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HUNDRED YEARS AND FAREWELL TO SALONICA

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ÖZET

Özge Durukan. *His Hundred Years: A tale* ve *Farewell to Salonica* adlı eserlerde transkültürel belleğin temsili. Başkent Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Yüksek Lisans Programı. 2024.

Sefarad Yahudileri, zorunlu göç ile İber Yarımadasına yerleşen fakat sonrasında İspanya'nın Katolik Hristiyan zulmünden kaçıp 15. yüzyılın başlarında Osmanlı Cumhuriyeti'ne sığınan Yahudi topluluğudur. 1492 Elhamra Kararnamesi ardından on binlerce Yahudi İspanya'dan sürgün edildi. II. Beyazıt döneminde, binlerce Sefarad Yahudisi Osmanlı topraklarına kabul edilerek yerleştirildi. Sefarad Yahudileri, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na davet edildikten sonra özellikle Selanik, İzmir, İstanbul ve Trakya bölgesine yerleştirildiler. Osmanlı'da yaşayan diğer Yahudi gruplarla beraber uzun süre İslam dünyasında oldukça hoşgörölü, varlıklı ve üretken bir yaşam sürdüler. Fakat Balkan savaşları ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın tüm İmparatorluğa ve var olan sisteme getirdiği politik, sosyal ve ekonomik değişimler, Sefarad Yahudilerinin Batı ülkelerine, özellikle Amerika'ya göçünü hızlandırdı. Bu anlamda tezim, Shalach Manot'un "*His Hundred Years*" ve Leon Sciaky'nin "*Farewell to Salonica*" kitaplarındaki karakterlerin ve Osmanlı'da yaklaşık 5 yüzyıl yaşayan Sefarad Yahudilerinin 20.yy. başında Amerika'ya göçünü trans kültürel hafıza çalışmaları açısından açıklamayı ve yaşadıkları çok kültürlü ortamı konu edinmektedir. Trans kültürel hafıza çalışmaları, hatırlamanın dinamik, evrilen ve birbirine bağlı doğasını aydınlatır. Hafızanın akıcılığını vurgular, anıların farklı kültürel peyzajları aşarak birbirleriyle etkileşime girdiğini ve tek bir kültürel veya ulusal sınıra sıkışmadan toplumsal anlatıların ve kimliklerin oluşumuna katkıda bulunduğunu gösterir. Son yıllarda, çok kültürlülük, kimlik ve genel olarak etnik dini çalışmalara artan ilgiden dolayı hafıza çalışmaları üzerine önemli akademik araştırmalar yapılmaktadır. Bu anlamda bu tez, 20. yüzyılın başlarında Sefarad Yahudilerinin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki çok kültürlü yapısı ve topluluğun ABD'ye göçü arasındaki ilişkiyi trans kültürel hafıza çalışmaları bakış açısından ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Leon Sciaky, Osmanlı Sefarad Yahudileri, Shalach Manot, Transkültürel bellek

ABSTRACT

Özge Durukan, Representation of Transcultural Memory in *His Hundred Years* and *Farewell To Salonica*, Başkent University, Institute of Social Sciences. American Culture and Literature Master's Degree Program, 2024.

Sephardic Jews are a community of Jews who initially settled in the Iberian Peninsula through forced migration but later sought refuge in the Ottoman Republic in the early 15th century to escape the Catholic Christian persecution in Spain. After the 1492 Alhambra Decree, tens of thousands of Jews were expelled from Spain. During the reign of Sultan Beyazıt II, thousands of Sephardic Jews were accepted and settled in Ottoman territories. Following their invitation to the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardim were particularly settled in areas like Salonica, Izmir, Istanbul, and the Thrace region. Together with other Jewish groups living in the Ottoman Empire, Sephardic Jews enjoyed a tolerant, affluent, and productive life in the Islamic world for centuries. However, the political, social, and economic changes brought about by the Balkan Wars and World War I accelerated the migration of Sephardic Jews to Western countries, especially America.

My thesis aims to explain the migration of Sephardic Jews to America in the early 20th century from the perspective of transcultural memory studies, focusing on the characters in Shalach Manot's "*His Hundred Years*" and Leon Sciaky's "*Farewell to Salonica*," as well as the memories of Sephardic Jews who lived in the Ottoman Empire for approximately five centuries. It explores the multicultural environment Sephardic Jews experienced. Transcultural memory studies shed light on the dynamic, evolving, and interconnected nature of the memory. It emphasizes the fluidity of memory, illustrating how memories interact across diverse cultural landscapes, contributing to the formation of societal narratives and identities without being confined to a single cultural or national border.

In recent years, there has been increasing academic interest in memory studies due to growing attention to interculturalism, identity, and ethnic-religious studies. This study aims to elucidate the relationship between the multicultural structure of Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire and their migration to the United States in the early 20th century through the lens of transcultural memory studies.

Keywords: Leon Sciaky, Ottoman Sephardic Jews, Shalach Manot, Transcultural memory

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will analyze the memories of Ottoman Sephardic Jews throughout their journey from the Empire to the USA at the beginning of the 20th century from the lens of transcultural memory studies in the novel *His Hundred Years: A Tale* (2016) by Shalach Manot (Jane Mushabac) and the memoir *Farewell to Salonica* (2003) by Leon Sciaky. Within the concept, the study argues that memories are dynamic and hybrid, transcending national or community boundaries. This is because memories incorporate various cultural and personal elements, making them transcultural, hybrid, and constantly evolving. In the selected works, there is a strong relation of the Sephardic Jewish to the Ottoman Empire based on the community's memory. The memories in both works demonstrate that the experiences and memories of the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish migrants (both individually and communally) continue to influence their lives and identity even after they have settled in the America. This is due to the transcultural and fluid nature of memory.

The novel and memoir revolve around Sephardim, Ottoman, and both protagonists' memories throughout their journey to New York after the Balkan Wars and World War I. The main characters of the novels Leon; and the Sephardic man whom we never learn the real name; immigrate from a deceasing empire, from the cities of Salonica and Çanakkale. Despite Leon and the Sephardic man live around the same region of an Empire, their memories of Ottoman Jewish life differ a lot. Although Leon is born and raised in the cosmopolitan and satisfying atmosphere of Salonica, the Sephardic man lives in socio-economically poor conditions in Çanakkale. Therefore, when Leon and the Sephardic man migrate to NY, their perception patterns of America and its culture contrast with each other. While Leon creates an alternative life to an industrialized America in the 20th century, the Sephardic man becomes a model immigrant and draws an image of rags to riches. Both novels include various memories of the Ottoman lifestyle in Salonica and Çanakkale, Sephardic Jews' culture and religion, individual experiences, descriptions, and relations with their own family, community, and other Ottomans.

Memories have a significant impact on diasporic communities like Ottoman Sephardic Jews. It has a positive relation with the past. For Feindt et al. (2014), memory plays a critical role in crafting personal and collective identity, directing the development of

the self and personality (p. 43). Consequently, letters, memoirs, and personal accounts ascribe how memory is encoded in cultural history and individual experiences intermingle with history. For Aleida Assmann (2008), in the last century, history was the monopoly for defining the past. In theory, history contains rhetorical use of language and a specific head start point whereas today this belief is broken with the mediation of an individual's memory, text, and images (p. 53). Therefore, the transcultural perspective of memory studies supports choosing memories concerning all historical periods considering all representations and memory dimensions. Today, personal memories and communal memories shape historical events. The transcultural lens on memory studies is explained by Astrid Erll (2011) that different national cultures remember things differently, influenced by shared historical sites due to travel, trade, and colonialism. Also, within each nation, various factors like social class, age groups, ethnicities, religions, and subcultures shape how memories are perceived. Additionally, memories aren't limited to national borders but are influenced by broader cultural formations. (Memory in Culture, p. 65)

Also, for Bond and Rapson in *Transcultural Turn* (2014), the various discussions, including literature, culture, history, geography, and philosophy, the late twentieth-century shift towards trans-culturalism. It rejects the older idea of fixed cultural boundaries, and instead embraces a more dynamic and evolving view of interactions between societies as transcultural viewpoints are now influencing a lot of research in the humanities and social sciences. (p. 9). At this point, Erll in *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* (2011) argues that literature and film can portray individual and collective memory, the content, working, fragility, and distortions by coding it into narrative structures, metaphors while fiction of memory is characterized by the dynamic relation to psychology, religion, history, and sociology. They are shaped in them and shape them in return (p.2). It is literary studies that show how memory is depicted in poetry, drama, and fiction. For Albrecht (2022) literature is often viewed as creatively shaping memory cultures. It can create new viewpoints on history and play an active role in shaping cultural memory (p. 309). Hence, the novel *His Hundred Years* and memoir *Farewell to Salonica* are set as literary examples regarding the lives of the Ottoman Sephardic community, and the two novel characters' individual journeys last until arriving in America upon their long-term migration experience via transcultural memory studies.

To conclude, this thesis aims to understand how Ottoman Sephardic Jews' memories were shaped by Sephardic-Ottoman-American culture regarding memory transactions between those three different geographies in their unique format by analyzing two novels' narratives and depicted memories. After crossing the borders, the characters grow and renew in a sense of nostalgia whereas memories become a cornerstone throughout their lives. This thesis' reference point is transcultural memory studies while benefitting from the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish characters' memories. Therefore, the characters are deeply affected by the environment they have lived in for centuries even after they migrate to America.

As a result, the thesis provides quotes from two novels and several historical data to show how memories are intermingled to each other in both individual and communal terms; beyond a single paradigm of any community, culture, or nation.

1.1. Historical Background

To understand the rich social climate of the Ottoman Empire, it is important to provide the history of Sephardic Jews in the 15th century, their exile from Spain, and their relation to the Ottoman Empire until its fall. This atmosphere of Sephardic Jews is depicted in two novels and will be exemplified and followed in detail via memories from the Ottoman Empire to America. The Sephardic Jews had already been welcomed to the Empire and lived with all Ottoman communities for several centuries; they carried empirical elements via memories from their homeland to the USA.

The Sephardim Jews were exiled from Christian Spain and Portugal in 1492 and settled in Ottoman lands as they were faced with massive forced conversions (Harrington, 1992). According to the website of the Jewish Community Foundation of Izmir (www.izmirjh.com/ana-sayfa/ladino-dili), their language was Judeo-Spanish, also known as Judaism or Sephardic Ladino, was a Romance language spoken mainly by Sephardic Jews residing in Israel, the Balkans, North Africa, Greece, and Turkey. Ladino is on the verge of extinction in many of these regions. A highly archaic form of Castilian Spanish, mixed with Hebrew elements (as well as Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, Bulgarian, and Italian), Ladino originated in Spain and was brought to present-day speech communities by the descendants of Jews expelled from Spain after 1492 (www.izmirjh.com/ana-sayfa/ladino-dili).

As Sephardic Jews migrated to Ottoman lands, they were welcomed by the Sultan due to the Sephardic communities' cultural and material richness. According to historian Stanford Shaw (2008), during the governance of Sultan Beyazıt II, he endeavored much to take the attention of Sephardic Jews to the Empire. It was known that he wrote letters and had mercy upon them by reporting state governors to accept the community with grace and understanding (p.53). According to Harrington (1992), Jewish resources mention that Sultan Beyazıt II took the attention of Sephardim by sending his ships to Spain and ordered them to take refugees to the Empire. The Ottomans undoubtedly appreciated the Jews' technical expertise (introduced the first printing press to Turkey) and their commercial contacts with the European continent. However, the Jewish people viewed the expulsion order as an act of divine providence that ultimately led to their redemption and resettlement in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman lands in a poem written by a Jewish journalist Lucian Sciuto approves this image;

There it is! There it is! The Orient has become illuminated! The haven is there! Stamboul in the distance is all bright red. Toward the mighty city, Israel proceeds, and his hymns of thanks burst in the sunshine (p.75)

Therefore, Shaw claims that the Sephardic Jews welcomed and resided in several different places from East Europe to Jerusalem under Ottoman rule. Among these places, they mostly settled in Edirne, Izmir, Çanakkale, Salonica, and Thrace region in general in addition to Istanbul. In these towns, the Sephardic Jewish community formed a specific neighborhood to proceed with their cultural background. Only in the Ottoman, nearly 250.000 Jews arrived in Ottoman lands however the real number will not be known ever. (p.53). The community became the richest and the largest ever and the era was called the golden age of Ottoman Jewishness. Even the number of Jews in Poland and Lithuania was only 15.000 compared to Ottoman lands in the same era (p.57). From the 15th century onwards, Jews lived in prosperity than in any Western Christian governing. Sultans aim to control and organize the minorities rather than suppress or convert them to Islam (p.64). Under Islamic rule, the term *dhimma* [dhimmi] guaranteed religious toleration and protection if the minorities paid taxes (p.72).

Among other minorities, Sepharad Jews were among the most intellectual and prospered among the Jews in the Ottoman. Shaw (2008) adds that back in Spain they were

assimilated into Spanish culture and were used to living together with both Christians and Muslims. Therefore, when they arrived in the east land, they continued in a similar way of living rather than feeling foreign in the Empire (p.71). In cosmopolitan Ottoman cities, Sephardic Jews were organized under *kahals*, and under this little community, they could contact the Ottoman ruling class. Kahals were responsible for keeping the neighborhood safe, being alarmed of any thieves, and protecting people from any kind of danger. They were also organizing trade to keep equal pricing among vendors, give licenses to kosher butchers, and inspect other actions to keep solidarity among Jews. Especially in cities like Salonica, Edirne, and Istanbul, there were rabbis, hospitals, cemeteries, and schools that led Sephardics in religious and secular items (p.76). Rabbis in the synagogues provide service for Jews and manage Jewish primary school (Talmud Torah) and university (Yeşiva) while also giving astronomy, math, and natural science lessons to the community. Sephardic Jews had a strong tendency to keep a critical view towards rabbis' decisions, so there was a huge opposition wing among the community (p.99). Synagogues were like mosques in terms of architecture. They had windows in the ceiling so that one could see the sky while praying. In general, the buildings were plain, and the floors were surrounded by Turkish carpets.

Among the Thrace region, Salonica was called an "Israel metropolis, city of truthfulness, once like Jerusalem the mother of all Jews, little Jerusalem". Many of the intellectuals, philosophers, lawyers, artists, poets, craftsmen, doctors, and bankers migrated to Ottoman lands. These Sephardim contributed a lot not only to their communal progress but also to Ottomans via monetary funds by providing secular and religious education, schooling, and libraries, and supporting intellectual thinking. Life was formed around Ottoman synagogues which included high schools giving qualified education to their members (p.154). It was a Sephardic Jew Salomon Franco who brought press to Ottoman lands in the 17th century. There were many privileged Sephardic Jews in close ties with the sultan (p.169). Like other dhimmi groups, Jews have also been able to make progress in various fields and work in government positions (Gürkaynak, 2003, p. 282). From the 15th century onwards, Sephardic Jews lived in the Empire in these conditions.

One reason for the prosperity of Jews under Ottoman rule was their perception as a useful and productive element, utilized as a tool of imperial policy. The Jewish community within the Ottoman state was not in competition with the Turks; rather, they complemented each other. However, "starting from the 18th century, Christian nations began to replace the

Jewish community in their roles” (Shaw, 2008, p. 287). The resulting ‘special relationship between the Ottoman government and the Jewish population permitted Ottoman Jews to subscribe to Ottoman culture, a political ideology that captured unity of elements, referring to the constituent ethno-religious groups that composed the Ottoman population (p.179-180).

After the 18th century, Ottoman Sephardic migration to America rose due to several reasons. De Naar (2015) mentions the Jewish migration to the United States from the Ottoman Empire occurred in three waves: the few migrants before the Young Turk Revolution (1908); the increasing numbers between 1908 and the beginning of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912); and a major influx during the Balkan Wars and the First World War (p.177). The Christian populations actively sought to liberate themselves from Ottoman rule, but no similar independence movements emerged among Ottoman Jews (p.179).

The Ottoman Sephardic migration to America was based on several push and pull factors. Especially, Balkan Wars and the events at the eve of WWI would bring hardships to the community. Rifat Bali (2013) mentions about “a report prepared in February 1920 by the Istanbul representative of NY based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, there were hundreds of indigent Jews living in Istanbul and its environs who had relatives in America” (p. 94). Furthermore, for Bali, two more pull factors were identified that were caused by natural disasters. The first event to be considered is the significant fire that occurred in Hasköy, Istanbul, which affected an important residential area for the Jewish community. Secondly, the earthquake that occurred on 6-7 August 1912 in Thrace, which destroyed densely populated areas inhabited by Jews, caused significant devastation to families in the region (ibid).

The most significant pull factor for the Sephardic Jews was the symbol of wealthy life for the newcomers. For Toktaş and Kılınc (2018) Unskilled workers earned about ten times more than they did in the Ottoman Empire. During that period, private companies in the Ottoman Empire were promoting the American dream. Immigrants who returned to their hometowns within the Empire shared stories of quickly amassing wealth on the American continent (p.35). These factors pulled and pushed many Jews to leave the Ottoman Empire to America in pursuit of a better life.

Therefore, from the beginning of the 20th century until 1924, when the United States Immigration Restriction Act came into effect, sixty thousand Jews from the Ottoman land

migrated to the USA (Naar, p.174-175) while for Marc D. Angel between 1890 to 1924, nearly thirty thousand Jews arrived at Ellis Island (1982, p.6). In addition, “due to the French education given in the chain schools of Alliance Israelite Universelle for near eastern Jewish, lived in isolation from the western world for centuries. As Sephardic young people had obtained a Western type of education, they began to believe that they could build a new life form for themselves and their families. Young people started to abandon their homelands in cities or little towns as well. While some expected to return some already knew that they would never go back” (Bali,2018, p.93). It is significant to mention that Ottoman Sephardic migrants settled in the Empire for about five hundred years and moved to Western land for socio-economic reasons, most of them became Ottoman citizens.

Cooperman states that even today, the Sephardic Jews whose origins are in contact with the Ottoman Empire, speak with affirmative memories and nostalgia of their old homeland or the homeland of their parents. “This might be a romantic idealization whereas we know that Turco-Jewish relations were based on mutual respect and intercommunal relations to this day. The richness of Turco-Jewish relations in the Ottoman Empire spanned some five hundred years and would encompass a lifetime of research” (1991, p.2).

With given historical background above, both the community’s socio-economic conditions during and after their exodus from Spain and the Empire’s adaptive strategies specific to Ottoman Sephardic Jews maintained a relatively positive environment in between. Throughout the thesis, their memories will be narrated and explained from this point of view as represented in both novels. In this respect, this study aims to exemplify how the two novel characters’ (The Sephardic man and Leon Sciaky) social, religious, and cultural memories as Ottoman Sephardic were shaped in the Empire and recalled in America after the migration.

1. 1. 1. Novel and memoir narratives

The thesis examines two works: a novel by Shalach Manot’s “*His Hundred Years,*”, and Leon Sciaky’s “*Farewell to Salonica,*” a memoir. Therefore, both novels have different forms of literary expression. Memoir narrative, as defined by Smith (2010), is a genre that provides “a retrospective commentary on the author’s own life experiences” (p. 322). In short, memoirs offer readers a firsthand account of the author’s memories, reflections, and emotions, providing details about his life journey. On the other hand, novels are fictional

works that include invented characters, settings, and plots. Nünning and Sommer (2008) define novels as “characterized by their invention of characters and events, as well as their narrative structure” (p. 50). Unlike memoirs, novels are not bound by the limits of real-life events, and novels can explore a wide range of imaginative scenarios and themes.

The main difference between memoir narratives and novels lies in their basis of truth and fiction. Memoir narratives are truly rooted in the author’s lived experiences, aiming to carry authenticity and truthfulness. Head (2005) notes that memoirs provide “a truthful account of personal experiences and reflections” (p. 3). In contrast, novels are free to create fictional worlds and characters without obeying real-life events, allowing authors to explore various themes and concepts through imaginative storytelling. In addition, while memoir narratives emphasize authenticity and truthfulness, novels often use storytelling techniques such as dialogue, description, and narrative structure to engage readers and transfer meaning. Novels are flexible, the author can use various genres likewise romance and mystery, science fiction, and historical fiction whereas memoir narratives focus on the author’s unique experiences and perspectives.

In conclusion, memoir narratives and novels are two different narrative forms within literature both having their purpose and audience. Regarding this study, Leon’s memoir brings the real-life events whereas the Sephardic man’s novel is a depiction of the writer Shalach Manot, who is also an Ottoman Sephardic migrated to New York. In the context of the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish ethno-religious group, my thesis will analyze the novel, “*His Hundred Years*” by Shalach Manot and the memoir “*Farewell to Salonica*” by Leon Sciaky, to provide insights into the Ottoman Jewish community and the portrayal of characters’ memories through the lens of transcultural memory studies.

1.2. Shalach Manot (Jane Mushabac) and *His Hundred Years* (2016)

As a professor emerita of English at the City University of NY, Jane Mushabac (under the pen name Shalach Manot) writes books, short stories, and essays. She has won many awards including fellowships from the NEH and Mellon Foundation and a Leapfrog Press international fiction contest award for her novel, *His Hundred Years, A Tale* (2016). In the acknowledgments part of the same novel, she depicts her parents’ life in Turkey by saying that life was good and beautiful including its toughness. Praying was an expression of being

grateful, that's why she chose to write under the pen name Shalach Manot; meaning the gifts of food for friends and family on Purim (a Jewish celebration).

It is understood from her interview on bookculture.com (2016) that her parents lived in Turkey as Sephardic Jews for over four centuries. She says, "Even though they were Jewish and New York is a very Jewish city, aside from my family I've known few Turkish people, and my background has long made me feel different from people I know, and I love". Also, she comments about the novel as mentioned below.

My twenty-eight short episodes are set in the Turkish countryside in the early 1900s, in New York in the late 1900s, and elsewhere. A non-sequential chronology makes my peddler's perseverance a kind of crazy repeating loop—my Turkish Jew became an everyman.

In the novel *His Hundred Years*; the author Marc D. Angel states that "the life of an unusual Sephardic man, his childhood in Turkey, and later his adaptation to life in America. We follow his adventures and come away with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Sephardic immigrant experience during in the 20th century" (back cover page). Another author Morris Dickstein comments "the protagonist, a buoyant and irrepressible salesman, is the furthest thing from Arthur Miller's defeated figure" (back cover page).

Except for the novel, Manot has written a novel and a short story in Ladino titled "Pasha: Pensamientos de David Aroughetti." The English translation of the story was recently published in *AJS: Perspectives*. Additionally, she co-wrote a short Ladino play titled "Un Otro Ermano—Another Brother," which premiered on the 2021 New York Ladino Day. Her NPR radio play, *Mazal Bueno: A Portrait in Song of the Spanish Jews*, narrated by Tovah Feldshuh, is available on CD. Mushabac co-authored *A Short and Remarkable History of New York City* (Fordham University Press and Museum of the City of New York), which was recognized as a 'Best of the Best' by the American Association of University Presses. Her work on Herman Melville received high praise from Alfred Kazin, Irving Howe, and others. Additionally, her essay on *Moby-Dick* was published in the acclaimed *MLA Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series. Her work has been translated into Turkish, German, Bulgarian, Russian and Ladino.

The novel "*His Hundred Years: A Tale*" is a narrative of a Sephardic boy of Çanakkale in the Ottoman Empire who started working as a peddler as a child, earned money as a migrant insurance man and became a wealthy businessman in America. As a symbol of

the American dream, he is a successful immigrant able to make a fortune out of his business for his family. As a Sephardic Jew, he maintained his culture in American society, yet he does not carry his Orientalist interconnection likewise Leon Sciaky. His memory of the Ottoman is unlike Leon's narration. Yet, his emotions or ideas about his childhood are not much reflected in the book except the family's economic condition and his efforts to survive with his mother all alone. The Sephardic man depicts the city filled with poverty and impossibilities that led them to emigrate to the USA. The novel *His Hundred Years* does not display Çanakkale as vibrant or affirmative as Salonica in the memoir *Farewell to Salonica*. Salonica was a cosmopolitan and multicultural city including a wide and rich Sephardic Jewish community, while Çanakkale was more like a village that lacked that rich socio-economic environment considering its limited land with a little coast and a few populations with so little to offer socio-economically. Although both novels' settings are in a very similar geography and were written in the same era, the memories of these two people differ a lot due to the characters' differing close relations with family members, personal backgrounds, and experiences with the social environment in Salonica and Çanakkale. Due to this reason, the differing memories of the two people resulted in contrasting perspectives upon arrival in America. Thus, their experiences differed immensely. The two personas' recollections led to vastly different outlooks on the events, obstacles, and situations they faced as Jews or Ottoman immigrants. While the Sephardic man hopes to earn money, Leon seeks to integrate with like-minded individuals to share his inner life, intellectual mind future visions, common goals, and predictions about life. Leon is not so much concerned about money as it has never been a necessity in his life, and he has not suffered from poverty.

1.3. Leon Sciaky and *Farewell to Salonica* (2003)

Born in Salonica in 1893, Leon Sciaky migrated to the United States in 1915. Following his engineering studies, he operated a groundbreaking children's camp. In 1953, he relocated with his family to Mexico, where he passed away in 1958. His memoir *Farewell to Salonica* was published in the USA in 1946 and renewed by his son Peter Sciaky in 1974. In addition, the memoir is significant because "it is the only autobiography written by a Sephardic immigrant who came to the United States in the 1880-1924 period. It is the only autobiography that paints a picture of the world from which fifty thousand Sephardic Jews came during the great migration" (Matza, 1987, p.33).

The memoir depicts Salonica (now Thessaloniki in Greece) at the beginning of the twentieth century. The city stood out as a peaceful place where various groups of people coexisted despite their differences. This city, under Ottoman rule, was home to Jews, Muslim Turks, Orthodox Greeks, and Bulgarians who peacefully interacted, traded, and lived together. Unfortunately, this harmonious coexistence didn't last due to nationalist flows raised in the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan wars, and WWI. This memoir provides a captivating and nostalgic perception of this lost society. Throughout the book, Sciaky expresses sadness about the impact of Western industrialization after he migrates to NY and hampers the traditional and more humane ways of life in the East.

The publisher's note in the memoir mentions that "in Sciaky's memoir, the integration of Jews into the life of the city is complete" (p.1). By the time when the twenty-three-year-old Leon and his family left Salonica in 1915 to go to NY, Salonica had already become a different city one less comfortable in its diversity. Like the Sciaky family, many non-Greeks, Jews, and others left Salonica following the Wars. The publisher finalizes the note by adding that "Leon Sciaky brings to life an alluring world where people of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds lived in unselfconscious acceptance of their differences and true appreciation of their common concerns and aspirations" (p.3).

Leon Sciaky's *Farewell to Salonica: City at the Crossroads* recounts the Sephardic Jewish community and personal experiences in Salonica and their dispersion due to historical events like World War I and the Ottoman Empire's collapse. The narrative illustrates how memories of the multicultural city transform as the community adapts to new environments across different countries. This highlights the interconnectedness of memories across cultural boundaries, as memories of Salonica intersect with experiences in new locations, shaping the collective memory of the Sephardic diaspora. The book also explores how the Sephardic Jews negotiated collective boundaries during their dispersal, with memories transcending geographical and cultural limits. These memories form mixed networks of remembrance, influencing how the community constructs its identity in various host countries. Overall, Leon Sciaky's storytelling actively contributes to shaping and disseminating collective memory within the Sephardic diaspora.

1.4. Theoretical Background

Memories have a significant impact on communities and individuals. Individuals remember events through social connections with group members. For Feindt et al. (2014), memory refers to acts of mental representation in which signs bring something absent to the fore of consciousness (p.28).

Therefore, personal memories are filtered by shared collective memories. About individual memory, Susan Sontag supports the idea that all memory is individual and unreproducible- “it dies with each person whereas collective memory is the process of stipulating not remembering” (2003, p. 86), and she adds (2012) that memories are subjective. It needs to reach the objective truth by comparing sources, arguments, and corrections (p.55). However, it is always the individual who has memory because it is created collectively, during social intercourse. For Assmann, memories originate from the thoughts of the groups we belong to whereas individuals have emotions, not memories (2011, p.23). In one way or another, individual memories affect the way a person acts while fitting into society to find his position.

On the other hand, memories hang together not that they are contiguous in time but rather a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group with whom we had relationships in the past or present. Everyone obtains an eye on the group’s interest and totality of memories. A specific attitude common to group members is shaped. Upon such commonality, the group gets accustomed to constructing all memories from similar perspective (Coser, 1992, p.52). The act of remembering and memorization is being shaped both by getting accustomed to the social environment and with personal memories thus there is a correlation between individual and collective memory.

From this point on, the relationship between memory and history is also considered by scholars. To begin with a reputable scholar in memory studies, Jan Assmann defines history as a result of memory and action because only memory exists for us through remembering opposite to history (2011, p.207). “History is a past with which we no longer have an organic relationship, a past that no longer has an important place in our lives. Yet, collective memory is an active past that shapes our identity” (Olick, 2011, p. 180). Moreover, Eyerman (2019) says that “history evolves into both a field of study and a profession. Its connection with collective memory became more thoughtful and challenging, constrained

by scientific norms and rules of evidence” (p.22). As a supporting view of Aleida Assmann (2008), history is the monopoly for defining the past in the last century. In terms of memory studies, history contains rhetorical use of language and a specific head-start point whereas today this belief has been broken with the mediation of an individual’s memory, text, and images (p. 53). As a supportive idea, Kirpikli claims history presents memories by dividing them into time scales and categories whereas memory remains within the limits of the group with a linear continuation history.

Then how is the individual and collective memory formed? Regarding individual memory, Kirpikli (2021) claims that the individual is significant and special for collective memory because each person remembers and forgets memories randomly, not certainly (p.24). Yet, Coser points out that “collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present and memory needs ongoing feeding from collective sources which is obtained from social and moral elements” (1992, p.34). From the perspective of cultural memory studies, memory constructs commemorative practices and traditions for each community that forms the culture. For Bond and Rapson, culture is shaped by the active process of selecting and producing memories (2014, p. 7). Therefore, for J. Assmann every culture formulates something that is called a “connective structure” (2011, p.3).

It has a binding effect that works on two levels – social and temporal. It binds people together by providing a “symbolic universe,” a common area of experience, expectation, and action whose connecting force provides them with trust and orientation. In connecting yesterday to today, cultural elements shape our current experiences and memories. Towards the present, culture becomes more fluid and transitional. They integrate images and stories from the past into the ongoing present while offering a sense of continuity and hope. This connecting framework, which is present in myths and histories, is rooted in culture. Both the prescriptive (normative) and narrative components of culture, blending guidance with storytelling, establish a sense of belonging and identity. This allows individuals to speak collectively as part of a group which is formed through shared knowledge, values, and a collective memory of the past. To reach this objective truth, the basic principle is repetition, as the core of all connective elements. Repetitive actions guarantee recognition (p.3).

Beginning from the 20th century onwards, the dramatic events like WWI and II, the Holocaust, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and changing regimes in the Middle East and North Africa region, the social actors and groups called traditional historians to broaden the

archives with their collective memories. Considering this shift, Welsch (1999) claims that the understanding of traditional culture doesn't work anymore because modern societies are so diverse that they can't be uniform. Also, the traditional view of culture is not only inadequate in describing reality but also poses risks and is unsustainable. What we need today is to move away from this concept and to think of cultures without strictly categorizing them as either our own or foreign. (p.2). The traditional definition of culture including social homogenization, ethnic consolidation, and intercultural borders was formed in the 18th century, whereas this concept is untenable today. Since the 1970s, sociologists have suggested that modern life can be seen as a journey through different social spheres, where individuals sequentially fulfill various possible identities. They maintain that we all have "multiple attachments and identities," also known as cross-cutting identities. In other words, transculturality challenges the idea that culture is a uniform and separate entity defined by a national or romantic perspective. Instead, it emphasizes a fluid and interconnected cultural experience that is not limited by ethnic or social boundaries (p.5). Regarding the shift Kirpikli (2011) mentions that

A progressive step forward in cultural memory is realized when Jan and Aleida Assmann start mentioning cultural memory at the beginning of the 1990s. As the limitations of using national perspectives to explore memory have become more apparent, memory studies have shifted their focus to culture. The term "culture" is shaped in part by passing down specific norms and values from previous generations, and is heavily influenced by memory, playing a central role in the cultural identity of a community. Unlike the fixed territorial boundaries proposed by previous models, cultural memory is seen as dynamic. It is an ongoing process where individuals or groups continually reshape their identity in connection to the past and its reflections in the present. However, it's essential to recognize that culture isn't confined to specific territories. Consequently, the cultural paradigm has broadened to encompass a more transcultural viewpoint. To put it simply, to understand contemporary cultural issues, there are now new approaches to memory that emphasize its dynamic nature and how it circulates (p.34).

In line with the increasing number of research considering diversity, Udo J. Hebel (2009) states that memory has served as a productive concept in the wake of the revisionist impulse of New American Studies since the late 1980s as well. The topics of identity politics and nation-building are among the favored subjects for Americanists studying the multiethnic history and pluralistic society of the United States. The interdisciplinary nature

of American studies, coupled with the discipline's recent emphasis on theoretical developments about the virtual, transnational, and spatial domains, empower Americanists to comprehensively assess the diversity of American cultures of memory and their manifestations and objectives (p. 1). Especially the influence of British trade and colonialism, combined with the varied origins of nations like Canada and the United States, along with the complex migration patterns of the twentieth century, has led to the development of diverse and interconnected sites of memory that are shared across national, transnational, and transcultural contexts for Erll (*Journal of Aesthetics*, 2011, p. 4). At the beginning of the twenty-first century:

The form in which we think of the past is increasingly memory without borders rather than national history within borders. Modernity has brought with it a very real compression of time and space. But in the register of imaginaries, it has also expanded our horizons of time and space beyond the local, the national and even the international. (Huyssen, 2003; p. 4)

To sum up, cultures are highly intertwined and connected. Lifestyles now extend beyond the boundaries of national cultures and are shared in similar ways across various cultures. Each culture tends to incorporate elements from all others, making them “interconnected like inner content or satellites. As a result, there is no longer anything truly foreign; everything is accessible and within reach” (Welsch, 1999, p.7).

Considering Bond and Rapson's (2011) argument on *transcultural turn*, in discussions related to literature, culture, history, geography, and philosophy, the transcultural shift in the late twentieth century is evident. This shift involves moving away from the previously dominant idea of container-like cultures and embracing a more flexible and temporary framework for understanding the relationships between societies. And this has changed how both place and human behavior are understood within memory studies. Although the concept of the nation may not offer a stable basis for analysis anymore, it is not completely discarded; instead, it is considered within the context of local and global influences. There is a growing awareness on global issues that significantly affect local concerns, as seen in approaches like ecocriticism, which explores the relationships between space, place, and identity. Also, regarding human rights studies, scholars agree that transnational empathy can be achieved and mobilized as well. There is an increasing need for empathy to move beyond categorizations of nationality or ethnicity. As “Nancy Fraser

suggests, trans nationalizing the public sphere is necessary for emancipating societies and individuals in public” (p.10).

On the other hand, for Erll (*Travelling*,2011) examining the nation-state as a social framework for remembering is perfectly acceptable. Despite the rapid globalization of our era, the nation-state remains a significant contributor to the formation of memory culture. This involvement includes organizing public commemoration events, establishing memorials, funding museums, and shaping educational priorities (p.7).

However, Kirpikli(2011) mentions that the uniform culture of the nation-state began to decrease due to WWII when decolonization and postcolonial studies became popular and formed the backbone of the transcultural turn above-mentioned. Therefore, a new paradigm in memory is established beyond nation-state boundaries likewise diasporas, subcultures, and political formations. Although the terms transcultural and transnational are being used interchangeably, they are not identical. Transcultural is associated with change and diversity facilitated by crossing borders and its impact on memory. (p.37). Therefore, memory studies have evolved into a cross-disciplinary field, bringing together historians, psychoanalysts, sociologists, philosophers, ethicists, scholars of religion, artists, art historians, writers, and literary scholars. Given this diverse collaboration, it is an opportunity to examine fundamental assumptions (Hirsch, 2008, p.108). As Erll (*Travelling*, 2011) mentions, transcultural memory appears to be a specific research approach, emphasizing the study of memory processes that occur across and beyond different cultures. Transculturality is a part of everyday life for all. To comprehend the approach, she gives the example of a “German Protestant football fan or a Buddhist Englishwoman playing jazz combine already three different memberships: national, religious, and subcultural ones, with their respective forms, contents, media, and practices of remembering” (p.10). She also emphasizes the importance of individuality in this approach by saying each of us is distinct because each of us has a unique transcultural makeup and memories in our minds

In terms of migrant populations and diasporic communities’ memories that reshape the nation's memory, for Kirpikli (2011); persons introduce disruptions that lead to new political, social, and cultural developments. Memory becomes a place of negotiation, prompting a reevaluation of historical legacies. This challenges and disrupts official histories and common narratives, offering alternative viewpoints and stories of past events. Therefore,

memory provides an opportunity to delve into one's cultural heritage and rediscover a forgotten past (p.41).

To put it briefly, this thesis targets to use memories that reveal cultural boundaries are fluid and societies interact dynamically across time and place based on the perspectives of memory scholars like Maurice Halbwachs, Wolfgang Iser, Marianne Hirsch, Jan and Aleida Assmann, Astrid Erll, and others via examining the memories of the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish community during the early 20th century in the Ottoman Empire. The analysis will span from the forced expulsion of the community from Spain to their settlement in Ottoman lands and subsequent migration to America. in the early 20th century. By doing so, the work particularly focuses on the memories portrayed in the two novels, exploring the communal and personal recollections of the two characters. The study adopts the transcultural memory approach to understand how the characters' perspectives differ significantly, despite belonging to the same community, residing in the same region, and undergoing a shared migration experience to America.

1.5. The Aim of the Study

This study aims to explore how memory is used in Shaloch Manot's *His Hundred Years* (2016) and Leon Sciaky's *Farewell to Salonica* (2003) from the lens of transcultural memory studies. Both narratives include two different Ottoman Sephardic migrant men's migration to New York at the beginning of the 20th century. Because of events like the Balkan wars, and political and socio-economic challenges in the declining Ottoman Empire before WWI, these individuals are compelled to migrate to the West. Despite facing similar circumstances, their experiences in the Ottoman Empire and America vary significantly. While the Sephardic boy works to support his family financially, Leon grew up in a culturally and materially affluent environment in the Empire. Nevertheless, living within a heterogenous empire paves the way to encounter diverse people and situations within their social environment. In simple terms, this study looks at how transculturality memory studies is applied to literary works by exploring the memories of these two men and the Ottoman Sephardic Jews. It recognizes that cultural boundaries can change, and different cultural experiences are connected to each other. It also aims to explore how cultural interactions shape memories and influence the formation of individual and collective identities across different cultural settings.

In specific, the study examines how memories of Ottoman Sephardic Jews are shaped by the interactions between Sephardic, Ottoman, and American cultures in addition to revealing how their collective memories blend, going beyond the traditional boundaries of community, culture, and nation. To put it briefly, this study aims to understand how individuals and communities develop their identities in different cultural environments, and how they change or transform each other when the Sephardic Jews migrate. Within the concept, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary field of memory studies by offering insights into the dynamic nature of memory and its role in shaping cultural narratives and identities in contemporary society.



CHAPTER 1

REPRESENTATIONS OF TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY IN SHALACH MANOT'S *HIS HUNDRED YEARS*

The novel *His Hundred Years* consists of twenty-eight short episodes without a chronological order set in Çanakkale, a countryside in the Ottoman Empire in the early 1911s and continues until the Sephardic man died in New York (NY) in 2008. It has a non-sequential chronology reflecting a loop including the Sephardic man and his family's memories. Depicted as a Sephardic Jew and an Ottoman kid trying to survive as a peddler before his arrival to America A, he finds himself in NY as a successful insurance man with a blend of memories since the Sephardic expulsion from Spain.

This chapter examines the Sephardic man's collective and personal memories from the beginning of his boyhood in Çanakkale until he died in New York via transcultural memory studies. The first episode of the novel starts with the Sephardic boy's peddling in front of the mosque down the street from his family's house. He depicts the street as "filled with dirt, a magnificent nowhere land, with nothing much to do for a man except study the Torah (the Hebrew Bible) which is the most significant thing for his father. His father is studying both Torah and selling kerosene lamps and other stuff from Austria, yet too few people can buy dishes or lamps. So, every day his father sits in front of the shop and reads the newspaper. As he is very few about how to read, he relays the news to everyone around. The news is not so bright, it is full of darkness and doubts in the wake of wars.

The Sephardic boy's mother is sewing at the same time she is praying to God with a voice of Spanish words. The boy sits down at her side and listens to her words in Ladino "Ken me va kerer a mi, ken me va kerer a mi? (Who is going to love me? Knowing that I love you, my love for you is the death of me)" (Manot, 2016, p.2). For Erll and Nünning (2011) language is a core medium in cultural memory (p. 13) and cultural memories are passed down and influenced by various forms of communication, including practices, visual signs, linguistic discourses, and other modes of expression (p. 134). Erll and Rigney (2014) contend that cultural memory is comprised of "'media' of all sorts – spoken language, letters, books, photos, films" – each of which provides "frameworks for shaping both experience and memory [...] in two, interconnected ways: as instruments for sense-making, they

mediate between the individual and the world; as agents of networking, they mediate between individuals and groups” (p.16). Since Jews’ great tradition was written in Hebrew and for their everyday communication, they used vernacular languages such as Yiddish, Ladino, or the various languages of their host countries. As a defining background for the use of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), Ladino is a blended language similar to Eastern European Yiddish for Jewish scholar Ben-Ur (2009, p. 17). Şarhon's article in the "History of Istanbul" discusses the language spoken by Jews in the Ottoman Empire, commonly referred to as a "Jewish language”.

It originated in medieval Europe and spread from the essentially west to the east. Sephardic Jews often called it "Djudezmo" or "Djudio/Djidio," meaning "Jewish language." Its distinctiveness as a "Jewish" or "Judeo" language comes from its use of religious terms mostly derived from Hebrew. Spanish terms that disagree with Jewish beliefs were corrected or replaced. Upon regularly hearing the call to prayer, Sephardic Jews incorporated the same musical modes, known as maqams, into their synagogue practices. Certainly, this exchange was not unilateral, and there were words borrowed from Judeo-Spanish into Turkish. Examples include "pandispanya" (angel cake), "kaşar/kaşer" (a type of yellow cheese), "abaşo" (lower), "boyoz" (a type of pastry), and "palavra" (lie). Those who were experts in prayer within these maqams were dubbed "bilbil," derived from the Turkish term "bülbul," meaning "nightingale. (Vol.7, n.a).

Keightley and Pickering (2017) accept that language is very important in shaping our memories of the past during our daily interactions (p. 5). Manot’s narration shows how Sephardic Jewish culture mixed with Ottoman culture for many years, influencing each other's language and traditions significantly. Therefore, language is important not only in his daily social interactions but also in his inner thoughts. The Sephardic boy speaks Ladino at home, a language mixed with Turkish words. He hears similar voices outside as well. Because he knows multiple languages, his intellectual capacity, perspective, and knowledge are influenced accordingly.

There are five hundred Jewish families in Çanakkale, and each wants their children to go to Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU) school in this town. Because the school has a positive reputation among Ottoman Sephardic who want to obtain modern training for their children. It is claimed that “AIU aims to bring reform to Jewish education in the Eastern world. Via European-formal training and independent schooling, Ottoman Jews who fall

behind the Western education can enhance their intellectual capacity likewise their French brothers in Europe” (Shaw, 2008, p. 255). The boy himself goes to a similar western school which is different from Talmud Torah school. “Talmud Torah schools were underfunded and old-fashioned schools giving religious education. However, AIU was exactly for him which is opened for impoverished Jews with its Paris-trained teachers. Those teachers were widening these people’s worlds through Western-type education” (Manot, 2016, p.3). Erll (Memory in Culture, 2011) argues that people remember things that match their group's identity and interests. They focus on similarities and continuities to show the group hasn't changed. Being part of a collective memory shows that you are part of the group (p. 17). Attending AIU or another Western school in the Ottoman Empire is like a social norm for a Jew who is modern or Westernized. It's a way of showing a sense of belonging and shared interests within the community.

From an early age, the Sephardic boy starts working as a peddler and proves that he can sell stuff and bring bread home. He is also talented at building strong connections with people, thanks to his deep roots in his homeland. Being an Ottoman Sephardic, he has lived among Muslims for a long time, making him accustomed to Ottoman culture and traditions. For instance, he knows that he can sell stuff around the mosque. Manot (2016) narrates that

After a Muslim prayer, he remembers selling many t-shirts to these men because they are cheap. Another, “the boy knows the smell of *kashkaval* [goon] cheese because when he works at the grocery that year, the owner asks him to carry a whole half wheel across the town. Yet, after the father’s runaway, the boy must continue to earn money to bring money home. So, the Sephardic boy, his mother, and his sister move to Inecik to a little hut. The Sephardic boy sells *yiminees* [headscarves] and then buys some honey to bring to his sister to make her happy. But sometime later it is hard for a boy to carry the loads of stuff. One day a donkey is looking at him and he thinks it can carry the load instead of him. The boy asks, “ne kadar [how much]? to the salesman. Then, the salesman shows the donkey’s teeth, and the two hands move the buyer’s and seller’s hands up and down like a meter. (p. 31)

To the point, Keightley and Pickering (2017) support that memories are rooted in society and its collection of signs and symbols. Memories can be examined on various scales, ranging from personal settings within families to the broader public sphere, including professions, political groups, ethnicities, regions, social classes, and nations (p. 8). The Sephardic boy knows how to speak in old Turkish and uses the same mimics and rituals as

the locals. Shaking hands up and down while doing a deal is a common scene that is still being realized in most towns in modern Turkey. It is a symbol that both sides agree with the deal and are glad about the decision.

From this point forward, Shalach Manot continues narrating the Sephardic boy's experiences in America, leaving his childhood behind with nostalgia. In New York, the boy starts remembering the times in Çanakkale and his cultural identity.

The Sephardic boy was all alone and there was no one to talk to or nothing to sell to earn money. There were no mosques, cafes, and no one selling trousers door to door. People here talking in languages he did not know, the building packed with families on each floor. He started to memorize his life in Çanakkale, the way he said goodbye to the girl he was leaving behind, singing a Greek song of farewell and longing. (Manot, 2016, p.48).

When he arrives in NY, he has to start earning money as soon as possible. He does not know what to do at first but when he hears "the balloon man spoke Greek, which the boy knew, so he could watch, and charm the details out of him, casually, admiringly. So, he blossomed like a young balloon tree uptown from the Greek, five blocks from his home" (Manot, 2016, p.48). As an explanation of this memory, Halbwachs (1992) argues that memories depend on the social frameworks created by individuals to access and recall their recollections (p.43). In New York, upon hearing Greek spoken, he is reminded of his past in Çanakkale, which makes him feel akin to the Greek man selling balloons. The Sephardic man perceives the Greek man as a neighbor from Çanakkale, leading him to believe that if the Greek man can do it, so can he. For scholars Keightley and Pickering (2017), specific memories regarding our connections with intimate individuals throughout time, combined with the environments and areas where we have a sense of belonging, offer the substance needed to build and uphold what appear to be temporarily enduring creative structures. These structures enable us to navigate various shifts, alterations, and transformations (p.159). Therefore, he remembers his homeland via hearing Greek, and he feels the intimacy and closeness with a Greek man whom he never has seen.

Soon after, when the Sephardic boy begins selling policies, he is a bit discouraged by the foreign social atmosphere of America. As a newcomer, he does not recognize anyone to talk to or sell the things he has at hand. Therefore, "he cannot make up his mind about how and where to sell policies. However, the past connection in his memory assists him. A small

church on the corner was very different from a mosque, nobody went there five times a day and it was closed and empty most of the time. If he were in Çanakkale he'd find people to sell the policy" (Manot, 2016, p.47). He is a foreigner who does not know where to begin socializing even for a small talk. Some days later, "he understood the New York City architecture of buildings, each building was packed with apartments, wash apartment was packed with families. You didn't need a mosque or a marketplace, or a countryside or a smoky café. The grid of stacked apartments and myriads of doors up and down the stairs was a grid of desire and possibility (Manot, 2016, p. 53). To clarify this memory via transcultural studies, heterogeneous phenomena work as a mixture of neuronal connections and tradition. Seen in this way, Erll (2008) claims 'memory' is an umbrella term for all those processes of biological, medial, or social nature that relate to past and present in sociocultural contexts (2008, p.1). Although he is Sephardic, he is accustomed to interacting with people of different faiths which guides him to do the same in NY. The traditions he is familiar with are rooted in an Eastern community where religion is integrated into daily life. In contrast, some churches remain empty and unused in America. In his new social environment, the boy seeks a similar sense of community. However, over time, he realizes that crowded apartments serve a similar function in America. In parallel, Maurice Halbwachs states on *mémoire collective* that, it is the memory that the connections between many single, seemingly disparate cultural phenomena become evident (Erll, 2005, V.). Through this logic, the Sephardic man creates a link between his memories and the present without any intention. To sum up, the heterogeneity of his memory helps him to resolve the problem.

Manot continues with the narrative when he feels confident about selling insurance and becomes successful as a Jew due to his talent in sales as a role model for other migrants. As a polyglot, he is becoming a celebrity in his field and a photographer comes to the office to take his pictures for the company magazine for his sales record only in a year. The photo man tells him to "look serious and purposeful but also as if you care about people". The scene depicts the difference between his identity and the American one. Because when the photographer says so, "the Sephardic man was offended because he really cared about people" (Manot, 2016, p. 58). On the other side, he is glad that the magazine man pictures him, and his family sitting around the table and sees her mother laughing out loud saying "Bre!" (Manot, 2016, p. 59). The magazine article write that this agent spoke six languages plus English and always answers his prospects in their language. In America, he sees that he

is being rewarded for his all talents, multicultural features, and hard work. Also, in America he thinks “there were many like him, and they were ready for a better life, Bre!” (Manot, 2016, p.64). In this land, he feels proud of being one of the migrants considering this mediative experience. Regarding the random wording choice, the Sephardic mother and himself use the word *Bre*, which is an exclamation still being used in the western part of modern Turkey. For Plewa et al. (2019), collective memory is shaped by ongoing mediation. It comes into being through the ongoing absorption and outward projection of the essence and manifestations of memory within social groups. Any depictions or accounts of historical events or imagery from the past conveyed through various mediums such as facial expressions, spoken word, performances, sculptures, texts, television, or the internet, hold significance in collective memory only when they are embraced by audiences, readers, listeners, users, or consumers (p.3). The Ottoman Jewish collective memory is transacted to the lands of America throughout the Sephardic man’s memories via words, attitudes, and facial expressions with the above-mentioned experiences. Mediations are inseparable aspects of an individual and their memory, connecting them to a larger memory, the collective. As a migrant, he organizes his memories and experiences in a foreign land, creating a broader understanding of a mutually nurturing life.

The Sephardic man’s deep attachment to his memories continues in the new environment after he moves to a better neighborhood. Now he is married and earning good money, the family move from Bronx Park East to Manhattan. The Bronx is filled with Jews; hence they are living among Turkish and Russian Jews where his children go to a Jewish school with great neighbors and greet Shabbats in the same synagogue together. Now in Manhattan, the conditions are so much better for both the Sephardic man and his family in material terms while “there are no synagogues, no *real* Jews (from his perspective), just intellectuals and artists. He could go to school until he was ten only. The husband and wife were fish out of water flopping on the boat flapping in the nowhere land. Where were they going, why hadn’t they stayed with the Jewish neighborhood; her wife was so terribly clever but he forgot all of that and began to look ahead and beyond his daughter Miriam to the wall” (Manot, 2016, p. 157). Regarding his memory conflict, Erll and Nünning (2008) claim memory is a matter of communication and social interaction on the social level. It is Halbwachs who shows that memory depends on and is analyzed as a foundation of our social life. It is the memory that enables us to live in groups and communities, and living in groups

and communities helps us to build a memory (p. 109). Considering the new neighborhood, he misses his old social surroundings filled with similar people and cultures. The Sephardic man and his wife feel desolate and lonely because they're separated from the Jewish community they were once part of when the family first moved in America.

In this luxury house in Manhattan, the Sephardic family has a rough discussion. As a traditional Eastern Jew from the Ottoman Empire, he orders his wife once, saying "I don't want my family seeing Dr. Wissenkraft anymore! In the pause of calm surprise, his handsome wife was staring at him in disbelief. She'd never heard anything like this from him. His bid was to get up and run from the insult of her disrespect. He'd say, 'My mother would never dream of talking to my father that way. She'd say 'Who cares? This is 1953, not the Middle Ages in Turkey'" (p. 159). Considering this memory, the Sephardic man's view of the family concept differs from his wife's. In Eastern culture, the father holds decisive authority, and family members are expected to obey his decisions without question, which contrasts with Western cultural norms. In the novel, Manot provides limited details about the Sephardic man's wife, mentioning her Jewish identity only, yet it appears from this memory that she embraces the Western concept of family. Regarding the conflict, Assmann (2011) mentions that every culture develops a connective structure that influences social and temporal aspects. This structure creates a shared foundation of experiences, expectations, and actions, fostering trust and providing orientation. This connective structure is fundamental to cultural myths and histories. Both normative (instructional) and narrative elements (storytelling) contribute to a sense of belonging and identity, allowing individuals to identify with a collective "we." This connection is established through adherence to shared laws and values, as well as the shared memory of a common past (p. 3). No matter whether the Sephardic man lives in America, his family norms and values are rooted in the East, yet he finds himself living in a context that pulls him in the opposite direction. This incongruence creates tension within his personality and disrupts his connection with his present social environment and culture. Sometimes it is hard for him to become "we" in this world because he is rooted in another culture. At times, it's challenging for him to feel a sense of belonging because his roots are deeply embedded in another culture.

The Sephardic man's need to a sense of belonging, togetherness increased when his mother died. From that point, he starts visiting the synagogue every day. He longs for a

natural sense of belonging, where he feels like a genuine part of a collective, without any sense of other factors.

It was what he needed, a group of men, who looked like him, who made a living, providers in the homes all around them, in the white shirts, the ties, the humor, the understanding. Every morning at seven, he was there, and they knew his name and he knew their story of work and women and children with Jewish father and Jewish mother. The men in minyan were there for him, just to be there with each other and to pray. They were not there to sell insurance or else. And he continued to pray Hebrew in the name of Holy one be blessed, praised, and honored. (Manot, 2016, p. 149)

The Sephardic man senses a collective belonging among fellow migrants from the eastern lands who have resettled in America. Together, he and the migrants persevere through daily challenges, working tirelessly to uphold their shared religious and cultural identity, drawing strength from their shared past experiences and common values. About these repetitive visits, Assmann (2011) claims that every day the community repeats the same pattern because all connective structures rely on repetition, ensuring that actions follow recognizable patterns, making them easily identifiable as part of a shared culture (p. 3). In addition, “the Sephardic man starts saying Kaddish every day like his father and mother do. Kaddish is a Jewish prayer, and it is nearly a thousand years old” (Manot, 2016, p.148). In doing so, he transcends his individuality and becomes part of a community that has formed over centuries. As a part of this community, familiar customs inspire confidence and prompt reflection on the past through memories. Therefore, he thinks “How did they lose their most wonderful mothers without saying Kaddish every day and how did they joke with their wives without having a daily brotherhood?” (p. 148). Those repetitions make him feel better while struggling with his mother’s loss. Regarding the ritual as a part of memory, Assmann (2011) adds that the ceremony has a fixed internal organization, and each celebration is connected to the one before it. All these festivals follow a similar order, involving repetition, much like the unending patterns on wallpaper creating a continuous connection, a ritual coherence (p. 3).

Another instance of an Ottoman Sephardic ritual depicted in the novel is the Jewish Passover. “The main focus of Passover is the commemoration of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, as described in the Book of Exodus” (Jewish Virtual Library, 2024). Before the Sephardic mother died, she intends to cook for that special day after migrating to America. Adapting to the new surroundings is quite challenging for her; she yearns for her

life in Turkey. To stay connected to her homeland, she desires to uphold the same rituals and ceremonies in America.

The Sephardic mother thought “if she was in Turkey, she would buy all the ingredients for making *bimuelos* (fried dough) or *keftes de prasa* (leek patties). In that little house, her husband ran to the market and bought just what he needed. And she’d chat in the streets with them, *Ke haber?* (how’re you doing?). Despite the sadness, she began cooking the meal that would gather the family at her home. Back in Turkey, her husband used to sing songs in Hebrew and Ladino into the night in the tiny living room made into a dining room with opened bridge tables. But now what was left? Also, she cooked *mina de karne* (savory pie) while singing the Ladino songs she used to do at home at Çanakkale. She also carefully maintained the same items from Çanakkale at her new house. She brought a linen closet because, in every place she’d lived in since Turkey, there were chests or closets with sheets and tablecloths in which they kept the vegetables. She carried all his aprons, tablecloths and pillowcases, bedspreads, washcloths, and cushion covers. (Manot, 2016, p. 167)

Regarding the link between memory and symbols, Erll and Nünning (2008) claim that memory relies on constant interaction, not just with other human memories but also with external symbols or objects like Proust's madeleine, artifacts, anniversaries, feasts, icons, symbols, or landscapes. The term "memory" in these cases is not a metaphor but a metonym, signifying a material connection between a remembering mind and a remembering object. Objects themselves don't possess memories, but they can trigger our memories because we have invested our memories into them. This applies to items like dishes, feasts, rituals, images, stories, texts, landscapes, and other places of memory. (p. 111). While cooking at home in America, the mother remembers the details of her dining room in Çanakkale and how she cooks dishes for the family on Passover. When she repeats the same action in the new house, she feels joyful and energized because she cherishes the nostalgic feeling associated with it.

As a link of memory and external symbols, Julia Philips Cohen (2014) states that a Turkish-Jewish memory narrative repeats the 1992 Quincentennial Foundation celebration, marking five centuries of friendship between Turks and Jews from the 15th century to modern Turkey. The gathering aimed to create a lasting memory of this anniversary. For that reason, a “Museum of Tolerance was formed within the Zülfaris synagogue in Istanbul (p. 133). To remember the ongoing friendship of Ottoman Jewry for centuries, a repetitive

celebration is created as a symbol. In relation, Erll and Nünning (2008) support that external symbols play a crucial role, as they help create a collective memory. Monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and similar institutions serve as reminders and contribute to what we refer to as cultural memory. It needs preservation and institutions to endure through generations, even in a disembodied form, to be reembodyed in successive sequences (p. 111). Today, thanks to digitalization; the website *zemirot.org* (Aguirre and Tinaz, 2021, p. 25) has been established as a digital archive including all the prayers of the Ottoman Jewish community, keeping the Sepharad liturgy tradition. Regarding the archive, there are sound records of Sephardic meal recipes, Ottoman Jewish family members' conversations, prayers, and music they listened to when Sephardic Jews settled in the Ottoman Empire for centuries. As a parallel effort for recollection, “the Sephardic Studies Digital Collection (SSDC) at the University of Washington” (The Sephardic Studies Digital Collection, 2024) safeguards the culture, language, and history of Sephardic Jews. It is the world's first significant digital repository containing important books, archival documents, and audio recordings related to the historically significant Sephardic Jews of the Mediterranean. The collection sheds light on their history, culture, literature, politics, customs, music, and cuisine, all expressed in their language, Ladino. “These efforts have been given by scholars, students, and donor families to uncover the Sephardic communities’ deep connection from Ottoman to America (Aguirre and Tinaz, 2021, p.18). The Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire still possess family documents, photos, and books that serve as evidence of their past lives and migration to the new land. This collection also helps future generations in America to understand their heritage as a transcultural memory archive.

As the Sephardic man grows old and becomes sixty-five, he begins hanging to his memories more than before. When he is a young adult, he thinks more about the future and dreams about achieving a good place in this new environment. Whereas as he grows older, he wants to visit Turkey once more. For Coser (1992), this is kind of a reality for old people. Older individuals actively seek to enhance their memories rather than passively waiting for them to resurface. They strive for precision by consulting fellow seniors, reviewing old documents, and sharing their recollections. While older people are generally more interested in the past than adults, it doesn't necessarily mean they can recall more memories from that time compared to when they were adults (p. 48). In the case of the Sephardic man, the past is an evoking figure throughout his life. He clings on his memories as an Ottoman Sephardic

Jew in Çanakkale. Therefore, to empower his boundary with the former land, the Sephardic man and his wife revisit Istanbul. They meet with some of the family members in Istanbul both to remember and create new memories. However, Manot writes his Sephardic aunt is offended by him and his wife for not taking care of her and her grandchildren, and she and her family are leftovers in Turkey. His grandsons and daughters are born in Istanbul, and these young people are not doing so badly regarding their socio-economic status. However, the Sephardic man sees that these people are working so hard compared to his life in New York. Clearly, he loves America, and he loves what he achieves in this land (2016, p.187). Despite the little dispute, they are all good in the end. Sephardic man offers to chant to honor each other or the prayer that the family all know. He says “You know yourself that being Jewish in Turkey was the greatest honor. You’re the most important one. You are the one person connecting us all, who connects Turkey with the United States, your parents, and your children, the very hard times of the past, and the prosperity of the future. No one is better than you, you are the Jewish heart of Turkey, and we love you very much” (Manot, 2016, 180). As Coser (1992) mentions; memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral elements; therefore, memory needs others to be sustainable (p. 34). To cherish his memories, he visits his homeland, where he discovers that relatives still reside and continue to live their lives. This experience evokes a sense of enchantment, a nostalgia that persists despite the geographic distance. He comes to recognize that his memories of meeting relatives in his homeland, even decades later, reflect his inner truth and core identity. Despite residing in America for an extended period, the Sephardic man remains an integral part of the Ottoman Jewish community. He reinforces his culture and identity by actively engaging in the creation of new memories in his everyday life.

The Sephardic man is a polyglot and a Jew who has been traveling from Spain to America for centuries, waiting to meet with new people to share his memories and ideas with others. At his age of retirement, he has lots of friends and relatives all over the world, he can contact many different cultures worldwide. “He becomes a finder after his retirement, and he is interested in international loans after decades of work in sales. One day he was flying to London to find millions of dollars in loans for a leader in Africa. During the flight, he sat next to a little boy and shared all his memories and ancient narratives with him like he was an adult” (Manot, 2016, p. 105). He puts himself in this little boy’s shoes and remembers his childhood days, how he is an uneducated boy but became a self-made rich

man. “A boy! The future ahead of him. Donkeys and subways, a wife and commissions, awards, and children’s spouses!” (p. 107). After the Sephardic man and the boy break the ice, the Sephardic man begins asking whether he heard Turkey and starts sharing his childhood memories about how he used to eat halvah as a boy in Çanakkale. Next, he begins talking about his memories, the Sephardic evacuation from Spain to Ottoman. He is sharing all his memories in excitement as if he is in a movie (p.109). Then, he asks the boy “What would you think if your family and their people had been living somewhere for a thousand years and were suddenly told they had to leave? They and all their friends and relatives had ninety days to pack up and leave everything behind, everything they owned” (Manot, 2016, p. 119). The Sephardic man concludes this historical drama with a happy ending after all and said “ah, but across a great sea was a country named Turkey. The sultan heard about these fine players. Do you know what a sultan is?” (Manot,2016, p. 119). Then, “the little boy lifted eyebrows with boredom due to these stories and names he had not ever heard. Yet he asked if the sultan was about the book about the genie in the lamp; he might be with a big stomach and a big belt. The Sephardic man corrected the boy by defining a sultan who wears a big white turban on his head, drinks strong coffee, and sits on the throne” (Manot, 2016, p. 120). The Sephardic man and the black little boy are on a plane to London for different reasons, talking about centuries of history as if the two are close friends or peers. Despite the boy next to him being just a little child, he continues to talk about his memories before WWI in Turkey. Soon, he begins talking about how he collects money to buy a British ship for the Ottoman navy back in Çanakkale. He starts with, “We all collected every penny we had-even children. Britain said they needed the ship for themselves. All Turkish sailors were lined up in a big parade on the shore in England ready for delivery of that ship. The British changed their minds and said Turkey couldn’t have the ship because they needed it themselves- they weren’t going to be on the same team with the Turks on the war” (Manot, 2016, p. 121). Indeed, this is a true historical event that happened before WWI.

According to Batmaz (2010), before WWI, the only hope of Turkey was to join the navy of two armored ships named Reşadiye and Sultan Osman, which were ordered to England in 1911 (p. 268). In 1914, two ship crews were dispatched to take delivery of the Sultan Osman and Reşadiye ships, which were scheduled to be completed that year, and bring them to the country. The crew, assigned for this purpose, set sail to Britain on the Resid Pasha steamer. The Sultan Osman ship was supposed to be delivered on July 21, 1914, just one day after the

final installment was paid. However, the British government declared that no ships under construction in England, regardless of the country they belonged to, could be taken away from its shores. Despite all efforts, the armored ships could not be obtained from England. Although the full payment for Sultan Osman and a significant portion for Reşadiye were made, these funds were not returned, citing them as compensation for the expenses incurred during World War I (p.144)

According to Republic of Turkey General Staff Gallipoli Naval Battle data by Thomazi and Işık (1997) even the widowed women participated in this campaign by cutting expenses from their children's food, and young girls joined by selling their hair (p. 3). During this event, the Sephardic man is in Çanakkale and despite being a child he helps the navy to fund the ships as a part of the Empire. As an explanation, Dorr et al. (2019) claim that

Memory is fundamentally mediated, occurring through the processes of creation, transmission, and reception. Memory media, spanning from oral traditions to digital platforms, allow content to move. This content originates, travels through, and arrives at specific locations and times. The forms used to encode content, such as speech genres or print formats, also travel through physical movement, duplication, or derivation, happening in specific times and places. Furthermore, the contexts of memory production and reception vary in different institutional settings and within intellectual and cultural traditions. The interactions between content, form, and context lead to new encounters, relations, and exchanges in specific locations, influencing both the producers and recipients of memories and inspiring new travels. (p. 2)

Once he begin sharing memories, he cannot stop remembering other historical elements from his past. In a plane, he remembers his boyhood and the content of his memories related to his social environment in Ottoman in that specific time and place, that is filled with hardships. Once a person begins sharing memories, those memories travel and are transmitted to a foreign boy in a foreign land.

Continuing the above-mentioned memory, he narrates how the Turkish sailors on one side and a thousand on the other side, wait for the steamships to be delivered to the shores of Britain. The boy asks him innocently about the reason for his going to London. The Sephardic man replies with a solution saying that “they changed their mind again and realized the Turkish people were very fine, and the Turks forgave them, and we forgave them, and now we’re all friends” (Manot, 2016, p. 121). Considering how memory travels,

Erll (*Travelling*, 2011) mentions that memory is not limited to a specific place, region, social group, religious community, or nation from the perspective of transcultural memory studies. Instead, it is constantly moving across and beyond territorial and social boundaries (p. 10). On a travel, a historical event which is also Sephardic man's memory is now shared with someone dramatically foreign to this memory's geography and time. Although the boy and the man are strangers, they are both interested in each other, and a relationship is built between the two. Welsch (1999) also agrees by saying that the concept of transculturality shifts our focus from differences between our own culture and others to paying attention to commonalities and connections whenever we come across foreign things (p. 7). Considering the experience and the data above, "traveling is a fundamental factor in the process of remembering. The act of mediated memory travels, known as remediations, is essential for memories to endure. "Memory is dynamic, much like people who carry memories. They can move, travel, migrate, and share their stories with others. Similarly, remembered content often spread across different places and groups rather than remaining confined to a single location or audience". (Dorr et al., 2019, p. 1). In short, memory travels and it is dynamic from the perspective of transcultural memory studies. On a plane to London, the boy and the man talk about historical and cultural events from different countries and cultures. Memory cannot hide itself since it is carried out through socialization ultimately. When the Sephardic man travels, his memory travels with him as well.

After the Sephardic man's flight with the boy, he meets with the boy's father who is a famous medic in London. The Sephardic man's family become friends with the medic's family and together they travel to Uganda for a trip. The Sephardic man is so proud to travel with this successful doctor as an uneducated, self-made man from Turkey. The Sephardic man remembers the visit as such;

They traveled in a world as different from Turkey as Turkey was from the U.S. The doctor planned a whole week in Uganda. It was one of the countries Theodore Roosevelt went to after he was President. People had crossed the world to see these animals. There was money in these animals. While traveling among the animals, a hippo was standing near the veranda, gazing at them with all of that animal directness that he had known as a boy as he plumbed the depth of his donkey's soul by looking into his eyes. (Manot, 2016, p. 115)

Based on the quotation from the novel above, the memories of the Sephardic man are intertwined with the Jewishness, Ottoman Empire, and America His identity is the

combination of those three cultures. In parallel with the Sephardic man's several identities and memory, Welsch (1999) claims that working on identity increasingly involves integrating components from different cultural origins. Only the ability to cross over transcultural will ensure our identity and competence in the long run. In summary, cultural factors today, from society's broader perspective to individuals' levels, have become transcultural. The old concept of culture misrepresents the true form of cultures, the nature of their relationships, and even the structure of individuals' identities and lifestyles. Any concept of culture meant to be relevant to today's reality must acknowledge the transcultural nature of the context (p. 6). To sum up, remembering his donkey in Çanakkale when he sees a hippo in Africa, and Roosevelt's Uganda trip as a president symbolize how an individual's memory has lots of faces, and variations affecting each other without boundaries. In the context of diasporas, exiles, or migrations, an individual and their ancestors can not exclusively belong to a single culture and identity. Therefore, according to Welsch (1999) "transculturality is in no way completely new historically" (p. 9) and in his same article Welsch wants the reader to imagine the line of ancestry from the birth of Christ by taking a description from Carl Zuckmayer's description in the novel *The Devil's General* (1963) below;

Roman commander, a dark type, brown like a ripe olive, had taught a blond girl Latin. And then a Jewish spice dealer came into the family, he was a serious person, who became a Christian before his marriage and founded the house's Catholic tradition. – And then came a Greek doctor, or a Celtic legionary, a Grisonian Landsknecht, a Swedish horseman, a Napoleonic soldier, a deserted Cossack, a Black Forest miner, a wandering miller's boy from the Alsace, a fat mariner from Holland, a Magyar, a pandour, a Viennese officer, a French actor, a Bohemian musician - all lived on the Rhine, brawled, boozed, and sang and begot children there - and - Goethe, he was from the same pot, and Beethoven, and Gutenberg, and Mathias Grünewald, and - oh, whatever - just look in the encyclopedia. They were the best, my dear! The world's best! And why? Because that's where the people intermixed. (Welsch, p. 9)

To the point, the more identities are fluid and dynamic the more transcultural are the memories. There are no boundaries among cultures, people, and memories. The Sephardic man belongs to an intermixed culture from Spain to the Ottoman and then to America which

means that his memories are beyond a single description. Neither his memories nor his culture is descriptive, yet both are active and in transition.

As a multicultural man from Ottoman, he can contact Turks and other minorities comfortably from the Ottoman Empire in America. One night at a dinner, his family members talk about how he achieves doing business with Turks. “He took them around, he sat and talked with people. He knew how from Turkey. The Sephardic man continued; “it is like you have all day; I’d get to sale but first you need to recognize people for what were they trying for in life-- if you rushed you didn’t catch them where you wanted them. He used to play backgammon with his customers, everyone at the table knew this; people come from all over South America to play with this master of *shesh besh*, his cigarette dangling from his mouth in his back room” (Manot, 2016, p .76). After they get acquainted with each other, he can make them customers or prospects to work for his team because they share a common land, culture and an invisible bond that remains among Ottoman migrants.

In Tinaz and Mandujano's (2021) research collection of Ottoman Sephardic history, Devin Naar writes that the Ottoman Sephardic Jews were ultimately identified with the Ottoman Empire; they named themselves *Turkino* (in Ladino) when they arrive in America. The word is found by Sephardic Jews in the late Ottoman depicting their equal citizen status and commitment to Empire. The Ladino newspapers released in America at the beginning of the 20th century used the word *Turkino* to indicate Ottoman Jews. In the same article, for Naar, this word is an important symbol of loyalty to the Empire rather than the nationalist citizenship form of modern Turkey. Another example is when Sultan Abdulmecid visited Salonica in 1859, a Sephardic Jew composes a song in his honor and named the day a Bayram (feast) for all Turkinos (p. 42). Regarding this commitment, in America, “the advertisements for businesses published in Ladino newspapers have further strengthened the sense of connection among Turkinos. In some advertisements, symbols like the star and crescent next to the American flag or the image of the sultan were occasionally featured. Job announcements included positions for someone to work in a Turkino restaurant or a maid for a Turkino family” (p. 46). In parallel with this ongoing commitment from Ottoman to America, Assmann (2011) expresses that;

Collective memory relies on those who carry it and cannot be randomly transmitted. Sharing it indicates membership in a group, tying it not only to time and place but also to a specific

identity. In simpler terms, it is exclusively linked to the perspective of a real, living community. The temporal and spatial aspects, along with various forms of communication within the group, operate in an existential context filled with ideas, emotions, and values. Together, these factors contribute to a meaningful history of home and life that holds significance for the group's image and goals (p. 25).

Although the Turkino community has a common memory and on-going history in America Naar (2021) articulates that “when the Ottoman Empire and America became opposing countries during WWI, Ottoman Sephardic Jews could not continue depicting themselves as Turkish Jews or *Turkino* as they were afraid of being stigmatized as an enemy community in this new land” (p. 54). Regarding this shift, Assmann (2011) claims that when a group realizes a major change, it stops being a group and allows room for a new arrangement. However, because every group aims for lasting stability, it often resists change and sees history as a constant continuation without much alteration (p. 26). At this point, the Ottoman Sephardic Jews must adapt and survive in this new land with peace and harmony especially in a war environment while keeping their cultural memories alive in silence.

Regarding this alteration above mentioned, “Hall, Clifford, and the Boyarins agree upon the understanding of diaspora societies as open cultural formations that blend or mix the specific and local culture of the host society with cultural traces from the original homeland, thereby forming a hybrid or transnational identity. This insight is much under Astrid Erll’s concept of transculturality understood as “mnemonic processes unfolding across and beyond cultures” (Ortner, 2015, p.3). Within the concept of transculturality, The Ottoman Sephardic adapt to the customs and needs of the host country but maintain their own identity and cultural heritage without abandoning it.

On a Jewish Shabbat Saturday, the whole family is ready to gather for prayers in the synagogue on 2nd Avenue. As the Sephardic man is coming to the end of his life, he finds himself reflecting on the many experiences that have shaped him. Memories flood his mind, each one carrying a piece of his identity. He recalls the warmth of family gatherings and the melodies of his ancestors' songs. But now, the Sephardic man is with “a wheelchair, his wife and two helpers. This time, the Sephardic man’s daughter drives him to the synagogue which he has always visited on his own every day until the illness. In the synagogue, he cannot even recognize his family members except his wife and her daughter. There are few things

he can remember now. His grandson opens the prayer book, and despite his forgetfulness, the Sephardic man is so fluent and successful at singing the prayers in Hebrew. The Shabbat prayers make him recognize who he is” (Manot, 2016, p. 44). According to Halbwach “only collective psychology is able to show how motives, aspirations, emotional states, and reflective sensations are connected to collective representations stored in the memory, which is the focal point of the higher faculties of the mind (Erll and Nünning, 2008, p. 141). Despite his illness, his collective identity makes him feel at home. His memories during Shabbat saturday and the atmosphere trigger his core identity and remind him who he is actually;

He had grown up in Turkey and learned as a boy to read Hebrew at a strong pace, singing out the prayer at a clip. So, he himself knew who he was and that was the most important part for him, what was not to be missed in life. Nothing mattered more than that, not that he was a hundred years old and one hundred percent dependent on his wife and helpers, or it was Shabbat with candles. (Manot,2016, p. 44)

In parallel, scholar Ron Eyerman (2019) mentions that memory gives people and groups a mental map, guiding them in understanding who they are, why they exist, and where they are headed. Memory plays a crucial role in both individual and collective identity. It orients a group providing the temporal and cognitive map (p. 24). Hence, the memories of the Sephardic man, his mental map and identity have been influenced by the formation of Jewish heritage and his upbringing in the Empire.

The Sephardic man never leaves New York after arriving in America , in parallel his community have experienced a significant growth in the same era. For Sephardic scholar Ben-Ur (2009) Ottoman Sephardic migrants’ community grew to be the largest, most diverse, and most influential by the 1910s. For him, “the city drew in intellectual elites from the Jewish community of the former Ottoman Empire. It attracted Sephardic migrants from both rural and urban places. Upward mobility began to settle in the outskirts of the city by the 1920s” (p. 36). As New York was a center for the community, many migrants want to take the chance to be rich, “a Sephardic newspaper *La Amerika* which was published in New York and addressed the immigrants writing that America was the land of dollars, offering unlimited opportunities” (Bali, 2013, p. 92). Therefore, the Ottoman Sephardic community found the opportunity to unify and nourish their culture and collective memory in New York while getting rich as well. Regarding the importance of Ottoman Sephardic unification in

America, Eyerman (2019) agrees that collective memory brings people together by offering a shared story that spans time and space. This story places individuals and their life stories within it. Since it can be told and written down, it can move around as people do. It can be expressed through various mediums like writing, art, and communication, allowing individuals in different locations to connect culturally, even if they're physically distant from the collective group (p. 45).

As the writer of the novel, Mushabac identifies herself as a member of the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish community who migrated at the beginning of the 20th century to America, New York where she shares her memories and identity with the readers (bookculture.com, 2016). For Marianne Hirsch (2008), the individual's memories are intermingled with an inter-subjective symbolic system of language. After sharing a memory with a person, it is no longer purely exclusive and unalienable property anymore. They can be exchanged, shared, corroborated, confirmed, corrected, disputed, and written down (p. 110). Considering the novel and memories within, memory do not belong to the writer only, they belong to the reader after it is published. Readers from different cultures and countries are able to empathize with Manot upon the Sephardic man's identity and his memories. To sum up, her writings are transferred from one to another and have the potential to be trans-cultured via the readers' perspective. As Hirsch (2008) also points out, post-memory can endure beyond the lifetimes of all participants and their descendants. The rise of memory culture might indicate a desire to belong to a shared collective framework shaped by the common legacy of various traumatic histories. (p. 111).

In conclusion, this novel is a pack of memories about the centuries of Sephardic Jewish diasporic experience between Spain-Ottoman- America and how it is reflected in the Sephardic man and Ottoman Sephardic collective memory. To put it briefly, it is the transcultural memory studies that indicate the memories are not gone forever but rather they travel regardless of time and place dynamically individual and the collective.

CHAPTER 2

REPRESENTATIONS OF TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY IN LEON SCIACKY'S *FAREWELL TO SALONICA*

The memoir *Farewell to Salonica, City at the Crossroads* by Leon Sciaky begins in 1893 from Leon's childhood when Leon Sciaky was a boy in Salonica. The novel was first published in 1946 by Leon's son, Peter Sciaky soon after Leon died in Mexico. By 1893, half of Salonica was filled with merchants and bankers working to enhance the overland and overseas trade. According to Sciaky's memoir, the Jews are fully integrated into city life. The publisher of the novel writes that "the peaceful diversity was partly because the city was on the outskirts of the declining Ottoman Empire and due to the empire's relatively tolerant attitudes towards its minority residents, whether Jewish or not". Yet, due to several reasons mentioned above in this thesis, "twenty-three-year-old Leon and his family left Salonica in 1915 to form a more stable business environment in New York" (Sciaky, 2003, p.11). In addition, the publisher also adds that Leon vividly portrays a captivating world where people from various religious and ethnic backgrounds come together, sharing their common concerns and aspirations (Sciaky, 2003, p. 12). Therefore, Leon's memories are shaped according to this atmosphere of centuries when Sephardic Jews arrive from Spain and migrate to America at the end. Sciaky family has positive memories regarding Salonica and the Ottoman Empire as Sephardic Jews, they are socially integrated into the Empire which is depicted in the whole memoir. Thus, these memories shape their attitudes toward the American system and society. Briefly, this chapter will examine Leon's memories from the late 19th and 20th centuries in the Empire and how Sciakys are integrated into his new life in America. In addition, it will analyze how he is connected to Ottoman Sephardic memories and his identity through the lens of transcultural memory studies.

The memoir begins at Sciaky's house as Leon overlooks the neighborhood at sunset waiting for the dinner to be set in the *verandado* [veranda] of the house. The streets are full of shadows, the storekeepers lit their kerosene lamps. Someone inside is singing in Ladino "Decild'a la morena que lla me v air, la nave lla' sta'n vela y lla va partir [tell my dark-haired one that I'm going, the ship has set sail and is leaving]". One of the family maids but more like a sister Buena approached Leon, bending down, and hugging him affectionately by

saying “Haide [let’s go], my jewel! Aman, come quickly, you look a boy of the streets, come before he would feel bad to see his son like this!” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 21). The family is a representation of multicultures living as Ottoman Sephardic Jews in a typical Ottoman house speaking several languages in their daily lives. For Erl (2011), memory is constantly moving and changing across time and space, through different carriers, media, content, forms, and practices, crossing social, linguistic, and political boundaries. To sum up, transculturality is a common part of everyone's daily life, especially for people of 'multiple memberships' based on intercultural communication studies. (*Travelling*, p. 11). Therefore, Sciakys' multiple-membered lifestyles reflect a microcosm of broader cultural and historical shifts, reflecting how memory evolves across various dimensions such as time, space, language, and social context where diverse influences intersect and shape their experiences daily. Also, Diane Matza (1987) comments on the deep connection between Sciakys and Salonica as, the city where five generations of his family had prospered as successful merchants and respected community members. Unlike many Jews in Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, the Sciaky family didn't face poverty, persecution, or limited opportunities. Instead, they actively participated in economic, social, and political interactions with their Jewish, Muslim, and Christian neighbors (p. 33).

The memoir continues with the hours following the evening meal when the veranda becomes the heart of the house as Grandfather Nono, seated in his corner of the *divan*, forms the center of the family gathering.

When the table cleared, Sarica the other maid sister would bring in the large tray with the little cups of Turkish coffee and serve it by reverencing ‘This is yours, Chilibi [Çelebi], it is sweet as you like it’ she would say to Grandfather. Bits of news and gossip would be exchanged so and so was betrothed, and so-and-so was to be married between the announcer and the family members. Nono would recount the details of his trip to the hinterland, he had met this Bey [sir] and that. He had spoken to the peasants about the harvest. Maşallah! Wheat is plentiful in Avret Hisar this year. (Sciaky, 2003, p. 26)

According to Welsch’s (1999) idea, transculturality seeks a broad and inclusive understanding of culture, rather than a narrow and exclusive one. It envisions a culture and society that thrives on connections and adaptability, rather than boundaries. When encountering different cultures, there are not only differences but also opportunities to connect. By fostering these connections, even previously isolated elements can become part

of a shared cultural experience (p.7). Regarding the argument, the Sciaky family's integration into the Ottoman Empire is a decision of adaptation rather than isolation; although they could have chosen to separate themselves from the rest of the population, they opt-in for inclusivity instead. Surely, social inclusion is complete due to Sciaky's socio-economic reasons as well, as Diana Matza (1987) argued in the above paragraph. Not just the Sciaky family, but a larger group, adapt to Salonica and Ottoman culture as Ottoman Sephardic. The famous historian Stanford Shaw mentions that as a Portuguese Jewish poet Samuel Usque portrayed Salonica as a haven for Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and faced persecution in the 16th century (2008, p .153)

It is the mother of Israel which has grown stronger on the foundations of the religion, which yields excellent plants and fruit trees, unequaled the world over. Its fruits are delicious because watered by rivers, Jews of other countries, persecuted and banished, have come to seek refuge there, and this town has received them with love and cordiality as if it were our revered mother Jerusalem (Benbassa and Rodrigue, 2000, p. 8)

Shaw (2008) continues that; due to its high population, Salonica was named as the "little Jerusalem" by Sephardic inhabitants. Before arriving in Jerusalem, Salonica had only been a stop as the Sephardic saw it was a calm, safe, and remote place away from crowded cities likewise Istanbul. Their migration to the city brought positive science to the Empire with its Spanish intellectual class. (p. 154). Sciaky's are one of the wealthy and intellectual families in Salonica as Ottoman Sephardic. Their adaptation to Ottoman culture is complete due to their long history and powerful bonds with the Empire. The contact between Ottoman and Sephardic Jewish culture can be understood from Wittgenstein's view (Welsch, 1999) as the culture is inherently flexible and can connect with new ideas and integrate them. Therefore, a cultural concept influenced by Wittgenstein's ideas appears well-suited for today's ever-changing conditions. On the transcultural level, there is a significant amount of cultural diversity once more, which is not less than what was observed among traditional single cultures (p. 9). To put it briefly, transculturality is a constantly evolving practice that provides richness in culture. Clues to a transcultural society are not only found in today's cultures but in the 20th-century Salonica.

Leon also agrees with Shaw's historical data by mentioning that the Jewish population in Turkey mainly lives in cities, with Salonica being the largest Jewish center. "Jews have a long history in the region, with some settling in Thessaly [Salonica] during

Alexander the Great's time" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 176). When Sephardic Jews arrived at the city, Salonica became a Spanish city as well. Leon (2003) mentions that in the narrow streets near the sea wall, the diverse dialects and accents of the Iberian Peninsula could be heard. Catalan, Valencian, Galician, Portuguese, Castilian, Andalusian, and Aragonese speakers grouped themselves by province, each having its own president and synagogue named after their beloved city or district of origin. Senor Angel Pulido, a Spanish senator visiting Turkey in 1904, was pleasantly surprised to find that he could freely converse in his mother tongue and feel at home among the descendants of people his ancestors had interacted with, despite their history of brutality (Sciaky, 2003, p. 179). To sum up, many Ottoman Sephardic Jews carry loads of memory as a part of their identity even today. According to Aleida Assmann (2006), since the memory boom of the 1990s, there has been a widespread interest in reclaiming the past as an essential part of the present. This involves reevaluating and reassessing the past within individual biographies and in the context of broader historical perspectives. In addition, this trend serves as a storage for group affiliations, loyalties, and identity in a time where individualism is less emphasized. Therefore, collective memory is mediated, while cultural memory is intended for long-term transmission across generations (p. 56). After the arrival of Sephardic Jews, Salonica is changed for good in which its traces can be followed regarding memory studies. With the rising interest in memory, understanding Ottoman Sephardic historical stories in cultural and social contexts via transcultural memory studies can reveal the complexity of individual and social levels.

Leon's vivid memories of his life in Salonica are mirrored in his family dynamics and their societal surroundings. He narrates that sometimes his Grandfather Nono would come home and announce that in a few days that, "we were to have guests for dinner: Turks from the hinterland. There would be Hussein Agha of Seslovo, Sami Effendi, the merchant from Kılıkış, and Hadji Ibrahim. It had been a good meal, Allah be praised. Mehmed's boy came with a portion of baklava for the Albanian in the corner. *Bakalim* [let's see], he called the boy, let me see! Hadji Ibrahim asked sometimes "Ajaba [perhaps] I ate a bit too much?" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 35). Sciaky's house is a symbol of multiculturalism, a place where several cultures get together in their house regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. Leon (2003) adds the scholarly headmaster of one of the Schools of Alliance, Han David Botton was welcomed on winter evenings, directly after supper, and as coffee was served, he would set himself in one corner of the divan. For the benefit of Nono and Grandmother who knew

no French, he was translating *Les Misérables* into Spanish” (Sciaky, p. 38). Regarding those memories, there is a huge trans-culturalization in the atmosphere as Leon remembers. Understanding these dynamics is vital for recognizing how memories travel in today's global era. As Andreas Huyssen (Bond and Rapson, 2014) asserts, as we enter the twenty-first century, our conception of the past is shifting towards a borderless memory rather than being confined to national history. Modernity has indeed compressed time and space, but it has also broadened our perspectives beyond local, national, and even international boundaries (p.16). In today's transcultural memory studies, having a culturally diverse life like in Salonica is common which goes beyond the limitations of nations or ethnic groups.

Moreover, Leon remembers when the novel *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo is being read at home. The pitiful figure of Jean Valjean and Javert pursuing his victim with the relentlessness of a friend would invade their serene living room and bring with them a world fantastic and unreal. These characters are members of another world and culture for Sciakys therefore they feel foreign and weird regarding the French narrative. Leon's Grandmother Nona Plata would comment “and all this because he stole a loaf of bread for starving children wiping her eyes. Bienvenida would say while Sarica squatting in a corner would heatedly assert that they had *corazones de Nemsis*, hearts of Germans” (Sciaky, 2003, p.29). Leon adds that “the 19th century is about to be over, and The West was slowly infiltrating, attempting to attract the East with its wonders. But vaguely we sensed the coldness of her glitter and the price of her wooing. With uneasiness we gathered tighter the folds of our homespun mantles around our shoulders, enjoying their softness and warmth and finding them good” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 39). In socio-political terms, the 19th century was the time when Westernization was on the rise while the Ottoman Empire was declining. The West was mesmerizing Easterners with its science and inventions as Leon had realized. Matza (1987) also comments about Leon's wording choice while depicting this scene of change, the words in the memoir "drawing to a close," "stealthily," "vaguely," and "with uneasy- ness" signal the imminent end of this world and hint at the extreme disruption soon to follow. This brief vision of the threatening aspect of the outside world's encroachment on the inside world” (p. 38). Leon is aware that his world is about to change as his elders feel that way likewise. His multicultural, colorful, and rich eastern city is about to disperse and something foreign is coming due to the Western flow.

As time moves forward the 19th century nationalist ideas are on the rise. The Empire is collapsing, and his world will vanish. Still, Sciakys live in the transculturality of Salonica. The city's transcultural perspective can be argued by Welsh (1999) as

There is a significant diversity of cultures comparable to what existed among traditional single cultures. However, now these differences don't arise from clearly separated cultures side by side, like in a mosaic. Instead, they emerge between transcultural networks, which share some similarities but differ in others, displaying both overlaps and distinctions simultaneously. The process of differentiation has become more intricate, but it has also become genuinely cultural for the first time, no longer constrained by geographical or national boundaries but following pure cultural exchange processes. Additionally, these transcultural networks are more interconnected than old cultural identities. They include segments found in other networks, serving as points of connection between different transcultural forms. Thus, this new form of differentiation promotes coexistence rather than conflict. (p.10)

In parallel with the argument, Leon remembers a Ramadan in Salonica, "listening to muezzin on the top of the minaret in a Ramadan day and how there was a momentary hush in the crowd. He depicted one evening in the month of fasting. 'I had played in the garden all day; I lay prone on the divan in our *shainishin* [sachnisi] observing the unusual activity in the street below. I could hear Nono's voice in the *verandado* [veranda]. He was saying 'there is no business during Ramadan; the Turks are fasting this month, and you can't deal with them!'. The hubbub in our neighborhood was great. Large platters of pastries, baklavas, and kadaifis, were neatly arranged on the boards with multicolored papers against a background of *locoum* [locum] boxes stacked in high pyramids. The cries of vendors were heard 'Come, come! Baklava melt in your mouth, for shame for shame!'" (2003, p. 80). As a Sephardic Jew of Turkey, Şarhon (2015) remembers how the cultures intermingled with each other as Leon regarding this memory;

Every day, the Sephardim, who heard the call to prayer, began to use the same modes in their synagogues. Those who recited the prayers best with these modes were also called "bülbul" [nightingale] in Turkish. Sephardim also shared superstitious beliefs with Muslim Turks and other communities. They visited the tombs of sanctified figures like "Telli Baba" just like members of other religions. All these changes, influences, and borrowings continued for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, where there was no language pressure (p. 125)

Accordingly, Erll mentions in *Memory and Culture* (2011) that “the broad scope of ‘cultural memory’ allows us to observe the various relationships between phenomena that were once seen as separate. This includes connections between tradition and canon, monuments and historical awareness, family communication, and neuronal circuits” (p. 99). Unlike more specific concepts, the concept of cultural memory provides an interdisciplinary perspective, creating a space for understanding these relationships” (2011, p.99). Therefore, these relationships pave the way for the transculturality and transition of memories. More specifically, “there are two ways to describe and study memory within culture: the individual's cultural memory and the cultural memory of social groups and societies. Both aspects cannot be viewed separately because collective memory, which involves cognitive and social levels, can only be understood through their interaction with each other” (2011, p. 101). To sum up, both Leon's personal and the Ottoman Sephardic community's memories about Salonica should be handled together to reach a correct observation from the perspective of memory studies.

At the end of the 19th century, Salonica's vibrant transcultural soul is in decline due to several reasons. Leon (2003) explains that ignorance and superstitions grew among Jews in Salonica; the schools, and academies of progressivism since Spain, declined and finally closed due to political and economic conditions of the time (Sciaky, 2003, p. 190). The decline of the Jewish communities in Salonica lead to poverty and ignorance among the population, and it seems unlikely that they would be able to recover. From this point forward, Leon starts to get bored with a traditional Jewish school. He becomes curious about the exciting world outside. Considering the situation, Leon's parents decide that he should move on to his education at a foreign and modern school. So, Leon continues his education in Le Petit Lycee Français involving the heterogeneous population of Salonica. About Leon's changing school, Matza (1987) claims that Leon's father Salomon quickly encourages the change by studying French and Turkish himself and enrolling his son in a school where he will also learn these languages as well (p. 36). Therefore, Sciakys believe both Leon and Ottoman Sephardic need to “maintain a Western-type education to move on with the changes of the new world. In his class, there were three French boys, one Greek, four Sephardic Jews, a Serb, a Mamin, an Armenian, a Turk and a Montenegrin boy. They spoke fluent French and they were seen as equals by the teachers; the informality made him more confident than before” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 193). Shaw (2008) gives a background information

about the French schools in the Empire, saying that the Jews in France had aided the Ottoman Jews to enhance their socio-economic conditions by opening Western-ideologized schools in which they would become a French type of modern Jews. Especially, *Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU)* has become the savior of Ottoman Jews (p. 254). Leon's school Lycee Francais is one of the saviors as well. In the memoir, Leon also comments about how "AIU reawakened the Spanish Jews and afforded the link with the outside world; it extended a friendly hand which we gratefully grasped to lift ourselves out of the isolation which we no longer were content to remain" (2003, p. 159). For Leon this new school includes valuable and visionary teachers from France, he says "teachers were men of competence and vision, men who fervently believed in the ability of the individual, whether religious or agnostic, and irrespective of his nationality, to achieve through a sincere search for truth and understanding" (2003, p. 160). In parallel with the reforming ideas of these French based schools, Devin Naar also (2015) agrees that the AIU as the Paris-based organization that operated a network of Jewish schools throughout the Levant, for support to facilitate 'expatriation' to America to improve their financial situations (p. 185). After years of migration, AIU membership become common identity of Levanter and Eastern Jews in the Western countries. Leon's journey shows how he has moved from traditional Jewish schooling to a more diverse education at his new school. The school become a fascinating place for Leon. Matza (1987) understands Leon by mentioning his curiosity that will lead him to thirst for learning; his sensitivity will make him search for explanations of the conflicts increasing around him (p.38). Leon is a curious boy growing up in a multicultural and intellectual environment like a Westerner unlike a Turkish Ottoman in Salonica now. Yet, "Jews who had been educated in AIU schools in Greece or other countries often passed as non-Jewish upon immigration to the United States" (Ben-Ur, 2009, p. 34). Considering Leon's ironic condition in the eyes of East and West, Welsch comments; the transculturality concept has an advantage over other concepts because it explains both uniformization and intermixing processes, as well as the emergence of new diversity, simultaneously and using the same approach (1999, p 10). Transcultural networks are in contact with more than one identity; therefore, one can own more than one identity. It becomes obvious that Leon does own more than one identity. He can intermix the East and West based on his family's Sephardic memory, cultural adaptation in the Empire, and high intellectual capacity. He has become a progressive and global person filled with various identities now. He is both part of

the East and West, yet his memories are in diffusion. Welsch (1999) adds that globalization is a concept of uniformization (preferably following the Western model). Yet, this view can at best present half the picture, and it is hard to ignore complementary resurgence particularisms worldwide. Particularism also cannot be ignored. Therefore, transculturality covers both global and local, universalistic, and particularistic aspects naturally. The tendencies of globalization and particularization can be fulfilled with transculturality (1999, p. 11). Transculturality is a helpful way to understand how cultures interact and change. It shows how cultures are connected while keeping their unique features. In a world influenced by globalization and particularization, transculturality helps us see how cultures mix and adapt. So, Leon's memories above mentioned show the change in his identity due to his modern formal education.

Leon and his parents first traveled to NY when Salomon decided to America to set up a branch office. Although Leon does not mention it in his memoir, in his article Devin Naar (2007) writes that before Salomon immigrated to the United States, he served in Salonica as the regional distributor for an American boot company (p. 458). Salomon (Sciaky, 2003) believed that conditions would improve in Turkey eventually, and he wanted to be ready for that day. Nono was behind him whereas other family members were astonished and afraid of the trip that would last three weeks (p. 237). Leon's first memories and ideas about America are created in these days. In NY, Leon misses going home to be with his best friend Shukri so that he can discuss the latest events in Salonica. He feels uprooted and lonesome in this big city. While Sciakys' were in NY, "Young Turks desired an end to the Hamidian regime and reforms which would give a voice to all nationalities. An ultimatum was sent to the sultan from Salonica, it demanded the restoration of the Constitution of 1876. The exciting news reach Sciakys, and they rejoiced wildly, happy at the thought that Turkey would take its deserved place alongside the democracies of Europe" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 254). Leon remembers how he needs to talk with his friends to exchange ideas with them in this time of great events, yet he cannot (p. 255). Leon depicts the city as below;

The novelty of living in this foreign land had by now worn off. The huge buildings downtown, so much taller than our white minarets, the ravine-like streets thronged with more people than I had ever seen at one time, the cavernous subways, all the mammoth city of steel and stone had ceased to fascinate. One marvel takes the edge off the next marvel. Everything was possible here; everything, I thought, except quiet. Coming from the

deliberate and unhurried pace of life in Salonica, being more oriental, in spite of my French education, then I realized, I felt that NY was a feverish place of mad activity where the people were driven on and on by an inexorable god of speed. They were ever on the go, forever rushed, always in a hurry. (p. 218)

Leon is not glad to be in NY as a boy. As a polyglot and curious boy, he cannot adapt to America despite his positive and revolutionary thoughts about the West. Matza (1987) depicts the Sciakys' overvaluing languages by saying; "this vehicle is Sciaky's only gateway to the outside world. This experience leads him to ponder the ongoing struggle between holding onto the past and embracing change, between seeking comfort in the familiar and accepting inevitable change, a theme that echoes throughout the book (p. 36). Leon continues to remember NY while hampering his complimenting his comfortable life in Salonica;

Reared in the atmosphere of courtesy and hospitality of the East, I found both teachers and pupils shockingly intolerant of anything that deviated ever so slightly from what they had been accustomed to. Their readiness to ridicule foreigners- their names, accents, and civility- struck me as singularly coarse. I could not understand the serious concern with baseball, nor the vehemence of the arguments over the relative merits of rival teams... There was the school itself. It bored me with its superficiality and shallowness. It was an America smugly ignorant of the rest of the world and of the cultures of the peoples who landed on its shores to operate its machines and till its vast fields, to create its industries and produce its wealth. No, this first contact with a machine civilization had not been a happy one for me and I pined for the slow tempo of our life at home. I craved an intellectual stimulation that neither the public school nor my association with the children I met had been able to satisfy. (p. 219)

The Western world is far different from the East for Leon, he is not ready to see the new world outside. He criticizes Americans because people are not intellectual enough like his friends or family in Salonica. His social surroundings are highly cultured and visionary among Muslims and other communities in Salonica. Matza (1987) adds that Sciaky's understanding, explanations and many of his descriptions are in a nostalgic tone. She gives another similar example from a memoir of migrant Jewish memoir. Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* which reflects the same nostalgic tone. Kazin, a second-generation East European Jew, writes affectionately about his childhood in Brownsville. He directly links his reason for writing the book to the disappearance of East European culture. (p. 40). Throughout

Leon's memoir, the reader feels that sense of nostalgia, the good old days of Salonica in his eyes, and how Leon cannot fully adapt to American culture and lifestyle until he passes away.

Regarding Leon's criticisms towards NY, Bond and Rapson's (2014) argue that mixing different ideas and approaches can help both smaller and larger cultural groups (likewise Ottoman Sephardic Jews or Leon's ideas about America) to share their views on community, allowing them to be fully included rather than overlooked, dominated, or made to fit into a certain view. Therefore, much criticism is given to the importance of keeping specific contexts in mind, as while some issues demand a global viewpoint and some phenomena have worldwide significance, it's crucial not to overlook or ignore the local aspects (p. 9). Despite Leon's memoir has nostalgic tone, his observations about America whether right or wrong should be considered along with memory studies. Because any memory is necessary and valuable from the transcultural perspective for creating a global viewpoint and enhancing empathy towards others. From another perspective, Bond and Rapson (2014) highlight that scholars studying human rights are also interested in how transnational empathy can be achieved and put into action. Imagining an empathetic form of solidarity based on acknowledging the vulnerability of all life, going beyond simplifying classifications of nationality or ethnicity should be created. Contemporary efforts should be put into political philosophy to conceive a form of justice capable of surpassing the normative dynamics of dominant global relations (p. 10). Regarding the argument, addressing transcultural memories of communities or persons from different perspectives can also broaden research in many different fields as well. Therefore, communal, or individual memories should be handled to bring wide perspectives towards the solidarity of people regardless of stable phenomena likewise nation or ethnicity. To sum up, whether nostalgic or not Leon's criticism of America is an Easterner Sephardic Jewish's view who has never been in America. Therefore, he holds on to his identity as a young boy and compares and contrasts Salonica and criticizes a civilization he has never been before.

After his return home, the new constitution is proclaimed in a hopeful atmosphere, yet the new situation leads to Sciaky's emigration to America for good. When he arrives to Salonica, he embodies a scene where "hodjas, softas, and dervishes, walk together with Orthodox priests and Jewish rabbis. Turkish army officers toast to one another's well-being, celebrating the camaraderie and harmony fostered by the recently achieved freedom" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 224). "People sang and marched while beating drums and waving flags;

“kimdir onlar? Kimdir onlar? Hareket ordusu, hareket ordusu! [Who are these men? Who are these men? The army of order, the army of order!]” (p. 229). Yet the joyful atmosphere does not last for long. “Leon’s Lycée days were over, he was studying alone while waiting to go to Paris. In 1912 on the edge of the Balkan Wars, the Greek army with Prince Constantinos was just outside Salonica. The blue and white stripes were everywhere. The Cross has replaced the Crescent” (Sciaky, 2003, p.252). Consequently, for Aviva Ben-Ur, the loss of Ottoman Salonica to Greece and the rise of Greek nationalist anti-Semitism led to a large Jewish exodus starting in 1912 (2009, p. 31). After all, Leon decides to pursue his academic career in NY. He remembers the day when he sees Salonica the last time with these words; “I recall feeling sad as I watched the tall minarets, domed Byzantine churches, red roofs, and ancient ramparts fade away until my native city became nothing but a faint blur against the darkening hills. Even after darkness had taken this last sight, I remained there, leaning against the guardrail, aware that my old world had come to an end. After all, wasn't I headed to America? Wasn't I supposed to pursue studies that would prepare me for the future?” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 336). Leon is sad about leaving his town and his colorful childhood memories which means the loss of his innocence. Matza (1987) shows how Leon's loss of innocence prompts Sciaky to become intellectually and emotionally involved with the world. Through studying history, reading philosophy, and witnessing tragedies like natural disasters and war, the author develops a keen sensitivity to the significance and pain of struggle and loss (p. 39). Not only Leon individually but as a family of Ottoman Sephardic leave their centuries of homeland with a load of memory. Together with Leon, his father Salomon and mother Paloma have carried a baggage of memory and experience. Yet, for Rothberg (2009), memories and groups aren't possessed by each other. Instead, the boundaries between memory and identity are irregular; what appears to be exclusively mine can actually be borrowed or adapted from a history that initially feels foreign or distant. Memory's ability to blend the present with the past, the local with the distant, is what fuels its creativity, allowing it to construct new realities from the remnants of old ones (p. 5). Therefore, Sciakys must shape their lives according to the new conditions and realities. When they arrive in America, Leon begins to build his new life based on the Western education he adopts at home and his multi-cultured environment in Salonica. Matza (1987) claims that at first Sciaky sees America as the location to finish his schooling. But as it became clear he couldn't go back to Salonica; America became a symbol of hope for him (p. 35). In terms of education, America

has been a light of hope for Leon, while for Salomon, this new land represents economic prosperity.

The Sciaky family is one of many among the Ottoman Sephardic people who migrated to America due to the conditions of the Balkan Wars and WWI. So, they are not alone in America. Ottoman Sephardic Jewish historian Naar (2021) presents a comparable example to Sciaky's departure from Salonica. He does so by recounting various experiences from Tekirdag in 1912 to America.;

The Maimon family had faced mass bombings, starvation and set out for America. When he arrived in Washington, his duty was to serve as Rabbi in the Seattle Bikur Holim Sephardic community. Another migrant from Salonica after the Balkan wars was Moise Soulam. "For him, leaving was the best solution. In a poem published shortly before his departure, Moise Soulam urged his readers in Salonica, Xanthi, Kavalla, Edirne, and other places in the region to follow his example: to come to 'blessed America' and work 'night and day' to bring over loved ones who were left behind. While life had been peaceful in 'beautiful Turkey,' Soulam, writing under the pseudonym tin Selanikli (a Salonican), notably offered his guidance "as a Jew, as a friend, as a brother, as a man, and ultimately as 'a true Ottoman'. He presented himself as inherently 'Ottoman' and hoped that highlighting this aspect of his identity would resonate with his readers and lend credibility to his advice. (Tinaz and Mandujano, p. 174)

Collectively, Ottoman Sephardic Jews' migration to America has created hardships and lead them to face difficult and discriminative events. Naar (2021) adds that when arrived in America, the Ottoman-born Sephardic Jews were seen as the 'locals of East' reflecting 'the terrible Turk' image and were speaking a different kind of Spanish dialect; found themselves in a vulnerable position in American society. After a certain point, they introduced themselves as Sepharad or Spanish Jews" (Tinaz and Mandujano, p. 37). As a supportive case, he also says that "the Ottoman Sephardic community constituted a tiny minority in comparison to the more than two million predominantly Yiddish-speaking Eastern Europe Jews who came to represent 'mainstream' American Jewry" (2015, p. 175). From the perspective of transcultural memory studies, Bond and Rapson (2014) claim that hybridity breaks down the nation-state's role as a cultural container, offering a diverse cultural model where relationships within and between nations can be flexible and go beyond traditional power and identity structures. In practical terms, mixing different cultural ideas and approaches can help both minority and majority groups tell their community stories and feel

included, rather than being overshadowed or ignored. These ideas, along with the postcolonial discussions they're part of, have paved the way for a larger critical movement known as the transcultural turn (p. 9). As above mentioned, there are socio-economic reasons of Ottoman Sephardic migration to America in the 20th century onwards. Likewise, Leon, there are many memories depicting their arrival and experiences in America. Therefore, exchanging memories and experiences helps individuals from diverse nations or races in the host country to empathize with each other through shared understanding and practical solidarity. In his memoir, Leon seizes the opportunity to share his new experience and longing for his homeland through memories. The hybrid nature of Leon's own or other Ottoman Sephardic Jewish memories, intertwined with his life, has the potential to inspire individuals, groups, nations, and ethnicities to transcend a fixed perspective.

Leon remembers his first days in the city and still thinking about the war in Ottoman, he says "how curiously distant that first lonesome year in New York now seems! The painful adjustment to a new life, the gnawing nostalgia that long hours of study could not dull, the sickening anxiety over the fate of those at home, sharpened by the knowledge of new, impending battles in Macedonia" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 386). To sum up, Leon's memories and Ottoman Sephardic experiences mentioned above bring clarity to the era and exemplify their unique migration to America. During the first few years of Sciaky's migration, all family members thought that

We must be ready to pack up at any moment. We talk around the dinner table often reverting to home in Salonica and plans for the return. The war could not last much longer. Now that America had entered the conflict, it would soon come to a successful conclusion, and we would be on our way. Yet, inwardly for Leon there would be no going back. They had been making roots. And here was a freshness of outlook, a youthfulness of spirit, a boldness of thought untrammelled by the decaying traditions of Europe. The ideals of freedom and of a classless society in which Leon had been nurtured in his Lycée days were nearer to reality in this country. (Sciaky, 2003, p. 388)

After changing thoughts, Sciakys do not speak of returning anymore. "What was there to return to? Our Salonica, the city of crowded streets lined with noisy cafes and bazaars, slumbering squares shaded by venerable sycamores where Grandfather Nono and I sat over coffee on our Saturday afternoon walks, the city of old whitewashed houses whose latticed windows silently surveyed the passerby, that city of our childhood was no more" (Sciaky,

2003, p. 389). It is hard for Leon to persuade himself to continue life in America as he never thinks about living abroad. As Matza (1987) puts it accordingly “the whole of Sciaky’s work reflects his longing for home, land, and people” (p. 34).

As an Ottoman Sephardic historian, Devin Naar’s grandfather Nono was an Ottoman Sephardic migrant from Salonica, Greece (2005, p. 1). Therefore, Leon and Nono’s memories have familiarity. In 1924, just before the Immigration Restriction Act took effect, Grandfather Nono, along with his wife, mother, and nine of his ten children sailed across the Atlantic from Salonika to America, bringing only a few belongings with them. Sciaky’s account best approximates the experience of my Nono one of the immigrants who escaped Salonica and came to the United States.” (Naar, 2005, p. 3). As argued by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, memories aren't solely contained within cultures. Instead, they can only become collective when shared through symbolic objects that connect individuals, creating a sense of community across space and time. Both two argue that cultural memory consists of various forms of media such as spoken language, letters, books, photos, and films. Each of these forms serves as a framework for shaping both experience and memory in two connected ways: they help individuals make sense of the world, and they facilitate connections between individuals and groups. (2009, p. 1). In this sense, both Sciakys and Naar’s family have migrated to America, yet they never have known about each other and how common their memories are. Although it has been a long time since they moved out of Salonica, they both remember the spoken language via words. And if they knew each other, they would have so much in common to share regarding their nostalgic past in the Ottoman.

After the Sciaky family has no option but to stay in America, they begin dreaming of a little place in the country where they can follow a similar life to the one in Salonica. So that “Salomon could again grow flowers and Paloma would not feel the weight of wall around her” (Sciaky, 2003, p.389). When Leon sees his mother Paloma in the new kitchen in New York, memories of the days spent with his grandmother and other family members working in Salonica flood back to him.

In the big white kitchen of a farmhouse tucked away among the wooded gills of the Hudson Valley. The season’s canning is finished. Row upon row, the multicolored jars stand on the deep shelves of the cupboards in the cellar. What memories this smell stir up in one! Memories of a long ago are so distant that it makes one wonder whether one is really that old. It brings back a vision of a cavernous oven, it brings memories of Nona Plata’s smile

and the way she looked with her arms white with flour, of Buena's motherly bosom, smelling of musk and spices. Father now white-haired but hale and hardy at seventy-five, comes to visit his American grandchildren often. And he looks at them with the moist look that reminds me of Grandfather (Sciaky, 2003, p. 393)

According to Hirsch (2008), the term post memory explains how the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma relates to the experiences of the previous generation, which they "remember" through the stories, images, and behaviors they grew up with. It isn't just about remembering the past; it's about using imagination to connect with it. Growing up with strong inherited memories can overshadow one's own experiences, especially when those memories come from previous generations. These experiences shape us, often indirectly, through events that are hard to fully understand or retell. Despite happening in the past, their impact persists into the present. The experience and process of connecting with the past is inherited through memories (p. 107). The smell of jar and Salomon's old face remind him of his life back in Salonica. He remembers them both in sense and vision, he imagines the past within the present time which is called post-memory. As a witness, he lives in a sense of nostalgia. Not only Leon but also other family members want to rebuild the life they used to.

From this point forward, the memoir switches to Peter Sciaky's viewpoint. He describes his observations of Leon's life in America and how Leon's experiences in Salonica still affect him. Peter writes that "for the rest of the family times were sadder in NY. In Salonica, Sciakys had been part of a vibrant, well-to-do, and highly social world. By comparison, the American culture seemed inhospitable and unfriendly, New York City cold and impersonal. So, they spent a great many days in the city parks and along Riverside Drive" (Sciaky, 2003, p. 407). For Leon "leaving home was a difficult decision, made to eventually go back. Sciaky explains that his upbringing, both formal and informal, was shaped by his family's involvement in all aspects of Salonica's life—not just the Jewish community. Initially, America was where he planned to finish his education, not where he saw his future. However, as it became clear that returning to Salonica was not feasible, his perspective shifted" (Matza, 1987, p. 35). Each Sciaky wants to return home to Salonica, but it is impossible. They seek a solution by trying to recreate their old way of life, as they cannot find what they are looking for.

Within the concept, Erll (*Travelling*, 2011) presents the term traveling memory by highlighting the constant movement of cultural memory. The term refers to the continual movement and transformation of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory across time, space, and social, linguistic, and political boundaries (p.11). As an example, while “Leon was studying engineering at Pratt Institute, he was quick to make friends among his fellow students yet in 1918 the United States appeared uncomfortably close to war. Universal military conscription was soon enacted. Having so recently come to America precisely to escape conflict, the thought of war was doubly repugnant for Leon, who saw it as a manifestation of a capitalistic society. In the fall of the same year, he traveled to Spain to escape military service” (Sciaky, 2003, p.408). He has made new friends easily in Salonica and continues to do so at the Institute. His social skills are strong due to the social atmosphere in Salonica. Yet, while running away from one war in the Empire, he finds himself in another war in America. Having endured the Balkan wars and relocating to a new country to survive, he despises war and cannot tolerate its chaotic environment anymore. That’s why he escapes to Spain due to cultural affinity and language. Despite once Sephardic Jews were expelled from Spain, his ancestors once lived in the country. Considering Erll’s claims above, Leon's avoidance of conflict, influenced by his past and culture, leads him to seek escape and safety. This shows how people use their own life stories to understand broader historical events. Leon's journey demonstrates how memory goes beyond borders, showing how people adapt and endure challenges.

The memoir continues to depict how his life is shaped after returning from Spain. He builds relationships with various groups and identities in America, especially migrants like him since he is more comfortable with them. Because memories provide connections and enhance social relations among people. For Erll (*Travelling*, 2011), the movement of memories can occur in various contexts, from everyday interactions among different social groups to global media consumption, trade, migration, diaspora, and even war and colonialism. Basic elements of what we consider Western cultural memory are influenced by transcultural interactions. (p. 11). These interactions are reflected in people’s private lives as well. Regarding Leon’s life, he was introduced to Frances, a girl from a large immigrant family. “They met when the transit workers in Manhattan were on strike, and transportation was at a standstill. They were both rebels and ‘free thinkers’. They read Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, Louis Untermeyer, and the like. They frequented Indian and other ‘ethnic’

restaurants. They both loved to be in the countryside. The couple were married at City Hall in New York City” (p.409). Leon chooses to marry a migrant woman as well since Frances has a similar identity. Both have the same perspective on life. After the marriage, they experience and create memories based on their rebel thoughts. And “America became a symbol of hope for Leon. In America the ideals of freedom and democracy Sciaky had already learned from Macedonians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Jews, and Turks might flower and eventually affect the Europe and the East Sciaky saw ruined by unenlightened leaders, foreign greed, and human corruption” (Matza, 1987, p. 35). Leon is a free thinker, and he has challenged the side of democracy since his life in Salonica. In Salonica, he grows up among many other ethnicities therefore he carries a similar point of view in America as well. In parallel, he interacts with the same kind of people and fights for the same ideas. Leon has adopted these ideas with the Western education, vision, and Salonica’s social atmosphere he receives. When he migrates to America, not only does he put these views into practice, but he also contributes to the transformation of the Western country he now lives in.

Considering the transformation of the Ottoman Sephardic community in America, the Sephardic Jews especially from Salonica form their relationships based on their empirical identity. According to Naar (2007), the Salonicans who moved to America tried to keep the spirit of Salonican identity alive through their café culture and early community organizations. As they put effort into upholding this connection during the interwar period, they reshaped the meaning of Ottoman Sephardic Jewishness both in the United States and in Salonica. Naar (2007) also acknowledges that initially, the "oriental" cafes set up by Jews from the eastern Mediterranean in New York's Lower East Side set them apart (p.464). Because in Salonica,

Cafes were central not just for socializing but also for community engagement. The leaders of the Socialist Workers' Federation of Salonica, which mostly consisted of Jewish members, used the cafes as key locations to spread their beliefs, host talks, and debates, and coordinate events like protests and strikes. After the migration, The Salonica Restaurant and Cafe on Chrystie Street in the Lower East Side transformed from a place where you could meet friends and read journals from Salonica into a center for community organization. During the peak of Jewish immigration from Salonika to the United States and after the blood libel accusation in 1915, administrators of the Jewish Insane Asylum [Azilo de Lokos] in Salonica sought financial help from their ‘brothers’ in America. (Naar, 2007, p. 467)

From Tinaz and Mandujano's archive (2021), an example of a Sephardic family from Istanbul opening "a Turkish restaurant serving world dishes, seen in the photograph of the restaurant, behind the counter, there is a Turkish flag with the crescent moon and star on the wall, along with the American flag, Turkish shish kebab signs, and even a picture of a youth dressed in an Ottoman military uniform, presumably the owner. This restaurant also has served as a public gathering space for everyone" (p. 74). Naar (2007) adds, "among all immigrants from Salonica recorded at Ellis Island in 1915, Jews are overrepresented at 86.3 percent, and Jewish immigration from Salonica reaches its high point in 1915 and 1916. The *La America* newspaper editor captures the escalating phenomenon in October 1915: 'Our brothers from Salonica are emigrating in great numbers... Every ship brings a new quantity to New York. of America, which represents "the country of the dollar where they [the immigrants] are certain to earn and eat from the sweat of their hard work" or—as Albert Levy had called it—' the land of rest and security'. Already extant economic connections as well as the "American dream" serve to draw immigrants from the golden medina [golden land]" (p.439). In Rifat Bali's book *From Anatolia to New World* (1992), he writes about the memories of how some Ottoman Sephardics sailed to NY. Especially there are details of Lahana Bey's memories from Izmir, "I was born and raised in Izmir and educated there. When cholera disease spread in Istanbul, I met with a group of merchant Ottoman Jews prepared to travel to America for the St. Louis fair. Together we sailed with the North Carolina ship to NY. Among this group, none of us have enough money to support ourselves. Yet all Sephardic Jews becoming so rich were among this group attending the St. Louis fair. As you had seen, the ship was filled with Ottoman Jews back then. At this time, America was such a foreign place for us, even more mysterious than Tibet. What a joyful travel it was! At last, we arrived in NY and promised each other; we'll be rich!" (p. 73). Naar (2015) gives another migrant's name, Moris Eskenazi, originally from Manisa near Izmir, who is a successful Ottoman Jew at the Chicago World's Fair. He knows about the tobacco business from his hometown and his time in Alexandria. After coming to the US, he patents a cigarette rolling machine and showcases it in Chicago. He then moves to New York, bring his brother Salamon, and set up a major cigarette manufacturing plant that import materials from Egypt and Kavalla. Known as the Schinasi Brothers, they became millionaires and receive recognition from the Ottoman government (p. 183). Regarding the success, Naar claims that the Jewish migration from Salonica to New York, particularly after the Balkan Wars,

represents “transplantation from a ‘Jerusalem’ under threat to another one on the rise”. (2007, p. 459). Regarding the rooted relations between Ottoman Sephardic Jews and America, it can be said that city of Salonica moves to NY when they bring their memories and identity. They try to merge their culture and identity into the current American culture at the beginning of the 20th century.

Leon’s memoir involves memories beyond the nations and countries considering the transcultural turn in memory studies. The importance of *transcultural turn* is based on “Bhabha's work on hybridity challenges the idea of the nation-state as the sole container of culture. Instead, it presents a diverse cultural model that promotes flexible relationships within and between nations, going beyond traditional power structures and identities. Through dialogue, hybridizing discussions and approaches can help both minority and majority cultural groups express their visions of community, integrating them into a collective identity rather than marginalizing or erasing them. These ideas, along with related postcolonial discussions, have been foundational in shaping a broader critical movement known as the transcultural turn” (Bond and Rapson, 2014, p. 8). An example of transculturality of memory is found when Leon gathers a diverse social circle including former Ottomans and Americans from various backgrounds. He frequently meets with his family members as well, which makes him pleased. Rather than living in a typical house, “Leon and Frances resided on a boat with a temperamental motor and an open deck. This was their initial boat among several they'd navigate together across New York State's inland rivers and lakes for the following two decades. Back then, boating wasn't just for the wealthy; people from various backgrounds owned small boats, and the boat basin was bustling with social interactions. They picnicked and played horseshoes ashore while inspecting each other's boat engines, galleys, and equipment onboard” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 410). “Other family members also came on the weekends. In the late spring, Leon’s sisters came with their children. Thanksgiving and Christmas were family times, which occasionally included close friends. In the late summer, the Old Country animosities, the Macedonians- Greeks, Bulgarians, and Turks would arrive for giant barbecues. They seem to find compatibility and friendship with one another in their adopted land. There was great festivity at these barbecues, drinking, singing, and dancing” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 413). In this new land, Leon embraces new cultural practices like celebrating Thanksgiving, and New Year and having barbecue parties, which are central to American culture. Therefore, Leon’s boat becomes a

transcultural memory site for Ottoman migrants from different backgrounds in which they all remediate the old times and share memories. However, there has been animosity among each due to ethnic or religious backgrounds in the Balkan region in the Ottoman Empire, they all share a common destiny as they become migrants in America to strengthen the cultural exchange in this new land.

Regarding the strong link between memories and transcultural memory studies, Erll (2011) claims that this research area focuses on cultural exchanges and the importance of migrants' memories. These intertwined histories also affect memories in English-speaking countries like Canada and the United States, due to factors such as British trade and colonialism, diverse ethnic foundations, and complex migration patterns of the twentieth century. This has created many shared, transnational, and transcultural memory sites. (*Journal of Aesthetics*, p.4). Providing the memoir, “The Sciaky family was becoming Americanized when Leon and his sisters married. Laure to a Belgian named George and Elda to a Bulgarian, Demetre” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 411). Each Sciaky member marries another migrant as they move on to life. The quotation also exemplifies how America became a country of immigrants. Considering the American migrants of that time, their homeland’s intermingled histories and their experiences in the new land are carried through identities, memories, and the transculturality of historical events of the 20th century.

Within the concept of memory studies, literature is highly significant. Through the end of the memoir, Peter Sciaky tells when Leon begins to write the memoir. “1942 was when *Farewell to Salonica* was planned. Leon wrote in longhand on those familiar yellow tablets Frances would read. They would discuss, edit, and make changes. Frances would then type the manuscript. They worked until the last pages were written in their boat Maya” (2003, p. 471). For Naar (2005), *Farewell to Salonica* paints a vivid picture of Salonica during the early twentieth century, caught at the crossroads between East and West. Yet testimonies found in other books like *Greek Jew from Salonica Remembers* (1993), *The House by the Sea: A Portrait of the Holocaust in Greece* (1998), *The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness Accounts* (2002), *Los Sefardies y el Holocausto* [The Sephardic Jews and the Holocaust] (2003), and *A Liter of Soup and Sixty Grams of Bread* (2003) represent some of the recently available first-hand accounts of the destruction of the Jewish community by Nazis (p.3). Regarding the importance of memories in literature, Erll (2011) mentions that;

Literature has a great importance on memory as literary works are read, reread, and rewritten over many years. They continuously change and find new purposes. Literature can vividly depict personal and collective memory, including its contents, processes, distortions, fragility, and encoding into aesthetic forms like narrative structures, symbols, and metaphors. Literary studies explore how memory appears in poetry, drama, and fiction. Concepts like metaphors of memory, narrative depictions of consciousness, and the creation of mnemonic space and subjective time are important topics in this field's examination of memory. It can contribute to an understanding of such 'traveling memory' by reconstructing the routes of powerful stories (*Journal of Aesthetics*, p. 4)

Leon's memoir is published by his son Peter after his death, so it can be understood that the "memories of those who experienced the events first-hand are transmitted to their children and grandchildren and people not immediately involved in the events" (Erll, *Journal of Aesthetics*, 2011, p. 3). In a literary work, memories are remembered or forgotten depending on the writer and the reader as well. In time, the memories are recreated in the reader's mind through his personal and collective memory. Considering the definitions, memory travels by works of literature therefore remembered as people read and share.

Furthermore, it is literature that plays a pivotal role in transforming memories into time travelers. For Monika Albrecht (2022) literary texts highlight shared histories and examine how they broaden national memory discussions across borders. The main idea is that these shared histories have the potential to transform both national and international memory landscapes. Literature plays a crucial role in driving the development of literary-theoretical concepts (p. 315). Therefore, Leon's memoir plays a critical role in shaping and enhancing our understanding of these shared histories and their implications, therefore influencing the development of literary-theoretical concepts.

After all, Leon gets used to life in America despite its hardships. He finds a new way to express himself as a teacher now. "Though Sciaky tells us his first evaluation of America had been harsh, he explains his error and says he is impressed by the nation's energy and achievement. The United States becomes for him and his family an adopted home" (Matza, 1987, p. 39). Nowadays he can maintain his liberal life via youth education;

Leon got a job teaching woodworking and Frances became the camp secretary. Due to their liberal identity, they quickly became the center of a group of young liberals at camp. The experience at the camp was immensely uplifting for Leon. It was gratifying and ego-

strengthening to find himself a capable and natural leader. Leon also discovered that he really liked working with children and did a superb job at it. In Hessian Hills School was a cooperative, progressive school. The school's basic philosophy was that children learn best by hands-on experience. While the curriculum covered all the basics, there were no bells and little semblance of a schedule. Fundraising, cleanup of the school and grounds, and painting of the building were always parent-teacher-child activities. (Sciaky, 2003, p. 415)

Hereby, Leon finds himself as a fulfilled teacher among children where he can share his vision and a liberal lifestyle outside of a formal schooling system. His background and vision contribute to the American youth and create forward-looking individuals based on interculturality. As a supportive argument about interculturality, Erll (*Travelling*, 2011) suggests that the idea of 'intercultural delimitation' refers to the tendency for individual cultures to be seen as separate entities, distinct from one another. This divisive thinking often leads to racism and tensions among local, ethnic, and religious groups. Therefore, as an alternative, Welsch introduces the concept of transculturality, which describes phenomena that extend across and, due to globalization, even beyond cultures (p. 8). Within the concept, Leon uses education as a tool of transculturality so that he can bring forward his liberal ideas that move beyond his own culture. From the beginning of his life in Salonica, he demands to live in this way. A free-spirited man who can enhance his social environment and intellectual capability in the modern world. He is different from other Ottoman Sephardic migrants who choose to remain local and stick to their good old habits back in the Empire. At the beginning of his journey, he hesitates about life in this new land. He is discouraged if he cannot find the same multicultural and culturally enriched environment in Salonica yet at least he is glad to have a similar one in America

Sooner, Leon and Frances form a new plan to start their own business. The couple continue their life beyond the borders of America in Mexico. Because "they would start a children's camp. Not only this was the start of a new life, but it was also dramatically the end of an old one. Frances and Leon raised much of the money to buy the property from friends and supporters and the sale of Maya- the boat. In 1945, they opened their first camp season at High Peak. It was an informal, friendly, unpressured, but stimulating place for children. The first season was such a huge success which continued its journey in Mexico. An old friend from Salonica hosted Leon and his family on a tour of Mexico. They loved the country, its sights, and its people so much that they came up with a new plan. They decided

to make a big change in their lives. Eventually, they decided to move to Mexico permanently. Yet, they took their children from the camp in America to Oaxaca, Mexico for the summers. Several years later Leon died of kidney disease in Mexico, and Frances moved to Los Angeles to be near her sisters-in-law Elda and Laure” (Sciaky, 2003, p. 419). In Mexico, Leon and Frances enjoy the people and the new atmosphere more than in America. Leon is not an American metropole persona with great material ambitions rather he is fond of living in a wide social circle in which he can move forward in terms of acculturation and social interaction. According to Welsch (1999), as transculturality progresses, the way diversity is understood changes. Traditional diversity, represented by individual cultures, is gradually fading away. Instead, a new form of diversity emerges in the variety of cultures and ways of life, each influenced by transcultural interactions (p. 9).

To conclude, Sciaky’s memoir focuses on his life in Salonica where it shapes his adulthood. Leon depicts the city and his boyhood experiences in a sense of nostalgia. However, Leon's migration to America increases the dynamism in his life until his death. He diversifies in the social sphere, developing himself and his surroundings, leading a life enriched by diversity. The multicultural and liberal character he has carried since Salonica has become his lifestyle, adapting to intercultural fluidity without selfishness. According to Sciakys memories, the Ottoman Sephardic inclusion into the Empire is complete. Not all Ottoman Sephardics might feel the same way. Matza claims “Most Sephardic Jews were not as fully integrated into Turkish life as were the Sciakys. Most lived in the Jewish quarter (the Sciakys lived in the Moslem one), and most Jews were not involved in the politics” (1987, p. 40). Nonetheless, Leon never mentions it and depicts the city otherwise because they are quite wealthy and socially accepted as an Ottoman Sephardic Jewish family. Because he was born and raised in an intellectual environment and obtained a Western education due to his capacity which helps him to carry his life in America until his death. Yet after the Balkan wars and the destruction of Salonica, there is nothing left of Salonica anymore. Therefore, the only option for Leon is to migrate to the modern West of that time, America. Despite having sad and lonely times as a new migrant in America, he finds his path by creating new surroundings and building a new life. Via his beautiful memoir, Leon demonstrates his colorful and multicultural life in Salonica from the eyes of Sephardic Jews by depicting his dynamic and fluid character of memories to America through his fluid narrative. Therefore,

from the perspective of transcultural memory studies, the memoir offers a cross-border experience that is quite suitable for the perspective.



CONCLUSION

This study has argued the transculturality and uniqueness of Ottoman Sephardic Jewish memories as they migrated from the Ottoman Empire to the USA in the early 20th century, by using transcultural memory studies framework. The narratives of Shalach Manot's novel *His Hundred Years: A Tale* (2016) and Leon Sciaky's memoir *Farewell to Salonica* (2003), lay out the experiences of two Sephardic men during their journey to New York following the Balkan Wars and World War I. Under the guidance of these two narratives, this study follows the memories of Ottoman Sephardic while providing insights into Ottoman Jewish life, culture, personal experiences, and community relationships, reflecting the varied memories intertwined with migration experiences.

Focusing on protagonists Leon from Salonica and an unnamed Sephardic man from Çanakkale, their different socio-economic backgrounds shape how the two see America when they arrive. Leon, familiar with Salonica's cosmopolitan atmosphere seeks a liberal and progressive life in industrialized America while the Sephardic man embodies the immigrant success narrative, moving from poverty to prosperity. These differences lead the characters to different life forms after the migration. The Sephardic man aims to move upward in social and economic terms, while Leon establishes an intellectual environment and supports social progress for people in America

The stories of both novels, reflecting Ottoman Sephardic cultural memory and the memories of the characters, help illustrate and demonstrate the essence of transcultural memory studies and its role in literature, as explored in this thesis. Both the Sephardic man and Leon Sciaky's memories include personal narratives, experiences, and collective traditions that connect individuals to cultural heritage to preserve and transform the person's own identity. On the mixture of communal and individual levels of memory, Eyerman (2019, p.25) argues that memory is often viewed as something personal, stored within our minds. Theories about human development and social interaction typically emphasize how memory shapes our identities and personalities. However, it is collective memory that truly unites people across different times and places, offering them a shared narrative. This narrative links individuals and their experiences to a broader story, which can be passed down orally or in writing, enabling it to accompany individuals wherever they go. This shared story can

be expressed through various mediums such as literature, art, or communication, allowing individuals from distant locations to connect culturally, even if they are physically separated. Therefore, memories are important elements that shape our personality, make us who we are, and bring people together across time and space, making them feel a part of a larger narrative that is expressed through various forms of art likewise literature.

As a supportive argument, Erll (2008) says that cultural/collective memory is a complex idea often used in various ways. It includes things like stories, monuments, history, rituals, conversations, and even how our brains work (p.1). As J.Assmann (2011) explains, what ties people to a group of people is the shared framework of common knowledge and traits - firstly through following the same rules and values, and secondly through remembering a past they all experience together (p. 3). He adds that the term cultural memory encompasses all such functional concepts as forming traditions, referencing the past, and shaping political identity or imagination. It's called "cultural" because it can only be established institutionally and artificially, and it is termed "memory" because, in the context of social communication, it functions similarly to individual memory concerning consciousness (p. 9).

In the current years, research in this area has grown a lot in many countries and fields. This has led to a wide variety of ways to study how culture and memory are connected. Now, the study of cultural memory involves many different disciplines, including history, social sciences, philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and literature and media studies. Within this context as a turning point in memory studies, Wolfgang Welsch suggests the idea of transculturality, which looks at things that span across different cultures and even extend beyond them due to globalization. "Transcultural memory," as a concept, seems to be a focused approach to studying memory processes that surpass individual cultures. It involves exploring beyond the typical ideas, topics, and methods found in traditional cultural memory studies (*Travelling*, 2011, p. 8). In addition, Erll (2011) indicates that current discussions about globalization and memory in the global age often overlook the fact that transcultural remembering has a long history. Since ancient times, memories, their forms, and technologies have crossed time, space, and social boundaries, adapting to new contexts, and gaining new meanings (Memory in Culture, p. 4).

Since Sephardic Jews were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula, the Ottoman Empire became a homeland for them from the 15th century until the beginning of the 20th. Regarding the reasons above-mentioned, they left the Empire and migrated to Western countries, especially to America. For Naar (2015), New York and other cities in the United States became key points in a network connecting new communities of Ottoman-born Jews in the Americas and Europe, allowing for the movement of people, families, ideas, and goods in various directions (p.176). When they first arrived in NY via steamships, they were first attached to *Turkino* identity. The word *Turkino* consciously and intentionally connected Ottoman Jews to their distant homeland empire — ‘Turkey’ was the common term used for the entire Ottoman Empire. For other Jews in America, Ottoman Sephardic had “different cultural habits, they smoke narghile (waterpipe), drink thick coffee out of tiny cups, and play *tavla* (backgammon) all day long at their cafes” (Naar, 2015, p.186). To sum up, they express their identity which is based on an Eastern empire, besides for Erll (2011), it is part of everybody’s everyday experiences to belong to multiple mnemonic groups and to have hybrid identities such as “a German Protestant football fan or a Buddhist Englishwoman playing jazz” (*Travelling*, p. 10). From the perspective of transcultural memory, it is natural for hybrid communities like Ottoman Sephardic Jews to have several identities regarding their history of migration. Within this context, the memories of Leon and the Sephardic man are also hybrid and multifaceted in parallel with the community they belong to.

On the other hand, the difference between the Sephardic man and Leon is the families’ economic status and vision which has affected how the two experience the migration to America. Leon lives in harmony with the Ottoman culture and its people, he grows up in one of the wealthy Sephardic families in Salonica at that time. He speaks Ladino at home and learns French besides Ottoman Turkish in a colorful social surrounding. He lives in a traditional Ottoman house with his elders and housekeepers like another Muslim family of the time. He has good friendships and obtains Western-type training before he arrives in America. Due to the Balkan War and declining conditions, he and his family members had to migrate to the USA. Whereas Leon and the family have a Western state of mind, the Sciaky do not adapt to American society voluntarily, it is more like a survival obligation. On the other hand, the Sephardic man lives in the little town of Çanakkale in which his father owns a little business. His father cannot hold on to business in a little town and he leaves the family. The Sephardic boy, his sister, and his mother are left in the town without a father or

any warfare. The boy feels responsible for caring for the family, and he tries several jobs that he can do like selling some traditional equipment, milk, and wheat. In parallel with the Sephardic man's experiences, he is fond of America and its culture. This overseas country is full of opportunities. He is bold, convincing, and sociable. He can sell anything to anyone because he is easy-going and multilingual. At last, he creates the wealthy life he desires for himself and his Jewish family. He uses the opportunity given by this brand-new land, America. The country is like a reflection of his traits and vision. These features match the American way of life and its model citizen portrait. On the contrary, Leon has pursued a vision of social progression and liberality, formed his path, and built a life in parallel with this aspiration.

Consequently, this study has shown how transcultural memory studies and the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish identity at the beginning 20th century overlap regarding their experiences of exile from Spain and migration to the Empire and then America. In this context, Ortner (2015) supports the idea that the transcultural position aligns with the idea of a diaspora society being a diverse home that mixes elements from various national, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This stateless community is a real example of how "transcultural post-memory of diaspora and exile rejects the possibility of a final return" (Ortner, p. 6). Regarding this study, the Ottoman Sephardic Jewish community has formed a new position wherever they moved and placed themselves between the Spain-Ottoman-America triangle. Their memories are intermingled by different cultural and personal elements, which is why their memories are transcultural, hybrid, and dynamic.

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