

THE FRAMING OF 11 SEPTEMBER IN THE TURKISH MEDIA: MODER(N)ATING TURKEY'S ORIENTAL IDENTITY

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INTRODUCTION

IN WHAT FOLLOWS I FIRST DISCUSS the orientalist worlding of the world where the world is conceived as divided into ontologically distinct and hierarchically ordered camps—the foundation of the “clash of civilizations” thesis. Through a postcolonial, deconstructive critique I then demonstrate the hybridity of the opposed camps such that cultural difference always-already inhabits the alleged ontological unity or purity of the opposed identities. I argue that the projected difference of the *Other* is actually within the *Self* and how U.S. President George W. Bush’s encratic¹ doctrine of “you are either with us or against us” is harming not only “them” but “us” as well. My main focus here is the framing of 11 September in the Turkish media, which highlighted the fear surrounding the ambivalence of Turkey’s identity as the oriental “other,” and which set in motion efforts to moderate and/or to re-modernize its oriental image in line with the imagined teleology of the orientalist imaginary. I then pose the need for a different approach that is capable of dealing with cultural difference, that is to say with the difference-within, without domesticating it into the externalized pole of an always-already familiar binary opposition. I refer to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s “radical democracy” and Jacques Derrida’s “democracy to come” formulations as attempts that respond to just such a need, and argue that a radical and dialogically plural democracy that is open to its own otherness and alterity is needed badly today in the whole terrain of the Occident/Orient opposition.

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ORIENTALIST "WORLDING" OF THE WORLD

In his path-breaking work on orientalism that led to the creation of the new field of postcolonial studies, Edward Said has pointed out how the orientalist worlding of the world imagined an ontological/categorial/essential distinction between the Occident and the Orient. Accordingly, whatever the West is (for example modern, civilized, developed) the Orient is not (that is, not modern, not civilized, not developed). The characteristics attributed to the Orient are thus West-centric projections, the result of an active othering by the West. In making such characterizations, one adopts—one has already adopted—a Western point of view, and installs the West as the sovereign subject of history. In other words, one sees through the sovereign eye/I of the West. The otherness of the Orient is not radically Other, an unknown about which our (Western) knowledge is ignorant, but, an otherness that is the product of a colonizing and domesticating appropriation.² We always-already know what the Orient is all about: it is the *opposite* of what we consider ourselves to be (not modern, not civilized, not developed). It is on the basis of this knowledge that comprehends the other as its binary opposition that the West makes universality claims for its knowledge. In this economy-of-the-same there is no room for a radically different Other that does not know its proper place, one that does not fit its domestic representation. Jacques Derrida has argued that this logic of binary opposition is characteristic of "Western metaphysics," and that it is from within this particular binary opposition that the Orient as the proper other of the West is projected. The properly identified other, in other words, is not outside the Western imaginary, but is projected onto the outside from within. What it depicts as the outside, where the other belongs, is *internal* to its representational logic of binary opposition.

The ontology of the Orient thus involves an epistemic violence, a violence in "knowing the Orient" that obliterates the Other and subjects its very being to the sovereignty of the West in what Jacques Derrida has called a "white mythology."³ The "white" of white mythology refers not only to the white-washed eurocentrism of such worlding, but also to the blanking of the radically other so as to allow the Western writing of his(s)tory on lands that are epistemologically cleansed of aboriginal peoples and their stories, as illustrated by the European notion of "discovery." An idea like "Columbus' discovery of America," for example, makes absolutely no sense without this epistemic erasure. But the consequent cleansing of the natives, for example in the "Westward march of civilization" in North America, is congruent with their already-accomplished epistemic cleansing. As Ashis Nandy puts it, this is colonialism that colonizes minds in addition to bodies and lands.⁴ The Western history of discovery and conquest, of colonialism and imperialism, of development and modernization, and of corporate globalization are all founded on this epistemic violence, and it should come as no surprise that they continue to beget violence on the ground.

The teleological conception of modernity is also based on this epistemic violence and has provided the framework by reference to which the

human misery that accompanied this capitalized His(s)tory, and the violence unleashed on the pre-destined “losers,” are explained away and thrown into its proverbial thrash can along with the “losers” themselves.⁵ In an article citing the historian Arnold Toynbee and referring to “those who lose in their struggle against the advanced civilization,” Gündüz Aktan, a columnist and former ambassador, refers to “their cause whose failure is a foregone conclusion” and explains how this makes death the only thing that awaits them.⁶ In an article entitled “Can the Taliban Live Together with the Internet?” Mehmet Altan, an academic who also writes a column in a major newspaper, notes that as the speed of globalization picks up, the screams heard around the world are also multiplying. Yet, choosing “the method of looking from the great window of history” he reminds us that “while passing from the Feudal Era to the Industrial Era” humanity also experienced great pain and misery, and maintains that “the historical process is cleaning up using its own logic,” that “globalization is a new moment in the process of history and cannot be stopped,” and, finally, that “it will be inevitable that those who cannot march in step are eliminated.”⁷ Clearly, history is his. The logic that Altan refers to, the telos of His(s)tory as expressed by the notion of progress makes “his” sovereignty predestined in the same way that his proper “others” are predestined to lose. This, in a nutshell, is what the “clash” thesis is all about. Within this framework “9/11” has become the latest and the most spectacular pretext for a cheering-squad trying to shore up the lately sagging confidence and the unraveling of the antagonism that sustained “the West” against its other(s) in the past. We could briefly mention the expansion of Europe and NATO to include former “enemies,” and the rising tide of a global and culturally diverse wave of protests against corporate globalization as signifiers of this unraveling. It is in this context that the shifting borders between “us” and “them” are redrawn in an attempt to fix it once and for all, and we are called on to prepare for the final decisive battle between “good” and “evil” where the (Middle) Eastern identity of “evil” as the Other of the West is a foregone conclusion.

The self-serving designation “modern” already tells us that the aim of His(s)tory is the West and serves to reassure us. And, once again, the characterization of different others *who are our contemporaries* as “backward,” as “belonging to the past,” as “remnants of the past,” or as “millennial losers” makes no sense and is illogical without the teleological epistemic violence that erases them from our present and projects them to our own (Western) past. This is the colonizing appropriation of the Other that led Ashis Nandy to refer to modernity as “the second form of colonization.”⁸ With its teleology that orders difference in the proper hierarchical order as if by a natural fate, modernist writing of history is decidedly monocultural and feels ill at ease in the presence of cultural difference. The epistemic violence at the root of the orientalist worlding of the world lets us know in no uncertain terms that there is no room for improperly different others in His(s)tory. This has been the gist of the order emanating from the various “New World Order”s from the time of discovery and conquest through classical colonialism to Hitler’s new world order to the era

of development and modernization, and to the ongoing corporate globalization. Not only non-modern Islam, but those who lead a way of life that does not fit "his" economy of the same such as "primitive" natives, anybody who subsists on what they produce without becoming a part of the global capitalist economy, for example Third World women who produce much of the world's food to feed their family with gardening, etc., are marked for elimination in the victorious march of His(s)tory. The relentless attack on the continuing existence of "non-modern cultures," based on the monocultural thrust of the modernist outlook, is but a continuation of the ideology of western colonization. Modernism today provides the framework of a colonizing project.

HYBRIDITY AND AMBIVALENCE: THE UNCANNY PRESENCE OF THE OTHER WITHIN

The various "post"s like poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, post(modern)-Marxism, and post(modern)-feminism have variously challenged the universalist certainties and modernist teleology of the orientalist worlding of the world. The unified, unilinear, and universal history of modernism was exposed as his story, an interested representational tool of exclusion and colonization. The universal validity claim of its scientific reason was shown to rest on internal, and hence culturally specific, assumptions and measures of validity. In short it was exposed as one story among others, a tall-tale that represents itself as much larger than its relative in(ternal)-significance.

However, deconstruction also revealed that the "post" of these critiques did not, and could not, move us to a pure beyond uncontaminated by what it leaves behind. The simple argument that we are now in postmodernity, for example, presupposes the very teleological notion of historical development that is under question, to the extent that it implies a progression from the premodern to the modern to the postmodern. As François Lyotard has pointed out, "this idea of a linear chronology is itself perfectly modern."⁹ Such a "moving beyond" is already built into the logic of binary opposition that informs orientalism. It does not help us to overcome it. Consider, as another example, that the refusal of colonialism has usually taken the form of a nationalism that speaks in the name of an indigeneous national culture. Hence the familiar schema of a struggle for national liberation leading to national independence. And yet, as Ashis Nandy and Partha Chatterjee point out, nationalism is a derivative discourse that derives from the colonizer's view of history.¹⁰ It tells the story of the colonial state's accession to the narrative of modernity, marking its induction into modernity, into ideas of development, into historical time out of premodern tradition and stagnation. In a similar way, orientalism portrays the Orient as completely external to the Occident, or as in the clash of civilizations scenario, as a completely different civilization untouched by modernity. And yet, the Third World of today, the designated other of the modern First World, is made up of former colonies of the latter. They are not the product of a non-modern, non-Western culture frozen in time. They are the product of a history of colonialism and imperialism, that is to say *they are the products of modernity*. When the

drunken Whisky Sisodia says, in Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*, "The trouble with the English is that their history happened overseas, so they don't know what it means," this is what he's getting at.¹¹

Deconstruction has thus shown that to the extent that these critiques with the prefix "post" are valuable and relevant, this is not because they have enabled us to move to a pure beyond—that is the definition of "other" inside the binary opposition, which is in question—but because they have been able to displace and dislocate that binary opposition, relocating difference, otherness and alterity within the self, not expelling it to the safety of an external other. Jacques Derrida's new term *differance* is designed to point out the difference within the term difference itself, and refers to both a spatial and a temporal difference.¹² Temporal difference, or spacing in time, means that full presence is constantly deferred and that being is always-already open to becoming (different). In other words, there can be no stable and fixed being that does not harbor difference, one that is not in the process of becoming different. The implications of this for an orientalism that attempts to freeze and mummify being in binary oppositions like West/East, modern/traditional, civilized/barbaric, advanced/backward, democratic/despotic and so on, are profound. As Trinh Minh-ha puts it, "differences do not only exist between an outsider and insider—two entities—, they are also at work within the outsider or the insider—a single entity."¹³ Similarly, Homi Bhabha has also argued that "the 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'."¹⁴ Otherness and alterity are not opposed to the self, but are constitutive of it. Hybridity is not something that takes place after the fact of the self, but is constitutive of the self. Accordingly the modern is also rift by difference, it is, and has always been, more than the modernist portrayals of modernity. It is this excessive difference-within that is signified by the term postmodern. Because alterity and difference are inside, those who identify the different as the enemy will never run out of enemies, including themselves. This could also explain the apparent anomaly of fascism-Nazism, the greatest barbarism known to humankind, taking place in the heart of Europe, the self-designated home of modernity, civilization, culture, and science; or the anomaly of how a President assumes dictatorial powers in "the land of the free"; or how yesterday's "freedom fighter" becomes today's "terrorist."

THE FRAMING OF 11 SEPTEMBER IN THE TURKISH MEDIA:

The Capitalist Profit Calculation Narrative

I will now turn to the representational practices of the Turkish media concerning the post-September 11 elaborations of the Other that enabled and continues to feed the ongoing U.S. interventions around the world. I find the Turkish case particularly interesting since, especially in an earlier incarnation as the Ottoman Empire, Turkey has long been seen as the principal signifier of the

West's other. This makes Turkey's contemporary Western stance ambivalent and this ambivalence can be clearly observed in the ongoing relations and negotiations regarding Turkey's admission to the European Union.

On the one hand, successive Turkish governments have embraced the requisite economic reforms, and IMF and World Bank prescriptions more or less willingly, and Turkey has even joined the European Common Market before becoming a member of the European Union. On the other hand, however, when it came to doing something about Turkey's appalling human rights and democracy record, they have been very reluctant, remembering their otherness in orientalist terms,¹⁵ and started looking for evidence of an imperial power play on the part of the Western powers. When the U.S. President George W. Bush decided that democratic and human rights were an unnecessary impediment in his "war against terror," himself assuming dictatorial powers in "the land of the free," this came as a big relief to these circles in Turkey. It raised their hope that the suspension of democratic rights and freedoms in their fight against internal dissidence ranging from communists to Islamists to any activity that could be associated with the Kurdish insurgence in the Southeast, would now gain acceptance in the West, the site of the sovereign Eye/I, through the leadership of the U.S. President. Fatih Altaylı¹⁶ writing on 13 September filed a friendly complaint clearly expecting to find sympathy: "When we were suffering under terror [in the past], our advanced Western friends lent a deaf ear. Where were Hakkari, Diyarbakır, Çukurca¹⁷ and where were Paris, London, Rome, Washington?" but immediately adding his hope for a new, more tolerant understanding of Turkey on their part following 11 September.¹⁸ A few days later, when the U.S. administration declared that it would go after those who harbored terrorists as well, Oktay Ekşi asked "whether one should not start with the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Belgium, Greece, and even France who at one time had taken ASALA to its bosom," naming the European countries that had given refuge to political refugees from Turkey as well as to the named Armenian organization that had engaged in assassinations against Turkish officials and civilians, holding Turkey responsible for the Armenian massacres of the past.¹⁹ However, these were the complaints of those who thought that their deeds, which were judged and found unacceptable in the past by the sovereign subject of history, would now be understood and vindicated instead by the new turn of events. Indeed, during the days following 11 September, the mainstream media in Turkey embraced "the war on terror" with high hopes of economic benefits on the side. During the earlier U.S. President Bush Sr.'s Gulf War, Turgut Özal, who was the Turkish President at the time, and the principal architect of the liberalization of the Turkish economy à la Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, had provided full support to the American forces and had explained his move with the motto "we will put in one and reap back three." Unfortunately his investment did not pay off and a long-standing complaint on Turkey's part regarding the Gulf War since then has been that Turkey was not properly compensated to cover for the "great" economic losses resulting from, among other things, shutting off the Iraqi oil pipeline at the very beginning of that conflict. The present war led to similar dreams of economic gains.

Hasan Cemal, for example, argued how “this cursed geography put opportunities in front of Turkey today, just as in the past” and how it was “in our hands” to grab those opportunities.²⁰ In an article titled “If we miss the opportunity again,” Emin Çölaşan asked whether it would be possible this time “to get something from the U.S.A.”²¹ Murat Birsel wrote that “if we properly use the conjuncture created by this extremely unlucky terrorist act, there are many opportunities to show that Turkey is right, ranging from the alleged Armenian genocide to Midnight Express to the low intensity war in the Southeast to the economic crisis,” also asking as a reminder “did we get what was owed us for our support in the Gulf War?”²² Mahfi Eğilmez advised us about what needed to be done to make use of this window of opportunity: “The [Turkish] President should visit the American President and exchange views regarding the region. Reminding him of Turkey’s strategic importance, he should enable a new orientation on the part of the U.S. treasury to provide swift and generous support to Turkey.”²³ On 14 September the Chair of the Central Bank, Süreyya Serdengeçti wrote: “If Turkey is going to take on a role, they need to be more generous.”²⁴ Associate Professor Emin Gürses wrote on 16 September in the same paper, explaining Turkey’s increased bargaining power: “They need us, they have to make concessions. The increasing role of NATO will bring about the slackening of pressure from Europe. For example, the Armenian problem will move to a lesser plane.”²⁵ Following the U.S. President’s declaration, “You are either with us or against us,” Hadi Uluengin maintained that there could be no third way, that everybody had to toe the line or else. And speaking from the American subject position, he had this to say to peace advocates in Turkey: “If you want to deviate with the deviousness of a belly dancer, I am not going to play that game. I won’t stick money to various parts of your body.”²⁶ In an article with the title “Playing for the Future,” Oktay Ekşi advised Turkey “to take the most active role in the global war on terror” because this would mean that “Turkey has chosen the civilization that fits its identity in the clash of civilizations...She will thus have grabbed the chance to have a say in tomorrow’s world and may soften the Western world on issues that create a headache today like membership in the E.U., Cyprus, and Turkish-Greek relations.”²⁷ On 18 September, Güngör Mengi wrote that while Turkey was not asking for baksheesh in the fight against terror, she had the right to ask for justice, and the government should not be timid but be proud in asking for what is its due.²⁸ This sense of a juicy opportunity about to slip through one’s fingers was so strong for some that when the Turkish Government did not immediately declare its unconditional support to the U.S. Government after 11 September, they chided the government for an opportunity about to be missed.

Reflecting a bit more critically, İsmet Berkan noted how widespread this attitude of translating everything into a monetary value was in the discussions regarding Turkey’s support for “the war against terror.” The title of his article was “Buying foreign policy with money.” He also identified Turgut Özal as the initiator of this outlook.²⁹ In a journal article in Turkish with the English title “Not For Sale!,” Nuray Mert, an academic who also writes an

occasional column in *Radikal*, provided a thorough critique of this view, arguing that this view damaged, at its root, the idea of democracy that was promised by the Western Enlightenment, and that it was the view promoted by corporate globalization which saw people as commodities that consumed and who were themselves bought and sold, thus reducing humans from the category of citizen to that of consumer.³⁰ The substitution of the consumer in place of the citizen mentioned by Mert, helps us to understand better why the corporate media in Turkey saw 9/11 and the American leadership in the subsequent “war against terror” as an opportunity not only in terms of dollars but also as a way out of the demands, both internal and external, for more democracy and human rights.

Mert raised two other issues in her article relevant in our context. First, she argued that it is not possible to make sure that the tragedy of 11 September is not repeated by condemning one single act of violence, as it requires the questioning of those power relations and governments that cannot but rely on violence to sustain themselves. And more specifically, to the extent that the Western world chooses to justify its violence, this will serve to justify the use of violence by those who oppose it. Secondly, she argued, it is not that there is a world of fanatics opposite the Western world, who target, and who do not accept or understand its philanthropic and benevolent values. Rather, the “philanthropic” values of the West have gone bankrupt and lost credibility, not because of the blind opposition of those who lack the faculty of comprehension, but because they have been used, since the era of colonialism, as instruments and alibi to further the interests of capitalism and the power struggles of those systems of government guarding it.³¹ We could recall at this point that Jean-François Lyotard defines “postmodern” as *incredulity* towards those very meta-narratives.³²

Nuray Mert’s deconstruction of the orientalist binary of philanthropic and freedom-loving moderns on one side and ignorant and savage pre-moderns for whom violence is a way of life is worth keeping in mind, for such othering of the enemy was quite widespread after 11 September.

Projecting Otherness and Alterity to the Outside

If one of Turkey’s identities is that of the non-western, non-modern other in Western eyes, its modernization and westernization also has a long history, extending back at least two hundred years into Ottoman times. Like the Young Turks around and before him, Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic was steeped in the European Enlightenment worldview, and, consequently, the Turkish Republic was formed and reformed extensively in terms of the Western, modernist cum orientalist imaginary. The task set for the citizens of Turkey by Atatürk was to reach the highest level of civilization personified by the West. That is still widely quoted as the task at hand today. This longstanding modernization project, on the one hand, orientalizes Turkey’s identity by the very epistemic violence discussed earlier. You have to be identified as an oriental—as less than the West, as less than civilized, less than modern, less than developed, etc.—in order to embark on a project of

modernization. Following Trinh Minh-ha who points out that “underdeveloped is someone who believes in development,”³³ we could say that Oriental is someone who believes in westernization/modernization. Therefore, as long time believers in the orientalist imaginary, the mainstream media representatives were quick to recognize and embrace the orientalist representations of “the other” in “the war against terror.” Consider the following characterizations of “the other” following 11 September. Note Tufan Türeñç’s clearly “white” chromatism in the following account:

As soon as the bombing started I remembered those children. Those children who felt the tension around them but could not understand what it was all about. Especially those with blue eyes, blond hair, and clean faces. Unaware of the calamity that they were about to experience, they were looking so innocently at the cameras. Resigned to their fate, they were waiting, huddled next to their black bearded fathers who were detached from our [modern] era, and their mothers who were like monsters, covered all over as if stuffed in a sack, revealing no part of them. As I continued watching them on television, I kept wondering how they remained so beautiful, so healthy with such red cheeks in the midst of that poverty, in that primitive environment.³⁴

Then, commenting on a photograph of Osama bin Laden, Aymen Al-Zawahiri, and Muhammed Atıf, he wrote: “The more I looked at the photograph of those three creatures with pitch black beards, well-deep eyes full of hate, who are unaware of civilization, who have remained thousands of years behind their time, with primitive minds and looks, the more my anger at them increased.”³⁵

In his column, Hadi Uluengin enlightened us about those “primitive minds”: “The West is not responsible for the psychologically discomfoting complex known as ‘frustration’ in the dictionary. As T. E. Lawrence analyzed eighty years ago in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, all the Arab masses, and to a large degree their elites think with a scheme of mind that is different than rational logic.”³⁶ Here are a couple of similar reactions upon seeing people apparently celebrating the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers: Bekir Coşkun wrote:

When I saw in some Arab capitals those who took to the streets, crying, salivating and jumping with joy, while innocent children, women, and elderly were dying there [in the Twin Towers], I remembered that my religion was recorded in my birth certificate as Islam. It troubled me. I do not want to share any adjective with those people. No feeling, no identity, no belief.³⁷

Coşkun then wrote how, for him, being a human came before being Turkish, Arabic, Islamic or Armenian, and then concluded that “those that I saw were not human first. And they had not become human afterwards.”³⁸ Tufan Türeñç had a similar reaction:

We were ashamed of our humanity as we watched the miserable, anachronistic state of those masses who took to the streets. We were terrified by the shouting and screaming of a herd of black faced, turbaned primitives wearing long dresses. Those people, with black beards that reached their bellies, savage eyes full of hate, and yellow teeth, were celebrating the murdering of thousands of innocent people by jumping up and down and with cheers of victory. None of them were aware of the age in which they lived.³⁹

Four weeks later another mega paper, *Milliyet* published a photograph showing an unruly rally by the Afghan refugees in Quetta, Pakistan, and framed it the same way with a big bold caption that read “Men Who Came From the Middle Ages.”⁴⁰ By contrast, the same photograph was published in the progressive daily *Radikal* above a discussion of the Afghan civilians with the title “They Did Not See a Decent Day.”⁴¹

These orientalist projections apparently had such a strong hold on their imagination that some of these newspaper pundits could not believe that the orientalized other could be anything other than ignorant. Here’s Serdar Turgut speculating about possible suspects two days after the 11 September attack:

Let’s put the facts together. These terrorists are very able. They are highly educated. They had pilot training. They possess scientific knowledge. They also possess some secret information and technical know-how belonging to American organizations...It seems doubtful to me that a terrorist group who could hijack four planes at the same time, coordinate people with the ability to train as pilots, take control of the planes right after take off, killing the pilots, could have been directed by Usama Bin Laden. Yes, people who would do suicide attacks for Ladin can be found in the U.S. However, the ability of those fanatic Arabs living in New York is limited to bombing on the ground.⁴²

More than six months later, when the war against terror was extended by the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon—who is himself a suspect in the Sabra and Shatila massacres—from crushing the Afghanis to crushing the Palestinians, Can Ataklı had this to say on his television program:

Do we have to take Palestine’s side at all times? Why do we ignore the terror created by Palestine in the region and

the world? Why should we support people who have no culture, no past, no language, no art, no literature, no science and technology just because they are Muslims?⁴³

The “cowardice” of “the other” was also a popular theme. Here is Fatih Çekirge blaming them for not being—presumably more courageous and dueling (!)—knights (!):

There is no duel. Because the Middle East does not have a dueling tradition...In the same way that it knifed the Ottoman from behind, there is the stamp of a sneaky and cowardly war in its history. Now, putting on the bloody teeth of terror they are spreading the poison of this ambush from the destroyed buildings of Lebanon to Libya’s conceited and cowardly streets...They could never become a knight...They could not fight face to face.⁴⁴

By mid-October, Hadi Uluengin was so caught up in the othering spirit that he began to write as the sheriff of the global village:

Hands up, shalvars down! Kandahar’s Taliban toe the line! And unroll your headress, I find it aesthetically unpleasant. I also don’t want to catch lice....Did you think that the brouhaha raised by your fellow tribals in Quetta of Pakistan, and your fellow cannibals in the Nijerian canoe would lead to a total uprising in the street of Islam? That the world of civilization would retract out of fear?...I had emphasized [in all my writings following September 11] that one could not stay ‘neutral’ in the long war that began between civilization and barbarism.⁴⁵

Finally, Mehmet Yılmaz noted the unashamed racism of similar portrayals, *but only in the cartoons of Western newspapers*:

Almost all cartoonists use the same theme: Some primitive, dirty, and bearded men who live in the stone age [versus] an awesome technology, white men whose victory is guaranteed. Such naked and up front racism makes one sick in the stomach. There are neither grays nor other in between tones. Everything has been reduced to a simple dichotomy: civilized us and primitive they.⁴⁶

When the former secretary of the Joint Chief of the Armed Forces Çevik Bir declared, “Everybody must help the United States. With this event the

European security and defense policy has lost its significance. NATO will come to the fore once again. Turkey's problem in its integration with Europe will go away," Yıldırım Türker responded by mocking the orientalist imaginary in an article entitled "Now We Are All Arabs," but—as testimonial to the hegemonic power of the orientalist imaginary—he did it by playing Europe as *the representative* of "the principles of humanity" against the U.S.:

We are resigning completely from the principles of humanity represented by Europe. We are selling the suspect Palestine in a breath. We are white. We are whiter than white. Take us to your side o civilized world. Let us destroy together. Those who are not civilized, who are not white, who do not believe in your dream.⁴⁷

Moder(n)ating Turkey's Islamic Identity

Considering the implications of the "new world order" that ordered all of us to toe the line or else—as the U.S. President George W. Bush put it, "you are either with us or against us"—and the rearticulation of "terrorist" to identify with "Islamic," Turkey's Islamic identity became another source of ambivalence and made the question of its loyalty to the new world order of paramount importance. Here's Tufan Türenç explaining the problem to us:

In their eyes the Islamic world is guilty. For, according to them, Islamic beliefs and value system cultivate terrorists that take the lives of innocent people. Unfortunately, in Western eyes Turkey, who suffered from both separatist and fundamentalist terror, is considered in the same category.⁴⁸

Oktay Ekşi was similarly worried. He noted how "the world is up in arms, looking for who is—not even guilty but —misbehaved. So much so that being a Muslim is enough reason to be excommunicated." He then asked "why don't we show that we are a part of the civilized world?" and expressed his concern that "we" may have missed an opportunity by not declaring "a national day of mourning."⁴⁹

When the American President George W. Bush declared that his war was a "crusade"—a statement that required some damage control afterwards—Hasan Cemal attempted to assure his readers that "this war is certainly not against Islam. It is against terror."⁵⁰ To reassure them again the next day, he quoted Ambassador (to the US) Özdem Sanberk as saying the same thing: "This is not a war between Islam and Christianity but between fundamentalism and the international community."⁵¹

However, Francis Fukuyama—one of the theorists of the new world order—in his article "We Are Still At The End Of History," which was

translated and published in *Radikal*, was insistent in portraying the West and Christianity as one and the same:

It is not by chance that liberal democracy was born first in the Christian West, because the universality of democratic rights can be seen, in many ways, as the secular form of Christianity's universality. The clash results from a series of attacks with the purpose of protecting certain societies whose traditional being is threatened by modernization. The strength of the reaction against social change shows the seriousness of this threat. But time and means are on modernity's side, and there is no reason that it cannot survive in the West [My retranslation from Turkish].⁵²

Furthermore, Gündüz Aktan pointed out that President Bush had presented the struggle as one "between good and evil," and although this approach "stemmed from the dualism concept of a pagan religion," it was Christianity that had coined the term "Armageddon" to refer "to the decisive battle between good and evil."⁵³ Suddenly it began to look like the whole representational framework of the "war against terror" was taken from the Christian imaginary.

Hasan Bülent Kahraman, an academic as well as a columnist, then stated the obvious: "America is inventing imaginary enemies, after communism, terrorism, and now Islam. When America could not invent a different and new enemy, the bill was picked up by Islam. From now on, the name of the enemy is Islam."⁵⁴ But all was not lost, for Turkey was not only outside but inside as well. As Serdar Turgut put it, "the West is concerned that its counter measures will be perceived as a crusade. They are relieved because Turkey is within NATO."⁵⁵

However, some thought the play of sameness and otherness, the ambivalence and hybridity of being both inside and outside was a unique characteristic of Turkey, a country that is customarily characterized as a "bridge"—between Europe and Asia, between West and East—without realizing that this reproduces the us versus them opposition at another level, between bridge countries and non-bridge countries. As the self appointed bridge between civilizations, Turkey then organized a "Meeting of Civilizations" in Istanbul where a couple of suspension bridges connecting Europe with Asia over the Bosphorus are located. But Turkey's allegedly unique ability to reconcile civilizations at the brink of a clash was questioned by Nuray Mert with a thoughtful query:

It is claimed that Turkey can take on the task of reconciling Islam and democracy, Islam and the Western world, and that it is best suited to reconcile the civilizations at the brink of a

clash. If she does that so well, would it not be better if she started at home?⁵⁶ (*Radikal* 10.9.2001).

Regarding the West-centric, binary oppositional portrayal of Islam, Ferai Tınç pointed out the resulting double standard: "Those who talk about Islam as a religion of violence need to be reminded: If the attack on the U.S.A. is Islamic terror, then the religious war in Northern Ireland is Christian terror. And yet we never saw such a characterization in the Western press."⁵⁷

Finally, taking his cue from the ambivalence of all identities, Taha Akyol proceeded to deconstruct the category of Islam in the orientalist imaginary:

First of all, the concept of 'Islam,' like those of other religions and national communities, is not homogeneous; there are bad people together with good people...Because the category of 'Islam' is not a homogeneous concept, it is wrong to see 'Moslems' as a category of angels and to attempt to provide excuses or 'provocation' scripts for the the Islamic terrorists. Similarly, it is dangerously wrong to see 'Moslems' as potential criminals or potential terrorists. Such a delusion leads this world to Huntington's cursed 'clash of civilizations'."⁵⁸

If I were to summarize the positions taken up in Turkish media representations, I think it is safe to make the generalization that the orientalist worlding of the world spearheaded by the United States in the aftermath of 11 September was reflected more or less enthusiastically, especially in the more mainstream mega media. And as I explained by reference to Turkey's long standing modernization project, the orientalist "worlding" of the world was no stranger to Turkey. However, it would be misleading to attribute a clearly recognizable uniformity to media representations across the spectrum. As my exposition here also illustrates, orientalist portrayals were sometimes contested even within the same medium.

DEMOCRACY TO COME

I think it is urgently important to weave the text of both intra- and inter-societal interaction in non-domineering and non-colonizing ways. If it was urgently important to explore the prospects of a non-coercive global interaction conducted across national and civilizational boundaries in the context of globalization, it has become even more so following the American response to the terrorist attack on 11 September. This response demonstrated at another level how otherness and alterity do not belong to the outside but reside inside, at home, for this "American" war on terrorism has put "American" values under siege from war policies that disregard civil liberties and due process at home, and respect for human rights abroad. It has betrayed the very ideals of freedom,

justice, and equal opportunity that “America” was supposed to signify. The value of the signifier “America” is defaced by the actions taken in its own defense, creating an Orwellian reality where “justice” means revenge, “freedom” requires sacrifice of fundamental liberties, and “terrorism” refers only to attacks against Americans. The encratic doctrine of “Either you’re with us, or you’re against us” leaves no room for even a domestic opposition and stifles questioning and critical thinking reminiscent of the Salem and McCarthy witch hunts. The simplicity of an “us” versus “them” dichotomy where “us” is understood as the paragon of virtue regardless of what we, in fact, do, and where “them” is frozen in the projected image of an evil incarnate, does not help us in dealing with the difference and diversity *within* each. There is a rich profusion of diverse idioms and cultural voices present in both sides of that divide, and such cultural difference cannot be mapped unto the procrustean bed of a binary opposition without, actually or potentially lethal, violence. By contrast, a radical and plural democracy⁵⁹ enables us to think and live with this relation of a difference-within in political terms. A radical and plural democracy, which maintains with Rosa Luxemburg, that “freedom is always the freedom of those who think differently.” However, democracy is not something that those in the modern West have and those in oriental Turkey lack, in the taken-for-granted familiarity of that orientalist binary opposition. Rather, it is “a democracy to come”⁶⁰ on both sides of that divide, one that responds to the undemocratic and colonizing nature of this very divide, “a democracy to come” that exceeds rather than completes the unity of the modern, and opens it up to new possibilities and new power/knowledge configurations across the colonial divide.

ENDNOTES

1. Trinh T. Minh-ha explains “encratic” as language produced and spread under the protection of power” in *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 74.

2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 12, No. 1 (1985) p. 243-61; Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 1-6.

3. Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology,” *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 213.

4. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. xi.
5. So proclaims, for example, Jacques Attali, the first Chairman of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He has described Africa as a "lost continent," and Latin America as sliding into "terminal poverty." Quoted in Walden Bello, *Dark Victory: The United States, Structural Adjustment and Global Poverty* (London: Pluto Press, 1994), p. 107-8.
6. Gündüz Aktan, *Radikal*, 27 October 2002.
7. Mehmet Altan, *Karizma*, No.3 (January-February-March 2002), p. 113-116.
8. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, p. xi.
9. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained*, translated by Don Barry, Bernadette Maher, Julian Pefanis, Virginia Spate, and Morgan Thomas (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 1993), p. 76.
10. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*; Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Books, 1986).
11. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), p. 343.
12. Jacques Derrida, "Differance," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982).
13. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 76.
14. Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," in Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 4.
15. The generals who ran the military coups in 1971 and 1980 in Turkey put it most simply and clearly: democratic freedoms were not suitable for "our" condition, they were a luxury "we" could not afford.
16. Unless otherwise mentioned, the Turkish authors quoted from the press from now on are regular columnists in major newspapers in Turkey.
17. The Turkish towns mentioned refer to the region of the war against the Kurdish insurgents.
18. Fatih Altaylı, *Hürriyet*, 13 September 2001.
19. Oktay Ekşi, *Hürriyet*, 18 September 2001.
20. Hasan Cemal, *Milliyet*, 12 October 2001.
21. Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet*, 27 September 2001.
22. Murat Bırsel, *Sabah*, 13 September 2001.
23. Mahfi Eğilmez, *Radikal*, 8 November 2001.
24. Süreyya Serdengeçti, *Sabah*, 14 September 2001.
25. Emin Gürses, *Sabah*, 16 September 2001.

26. Hadi Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, 22 September 2001.
27. Oktay Ekşi, *Hürriyet*, 16 September 2001.
28. Güngör Mengi, *Sabah*, 18 September 2001.
29. İsmet Berkan, *Radikal*, 10 October 2001.
30. Nuray Mert, "Not For Sale!," *Türkiye Günlüğü*, No. 66 (2001) p. 30-33.
31. Mert, "Not For Sale!," p. 32.
32. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xxiv.
33. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 61.
34. Tufan Türeç, *Hürriyet*, 10 October 2001.
35. Tufan Türeç, *Hürriyet*, 10 October 2001.
36. Hadi Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, 10 October 2001.
37. Bekir Coşkun, *Hürriyet*, 14 September 2001.
38. Bekir Coşkun, *Hürriye*, 14 September 2001.
39. Tufan Türeç, *Hürriyet*, 26 September 2001.
40. *Milliyet*, 11 October 2001.
41. *Radikal* 11 October 2001.
42. Serdar Turgut, *Hürriyet*, 13 September 2001.
43. Can Ataklı, Habertürk TV, 4 April 2002.
44. Fatih Çekirge, *Star*, 13 September 2001.
45. Hadi Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, 12 December 2001.
46. Mehmet Yılmaz, *Milliyet*, 10 October 2001.
47. Yıldırım Türker, *Radikal*, 16 September 2001.
48. Tufan Türeç, *Hürriyet*, 15 September 2001.
49. Oktay Ekşi, *Hürriyet*, 15 September 2001.
50. Hasan Cemal, *Milliyet*, 9 October 2000.
51. Hasan Cemal, *Milliyet*, 10 October 2001.
52. Francis Fukuyama, *Radikal*, 10 October 2001.
53. Gündüz Aktan, *Radikal*, 17 September 2001.
54. Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Radikal*, 17 September 2001.
55. Serdar Turgut, *Hürriyet*, 17 September 2001.
56. Nuray Mert, *Radikal*, 9 October 2001.
57. Ferai Tınç, *Hürriyet*, 30 September 2001.
58. Taha Akyol, *Milliyet*, 15 September 2001.
59. First formulated in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

60. Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), and *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).