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Book Review

Halide Edip ve Amerika* (Halide Edip and America) by Frances Kazan, translated by Bernar Kutlu, 1995, 85 pages. Available from: Bağlam Publishing, Ankara Caddesi 13/1, Caðaloðlu, 34410 Ýstanbul.

Ayşe Kırtunç

The book is comprised of two main sections. In the first section, entitled "Halide Edip Before She Goes to USA," the author briefly summarizes Halide Edip's personal history, her childhood, her family relations, and particularly her education in the American College for Girls in İstanbul. Frances Kazan asserts that Edip's exposure to American culture and the contrast this provided with the life of the "common man" have had an indelible effect on her, shaping her social outlook a well as her personal and national politics. Edip was the first woman to graduate from this school and her father, a secretary working at the palace, lost his good standing with Sultan Abdülhamid because he had sent his daughter to the American institution.

The author then outlines Edip's personal and political life, her two marriages, her seeking asylum in the American school during a religious fundamentalist uprising (32), her work in the Wilsonian League, and her first establishment of contact with Mustafa Kemal through a personal letter dated 13 August 1919 (35). In this letter, Edip suggested that in order to protect the country from the potential danger of imperialist Europe, a formula for a protective US mandate should be considered. She also worked as translator/interpreter for The King-Crane Commission which later reported that the Turkish people is unable to govern itself and that an American mandate should be put into effect immediately.

Kazan maintains that Edip later worked as a secretary, which facilitated the communication between Mustafa Kemal and the USA Commissioner Admiral Mark L. Bristol, stationed in İstanbul. After 1920, Edip had high expectations of being appointed the first woman ambassador to the USA. These hopes were shattered, however, when Edip's husband, Dr. Adnan Adıvar, resigned from his position in parliament and established the Progressive Republican Party in October 1924. The party was accused of instigating uprisings and was closed down in 1925. Edip and her husband left the country and lived in exile until 1939.

In the second section entitled "Halide Edip in the US," the author describes Edip's life in exile. Edip communicated with her friends in her homeland through the Red Cross. She was hailed in the US as an "exotic, woman revolutionary" (47) and the American press published many interviews with her, depicting her as an extraordinary woman of "The New Turkey." She was invited to lecture at the Williamstown Conference, where she presented a historical and ideological analysis of the Ottoman empire and the young republic.

The writer then outlines Ottoman and Turkish national identities and discusses how Edip coped with these. Coming from an old Ottoman family which had connections with the palace, Edip never defined herself as a "regular Turk." Kazan correlates Edip's politics with the social strata that appear in her novels, particularly in the Shirt of Flame. In an attempt to isolate Turkish national identity and dissociate it from the "evil" associated with Ottoman rule, Edip blamed the destructive effect of Byzantium on the weak Ottoman palace and portrayed Turkish identity as being "simple and pure." Kazan thinks that some of these proposals are too emotional and taint the otherwise scholarly work Edip brought out, particularly during the Williamstown Conference.

The last part of the second section summarizes the historical background of the women's situation in Asia Minor until 1928 and Edip's account of the role of Turkish women in their own history. Edip was one of the first Turkish feminists and established the Society for the Development of Women in 1908 (73). She borrowed extensively from Ziya Gökalp's thesis on the status of women in pre-Ottoman Turks, a thesis which served as basis in formulating the official history of the Turkish republic during the 1930s (76). Kazan asserts that Edip had a contradictory attitude toward women. In her novels she depicted strong, willful women who react against traditional gender roles. However, in her political discourse she favored male-dominant, patriarchal hierarchy, whereby the role of women can only be secondary. "In other words, Edip has simultaneously identified both with the dominant culture, and with the marginalized gender"(78).

The translation has been done by Bernar Kutlu. It is a fairly smooth translation although there are quite a few words which can be replaced by their more recent usages. Kutlu has also used some English words in parenthesis, perhaps when he suspected that the term did not translate well into Turkish. This may be understandable for words such as "vision" (10) and "non-fiction" (81) which have been translated as "bakış" and "romandışı," but one fails to see the need for offering the English versions of simple words such as "the best" (en iyi-10), "dilution" (sulandýrma-67), or "massacre" (kitlesel kýrým-56).

The book would appeal to an audience interested in Turkish history, politics, and literature, and particularly gender studies. It sheds light, from an American's point of view, on Edip's literary and ideological makeup. It does not make excuses for her choices; nor does it try to justify her somewhat tarnished image in the Turkish

media. It does, however, try to explain away some of her eccentricities by blaming it all too readily on the sharp contrast between the world created by her Protestant-missionary schooling and the elitist-poligamist Ottoman family in which she was brought up. All in all, the book presents a plausible (albeit limited) portrait of Halide Edip. The bibliography is also quite useful.

* The late Professor Halide Edib Adıvar used to sign her name as "Edib." Ed.

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Book Review

Oltadaki Balık: Türkiye (The Fish on the Hook: Turkey), by M. Emin Değer, 4th ed. 1994, 374 pages. Available from Çınar Yayınları, Rıfat Ilgaz Kültür Merkezi, Küçükparmakkapı Sokak, No. 23, Beyoğlu, 80060 İstanbul.

Nur Bilge Criss

On the 25th anniversary of the 12 March 1971 military coup-by-communiqué in Turkey, the İstanbul daily *Cumhuriyet* published an interview with a Navy officer (Ret) who had been involved in the numerous leftist cliques in the military at the time (Leyla Tavşanoğlu, "Söyleşi," March 10, 1996, page 8). The coup was made to obstruct a socialist military junta from taking over. Cited among the officers who had been part of a clique was Col. Emin Değer, Military Judge (Ret), author of the book under review.

The overall theme is neo-imperialism and how it works, especially within the context of US interests in the Middle East. First, Değer focuses on Turkey, which he describes as the "gendarme of US interests in the Middle East," a role that was bestowed upon the country at minimum material cost to the US. Secondly, the author discusses how US foreign policy is shaped by the interests of multinational firms. Accordingly, the method used to render dependent upon the US key countries which are geo-strategically important for US economic interests is to proffer aid and education. Değer considers aid as an instrument for US leverage on political and economic decision-making. He contends, further, that Turkish people who have gone through the US education system either in this country or in the States are alienated from their own society. And, once these people attain key positions in the military or civilian bureaucracy they only follow policies that benefit the US.

The author goes on to discuss Turkish-US relations within the parameters of sovereignty, total independence and dependence. Değer is very critical about the bi-lateral agreements concluded between the two countries. In essence, his overall evaluation of the relationship is that Turkey was entrapped through military aid, IMF and AID to remain within the capitalist camp. And when there was a leftist Prime Minister such as Bülent Ecevit in power during 1977-1978, all the

preconditions for his failure were provided by the US and IMF. The US had withdrawn from Turkey the status of most-favored nation for trade over problems with opium cultivation and Cyprus, and IMF and the World Bank refused to extend credits unless stringent economic measures were taken. Since Ecevit did not agree to implement them, his government was refused credit; social disturbances continued, upon which he resigned. By inference, Değer concludes that Ecevit had to resign on account of his socialist stance. However, when he discusses the reasons for the last military coup of 12 September 1980 about a hundred pages earlier, he affirms that Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's rightist coalition was just as reluctant to apply all of the measures that the 24 January 1980 Economic Reform Packet foresaw. The author concludes that stringent economic measures regarding taxes, employment, and liberalization of the economy could only be imposed by a majority civilian government under military tutelage, as that of the Özal government formed in 1983. Peculiarly enough, he does not compare the number of political parties before and after the coup, nor does he criticize the election system.

Oltadaki Balık: Türkiye is a very exhausting book to read, regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with the author's premises. It is exhausting because it is highly categorical, full of half-truths, chronologically out of context, and full of conspiracy theories. It is not the intent here to claim that Turkish-US relations have always been paved with good intentions. But the reader expects a sophisticated style and approach from a person with law training who claims to use the dialectical method in writing.

The major dilemma stems from defining Turkey's problems from the so-called "Kemalist left" viewpoint. Qualifying any ideology as Kemalist somehow links it to patriotism and renders it legitimate. However, Kemalism/Atatürkism was never an ideology, and had no theoretical basis as such. This is very clear when one reads the etatist literature of the 1930s written by the ruling elite such as İsmet İnönü, Recep Peker *et al*. They were careful to distinguish the political and economic system in Turkey as being different from socialism or fascism.

And indeed Turkey opted in the aftermath of World War II to join the Western family of nations, i.e., democracies, hence the capitalist camp. But the age-old problems between industrialized and non-industrialized nations continued, with the former constantly advising Turkey to remain an agricultural country. The policy-makers did not comply.

Secondly, US military aid did indeed create an aura of dependence whereby Turkey's freedom of maneuver was severely limited. Between 1960 and 1970, un-controlled American freedom of action on Turkish soil, as in the cases of unauthorized U-2 flights and downing of US reconnaissance flights, twice caused diplomatic scandals between Turkey and the Soviet Union. Thirdly, as the book asserts, Richard Perle in 1978 and Gen. Alexander Haig in 1983 stated that the Turkish Armed Forces were not equipped to handle anything but a defensive war,

and a short one at that. Perhaps the most relevant question the book asks is why the TAF was in the shape it was after 45 years of military aid.

No wonder then that even the most "pro-American" Chief Executive of Turkey, the late Turgut Özal, insisted on more trade and less aid. All relationships are fragile and perhaps international relations are more so. However, blaming outsiders and their so-called native collaborators for all the ills of the country appears like Third World sentimentalism to which Turkey should not subscribe.

Lastly, it is difficult to assess to whom this book would appeal. It definitely does not appeal to patriots who believe, not in a socialist revolution, but, where necessary, in the role of a social state.

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Book Review

Kızılderili Mitolojisi (American Indian Mythology), by Alice Marriott and Carol K. Rachlin. Translated by Ünsal Özünlü. 1994, 294 pages. Available from İmge Kitabevi, Konur Sokak 43A, Kızılay, Ankara.

Yeryüzüne Dokun: Kızılderili Gözüyle Kızılderili Benliği (Touch the Earth: A Self-Portrait of Indian Existence), by T. C. McLuhan. Trans. Ece Soydam. 1994, 239 pages. Available from İmge Kitabevi, Konur Sokak 43A, Kızılay, Ankara.

Meldan Tanrısal

Kızılderili Mitolojisi, translated by Ünsal Özünlü, is a recent contribution to the limited publications on Native Americans available in Turkish. On the one hand, since there are not many translations of books on Native Americans, it serves as a reference work for those who are interested in Indian cultural heritage. The fact that the book is in its second printing demonstrates the genuine interest of Turkish readers in Native Americans. On the other hand, it opens a window to the alluring, yet enigmatic world of the Native Americans.

Kızılderili Mitolojisi introduces different Native American tribes to the readers and exposes the diversity of their cultures. The introduction offers a brief history of the indigenous peoples of North America--their migration patterns, the arrival of the Europeans, the attempts of the latter to Christianize the natives, and their efforts to push the natives out of their lands.

The book consists of a compilation of myths and legends most of which are told to Alice Marriott by members of different tribes, reflecting the rich oral tradition of Native Americans.*Kızılderili Mitolojisi* consists of four parts. The first, "The World Beyond Ours," comprises nine stories that are creation myths and monster-stories. The second, entitled "The World Around Us," has fourteen stories belonging to different tribes. The third, "The World We Live In Now," is made up of seven stories and the fourth, "The World We Go To," contains six stories that deal with death, as the title implies. Before the narration of each story, brief information is given about the tribe the story belongs to.

The difficulty in translating the book comes from the cultural and linguistic differences. Yet, Ünsal Özünlü, professor of linguistics at Hacettepe University, with his background in linguistics, manages to manipulate words and retain the essence of Native American oral tradition.

Yeryüzüne Dokun: Kızılderili Gözüyle Kızılderili Benliği, translated by Ece Soydam, has helped increase the interest of Turkish readers in Native Americans. As a book in which the Native Americans speak for themselves and relate their lives, it stands as one of the uncommon works offering the Native American perspective. So far Native Americans have mostly been depicted through the eyes of the White. The book is made up of passages taken from the speeches and writings of Native Americans who lived in all parts of the North American continent between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Yerzüzüne Dokun consists of four chapters. The first depicts the Native American way of life and the Native American's respect for the environment. The second chapter describes his/her encounter with the White, while the third chapter is about his/her becoming powerless. Finally, the fourth chapter reveals his/her determination to survive. Essentially, the book advocates establishing a right relationship with nature through the rediscovery of the environment in order to prevent the destruction of humankind.

The words of sage Native Americans not only reveal striking differences between their culture and that of the Whites, but also raise questions pertaining to civilization and society in general. In the last section of the book, Vine Deloria Jr., the author of *Custer Died For Your Sins*, makes a provokative statement directed against the Whites.

The Native American philosophy of life, his/her relationship with nature and with the Whites are presented, through Native American eyes, with an unadorned, lucid and simple style typical of the Native American. Soydam's ease in translation, conveying the simple yet potent style of the Native American discourse, stems from the fact that she has lived among the Native Americans and has observed closely their way of life.

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Book Review

Aşktan Sözettiğimizde Sözünü Ettiklerimiz (What We Talk About When We Talk About Love) , by Raymond Carver. Trans. Zafer Aracagök. 1994, 152 pages. Available from İletiþim Yayınları, Klodfarer Caddesi, İletişim Han No. 7, 34400 İstanbul.

Suat Karantay

Raymond Carver (1938-1988) published four short-story collections. He has also three poetry collections to his credit--but is better known as a short-story writer in the "minimalist" tradition. Largely autobiographical, Carver's stories are set in unnamed small towns in the Pacific Northwest. His protagonists are white, working-class Americans entrapped in dull lives. Lonely, dissociated, maimed, inarticulate, these people are readily recognizable. Carver says next to nothing about their physical appearance or backgrounds perhaps because his world is all too familiar.

An unnerving vision of contemporary America unfolds in drying-out centers for alcoholics, in mobile caravans, in kitchens and on porches where we encounter most of Carver's characters. The focus is on the bleak existentialism of daily life. Excluding religious, political, cultural topics, his subject matter centers on failed marriages and wasted lives. The prevailing mood is one of inertia, aimlessness, worthlessness, resignation, and regret--with no redeeming revelation forthcoming. The monotonous atmosphere of the stories is at times broken by acts of gratuitous cruelty and violence.

There are no multiple narratives in Carver's stories. His prose is spare, cryptic, staccato. It is deliberately unliterary, yet has tremendous force. The characters seem to talk past each other; the dialogues, often in the form of monosyllabic retorts, are unedited. Little is said but much is conveyed. The Chekhovian surface simplicity (Chekhov is Carver's acknowledged mentor) masks Kafkaesque intimations of things amiss. Technique and vision, manner and substance are often in perfect harmony.

In his second collection of short stories entitled *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981)* the Carver "voice" is omnipresent. The first of the seventeen stories, "Why Don't You Dance?," is a particularly fascinating one. In an odd yard sale, a middle-aged man has reassembled the contents of his house in the front yard, the way they stood inside--an extension card even allows the electric appliances to function. The man gets drunk with a young couple looking for bargains. The girl is haunted by this experience and tries, helplessly, to tell everyone about it. But words fail her. In "Viewfinder," a woman invites for coffee a man without hands who takes photographs of houses. The man immediately senses that her family has left her and that she is desperately lonely. She asks him to take more pictures of her and the house. "It won't work," the man says, "They're not coming back." The alcoholic narrator of "Mr. Coffee and Mr. Fixit" recounts the affair his wife is having with an unemployed aerospace engineer she has met at an AA meeting. The story of a disintegrating marriage unfolds as a young couple falls into a drunkard stupor in "Gazebo." The alienation of a father and son is underscored in "Sacks," in which the father confesses why his wife divorced him, trying to no avail to get his son's sympathy. A family tragedy concludes ambiguously in "The Bath"--a fine example of Carver's open-ended stories. The violence at the end of "Tell the Women We're Going" seems gratuitous, yet when read carefully, small details used in the story render the ending quite plausible. "So Much Water So Close to Home" is a powerful study of insensitivity. The difficulty of talking about what really matters is the subject of "A Serious Talk." A man, again an alcoholic, comes to visit his estranged wife, and instead of talking about the "important things that had to be discussed," he ends up cutting the telephone cord as the wife talks to her boyfriend. In "The Calm," a man reminisces about the time when he tried to start a new life with his wife in California and, about how, sitting at a barber's shop listening to a disturbing story about deer hunting, he decided to leave her. The two-page "Popular Mechanics" is a horrendous piece about a man deserting a woman--he wants to take their baby with him and in the scuffle that ensues each pulls the baby very hard by one arm. The piece concludes with a typical Carver understatement: "In this manner, the issue was decided."

The title story "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" is, again, on the difficulty of talking about what really matters. Two couples, both previously married, start a drinking bout in the early afternoon. Their topic of discussion is love: absolute love, sentimental love, carnal love, old love, new love . . . Unlike most Carver characters, the couples in this story are highly educated, the setting is known (Albuquerque), and two of the characters are named and briefly described. Mel, the cardiologist, after several digressions, completes his example of true love which involves an old couple badly injured in a car accident. Both are in casts and are bandaged from head to toe: "the man's heart was breaking because he couldn't turn his goddamn head and see his goddamn wife." Mel further comments on this ideal love with obscenities as it gets dark and nobody moves to turn on the light. Complete inertia reigns in the room. The gin is consumed. The narrator concludes the story: "I could hear my heart beating. I could hear everyone's heart. I could hear

the human noise we sat there making, not one of us moving, not even when the room went dark." In "One More Thing," the last story, "I just want to say one more thing," a man says as he walks out on his wife and daughter. "But then he could not think what it could possibly be."

Despite the surface simplicity, there is great verbal skill and painstaking craftsmanship in these stories. They have been sensitively translated into Turkish by Zafer Aracagök. Unfortunately, the Turkish readership is acquainted with Carver through only one other book: *Fires* (*Ateşler*), translated again by Aracagök. Also, Robert Altman's *Short Cuts*, based on several Carver stories, has been shown on Turkish TV.

* New York: Vintage Books, 1982.