A place on the map is also a place in history.
—Adrienne Rich, “Notes toward a Politics of Location”

One who goes too far East,
Because of geography arrives in the West,
The reverse is also true.
—Ece Ayhan, Yort Savid

Europe has been an object of desire as well as a source of frustration for Turkish national identity in a long and strained history. Turkey, who has long been trying to be a member of Europe,¹ regarded 2002 as an especially critical year in its relations with the European Union (EU). Hoping to be given a date for “negotiations” for full membership at the end of the year, the Turkish government concentrated its effort to initiate legislative reforms concerning human rights. Although the political target of full membership to Europe found support in most segments of the society, the enthusiasm was nevertheless shadowed by a doubt whether Europe or “the West” would at last accept Turkey’s self-consciously crafted Western identity. It turned out that the anxiety was not without reason. In December 2002, the EU leaders’ meeting came

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to the conclusion that “if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.” The ambiguity of the “if” condition is causing further debates in Turkey as to the possible reasons of this recurring “delay.” The debates take new shades given that a pro-Islamic party has been in government since November 2002. However, instead of analyzing the trajectory of the debates, I would like to focus on the year 2002 when both the hopes and the anxieties concerning membership in the EU found significant social and cultural expressions, which I find relevant to my discussion of Occidentalism in this article.

One of the striking themes that emerged in the pro-European campaigns emphasizing the urgency of accomplishing the required legislative reforms in 2002 echoes the persisting anxiety over the possibility of finally “catching the train” of modern civilization. I remember seeing a comic strip in one of the popular comic magazines in Turkey years ago that brilliantly captures and mocks the train metaphor. The comic strip shows a “typically” dressed Kurdish man lazily sitting in a forlorn train station looking at a “typically” Western-style dressed young woman waiting for the train with a big suitcase. He says, “The last train has long gone, Miss. So, marry me.” The message is clear: The train metaphor is functional to deploy the desire for a Western future embodied in the figure of a Western-looking woman, yet the present is the problem-stricken Turkey unable to deal with its Kurdish or other ethnic-identity problems. Instead of concentrating on the present problems and their solutions, the hegemonic imaginary looks beyond the present with the aid of an already-late and always-postponed ideal. Despite the apparent emphasis on movement and speed best exemplified in the metaphor of “catching the train” before it is too late, I argue that there is a certain temporal stasis, even timelessness involved in the way the EU was perceived in public discussions in 2002. As I discuss later, “speed” is symptomatic of a much earlier condition of modernity in Turkey, which urges one to think that the emphasis on speed has nothing to do with movement, but rather is static.

My aim in this article is neither to discuss the specific case of the EU membership of Turkey in its highly contested political and economic aspects, nor to dwell on its long and frustrating history. Instead, I point at the temporal constructions of modernity appropriated in discussing the EU
as part of a larger historical framework in order to elaborate the conception and experiencing of modernity in Turkey in relation to “the West.” The “present” cannot simply be reduced to a naturalized and privatized time embedded in everyday life or to a segment in the national-durational time of modern history that connects past and future in the moment. The present has its own politics of time and space that is overdetermined by what is called history, itself a geographical-temporal representation.

I offer the term Occidentalism to conceptualize how the West figures in the temporal/spatial imagining of modern Turkish national identity. From its initial conception in the process of defining the Turkish national identity in the late nineteenth century to this day, “the West” has been contrasted to “the East” in a continuous negotiation between the two constructs. “The West” has either been celebrated as a “model” to be followed or excorized as a threat to “indigenous” national values. I argue that in theorizing the construction and representation of Turkish modernity, we can neither unproblematically herald the Western model nor dismiss the fantasy of “the West” that informs the hegemonic national imaginary. Turkey, which has been labeled by both outsiders and insiders as a bridge between the East and the West, has an ambivalent relation not only to the geographical sites of the East and the West, but also to their temporal signification: namely, backwardness and progress. Turkey has been trying to cross the bridge between the East and the West for more than a hundred years now, with a self-conscious anxiety that it is arrested in time and space by the bridge itself. In other words, the meaning of the present has a mythical core that has persisted over years and which remains as a source of frustration and threat, and as a symptom of internalized inferiority.

A study of Occidentalism means being receptive to the problems on the very boundary of the East-West divide. Therefore, it is neither an emic analysis that tries to “see things from the actor’s point of view,” nor an etic analysis that looks at things from imposed frames of reference, such as those based on Western representations. I pursue, rather, a theoretical framework that claims to analyze the gaps and mismatches that emerge on the boundaries of interconnected projections of the Occident and the Orient. This framework attends to questions of modernity in a non-Western context and aims to evoke the historicity of the non-Western other rendered invisible in the hegemonic conceptions of Western modernity, and even in some existing social theories that attempt to analyze these conceptions. Therefore, the
aim of the article is not simply to go beyond the East-West divide; instead it is to re-member the historical divide as constitutive of both the “Western” and “Eastern” modernities. This seems to be an even more necessary task at a time when intellectual maneuvers try to transcend the divide, yet the war positions continuously reproduce violent versions of it.

The “Time Lag” and the West

The wide gap between the present and the future, captured in the train metaphor, is not contingent to Turkish modernity. Nilüfer Göle argues that non-Westerners are “alienated from their own present which they want to overcome by projecting themselves either to the utopian future or to the golden age of the past” due to the “time lag” stigmatized and internalized as “backwardness” in representations of non-Western modernity. Halil Nalçaoğlu makes a similar point: the self-identity of those countries where modernization is attempted in a non-Western context is significantly determined by “being late.” Catching the train is a metaphor that signifies the destination of history to which the “latecomers” are always already late. Nalçaoğlu points at the “chronic anxiety” and the “universe of symbolic crises” thereby produced.

The “time lag” is paradoxically immobile and stands apart from the constantly onward-moving chronological sequence of Western progress. It is a timeless element of the self-definitions of the non-Western. Yet, as I argue later in the article, it does not originate from the culture of the specific sites labeled as non-Western and cannot be reduced to essential traits of a past heritage. Instead the past that figures in this state of stasis should be thought of in connection to the historical dynamics of modernity. The movement is arrested and bracketed in the formula that equates the present with stasis points to the dislocated time and space of the non-Western.

When seen in this larger framework, it is not surprising to find that the same anxiety of the “time lag” plays itself out in the way the EU is currently perceived and discussed in Turkey. Although it is not easy to portray the complexity of the long- and short-term political interests of each actor participating in the discussions, it is noteworthy that, positively or negatively, the EU was evoked as a symbolic marker for the future of Turkish society. What all the parties in the ongoing discussions shared was the ambivalence about the transcendental meaning of the reforms required by
the EU for membership. The reforms were not discussed as such, as solutions to present social problems, but signified as a code for the desired or feared Westernization.\textsuperscript{16} It is striking that the ambivalence persisted even after the reforms were finally and “miraculously” enacted in the national parliament at the last minute.\textsuperscript{17}

More concerned with the question “How does Europe see us?” the public discussions defer the practical-political meaning of the reforms.\textsuperscript{18} The gap between what the reforms imply—for example, the rights given to ethnic communities to speak and broadcast in their own language—and the continuing political pressures over the same groups becomes disturbing only if pointed out by the EU representatives. This makes it more apparent that the reforms were not meant for addressing the present problems in Turkish society,\textsuperscript{19} but they were part of a performance geared for the gaze of the West.

The hegemonic imaginary concerning the EU displaces the present and focuses on the future. Nevertheless, the future is overshadowed by a fixed past. This is best illustrated in the campaign of “Europe Movement 2002.” This is a “civil society”\textsuperscript{20} movement supported by a large number of primarily business and trade organizations; the specific campaign consists of newspaper ads and billboards advocating the urgent need for Turkey to become a member of the EU.\textsuperscript{21} The slogan of the campaign is “There is no other tomorrow.” The campaign evokes an emphasized feeling of urgency by both the slogan and the text of the ads. The first ad uses the old Kemalist motto, “Turk, be proud, work and trust,” and supplements it with the phrase “and be quick.” It links the present anxiety about the future to the “centuries-long struggle” of Turkish nationalists to become part of “contemporary civilization.” The stagnant past is revisited in the light of the urgency of choosing a future. The second one accentuates the anxiety with a threat. It portrays a crying baby and, using ironic language, claims that without the “European future,” Turkey is doomed to stay in the unbearable present (past?) crisis. The infantilization of the national identity that desperately needs the West to survive is again a resurrection of a past theme that will be addressed later in this article as I develop the theoretical construct of Occidentalism. The third ad is especially significant in bringing in the past issues of national identity. Showing identical-twin images of an Oriental-looking man with a moustache, the ad invites us to look at the “difference.” We learn that the difference, which doesn’t show but has a major impact on
the present, is the difference in the life quality between a Greek who is a member of the EU, and a Turk who is not. The past when the Greeks were part of the Ottoman Empire, and hence joined in sameness with them, is reclaimed yet cancelled by the national difference, in fact a product of the invisible mediation of the West. The final ad gives the clues for the long-awaited solution. The headline “Golden Goal” makes a reference to Turkey’s unexpected “victory” in the World Cup. It says that with a little “willpower” and “courage,” Turkey will make a final “attack” to win the match. Once again, the meaning of the reforms as code words for the EU are severed from their present meanings (such as the ongoing painful struggles for human rights in the society) and reduced to a clever tactic in a game conducted and viewed by the Western world.

As the ads’ themes show, the campaign conveys a discourse deeply shaped and burdened by the past, yet never passing, symbolic crises of Turkish national identity. It tells much about the temporal constructions of modernity and national identity. The urgent call to the future reinscribes the past as the immutable and timeless origin of the present, which should be annihilated by a radical leap into a future that has no connections with the present. The present time is denied in its heterogeneous experiential terms and reduced to a permanent crisis that the Turkish national elite has “struggled” to evade from the very beginning.

The present is very much haunted by beginnings. The timeless fantasy of “the West” in contrast to “the East” is not a construction in void. It has its dialogical references to the fantasy of “the East” produced in the historical encounter of the West and East, as accounted by Edward Said’s Orientalism. The fantasy still informs the present images of Turkey utilized by Westerners. It is not at all a coincidence that Western journalists also made reference to the “beginnings” of Turkish national identity in their comments on Turkey’s membership to the EU. For example, their envisaging Turkey as the “sick man” of Europe implies a double meaning: While pointing to the present—to the poor condition of health of Bülent Ecevit (then prime minister of Turkey)—it invigorates the late-nineteenth-century phrase that the Europeans used to denigrate the Ottoman Empire. Another “classical” type of comment that came from the Western journalists and infiltrated the Turkish media raises doubt about the authenticity of Turkish modernity. It reads that Turkey, after the enactment of the reforms, is now like Europe. Once again, this is not a new perspective. The Western “model” and Turk-
ish “copy” have been recurring themes not only in journalistic representations but also in social theory for a long time. The distinction historically made between the model and the copy lies at the heart of the hegemonic imaginary concerning the constructs of the East and the West. The Turkish hegemonic imaginary has been structured within an encounter with the West, which imposed a “model” for modernity in its colonialist and imperialistic history, and which has always reproduced itself through insufficient “copies.”

Let us now look briefly at how the concepts of model and copy figure visibly or invisibly in theories that address “Turkish modernity.”

**The Time Difference between the Model and the Copy**

Modernization theorists regarded the process of Westernization and/or modernization as a movement of Western values and techniques from the center of modernity to its “developing” margins. In this Eurocentric conception, the complexity and the crisis of modernity are neglected, being reduced to a “model” which is taken as an “exclusively European phenomenon.” However, as long as the so-called modernizing mission is integral to this view, the linear-time model of modernity that is expected to travel from the modern to the traditional is paradoxical. The homogenizing attempt of modernization is premised upon a differentiation that, according to Peter Osborne, “must first be recognized in order to be negated, so that “the results of synchronic comparisons are ordered diachronically to produce a scale of development which defines ‘progress’ in terms of the projection of certain people’s presents as other people’s futures, at the level of the development of history as a whole.” In this sense, the linear time model is also an invisibly spatial one. The resulting paradox is that the movement of time is cancelled by the stasis of space. Modernization is bound to be distorted in the end because of the essential particularities of the specific space under consideration. This means that modernization theories, which preach that modernization is possible in non-Western contexts, at the same time posit an opposition of time and space, which is not resolvable within their paradigm. The “essential space” of the non-West is stagnant and is defined in opposition to time and change. For example, it is not surprising that Bernard Lewis, who celebrated “the emergence of modern Turkey” more than thirty years ago, recently evaluated the Turkish case as still facing
“important choices” between the Middle East and the West. For Lewis, too, Turkey could not still cross the bridge. As can be clearly seen from this example, modernization theory is quite ambivalent about the inevitability of modernity in places such as Turkey. Modernity does not have its inherent dynamic in non-Western sites but is always dependent on an ever-appearing critical choice between the East and the West, which is paradoxically inscribed on its essential space.

Recent research on modernity and nationalism in Turkey is very critical of modernization theories. In opposition to classical modernization theories that celebrated the “asymptotic” adoption of Western modernity in Turkey, critiques of this approach “publicly debate and criticize the Kemalist doctrine as a patriarchal and antidemocratic imposition from above that has negated the historical and cultural experience of the people in Turkey.”

Whereas modernization theories saw a more or less successful example of universal modernity in the Turkish case, the critique treats this case as a failure to achieve a democratic and modern society. However, both views share the reference point of the implicit model. Whether the history of Westernization is designated as a success or failure, both versions imply that Turkey, which “imitated” the West, is an exceptional case: an inept vehicle for Western modernization. It is bound to be a “copy.”

Furthermore, in recent critical approaches there is a tendency to interpret the making of the Turkish nation in terms of “fabrication” from a model. This seems to be a mirror image of the nationalist ideology that prioritizes the successful initiative of the political and cultural leadership in the interconnected processes of nationalization/modernization/Westernization. If the official nationalist representation emphasizes “good intentions,” the critique points to the “dictatorial intentions” of the initiative. According to the latter view, the Turkish “modernizing elite” voluntarily adopted the model of Western civilization and forcefully imposed it on the masses, which, of course, falls short of the “democratic” Western model. Both views deal with Turkish identity within a problematic of imitation, hence maintaining the necessary temporal/spatial difference between the model and the copy. Even those scholars who are critical of Western dominance pursue the same logic to emphasize the evils of imitation. According to Kevin Robins, for example, Turkish culture “has been imitative and derivative in its emulation
of the European model.” “But, of course,” he continues, “however good the simulation, it does not amount to the real thing.”\(^40\) The West is posited as the original stage for modernity to play out its concepts and institutions. This approach renders Turkish modernity a nonhistorical and nonsociological phenomenon.

So, one is confronted with several questions deriving from the above perspectives concerning Westernization/modernization in Turkey: the problem of how one might conceive of “impact” and “influences”; the problem of what “imitation” may mean; and, of course, the problem of what the “real thing” is. These questions pose a theoretical, practical, and political challenge. Obviously, the problem of model and copy is not unique to Turkey. This very challenge is addressed, for example, in postcolonial theories.

Postcolonial theories attempt to deconstruct the historical representations of the model/copy or the self/other by attending to the colonial history of these dichotomous oppositions.\(^41\) However, what can be considered unique to Turkey is its uneasy relation to colonialism and its consequent invisibility in postcolonial theories.

The Turkish case has not really attracted the attention of postcolonial critics.\(^42\) Modernization theories have more to say on this case; they advance the idea that Turkey was Westernized without being colonized.\(^43\) It then becomes worthwhile to ponder Turkey’s invisibility in postcolonial criticism. It is even more striking that Edward Said omitted Turkey in his study of Orientalism, given that his critical investigation of the Western conceptions of the non-West made a big impact on studies of modernity, including postcolonial criticism. Not only does Said skip the long Ottoman history that has been the object of Orientalist visions of desire and derision in many areas such as philosophy, travel writing, and art;\(^44\) he also does not address the complications of the “defeat of Turkey and the West’s appropriation of its former imperial possessions”\(^45\) after the First World War. Said’s silence on this issue is significant, since he describes the same period as a time when the “Orient” increasingly “appeared to constitute a challenge... to the West’s spirit, knowledge and imperium.”\(^46\) Said primarily locates the “Oriental” other in the Arabic world to which he partially belongs, and his neglect of the Turkish case implies that Turkey stands in a very problematic relationship to the Arab world, the Ottoman Empire being the former colonial power there. This may reflect Said’s own ambivalence toward the history of the Ottoman colonization of Palestine: the Ottoman Empire dis-
rupts the binary oppositions of East and West, colonizer and colonized that inform his analysis.

Hence, the status of Turkey in relation to the history of colonialism is further complicated by the fact that the Ottoman Empire was itself a colonizing force. The major challenge to Ottoman rule came from the so-called West starting in the eighteenth century. The invasion of Western sciences, know-how, and artifacts, which contested Islamic and traditional ways of life and invoked the existence of a “lack,” was accompanied by actual Western enterprises that established and monopolized certain trades and industries. Thereafter Ottoman rule underwent a period of decline, which can be described as the colonization of the colonizer. The impact of this period, either the Western colonization of Ottoman life or the problem of the Ottoman colonies, was not openly addressed in the Kemalist discourse that reigned after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The Kemalist rupture that tried to set a zero point in time has contributed to the predominantly ambivalent attitude toward both the West and the Ottoman past in Turkey. In parallel to the maneuver of the Kemalist discourse that rendered the dynamics of the colonization of the colonizer Ottoman invisible, social theory has also not fully addressed the complexities involved. Consequently, the Turkish “replica” of modernity is either taken too literally or remains invisible in theories of modernization, Orientalism, and postcolonial criticism.

**The Meaning of the “Present”: Alternative or Multiple Modernities**

If the postcolonial critique is mostly oblivious to the case of Turkey, a line of critique that stems from postcolonial criticism but frees itself from the dialogism of self and other celebrates the hybrid and multiple (or alternative) modernities in Turkey and other non-Western countries. This is, in a sense, a partial liberation from the burden of the history of modernity and colonialism. The oppressive framework of “model” and “copy” is refuted. Instead, “a site-based reading of modernity” is privileged. According to Dilip Parameshwar Goankar, “modernity today is global and multiple and no longer has a governing center and master narratives to accompany it.” But of course, this does not mean for the authors who engage with the idea of alternative or multiple modernities that the Western discourse of modernity could or should be abandoned. A mere celebration of cultural differ-
ence would be too naive. In order to overcome the difficulty of defining the “universal” and the “local” meanings of modernity, a distinction between “societal modernization” and “cultural modernity” has to be made albeit in a dialectical way. In Taylor and Lee’s words, “A viable theory of multiple modernities has to be able to relate both the pull to sameness and the forces making for difference.”\textsuperscript{52} Hence, it is posited that societal modernization provides the axis of convergence for the divergent “site-specific ‘creative adaptations’” Goankar advances on this distinction to pursue the meaning(s) of modernity.\textsuperscript{53} Inspired by Foucault’s reading of Kant, he primarily argues that modernity “is best understood as an attitude of questioning the present.”\textsuperscript{54}

This perspective is an attempt to negate the inherent paradox of modernization that I discussed earlier. In opposition to marking space in hegemonically represented temporal terms (such as the words \textit{backward or progress} imply), space is treated as a differential and productive constituent of modernity. Non-Western localities should be thought of as the site “where people ‘make’ themselves modern, as opposed to being ‘made’ modern by alien and impersonal forces.”\textsuperscript{55} If modernity is a “form of relationship to the present and to oneself” that emerges everywhere around the globe, then the analysis of modernity is based no longer on “sequential chronology” but on “coeval time.”\textsuperscript{56} Such a conception of modernity may have liberating effects, especially for non-Westerners. However, my contention is that within this framework, the theoretical and political problems that inflict the modernization approach are not totally resolved, if not simply reversed.

The effort to rethink yet maintain the distinction between “societal modernization” and “cultural modernity” along the axis of convergence/divergence remains highly problematic. Although divergence is thought to be possible within the limits of convergence, and divergence is treated as producing similarities at the limits, this framework does not really address the problem of the worn-out but still alive historical representations of modernity—not only in scholarly texts but in discourses that continue to justify power regimes in both the West and the non-West. The emphasis on coeval time and differential space reduces the power-stricken texture of history to a flat surface on which sameness and difference operate indefinitely. The implicit spatial factor in the linear-time model of modernization theories is, in a way, reversed. In the framework of multiple or alternative modernities, modernity appears to be a desired final destination the “latecomers” have
their own creative ways of approaching. Yet one has to be sensitive to “the language and lessons of Western modernity” for a theory and practice of “creative adaptation.” Then, the chronology of Western modernity is not only assumed without questioning its historical construction and representation, but it is also implicitly taken as a model. The implicit chronology rendered invisible in the site-specific reading of modernity once again affirms the legacy and the model of Western modernity.

The most intriguing question, however, for the specific problems raised in this article on the Turkish case is the question of the present. Modernity as an attitude or an ethos for interrogating the present runs counter to my argument so far, that the meaning of the present is displaced in Turkey. At this point, it would be worthwhile to look at how the framework of multiple modernities is applied to Turkey. Nilüfer Göle argues that there is an “indigenization of modernity” in Turkey and other non-Western contexts, which implies “a divorce of Westernization and modernization.” In her elaborate theoretical discussion on the problems and promises of multiple modernities, she rightly points to a new conceptual awareness in the effort to read non-Western modernities differently. According to Göle, postulates such as “1. Decentering the West; 2. Introducing coeval time; 3. Replacing the perspective of ‘lack’ with ‘extra’ modernity; 4. Dissonant traditions can provide some methodological foundations for an approach in terms of the non-Western modernities;” may, to some extent, be meaningful in theoretically combating the oppressive model of Western modernity. Göle provides examples, especially regarding the Islamic experiences of modernity in Turkey, that point at the heterogeneity of “the modern.” However, I would argue that the hybridity and heterogeneity of modern identities boil down to the historical markers of East and West to the extent that these identities are appropriated within the limits of national identity. Identities are always “hybrid” and “ambivalent” but they are, at the same time, totalized within boundaries and bear the violence and the burden of history as well as possibilities for resistance within themselves. Hence, the limiting and the totalizing hegemonic imaginary may not be at all congruent with the efforts of “creative adaptations” of modernity practiced by the heterogeneous social groups in the society. I contend that what is thought to belong to the past of Turkish modernity, and is assumed to be surpassed (i.e., the Western hegemony; the perspective of “lack”; the noncontemporaneous perception of time; the binary opposition of traditional/modern) is very much present
in the hegemonic deployment of what modernity means. I have already discussed the present mode of discussing the EU membership in Turkey as a significant example of this.

Göle too easily equates the new theoretical awareness with the dissolution of the East-West divide. For example, she argues that decentering the West would replace the Western mirror of identity with one that “provides an opportunity to read our experiences in the reflection of each other’s historical experience and social practice.” 61 This immediately brings to mind the question of whether, in this case, the often-referenced Turkish-Greek enmity will be dissolved, and Turks and Greeks will read their experiences in the reflection of each other’s experiences, which are historically intertwined. Many current examples, including the portrayal of the Greek and Turkish men in the “Europe Movement 2002 campaign” discussed earlier, make one think that “the West” is still a powerful mediator in the construction of national identities 62 that may encapsulate local experiences in a mythical time. What is called history is not easy to disentangle in theory, which itself a challenge to theory.

**The Mythical Time of Occidentalism**

A new theoretical conceptualization is necessary in order to comprehend the historical interdependence between Turkey and the West without either collapsing particular differences into a dubious universalism or celebrating particularisms for their own sake. 63 This new perspective is especially relevant for Turkey, which has been regarded as an ideal space where East and West meet. But it was, at the same time, where the boundary between East and West was demarcated and consequently reproduced. 64 The history of Turkish nationalization/modernization/Westernization provides a rich account to study the persisting reproductions of the East-West divide. I will present snapshots from this history in order to illustrate the relevance of the theoretical framework of Occidentalism.

The late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. 65 When the Empire was invaded and partitioned by British, Italian, French, and Greek forces after being defeated in the First World War, most of the Turkish nationalists who opposed the policies of the Ottoman government in Istanbul, and were “denounced as godless atheists waging war against the caliph,” 66 took refuge in Anatolia, where they
participated in the “National Struggle.” Halide Edip Adivar, a rare female figure represented in the National Struggle, had been assigned the duty to visit different villages and report the violence done by the Greeks to Turkish populations. She mentions, in her memoirs, a conversation with an old peasant woman at that time. The peasant woman complained to Halide Edip that her writing reports was in vain. She said, “Why do you write? What could writing mean for a people who are being slaughtered?” Then she continued: “I have asked for pity from the Greeks. . . . They told us that they have been sent by Avrope [Europe; in Turkish, Avrupa]. So, my girl, please tell that man called Avrope to leave us alone, we didn't do anything bad to him, tell him not to disturb us.”

The old peasant woman’s painful words on Europe give a sense of what the West or Europe could mean for the people of Anatolia during the imperialist invasion. It represented a threatening force that was involved in conspiracies striving to destroy the traditional order of things. But for Halide Edip herself, the writer, Europe always was an abstract concept, ambivalent in many aspects. While actually fighting the Western forces, Halide Edip and other Turkish intellectuals discussed and wrote on the possibilities of Westernization as a synonym of modernization. There was a wide gap between how the intellectuals and the local communities interpreted the “West.” The national discourse was not monolithic. It was produced and reproduced by continuous negotiations between the West and the Orient. Also, it was not a voluntarily created set of ideas, as the “imitation” problematic would say. Westernization and modernization had been brought on the agenda of the Turkish national elite by means of a threat, “by convincing Turks of past and present inadequacy.” The constitutive lack was there, right at the center of national identity.

The Turkish national identity propagated as the official identity of the new Turkish State after 1923 had to assume many dimensions that were thought to belong to the nation but were absent. Turkish national discourse, as regulated and disseminated by the elite, was an eclectic mix of diverse elements: ideas taken over from past generations of nationalists; concepts, tools, and techniques borrowed from the West; unique solutions to deal with the pressing current political, ethnic, social, and economic problems; and much after-the-fact theorizing. Despite its pragmatic fluidity, the consequent national discourse was structured in and through a fantasy. The diverse realm of relations with the Western countries was
The Occidentalist fantasy evoked a “lack” in “the people” upon which it organized the “desire” to fill it. This was in close connection to the lack projected onto the Turkish by the Orientalist fantasy. They function in the same economy of identity and desire.

If Orientalism is a representation that is informed by historical and material power configurations but also conveys the desire of the Western subject, how the “Orientals” answered back to their representation by the West brings to view a complex field of subjectivity. Then, what is the subjectivity of the other? Furthermore, if “the creation of the Orient . . . signifies the West’s own dislocation from itself, something inside that is presented, narrativized, as being outside,” then what does the concept of “the West” produced by non-Westerners present and dislocate?

The concept of Occidentalism that I want to introduce is different from an idea of internalized Orientalism or a defensive reaction against the West. Instead, it points to the specific mechanisms that “Orientals” employ to create their subject status (not at all a homogeneous entity) and also to the common sky that structures different horizons. The other is represented not only by the Western subject, as the theory of Orientalism would put it. Occidentalism also denotes the subjectivity of the other in relation to Orientalism. It opens a space for the positivity of the other—its experiences, utterances, and practices—instead of adopting the often negative definition of the other in theories of Orientalism. But it also shows how the subjectivity of the other is encapsulated in the discursive realm of the other that is denied the real thing of modernity. The other’s inhabiting the space of the other and speaking for itself occurs in the same universe of signification.

But the double reflection (the viewpoint of the Western representation—that is, how the non-Western imagines that the West sees itself—is incorporated in the reflection on its own identity) complicates the identification process. Hence the critical study of Occidentalism not only deals with the ambivalent identity of the non-Western but also conveys that the imagined Western gaze is an integral part of this identity. It attends to how “center” and “periphery,” or “model” and “copy,” are already inscribed in the conception of modernity.

I do not mean to suggest that Occidentalism represents the other, as such,
as a unitary and separate entity; that it designates a (libertarian, or non-repressive and nonmanipulative)\textsuperscript{78} alternative to Orientalism; or that it is merely a fictive representation of the other othered by Western domination. I argue that the term \textit{Occidentalism} can be best understood as describing the set of practices and arrangements justified in and against the imagined idea of “the West” in the non-West. On the one hand, it signifies a projective identification with the threatening power of the West. On the other hand, it implies a demarcation of internal and external boundaries.

Westernization in Turkey cannot be understood as an objective process in which certain things, including manners, were imported from the West. Neither was it merely a subjective orientation that shaped events in line with the willpower of the ruling elite. It was a process in which the non-Westerners were othered and subjected to unequal power relations but also produced their subjectivity in that very encounter. \textit{Occidentalism} refers to a field of social imagination through which those in power consume and reproduce the projection of “the West” to negotiate and consolidate their hegemony in line with their pragmatic interests. The hegemony operates by employing the mechanisms of projection that support the fantasy of “the West.” Projection, in its psychoanalytical meaning, operates both as the displacement of what is intolerable inside into the outside world, thus as a refusal to know; and as introjection of what is threatening in the external world so as to contain and manage it. Therefore it designates at the same time what the subject refuses to be and desires to be. In Turkey, projection, in its double process, figures in the conception of “the people” on the one hand, and in the conception of “the West” on the other. Members of the national elite constituted their identity through a projection of the West in affirming their construction of a modern society. They organized the desire to be modern around the marker of “the West,” which they claimed to possess. By doing this they introjected the imagined nation into their subjectivity. But they displaced what is disturbing for them, such as the threatening power of the West, by assuming a guardian role that modernizes but at the same time protects the “less civilized” and “infantile” population from the “dangers of too much Westernization.” The virtual viewpoint of the West, which is the product of double projection, oscillates between recognition and rejection, leading to a series of splits.

It must be observed that Kemalists in early Turkish history were quite ambivalent about the possible impact of Westernization. While Western
Civilization was acknowledged as “superior” to the Ottoman heritage, it was, at the same time, despised for several reasons associated with its morality, the presence of “dangerous” class struggles and the existence of imperialist tendencies, and so on. It was seen as a source of both progress and threat. Civilization, in Mustafa Kemal’s words, stands out as a fierce force that destroys those who resist or stay indifferent to it; it is aggressive, threatening, and all-powerful. The feelings of panic raised by its progress and the fear of “being late” are accompanied by a feeling of inferiority inflicted on those who are not part of Western civilization. “The lethargic mentality of the past centuries” should be abandoned, said Mustafa Kemal; the new standards should be based on “speed and movement that define our century.” In a similar manner, the first sociologist of the nation, Ziya Gökalp, had said, “We shall skip five hundred years and not stand still.”

The impact of the West, therefore, was more than a mere import of concepts and techniques for Turkish nationalists. It was not just a movement of “modernity” in time and space. It was a performance for the imagined Western audience. It was also a totally new conception of time, which proceeded violently. It was a threat that the Turkish nationalists had to acknowledge and adapt to with “high speed.” Şerif Mardin points to a feeling of urgency on the part of the Kemalists “to work for something which did not exist as if it existed and make it exist.” “Nation” and “Western civilization” were fundamental code words for this.

There is no need to say that Turkish economy, politics, and social life underwent major changes from the 1920s to the present. However, the mythical time of Occidentalism remains to this day without much alteration. Mythical time is the recurrence of the same appearing as new and desirable. The past reappears as the desirable future in the Occidentalist fantasy. It is primarily a lack of historicity, a refusal to know the realm of forces that produce things as they are. It is a mode of representation of social reality reducing its complexity and heterogeneity in a national idiom that is captured in the timeless polarity of West and East. It is reproduced as long as it sustains its hegemonic power and sets the limits and terms of the subjectivities of various social groups in society.

The case of the present significations that restrict the EU debate in Turkey to timeless markers of East and West indicates that the Occidentalist fantasy is still at the heart of the hegemonic imaginary. I do not intend to underestimate the material interests in power struggles. But significations
and representations also have a complex role in shaping power strategies. Just as the West always refers to the notion of the East to assert its hegemony, Turkey reproduces the reified images of the West to justify its regime of power in its boundary management of dividing spheres, regions, and people along the axis of East and West. Occidentalist fantasy nurtures power strategies. It is not simply an admiration for the West or hatred against it. The reified image of the West for Turkish in this context can have both positive and negative meanings. For example, a government in Turkey may bring the problem of human rights to the agenda with reference to the sensitivity of the West on this issue, as in the EU case. But when confronted with an accusation of human rights violations, the same government may warn people against the dangers of Western interference. Occidentalism makes the conflicting statements possible, justifying every act and statement with reference to an imagined Westernness. It should not be forgotten that Kenan Evren, the general who seized power after the military coup in 1980, commented that Turkey is an integral part of democratic and free Europe and intends to remain so. And he ironically objected to any Western criticism targeted to the military regime and massive human rights violations.

I have argued in this article that modernity is a historical construct, and its historicity is displaced in the polarity of East and West. Hence the historical path of modernity in Turkey, very much intertwined with the development of world capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism, remains unacknowledged. Instead a fantasy of the modern, as “the West,” is replaced in the hegemonic imaginary. I have also argued that social theories such as modernization, by sustaining the polarity of East and West, have contributed to this fantasy. On the other hand, recent critical stances of alternative or multiple modernities miss the role of the fantasy by too easily dissolving the poles of East and West. I have suggested that one should address the symptoms of tension involved in the re-production of the polarity, in both its particular historical manifestations and “universal” relevance. Occidentalism provides examples of this tension. Occidentalism is an answering practice to the constructions of the West, which operates in the mythical time of reified representations. It may produce a resistance to Western power, but operates within its discursive terms to maintain a system of government that endorses its hegemony. The desire of the nationalist elite in Turkey to become both Western and anti-Western and Turkish resonates...
with the Western desire to see Turkey as a bridge that never crosses the distance between the West and the East. But Occidentalism also brings to light symptoms of mismatch and excess not pinned down in this timeless circularity. Therefore, a critical study of Occidentalism may illustrate how the projections of the West by non-Westerners hover over the universal principles of Western modernity as a deferred echo that challenges and alters its “universal” and “local” meanings.

I have also argued that the emphasis on speed in Westernization/modernization based on the idea of a time lag paradoxically blocks possible changes in the structure of social life in Turkey. It is in the notion of speed that the reified, thinglike character of modernity associated with the West is sustained. The idea of speed encapsulates energies that could otherwise be spent in dealing with frozen identities and problematics. The metaphor of “catching the train of Western civilization” both channels and frustrates the desires of the people to be modern. The anxiety of “being late” puts a barrier to critical and creative thinking that could have attended to the questions of the present. Most burning questions in Turkey today are deferred or made invisible by their displacement in Occidentalism, including human rights violations, gender inequalities, ethnic problems, and political Islam.

It is never easy to resist reification at either the level of the production of commodities or that of representations. But it is worth the effort. If we can understand and analyze the inner contradictions, the tensions of modernity that produce the intertwined histories of Orientalism and Occidentalism, then maybe we can revive the buried promise of modernity—the practice of critique. It is time that we reach out for the emergency brake in the “train of Western civilization.”

Notes

1 Turkey first became a candidate for membership in the EEC (European Economic Community) in the 1960s. After a long period of indeterminacy, Turkey was declared an official candidate for “full membership” to the EU (European Union) with twelve other countries in December 1999. Although most of the other candidates are proceeding toward a final decision in their negotiations with the EU, Turkey is the only candidate still waiting for approval from the EU to start negotiations for full membership.

2 In the Web journal Enlargement Weekly (December 17, 2002) the decisions of the Copenhagen Meeting of EU leaders December 12–14, 2002, are reported. According to these reports, not only is the starting date of the accession negotiations with Turkey postponed to 2004, but it is also made dependent on the fulfillment of certain conditions, which, this
time also include the “implementation” of legislative reforms. See www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement.

3 This metaphor has been widely used in Turkish media for years to point at Turkey’s belated relationship to “Western civilization.” Currently it has gained further prominence in the discussions over the question of the EU. For example, a distinctively pro-European newspaper, Radikal, has turned the phrase into a logo for its specific campaign for the EU: “AB Treni Kaçmasın” [Don’t let the EU train run away].

4 The concept hegemonic imaginary is inspired by Cornelius Castoriadis’s concept social imaginary. See Cornelius Castoriadis, The Imaginary Institution of Society, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity, 1987). Hegemonic imaginary refers to the realm of significations and representations that constitute and provide a historical mode of social being for individuals in the society. The imaginary is hegemonic to the extent that it is reinforced by power relations as the dominant mode of being and channels the desires of people to appropriate that mode of being. Turkishness in relation to the Western world is a significant element of the hegemonic imaginary in Turkey.

5 While hegemonic imaginary regards the significations and representations that provide the social mediation for being a social agent, fantasy refers to the psychopolitical dynamics in the constitution of subjectivities in a certain historical context. Postcolonial theory informed by psychoanalysis makes use of the concept to address the splits and projections in the processes of subject constitution and identification in a colonial and postcolonial situation. For significant examples, see Ashis Nandy, The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. C. L. Markmann (London: Pluto, 1993); Homi Bhabha, “Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition,” in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, ed. P. Williams and L. Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Mladen Dolar argues that fantasy is a “useless tool to explain its object.” Yet it “can shed light upon its producers and adherents. It projects onto the screen of this distant Other our own impasses and practices in dealing with power, and stages them.” Mladen Dolar, “The Subject Supposed to Enjoy,” in The Sultan’s Court: European Fantasies of the East, by Alain Grosrichard, trans. L. Heron (London: Verso, 1998), xiv.

6 In the 1830s August Comte wrote to the Grand Vizier Reşit Paşa: “The world has been divided into two oppositional worlds, Asia and Europe, for centuries; it is time that this opposition should be overcome; that there must be a common civilization in the world.” Comte “regarded Turkey as the only country with the capacity, in historical and geographical terms, to realize the synthesis between the two worlds.” Mehmet Kaplan, Nesillerin Ruhu (Istanbul: Hareket Yayını, 1967), 73.

7 A Turkish social scientist captures this structure of sentiment, which he, like most others, cannot manage to deal with critically: “Of all the nations in the world, Turkey is unique in having failed to forge a consistent image of herself. Is she of Europe or of the East? Is she a modern nation-state or a feudalist [sic] association wallowing in the Middle Ages? Is she a popular democracy or a camouflaged group dictatorship? Aware of their lack of articulateness in international discourse, the Turks blame themselves for the confusion.”


11 According to Nalçaoğlu, the symptomatic significance of the train metaphor is not that we are late to it, but we are always late to it. Nalçaoğlu, “Devrimci Öğrencilerin,” 146.

12 Ibid.

13 Peter Osborne dwells on the “temporal dialectic of modernity,” arguing, “Insofar as ‘modernity’ is understood as a periodizing category in the full sense of registering a break not only from chronologically defined period to another, but in the quality of historical time itself, it sets up a differential between the character of its own time and that which precedes it. This differential formed the basis for the transformation in the late eighteenth century in the meaning of the concepts of ‘progress’ and ‘development,’ which makes them the precursors of later, twentieth-century concepts of modernization. For the idea of the non-contemporaneousness of geographically diverse, but chronologically simultaneous, times which thus develops, in the context of colonial experience, is the foundation for ‘universal histories with a cosmopolitan intent.’” Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 16.

14 For a long time the debate centered on whether Turkey wishes to commit itself to the reforms required by the EU for membership, such as the ban of capital punishment and the right of Kurdish people to speak and broadcast in their mother tongue. It must be stated that no one party in the Turkish political arena was consistently for or against the reforms. The alliances on either front do not fit to the apparent political divisions in Turkey: while the big bourgeoisie, liberal intellectuals, Kurds, most Islamists, the new leftist movements, human rights activists, and those Kemalists that are devoted to Western civilization argue for the EU; the extreme right, the right conservatives, Turkists, radical Islamists and some Kemalists keen on national independence, leftist nationalists, and radical socialists argue against it. Oya Baydar, “Yalın Kılıç AB’ye Doğru,” *Radikal*, June 16, 2002.

15 According to Ahmet Insel, the ambivalent attitude toward the EU functions as a hegemonic power strategy that fixes Turkish society in a twilight zone, investing in hopelessness disguised as postponed hope. Even the leftist ODP (Freedom and Solidarity Party), he argues, is part of the hegemonic ideology, as its ambivalent attitude summarized in the slogan, “AB’yeye Havet” [Nes to EU, Nes meaning a combination of yes and no] illustrates. Ahmet Insel, “AB Kapısı Kapanırken,” *Radikal*, June 23, 2002.


17 While the pro-European newspaper *Radikal* and the “Europe Movement 2002” celebrated their own contribution to “having a place in history,” the newspapers, including *Radi-
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continued to publish articles that emphasize the uncertainty of the present situation with reference to whether the recent legal initiative would be adequate for membership. While Radikal concentrated on the possible reactions coming from the EU, interestingly the Islamic newspaper Yeni Şafak introduced more radical questions regarding the meaning of the reforms and questions the link between modernization and Westernization often taken for granted. It argued that Turkey should get rid of its platonic love relationship with Europe and face its own identity as the other of the West, while getting ready to be a member of the EU. Yusuf Kaplan, “AB’ye Taraf Olarak Bertaraf Olmak mı; Yoksa Yükselesek Verolmak mı?” Yeni Şafak, August 4, 2002.

Avni Özgürel states that the debate over the EU in Turkey is informed by the question “What does Europe think?” By giving a historical account of the problem of the Western gaze, he argues that the question has a history of 250 years. Avni Özgürel, “Osmanlıdan Başlayıp Bugüne Kadar Gelen 250 Yıllık Bir Soru . . . Avrupa Ne Düşünüyor?” Radikal, August 4, 2002.

For example, while the enactment of the reforms were celebrated, not much attention was paid to what will happen to the university students who have been penalized due to their demands of education in their “mother tongue,” namely Kurdish.

The concept civil society gained prominence in Turkey in the late 1980s. Its meanings vary in different conceptions, from being associated with the “interests of the society” in opposition to the “state,” to being positioned as the new agent of modernization. In most cases, civil society denotes the business and trade organizations, as in the case of “Europe Movement 2002.” Tanıl Bora and Seda Çağlar critically discuss the role of the so-called civil society organizations as the new agents of modernization and Westernization in “Modernleşme ve Batılılaşmanın Bir Taşıyıcısı Olarak Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları,” in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Modernleşme ve Batıcılık, ed. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).

The campaign was specifically designed for creating a public opinion, especially on the need for enacting the reforms, as a condition for membership to the EU. However, it continued after the enactment of the reforms stressing the current problems that should be addressed in the process of becoming a member. The campaign had wide publicity in print media, as well as a Web site petition inciting individuals to enroll in the movement.

Greece and Turkey are not only engaged in a feud over territorial claims, such as in the case of the Aegean Islands or in Cyprus, they also compete for being considered Western. For example, when Greece was accepted in the EEC, a Turkish newspaper wrote: “They have become Europeans and we have remained Asians.” The feeling of inferiority triggered by Greece’s membership was addressed by Mümtaz Soysal, a Turkish academic and politician, in a significant remark: “This is the most opportune time to rid ourselves of the complex of ‘being considered European.’ . . . We are Turks from Turkey. Turkey is a country with one bank in Europe and the other in Asia. . . . We must realize this and accept this as such, and we must turn this embarrassment into a sense of superiority.” David Kushner, “Westernism in Contemporary Turkey,” in Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey, ed. J. M. Landau (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984), 234–40. On the other hand, Herzfeld points at the constitution of the Greek identity by inventing a Greek tradition that was supposed to be Western in opposition to the “foreign” local Turkish culture.

23 In its press declaration on August 3, 2002, after the enactment of the reforms, IHD (Human Rights Organization) reiterated that “the ban of capital punishment cannot be regarded as a momentary decision. So many people have been struggling over decades for this end in Turkey, and they paid a price for it. Some were convicted and some were killed. So we should not forget the struggles that have been going on in the society by equating the recent reforms with the EU demands” (www.ihd.org).


26 The London Times, the Economist, and Die Welt have recently talked about Turkey as the “sick man” of Europe. The translated articles appeared in Radikal as part of the discussions on the EU membership. “Avrupa’nın Hasta Adami,” Radikal, July 6, 2002 (London Times, July 5, 2002); “Tükenmiş Başıbakana Yer Yok,” Radikal, July 6, 2002 (Economist, July 5, 2002); Dietrich Aleksander, “Hasta Adam’ın Özgüveni Yerinde,” Radikal, July 7, 2002 (Die Welt, July 1, 2002).

27 One comment, quoted from an Italian communist newspaper, Manifesto, clearly underlines the interplay of projections between Turkey and the West. The sarcastic comment reads, the “New Turkey is now ‘like Europe.’” Nilgün Cerrahoğlu, “Türkiye’ye Evet Ama,” Cumhuriyet, August 5, 2002.

28 For classical examples of modernization theory applied to Turkey, see Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958); Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).


31 Osborne argues that “it is in the repressed spatial premises of the concept of modernity that its political logic is to be found.” Osborne, The Politics of Time, 16.

32 This is due to the conceptions of space and time in hegemonic forms of modernity, in which time is associated with movement and politics and space is deﬁned as stasis. Space and time opposition is also gendered along this axis; space is feminine, time is male. See Doreen Massey, “Politics and Space/Time,” in Place and the Politics of Identity, ed. M. Keith, S. Pile (London: Routledge, 1993).

33 Said’s account of Orientalism (in his Orientalism) illustrates this point. His path-breaking study illustrates how the Western scholars’ attempt to travel to, to penetrate into, and to represent the Orient produced an objectiﬁed and essentialized Orient.

34 “Turkey today stands before important choices. It may choose, as some of its leaders would clearly prefer, to turn its back on the West and return to the Middle East, this time
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not leading but following, in a direction determined by others. It may choose, as other
Turkish leaders would clearly prefer, to tighten its ties with the West and turn its back on
the Middle East, except for those countries that share Turkey’s westward orientation and
democratic aspirations.” Bernard Lewis, The Future of the Middle East (London: Phoenix,
1997). 48. See also Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey.

Lewis, The Future of the Middle East, 46.

See also Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey.

35

Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, introduction to Rethinking Modernity and National Iden-

36 The fact that Europe is already an example bound with the history of domination over
others inscribes a hierarchy between the examples in Europe and those elsewhere. As
Derrida puts it, “Europe has the privilege of being the good example, for it incarnates in its
purity the Telos, of all historicity: universality, omnitemporality, infinite traditionality,
and so forth; . . . The empirical types of non-European societies, then, are only more or less
historical; at the lower limit, they tend toward nonhistricticity.” Jacques Derrida, The Other
Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe, trans. P. Brault (Bloomington: Indiana University

37 Keyder argues that “Turkish nationalism is an extreme example of a situation in which
the masses remained silent partners and the modernizing elite did not attempt to accom-
modate popular resentment.” Çağlar Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity? Turkey
in the 1990s,” in Bozdoğan and Kasaba, Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in
Turkey, 43.

38 For example, Kadioğlu, who makes use of Chatterjee’s perspective to analyze Turkish
nationalism, argues that “the emerging new Turkish identity . . . was distinguished by its
manufactured character.” Ayşe Kadioğlu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the
(London: Frank Cass, 1996), 188. Despite the fact that Partha Chatterjee insists on the
colonial dynamics of imagining the nation in India, Kadioğlu’s statement reflects the
exceptionalism that has been so widely internalized by the Turkish people. See Partha
Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse (London:

39 Kevin Robins, “Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe,” in Questions of Cultural Identity,

40 For example, Bhabha’s concern is to overcome the given dichotomous model/copy or
self/other poles of identity by pointing to the hybridity and ambivalence in colonial dis-
course. He argues that the narrative of colonial mimicry maintained a recalcitrant differ-
ce, “a difference that is almost the same but not quite,” which is similar to the function-
ing of modernization narratives. Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence
of Colonial Discourse,” October 34 (1985): 26. Bhabha thinks that the necessary hetero-
genesis in the narrative provides a medium of intervention. The “in-between” rewriting
of the narrative, which produces not a copy of the original but a misappropriation of it,
is capable of interrupting the hegemonic narrative and exposing its ambivalence.

41 Although Turkey does not really fit into a postcolonial model due to the fact it was never
overly colonized, and also because of the complications of its own colonial past, it is still
possible to argue that it is more or less a proper object of study for postcolonial criticism if
we accept Bart Moore-Gilbert’s broad definition: “In my view, postcolonial criticism can still be seen as a more or less distinct set of reading practices, if it is understood as pre-occupied principally with analysis of cultural forms which mediate, challenge or reflect upon the relations of domination and subordination—economic, cultural and political—between (and often within) nations, races or cultures, which characteristically have their roots in the history of modern European colonialism and imperialism and which, equally, characteristically, continue to be apparent in the present era of neo-liberalism.” Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997), 12.

For example, Gellner argues that the Turkish case is unique in that sense: “Turkey . . . can claim that its commitment to modern political ideas owes nothing to alien imposition, and everything to an endogenous development. Turkey chose its destiny. It achieved political modernity: it was not thrust upon it.” Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 82. For Gellner, the commitment to elective and constitutional government testifies for this. The military coups, in his view, although signs of not an “easy ride” in liberal democracy, were just necessary lapses in democracy, since they have always ensured that democracy is eventually restored. In this approach, the compromises in democracy, and a whole history of suffering that accompanied them, are shadowed as negligible while the commitment to Westernization is privileged.

Alain Grosrichard studies the European fantasies of the East focusing on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writings on the Ottoman Empire. In *The Sultan's Court*, he analyses the Western image of “Oriental despotism” in terms of the Lacanian concept of fantasy. Mladen Dolar, in the introduction to the English translation of the book, states that “Said consciously limits himself to the Arab world, the Near East, while Grosrichard’s sources mostly treat the Ottoman Empire (still a very real threat at that time)” (x).


The power regime in the Ottoman Empire was highly centralized but flexible enough to hold different ethnic and religious communities over a large territory from Balkans to the Arabian peninsula under control by allowing some cultural autonomy to each community. The peculiar mechanisms and rationale of the Ottoman rule in its colonies is a vast subject for Turkish and Western scholars that lies beyond the scope of this article.

The Western capital infiltrated the Ottoman social, economical, and political life starting in the nineteenth century. The low tariff rates in trade during the Tanzimat era led to a flood of imported European goods, which dealt a blow to small craft industries. Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 89. Economic capitulations given to Western powers and the treaties that endowed European merchants with economic privileges “reduced the Turkish government to the status of the ‘gendarmes of foreign capital.’” Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 93. In addition to economic colonization, the social life was also colonized due to factors such as the constitution of Western schools and organizations, the invasion of Western technologies and ideas, and the political power enjoyed by Western embassies. See Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 41; Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923: The Impact of the West* (London: SAQI Books, 1990). Mete Tuncay makes the point that, despite the nationalist struggle against foreign privileges,
the position of “foreigners” in economic, social, and political life was not dramatically altered in the first ten years after the foundation of the Republic. Mete Tuncay, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi’nin Kurulması (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), 198.

49 The only exception to this is a group of Kemalist intellectuals around the journal Kadro, which began publication in 1932 and was forced to suspend publication in 1934. According to Feroz Ahmad, their aim was the creation of “an ideology original to the regime.” Ahmad, The Making of Modern Turkey, 65. Ahmad explains that they dwelled on the economic and political aspects of colonialism and reckoned their ideology to be useful for all colonies and semicolonies (a term they used to define the Turkish past) emphasizing the “original character” of the Turkish revolution. One of the prominent members of Kadro, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, has continued to be an almost haunting critical voice of Kemalist reforms by evoking the self-deception of the cultural elite and their alienation from “the people” in his novels and essays.


51 Ibid., 13.

52 From Charles Taylor and Benjamin Lee’s working draft on the Multiple Modernities Project, cited by Göle, “Global Expectations,” 42.


54 Ibid., 13.

55 Ibid., 16.


58 “Those who submit to that rage for modernity are not naïve; they are not unaware of its Western origins, its colonial designs, its capitalist logic, and its global reach. In haphazardly naming everything modern, they are exercising one of the few privileges that accrue to the latecomer: the license to play with form and refigure function according to the exigencies of the situation. Thus, in the face of modernity one does not turn inward, one does not retreat; one moves sideways, one moves forward. All of this is creative adaptation. Non-Western people, the latecomers to modernity, have been engaged in these maneuvers for nearly a century.” Goankar, “Alternative Modernities,” 17.


61 Ibid.

62 I have already cited Herzfeld and Jusdanis’s research that points at the complexities of the Western mediation in the constitution of Greek national identity.

63 Deniz Kandiyoti makes an important point stressing how “revolving around two opposed narratives—two sides of the same discursive coin” brings us “full circle to posting notions of lost authentic ‘indigeneity’ and inviting forms of neo-Orientalism that are inimical to an understanding of complex historical processes.” Deniz Kandiyoti, “Gendering the

Turkish national identity was constituted and continuously modified at the margin between being a “bad” and a “good” example of modernity. Islam has been a very important factor that contributed to the ambiguity. For Islam was seen to contradict Westernization and modernity, by both Westerners and Turkish nationalists who aspired to be Westernized. Yet, as Bobby Sayyid argues, Turkish nationalists, Kemalists, “found themselves in a paradoxical situation: to be western one had to reject the Orient,” but “their rejection of the Orient relied on them being able to articulate and perpetuate an oriental identity . . . The only way to manage this paradox of westernizing and orientalizing was for the Kemalists to fix upon Islam the representation of orientalness.” Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed, 1997), 69. A group of people who call themselves “laicists” in Turkey today argue against the “Islamic fundamentalism” they think takes Turkey “backward” in modernity.


Halide Edip is a significant figure in early Turkish literature. She wrote many novels and essays in Turkish, as well as in English. She was, at the same time, a militant nationalist who took part in the “national struggle” in the beginning of the twentieth century.


Yakup Kadri, who also wrote on the war years in Anatolia, says: “The difference between a person educated in Istanbul and an Anatolian peasant is greater than an English Londoner and an Indian from Punjab.” Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayımları, 1983), 53. The intellectuals felt that “as they went deeper into the country which they call their own, their alienation from their origins grew bigger.” In return, the peasants labeled them as “strangers.” Should the national struggle end in victory, said Yakup Kadri, then the intellectuals had “to make the nation” by bridging the gap.
The West, which had been a threatening force against the nationalist movements and reforms in the Ottoman Empire, was heralded as a natural ally. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 41. The national dream was to bridge the gap between the West and Turkey, between the national elite and the local Muslim population, between the economic power concentrated in the hands of non-Muslim communities and the politics centrally controlled by the national elite, and between the authoritarian regime in practice and an image of a civilized democratic republic.

Hasan Ünder claims that the philosophy of Kemalism can best be described as pragmatism. He argues that pragmatism has been functional to maintain a distance against the Western techniques and principles that were instrumentalized in government, to sustain a position of being both Western and anti-Western. Hasan Ünder, “Türk Devriminin Felsefesi,” *Mürekkep* 6 (1996): 31-48.

A Kemalist spokesperson wrote in his memoirs that “to be Westernized meant at the same time to escape from being Arabicized; it meant being Turkified.” Falih Rıfkı Atay, Çankaya (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Basımevi, 1969) 446. Koçak dwells critically on this arguing that the “internationalization” of Turkey was an escape from the East to the West in order to guard against “Arabicization/Calibanization.” Orhan Koçak, “Ataç, Meriç, Caliban, Bandung- Evrensellik ve Kısmilik Uzerine bir Taslak,” in *Türk Ayyumu ve Kimlik Sorunu*, ed. S. Şen (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1995), 239. The ethnic and religious minorities in the population, such as the Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews yet established another kind of other, which posed a threat to the idea of a homogeneous national unity.

Occidentalism has been given different meanings by different scholars. Some employ the term to denote anti-Westernism. For example, in his afterword to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, Said talks about the reception of his work by some circles as suggesting anti-Westernism. Said disowns this stance, equating it with Occidentalism. On the other hand, Iranian historian Mohamed Tavokoli Targhi criticizes Said for contributing to the silencing of the other. He studies the self-fashioned experiences of modernity in Iran in the vein of postcolonial criticism. In this context Occidentalism is perceived as a means of reversing Orientalism. Mohamed Tavokoli Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave, 2000). In a similar manner, Xiaomei Chen attends to the question of a “counter-discourse” in post-Mao China by utilizing the term *Occidentalism*. Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post Mao China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Couze Venn’s use of the term, Occidentalism, however, sets another, completely different example. Venn regards Occidentalism in relation to the process of “becoming-West of Europe and the becoming-modern of the world.” Couze Venn, *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity* (London: Sage, 2000), 8. The conception of Occidentalism conveyed in the articles included in James Carrier’s book comes closest to my understanding of the term. Carrier says that “Occidentalisms and orientalisms serve not just to draw a line between societies, but also to draw a line
within them . . . this process is likely to be particularly pronounced in societies that self-
developed my framework of Occidentalism in Meltem Ahıska, “Occidentalist Fantasy: Turkish Radio and National Identity” (Ph.D. diss., Goldsmiths College, University of Lon-
don, 2000).

78 Said, in his introduction to Orientalism, mentions his hope that there will be further research tackling those questions left beyond the scope of his own work. He says, “Per-
haps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alter-
natives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a lib-
ertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective” (24).

79 The imagery of Western civilization that appears in Mustafa Kemal’s speeches is strik-
ing: “It is futile to try to resist the thunderous advance of civilization, for it has no pity
on those who are ignorant or rebellious . . . . We cannot afford to hesitate any more. We
have to move forward . . . . Civilization is such a fire that it burns and destroys those who
ignore it.” Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Atatürk’ün Söz ve Demeçleri II (Ankara: Türk Tarih
Kurumu, 1957), 207–12.

80 Ibid., 277.
81 Ziya Gökalp’s words are cited in Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society, 136.
82 Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” in Atatürk: The Founder of a Nation
83 Benjamin makes a connection between the myth of progress and the eternal recur-
rence of the new in commodity fetishism. I use the concept of mythical time evoking
Benjamin’s critique of progress. Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, trans. Howard
84 Countering Marx’s idea of revolutions being the “locomotives of world history,” Benjamin
says, in his notes to “Theses on History,” that “perhaps revolutions are the reaching of
humanity traveling in this train for the emergency brake.” Cited in Susan Buck-Morss,
The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project (Cambridge: MIT Press,
1999), 92.