of Baldwin's later works and in Norse's references to their brief affair in his *Memoirs of a Bastard Angel: A Fifty-Year Literary and Erotic Odyssey* (1989), which he somewhat incongruously dedicated, "For James Baldwin. In fond memory of our twenties."[8]

Unlike his ambivalent relationship with Norse,[9] Baldwin's friendship with Beauford Delaney (1901–79) and his soon-to-become-contentious relationship with Richard Wright (1908–60) helped him to embrace the process of becoming a writer.[10] These two black mentors and successful artists helped Baldwin to see himself as valuable and gifted enough to follow his vocation, despite his inability to attend college. Delaney, a son of a preacher and gay like Baldwin, opened up a whole new world to him by sharing his art and tastes in music, colors, and shapes and by introducing him to other famous black artists, Marian Anderson among them, who were "not meant to be looked on by me as celebrities, but as a part of Beauford's life and as part of my inheritance" (*Price of the Ticket*, x). Impressed with sixty-some pages of the novel that Baldwin was struggling with at the time, which would almost a decade later become *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Wright helped Baldwin to obtain a Eugene F. Saxton Foundation Fellowship and recommended him to Harper and Brothers. Baldwin idolized Wright, and when the older writer left for Paris in 1946, Baldwin "saw in his departure a future path for himself" (Leeming, *James Baldwin*, 50).

Baldwin's brief romance with the Left, perhaps in part encouraged by Wright's stint with the Communist Party, dates from around the time he entered the scene in the Village.[11] He befriended a young black man, Eugene Worth, whom he "loved with all my heart," and who was a member of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL).[12] Worth persuaded Baldwin to embrace Trotskyism for a short time. Finding himself an "anti-Stalinist when America and Russia were allies," Baldwin soon realized that "it may be impossible to indoctrinate me" (*Price of the Ticket*, xiii). His alliance with the Left—"of absolutely no interest," as he stresses (xii)—ended with a painful loss that he would recall many times and that inspired the description of the suicide of Rufus Scott, the black jazz drummer in his third novel, *Another Country* (1962). Worth killed himself by jumping off the George Washington Bridge two years before Baldwin took off for Paris in 1948. For the rest of his life, Baldwin would regret that he had somehow failed to save him: "We were never lovers: for what it's worth, I think I wish we had been" (xii). After a long struggle, he was finally able to write the scene of Rufus's suicide—one of the hardest things he had ever written, he claimed—while on his first long visit in Turkey.

Before he found himself in Istanbul completing *Another Country*, Baldwin spent nearly a decade in France, where he realized that "Europe had formed us both [American Blacks and Whites], was part of our identity and part of our inheritance" (*Price of the Ticket*, 172).[13] His famed and well-documented flight to Paris took place on Armistice Day in 1948 and initiated his literary life in transit among cultures, languages, and continents. This departure, not *to* France but *away* from New York City, as he stressed repeatedly, compounded his feelings of estrangement from his country and guilt toward his family. When he attained international renown with the publication of *The Fire Next Time* in 1963, exactly two decades after Baldwin the elder's death on the day of the Harlem riot that his stepson described so vividly in "Notes of a Native Son" (1955), James Baldwin was still in search of a place where he would fit in as a black and queer writer. His intra- and international journeys are vital to understanding him as a migratory writer, a "witness dedicated to blurring the distinction between patriotism and expatriatism, citizenship and exile," as the literary critic Joshua Miller aptly defines him ("Discovery," 338).[14]

Baldwin's transitions from Harlem to Paris and then to Saint-Paul de Vence in the south of France, where he bought a house and remained for the rest of his life, have received much attention in the scholarship published during his lifetime and after his death from cancer in 1987.[15] But few scholars except for the biographers—David Leeming, James Campbell, Fern Marja Eckman, and William J. Weatherby—have followed Baldwin to Istanbul and Turkey. And yet that city and country had considerable impact on his career that must be taken into account today, when scholars of the African diaspora proclaim the importance of the "outer-national sites" for studying canonical African American literature (Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 4).[16]

Baldwin's little-known Turkish decade, a period roughly between 1961 and 1971, stands chronologically at the center of his multiple journeys—from the Harlem ghetto and Beauford Delaney's Greenwich Village studio, where he first learned "how to see," through the churches and lecture halls and freedom marches in the South, to the salons of jet-setting international literati and the vistas of southern France of his later years. It was an important period of artistic incubation and thematic and formal experimentation to Baldwin that was bracketed by the innovative form of his third novel *An-*

other Country (1962), and the complex essay structure of his little-read fourth collection, *No Name in the Street* (1972). For readers of American literature, Baldwin's Turkish sojourn helps us to embrace more fully the transnational dimension of mid-twentieth-century black literary culture; it helps us to see that "certain moves, certain arguments and epiphanies, can only be staged beyond the confines of the United States, and even sometimes in languages other than English," as Brent Hayes Edwards recently observed (4–5).[17]

Baldwin's Turkish period is also vital to reassessing his contribution nationally and internationally, as we witness the emergence of transnational African American studies. This new field expands and challenges Paul Gilroy's famous formulation in 1993 of the Black Atlantic cultures and has produced interdisciplinary projects by, among others, Bill Mullen, Penny Von Eschen, Nikhil Singh, Maria Diedrich, Kevin Gaines, Tyler Stovall, Michelle Wright, and Melanie McAlister. While *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade* hopes to contribute to the rich conversations in this field, it also engages in dialogue with another emergent field, one that plays on the margins and borders between African American and gender studies, and feminist and queer theory, a field that E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson have recently defined as "black queer studies."[18] While relating Baldwin's prolonged stays in Istanbul and other parts of Turkey, this book engages the part of the world that has been persistently eroticized, exoticized, and Orientalized but little understood by the West. My subtitle, *Erotics of Exile*, plays on the stereotypical associations of the East and Islamic cultures with sensuality, on the one hand,[19] and Baldwin's insistence that his prolonged forays abroad must be defined as exile, on the other.[20] It also targets the intersections of race, sexuality, gender, and location that Baldwin explored in his works and rethought and recast amid his new milieu.[21]

As I show in the chapters that follow, Baldwin's attention to the intertwining of the erotic and race in a transatlantic context, and his embrace of what we would today call a "queer" identity, was sharpened and enabled by his Turkish exile precisely because he was free there from the American notions of race and sex. In my research for this book, I have tried to trace the influence of Turkey and its people on the texts that emerged from a prolific period in Baldwin's life, as well as acknowledging his occasional participation in exoticizing and stereotyping Turkish culture. I have done so by bringing together archival material—interviews with Baldwin's Turkish friends, unpublished letters, scholarly and journalistic accounts, photographs and film—with new critical interpretations of his works. Deploying a mix of theoretical tools and methods, from contextualized close readings and biographical accounts, through feminist and cultural studies approaches, to oral history and black queer studies, I offer this book as a contribution to the emergent dialogue on where and how we position the study of African American literature and culture in the twenty-first century.[22]

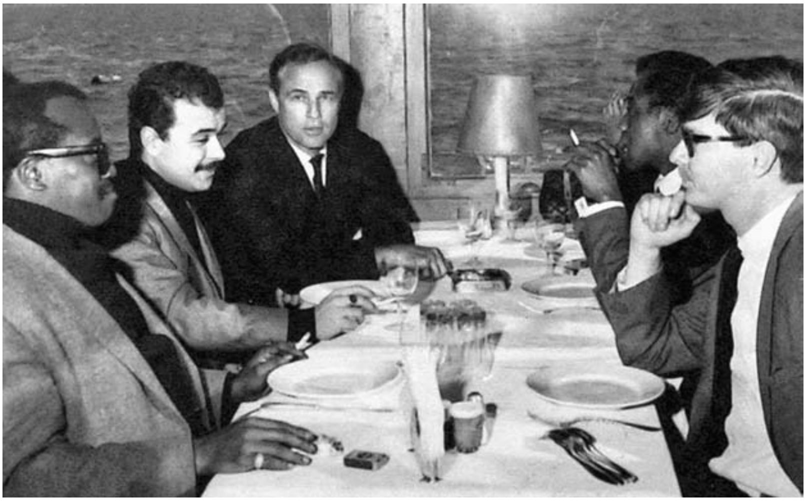
Looking for Baldwin in the East

Although it provided James Baldwin an excellent vantage point on his homeland and a lens through which to assess the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, Turkey may seem a somewhat unexpected location for studying this writer in the context of African American literature and culture.[23] It lies outside the geographic reaches of the African diaspora delineated by Paul Gilroy's landmark project *The Black Atlantic*, and while it fits more easily with the spectrum of international locales taken up by the more recent work in transnational African American studies, it challenges a scholar with the difference of language and cultural context. As Leeming cautions, Turkey was an important location to Baldwin, but not as important as France, where he was a part of a large, vibrant, and well-documented African American community and chose to spend his last years.[24] Unlike France, which is the fictional setting for several of Baldwin's works, Turkey does not appear prominently in any. Nevertheless it made the creation and completion of these works possible as an authorial setting and as such is worthy of careful and thorough consideration. Few American readers know that Baldwin's works and presence have had lasting resonance in Turkish culture, whereas his fans in that country are not only aware of his residency among them but now have two translations of *Another Country* to compare,[25] as well as brand-new ones of *The Fire Next Time* and *Giovanni's Room*.[26] They know that he formed important alliances with local artists and intellectuals and directed a play whose daring focus on prison homosexuality dramatically changed the Turkish theater scene. As Ali Poyrazoğlu, of the original Turkish cast of *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (*Düşenin Dostu*) and currently a prominent actor and director, contemplates restaging the play to celebrate Baldwin's legacy, we can only hope that his endeavor—when and if it comes to fruition—will be recognized in the United States as an integral part of the writer's larger transatlantic story.

Located on the margins of continents—between Europe and Asia, in the vicinity of North Africa and the Middle East—Turkey provided a haven where Baldwin worked on some of his most important, and arguably most American, works: *Another Country*, *The Fire Next Time*, *Blues for Mister Charlie*, *Going to Meet the Man*, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, *One Day When I Was Lost*, and *No Name in the Street*.[27] Some of them would not have seen the light of day without the support of Baldwin's devoted Turkish friends, Engin Cezzar, Gülriz Sururi, Zeynep Oral, Cevat Çapan, Oktay Balamir, and Ali Poyrazoğlu, as well as the cultural newness and "breathing space" that their hospitable country afforded him. Turkey was an alternative location, a space of exile, but also a nurturing dwelling place after Baldwin had spent nearly a decade in France and Western Europe and failed to reestablish a permanent residency in his homeland upon his return in 1957. It became a hideaway during the depressed years following the assassinations of Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King Jr., all of whom Baldwin knew and considered friends. As a dramatically different location far removed from his home country, Turkey also provided a powerful lens through which he reimagined himself as a black and queer writer and readjusted his view of American race relations as the 1960s drew to a close. As Baldwin was fond of saying about people, countries, and works that punctuated profound moments in his career, Turkey "saved my life."[28]

Baldwin's first visit to Turkey took place in the fall of 1961. He went at the invitation of Engin Cezzar, a Turkish actor from the Yale Drama School whom Baldwin befriended in New York and cast as Giovanni in the Actors Studio production of *Giovanni's Room* in 1957. Jimmy, as his friends there called him, came to Istanbul with little money, depressed by a trip to Israel, and with a severe case of writer's block that made him desperate to finish *Another Country*. Local hospitality, the love and care of his hosts, and the peace of mind that surprisingly came to him in the middle of bustling Istanbul worked wonders. In a matter of months, fed, housed, and entertained by the extended Cezzar-Sururi-Çapan family, he rewrote and finished his long-overdue novel and returned to the United States to celebrate its publication and bestseller success.

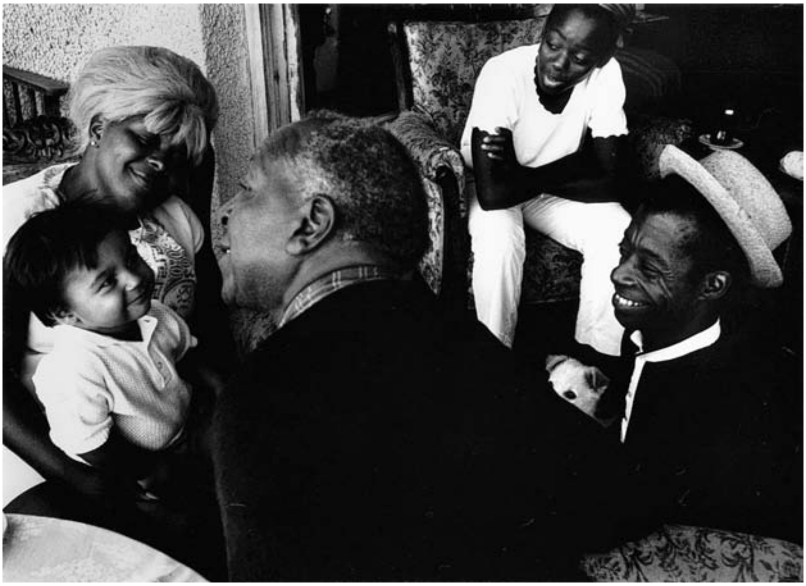
After Baldwin had come back to Turkey a few months later, he established a pattern of remaining there for extended periods of time, returning home for visits with family and publishers, and traveling elsewhere that would last throughout the 1960s. While in Istanbul, he worked with abandon and socialized in a similar manner, as I was told by several of his friends, among them John Freely, a writer and physics teacher at Boğaziçi Üniversitesi (Bosphorus University), and Avni Salbaş called Avni Bey, an Afro-Turk who worked as a bartender in Divan Hotel, one of Baldwin's and his friends' favorite hangouts.[29] Following the phenomenal success of *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin became an international celebrity sought after by the Turkish press,



3. James Baldwin, Marlon Brando, David Baldwin, and David Leeming in Urcan Restaurant, Istanbul, 1966. Reproduced by permission of Doğan Kitap and İzzeddin Çalışlar.

cultural establishment, and high society. His increasing fame and need to stay in close contact with his American publishers and editors at a time when Turkish telecommunications and postal services did not work very well were among the reasons why he decided to move to France in 1971. Baldwin's last Turkish sojourn, "an interlude of almost idyllic calm," took place in the early fall of 1981, when he spent perhaps the happiest months of his life with his brother David, Cezzar, and Sururi at a farmhouse in Bodrum, a resort on the Aegean Sea (Leeming, *James Baldwin*, 358).

Baldwin's long-awaited financial success in the mid-1960s made it possible for him to afford his own accommodations in Istanbul, some of them quite spectacular, and to entertain lavishly. He soon became a magnet attracting other Americans and African Americans who came as either visitors or collaborators.[30] Lucien Happersberger, the Swiss man whom Baldwin met in his early years in Paris and described as the love of his life, came to visit in 1962, while he was going through his first divorce, from the mother of Baldwin's godson, Luc (J. Campbell, *Talking*, 209).[31] When the actor Marlon Brando dropped by in mid-1966, he was clandestinely transported around the city in Cezzar's little car while his limo served as a decoy to deflect the crowds of fans.[32] Jimmy's artistic mentor, the painter Beauford Delaney, came from Paris around the same time and quickly became a magnet for other artists; he painted Jimmy's portrait and a lovely vista of



4. James Baldwin, Bertice Reading and her children, Beauford Delaney, and dog, Andromache, Istanbul, summer 1966. Photo by Sedat Pakay.

the Bosphorus at night.[33] The U.S. State Department officer Kenton Keith and his wife Brenda and their children, Pamela and Vincent, visited often, and as often invited Jimmy to dinner at their house in Balmumcu, where they also hosted the musicians Sonny and Linda Sharrock.[34] The singer Bertice Reading, revered by the Turks for her eccentric style and blonde wigs, came to chat and cook with Jimmy. Redding's entourage included a teenage daughter, an adopted orphaned Turkish boy, a Swiss husband, and a puppy, as evidenced in evocative photographs of the gatherings at Baldwin's house that were taken by Sedat Pakay in 1966 and 1967. Ann Bruno, a white journalist from New York, was a frequent visitor, and Alex Haley stopped by on his way to Africa to research *Roots* (Leeming, *James Baldwin*, 275). Baldwin's beloved brother David came to spend some time with him as well.

When in 1969 Cezzar and his wife, the actor Gülriz Sururi, invited Baldwin to direct a play for their theater, John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (1967), he employed the jazz musician Don Cherry, who happened to be passing through town, to write an original score for the performance.[35] The choreographer Bernard Hassell, who had met Baldwin in Paris, came to Istanbul on his invitation and collaborated with the Gülriz Sururi–Engin Cezzar Theater Company on a production of *Hair*. Hassell later became Baldwin's secretary and relocated with him to the south of France in 1971. The most famous African American resident in Istanbul besides Baldwin was the multitalented entertainer Eartha Kitt, who had a house in the neighborhood of Üsküdar and sang a catchy and erotically charged song in Turkish about the area.[36] The musicians Sonny and Linda Sharrock visited with the Herbie Mann's band in 1971; they later recorded the original music soundtrack to Pakay's film about Baldwin. As Kenton Keith, who served as the U.S. cultural attaché in Istanbul at the time, explained to me in a recent interview, there was never a large colony of exiled or expatriate African Americans in Istanbul. Still, American Blacks appeared there occasionally: for example, some civil rights activists came through town, a few draft dodgers preferred Istanbul to other European locations, and some Blacks worked at the U.S. consulate, while a handful of the air force military personnel lived in the city, too.[37]

The enticing cosmopolitan metropolis of Istanbul was the place where Baldwin spent the most time while in Turkey, and he came to love both the city and its people. Amid bazaars, mosques, and ancient sacral and Atatürk period secular architecture, with gigantic ships, including many American warships, passing through the picturesque strait of Bosphorus, he not only worked on the books that were published but also planned many that were never finished or realized. Among them was a project for a triple biography of Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King Jr., tentatively named *Remember This House*, and a novel on Muslim themes, *No Papers for Mohammed*, "whose roots were sunk in Turkey" (J. Campbell, *Talking*, 271), which would echo years later in Baldwin's last completed, and unpublished, play, *The Welcome Table* (1987).[38] At the end of the decade, frustrated by his experience with Hollywood, where he was invited to write a screenplay for a film based on Malcolm X's life and on Alex Haley's biography, Baldwin finished and published his unrealized scenario with Dial Press as *One Day When I Was Lost: A Scenario Based on "The Autobiography of Malcolm X"* (1972).[39] Among the papers that Baldwin left with Oktay Balamir, his friend and the translator of *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, there is a stage adaptation of *Giovanni's Room* dated 1964 and one of Albert Moravia's *A Cultural Experiment* that bears the names James Baldwin and Gene Lerner and the date of November 1969.[40]

Despite his negative experience with Columbia Pictures at the time of his involvement with the Malcolm X project, Baldwin dreamed of making movies and wrote two screenplays directly linked to Turkish and Greek cultures in collaboration with Cezzar. Encouraged by his energetic Turkish friend, he also wanted to realize film versions of *Blues for Mr. Charlie*, *Giovanni's Room*,[41] and *Another Country*, none of which saw the light of day.[42]

When Cezzar visited Baldwin in his new Provençal abode in Saint-Paul de Vence between 1979 and 1980, he proposed that they write together a screenplay based on a play by a Turkish playwright, Güngör Dilmen, entitled *Kurban* (The Sacrifice). They completed a version, but it was never realized as a film.[43] On his last visit in Turkey in 1981, Baldwin and Cezzar wrote another script, *The Swordfish*, which Cezzar quotes in his memoir as having been an adaptation of a novel, *L'Espadon* (The Swordfish), by the Turkish writer Osman Necmi Gürmen, who lived in France and wrote in French.[44]

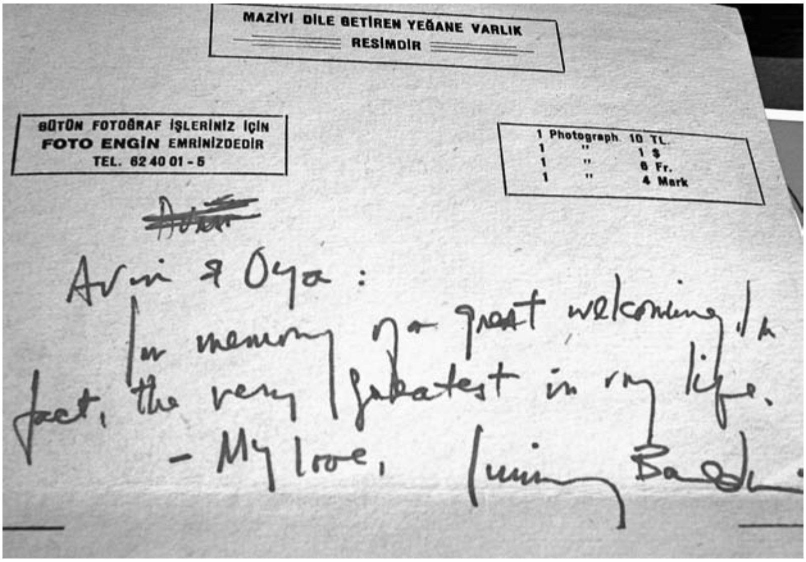
A few years later, on his deathbed, Baldwin asked David Leeming, whom he first met in Turkey, to read to him from that screenplay.[45] As Leeming recalls, "Since I knew Turkey well and had been several times to Greece and to Cyprus, he wanted my opinion on whether or not he had captured the atmosphere of that part of the world" (*James Baldwin*, 383). Clearly Turkey, its landscape, his life and work there, and friends who welcomed him easily and warmly years ago were much on his mind until the day he died. As Engin Cezzar stressed in our interview in June 2001, he was convinced that his friend Jimmy would eventually have written about his Turkish experience but was too busy with the "usual American matters" and "simply ran out of time."

Baldwin's biographies, by Leeming, Campbell, Weatherby, and Eckman, are the only texts that deal with his Turkish decade as an integral part of his life and career. They include similar albeit somewhat conflicting explanations for Baldwin's extended visits to Turkey. While Leeming aligns ethnically and linguistically diverse Istanbul and its people with Harlem, stressing the familiar,[46] James Campbell capitalizes on the city's erotic and exotic mystique, stressing the alien; Campbell's recent article, "Room in the East," comments on the Turkish publication of Baldwin's letters to Cezzar and emphasizes that he "treated Istanbul as a place of refuge all through the 1960s" (3). Weatherby's *James Baldwin: Artist on Fire* agrees with both while emphasizing that Baldwin was drawn to the new and unfamiliar, even the stereotypically "Eastern" qualities of Turkey: the "ancient city on the Bosphorus seemed to combine the Europe he knew with the Orient and Arab world that were both strange to him" (177).[47] Similarly capitalizing on Istanbul's alien appeal, Eckman describes it as a faraway haven that Baldwin retreated to when he was particularly needy of a refuge or "whenever closer hideaways fail[ed] to immunize him against his own social susceptibility" (148).

Of the biographies, Leeming's offers the most informed, personal, and detailed account of Baldwin's contacts with the places and people of Turkey, including glimpses of several Anatolian locations. Leeming met Baldwin in Istanbul in 1961 while teaching at Robert College—now Boğaziçi Üniversitesi—and later became his secretary and a close friend of the family, whom Baldwin entrusted with the care of his papers.[48] Leeming lived with Baldwin for several years after they met in Turkey, and quotes the writer's stock response to Turkish reporters' questions about his Istanbul sojourn: "[Baldwin] was in Istanbul because he was 'left alone' there and could work better there. The fact that Turkey was a Moslem country had nothing to do with it, 'except, perhaps, that it's a relief to deal with people who, whatever they are pretending, are not pretending to be Christians'" (*James Baldwin*, 263). Leeming stresses the importance of Baldwin's friendship with Cezzar and the intellectual and artistic community of Istanbul's unequivocal welcome of him as an artist and activist, regardless of his race and sexual orientation.

Leeming's biography also describes a disturbing incident during Baldwin's visit to the Anatolian village of Erdek that confirms that it was not always possible to get away from racism and homophobia in Turkey. Although embraced and respected by the villagers, Baldwin was one day beaten up by a bizarre "magician" and his assistant who came to visit Erdek with a show that offended and angered many local people. Baldwin told Leeming about having been entrapped with no clothes on and called a "nigger queer" during the attack; he suffered injuries so severe that he had to be taken back to Istanbul for treatment (266–68). Before they left Erdek, however, the concerned villagers sent a representative who told Leeming that the evil magician "had gone and would not be back" (268); the exact meaning of this proof of Turkish hospitality is left to the reader's imagination.

The villagers who took the frail American black man under their wing and all of Baldwin's Turkish friends referred to him as "Arap Jimmy," or, as Leeming explains it, "'Arab Jimmy,' a term roughly equivalent to 'Black Jimmy'" or a darker-skinned person (266).[49] As much as the term connotes someone of foreign ethnic and geographic origins, it does not, as Cezzar, Leeming, and others assured me, connote references to blackness and essentialized racial difference in the same way that "Negro" or "African" and "black" or even "of color" do in American culture. It means that a difference in appearance has been noted, but that this fact does not have further consequences on the person's everyday life in the way it does in the American context. Again, however, the incident with the magician and the racial slur he used proved that this was not always true. When I spoke to Avni Bey (Avni Salbaş), Baldwin's Afro-Turkish bartender friend, he had a slightly different take on blackness, given his experience and family background. He iden-



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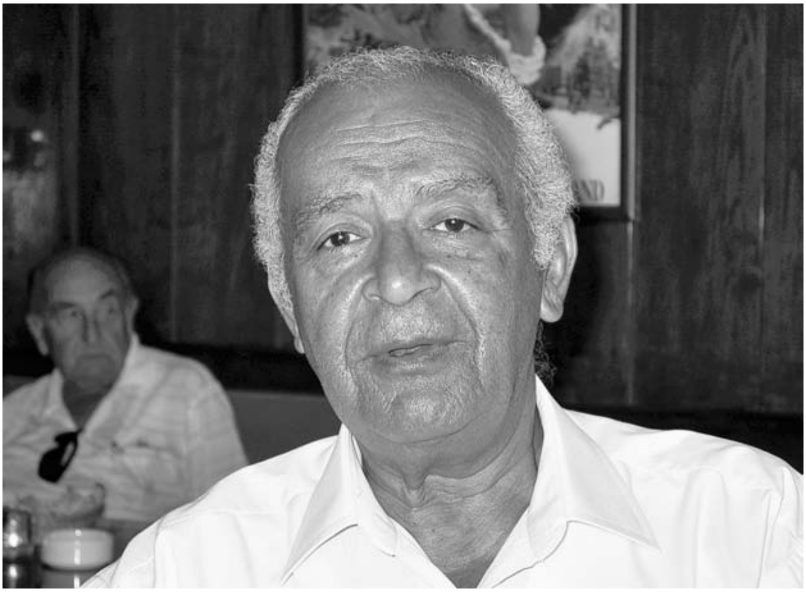
Avni & Oya:
In memory of a great welcoming, in fact, the very greatest in my life.
– My love, Jimmy Bald

5. Baldwin's note to Salbaş, Istanbul, 1960s. Collection of Avni Salbaş. Reproduced by permission.

tified his father as "South Arabian" from Mecca and "very dark," and his mother, who came from Anamur in southern Turkey, as "very light." Avni Bey was sent to Istanbul when he was eight, to be raised and educated by his Belgian godmother. A dignified old man who speaks beautiful English, he is aware and proud of his blackness and ethnic origins as an Afro-Turk, not a foreign "Arap."[50] When we talked, he showed me a photograph that he took of his wife, Oya, and of his aunt and Baldwin, as well as the note of thanks that Jimmy wrote him.

James Campbell's *Talking at the Gates: A Life of James Baldwin* (1991) does not dwell as much on the perceptions of Baldwin's race in Turkey as on the qualities of the place that welcomed him. Campbell stresses the sensual, "hermaphrodite Euro-Asian" aura of Istanbul, which "appealed to several different senses" and was a place "unique in Islam: ambitious to adopt Western appearances, it was oriental in its values, its manners, its atmosphere. . . . People were greatly hospitable" (208–9). He suggests that Turkish sociability nurtured Baldwin and its street culture helped him to feel positive about his sexuality: "Strangers were naturally sociable; young men had no shame in touching one another; homosexuality was quite common, and, in its underground form, accepted without fuss. . . . Baldwin himself, naturally gregarious, must have felt that he had landed in an ideal place—



6. Avni Salbaş in Avni's Pub, Istanbul, 2005. Photo by author.

another country, indeed" (209).[51] Baldwin's Istanbul period was an "exile of a different stamp from his first flight to Europe" (210), one that "afforded [him] another sort of freedom, from the treachery of language" (213). Baldwin's decision not to learn Turkish was a deliberate attempt to maintain his resident-outsider status as a "commuter exile." When considered from the United States and Western Europe, Campbell notes, Baldwin's "semi-residency" in Istanbul was considered a biographical "enigma" (208). For his readers and critics at home, James Baldwin was rooted very specifically as an African American writer, and so his location in exotic Istanbul and his identity simply "did not fit" (208).[52]

Straying away from the usual Western European and American trajectories into what Engin Cezzar called "our Babylonia," Baldwin sought a place not only where he could work undisturbed but also where he could shake off the stress of his busy life as a speaker and civil rights activist.[53] He saw it as a safe space compared to other destinations in the Middle East. As he recalled his first visit there in a 1970 interview, he went to Turkey after a tour of the Holy Land: "When I was in Israel it was as though I was in the middle of *The Fire Next Time*. I didn't dare to go from Israel to Africa, so I went to Turkey, just across the road" (Standley and Pratt, *Conversations*, 86).[54] Turkey was both "just across the road" as a central geographic location between Asia, Europe, and Africa and remote enough as a culture fairly alien to most Americans to become something like a safe house for Baldwin. In another interview from the same year, Weatherby reports, “Asked why he had come to Istanbul, he told reporters he had wanted ‘a place where I can find out again where I am and what I must do. A place where I can stop and do nothing in order to start again’ ” (Weatherby, *Artist on Fire*, 302). In an interview with David Frost in 1970, Baldwin stressed the healing qualities of his Turkish hideaway as he painted Istanbul as a neither-here-nor-there liminal space, where it was “great to work.” He liked it there precisely because it defied dichotomies of geography, religion, and culture by being “both in Europe and in Asia . . . neither Christian nor Muslim,” and because there he could get away from identity labels and simply “try . . . to become a human being” (Standley and Pratt, *Conversations*, 93). Reporting for *Ebony* in the same year, Charles E. Adelsen saw Baldwin in Turkey as “the invited guest in the house” (46). In response to his question “Why Istanbul?” Baldwin pointed out again the unique quality of his Turkish haven as a space of personal renewal: “To begin again demands a certain *silence*, a certain privacy that is not, at least for me, to be found elsewhere” (44).

But when speaking of Turkey with his Turkish friends, Baldwin often stressed that to him the place of exile was not necessarily an unproblematic space of refuge. As he told Sedat Pakay in 1970, “There are no untroubled countries.”[55] Like many other nations at the time, his temporary home had its own political tensions and had been scarred by a long history of conflicts, conquests, and defeats in the wake of its history as part of the Ottoman Empire. The military coup in 1960 and the subsequent liberal constitutional reform brought about unprecedented freedom of speech and an opening to the West that led to a vibrant period of experimentation and daring productions in the arts. By the time Baldwin got there, much was happening in Istanbul’s cultural scene, and all his new friends were engaged in it. Given his lack of Turkish language and the highly educated and largely upper-crust intellectual circles in which he moved, he was not getting involved in local politics and relied on what his friends were telling him about Turkey’s situation. Zeynep Oral, a journalist and translator who worked as Baldwin’s assistant when he was directing a play for the Gülriz Sururi–Engin Cezzar Theater in 1969 and 1970, remembers that as the decade wore on, Baldwin became more interested in what was going on in his new home and regularly asked to be informed about daily press headlines.[56] When the government started cracking down on dissenting intellectuals and artists—for example, his close friend the Kurdish writer Yaşar Kemal was imprisoned for some time—he would organize petitions and use his standing as an internationally recognized writer and activist to support good causes.

A holder of a passport issued by the world's superpower, Baldwin considered himself privileged to be a "transatlantic commuter,"[57] yet he felt trapped by his Americanness. While his statement recorded by a *New York Post* reporter in Istanbul in 1968—that "he was in some ways that last unassassinated Negro of his generation"—may have exaggerated the extent of his actual physical danger, it conveyed his awareness of being a marked, or dangerously visible, man.[58] In letters to friends and family, Baldwin repeatedly expressed fears for his personal safety.[59] Recalling how the State Department had prevented Du Bois from attending the Congrès des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs in Paris in 1955, Baldwin also worried that his passport might be revoked on one of his return visits to the United States. Leeming, who in 1958 had been "approached to work for American intelligence in Istanbul," remembered the sensation of being watched and the suspicions that he, Jimmy, and Baldwin's younger brother David harbored of some USIS employees who frequented their house on the Bosphorus. As Baldwin reported in a letter to Cezzar written on September 27, 1974, after scheduling a lecture tour in Germany, where *If Beale Street Could Talk* was a "smash" hit, USIS suddenly canceled his contract and "banned" him or announced that he was "unsuitable for use" (Leeming, *James Baldwin*, 308). This had to do with Baldwin's public denunciations of the Vietnam War and his advocacy on behalf of black prisoners. As he stressed in the letter, experiences like that made him realize that it was as impossible to get "into" America as to get "*out*" of it. He also commented on racism and discrimination across the world, upbraiding the Swiss for living in a "bank" rather than a nation and pointing out that in Germany, where he represented the "celebrated" witness to America's "Negro problem," this problem closely resembled that of the Turkish, Greek, and Spanish workers and their treatment in the former Nazi state.

Baldwin's awareness of the imperial presence of the United States in the world and of global racism increased and sharpened while he was living in Turkey. He was surrounded by friends who embraced radical leftist politics and were artists, writers, and intellectuals: in addition to Engin, Gülriz, and Yaşar Kemal, he befriended the poet and critic Cevat Çapan, drama teacher Hilary Sumner-Boyd, Irish American physics teacher John Freely, and literature scholar David Leeming—all from Robert College—as well as the eccentric artist Aliye Berger, actress Şirin Devrim, Armenian American expatriate Minnie Garwood, and feminist journalist Zeynep Oral. When Jimmy worked at Gülriz Sururi's and Engin Cezzar's theater in 1969 and 1970, he also met a young journalist and translator, Oktay Balamir, who worked for the British Council, and several actors, the flamboyant Ali Poyrazoğlu among them. Most if not all his Turkish friends strongly opposed the Vietnam War, American military presence in Turkey, and the civil and human rights violations by the United States at home and abroad. At the same time, they embraced American culture and Baldwin as its ambassador. In Pakay's film, while observing U.S. Navy warships on the Bosphorus through the window of his Istanbul apartment, Baldwin seems to echo some of the complex sentiments that motivated them all: "The American power follows one everywhere."[60]

Regardless of his fear that he was being followed, that his house was bugged, or that he might be "relieved" of his passport by the American government, as he wrote to Cezzar, Baldwin's sense of entrapment was also an artistic asset. Like other famous twentieth-century intellectuals and writers who had to negotiate multiple locations, cultures, and national allegiances—Frantz Fanon, Gertrude Stein, Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, and George Lamming, to name just a few—exile gave Baldwin a unique outsider-participant perspective on his country and the world. It made him one of the most powerful critics of twentieth-century American culture precisely because he embraced the mixed blessings of his condition with what Cornel West has recently described as "dramatic insights, and prophetic fire . . . [and] a rare intellectual integrity and personal anguish."[61] In Pakay's film, Baldwin explained his vantage point in simple terms of distance and scale: "One sees [one's country] better from a distance . . . from another place, from another country."

But while it allowed Baldwin a welcome distance from which to observe American culture, Turkey and the so-called East were baffling locations for his readers at home. Their bafflement had much to do with how Americans conceived of the world in the aftermath of its Cold War geopolitical divisions, which brought about myopic and racialized approaches to place and nationhood.[62] After World War II, the East included not only Asia but also Eastern Europe, or the scary, barbaric part of the globe staggering under Soviet domination.[63] Turkey, which seemed close enough geographically to be mistaken for a part of that little-known and demonized region, or at least to be seen as having been somewhat influenced by its Evil Empire qualities, was an ambivalent country in most Americans' eyes; it was among the "front lines of the Cold War, places that most tourists avoided."[64] It was a conglomerate of paradoxes: a NATO ally in the Korean War but also a state whose citizens protested the Vietnam War; a secular Muslim country and culture; both modern and ancient, immersed in the past and shockingly radical and modern.

Looking for Baldwin in Turkey then and now forces one to confront Orientalistic clichés about the East that have abounded in American popular culture. In twentieth-century Hollywood movies or dime novels, the Orient was either hyperexoticized or imbued with romanticized "authenticity" and mystique, at the same time as both approaches pictured the region as a reservoir of escapist, often erotic, fantasies for the West.[65] When considered relevant at all to African American culture in the mid-twentieth century, the Middle East was seen through the alliances that the Black Muslims sought with "both Arab culture and the forces of Arab nationalism," as well as the "moral geographies associated with religious communities," as Melanie McAlister claims (*Epic Encounters*, 86, 87).[66] As a black *and* queer writer,[67] Baldwin also stood out in sharp relief against a region that was stereotyped as exotic, erotic, and oversexed, as well as permissive toward homosexuality.[68]

And yet these defamiliarizations and dislocations of Baldwin and his works in the East can actually help us to overcome the splits along the lines of race and sex, genre and location, that have so far defined, if not entrapped, him and his legacy in the United States. Reconsidering how various aspects of identity functioned in the Turkish context and how their different configurations might have influenced Baldwin's thinking on Americanness opens up new perspectives on reading his writings today. Reminiscences of Baldwin by the Turks I interviewed for this project reveal him as both a familiar and somewhat anomalous figure—a perspective that sometimes echoes, and sometimes subverts, his representations in the United States, where, for example, the historian Carol Polsgrove construes him as an odd man in the Civil Rights Movement, while the literary critics Kendall Thomas, Dwight McBride, and Maurice Wallace approach him as one of the representative father figures.[69] In his *Indians in Unexpected Places*, the Native American historian Philip Deloria argues that "cultural expectations are both the products *and* the tools of domination . . . an inheritance that haunts each and every one of us" (4). Baldwin's legacy has been categorized according to the expectations that reflected the trappings of his identity as a black and queer man, that is, by privileging either race or sex. We have therefore inherited and been haunted by the black writer from Harlem of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* or by the gay writer from Paris of *Giovanni's Room*.[70] By destabilizing these notions, by offering an alternative location where they were played out and recast, Turkey helps us to understand and challenge their origins, rigidity, and arbitrariness.[71]

In the eyes of many of his American readers and critics, Baldwin's "Eastern hideaway" defined him according to a sexualized geography of the world, or what I call the "erotics of location." In 1970 *Ebony* magazine's Charles Adelsen described a "love affair" and "a kind of attraction for each other" between the writer and the "person-like," polysensual, and erotically charged city of Istanbul and placed them both on the "edge of the Orient" (44).[72] Such an approach could be seen as echoing a traditional way of regarding the exotic East as the locus of illicit erotic desire that must be tamed and rendered safe. As the cultural critic Irvin Schick theorizes it: "The West's sexual panopticism is indeed the construction of power over the Orient; it is appropriation through voyeurism, subjection by denuding" (*The Erotic Margin*, 15).[73] As he wrote to Cezzar in one of his letters, Baldwin was acutely aware that some of his readers, critics, and editors considered his Turkish visits a kind of "sex tourism" or "sex exile"—a perception that obviously revealed much more about their own voyeuristic approaches to race and sexuality than it "denuded" anything substantial about the writer.[74]

That the perceptions of Baldwin's race and sexuality sharpened in direct proportion to the distance separating him from the United States is clear from the critiques of his works and person that were published in the mid- and late 1960s. In a celebrity biography, *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin* (1966), Fern Marja Eckman sexualizes Baldwin's racial pain: "Baldwin tests everybody. . . . [His] anguish . . . spurts from him like semen" (243). He is the priapic black gay man who writes "hard," but also a gender-bending artist whose "labor pains are intense and prolonged" (120). The macho icon Norman Mailer famously called Baldwin's prose "perfumed," which Mailer's devotee Eldridge Cleaver dutifully repeated in his own attack on the author of *Another Country* in *Soul on Ice* (1968). Cleaver saw Baldwin as a sissy fearing the "stud" in himself, as self-hating and sick from the "intake of the white man's sperm," as "bending over and touching . . . [his] toes for the white man" (102). Even the unattributed article in *Time* magazine that featured Baldwin's face on the cover on May 17, 1963, and thus confirmed the peaking of his fame that year, denied that he was a civil rights leader and described him as "effeminate." While the United States postured as the home of true manhood, both white and black, not only could sissy men not be heroes or gay men not be manly there, but they were also considered foreign and outlandish. Not long ago, having heard my presentation on Baldwin's Turkish connections, a conference session participant took me aside to tell me that he was certain that Baldwin must have gone to Turkey for . . . the "Turkish baths!" Blinded by race (what would a *black* writer be doing in Turkey of all places?) and homophobia (a *queer* man would be there solely for the homoerotic allure of the *hamams*!), Baldwin's American audiences of all hues continue to see him as a displaced anomaly and a "sexual freak."[75] Baldwin anticipated this perception of himself by fellow Americans and used this very term to describe himself in *No Name in the Street*, a powerful autobiographical reconsideration of his relationship with manhood that was written in Istanbul and significantly influenced by his contacts with Turkish culture.

The critiques of Baldwin as either a race traitor or an angry panderer to Black Power, as some Whites saw the persona behind his later works, obscure his serious international involvement not only in antiracist but also in antihomophobic politics.[76] They leave out his increasingly prominent focus on the intersections of race, sexuality, and social space in his later works, such as *Blues for Mr. Charlie*, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, *No Name in the Street*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Just above My Head*, and *The Welcome Table*, all of which have some ties to drafts, outlines, and planned projects in Turkey. Since his early essay "The Preservation of Innocence" (1949),[77] Baldwin insisted that race and sex must be approached as immutably interconnected and that homophobia was to be combated along with racism. His whole oeuvre can be bracketed between the publications of "The Preservation of Innocence," which surveys Truman Capote's and Gore Vidal's homoerotic novels of the late 1940s, and his late essay, "Here Be Dragons" (1985), originally published in *Playboy* as "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood," which ponders the vicissitudes of American manhood, as well as embracing androgyny and bisexuality.

Although many scholars in the 1970s and 1980s were resistant to Baldwin's theorizing of sex and gender, some critics commented on his innovative linking of race and sexuality long before it became all the rage in the twenty-first century. Besides Leeming's biography, which approaches Baldwin's works as complex parables of identity, Horace Porter's *Stealing the Fire: The Art and Protest of James Baldwin* (1989) claims that Baldwin "subliminally conflates race and homosexuality. . . . To . . . [him], sex and race, in America, are hopelessly intertwined" (153). Representing Baldwin as an icon of racial suffering, but by means of a gender-bending image of Hawthorne's Hester Prynne in blackface, F. E. Dupee's review of *The Fire Next Time* both castigates its author as an angry "Negro in extremis" who betrayed his European education and confirms that white critics saw blackness and nonnormative sexualities as interconnected. Baldwin's exhortations that liberation from racism must go hand in hand with liberation from sexual oppression were hard enough to swallow for his contemporaries when uttered explicitly in *Giovanni's Room* and *Another Country* and, more subtly, even in *The Fire Next Time*, where he discusses "sensuality" while contemplating religion, jazz, and national identity (60).

Baldwin's radical placement of bisexuality and interracial relationships at the center of *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, which was written in his outlandish Orientalized location in Turkey, confused and embarrassed both his white and black audiences. In contrast, this novel was enthusiastically received when it appeared in Oktay Balamir's Turkish translation in 1973. As Lynn Orilla Scott argues, Baldwin's last novel, the hefty *Just above My Head*, was rejected due to its open celebration of black homosexuality (*James Baldwin's Later Fiction*, 122). Moreover, as Robert Reid-Pharr stresses, the "huge increase in the visibility of homosexual communities, particularly in the nation's cities," signaled, especially so for black communities, a sign of a "deep crisis . . . of identity and community that threw into confusion . . . the boundaries of (Black) normality" ("Tearing the Goat's Flesh," 378–79). No wonder, then, that even in 1984, just three years before his death, Baldwin felt he had to reinforce his point in an interview with Richard Goldstein: "The sexual question and the racial question have always been entwined."[78] Baldwin's insistence on sex and race as inseparable may seem unduly repetitive to today's readers, given our access to a wider spectrum of African American literature and criticism on the subject, but must be remembered as a revolutionary contribution that not only preceded the women's and gay rights movements of the late 1960s but also anticipated what is now cutting-edge scholarship in black queer studies.

Throughout the decade when America experienced its "greening," or sexual and civil rights revolutions, Baldwin's interviews and his correspondence with friends and family prove that he was well aware of the erotically charged allegations concerning his stays in Turkey and deliberately emphasized the working nature of his connection to that country.[79] His works written in Istanbul and his directing of John Herbert's play that explicitly focused on (homo)sexuality in a Turkish context can be interpreted, too, as evidencing Baldwin's awareness of, and reaction to, Western Orientalism, which he confronted perhaps most fully, and paradoxically, while living in a place that was their target, a place that he might once have stereotyped in similar ways himself. From *Another Country*, where Turkey and Istanbul provide shadow referents for New York City and the sexual encounters between its white and black inhabitants, through *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, which was influenced by his friendship with the actor Engin Cezzar, to *No Name in the Street*, which echoes Baldwin's experience directing *Fortune and Men's Eyes* in Istanbul, he used Turkey as an authorial location and lens that allowed him to recast Americanness "from another place." Even his last completed work, the play *The Welcome Table*, harkens back to the notions of Turkish sociability that Baldwin experienced while working with Engin and Gülriz's theater company and on his last visit with his friends in Bodrum in 1981.

Turkey also provided Baldwin with a potent example of how much one's immediate environment—literally the very spaces where one lived, slept, and interacted with others—influenced one's ability to work. A few years before his arrival in Istanbul, Baldwin wrote a long letter to Sol Stein, his high school friend and editor of *Notes of a Native Son*, in which he described his writing using references to dwelling and confinement: "I don't, myself, think that I've seriously considered work as a penalty, though I do consider it my only means of understanding the world, and, in fact—at the risk of causing you to gnash your teeth—my only means of feeling at home in the world. I don't know what I think until I've written it. . . . Please, get over the notion, Sol, that there's some place I'll fit when I've made some 'real peace' with myself: the place in which I'll fit will not exist until I make it" (Baldwin and Stein, *Native Sons*, 96–97).[80] This letter, written in early 1957 while Baldwin was in Corsica struggling with early drafts of *Another Country*, describes his awareness that the only "place making" that he is capable of happens through writing.[81] He insists elsewhere in the letter that one's "inner" and "outer" "environments" are the same: "There is no such thing as an 'external environment.' . . . An environment is also an inward reality, it's one of the things which makes you, it takes from you and it gives to you, facts that are suggested by the word itself" (96–97). Baldwin explains here his tendency to flee from one place to another as having nothing to do with a desire to escape his national identity: "If I were trying to escape my environment, I wouldn't be covering the earth to do it. The best way to escape one's environment is to surrender to it." Exile, then, like his writing and mobility, became a form of dwelling to Baldwin. As he emphasized to Stein, "I don't think I'm romantic enough, any longer, to imagine that anything is ever escaped."

Baldwin explored this theme in Turkey while rewriting *Another Country*, and later while working on his fourth novel, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, and his fourth book of essays, *No Name in the Street*. The first and last of these three texts neatly bracket his Turkish decade, given that *Another Country* was finished and revised during his first visit there in 1961, and *No Name in the Street* was completed virtually on the eve of his departure for France in 1970. A best-selling novel describing the tumultuous romantic relationships and travels of a colorful group of New Yorkers in the late 1950s, *Another Country* has been the better known of these two works. *No Name in the Street*, on the other hand, was not received well and fell into obscurity soon after its publication. This unjustly neglected text offers a valuable introduction to the so-called late Baldwin, as it combines an autobiographical reevaluation of his life on the brink of the 1970s with a powerful examination of his visits to the American South, which he sees as a lens through which to approach American culture. It is also a follow-up testament to *The Fire Next Time*, in which Baldwin considers his waning reputation among younger African Americans in the context of gender and sexuality, and in which he relates his activism on behalf of political prisoners in the United States and in Europe. Finally, it offers an important reassessment of how Baldwin understood "intellectual activity" by the end of the 1960s.

Given the ravages of McCarthyism and the Cold War, but also what came after the civil rights reform legislation—the drive to embrace racial and sexual separatism and essentialism among many Blacks—Baldwin insisted in *No Name in the Street* that intellectual activity "must be, disinterested . . . [because] the truth *is* a two-edged sword—and if one is not willing to be pierced by that sword, even to the extreme of dying on it, then all of one's intellectual activity is a masturbatory delusion and a wicked and dangerous fraud" (31).[82] This passage implies a focus on both the intellectual and the erotic—"brilliance without passion is nothing more than sterility" (31)—that he embraced more fully in his nonfiction prose while living in Turkey. Framed by the rich vistas and aural textures of Pakay's *James Baldwin: From Another Place*, one of my key visual sources in the chapters that follow, Baldwin's pronouncements on the erotics of writing and intellectual activity signal as well his important contribution to locating sexualized and racialized Americanness in a transnational context.

Like France before, Turkey helped Baldwin to escape some of the racist and homophobic climate of his home country and saved him as a writer during a tough period in his life, but it did not make him into an expatriate. Unlike the white male hero figures of twentieth-century American literary history—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and James—from whom Baldwin distances himself sharply in his 1962 literary manifesto “As Much of the Truth as One Can Bear,” Baldwin saw himself as an exile rather than expatriate and was chastised rather than admired by others for his explorations of foreign places.[83] In 1968, when criticized by the *New York Post* for his prolonged stays in Istanbul, he replied that his presence in that ancient city signified “preparation, not flight,” and that there was “no way except death to shut . . . [him] up,” despite the fact that by that point, “what we called the civil rights struggle can be said to have been buried with Martin Luther King.”[84] To the Turkish journal *Cep Dergisi* he stressed that his flight abroad was necessary to his productivity, and the critiques he kept receiving were in fact welcome: “I have been criticized for so many things, and for so long, that I am quite unable to look at the possibility of being criticized as a danger. The danger probably lies in the opposite direction” (Standley and Pratt, *Conversations*, 63).

Baldwin never avoided criticism, even when it hurt him to the core, as was the case when it came from other African Americans, such as Eldridge Cleaver or Amiri Baraka, who berated him for his sexuality and contacts with Whites. He also criticized his home country the more severely the longer it remained involved in Vietnam. He summarized his expanding view of the United States in the world in an interview with Sedat Pakay, recorded in Istanbul in 1970 during the production of Pakay’s film: “And furthermore you look at other countries you cannot pretend that any country is free of the blood-guiltiness, which so dishonors my own.” Baldwin’s realization that no other state was free from the “blood-guiltiness”—exploitation, racism, and systematic murder—of which he accused his homeland was small consolation. As I was told by many of his Turkish friends, he claimed that American ignorance lay at the root of many of the world’s problems. Recorded at the end of his Turkish decade, and never published, his interview with Pakay contains an indictment of “the most powerful country in the world, which is also the most ignorant, and in terms of action these days, is the most wicked.” It is worth quoting at length:

> American ignorance is a new phenomenon, I think. It’s not the ignorance of your peasant in Anatolia, or any peasant anywhere. . . . If you are dealing with people who do not know how to read and know they don’t know how to read, it is at least conceivable that you can teach them how to read. If an African peasant doesn’t know how to drive a tractor, or how to irrigate a barren field, he can be taught those things. But I don’t know

> what you do with the people who are ignorant in the way Americans are ignorant. Who believe they can read, and who read their *Reader's Digest*, *Time Magazine*, the *Daily News*, who think that's reading, who think they know something about the world because they are told that they do.

By placing American ignorance in a global context, and specifically in an unfavorable comparison with the problems of the so-called Third World, Baldwin stressed its magnitude and international impact. Speaking more directly and openly than he ever did when criticizing the United Sates at home, he also explicitly targeted the legacy of American exceptionalism and, implicitly, the American educational system for the inability of many to think independently. In a sweeping statement, and perhaps pandering too eagerly to his Turkish audience's anti-American sentiments, he castigated his compatriots, who "think that they know something about the world because they think that they are better than the rest of the people in the world, better than the other countries in the world . . . [and] have no respect for language, and they cannot read, and it means they cannot think." A grandson of a slave who never finished college because of his race and class, Baldwin must have felt that he had every right to be angry at Americans who did not use their privilege to learn more about the world.

In the same interview, Baldwin explained to Pakay another reason for his anguish and despair, that is, his belief that Americans lacked self-knowledge and self-reliance, those most American of characteristics extolled by founding fathers of the national letters such as Emerson and Thoreau: "They can never find out what's inside them, what they really mean, they can never divorce themselves from what they think they should think." As the "most fully Emersonian of democratic intellectuals in our history," as Cornel West defines him (*Democracy Matters*, 78–79),[85] James Baldwin devoted his life and career to exposing and battling his compatriots' ignorance about the world, about themselves, and about the various Others in their midst. As a black and queer writer, as we would call him today, Baldwin was marked as much by his racial as by his sexual otherness, and was thus doubly displaced and exiled in his home country, but was able to turn his marginalization into a catalyst for writing that redefined the meaning of American identity not only for the twentieth century but also for our own.[86]

James Baldwin Now

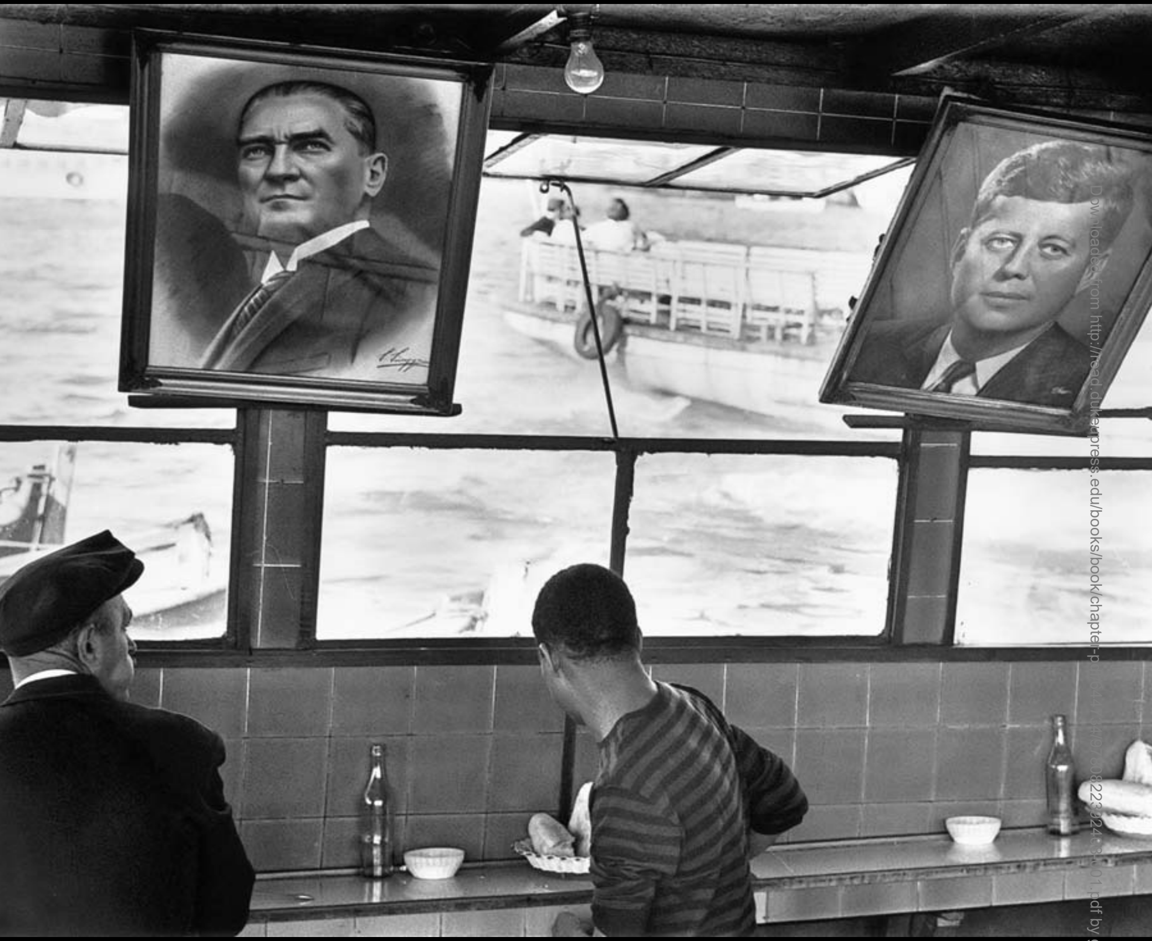
The publication of *Collected Essays* and *Early Novels and Stories* in the prestigious Library of America series in 1998 recognized James Baldwin as belonging to the national literary pantheon.[87] But while his books can now be tastefully displayed side by side with those of Henry James, Baldwin's favorite American writer, scholars are still disputing his oeuvre's worth along the lines of race, sex, and genre: whether Baldwin was "the defining voice" of black Americans during the Civil Rights Movement or sold out to the Whites,[88] whether in his attention to the erotic he set out to "illustrate [that] . . . Negroes . . . make love better . . . dance better . . . cook better,"[89] whether he was a better novelist or essayist. The majority of scholars, with several notable exceptions,[90] still split Baldwin's career into a period of artistic ascendancy and regrettable descent, from the publication of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) to the incendiary essay-epistle *The Fire Next Time* (1963), and from the play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964) to his last published work, the polemical essay *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (1985). The tacit or in-your-face agreement that Baldwin's output after *The Fire Next Time* lacks merit, even among those who have not read his late works, is reflected in the very publication that has recognized him as a classic. We are yet to see the volume of his "late novels" from the Library of America.[91]

As we await new scholarship and new appreciation of this writer's later works, it is clear that Baldwin's Turkish decade stands at the crux of his biographical and authorial journeys. It helps us to trace his progress from the Harlem ghetto and Beauford Delaney's studio in Greenwich Village to the salons of international literati, and from the experimental novelistic form of *Another Country* to the complex essay structure of *No Name in the Street*. Positioning my project in conversation with past and present scholarship on Baldwin, I distance my readings from approaches that segregate the black writer from the gay writer and the novelist from the essayist.[92] Baldwin's Turkish sojourn helped him to articulate his key artistic and political concerns on the interdependence of race and the erotic in constructions of American identity, which should prompt more nuanced, transnational readings of his works across the fields of African American and American literary and cultural studies. And as much as placing Turkey at the center of his career helps us to read Baldwin's later works in a new light, it also provides us with critical tools for productively reassessing his earlier writings, especially those depicting migration, relocation, and transatlantic passage.

I read Baldwin's Turkish decade as a kind of voluntary exile, a temporal and spatial process of artistic incubation and discovery that resulted in new ways of seeing and conceptualizing (African) Americanness across the Atlantic. Edward Said's definition that stresses the in-between, neither-here-nor-there character of late-twentieth-century exile rings especially true given Baldwin's sense of entrapment in national identity: "For most exiles the difficulty consists not simply in being forced to live away from home, but rather, given today's world, in living with the many reminders that you are in exile, that your home is not in fact so far away" ("Intellectual Exile," 370). Said's notion stresses the inherent combination of geographic, linguistic, and intellectual factors that shape the exilic intellectual's "double perspective." Given Baldwin's conviction that the legacy of one's birthplace could not be escaped and his commitment to the fight for civil rights at home, while he was certainly immersed in, and appreciative of, Turkey as a kind of a houseguest, he lived there with a somewhat modified diasporic version of Du Bois's "double consciousness," what Said terms the "constant but tantalizing and unfulfilled touch with the old place."

Sedat Pakay's marvelous film captures the waning of James Baldwin's Turkish decade in 1970, but also the fact that the writer in exile found in the city of Istanbul a transitory home. Orhan Pamuk's recent memoir, *Istanbul*, describes the ancient metropolis as a place where someone like Baldwin could thrive and, perhaps temporarily, forget his own entrapments as a migrant: "Caught . . . between traditional and western culture . . . overrun . . . by wave after wave of immigrants, divided . . . along the lines of its many groups, Istanbul is a place where, for the past 150 years, no one has been able to feel completely at home" (115). As Baldwin's readers, we can try to imagine how he felt on that sea of strangers, but we will never know, of course, how he actually saw the city and his life there.

Speaking of his own exile and colonial and postcolonial experience as a West Indian, George Lamming stresses that "what a person thinks is very much determined by the way that person sees."[93] While interviewing Baldwin's Turkish friends, I experienced something similar, or how thinking is affected by point of view and ways of seeing, how there is often a contentious relationship between vision and rhetoric, memory and expression. As much as they tried to bring back how they saw Baldwin and what they thought when he was among them, they could offer only memories, often tinted with nostalgia, sometimes curiously autoethnographic, but always fascinating and enlightening. Many times Avni Bey's chuckle, "Memory is like the weather," went through my mind as I listened to their stories. I am profoundly grateful to him and all the other Turkish friends of Baldwin for welcoming and talking to me, as well as for showing me their beautiful city and other places in Turkey. In the end, when all the travels and research and endnotes are done, Baldwin's works are there to bring us closer to his thinking, and they, as always, offer us the best way of seeing him at home in the world.



7. James Baldwin in a fish restaurant in Eminönü with photographs of Atatürk and JFK, Istanbul, 1965. Photo by Sedat Pakay.