

JTAS Special Forum

Framing Turkish American Literature: Form, Poetics, and Transnational Imaginaries

Edited by Gulsin Ciftci (University of Münster) and Yagmur Su Kolsal (University of Münster)

Deadline for paper proposals: **March 1, 2026**. Contributors will be notified by mid-April 2026. Invited full-length submissions (5,000–8,000 words) are due November 1, 2026 and should follow [JTAS submission guidelines](#).

Please submit abstracts of 300 to 500 words and any questions to Gulsin Ciftci (gulsin.ciftci@uni-muenster.de) and Yagmur Su Kolsal (ysukolsal@uni-muenster.de).

What is Turkish American literature? Where does it begin—and why has it so rarely been named as such? How might this body of writing, long dispersed across time and genres such as immigrant narratives, millennial literature, and memoirs allow us to rethink the transnational dimensions of American literature itself? Guided by these questions, this special forum of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies* explores the literary, linguistic, and cultural formations of Turkish American literature through the lens of transnational American studies.

From the early nineteenth-century missionary encounters in the Ottoman Empire to Cold War realignments and the political displacements of the late twentieth century, Turkish American entanglements have produced a rich yet largely unrecognized archive of writing, translation, and cultural exchange. Attending to this history—shaped by restrictive immigration regimes, the afterlives of empire, and the secularization of Muslim-identified migrants after 9/11—also requires accounting for the present. In an era marked by renewed visa uncertainties, tightened border controls, and heightened scrutiny of non-US scholars and cultural workers, transnational literary production—especially by writers who move between Turkey and the United States—faces significant structural pressures. As a result, we ask: How might foregrounding these historical and contemporary conditions that have given rise and continue to shape Turkish American literature allow us to rethink the transnational dimensions of American literature and to recognize a tradition long rendered diffuse, unnamed, or difficult to place?

Building on recent scholarship (e.g., Furlanetto 2017, Laschinger 2016), this special forum positions Turkish American literature as a vital site for examining the transnational circulation of culture, language, and identity.

While earlier studies have approached the field primarily through ontological and historical questions—what counts as Turkish American literature, and where its boundaries lie—this forum accentuates literary production, form, and the material infrastructures that shape the field. Rather than treating Turkish American literature as a fixed category, we seek to map its fluid and evolving contours by examining the formal strategies, aesthetic practices, and narrative affordances through which authors negotiate migration, memory, language, and belonging. The forum also interrogates processes of canon formation—how translation, publishing, prizes, and readership influence visibility and recognition—and explores the kinds of transnational aesthetics and poetics that emerge from writing across overlapping cultural, linguistic, and political contexts.

We invite contributions exploring the imaginative, formal, and aesthetic dimensions of Turkish American literature across genres, including novels, short stories, poetry, memoir, graphic narratives, and digital media. Of particular interest are the spatial, temporal, and speculative imaginaries these works construct—how they traverse, compress, or reimagine geographies, histories, and possible futures. Equally central is how these texts employ form, poetics, and language to negotiate identity, memory, and belonging, including strategies of translation, multilingual play, and experimental narrative or lyrical techniques that shape transnational meaning.

For this special forum, we seek contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Categorization and framing: How is Turkish American literature constituted, contested, and framed across historical, scholarly, ethnic, and cultural contexts.
- Spatiality and mobility: how travel, return, and cross-border movement structure narrative, poetic, and aesthetic forms.
- Language and multilingualism: translation, code-switching, and linguistic hybridity as creative and political strategies.
- Memory and archive: individual and collective memory, intergenerational transmission, and the creation or contestation of diasporic archives.

- Genre, form, and affordances: The formal work of genres such as novels, memoirs, poetry, short stories, millennial fiction, graphic narratives, to name a few, in generating transnational aesthetics.
- Poetry and poetics: how Turkish American poets negotiate tradition, form, and voice across linguistic and cultural borders.
- Translation and circulation: how texts move across languages, markets, media, and readerships, and how prizes, translation economies, and institutional recognition mediate visibility and shape the emerging Turkish American canon.
- Book and publishing studies: production, distribution, reception, and canon formation in Turkish, US, and global literary markets.
- Crises and imaginaries: environmental, political, social, and economic crises as they shape diasporic aesthetics, narrative forms, and transnational imaginaries.
- Politics of representation: negotiating postimperial histories, Cold War legacies, authoritarianism, migration regimes, and global modernities.
- Emerging authors, platforms, and readerships: digital storytelling, social media, multimodal forms, and new circuits of dissemination.
- Transnational and comparative frameworks: Placing Turkish American writing in dialogue with US ethnic, diasporic, and world literary traditions.