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Elifcan Karacan. *Remembering the 1980 Turkish Military Coup d'état: Memory, Violence, and Trauma.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016, 202 pages.

With its deep effects of society and memory, the Turkish military coup of September 12, 1980 has been a much discussed topic in memoirs and newspapers, and on television programs, yet academically it remains underanalyzed. In her book,¹ Elifcan Karacan delves into the topic and analyzes the memory of September 12, 1980. After a theoretical and methodological introduction in the first three chapters, the author lays out the historical backdrop of the 1970s and early 1980s—highlighting especially the military coups of March 12, 1971 and September 12, 1980—while in the fourth chapter she looks at these coups' effects on the revolutionary movement. In the fifth and sixth chapters, Karacan traces the revolutionaries' recollections of the coup d'état of 1980 based on research conducted between 2009 and 2013. This analysis of memories from the early 2000s focuses on biographies and commemorations, as well as on the ritualization of the past. The author's personal interest in the topic, stemming from her own family's experiences, has led her to pursue the personal memories of others and to question the collectivities within which they have been constructed.

Departing from Maurice Halbwach's theory of collective memory, Karacan handles memory "as a social reconstruction" and personal stories "as products of society," emphasizing the social structures and group belongings that shape remembrance and forgetting (pp. 18–21). The past is not a static entity, and the present redesigns the memory of the past; therefore, in her search for present frameworks, the author utilizes a comparative methodology that compares and contrasts the memories of the revolutionaries of the 1970s who migrated to Germany with those who stayed in Turkey. Karacan conducted nineteen interviews—ten in Germany and nine in Turkey—with revolutionaries of the 1970s who have continued to engage in politics via a variety of political organizations or NGOs. Her study asserts that the difference in these two sample groups' memories pertaining to the 1980 coup d'état stems from the dissimilarity of the present conditions in which they live.

In analyzing the memory of September 12, Karacan questions how society has remembered and forgotten the military coup and its effects, how the trauma that the coup inflicted on the revolutionaries has operated, and how remembered wounds and silent moments have been structured and restructured in the present. Comparatively investigating the memories of exiles in Germany and revolutionaries still resident in Turkey, she aims to detect the

1 Elifcan Karacan's book is based on her dissertation, which was submitted to the University of Siegen, Germany, in 2014.

outlines along which the collective memory is reconstructed, past stories are narrated, and individual memories are molded through the lenses of different revolutionary groups. Apart from interviews and biographical inquiry, the author also participated as an observer in events currently organized by the revolutionaries of the 1970s—such as commemorations, meetings, demonstrations, and conferences—in order to better be able to decipher the operation of memory. The answers to the questions she posed, aided by the further investigation offered through such participation, unearthed not only common concepts of and approaches to remembering the military coup of 1980, but also differing perspectives stemming from differing present conditions.

For Karacan, “[t]he memory of 12 September is above all the memory of violence” (p. 139). In analyzing how the revolutionaries of the 1970s remember the trauma of the military coup collectively, she encountered a number of common concepts of recollection. Leftist groups in Turkey and Germany organize commemorations for the persecuted and commemorate the anniversaries of significant political events in a manner reminiscent of religious ceremony. Both in such events as these and in their biographical narratives, they consecrate the past by reframing a mythology of the fallen. This “sacralization” is based on a “dialectic of victimization and heroization” in which the revolutionaries persecuted by the junta of 1980 are remembered not only as immortal heroes devoted to the revolutionary cause, but also as innocent victims martyred for their dedication to that cause (pp. 118, 124). Ironically, Karacan relates how the participants of the study themselves were unwilling to be denoted as “victims” of the period, but instead desired to be termed “revolutionaries” (pp. 18–19). Despite this common stance, one of the prominent characteristics of the memory that has developed around September 12 is the idea of “victimization.”

Memory operates in peculiar but predictable ways. Political stance and group belonging influence the ways in which the past is remembered or forgotten. As such, Karacan’s research shows how different political groups highlight different moments and people from the past in their anniversaries, commemorations, meetings, and narratives. By constructing diverse perspectives on the past, all groups strive to bring forth a shared narrative cement that will bring group members together, thus fortifying collective identity in the present. Moreover, the exiles in Germany and revolutionaries still resident in Turkey also adopt different attitudes towards the past: while, for the exiles, the revolutionary movement of the 1970s and the debris of September 12 ended when they were forced to migrate, the revolutionaries—who have since been living under a constitutional and governmental system instituted by the junta—have lacked a similar closure or rupture of memory. Therefore, quite differently from the exiles in Germany, the revolutionaries in Turkey tend to emphasize the governmental repression ongoing since 1980. According to Karacan, for the participants of her study in Turkey, the

memory of September 12 is still fluid, taking and retaking shape according to recent political events. For the participants in Germany, however, the memory of September 12 froze at the moment when they had to leave Turkey.

In addition to the differing past perspectives of different revolutionary collectivities, there is one more contender in the process of memory: the state. The Turkish state has attempted to construct an official collective memory regarding the military coup of 1980, one that has competed with the narratives of the revolutionaries. In discussing this matter, Karacan utilizes Louis Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses in order to address both those state institutions that oppressed the revolutionary movement in 1980 and those state instruments that have ideologically manipulated the social framework since. The tension between the mnemonic practices of the state and of the revolutionaries has become manifest in the construction of places of memory. Here, Karacan analyzes the production by the state of the Ulucanlar Prison Museum and by the revolutionaries of the September 12 Shame Museum (*12 Eylül Utañ Müzesi*) together with these museums' diverging effects on the reconstruction of memory. The museums represent different translations of the past from their producers' differing perspectives, both reframing memory for present needs. On the one hand, through the production of the Ulucanlar Prison Museum, the state has reconstructed a docile past, one that excludes a substantial part of the prison's history, such as revolutionary insurrections and imprisoned Kurdish MPs, pruning the place's historical meaning so as to leave out inconvenient historical facts and emphasize a historically and politically baseless "victimization." On the other hand, the September 12 Shame Museum, initiated by the Revolutionary '78s Federation (*Devrimci 78'liler Federasyonu*), also presents a restructured version of history that attempts to construct a collective memory of September 12, but this time one in which the oppression of the junta is presented via the "heroization" and "victimization" of revolutionaries. By thus concretizing the memory of the trauma in a museum, the revolutionaries aim to produce a shared uniform interpretation of the past and reinforce their own collective identity.

Throughout her study, Karacan unfortunately suffers from a mild case of tunnel vision inasmuch as she tends to ignore the relevant practices of remembering and forgetting particularly in the 1990s, prior to the time on which her study focuses. She mentions "a long period of silence in society" about the violence and trauma of September 12 (p. 192), and indeed, it is true that mnemonic production relating to the 1970s and 1980s flourished in the early twenty-first century, creating the effusion of memory that Karacan's book traces. Yet even so, in the 1990s, with the end of military rule and a moderation of the authoritarian regime, the leftist movement in Turkey experienced an awakening that resulted in a fresh remembering and reconstitution of the collective memory of the 1970s and early 1980s. At this time, a decent number of memoirs, literary works, reviews, and commemorations were produced and organized by revolutionaries, even as

ideological reviews began to be produced by the state, in the process respectively mythologizing and denigrating the revolutionary movement of the 1970s that was harshly halted by the September 12 coup d'état. Karacan's book succeeds in its explanation of the impact of present conditions on memory, and thus in interpreting the reasons behind the concurrent memory discrepancies of different social groups. In achieving this, the book benefits from an adequate theoretical background that starts with Halbwachs' theory of collective memory and proceeds with additional theories of social memory by Jan Assman, Aleida Assman, Paul Connerton, Andreas Huyssen, and Pierre Nora, among others. Nevertheless, these theories are only utilized in a limited way. Furthermore, because Karacan's study glosses over the 1990s, it fails to adequately demonstrate the temporal change that occurred in memory between the 1990s and the 2000s. If remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same coin, as Sigmund Freud asserts and Karacan acknowledges (p. 46), then a different kind of memory regarding September 12 operated in the remembered and silenced moments of the 1990s, rather than, as the author states, a complete silence. Although this period lacked such spaces of memory as museums, which characterized the effusion of memory occurring in the early 2000s, the memory of September 12 was already operative in the 1990s, albeit framed by the particular sociopolitical conditions of the time.

In its analysis of collective memory and its emphasis on collective memory's presentist character, Karacan's book examines in detail the memory of September 12 and the present conditions which have shaped that memory. Being a slightly modified version of Karacan's dissertation, the book still bears the hallmarks of that genre rather than employing the style of a book, and so could use further conversion. Nevertheless, Karacan's is one of the few substantial studies on the memory of the September 12 coup d'état, one that is based on thorough research and a suitable theoretical background, and that is strengthened by the author's own personal involvement in the topic.

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Bilge Yeşil. *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State*. Oxfordshire: University of Illinois Press, 2016, xi + 212 pages.

Bilge Yeşil's book is a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's media system and its reconfiguration under changing dynamics among the state, the military, and