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The Struggle Goes On: The Discursive Strategies of the Islamist Press in Turkey

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ABSTRACT *This study explores the discursive strategies of the Islamist press against secular political project of Kemalism. Two best-selling Islamist newspapers were chosen to make a comparative analysis between radical Islamist and liberal Islamist way of representations during the 1990s. Theoretical context of psychoanalytic ideology critique is the main source for analytical frame. It is displayed that the historical antagonism between Islamism and Kemalism has still a constitutive effect for the representations of the Islamist press in Turkey. This antagonism is centered on the issue of turban (headscarf) for the last decade. Islamic newspapers do claim the universality of their understanding of laicism by equating the turban issue with the issue of human rights. By asserting the universality of their Islamic way of laicism, they also assert the particularity and locality of Kemalist laicism. Despite their struggle with the Western way of modernisation and the secularisation project from the constitution of Turkish Republic (1923) to the 1980s, Islamist newspapers have begun to benefit from the discourse of modernisation, freedom and human rights since the 1990s. This analysis focuses on mainly two ideological strategies of Islamist newspapers: First is the usage of the empty signifiers through the news, and second is the usage of discord between notions of universality and particularity as the constitutive of all ideologies.*

KEY WORDS: Ideology, discourse, news, Islamism, Kemalism, Turkey, psychonalysis

Introduction

The content is always young. (Hegel, 1977)

In Turkey since the 1990s practices of exclusion in the social sphere have centred around a tension between two ideologies—Islamism and Kemalism. During these years a recurring issue in the Turkish media and cultural studies is how Islamist political movements and Islamism were represented and constructed by the so-called secularist popular media.¹ In the process of becoming a frustrated and challenged political symbol in Turkey, the headscarf² has intensified these kinds of research in communication studies, as well as in political and sociological studies. However, there is a little concern about how the Islamist media itself represents Kemalism and the existing order in Turkey. The main reason for this lack of interest is that representations in Islamist media are assumed to be anchored to a simple and well-known dichotomy of ‘enemies and friends’. However, when examined

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more closely, it is not as simple as it looks. Without falling into any kind of reductionism, it should be noted that there are similarities and differences between the discursive strategies of the Islamist media and the secularist popular media.

It is easy and commensensical to see difference and sameness as a part of a logic of discursive struggles and as a central operational component of discourse in general. The point in which difference first appears does cause an antagonistic relation between actors in the field of discourse by creating an irreducible gap between them. The source of this gap is ontological. It owes its existence to the ontological primacy of negation in Hegelian terms (see Butler, 1987, pp. 30–38). Any subject can achieve its own self-consciousness and, of course, its subjectivity by negating living objects in the world. This means that the gap is inscribed into the subject itself and the subject can emerge only after this determinate negation (Hegel, 1977). Thus the subject knows him/herself only by creating an other who is different from him/herself and whose recognition is continuously demanded through the master/slave struggle (Hegel, 1977, pp. 102–111). Neither empathy nor identification can overcome this gap because the subject's attempts to bridge this gap is always hopeless. On the other hand there is sameness, which fills this gap by attempting to overcome antagonistic relations. The ontological primacy of negation makes this gap constant and constitutive. Nevertheless, this negativity represents itself as something transformed into a positive being by expanding the chain not of differences but of equivalences in all cases.

To understand the discursive strategies within Islamism it is insufficient only to grasp the constitutive character of difference and sameness. It is only a starting point. This is why we need to examine the antagonistic relations between the discursive universe of Islamism and Kemalism to arrive at a deeper and more meaningful comparison for future research on Islamist discursive strategies in general and to anticipate some distinctive features of representation of Islamist media in particular. I first briefly evaluate the socio-historical antagonism between Islamism and Kemalism in Turkey. This historical account provides the social context to help us grasp why reconciliation between the two ideologies is difficult and getting harder. Finally, I examine the basic discourse strategies in two well-known Islamist newspapers (*Yeni Şafak* and *Akit*) using the notions of ideology criticism from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Contradiction Between Islamism and Kemalism

One of the main antagonistic³ features of the social in Turkey has always been formed around certain dichotomies between Kemalism and Islamism, especially since the 1990s. The origin of the antagonism between Islamism and Kemalism is 'authentic' in that it has an historical background in the 1920s and its roots can even be traced to the beginning of the 1900s. From the very beginning of its ideological formation in the 1920s and the 1930s, Kemalism has been a revolutionary secularist political project against Islamist and other fundamental socio-political projects in Turkey. Additionally, although the main and enduring antagonistic relation is and was always between these two camps on the basis of the role of religion in a secular and Muslim society, there are other antagonistic positions⁴ that have emerged and become more visible through political struggles for hegemony after the 1980s. New political identities have emerged through the articulation and rearticulation of signifying differences between religious paths (Alavi and Suni *tarikats*) and ethnic diversities (Turks and Kurds) and have been embodied around certain social

and political issues like European Union (EU) membership, privatization policies, the headscarf issue and human rights violations during those years.

The increasing complexity of the antagonistic positions over the last 25 years cannot cover the fact that Islamism has become a powerful political movement and ideology whose content has changed over time, although Islam remains its frame of reference. Islamist arguments first emerged in the 19th century⁵ and were used to refer to socio-political projects which sought to gather all Muslim peoples (such as Arabs, Turks, Cerkas and Boshnaks) around the Ottoman Empire under the flag of Islam. As the decline of Empire became obvious during this century (Mardin, 1991), Islamists advocated religious brotherhood and loyalty to the caliph as devotion to the Ottoman. They believed that a religious solidarity among different Muslim nations (*millet*) could revive the Empire. Only Islam could save the Ottoman, along with limited western-oriented economic and military reforms which were also undertaken throughout the entire Empire. During the 19th century, many Islamist politicians and intellectuals pursued a radical return to the source of Islam, instead of to the parameters of Western civilisation. Nevertheless, that very old tradition, called *tecdid*, which means 'the possibility of interior renewal' in Islam, was focused on the past and was renounced in the 19th century. Islamism offered a religious brotherhood against separatist nationalist movements of other nations (Slavs, Arabs, Kurds, Greeks, etc.) that flourished on the bases of diverse religion, ethnicity, region and culture in Ottoman Empire. It was a reactionary movement and an ideology against expansionism and the power of Western civilisation all over the world.

Another tendency in Islam, called *terakki*, which focused on finding immediate and pragmatic solutions to contemporary problems, gained strength during the 19th century. In this view, progression was understood by Islamists as overcoming a deviation between 'the current situation and the initial (original) perfect situation' (Kara, 1986). Questions were centred around how Muslims could achieve development and be united. Answers were influenced by feelings of appreciation to the West and self-denigration. The most convenient way to insert Western notions and institutions, such as a constitutional monarchy and a parliament, into the Ottoman structure was to defend them through Islamic discourse. This means that the more the technical order of Western societies was referred to, the more Islamic values were overemphasized in the symbolic universes of the Ottoman Empire. Ironically, the West, which was perceived as an 'unavoidable evil' at the beginning of Ottoman decline, was then perceived as a 'necessary evil' for Islamists. This does not mean that what was accepted as the superiority of the Western world by Islamists was their culture and civilisation, but technological and scientific development. This led Islamists to imagine an eclectic way to combine the technical/scientific superiority of Western civilisation and the supremacy of the cultural/moral values of Islam.

Before the Kemalist versus Islamist polarity there were already tension between Islamism and Turkism. Turkism or pan-Turkism sprang out of the effects of nationalist political revolts within subordinate nations in the Ottoman Empire. Turkism was different from Western nationalism at its emergence because modern nationalism was centred on the idea of territory and state sovereignty, whereas Turkism was rooted in the idea of loyalty to the Turkish community without consideration of territorial boundaries. Turkism pointed to vast communities beyond the Ottoman political territory, mainly in Russian controlled Middle Asia. In contrast to Islamism, the aim of Turkish nationalism was to spread Turkish culture and give a consciousness to Turks about their historical origins and sublime past. Since Turkism developed mainly to save the Ottoman Empire, it neither

rejected the idea of Ottomanism nor replaced it. At its emergence Turkish nationalism was not a race-based nationalism. It claimed a unity of the Turks who felt themselves to be Turks. Turkism was an example of late modern nationalism. Islamists argued against this that ethnic solidarity could only be the first phase of unity, which had to be followed by a second and more progressive phase of religious solidarity in Islam (Arai, 1994, p. 108). Pan-Turkists, like Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp, responded either by reminding Islamist critics that the Islamist brotherhood was only an ideal which could not be realized or by emphasizing that service to the Turkish nation also meant serving Islam itself. To give credibility to their claims, Turkish nationalists referred to the 'great role of Turks throughout the history of Islam'. When the Turks were fighting over and invading lands from East to West they were also fighting for Islam and making this religion powerful and sovereign in those lands⁶. They have always argued for and stressed the historical 'inseparability' of Turks and Islam.

Turkism as a nationalist project and Islamism as an *umma* project (one addressing the global community of Islam) developed in opposition to one another between the late 19th and early 20th centuries as ways of bringing the Empire back to its historical strength. Because loyalty was mainly religiously defined, Turkish nationalism was one of the last ideologies to emerge as a project to revive the Ottoman Empire. As the 'masters' of Empire the Turks were the last nation to be affected by modern nationalism and this fact should lead us to consider the power of Islamist identification. As Şerif Mardin (1991, p. 94) argued, Islam created a common consciousness of religious unity, particularly at the end of the reign of Abdulhamit II.⁷ In contrast, Turkism only become a more powerful identification point for citizens and created a common consciousness of national identity after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Turkism was centred on 'political nationalism' rather than racial nationalism—nationalism was declared one of the constitutive principles of the new modern state. Having modernist objectives, such as securing a representative state for their community, leading political nationalist figures in Turkey tended to identify human reason as their ethical source. This is the point at which they articulated elements in common with Kemalist ideology. However, from the 1960s nationalists began to consider Kemalism as a local extension of Western culture and their articulation with it loosened.

What then is Kemalism? How did the antagonism between Islamism and Kemalism emerge? Kemalism is the constitutive ideology of the Turkish Republic, receiving its name from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkish state. This ideology coincides with the establishment of the new Turkish Republic and with one party rule between 1923 and 1931. There are six major principles that give Kemalism its main characteristics. These are republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionism (Timur, 1997). Since the Turkish Republic was founded Kemalism has given priority to the secularization, modernization and rationalization of society. The foundation of the Turkish Republic after Ottoman rule was a unique historical moment for the beginning of the struggle between Islamism and Kemalism because reorganization of the symbolic order in Turkish society removed powerful Islamic symbols from daily life. When the symbolic order was reconstructed from the *umma* (religious brotherhood) to the *nation* by the intervention of Kemalism what was sacrificed was the power of religion in the public sphere. Thus, secularism has always been the most significant and controversial issue in the struggle between Kemalism and Islamism. Although the bureaucratic and military elites, as defenders of Kemalism, never created any obstacles to worship and the dimensions of religious experience in people's daily life, Islamic communities have always claimed the reverse.

For Islamists Kemalism gives little room for the public dimensions and practices of a religious lifestyle without consideration that this religion may be something more than a private relationship with God. In fact, Islam places a specific emphasis on the common and public experiences of religious practices and worship (Mardin, 1991). While Islam promises a good and fair world to its believers in this present world (not only heavenly world), it demands that they follow social and political projects that organize and determine every instance of daily life, including the public sphere, according to the imperatives written in the Quran. For Islamists individual religious practices and worship is not meaningful enough and cannot be counted as wholly exercised unless public life is regulated according to the Sharia or Islamic laws. This basic principle of Islam makes it a belief that claims not only religious universality but also socio-political universality in terms of governing and guiding every moment of people's way of life on the basis of Quranic teachings.

Because of its political character, this unresolved tension—inscribed either in the individual's conscience and private life world or in the public sphere—plagued the newly established secularist and modernist Turkish Republic. The Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican Peoples Party), founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and friends, and the one and only political party until 1946, promoted secularism by separating state affairs from the effects of religion and diminishing the power of religion as a basic identification point during the 1930s and the 1940s. The Kemalist revolutionary programme, which sought to displace Islamism in the public sphere and confine its power to the private sphere, gave rise to the return of Islamism in a vivid and strong form in the 1950s. As Mardin put it, Islam addresses the ontological lack of confidence of man and the essence of man's being; compared with national identity, the dislocations and insecurity of people in a changing world make Islam a vivid point of identification for people in Turkey (Mardin, 1991). The return of Islam encouraged religious bigotry and fanaticism in the conservative Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party⁸), leading to the need for the first military intervention in Turkey in 1960. Following this coup a strong Islamist renaissance, which had begun after World War II, led to the founding of the first militant Islamist political party, the Millet Partisi (Party of Nation). While this party declined in the 1960s, a second Islamist party called the Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party) was founded in 1970 as its successor. The overall political strategy of this party was to regenerate a powerful opposition to the modern world and westernization. When this second Islamist party was banned by the Supreme Court, a third Islamist party, the Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party) emerged. Unlike previous parties, this last party created a synthesis of modernism⁹ and Islam. However, reconciliation with modernism has a specific character in its political programmes because it only claimed to transform infrastructural elements such as the economy, science and technology, while keeping cultural and moral values as an authentic superstructure. This conservative approach created a dual position concerning Western modernization: to use modernization but not to be abused by it. This reconciliation became a central theme for all conservative right-wing political parties and ideologies, as well as Islamist parties, in Turkey.

One of these ideologies is radical nationalism or Turkism. Nationalist understandings have changed since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic. By framing an irredentist nationalism aimed at other nations of the Empire, Turkism offered an emancipatory project which was blended with Islamism at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁰ The contradiction between two ideologies had deepened

in the period of the foundation of modern Turkey in which secularist revolutions intensified de-Islamization policies (Akgün & Çalış, 2002, p. 593). Turkism had made the nation state a more powerful identification point for its citizens and had began to create a common consciousness of national identity. While Turkism tried to remove Islamist effects, Islamist ideology tried to eliminate Turkist elements and nationalist effects after 1945 (Akgün & Çalış, 2002, p. 599). Additionally, as Sakallıoğlu noted, from the late 1960s until the coup in 1980 Islam became an exceptionally powerful weapon against communism in the hands of right-wing parties, including nationalist parties such as the Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party) (Sakallıoğlu, 1996, p. 240).

Conservative right-wing parties developed a double discourse that included both the traditional elements of those in society who held deep religious beliefs, such as popular Islam, and the modern aspirations of Kemalism. However, moral and religious values had always been defended as a return to a strict Islamic polity by the religious parties (Sakallıoğlu, 1996, p. 242). During the post-coup period of 1980 political articulation between conservative nationalist elements and Islam was made by the Aydınlar Ocagi (Intellectuals Hearth) and the particular ideological formation that the Hearth gave birth to—the Turkish–Islamist Synthesis—gained official stature. The Turkish–Islamic Synthesis sought to respond to dislocations in the social structure and political oscillations by emphasizing the importance of ‘national culture’.¹¹ National culture became a key articulatory element between Islamism and Turkism. After this period Turkism strengthened its ethnocentric core through various confrontations with Kurdish movements in the 1980s and 1990s.

There has also been an expansion of the hegemony of new-right/neo-liberal ideology under the government of Turgut Ozal since the 1980s. Meanwhile, new articulations between market oriented ‘liberal’ economic principles and conservative approaches to society transformed the opposition in Turkey. The slowdown in economic reconstruction during the 1980s due to policies deriving from the new-right ideology led to a deep erosion of trust in the nation state and raised questions about the Kemalist nation state and secularist ideology. Kemalism lost its power as a hegemonic ideology and was seen as being responsible for the delays in catching up with Western civilisation, which represented the individualistic and competitive values of globalized capitalism. Strictly defined positions such as ‘progressive/conservative’ or ‘left/right policies’ or ‘statism/commercialism’ gained new emphasis as a side-effect of the struggle against pragmatic policies designed to solve political and social crises, complicating the already highly fragmented socio-political positions that existed after the 1980 coup. During these years the gap between Islamism and Kemalism remained, although Islamist ideology reconciled itself with ‘modernization’ in a specific way and directed its political vision to the EU from one election to another, as a significant alternative to other parties.

My emphasis on the origins of this fundamental gap between the Kemalist and Islamist ideologies should not obscure the fact that there had always been political parties that tried to secure hegemony around emancipatory projects that were not based on secularism. Conservative right-wing parties, of course, had had secularism as a component of their socio-political projects more or less since a multiparty system was instituted in 1945. However, right-wing political parties, whether nationalist or religious, have always been loyal to traditionalist values and religious principles. That is why their degree of loyalty to secularism is incompatible with Kemalism, since nationalists in Turkey see Islam as ‘one of the main elements that constitutes nation’ (Bora & Can, 1991, p. 285). Right-wing

parties subordinated Islam to nationalism during the 1970s. Nationalist movements between the 1960s and early 1970s took Islam as a spiritual and moral system that gives originality to Turkism and that ensures the superiority of the Turks in history. By competing for popular votes in the rural areas, the leader of the nationalist camp, Alpaslan Türkeş, declared Turkism and religious Islam to be indispensable values (Bora & Can 1991: 284). When the Turkish–Islamic Synthesis became the dominant ideology in the 1980s¹² it gave a pivotal role to Islam in state mechanisms for ‘the sake and unity of society’ and the secularist dimension of nationalism has evolved in parallel with an increasing distance from Kemalism.

As the cement for the construction of a nation Islam has had effects on the nationalist imagination itself. Turkish nationalism and Islamism have always been considered contradictory ideological projects in the sense that the former, since the French Revolution, had emphasized modern nationhood as the root of a nation state, whereas the latter focused on religious brotherhood and *umma* as the root of an Islamic state. Nevertheless, the gap between modern nationalism and religionism has sometimes widened, for instance after the founding of the Turkish Republic, and sometimes narrowed, by pragmatic cooperation between the religious and nationalist movements in the 1980s and 1990s. Nationalist ideologies have their own secularist tendencies although they can be articulated and can cooperate with Islamic parties, for instance as happened between the Nationalist Activist and Welfare Parties in the 1991 election. This means that their secularist understanding might be weak and/or strong according to how nationalists define ‘national interest’ when confronted with actual global and local issues. Nationalists have at times treated Islam as the ‘cement’ for a highly fragmented society—for instance during the 1980s when secularism was subordinated—and have at other times made secularism an indispensable element—such as in Kemalism).

As mentioned, Islam lost its symbolic first place as ideological cement after the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic and began to play only a secondary role in the formation of citizens. Meanwhile, Turkism had emerged as another basis for expressing belonging; Islamism had begun to signify sharp opposition to any kind of Western-oriented modernization projects in this new state. Of these political projects, Kemalism was the first, most powerful and most revolutionary one.

Ideological Fantasies of Islamism and Kemalism

This brief historical summary shows that there has been a significant difference between the social realities that Islamism and Kemalism offered. This difference is an ideological difference par excellence. Ideology is grasped here not as an illusion which can conceal the real conditions of things. Rather, ideology is conceived as an unconscious fantasy that structures the very reality of the social itself (Žižek, 1989, pp. 21 & 44). This approach to ideology, which is termed the psychoanalytic critique of ideology, derives mainly from Žižek’s synthesis of Lacan and Hegel. Psychoanalytic perspectives on ideology elaborated by authors like Žižek, Laclau, Mouffe and Butler help us understand not only the macro-dynamics of ideologies but also why and how people believe in ideologies which contradict their social position based on class, religion, ethnicity and gender. Of course, we should mention Althusser, who first brought Lacan’s key notion of the ‘imaginary’ to theories of ideology and who considered ideology as ‘an imaginary relation between man and its real conditions’ (Althusser, 1971, p. 233). He was the first Marxist to emphasize the

unconscious level of the subject's relation with his/her own world. Here the questions of ideology became centred around the issue of subject instead of the relation between base and superstructure in classical Marxism. These questions were generated by critics of ideology who focused on the level of unconsciousness, such as the works of neo-Marxists of the Frankfurt School (Elliot, 1992).¹³

Fantasy is one of the key concepts introduced by the psychoanalytic approach to the theory of ideology by Žižek in response to questions about the relationship between society and self. This notion has a place in theories of ideology for understanding the constitution of the individual subject as a political and ideological agent in society. The process of identification with an ideological position and the formation of a political agent can be seen through the work of fantasy. Fantasy is a frame that allows the subject to formulate his/her own desire on the level of signification and in the language of psychoanalysis.¹⁴ This desire that the subject seeks to fulfil is its unity with itself, even though it is marked by a split or a lack. The subject of Lacanian psychoanalysis is a subject of lack or split and its self is divided, crossed out, identical to a lack in a signifying chain. Lacan strikes this through producing the symbol 'barred subject', thus illustrating the fact that the subject is essentially divided. This dividedness derives from the misrecognition of a split between the fragmented subject and their own unified mirror image. The subject identifies itself with its mirror image as a unified and coherent entity and pursues *objet petit a*, which causes imaginary fantasies as it attempts to continuously construct itself as a full and unified subject. Fantasy makes identification possible for the subject among a multitude of possible identifications, despite the fact that this identification cannot result in a fixed and stable identity for the subject. Because of the impossibility of achieving a full identity or unity with itself, identification is possible only within a Lacanian framework (Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 29). As Stavrakakis (1999) and Žižek (1989) pointed out, the objects of identification in the subject's life include political ideologies and other socially constructed objects.

Following these arguments, ideology is considered a social fantasy which provides an idealized vision of society that cannot exist in reality. Žižek wrote, 'fantasy is basically a scenario filling out the empty space of a fundamental impossibility, a screen masking a void' (Žižek, 1989, p. 125). Ideological fantasy is that which seeks to fill in the fundamental lack of the subject, that immutable gap between self and other. It is not opposite to the real; it belongs to the social and can provide a frame for coordinating our desires so that we can experience the world as a meaningful and consistent totality. By means of this fantasy construction the subject produces a social reality that allows him/her to escape from the traumatic kernel of Real.¹⁵ The construction of a socio-symbolic universe depends on the absence of any direct encounter with the Real. This is one of the paradoxes of ideology—while on the one hand ideology presents the object of fullness as attainable, on the other it endeavours to sustain a critical distance in order to avoid any direct encounter with it. In this way, as Daly said, 'ideology, supports the notion of a realizable fullness through a particular emphasis on the "other" who has stolen, or is denying us access to, this fullness' (Daly, 1999, p. 222). The existence of an unobtainable other is the primary source of self-constitution in respect of this perspective.

This general conceptual framework which I have drawn gives some significant clues as to how we can grasp the struggle between Kemalism and Islamism. First, both ideologies promise a unity and fullness which had been prevented by 'the inner and outer' enemies of the Turks. This promise is also a promise of a jouissance, of being a full and totally

harmonized nation. From the beginning Kemalist ideology placed a modernist and Westernized social and political project on the fantasy horizon of the Turkish nation. Thus, according to Kemalism the main problem in Turkey is inner blockage of Westernized modernist and rationalist political projects by Islamist projects. However, according to the Islamist's view the reverse is true: the main obstacle that prevents the new republic from being totally itself is westernization, and Kemalism as an inner extension of that. These ideological fantasies have reciprocally construed the other as responsible for that blockage. Making the other (Kemalist and/or Islamist) responsible for the loss and immanent blockage of ultimate unity of the Turkish nation causes antagonisms to become stronger and more rigid. In Laclau and Mouffe's notion of antagonism, in which the presence of the other prevents me from being totally myself (Laclau & Mouffe, 1992), every subjective identity, regardless of any antagonistic encounter, is already marked by an inherent blockage. However, according to Žižek the point is not that 'we are nothing but the drive to annihilate the antagonistic force that prevents us from achieving our full identity' (Žižek, 1990, p. 253). Rather, 'antagonistic force is held responsible for the blockage of our full identity, and this permits the externalization of our constitutive lack as subjects to the negating Other, which thus becomes the positive embodiment of our self blockage' (Žižek, 1990). Social antagonism has a constitutive role since it gives energy to our political activities in many ways. Not only does it produce a kind of negation, it also offers a certain jouissance for the subject by giving the subject a reason for the blockage in the symbolic order. The central paradox of ideology is that it cannot affirm a notion of unity without simultaneously producing the idea of a threat to that unity. An integral dimension of ideology, therefore, is 'the constitution of the other as a culpable stand in for the traumatic Real of immanent blockage' (Daly, 1999, p. 239).

In this theoretical context according to official political discourse the threat which prevents the Turkish nation from being totally itself has been produced in the new Turkish Republic itself. This threat has been called religionism. Contrary to this official discourse, Islamists assert that 'imitation of the West and things Western' is the real threat. Imitation of the West has become one of the nodal points (point de capiton). It is a master signifier that retroactively fixes the floating signifiers within the paradigmatic chain of equivalence (Torfing, 1999). A nodal point can be simply a word which organizes all the meanings in the field of discourse, such as party, class, democracy, human rights, West, etc. It emerges from the notion that the meaning of any given signifying chain occurs retroactively and the meaning of any utterance floats until a certain key signifier pins it down (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987). Hegemonizing a content, as Laclau put it, amounts to fixing its meaning around a nodal point (Laclau, 1990, p. 28). He exemplified the concept of democracy as a nodal point: 'it acquires one possible meaning when articulated with anti-fascism and a completely different one when articulated with anti-communism' (Laclau, 1996, pp. 205–206). Within Islamist discourse when imitation of the West becomes the nodal point it has to exclude some other signifiers, such as enlightenment, progressivism, westernization, Kemalism, etc. By this operation the phrase 'imitation of the West' gives the floating elements in Islamist discourse, such as reactionarism, authenticism and traditionalism, their meaning.

As a western mode of modernization Kemalism was transformed into an empty signifier. The word Kemalism articulates other floating signifiers, such as democracy and modernism, to create a chain of equivalences around itself. As a pure signifier without signifieds Kemalism first empties its content so that a variety of signifiers, such as democracy, human rights, modernism, civilisation, etc., can float in its field of discursivity.

They lose their traditional meanings and new meaning is retroactively constituted by the intervention of this empty signifier, Kemalism. Insofar as Kemalism succeeds in fixing all other signifiers and hegemonizing them, it would have created key subject positions in the socio-political field in Turkey until the 1980s (Çelik, 2000, p. 200). All efforts of Kemalism to hegemonize the social have led to the proliferation of subject positions in Turkey and these subject positions articulate themselves in reference to modern secular Turkism. However, Islam could not be articulated with these key subject positions and its displacement from the public sphere has opened the very possibility of the politicization of Islam.¹⁶ The military regime of the 1980s emphasized the significance of religion in maintaining the unity of a nation that was fragmented by class and religion during the 1970s (Dursun, 2004). Thus, reconciliation with Islam has given religion a pivotal role in sustaining an authoritarian political regime to overcome this fragmentation of the 1980s. The dissolution of Kemalist hegemony can be seen in the coup in Turkey (Dursun, 2002, p. 140). As a result, Kemalism has since the 1990s become one of the ideologies that continues to struggle for hegemony.

In Islamist newspapers the antagonistic character of the social is represented and constructed according to transformations and progression within Islamist ideology. Analytically, social antagonisms constructed in the Islamist press can be grouped around three major problematics:¹⁷ (a) the problems of the existing secular order and system itself; (b) the issue of the headscarf, democracy and human rights; (c) religious terrorism. I will trace two of these antagonisms by examining the signifying practices and constitutive dialectics between the notions of the universal and the particular in Islamist newspapers. The last issue, religious terrorism, will not be analysed here.

The Ideological Realm of Islamist Newspapers

In this examination of discourse strategies two well-known Turkish Islamist newspapers, *Yeni Şafak* (New Dawn) and *Akit* (Agreement), were chosen. It should be noted that the terms 'Islamist media', 'Islamist press' and 'Islamist newspapers' are used as a relational term with reference to the secularist popular mainstream media in Turkey. The term Islamist media is used by the secularist popular media against Islamist media, a very important ideological agent in Islamist ideology formation in Turkey. By this term the secularist popular media not only reveals the religious character of the other media, but also refers to a lack in the Islamist media itself. This lack is Kemalism or Kemalist ideology. The best selling newspapers (such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, etc.) have always had a secularist and sometimes Kemalist ideological tendency, especially on highly contentious issues. The secularist popular media call themselves secularist. There is no need to call themselves Kemalist or secularist and, in fact, they are not Kemalist in the strict sense of the term and by naming the other as Islamist media the secularist media have already defined themselves. Naming the Islamist media has a constitutive effect for the identity of the secularist media, irrespective of their degree of identification with Kemalism.

When we look at the Islamist press or Islamist media it is evident that there have been numerous newspapers published since the 1950s and many television channels and radio stations since the 1990s. However, the greatest flourishing of Islamist newspapers was in the 1980s, under the influence of the remnant of military intervention. A social inclination towards Islam during the 1980s resulted in an increase in the number of Islamic publications; Islam was accepted not as an issue of individual conscience but as a social

institution with social functions. Several bestselling Islamist newspaper publishers started television and radio stations when the state monopoly *de facto* ceased in 1990. As such, it can be said that the Islamist media has become one of the powerful players in the media market, not unlike the mainstream popular media in Turkey. From the start, the most influential religious communities have always provided financial support for the Islamist media. Some Islamist media can be considered the voice of specific religious communities; for example *Zaman* is the newspaper of the Fetullah Gülen (followers of the Nursi path) religious community. Others try to cater for general Islamist readers, regardless of their religious affiliations. Financially, to not be affiliated to a religious community means having more political and ideological power than an affiliated Islamist medium. When a media company wants to gain extensive recognition as a political actor in Turkey, one of the most effective strategies is to cater to a mass audience and be unaffiliated to a religious community. The newspapers I have chosen for this analysis, *Akit* and *Yeni Şafak*, do not have any overt affiliation to Islamist parties or communities and are powerful media organizations in the public sphere.

Akit began publication on 12 September 1993. Its original name was *Beklenen Vakit* (Expected Time) and it achieved a loyal readership in a short time. Despite starting as a national newspaper, it had a small circulation in its early years. Nowadays its daily circulation is around 180,000. The newspaper is owned by Mustafa Karahasanoğlu (Çınar, 1997, p. 78). *Akit* changed its name after it closed down in 2001 because it had not paid court fines. As a radical religious newspaper it had been accused of provoking secularist columnists, authors and figures in Turkey. In response, its name was changed twice; from *Beklenen Vakit* (Expected Time) to *Akit* (Agreement) in 1995 and from *Akit* to *Vakit* (Time) in 2001. *Yeni Şafak*, which began publication in 1995, has a circulation of 120,000 and has been owned by Ahmet Albayrak since it was founded.

Both newspapers target religious readers, although there are major discursive differences between them. *Akit* has a provocative, offensive and even emotional reporting style when representing daily events related to Kemalism, while *Yeni Şafak* has a more modest and rational sounding style when criticizing Kemalism and the existing political order in Turkey. *Akit*'s struggles against Kemalism are direct and rigid. This is so obvious that one of its columnists wrote 'we have to be in the world of Sharia [Muslim canonical law] if we want to have an identity' (*Akit*, 1999, p. 1). This necessity of living by Sharia imposes a task on this newspaper according to its columnists. The task is hard and long term: to give Muslim people a consciousness of being 'real' Muslims'. *Yeni Şafak*, on the other hand, uses more rational arguments. It tries to challenge Kemalism using more conventional elements of political struggle. Nevertheless, *Yeni Şafak* also has a tendency to construct news using emotional language at the expense of rationality. A second difference is ideological: each newspaper defines itself differently within Islamist ideology. While *Yeni Şafak* sees itself on the side of democratic order as a liberal Islamist newspaper, *Akit* defines itself as fully on the side of Muslim canonical law and its ultimate reference is the Quran as the main determinant of the people's way of life. In that respect, Western liberal political principles are a reference point for *Yeni Şafak*, while *Akit* has no reference to any Western democratic standards. This difference between them should not be considered significant or irreversible because Islamist ideology has its own core fantasy framework that is shared by liberal and conservative Islamist newspapers. Within this fantasy Islam is seen not only as a regulatory determinant of the life world of an individual but also as a regulatory determinant of the public life world through the ages.

The rules and principles of Islam, according to this fantasy framework, can be combined with democratic standards if necessary.

The period I have analysed is 1990–2003. This period is of great importance for two reasons. Firstly, deregulation and commercialization of the media sector in Turkey led to a media burst in terms of the creation of different politico-ideological spheres in the struggle for hegemony. Under the new media conditions new politico-ideological identities emerged in the public sphere as a major sign of the so-called ‘pluralistic democratic transformations’, despite existing restrictions and litigation against political activity. There has always been a gap between how these new identities have been represented and how they wanted to be represented in the media. This issue has generated feverish discussions about the possibility of democratic representation in Turkey. It is well recognized today that the proliferation of media does not automatically lead to a polyphonic or democratic public sphere. My second reason for choosing this period is that the Islamist political movement has gained power and one Islamist party, Refah Partisi (Prosperity Party), has become a serious rival to other parties during this period. The Prosperity Party was considered a ‘major threat’ to the secular regime by the army, secular political parties and the secularist popular media. Parliamentary elections showed that an Islamist party can become a mass party when other centrist parties do not satisfy the majority of the people’s needs.¹⁸ This political process has been witnessed in a relatively ‘polyphonic’ media environment compared with the 1970s or the 1980s, when there was a state monopoly on broadcasting.

For the purposes of analysis I prefer to take both news items and columns from *Yeni Şafak* and *Akit*. News is here conceived as a specific kind of knowledge that reconstructs social reality and imposes order on the flux of life in order to overcome the ambiguous and elusive character of the world (Rock, 1973, pp. 74–75; Hall, 1978; Tuchman, 1978). Critical theorists of communication see news as ‘a knowledge of the world’ which is never neutral and cannot exist in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real (see Hall, 1978; Fiske, 1989; Eldridge 1993, 1995). It is a battleground between those who want to hegemonize (as a class, ethnicity, sex or race) and those who resist. If, as Torfing (1999) suggested, a hegemonic discourse ‘establishes a truth regime that defines what can be considered true and false and a value regime that provides criteria for judging what is good and bad’ (p. 220) then the act of representation through news cannot be exempt from this struggle. In fact it is the very place of struggle for political and ideological hegemony.¹⁹ When we consider that ‘news is not a reflection of a world “out there” but, as Molotch and Lester have said, a product of the practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others’ (cited in Schudson, 1991, p. 148), there is no significant difference between columnists and reporters or between columns and other framed news in a newspaper. Every aspect of a newspaper functions to reproduce subjects in the world in which they live.

Having described the historical antagonism in Turkey between Islamism and Kemalism and two Islamist newspapers, we can now trace the appearance and the nature of antagonism in *Yeni Şafak* and *Akit*. My argument is that Islamist newspapers assert the universality of their sense of secularism against Kemalist secularism. Drawing upon the universalist discourse of human rights, they try to claim the particularity and locality of the Kemalist understanding of secularism. The claim to universality of Islamist understandings of secularism against the particularity or locality of Kemalism decreases the possibility of producing democratic antagonism and increases popular antagonism in Turkey. This point will be explained later.

The Construction of Antagonisms and Fixation of Signifiers in the Islamist Press

The basic strategy of Islamist newspapers in their anti-Kemalist positions has been to reactivate the enduring conflict between state and people in Turkey over the last decade. Political corruption, overt connections between bureaucrats, mafia and politicians, unresolved crises in public education, health and the judiciary, etc., in short every context in which state organization and operations are questioned in Turkey, have provided discursive resources to Islamist and other oppositional movements since the 1990s. Although it is questionable whether the political system in Turkey is Kemalist or not, Islamist ideology systematically equates the existing order with Kemalism, so that being oppositional to the order means being oppositional to Kemalism itself. The main failure of the system from the foundation of the Republic according to Islamists was 'it being separated from the people'. For Islamists this indicates a state structure which is not for the people but against the people. In this chain of equivalence antagonism is created both directly between the state and people and indirectly between Kemalism and Islamism. This logic of equivalence narrows the discursive space by splitting a system of differences and instituting a political frontier between two opposed camps (Laclau, 1996). This kind of equivalence has to be made in Islamist discourse so that it can assert its own credibility and validity against Kemalism. Production of a Muslim/Kemalist political frontier in society during this period was achieved by drawing upon a clear division between Kemalist secularists (as enemy) and 'Muslims' (as friends). Thus, a political frontier was drawn between those who approved of the Kemalist order and those who were willing to challenge it.

In this discursive field, as Howarth (1996, pp. 9–10) explained, antagonisms are constructed through creating equivalent identities which express a pure negation of a discursive order. Usage of the notion of democracy as a floating signifier in discursive space is the main strategy of Islamists in the construction of antagonisms. In the Islamist newspapers democracy refers to the 'relocation of religion in the public sphere' and the expansion of personal experiences of a religious lifestyle into every micro level of public life. This understanding of democracy is referred to and sublimated as 'Western democracy' by Islamists because the idea of 'living a life Muslims believe in' only seems possible in a system which is framed by 'Western' democracy. The democratic process is perceived by Islamists to recapture social and political power positions that were absent during the secularist-modernist construction of the Republic. Specific issues for Islamist newspapers include the headscarf issue, since it signifies the 'anti-democratic' character of the Kemalist Turkish Republic. Prohibition of the headscarf in universities and government offices is emphasized as 'a sign of repressive regime' (*Akit*, 1998, October 28, p. 1, 3). For example *Akit* asserted that 'the Turkish Republic has become an exploitative mafia and corrupted regime on its seventy-fifth anniversary' (*Akit*, 1998, October 28, p. 1, 3). According to *Akit*'s interpretation of Turkish history, 'the Republic started out to save the caliph and unexpectedly resulted in a Godless state' (*Akit*, 1997, October 29, p. 1, 3). *Yeni Şafak* has also questioned the regime on the 76th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic and concluded that 'unless secularism is exercised according to Western democratic principles, the Turkish Republic is condemned to be a fascist regime' (İlıcak, 1999; Kuru, 1999).

Another empty signifier reproducing the state/people antagonism in Turkey is the notion of reaction. This term has been one of the most central, self-sufficient, overloaded and

contested terms in the discursive field. Kemalist discourse takes the meaning of reaction as opposition to the existing secular system, i.e. Western democracy and modernism in Turkey.²⁰ In Turkey this term literally means ‘going back or receding’, but broadly it means a new social order built entirely on Islamist principles. ‘Reaction’ has become a signifier of an inner threat to the secular law of the Kemalist order. This means that for Kemalists the term has also become a signifier of the political project of transforming the regime from a secularist democratic to a religion-based system. Moreover, not only does it signify an historical and structural opposition to the existing order and Kemalist ideology, it has become a signifier for the ‘irrational’ dimensions of Islam. However, to fix this term as something oppositional to the Western modernist system, as Kemalists have done previously, is not as easy as it was in the 1970s and the 1980s. This is because Islamism in Turkey has enriched its ideological character by retreating gradually from the struggle against the modern Western world during the 1990s.²¹ This process enabled Islamist newspapers to continue to use the term ‘reaction’ in two different ways. First, the radical Islamist newspaper *Akit* maintains the original meaning of the term reaction, as against secularist logic and operation of the state.²² Second, liberal Islamist papers such as *Yeni Şafak* equate the term with the metaphor of a mask which can conceal the ongoing corruption and anti-democratic features of the Turkish state. A good example of this ideological strategy is seen in an article in *Yeni Şafak* entitled ‘Reaction in the energy sector’ (*Yeni Şafak*, 2001, January 29, p. 1). This title not only refers to corruption and scandal in the industry, but also indicates that any ‘real threat’ to the present system does not come from Islamism but from the ‘deeper devices of the state’. The word ‘deeper devices’ signifies unknowable parts of the state mechanism in Turkey. Thus *Yeni Şafak* tries to dislocate the term reaction and posit the ‘deeper devices of the state’ as an inner threat instead.

The Clash of Secularisms on the Basis of ‘Universalism’

In addition to the discursive strategy mentioned above, a second significant discursive strategy of Islamist newspapers is to fix the meaning of Kemalist secularism as particular rather than universal content. The well-known premise that the discord between the universal and the particular, which is constitutive for all ideologies, is at work here. The particular is always seen as deficient and/or in excess with regard to its universal. As Žizek mentions, “...in excess, since it eludes the Universal; since the Universal cannot encompass it” (Žizek, 1991, p. 43). It is also deficient because “there is never enough of the Particular to fill out the Universal frame” (Žizek, 1991, p. 44). In compliance with the Hegelian system, Žizek made clear that the universal is already in itself particular. This point is crucial, since the relationship between the universal and its particular content is always conceived in three modes. The standard version sees universality as indifferent to its particular content. The second is a common Marxist reading, which renders the form of abstract universality as inherently ‘masculine’. The third version, detailed by Ernesto Laclau, claims that ‘despite it always being already filled by some contingent content, the Universal is *in itself* empty and also is a battleground for the multitude of a particular substantive fight for hegemony’ (cited by Žizek, 2000, pp. 100–101). Considering this last version, the universal is not an organic articulation of a whole in which elements play particular and unique parts, rather, the universal is conceived as a process that ‘does not simply exemplify the neutral universal notion but struggles with it, gives a specific

twist to it' (Zizek, 2000, p. 102). However, according to Zizek, conceiving the inherently divisive, splitting character of the universal is not enough to understand how a particular works. What he offers to grasp the dialectic between universal and particular is the Hegelian notion of 'concrete universality'.²³ What makes the universal what it is is not the struggle for hegemony between particular contents to fill out the universal, but the struggle between the particular and the universal. So there are two struggles that constitute the universal: one is between the universal and the particular, the other is between multitude of particulars. In order to become the universal, not only has it to comprise its own particulars and their opposites, it also has to comprise its own opposite, i.e. the absence of itself. Within this Hegelian logical framework the gap is not only between the particular and the universal, but it is a gap in the universal itself. That means that the difference is not a difference between the elements/particulars but it is a difference between elements and the universal set itself, i.e. it is in the universal itself. This paradoxical difference, which is constitutive of the universal, means that the universal discovers itself within its particularities. This is the Hegelian paradox of totality, as Zizek (1991, p. 45) asserted, 'which always comprises a particular element embodying its universal structuring principle'.²⁴

Whether the gap is between the universal and the particular or inherent in the universal makes a crucial difference to the nature of ideological struggle. According to Laclau, the ideological struggle for the hegemonization of a notion emerges because of the necessity to fill this gap between the particular and the empty universal, while Zizek sees both the gap and ideological struggle inherent in the universal itself (Zizek, 2000, p. 179). Zizek's approach continues by asserting that 'the antagonism, the struggle is inscribed into the very heart of the thing itself' (p. 182). We can now conceive that the struggle for hegemony is, in fact, groundless. Does this mean that the ideological struggle for the particular content function is a stand-in for the universality of the political? The answer is clear: a political subject emerges at the very point of the unjunction of the universal with a particular content.

The particular content which guarantees the specific efficiency of an ideological notion is the element of fantasy. For my focus of analysis, secularism as a universal notion is treated as an empty signifier that serves as a site where a multitude of particular contents about secularisms struggle for hegemony. Islamist newspapers refer to Western secularism as global, contemporary and universal and claim Western secularism's universality against the particularity and locality of Kemalist secularism. In the news Kemalist secularism is defined as something specific and particular: 'this [Kemalist] secularism is nothing but the removal of claims leaning on faith from the public sphere. This comprehension is opposite even to the last century's modernism' (*Akit*, 2000, October 29, p. 1). They consider Kemalist political principles as 'old fashioned' (*Yeni Şafak*, 2000, November 11, p. 1, 7). Thus, while Islamists object to the secularist principles of the system in Turkey, they insist that their objection is not to secularism itself, but to a specific interpretation of secularism called Kemalist secularism. The characteristic of Kemalist secularism, according to Islamist newspapers, is not the modern separation of political and religious matters but the maintenance of state control over religion via state mechanisms. The experience of secularism through legislation²⁵ at the beginning of the Turkish Republic had made it something that needed to be protected against its inner enemies, the Islamist fundamentalists. The strategy of protecting secularism from its 'inner enemies' and establish it in the social order always depended on legal and constitutional prohibitions.

The issues of democracy and the priority of law and order in Turkey are easily connected with legal practices by Islamists. Western democracy and human rights have again become the main referential frame for claims of universalism. A quotation exemplifies this tendency at its best: 'We should, then, consider how Europe and the USA practice secularism. Secularism should be exercised in a way which has to be parallel to the minimum principles of the universal democratic social order' (*Yeni Şafak*, 2000, October 29, p. 7). Can it be said that the author of this article lays claim to the universal notion of secularism rather than the 'particular secularism' that is practiced in Turkey? When we remember the dialectic between the universal and particular it is hard to give a positive answer to this question. What the writers in Islamist newspapers claim is in fact hegemonization of the universal (the notion of secularism) by another particular, Western secularism. Thus their claim cannot be a passage from a kind of particularity to the universality. The possibility of a transition from Kemalist secularism to Western secularism can only be another political claim to fill out the constitutive split both between the universal and the particular and in the universal itself.²⁶ For example, their statement that 'without the priority of democracy and law, secularism will become a kind of despotism and bigotry' (*Yeni Şafak*, 2000, October 4, p. 7) asserts a link between democracy and secularism in such a way that the former is a precondition for the later. However, Kemalists assert the reverse: secularism is a precondition of democracy because the invasion of public life by religious principles can lead to a dislocation of freedom, a loss of human rights, for example the headscarf can be used as a sign of good Muslim womanness. According to Kemalists the danger is that democracy can be dislocated if the connection between secularism and democracy is not accurately displayed.

The headscarf is a key issue by which claims for universal secularism can be asserted against the particularity of Kemalist secularism. The struggle between the two understandings of secularism have always centred on the issue of the headscarf. At the beginning of the 1990s the headscarf was presented by Islamists as an issue that concerns a Muslim's private lifestyle. The political meaning of the headscarf as a symbol was not asserted during this period. However the government's discourse in the 1980's and 1990's encouraged new religious orientations since the "commonsense" of the society could have been produced by benefiting the symbolic repertoire of Islam (Kurtoğlu, 2001, p. 85–88). To overcome the fragmentary structure of society after coup was thought possible basically with the help of religious sharings. Then headscarf became a political symbol. Islamist newspapers represented the headscarf as a sign of human rights and freedom in a Western 'universal' and liberal sense of the term. During the protests against prohibition of the headscarf in public universities *Yeni Şafak* printed the headline 'This is Fascism' (*Yeni Şafak*, 1999, October 2, p. 1) and tried to create an ideological identification between Turkish democracy and Hitler's regime. In contrast, *Akit* emphasized the headscarf as a religious imperative. When a columnist wrote 'they who are against this symbol must say clearly what they are against' (*Akit*, 2000, October 6, p. 1, 5), he judged them as persons whom are against Islam itself and also against God (Allah). Anti-religionism is an unacceptable political position and even a forbidden identification point according to the writers of *Akit*. *Akit* asserted that the headscarf must be allowed in the public sphere not because it is a liberal human right but because it is a sign of Islam and Allah himself. This is the main difference between *Yeni Şafak* and *Akit*. They both consider the headscarf as a sign of a Western 'universal' sense of human rights, but they differ in their justifications: *Yeni Şafak* refers to liberal democratic rules and values, while *Akit* mostly refers to the

Quran and Islam. Both Islamist newspapers claim universality, one the universality of liberal democracy and the other the universality of religion.

The similarity between these two newspapers is that both constructed antagonisms around the headscarf issue mainly as dichotomies between true believers and non-believers, between liberals and fascists, between the oppressed and the oppressors²⁷ and between Western law and the law of the Turkish state. They tried to prove the so-called deficiency of Kemalist secularism and its 'tyrannical essence' by focusing on the headscarf issue. Tyrannical essence is equated with atheism in the Islamist press. Moreover, an *Akit* columnist made another indirect equation between atheism and homosexuality by writing: 'do they [Kemalists] understand if we say that homosexuality is equal to gay, tyranny is equal to atheism? I really don't know' (*Akit*, 2000, October 10, p. 1, 7). This equivalence is clear: to be against the headscarf in the public sphere is to be a repressive person; to be a repressive person is to be an anti-religious person; to be an anti-religious person is to be a homosexual. Thus what *Akit*'s columnist did is to subordinate secularists by referring to another problematic identity in Turkey, i.e. homosexuality. What is interesting here is in fact not the usage of homosexuality as a metaphor to display a negative feeling for secularist Kemalists but rather how ideology operates through news practices, through using the obscene supplement incised into the very symbolic power itself.

Conclusion

This study has focused on the issue of how Kemalism is represented by Islamist media in the discursive field of Turkey. It gives some clues to the changed and enriched content of the antagonism over the last decade. Although the social reality of an antagonistic struggle can be symbolized and represented, it would not be sufficient to identify both sides of this struggle as enemies and friends within the nation. To display a dichotomous aspect of an us and them relationship can only be a starting point and not a conclusion for the analysis of an ideological struggle. Dichotomous aspects can be seen in the antagonistic struggle between Kemalism and Islamism. Antagonism in the Islamist press is constantly constructed between 'the universal democratic standards of Western societies' and the so-called 'particular democratic standards of Kemalist ideology'. The Islamist press tries to support Islamist discourse using a universalist discourse of democracy and human rights. By defining what secularism is and what it should be, Islamist papers are able to continuously reference Western secularism. The discursive operations in the Islamist press are clear here—the universal notion of secularism is displaced with a particular one, i.e. Western secularism. By neglecting that the universal is hegemonized by a particular and the particularity of Western secularism, the Islamists' sense of secularism in fact hegemonizes the empty universality of secularism in this epoch. In other words, Islamist newspapers are attempting to discredit Kemalist secularism as the main referential point. Despite Islamist's assertion of the universal validity of their understanding of secularism, it should be noted that 'there is ideology whenever a particular content shows itself as more than itself' (Laclau, 1996, p. 238).

The second conclusion we can draw from this analysis of the Islamist press concerns the operation of equivalence in their discourse. Benefiting from the logic of equivalence is one of the main strategies of Islamist newspapers when they represent Kemalism. The domination of this logic has narrowed the discursive space by splitting a system of differences and instituting a political frontier between two opposed camps (Islamist and

Kemalist). In terms of the possibility of reconciling the two ideologies, the logic of equivalence makes it harder because it seeks to divide the social space by condensing meanings around two antagonistic poles. That is why it causes popular antagonism rather than democratic antagonism of the logic of difference (Laclau, 1996). As a result, Kemalism has been equated with fascism, anti-democracy and totalitarianism by Islamist newspapers for each specific issue that has emerged in the political field since the 1990s. The Islamist press continuously represents Kemalism in a frame of negativity. Thus the origins of all current social and political problems in Turkey are somehow attributed to Kemalism. Interestingly, the Kemalism that the Islamist press argues against is not conceived as a changing ideology but one that remains the same, unchanged and fixed. Transformation is a property that is assigned to Islamism by the Islamist press.

The biggest problem with representations of Kemalism in Islamist newspapers is that the logic of equivalence has led to a sharp antagonistic polarity in society. This kind of polarity derives from a friend/enemy political frontier and does not allow for a complex articulation of elements against such dichotomization (Norval, 2000). Therefore, reconciliation between the dichotomous sides of the political space in Turkey is difficult. Representations of Kemalism in the Islamist press not only reflect this friend/enemy form of popular antagonism but construct them with the help of many discursive strategies. Although alternative representations of Kemalism (beyond friend/enemy) are possible, these positions were not cultivated by the Islamic press in the 1990s.

Unless the Islamist press uses a logic of difference instead of a logic of equivalence, the democratic features of a discursive space will continue to be weak. Thus their claims for democracy, freedom and human rights appear a demand not for all people in Turkey but only for religious people, who suffer from secularist law according to the Islamist press.

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Notes

¹ A few good examples of these kind of researches on Turkey's Islamist political party (Refah Party) are Ayşe Öncü's (1995) 'Packaging Islam: cultural politics on the landscape of Turkish commercial television and Çiler Keleş Dursun's (1994) 'A comparative analysis of the construction of the Refah Party on television news and struggle in discourse' (in Turkish). Both are concerned with Islam as constructed by commercial television channels in Turkey.

² The headscarf is a religion-based garment that religious women in Turkey have used to cover their hair (but not face) since the beginning of the 1970s. The headscarf is solely female headgear. It is also different from the veil because the face is not concealed from men. To be seen by men is not forbidden by God according to young women using the headscarf in Turkey. This is not the traditional hair covering of rural Anatolian women, although it similarly hides women's hair but exposes their entire face. Despite being forbidden since the Kemalist cultural revolution, the headscarf has begun to penetrate the social realm (from the 1930s until today), unlike the veil, which is used only by a small minority of (usually older) religious women in cities and towns. The headscarf is accompanied by a long coat which conceals the womanish shape of the body, but in rural areas women do not wear long coats and don't try to hide their body shape.

³ Social antagonism introduces an irreconcilable negativity into social relations. The role of antagonism is formative of social objectivity itself and is evidence of the frontiers of social formation (Howarth, 1996). What gives specificity and authenticity or content to an antagonistic social relation can only be pursued through its historical determinants. The most simplified version of any antagonistic relation as

enemies and friends is a valid frame for all ideological struggles between different parties, although this version cannot help us to see the wealth of struggles.

- ⁴ The most prominent of these antagonisms in the last 25 years derives from the ethnically diverse landscape of Turkey and stems from the multi-ethnic character of Turkish society, consisting mainly of Turk, Kurd, Laz, Cerkes and others.
- ⁵ Since Islamism has existed as a word, it became a political movement used to gather all Muslim communities around the caliphate and under the flag of Islam in the period of Sultan Abdülhamit II (Kara, 1986; Mardin, 1991, pp. 92–93).
- ⁶ Early nationalists asserted that ‘Turks ... went so much further in being Muslim that they gave up their own alphabet and took the Arabic alphabet’.
- ⁷ In the multinational Ottoman Empire the word Turk was not a credible word even at the end of the 19th century. The word ‘Turk’ then referred to a ‘nomad’ or someone who was ‘uncivilised/underdeveloped; it was a humiliating term.
- ⁸ The Democratic Party (DP) was a centre-right political party that claimed to represent the periphery against the secular bureaucratic intelligentsia (Sakallıoğlu, 1996, p. 237). It was committed to a republican state, modernization and progress via secularization, although the DP also encouraged the rise of Islam by setting up İmam Hatip Lycees (religious schools) as a parallel system to the secular schooling system, introducing religious courses into primary schools. Benefiting from traditional and popular Islam, the DP appealed to the popular vote and to tarikats such as Nakşibendi and Nurcu.
- ⁹ Islamists have sided with partial westernization since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. An inability to follow the rise of Western civilization over the last two centuries was seen as the main reason for the decline of the Empire. Therefore, Islamists have tried to create an eclectic way of following the West by reconciling the cultural and moral values of Islam and the scientific, industrial and technical superiorities of the West (Kara, 1986). This pragmatic way of recapturing the ‘good old days’ of the Ottoman Empire was of no great use since the values and principles of Western civilisation as content cannot be separated from the Western system as form.
- ¹⁰ With the aim, first, of making a strong connection between Islam and a modern way of life instead of a secular way of life, Ottoman intellectuals such as Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura tried to articulate ideological formulations for the continuation of the Empire.
- ¹¹ The ‘national culture’ of the Synthesis is the essence of the nation, which is accepted as an organic being and the result of not merely consent or law but also passions implanted by nature and history.
- ¹² The Turkish–Islamic Synthesis is an ideology formulated by Aydınlar Ocakı (Intellectuals Hearth) and placed on the political agenda in the 1970s. This ideology did not achieve political hegemony until the 12 September 1980 coup. It gained significant political power and influenced policies such as the Atatürk Language and History Higher Commission and the State Planning Organization. Nevertheless this does not mean that the Synthesis was not influential before military intervention. The Turkish–Islamic Synthesis tried to respond to dislocations in the social structure and to political oscillations in Turkey by emphasizing the importance of ‘national culture’. The Synthesis was an ideal introduced by right-wing politicians and intellectuals surrounding Aydınlar Ocakı and was aimed at disseminating Turkish nationalism by developing the national consciousness and culture (since May 1970). The inclusion of Turkism and Islam in the naming of an ideology signifies that the constitutive antagonism of the Synthesis is not between Turkism and Islam (Dursun, 2004), rather, a certain and irreversible connection is claimed between being Turk and being Muslim: Islam is asserted as a precondition of being and remaining a real Turk. The synthesis considers Islam as a *sine qua non* of being a Turk. The origin of being a real Turk is anchored in the acceptance of Islam. However, being a Turk is not considered a precondition for remaining a Muslim according to this ideology. The main claim of this Synthesis is that there is a unity and harmony between Turkism and Islam. The emphasis is on the coexistence of these elements. not the difference between them although, there has been a difference between the nationalist political project and the Islamist political project since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.
- ¹³ The nature of the unconscious is a constitutive and creative source of subjectivity and human experience according to Freud. His work stressed that the individual subject creates thoughts and images in an indeterminate manner against the trace of desire. Unconscious desire is seen as a potential realm against domination and as full of possibilities of alternative futures. By introducing this and related concepts, psychoanalytic theory plays a crucial role in social critique by focusing on deformed and crippled forms of repressed human desire. Thinkers of the Frankfurt School, like Marcuse, Adorno

and Horkheimer, reformulated some notions of Freudian theory of repression to adequately comprehend certain intersections between the psychological and social fields. The source of the individual subject's incorporation within the dominant cultural values of modern society was explained by the manipulation of unconscious processes. According to critical theorists, a new and more powerful form of ideological incorporation arises through the repression of consciousness. The fractured character of self identity and the split between consciousness and the unconscious is seen as the foundation of contemporary social divisions and antagonisms (Elliot, 1992).

¹⁴ While Freud used this concept as opposed to the reality (an illusory product of the imagination), Lacan emphasized the fantasy scene as a defense that veils castration (Evans, 1996, p. 60).

¹⁵ From a Lacanian perspective the central point is that ideological processes are driven by the need to escape the horrifying condition of lack and trauma in the Real. This horrifying kernel is the impossibility of access to the Real as a complete state of being. To escape from the Real, reality is constructed.

¹⁶ I fully agree with Žižek's comment that those

who directly translate the political antagonism into moral terms (the struggle of Good and Evil) is sooner or later compelled to perform the political instrumentalisation of the domain of morals: to subordinate their moral assessments to the actual needs of their political struggle. (Žižek, 2000)

Thus, just as the moralization of politics necessarily ends up in its very opposite, the politicization of morality, so too the Islamization of politics ends up in the politicization of Islam in Turkey. This is the logic of the negation of negation in the Hegelian sense, which was perfectly interpreted by Slavoj Žižek (1989, 2000). When the negation of negation is considered not as a magical reversal but as a repetition at its purest, it is not wrong to say that the passage from in-itself to for-itself asserts what it already was in itself. The politicization of Islam should not be seen as an unexpected outcome of the Kemalist revolutions but as a return of the repressed in a psychoanalytic sense, or as a sign that the symbolic death of a negated system (Islamism) could not succeed.

¹⁷ It should be noted that these are the only analytical categories which are going to help us clarify the oppositions and the strategic reversals in Islamist discursive operation. Each of these problems is transitive to each other when it is represented by a newspaper. For example, in the news the headscarf issue is intertwined with the problem of the existing order. This makes it more difficult to identify which issue is central for the newspaper. However, if the actual news event can be considered as originary content, it becomes possible to make a meaningful separation between issues. I have followed this procedure when analysing news.

¹⁸ For the last 10 years an Islamist oriented party has identified itself as the voice of all the suppressed and unhappy people in Turkey. At the end of the historical developments mentioned above, a newly established (in 2002) conservative religious party called the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party) gained a majority during the parliamentary elections (two-thirds of the members of the Turkish National Assembly), although it only gained 35% of the valid votes on 3 November 2002.

¹⁹ Cultural studies has had a great impact on communication studies and news analysis because it provides new grounds for making connections between ideology and the media. Very productive research studying the ideological function of the media and pseudo-'objective news' was undertaken by critical theorists like Fairclough, van Dijk, the Center for Critical and Cultural Studies (CCCS) and the Glasgow University Media Group during the 1980s and 1990s.

²⁰ The definition of reaction as something against the existing system is so powerful that the last two military interventions in Turkey (1980s and 1997) were justified by the armed forces as opposition to religious fundamentalism and to the power of reactionary movements. However, when it came to maintaining the unity of the nation, ironically the military regime of the 1980s strongly emphasized the significance of religion and Islam, which was used as the 'ideological cement' holding together divided political, ideological sides.

²¹ This enabled Islamists to make a pragmatic articulation between critics of Western culture and the desire to achieve the highest point of Western technology and civilization. Although it is also a conservative articulation, the difference between the Islamist parties and the central right-wing parties in Turkey stems from the fact that conservative rightists had always kept Kemalism as an ultimate

reference point, while Islamists have tried to retraditionalize social and cultural life according to Islamist principles.

- ²² An *Akit* columnist mentioned that ‘those who say I’m Muslim means 95% of the population in Turkey is also reactionary’ (Karaali, 2000). He has, ironically, equated being Muslim with being a reactionary.
- ²³ Concrete universality involves the central impossibility of acquiring a figure that would be adequate to its notion. It is impossible since there is a gap, a hole in the midst of the particular content of the Universality. However, the Universal always asserts itself in the guise of some particular content which, as Zizek mentioned, ‘claims to embody it directly, excluding other content as merely particular’ (Zizek, 2000, p. 101).
- ²⁴ According to Zizek, a radical consequence of this difference is that ‘the split is located on the side of the Universal, not on the side of the Particular’ (Zizek, 1991, p. 44). In sum, what makes the Universal universal is not its opposition to a wealth of particular diversity, but its opposition to both its own absence and to the particular. As again Zizek remarked, ‘the impetus of the dialectical process is precisely this contradiction between the Universal and the Particular’ (Zizek, 1991, p. 43).
- ²⁵ Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the necessary legal arrangements were made to remove existing religious authorities, communities and sectarians from public life. Thereafter the secularist system placed new and modern positions into social life, whose interests were dependent on the continuity of this new secularist structure.
- ²⁶ The irony of these kind of claims in the ideological political process was well expressed by Zizek:

when a political agent criticises rival parties for considering only their narrow party interests, he thereby offers his own party as a neutral force working for the benefit of the whole nation. Consequently . . . the dividing line that structures his speech runs between his own party and all the rest. What is at work here is again the logic of ‘oppositional determination.’ The alleged universality beyond petty party interests encounters itself in a particular party—that is contradiction. (Zizek, 1993, p. 133)

- ²⁷ Oppression to the aggrieved is the phenomenon of a spirit of late capitalism which encompasses the Turkish- Islamic land” according to Açıkel. He grasps the aggrievement as a specific position seeking some credibility and power through a political fantasy called Turkish- Islamic synthesis (Açıkel, 1996, p. 180–185). When the society loses its class origins and cultural foundations, subordinated subjects might be articulated to any kind of oppressive political apparatuses. The division between oppressive and aggrieved people has a central function in Islamist discourse. By substituting his/her impotent feelings with the omnipotence of God, an aggrieved person tries to get rid of a deep suffer derived from the powerless position in a secular life.

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