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Violent spectre of ghost limbs

Sacrificial limbs: masculinity, disability, and political violence in Turkey, by Salih Can Açıksöz, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2020, xxiv + 246 pp., \$29.95 (paperback), ISBN 9780520305304

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the illusion that nationalism is the road to an egalitarian future and that possession and appropriation are harmless preoccupations.

In the conclusion of the book Khanna analyses Fanon's elaboration of the disjuncture between the body and the anticolonial rhetoric of the colonized. Drawing on Fanon's authority enables her to generalize her abstractions drawn from the fiction of the sub-Indian continent, seeking an account of decolonization elsewhere. The bodily dysfunctions explored in this literature explain the paralyzing tensions that exist among the colonized who aim less to 'become' but more to 'substitute' the settlers. The distinction here is of course critical: as Khanna argues, 'the act of becoming' could have ushered in a historical subject and paved the way for an alternative instantiation of decolonization.

The extent that realism stifles the revolutionary ardor of eroticism or casts it as simply pornographic is a promising line of argument as proposed by the author. Indeed, Khanna indirectly asks us to rewrite the nationalist canons in order to distinguish the revolutionary from the pseudo-revolutionary arts. Here Khanna assumes that had the nationalists dwelled more on modernism instead of realism, colonial Indians or Algerians could have withstood a chance in regaining their freedom beyond the political instantiation of freedom. Differently put, realism could or could not have been an empowering mode of expression to galvanize action for the nationalist cause against colonialism, but after independence realism became a liability. Still, the logic of *Visceral Logics* looks like it is charging literary and cultural elites with failing to draw the kind of excitations that would somehow reverse the postcolonial dysfunction. After its perhaps demanding early chapters, students of postcolonialism will find this book exceptionally rewarding, where Khanna's contribution will reshape literary scholarship for generations to come in the way *The Country and the City* (1973) by Raymond Williams or *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said have done.

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Violent spectre of ghost limbs

Sacrificial limbs: masculinity, disability, and political violence in

Turkey, by Salih Can Açıksöz, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2020, xxiv + 246 pp., \$29.95 (paperback), ISBN 9780520305304

Sacrificial Limbs is a thorough investigation and narration of the disabled veterans (*gazis*) in Turkey who were injured and lost their body parts and organs in the ethno-political war/conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK (Kurdistan

Workers' Party) guerrillas in the latter half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Açıksöz shows how gazis, mostly living under conditions of poverty, constitute a fragile as well as a sacred group forced to navigate a double life: from the heroic soldier who sacrificed his limbs for the nation without hesitation, on the one hand, to the abject subject condemned to poverty and to physical and spiritual insecurities in a deeply ableist social register, on the other.

The book is product of Açıksöz's fieldwork in Turkey between 2005 and 2008. It consists of six main chapters in addition to a preface, a short introduction, and an epilogue. In the first chapter 'Being-on-the-Mountains', Açıksöz provides a detailed account of what it is like to be on the mountains as soldiers fighting against the unpredictable, irregular, and erratic attacks of the guerrilla forces. The breath-taking work here is Açıksöz's articulation of how conscripted soldiers learn to think and act like a terrorist to survive and fight: becoming-terrorist. But this is not the only becoming in the book, as there are many: soldiers-becoming-terrorists, terrorists-becoming-soldiers, ethnographer-becoming-soldier, ethnographer-becoming-terrorist, gazis-becoming-the-state. Evading to occupy a stable position throughout, Açıksöz masterfully makes evident the impossibility of having an unmoving stance on the matter.

In the second chapter 'The Two Sovereignities: Masculinity and the State', Açıksöz shows that becoming a soldier is a rite of passage that leads to the adult, sovereign manhood/masculinity. However, this masculinity is disrupted by the disability inflicted during the same rite of passage. The chapter traces the ways in which the gazis deal with this disruption in a contentious relationship with the state. The third chapter 'Of Gazis and Beggars' discusses that the sacrificial crisis that shapes the disabled veterans' lives leads them to deploy discursive strategies that blur the lines between the sacrificial body of a gazi and the abject body of a street beggar. This enables them to performatively question the sacred gazi status granted by the state and the legitimacy of the state itself. This chapter also consists of a beautifully crafted genealogy of the gazi title and institution, tracing its Islamic, secular, nationalist turns.

In the fourth chapter 'Communities of Loss', Açıksöz describes how shared loss brings together veterans and families of martyrs as a community made by affective engagements, intersubjective therapeutic healing practices, and 'ultra-nationalist' political activism. The chapter contains vivid and moving narratives of the veterans and the ways in which they collectively 'transform the negativity of traumatic loss into a therapeutic force by voicing vulnerability in a humorous way' (p. 131), pointing to the gallows humour they share with one another: 'a legless penalty taker against a blind goalkeeper!' (p. 130). This laughter and humour produced through jokes about disability and lost limbs create a particular 'fleshly intimacy' based on a shared and communal experience of inhabiting non-normative bodies. This is where Açıksöz becomes and turns us all into soldiers/gazis. We feel (through) them.

The final two chapters are concerned with gazis' prosthetic limbs. In the fifth chapter 'Prosthetic Revenge', Açıksöz delves into gazis' prosthetic protests of the government, especially during the peace negotiations with the PKK. The common form of protest they invented is to take off their prosthetic limbs and throw them

on the ground in a public square. Through such a public performance, they become 'whole' again, re-establish their sovereignty, trying at the same time to put the deviating state sovereignty back on track. They are the 'conscience' of the nation, as commonly held, with the spiritual ability to sense when things go wrong and to act in lieu of the state. It is also in this chapter that we become terrorists with Açiksöz opting not to participate in the veterans' 'ultranationalist' protests targeting the intellectuals criticizing the official Turkish nationalist discourse. But right at this point, we are missing his voice. He passes by without detailing his absence in the protests and its affects/effects. In the sixth and final chapter 'Prosthetic Debts', Açiksöz points out how the debt the state owes to gazis for their sacrifice turned out to be incompatible with the neoliberal debt economy in which veterans go into large amounts of debt to acquire a cutting-edge prosthesis. Facing repossession for failed payments, gazis appeal to the nationalist value system of sacrifice to be able to compete with neoliberal finance.



Overall, this is the kind of book one would point to as a textbook example of ethnographic description or, if you like, of 'thick description'. But the thickness under consideration does not just mean a mass of statements lumped together by a certain thematic resemblance but rather indicates an eloquently weaved narrative that moves, unsettles, and affects the reader. As an interdisciplinary work, the book's contribution is multiple. First, it can be read as a fine historical account of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey from the emergence of the armed struggle in mid-1980s to the present. (The Epilogue is quite useful and essential in this regard. It further details the recent and curious fortunes of the gazi title). Second, it contributes to disability studies and medical anthropology with a unique case study, because the disabled veterans here are not just medicalized victims and conscripts of a war in an ableist society, but they are also willing actors of the war performing and claiming the statehood for themselves. Having lost a limb, every gazi in fact gained a vision, a deep insight into the truth of the nation/state. It is a grey zone where victims and perpetrators of the war cannot be so clearly distinguished. Third, it is a contribution to gender and sexuality studies, showing yet again that the regimes of (dis)ability are always co-constituted with gender and sexuality, especially when the subject is military violence, sovereignty, and the nation-state. Besides the gazis' constant struggle to restore their masculinity vis-à-vis the state, the best illustration of this in the book is a discourse identifying attempts at evading military service with lack of manliness and/or homosexuality.

It also touches upon the intricate theoretical issues around (doing) ethnography. The 'gray zone' Açiksöz finds himself in and openly faces in the preface gestures towards a question that is not new but also not often asked in the increasingly prevalent ethnographies studying the poor exposed to violence (in Turkey). What does the ethnographer do when they go to 'the working- or lower-class neighbourhoods that [they] had never been to despite being a native of Istanbul' (p. xvii) for research? What does it mean to be ashamed to have shared an upper-class breakfast with an intellectual whom the veterans protested, as we are 'aware of the class base of interlocutors' political resentment'?

(p. xix). What kind of effects might the research (the book) have on those who live in the neighbourhoods that the ethnographer would not perhaps go back to? What exactly are we doing when we translate the violent and traumatic experience of the poor into an academic work in English? These are the questions Açıksöz's brief reflections on his own experience generate and leave open for us. And this quest, though definitely requiring it, might be a little more complicated than 'becoming terrorist'.

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Stirring the sugar in the English cup of tea: more notes on the continuing relevance of Stuart Hall

Selected writings on race and difference, by Stuart Hall, edited by P Gilroy, RW Gilmore, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2021, 376 pp., 978-1-4780-1052-4, \$114.95 (hardback), 978-1-4780-1166-8, \$31.95 (paperback)

Selected writings on Marxism, by Stuart Hall, edited by G McLennan, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021, 376 pp., 978-1-4780-0027-3, \$109.95 (hardback), 978-1-4780-0034-1, \$29.95 (paperback)

In 2021, Duke University Press published two collected editions of Stuart Hall's works: *Selected Writings on Race and Difference* (2021a, edited by Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Paul Gilroy), and *Selected Writings on Marxism* (2021b, edited by Gregor McLennan). While Hall is no longer with us, he did have an input in the selection of the essays chosen for these editions, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore recounts in her preface to *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*. Between the two collected editions, there are 22 different essays, spanning the years of 1959–1997. Despite this wide range of entries – across both topics and temporal periods – it is perfectly acceptable, and indeed advisable, to read these two collections together. For Hall, his critiques of racialization and racism were always connected to his developing of Marxist social theory, just in the same way that his developments of Marxist critique were deliberately formed to better understand the processes of racialization and racism. It is this interplay between the two edited collections that I will examine in this review, looking both at the historical