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BOOK REVIEWS

YAEL NAVARO-YASHIN, *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012). Pp. 296. $89.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.

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When visitors arrive in the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC), a state unrecognized internationally except by Turkey, they are given the option of inserting a slip of paper into their passports to have stamped on entry and exit (a TRNC-stamped passport would preclude future entrance into Greece or southern Cyprus). Afterwards, this paper has no legal value; they can toss it out or, perhaps, keep it as a souvenir of their trip to a pseudo-state. For anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin, the offering of these slips of paper constitutes an ironic and revealing gesture by which the TRNC officials negate "the existence of their state in the very act of asserting it through their uniforms and entry procedures" (p. 114). This little slip of paper, along with the catalogues compiled by the TRNC Maps Department listing newly "Turkey-fied" place names next to the former Greek, Latin, or Turkish-Cypriot ones, the gigantic Turkish flags painted on mountainsides, and the abandoned cars, photo albums, and homes of Greek-Cypriots, are precisely the kinds of objects foregrounded in Navaro-Yashin's seminal study of the affective aftermath of war. The centering of melancholic objects and spaces, rather than melancholic people (their subjectivities and testimonies), constitutes the key methodological innovation of this ethnography. The author, however, uses affect theory and new materialism with the intention of complementing, not debunking, anthropology's traditionally human-centered, discursive, and interpretive research practice.

The fieldwork on which this resonant ethnography is based was concluded just prior to a watershed moment in Cyprus' post-partition history: the sudden opening in April 2003 of border checkpoints allowing Turkish-Cypriots to cross relatively freely into the southern, internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus (what has become de facto the "Greek side"), and Greek-Cypriots to enter northern Cyprus. The following year saw the United Nations hold a referendum aimed at ending the division of the island by forming a United Republic of Cyprus (a federation of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot states); the referendum, which had to be ratified by both states for unification to proceed, was strongly supported by Turkish-Cypriots (65%) but rejected by Greek-Cypriots (only 24% voted in favor). *The Make-Believe Space* provides an ethnographic snapshot of the period right before these critical events. The book takes stock of the heavy emotive load that had accumulated following intercommunal violence on the island between 1963 and 1974 (chiefly perpetrated by Greek-Cypriots), the failed Greek-Cypriot military coup in 1974, and finally Turkey's invasion of the island in the same year, which culminated in the partition of the bicommunal Republic of Cyprus (established in 1960 after the end of British colonial rule) and population exchange along ethnic lines. The subject of this book is neither the seismic opening of the border in 2003 after almost forty years, nor the mass demonstrations against Rauf Denktaş' repressive pro-Turkey TRNC government during the years preceding the 2003 opening. Yet, in charting the affective ground from which these events emerged, this highly original study challenges us to rethink the political outside of the narrow straightjacket to which it is so often confined.

Literature on the "Cyprus problem" is dominated by works of political science framed around concepts of nationalism and ethnicity (and thus centered on "Greek"–"Turkish" relations). Guided by the concerns of her informants, Navaro-Yashin chose to concentrate instead on the tensions that have developed *among* "Turks" in postwar Cyprus yet been obscured by essentializing political discourse and academic writing. Her ethnography predominantly presents the viewpoint of the Turkish-Cypriots, who, feeling subsumed by the large numbers of Turkish settlers, refer to themselves as the "Last of the Mohicans." She describes their disdain for the mainland Turkish newcomers, as well as their often nostalgic feelings toward their former Greek-Cypriot neighbors. That the complexity of affect in relation to homeland cannot be reduced to Greek vs. Turk is demonstrated by Turkish-Cypriots' ambivalence toward obtaining Republic of Cyprus passports to which they are entitled. The passport, which enables them to travel abroad (except to Turkey) as citizens of a recognized state, promises an escape route from their "open-air prison." Applying for one asserts a (shared) Cypriot autochthony (after decades of imposed Turkey-fication), but also could feel like a betrayal: a "going Greek."

The Make-Believe Space is organized around two broad and interrelated themes that together evoke the melancholic, irritable, and tentative ambience of life in postwar northern Cyprus. The first concerns the materiality of sovereignty and the affects of administration. The TRNC might be an illegitimate state, "made-up" as Turkish-Cypriots repeatedly noted to the author, but the "phantasmatic" projections of statehood—through the trappings of administration (passport controls, civil service, law system, etc.) and transformations of the built environment—have generated all too real feelings of confinement, annulment, and irony. The second focus of the book is the haunting of northern Cyprus by objects and spaces left behind by Greek-Cypriots and now used by Turkish-Cypriots. Navaro-Yashin argues that the "phantomic" presence of expropriated property and possessions can be detected in all social, political, legal, and economic transactions in northern Cyprus. The experience of "ruination" involved, for instance, in living in a house formerly belonging to Greek-Cypriots or moving around the abject space of the border with its perduring rubbish generates discomfort and melancholy (*maraz*). The author insightfully points out that use of the affectively charged term *ganimet,* or "loot," to describe such objects and spaces, constitutes self-criticism regarding the morally problematic (if institutionalized) practice of taking over other people's properties, as well as a key idiom for critiquing the corruption of contemporary political administrations. These affectual materialities are not neutral or untouched by human subjectivity (as a radical object-centered approach might posit) but marked by historical contingency and political specificity.

A curious oversight in *The Make-Believe Space* is a lack of systematic engagement with Cyprus' colonial past as well as with colonial and postcolonial scholarship. The colonial legacy is treated briefly in the section related to mapping practices on the island. Yet, one wonders about other ways that colonial sovereignty was inscribed in this environment and embodied in material artifacts, such as roads and other engineering projects, colonial architecture (administrative buildings, schools, prisons, villas, etc.), sites of violence, electricity grids, photographs, military bases, archives, censuses, and English-language print culture. How do these materialities and spaces contribute to the ambience of northern Cyprus today? How have they been entangled with, or perhaps become submerged by, the debris produced by intercommunal conflict and the symbolic and physical architecture of subsequent state-building? Turning from empirical to more theoretical concerns, one might note that colonial and postcolonial studies also remain largely untapped in this study despite significant methodological overlaps. The theorizing of the colonial archive, for instance, shifted discussion from text and discourse (as ideology, representation, source) to practices of documentation and the social production of knowledge, bringing to the fore issues of materiality, place, and affect. Recent research on technology, media (especially photography), and infrastructure in colonial contexts has also

strongly underscored materiality and affect through a nonrepresentational emphasis on sensory experience in spatial contexts and human/nonhuman interaction.

The Make-Believe Space is a beautifully written book that engages in the subtle theoretical and ethnographic work of limning affective registers and probing human-object relations. The carefully drawn ethnographic portraits treat northern Cypriots' experience of discomfort, confinement, loss, and abjection in relation to the melancholic objects and environments that surround them with great sensitivity and respect. The relevance of Navaro-Yashin's study extends far beyond the reaches of this divided island. At the same time, this ethnography definitively demonstrates the quality of theoretical research emerging from such irritable and haunted geographies.

KIMBERLY HART, *And Then We Work for God: Rural Sunni Islam in Western Turkey* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013). Pp. 304. $25.00 cloth, $24.95 paper, $24.95 e-book.

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To ask a city dweller in Istanbul or Ankara about Turkish village life (*köy hayatı*) is to invite one of two standard responses: disdain or nostalgia. Urban dismissal and romance of the rural are opposite sides of the same coin of modernization in Turkey. For the urbanite, the rural is the constitutive Other of modern life, both longed for and abjured. Rural space is simultaneously idealized as the seat of authentic "culture" and demonized as the locus of problematic "tradition." Concomitantly, the rural bears an ambivalent relationship to the nation, as both its point of origin and its repressed past. Above all, the urban image of the rural is fixed and homogeneous. According to this image, the rural past that the venture of modernization discards must remain singular and unchanged. From such a perspective, the rural villager is necessarily a subaltern who cannot speak to the realities of contemporary life.

In *And Then We Work for God*, a vivid new ethnography of two villages in the mountainous Aegean region of western Turkey, anthropologist Kimberly Hart effectively explodes such images of rural stasis and homogeneity. She does so in reference to the transformations of Islamic practice and Muslim community—the emergence of new forms of orthodoxy and temporality—that have animated and troubled village life over the past several decades. By the end of the book, any lingering notion of the rural as a space of mere recalcitrance or indifference in relation to national and global transformations of Islam is impossible to maintain.

Hart's book is by no means the first anthropological treatment of rural Turkey—on the contrary, it partakes in and reorients a rich tradition of Turkish village ethnographies. Works by anthropologists such as Carol Delaney and Paul Stirling are now regarded as classics in the field, and the Turkish state funded and fostered its own ethnographies of rural Turkey during the early decades of the Republic. That said, the anthropology of Turkey in recent decades has taken on a decidedly urban bent, with particular focus on Istanbul, and Hart is surely justified in writing against "the Istanbul-centric assumption—usually unacknowledged and untested—that the city is the relevant location of all study" (p. 24). Indeed, Hart is one of the first ethnographers of rural Turkey to incorporate the lessons of research in and on Turkey's cities, even as she challenges the presuppositions of this urban anthropology.