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change and challenge

edited by

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*Upon Her dateless Fame
Our Periods may lie
As Stars that drop anonymous
From an abundant sky*

...dedicated to the memory of Assist. Prof. Dr. Seçil Saraçlı

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PREFACE

You cannot step into the same river twice. Heraclitus of Ephesus made this observation roughly 2500 years ago. So how appropriate it was that Ege University, in the nearby city of Izmir, would frame its 2011 cultural studies conference with the title "Change and Challenge." The participants in the conference, scholars and apprentice scholars, Turks, residents of nearby nations, and a few more far-flung thinkers, addressed the theme in multidisciplinary and abundantly varied ways. They examined the means by which modernization, capitalist expansion, and technological dominance have ordered our lives anew. A significant number utilized literature as their lens to peer into cultural shifts. In this volume, the reader will find consideration of and consternation about changes created by computers and consumerism. For an outsider, someone who did not attend the conference, reading these efforts to make sense of our world is both a pleasure and a challenge. Anyone who works in interdisciplinary modes can expect to have her/his brain stretched, sometimes in directions we think we have no interest in pursuing. This volume reminds us that we can always open our minds to new ideas, new directions.

These cooperative ventures among Ege University's departments of American Culture and Literature and English Language and Literature, and the American Studies Association of Turkey, now span almost two decades of conferences. Of course, every country, indeed every individual, thinks that its/her/his encounter with the challenges of change is unique. And they are, but there are also patterns. One welcome and ever-growing development is the increasing number of women intellectuals in academic life. Women's perspectives are well-represented in this volume, a fact that deserves attention.

I was first introduced to the idea that only change is changeless decades ago, in an undergraduate introduction to western philosophy class. In this ever-shrinking world it is almost impossible to avoid the transformations around us, and consequently, inside ourselves. Thinking as a historian, I endeavor to analyze, explain, and understand change. As a citizen of the world, I endeavor to accept the challenges that change offers. This volume provides a welcome introduction to some of the explorations which cultural studies is undertaking in Turkey in the early twenty-first century. And the conference theme can remind us of that ever changing river. Ephesus/Efes no longer sits on river banks. Geography shifted; the place was abandoned. Now people from around the world visit and marvel at the ancient city without a river.

Lois Rita Helmbold