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Women and Turkish Cinema: Gender Politics, Cultural Identity and Representation. Eylem Atakav. Routledge Studies in Middle East Film and Media, 2012. h / bk 145pp. ISBN 978-0-415-67465-2. Price £76.00.

Eylem Atakav explores the women's movement in Turkey and representation of women in Turkish films of 1980s. Her central argument is to show how "enforced depoliticisation introduced after the coup by incoming military government is responsible for uniting feminism and film in 1980s' Turkey" (4). Unlike other movements, the feminist movement was not perceived by the government as politically and socially significant; hence it was allowed to flourish - in political as well as social terms - as well as dramatize some of its essential issues through the cinema. One of Atakav's major achievements has been to show how the term 'feminism' assumes a culturally specific significance in Turkey; Islam has played a powerful part in shaping the way individuals look at the issue of female emancipation, family and identity. This is what renders Turkish feminism so fascinating, as compared to feminisms elsewhere.

Atakav strengthens her case through detailed analyses of four Turkish movies: *Dünden Sonra Yarından Önce (After Yesterday before Tomorrow)* (Nisan Akman, 1987), *Mine* (Atıf Yılmaz, 1985), *Asiye Nasıl Kurtulur* (How can Asiye Survive) (Atıf Yılmaz, 1986); and *Kurbağalar* (The Frogs) (Şerif Gören, 1985). She focuses both on the creative and thematic aspects of the films, as well as looking at them in structural terms, emphasizing "the operation of cinematic signifiers and elements of plot, characterization and narrative structure" (5).

Most of these readings are insightful, but sometimes incline towards narrowness. In her analysis of *Mine*, for example, she focuses on one particular scene where the eponymous central character (Türkân Şoray), unhappily married to a violent husband, escapes from a group of young men who attempted to rape her. She runs to the home of another boyfriend and makes passionate love to him. Analyzing this sequence of events, Atakav comments: "[I]t suggests that rape works as a catalyst for a good sexual relationship and that the men who tried to rape her (sexually) liberated her" (80). However a close look at the film reveals that the men who are attempting to rape her are not liberating her. Most people live

without thinking about the possibility of death. If a woman escapes from a threat of being raped or killed she may realize that there is not a second to waste in her life. A near to death experience may motivate a person to take action to live her life in a more meaningful way without being stopped by her fears. It is Mine liberating herself by taking the risk of adultery and consequently being rejected by her society.

Later on Atakav quotes from Sule Torun's article in *Somut* magazine on 4 February 1983, claiming as she does so that Torun introduced feminism to Turkish society in the early 1980s (32). *Somut* magazine was read by a very small group of people and Torun's message influenced only a very small number of scholars. By contrast the journalist Duygu Asena disseminated feminist ideas through her best-selling book *Kadının Adı Yok* (The Woman Has No Name) (1987). While not a scholar, Asena had the kind of popular appeal that rendered her ideas extremely popular. There is no mention of her contribution in Atakav's book.

Despite its focus on feminism in broad terms, *Women and Turkish Cinema* makes no acknowledgment of queer studies, despite its reference to "Gender Politics" in the title. From the beginning of the Sixties onwards, Turkish cinema analyzed issues of gay identity in films such as *İki Gemi Yanyana* (Two Boats Side by Side) (Atıf Yılmaz, 1963) and *Haremde Dört Kadın* (Four Women in a Harem), (Halit Refiğ, 1965). Three decades later directors addressed lesbian issues in works such as *Düş Gezginleri* (Walking After Midnight) (Atıf Yılmaz, 1992), *İki Genç Kız* (2 Girls) (Kutluğ Ataman, 2005), and *Yaşamın Kıyısında* (The Edge of Heaven) (Fatih Akın, 2007). The omission of queer studies in Atakav's book seems surprising, suggesting a heteronormative point of view.

Women and Turkish Cinema is an undoubtedly important book, designed to broaden our awareness of a hitherto neglected topic. However it could have been slightly more ambitious in its scope, rather than confining itself to material originally contained in the author's doctoral dissertation.

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Governing America: The Revival of Political History. Julian E. Zelizer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. IBSN 978-0-691-15073-4. h/bk 416 pp. Price $35.00 (£39.99).

Governing America: The Revival of Political History is a recent addition to the growing corpus of studies on the resurgent field of political history. This work aims, in large part, to reconnect the state to its electoral underpinnings through an examination of national security. Authored by the eminent Julian E. Zelizer, a professor of history and public affairs at Princeton University, this provides a welcome look at the historiography of American politics. It examines not only historical events in American politics but also how pundits and academics have viewed those events. Zelizer aptly demonstrates their connections in a collection of seventeen essays (all previously published in other collections or peer-reviewed journals,), which analyze the complex dynamics of policy and politics. His introduction clearly states the purpose of this collection; to "promote a style of analysis that scholars, students, and general readers to grapple with and advance in the coming decades" (8). That is, Zelizer is as concerned with the methodologies used to study politics as he is with politics itself; the essays represent his "efforts to participate in the rebuilding of the important field of U.S. political history" (7).

The initial essays, under the heading "Thinking about the Field," deal with a critical evaluation of the historical understandings that guided American political history in the past two centuries. Zelizer conducts this review generally neutrally and authoritatively, always emphasizing the need for historians to "revitalize and reconceptualize political history" by dispensing "with outdated narratives" (32). In doing this, Zelizer claims "new conceptions of the path that links our past to the future" will be realized (32). This underscores Zelizer's primary interest in the "revival" of American political history. Though he provides a detailed review of historical events, including a fascinating revaluation of the role of fiscal conservatism played by liberal Democrats since Roosevelt's New Deal, Governing America largely centers on American politics and polices dating from the Johnson administration. A reader looking for a comprehensive, historical review of politics might be disappointed.

The next section, "Paying for Government: Taxes, Money, and Fiscal Restraint," consists of a number of essays written in the 1990s and early 2000s. These underscore Zelizer's interest in the "complex relationship between conservatism and U.S. state building" (169) and the development of deficit driven politics. These essays are, perhaps, the densest of a highly readable volume. Nevertheless, they are clear enough for a general reader and, though written well before the current economic woes, are prescient in their discussion of Americans' affinity for Social Security and Medicare yet general distaste for enhanced revenue.

Though each essay is valuable, perhaps the most interesting essays come from the third section "The Rules of the Game: The Politics of Process." If nothing else the essay "Without Restraint: Scandal and Politics in America" is as salacious as it is informative, detailing how political scandals grew from events limited in scope to "a driving force in politics [...] [scandals had never] been so pervasive as in the last three decades of the twentieth century" (232). Also of particular interest is the catalogue of expansions of executive power, starting with Franklin D. Roosevelt and reaching a zenith with George W. Bush. Though this essay was originally published only three years ago, in 2010, it surely would have benefited with an update or postscript detailing the moves of Barack Obama. As it is, Zelizer only includes an equivocation, stating that Obama made "important moves to distinguish himself from Bush" but "there is still minimal evidence that Obama will substantially roll back the gains in presidential power" (305).

Part IV -- "Politics and Policy: The Case of National Security" is a fitting to the conclusion to this collection. While there are numerous other works examining similar questions, Zelizer's is a unique contribution because it stresses "partisan interests, partisan ideologies, and inter-branch struggles" (308) were dominant forces in shaping current national security. The essays in this section provide a logical continuation to the preceding discussion on the Imperial Presidency, delivering a solid description of how an increasingly partisan electorate has allowed for a rightward trend in foreign policy: "By 2000, President George W. Bush and his top strategist Karl Rove would decide to ignore moderate voters on the grounds that Republicans could achieve bigger gains by pleasing the right wing" (349).

Governing America: The Revival of Political History is an important instrument to any person hoping to gain a better understanding of the revaluation of political history and the negotiation of the current political landscape of the United States. Both the lay reader and a student of political history would benefit by adding Zelizer's latest to his or her collection.

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