

of the Armenian language, Yaghoobi cites *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (1988) by Esat Uras—likely unaware that Uras has been identified as producing denialist writing.

Readers may very well find one aspect of the book's content about transnational culture—engagement of primary sources versus personal narrative—as more relevant over the other for their own research needs. Additionally, *verants'ughi* may see its own transformation as the rubric's scope is tested and its lineaments refined through future applications. The final definition of *verants'ughi* Yaghoobi provides is based on the notion of sharing stories to “empower” others (p. 221). In that spirit, let readers ultimately feel empowered to continue the worthwhile conversations that Yaghoobi sets forth in *Transnational Culture*.

doi:10.1017/S0020743823001150

Voices That Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey

Marlene Schäfers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022). Pp. 240. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226823058

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Representation is not always the liberating force that it is heralded to be. Representation comes with conflicts, disappointments, complications, as many anthropologists and feminist scholars have shown. Yet still, raising one's voice is often sutured to acquiring rights and representation, taken as conditions of progress. Anthropologists alike have been invited to raise our voices, reflected in the theme of the annual American Anthropological Association meeting in 2020. In her wonderfully written and theoretically rich book, *Voices That Matter*, Marlene Schäfers disrupts the *a priori* valence often given to voice, drawing on fieldwork conducted between 2011 and 2012. Voice, she argues, is not the universal pathway to representation unequivocally valued in contemporary liberal governance, especially when women are concerned.

Kurdish women *dengbêjs* in Wan, Northern Kurdistan—artists who write, perform, circulate a genre of storytelling through singing and spoken word—lead us through what voices *do* and how they *come into being* rather than what they *are*. Schäfers treads a very careful balance portraying women within very rich Kurdish oral traditions, which are often seen as the domain of men, neither as victims of a patriarchal culture nor as perfect liberatory figures whose voices render them so. With her interlocutors, Schäfers prudently attends to voice itself as a source of political potential and disappointment. Voice is both enabler and culprit. Social and even financial recognition can become available to Kurdish women through voice. Voice can also engender new conflicts and vulnerabilities. Both ring true in Schäfers' nuanced ethnographic account, demanding attention to both the gendered form and content of Kurdish artists' voices. We see this complex picture unveiled through five lines of thought that shape this review: voice as form, voice as affective technology, voice and self-making, voice as property, and voice as object of disappointment.

Schäfers first introduces us to voice as form: how voices sound and resonate, as well as how they are articulated and mediated. Rather than merely providing a background that represents a monolithic Kurdish collectivity, the forms that voices take on are manifold. Voices move to bring out certain kinds of emotions, which both constitute and are constituted by



the vocal form. As we pay careful attention to voice as form, conceptions of voice as direct expressions of interior will or direct representations of an imagined collectivity become complicated. Instead, their potency lies in the affective work they do, a continually moving feat that is not fixed by any means.

Having established voice as a mobile force, Schäfers then shows how this mobility works as a technology of affect. Voices circulate and take lives of their own through mediation. And if so, audio technologies go beyond neutrally transporting voice: they contribute to the affective work of vocal form. Cassette tapes, tape recorders, and cell phones make possible new sonic intimacies, extending the expressive reach of voice, like sharing and articulating pain, as we see with Schäfers' interlocutors. Schäfers also weaves a historical account of Soviet-sponsored Radio Yerevan into her ethnography, presenting radio broadcasting as a medium that was heralded to do a different kind of social labor, envisaging a Kurdish collective identity. In this sense, affective technologies are not stable either. They endow voice with different kinds of potency.

Nor is "the self" a stable unit in *Voices That Matter* thanks to Schäfers' attention to pain and voice. Pain trains the voice and the body, and this training has been transforming in conjunction with changing gendered perspectives. Often, for older generations, for example, Kurdish *dengbêjs'* voices serve to express collective pain, loss, exile, or migration, all connoting the entanglement of the self with care for others. Yet in younger generations, voice becomes a vehicle to also express one's own personal suffering, entangled with younger artists' aspirations to raise their profiles. Importantly, these transformations of the self and pain challenge the liberal feminist notions of self-representation as emancipation. One point I was curious about, though, concerns the interstices between vocal form and pain: in a context where the affective resonance of the sonic is so important, where does the author stand? I wondered if Schäfers could have included her positionality with the vocal form, which might have extended the complicated picture she presents beyond the individual and collective as the subject of representation. This, however, does not detract from the book's impressive framing. Rather, Schäfer powerfully shows how the ever-transforming relationships between the self and affect can produce new vulnerabilities in a context where the stakes of public voice are high for women.

Another line of argumentation that lays bare these stakes concerns authorship and property of voice. Schäfers maintains that Kurdish women's claims to voice as property, drawing on liberal property logics, are desired yet complicated. Claim-making over voice is shaped by a landscape of expanding Kurdish music markets, heightened by historical appropriations of Kurdish music by Turkish artists enabled by authoritarian Turkish politics, or "stolen" repertoires by *dengbêj* men. Authorship over voice becomes a concern and desire for women, giving new value to the vocal form, while reifying it as property that can belong to a single individual—a challenging task in an oral landscape relying on complex genealogies. Challenging liberal conceptions of voice's possession and whose agency it carries, individual and collective authorship, in this book, stand in tension to each other.

As authorship does not cement voice, nor does its enunciation. How do different audiences, inhabiting Turkey's political landscape, affect the making of voices? Schäfers hones in on the political hopes and desires, but also the disappointments, imbued in women's voices. She conducted her fieldwork at a time of the Turkish government's "Kurdish opening," a hopeful moment where liberal representations of Kurdish women were celebrated conditionally. This paves the way for women *dengbêjs* from Wan to "raise their voices" in a concert at a university in Istanbul for International Women's Day. However, they are told by university administration to highlight "women's" issues and empowerment over issues drawing on Kurdish politics. The artists also feel the need to make their performances more "digestible" to the audience by picking certain tones, durations, and rhythms over others. In this sense, public audibility is not inherently a source of liberation. Nor is it during a rally on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Wan,


where women's performances are not given the time and space they demanded, causing disappointment. Overall, politics calibrate voices, and voice is far from capacious as a metaphor.

Voices That Matter thus performs two levels of impressive work. On the one hand, it detangles liberal equations of voice, representation, and agency. On the other, it provides an important critique of Turkish feminism, bringing about the limits of taking voice as a political metaphor which veils the racialized politics that curtailed representation in the first place. The book therefore provides ample grounds to be reflexive about anthropological methodologies as well. In a podcast episode with the author, anthropologist Armanç Yıldız (2023) brings up the repercussions for a critical perspective on voice in relation to anthropology itself, challenging the notion that ethnographers, for example, "raise their voices" for their interlocutors. Schäfers uncovers many ways in which we can think with, and perhaps against, voice across Kurdish studies, ethnomusicology, Middle Eastern studies, anthropology, and more. With its lucid writing and clear argumentation, the book is highly recommended to undergraduate and graduate students. I am looking forward to assigning and thinking with *Voices That Matter* in the future.

doi:10.1017/S0020743823001307

Digital Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Deception, Disinformation and Social Media

Marc Owen Jones (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022). Pp. 272. \$40.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780197636633

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In *Digital Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Deception, Disinformation and Social Media*, Marc Owen Jones brings together more than a decade of research to document how authoritarian rulers, corporate hacks, and foreign governments have corrupted and constrained the MENA region's digital spaces. The author's critical approach to the production of online discourses, keen sense of regional political dynamics, and mastery of a wide range of data analysis tools ensure that this pathbreaking book will inspire no shortage of future research. Furthermore, Jones's reflections on the process of exploring this new frontier in Middle East Studies provide a valuable guide for those wishing to follow in his footsteps.

The bulk of *Digital Authoritarianism* consists of episodic investigations into the scale and origins of MENA-region deception. Jones employs "deception" as a catch-all term encompassing the "willful manipulation of the information space" to manufacture, suppress, inflate, or obscure politically and socially relevant discourses (p. 40), a useful alternative to the more clinical concept of "information operations." "Disinformation" constitutes a particular subset of deception efforts, namely an intentional effort to spread false or distorted information. Across several widely ranging vignettes, Jones makes the case that the Persian Gulf has entered a "post-truth moment" in which state efforts at deception have undermined citizens' ability to organize in online spaces, or perhaps even to *think* about dissent on or offline.

The centerpiece of Jones's investigation is chapter 6, "The Gulf Crisis Never Happened," which discusses how the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates sought to marshal domestic and global public opinion against the Qatari monarchy as part of a broader geopolitical struggle. Set against the backdrop of the two countries' economic blockade of