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Healing Secular Life: Loss and Devotion in Modern Turkey. Christopher Dole. Philadelphia, U. of Pennsylvania P., 2012. h/bk 299 pp. ISBN 978-0-8122-4416-8. Price $69.95.

The body of anthropological literature on Turkey is growing considerably. During the last two decades, anthropologists have started to examine the very dynamics and bases of the Turkish polity from different angles. However, despite these burgeoning studies on Turkey, the anthropology of medicine and its intersections with politics as well as the culture of Turkey are still scarce. In this vein, Christopher Dole's work provides a new framework to overcome this gap. At the intersection of medical and socio-political anthropology, Dole's work is quite exceptional in the sense that he successfully captures the intimate fragments and elements of social, cultural and political textures of Turkish polity in the time of agonizing years of 1990's Turkey. In other words, Dole focuses a very contentious subject: the religio-cultural healing practices of contemporary Turkey.

Under the secular order of Republican Turkey, the religious therapeutic practices are often subject to severe public criticisms and sometimes prone to criminal prosecution, as Dole pointed out. However, these healing practices survived throughout the years and are still prevalent. Having been introduced to the brief history of Turkish Republican secular reform and its suppression of certain Islamic practices, the reader would understand the difficult task Dole successfully undertook in his research. After introducing the background of main secular republican pillars of Turkish modernization, Dole focuses on the field of medicine as the most crystallized form of this secular modernization. He then brings the discussion of republican dreams and projects of "rational, scientific, secular" medicine into our attention through the story of Mustafa Kemal's personal doctor Dr. Refik Saydam and excerpts of a widely circulated journal of the time, *Ülkü's* vision of medicine for "new" Turkey.

In the following chapters of his diligent research, Dole offers a controversial yet thought-provoking framework for the study of Turkish secularism, which challenges the dominant paradigms of secular-Islamic dichotomy of Turkish polity. He concentrates on the margins of this evident but complex phenomenon of Turkish secularity by looking at

the religious healers and the people, who had been under their sphere of influence. Observers of Turkish politics might be familiar with, at the time of Dole's research in 1990s and early 2000s, Turkish public opinion was full of scandalous portrayals of such religious healers including self-claimed saints *(evliyalar),* variety of mediums and hodjas, who deal with jinns *(cinci hocalar).* In this context, Dole brings two particularly striking stories along with the other rich narratives to the reader's attention: Zǒhre Ana, a self-proclaimed Alevi saint and ibrahim, a *cinci hoca,* who calls himself a medium in the "modern" sense.

These two leading stories in the rich inventory of ethnographies reverberate throughout the book in order to elucidate the intricate and complex relationship between secularism and Islam in the context of Turkish modernity. By looking at two distinct but interrelated cases of religious healing, Dole engages in discussions of the secularism's politics of aesthetics and marketization of therapeutics of piety. These concurrent themes convey our attention into the unfolding historical fragments of suppressed practices and figures of the folk Islam via manifestation of religious healings as "sites of return" in contemporary Turkey.

Especially, in Zǒhre Ana's case, this return is more conspicuous. As a religious healer of an Alevi saint, Zǒhre Ana's legitimacy is in complete cooperation with the symbols of Kemalist ideology. Her public statements, her *dergah* (convent), her publications and even the saintly narrative of her genesis coincided with Kemalist symbolism. What we see in Zǒhre Ana's case is not simply an instrumental strategy of appealing to Kemalist symbols to protect herself from the public fury or state's persecution. In fact, she faced criminal prosecutions too although her case did not take substantial public attention compared to *cinci hocas.* However, what we see in this case an internalization of this Kemalist secularism and the transformation of it into a site of return of the suppressed elements of folk Islam through secularism's politics of aesthetics. More broadly, instead of focusing the obvious restrictive conditions of Turkish secularism and its limits to the communities, Dole prefers to emphasize how the secular symbols and secularism's politics of aesthetics can be a possible source of legitimacy and recreation for - as in Dole's terms - "those modalities of exilic religious life," which were once suppressed by the earlier Republican secular reforms.

These seemingly paradoxical, nay perplexing intertwinements of Turkish secularism nevertheless offer new opportunities to understand what is operating behind this phenomenon. To comprehend better what is functioning behind actually lies in its contrary form as Dole said: "To understand the politics of secularism in Turkey, one must understand its politics of piety" (44). Dole's emphasis on this approach is important because his ethnographic accounts link with the history of secular reform in Turkey. Therefore, it should not be wrong to say that to understand the history of secularism in Turkey, one must also understand its history of piety. The history of the forced closure of dervish lodges, saint tombs and Islamic hermitages in the early years of the Republic in the name of secularism connects with the backdrop of these stories in the book in a sense that, Dole implicitly denotes where the operating forces of Turkish secularism are in conversation with the religious symbols of folk Islam.

In the story of Ibrahim the *cinci hoca,* Dole casts another dimension to the discussions on religious healer. By paying attention to the most disdained figure of the time, Dole urges the reader to view the issue from another perspective. As a participant observer of the religious healing practices in Ibrahim's case, Dole discovers the anxiety of ethical concerns of Ibrahim, the *cinci hoca,* as a pious Muslim. Moreover, Dole highlights Ibrahim's successful adaptation to the new market conditions through professionalization and meticulous care of his job as a religious healer. Widespread considerations of these religious healing practices as backward, quackish and dangerous for the secular regime and corrupt for the Islamic *sunni* orthodoxy, the discussions on the *cinci hoca* respond the otherwise through the generative forces of the capitalist market. Seeking legitimacy and struggling to survive under the conditions of an authoritative secular order and a harsh capitalist market, the religious healers and their practices may paradoxically appeal to the orthodox piety, secular aesthetics and business ethics at the same time.

One of the shortcomings of the book is its failure to embed the detailed ethnographies of religious healing practices in the turbulent political setting of the time. The years that Dole conducted his field research were the most contentious moments, and the main ethnographic figures of his analysis were some of the most controversial characters of the 1990s and 2000s Turkey. Indeed, the Turkish political scene was the stage of an acrimonious Islamic-secular controversy, which triggered

a process of long-term military involvement into politics, also known as February 28 post-modern *coup d'état*. Even though Dole's ethnography was definitely at the heart of these events, the book does not discuss the 28 February Process, in which the secular military unseated the Islamic party from the office. Readers should have been informed about the coup process and their reverberations in those discussions. All in all, apart from this important negligence and lack of political setting, Dole's theoretically rich discussion shows how history of Turkish secularism provides new dimensions for broader analyses on Turkish polity. In this case, Christopher Dole's exceptional study fills an obvious gap, also contributes further to the corpus of ethnographic work and presents new opportunities of academic and intellectual accounts for future anthropologists and social scientists.

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