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The Paradoxical Logic of Europe in Turkey: Where Does Europe End?

∞ BANU HELVAÇIOĞLU ∞

We are all “Europeans”. As has been the case in the last 150 years, we are Europeans in spite of Europe.¹

In April 1994 there was an international symposium organised at Marmara University, Istanbul, to discuss the changing conceptions of Europe. One of the participants watching outside of the window, noticed a German ship named “Europa” passing through the Bosphorous and he exclaimed: “C’est L’Europe qui a passé.”² This anecdote summarises the logic behind the changing political and cultural representations of Europe both in Europe and in Turkey. Like a ship, Europe is an identifiable, knowable, explicable object, constantly moving in its own territory as well as in foreign waters. As the name of the ship, Europa, alludes, the more one tries to bound this constantly moving object within the logos of history, geography and politics, the more eternal and mythical it becomes. Those who claim to identify themselves as Europeans contend with different references to Greek mythology, Roman history, Judeo-Christian tradition, and the legacy of Enlightenment thinking which are constructed in imagination as markers of origin.

The logic behind the self-constitution of Europe is then defined by the blurry boundary drawn between physical reality and the metaphysical construction of the idea of Europe in imagination and representation. In practice this logic manifests itself in a series of discrepancies between the physical geography of Europe and cultural and political representations of European heritage. In Turkey, because of its geographical location and the centuries old relations between the Ottoman empire and European imperial powers, the blurry boundary between physical geography and the metaphysical constructions of the intrinsic essence of European culture and identity are reproduced in a rich medley of paradoxical discourses. In everyday life floating images of Europe are circulated in the market in the forms of military armaments, foreign currency, durable consumer goods, movies, novels, music charts, fashion design and architecture. The term Europe is often used interchangeably with another vague construct, West.

As an idea, both Europe and West refer to idealized conceptions of cultural civility, industrial development, scientific progress, liberal democracy and innumerable aesthetic trends. When it comes to the thorny question of European identity, the commonly held view both in Europe and in Turkey is that Turkey is “a country caught between two continents, two traditions, [and] two trends in history”.³ This view is in conformity with dualistic thinking which conceives of reality in binary oppositions between west and east, be-



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tween European civilisational values and Islamic culture and identity, and between foes and friends.

The major argument of this paper is that although dualistic thinking is one of the defining features of European heritage, it will be more fruitful to analyse the self-constitution of European identity and its reproduction in Turkey within the context of a tension between knowledge and myth. In investigating this tension the major focus is on the contradiction between Europe as a fixed, easily identifiable, explicable object of analysis and constantly changing, fleeting representations of European culture. What is at stake in this tension is the political question of power which defines where the physical geography of Europe begins and ends, what is included as part of the European heritage and on which foundational grounds the intrinsic essence of a European identity is problematized. When posed as a question of power, in spite of the changes in the geographical and cultural boundaries of Europe, what remains constant is the enigmatic paradox of Europe. As an object of analysis Europe is both a physical and a metaphysical being and in spite of diverse explanations about its origins, no one claims to know where it ends.

THE PARADOX OF EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Named after Europa, the daughter of King Agenor, believed to be abducted either by Zeus or by Jupiter over the Aegean sea to Crete, the European continent has gained its geographical identity in relation with territories which were not yet named. In the initial historical accounts, Europe started at Thrace—the Greek mainland—growing northwards and westwards, and the boundaries with Asia included such reference points as “the river Phasis flowing into the Black sea from the east . . . the river Don, the sea of Azoff and much harder to trace—what were called the Riphean Mountains.”⁴ Klavs Randsborg describes the period from 1000 BC to 1000 AD with reference to the slow rise of the city state (polis) in Greece and a long drawn-out eastward and southward development which culminated in the changing geographical locations of the economic core from Rome to Constantinople and to the Mediterranean region.⁵ He argues that “the dominant sector in the economic activities of classical civilisation [was] agriculture”. Hence, “in spite of their very significant cultural legacy, the classical centres [Athens and Rome] were only a limited success story in economic terms”.⁶ In Randsborg’s historical frame of reference we come across with the discrepancy between cultural centres and centres of economic activity. Following the split between Western and Eastern Roman empires in 286 AD, the core of economic growth moved further to the east of Constantinople, to Damascus under Umayyad Dynasty in 700 AD then to Baghdad under the Abbasid rule.

Within the confines of dualistic thinking, the history of ancient civilisations is explained with reference to the demarcations between Europe and Asia, between Rome and Athens, or between Western and Eastern Roman empire. Each of these demarcations are considered as historical fault lines separating west from east. In conformity with this thinking the period between seventh and thirteenth centuries is classified as the time of the rising power of Islam, its westward expansion in the Mediterranean region and Christian Crusades. In this classification the geographical demarcation between east and west is given a religious character. Since the religious identity of Europe is one of the prominent themes in Turkey, it is important to note three contradictions in the cultural construct of Christian Europe.

Leyser argues that in the ninth century "Europe had become . . . a topos of panegyric, cultural emblem rather than a solid, firm geographical and ethnic concept". This cultural emblem was constituted by an "urbane, literary self-indulgence", in the genre of Carolingian narrative of historical poetry.⁷ This particular genre emerged within the geographical and spiritual setting of Charlemagne's Europe which was Christian and was expanding its borders from the Mediterranean and Gaelic region towards the east and further north. On the eastern front there was the Byzantine empire whose center of economic activity was in the Asia Minor. "For the Byzantines, Europe could never gain the significance it came to have for their Carolingian western rivals and adversaries".⁸

The notion of Christian Europe at the time of Carolingian empire identified Christendom with the Latin West, as opposed to the Orthodox Christianity practiced in the Byzantinian empire. The first contradiction in the cultural construct of Christian Europe is that underlying the unifying theme of Christianity there has always been an exclusionary principle. The initial exclusion consisted of both Orthodoxy and Byzantinian culture which were considered to be part of the Orient. Yapp argues that "the domination of the [notion of Christian Europe] as a political and cultural concept was prolonged because of the political power of Islam". According to Yapp, the image of Christian Europe prevailed until the last years of the seventeenth century. In 1716 and 1737 "the Habsburgs sought to rally support against the Ottomans by employing the well-tried Christian slogans of old, but the device was not employed again after the Peace of Belgrade in 1739". Like most historians, Yapp explains the decline of the role of Christianity in the self-identification of Europe with reference to the emergence of scientific thinking in the Enlightenment period.⁹

The second contradiction which underlines the cultural construct of Christian Europe is that, within the political context of the rising power of Islam, the notion of Christian Europe came to represent the aspiration to regional power. Yet, in the period from Ninth to Thirteenth centuries, identification with Christendom represented "a siege mentality" which was born "in defeat not in victory".¹⁰ In other words, Christianity as the unifying principle to regional power did not represent a discourse of power, but rather a discourse for power. According to this distinction, at the time Islam represented a discourse of power whereas Christianity symbolized a discourse for power. This subtle distinction culminates in the third contradiction which is to be found in the Enlightenment conception of Europe as a symbol of power. According to Delanty, the Enlightenment principle of secularism "did not reject the prejudices of Christianity . . . religion remained one cognitive dimension among many others . . . the Christian world view remained as the dominant cultural motif by which European civilization could identify itself."¹¹

As this brief historical account denotes, the cultural construct of Europe first emerged within the Carolingian narrative of poetry which was soon replaced by the political narrative of Christianity. With the enlightenment thinking there was once again a return to a secular cultural emblem for Europe. In spite of these changes in the self-identification of Europe, the internal contradictions of the cultural construct of Christian Europe have survived until the present time. The notion of Christian Europe still to this day demarcates a geographical boundary between the Occident and Orient, the latter referring to non-Christian, non-European territories. Second, there has been a reversal in the logic of the religious construction of Europe. The siege mentality in the defeatist 'discourse for power' is now being captured by present day Islamic discourses. Furthermore, anti-Euro-

pean, anti-western Islamic positions exploit the double standards of secularism and the domination of Christian influences in liberal democratic traditions as well as the principle of exclusion in the cultural identity of Europe. As will be explained shortly the rich pastiche surrounding different discourses of Europe in Turkey drive their major inspirations from these and other historical contradictions in the self constitution of Europe.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the return to a secular cultural identity of Europe was also characterized by contradictory developments. Delanty argues that in the context of the westward expansion to Americas, a new identity of Europe was born. It denoted a "system of civilisational values". In this period two cultural constructs co-existed simultaneously. The idea of Europe as the West with its destiny came to symbolize an "Oceanic Europe", whereas "Continental Europe" maintained the Christian identity against the Muslim Orient.¹² In Turkey when the term Europe is used interchangeably with the west, what is being referred to is this cultural mix of two Europes, the Oceanic, civilisational Europe denoting the geographical destination of the west, and the continental Europe, which depending on the specificity of the political conjuncture, has been an ally of the Turkish state just as much as an enemy of Muslim culture and identity.

In critically reflecting on the idea of Europe as a totalising project, Delanty draws attention to the tension between geographical territory and cultural identity of Europe. He argues that Europe has come to identify the unifying theme in a cultural framework of values as opposed to a mere political norm or the name for a geo-political region. In his framework, five historical discourses on Europe—the discourse of Christianity, enlightenment discourse of civilisation, of culture, cold war and Fortress Europe of the 1990s—are characterised by ambivalence rather than constituting a uniform project.¹³

Seen from this perspective the prime paradox in the self-constitution of Europe is that although each of its historical discourses are characterized by ambivalence and internal contradictions, the idea of Europe still has an hegemonic influence in representing a unifying cultural framework of values. In this respect what is provisionally referred to as the European heritage includes "the legacy of Athens, Rome, Jerusalem, of Hellenic rationality and beauty, Roman law and authority, and the Christian conception of man, God, and the universe."¹⁴ In addition, the Reformation and Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the development of class societies, bourgeois culture, and a civil society are listed as the universally recognised elements of European civilisational values. Since each of these historical developments connote specific geographical locations and historically specific power struggles, the relationship between Europe as a geographical region and Europe as the cradle of human civilisation remains an unresolved enigma.

If we consider the discrepancy between the geographical territory and the cultural heritage of Europe as the defining feature of Europe, then we can offer two explanations about the paradoxical constitution of European heritage. First, as most scholars critical of the Eurocentric conception of Europe argue, each of the above mentioned historical developments are a product of cross-fertilisation with other cultures. It is through the means of "dialogue between and within societies" and through "defensive assimilation" of other civilisations that European identity was formed.¹⁵ This benevolent historical interpretation applies to the period prior to eighteenth century when European imperial, colonial powers started establishing their hegemony in different continents.¹⁶ By emphasising dialogue and cultural exchange through defensive means, this interpretation offers an alternative

conception of Europe shaped by conquest, wars, slavery, trading companies, and the authority of Roman Church.

Regardless of the modalities of exchange, cross-fertilisation implies that there are several entry points to the geographical and cultural formation of Europe and the European heritage is a product of a multitude of non-European influences. Jan Nederveen Pieterse examines Chinese, Ethiopian, Indian, Ottoman and Egyptian influences in Europe in the period between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. He argues that "what we call European civilisation is actually a universal human heritage which for historical, political and geographical reasons comes to us in the disguise of a European or western synthesis."¹⁷

In an attempt to put this universal heritage under scrutiny, the second point to note about the geographical and cultural formation of Europe is that the self-identification of Europe always required another entity, broadly defined as non-European or not Western (implying eastern, southern and northerners). Scholars critical of the Eurocentric heritage argue that the self-constitution of Europe has been made possible through the construction of the "other" which has been conceived as being inferior to Europe. Starting with Edward Said's seminal work on orientalism, the cross-fertilisation of Europe is being investigated in the contexts of colonialism, slavery and in relation to the encounters with the "Islamic world", "Arabs" and "Turks". In each of these historical encounters, the geographical boundaries of Europe kept shifting in accordance with the imaginary boundary drawn to externalise and to exclude the "other" from the self-conception of Europe. In other words, Europe got to know itself as an explicable, identifiable entity by constructing a body of knowledge about Islam, Turks, slavery and the colonising missionaries in Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia which were then scientifically coded in diverse fields of knowledge. As diverse discourses on Europe in Turkey illustrate, "non-Europe" or those formations which were initially excluded from the self-conception of Europe, have developed a sense of their own history, geography and culture by the same means and tools of European thinking and reasoning.

What gives a universal, hegemonic character to both the geography and cultural identity of Europe is this process of legitimacy produced by knowledge. Contrary to the commonly held view which traces the production of scientific knowledge of other civilisations to the universalising trend in Enlightenment thinking, Vilho Harle argues that "an integral part of the European cultural heritage, the European way of thinking, is related to dualism". The earliest references to dualist thinking is found in Ancient Persia in the Zoroastrian distinction between the powers of Light (Ahura Mazda) and powers of Darkness (Angra Mainyu). The political corollary of this theological dualism in Zoroastrian thinking was the separation between the believers who have received the law of Mazda and respected the contract and those evil ones who broke the law and were destined to live somewhere else, in the world of chaos.¹⁸ The cosmic conflict between the power of light and the power of darkness was believed to be resolved by a "Saviour, Saoshyant who [would] appear in due season and join the good forces". Harle argues that this dualistic thinking stems from the need to experience reality by means of polar opposites and was inherited not only by Judaism, Christianity, Islam, but also by Greek thinkers. He notes the impact of this dualistic thinking of opposites in Plato and Aristotle's conception of politics as a sacred realm defined by inside and outside, inside being the centre for civility and outside as the field of barbarians.¹⁹

In examining the widespread influence of this dualistic thinking, Harle focuses on the theoretical and practical constructions of politics where "co-operation between friends or allies is directed against the policy of the opponent, the 'other' . . . thus, what is specific in the experience of politics is constituted by the actor's experience of being in the situation of acting against the other."²⁰ There are two implications of this dualistic conception and experience of politics in the self-construction of Europe. First, in geographical, cultural as well as in political terms, Europe came to be known vis-à-vis its enemies and allies. Second, "the very idea of what Europe is, has been defined by the European mind in negative terms, suggesting what Europe is not."²¹ From a historical perspective then, the positive connotations of European identity have been shaped by a multitude of negative images such as 'barbarians in Asia', 'Arabs' in the Mediterranean, 'Turks' on the outskirts of Vienna which are historically categorised as external enemies.²² In the new Europe of the European Union Harle notes two other categories, "enemies that have penetrated into Europe", namely the migrant labour and refugees and "enemies already European". The latter category is the reincarnation of the previous distinction between 'true Europeans' and Slavs. In the current political configuration of the post-cold war period this category refers to "the formidable poor masses [migrating] from Eastern Europe."²³

What is universal and puzzling in historically specific cultural constructs of Europe is the blurry boundary drawn between physical reality and its metaphysical construction in imagination, representation and reproduction. In this context, the conception and experience of the world from the lens of dichotomous oppositions plays an important role in constructing the boundary between reality and the metaphysical realm in definitive terms. In the dualistic construction of physical geography, physical space is categorized by means of such bifurcated categories as inside and outside, enemy and ally, Europe and Asia, Europe and Islam, Europeans and Turks. The element of certainty in this bifurcated ordering of geography is to be found in the implicit assumption of origin as an act of self-possession. Seamus Deane argues that "[t]he naming of a place . . . race, region, a person, is like all primordial nomination, an act of possession." What gives a metaphysical character to naming places, peoples, and nations, is an invented origin which is "thought of as something natural."²⁴

Hence in each of the dualistic categories which are used to define Europe, there is the primordial act of possessing something positive—civilisation, the aesthetic beauty in Greek form, the law in Roman times, Reason in Enlightenment, civil society, bourgeois culture, individual rights in liberalism—which non-Europe does not have. Perhaps what explains the long-lasting hegemonic power of European cultural values is this positive connotation of European heritage which has been inherited by social formations that came in contact first with colonial powers in the Eighteenth century, then by European diplomatic, military, and industrial cadre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

EUROPE IN TURKEY: HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHICAL-POLITICAL FLUX

As was argued at the outset of this paper, the geographical location and centuries-old relations with European powers define the contradictory ways in which the European heritage is reproduced in Turkey. Just as much as the cultural constructs of "Turks", "Islam", and "Orient" have been instrumental in the self-constitution of European identity, the cul-

tural constructs of "Christian Europe", "European civilisation", "Europe as a symbol of Western progress", "Europe as a western ally" and "Europe as a sinister enemy force" have been used in shaping the national, cultural identity of Turkey. In critically reflecting on this dualist thinking in Turkey, the first point to note is that Turkish Republic was founded on the basis of an ambivalent relationship with Europe and the Ottoman empire. Seen from this perspective, what is at stake is not a country caught between two different cultures and identities, but rather the contradictory imperatives of the self-constitution of Turkish national identity as well as the contradictory national/imperial policies of western European powers in the immediate aftermath of the first world war.²⁵

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the first world war, Sevr Treaty was signed between the Ottoman sultan, and the Italian, French and British governments to partition the Ottoman territories. The national independence war (1920–1923) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a response to Sevr and to the subsequent occupation of Istanbul and Anatolia by Greek, Italian, French and British troops. One of the cultural legacies of the national independence war for present day Turkey has been the political and cultural representation of Europe as the enemy and a sinister force which threatens to break up the Turkish national unity. The second objective of the national independence struggle was to break away from the political control of the Ottoman sultan. This goal was achieved by following the puzzling footsteps of the nation-state building in Europe.

The state structure, which was modelled after the French presidential system, was designed in part by borrowing from Italian, German and Swiss legal codes, and in other part by preserving most of the "western reforms" conducted under the Ottoman rule.²⁶ An integral aspect of the creation of Turkish nationhood was Atatürk's cultural revolution which was undertaken in the early Republican years (1923–1930) by means of a series of reforms to change the dress code, the alphabet, the family law, and to impose state controlled compulsory elementary education as well as state control of religion and language.²⁷ What remains as a heritage from this period is a modern, centralised territorial state and a monolingual conception of Turkish people considered to be undifferentiated in terms of class, gender, religion and ethnicity.

In so far as the national, cultural essence of Turkish people is concerned, predominant discourses among state representatives, the intelligentsia and the industrialists contain both Europhobic and Europhile tendencies at the same time. The primary reason for this paradoxical stand on Europe is that even though the Turkish national identity has strong affinities with both the institutional framework and the metaphysical essence of European civilisation, starting from the national independence struggle, the unequal relations with western European countries have left their trademark on the fragile self-identity of Turkish nation vis-à-vis Europe.²⁸ Bedia Akarsu traces the reasons for the paradoxical stand on Europe and West to a quotation by Atatürk in 1920 which depicts the occupation of Istanbul by European powers as a "violation of the holy principles of the twentieth century civilization and human consciousness". According to Akarsu, this quotation suggests that Atatürk was opposed to the imperialist policies of the west but supported the main principles of national and universal freedom and laicism within the context of promoting western civilization in Turkey.²⁹

This brief historical exposé of the formation of the independent Turkish nation-state aims to suggest three things. One, the changing representations of Europe since the 1960s

cannot be explained within the framework of the dichotomous polarisation between pro- and anti-Europe positions. Two, diametrically opposed political trends in Turkish politics overlap in their paradoxical stands on Europe. Three, going back to the theme of cross-fertilisation in the self-constitution of Europe, the Turkish case suggests that historically and politically specific modalities of exchange between Europe and non-Europe are always defined by the principle of inequality. The mutual transformation which results from this unequal exchange reproduces the dualistic thinking of "us versus them" in a rich medley of contradictory stands.

With these reminders in mind it will be useful to briefly revisit the geographical boundaries of Turkey within the context of changing political relations with Europe. Here the important point to note is that, although national/geographical territory of the Turkish Republic remained fixed, there has been an ongoing shift in the political and cultural representations of Europe. In terms of physical geography, Bosphorous separates the European and Asian borders of Turkey. Thrace/Trakya is included on the European side and the urban plan of Istanbul is designed in accordance with the division between the European and Anatolian sides of Bosphorous. The Aegean coast has always been a politically contested area in terms of the demarcation of sovereignty in international law and the possession of islands between Turkey and Greece.³⁰ In the Mediterranean, Cyprus island occupied by Greek and Turkish Cypriots has been the most significant issue in Turkey's foreign relations with the members of the European Union. Since the Turkish military intervention in 1974, the island now consists of two countries. The Turkish Federation of Northern Cyprus remains unrecognised in international relations, while the southern side, named as Cyprus proper is a potential member of the European Union. The barbed wire that runs across the city of Nicosia with several check points is a powerful reminder of the persistence of bipolarisation in international politics.

In the immediate post second world war settlement, Turkey positioned itself in alliance with the west and had estranged relations with most of the Middle Eastern countries. From the 1950s onwards Turkey was a recipient of Marshall Aid, then became a member of NATO, IMF, OECD and the European Council. As of December 1995 Turkey is a member of European Customs Union, but its aspiration to become a full member of the European Union has been periodically halted due to its political record on human rights and democratic freedoms defined by the core members of the EU. In accordance with the political conjuncture of the east-west split during the cold period, the Black sea coast and Bosphorous were strongholds on the 'western' frontier defended by both Turkish and NATO military forces against the Soviet Union. In the post-cold war realignment, in an attempt to renew ties with the Turkic Republics of the former Soviet Union, Turkey became a member of Black Sea Economic Co-operation. Since the mid 1990s Turkey has been engaged in a series of bilateral agreements with Russia and Turkic Republics.

As to the eastern frontiers, like its western allies in Europe and North America, Turkey continued its amicable relations with Iran until the fall of Shah in 1979, considered communism as the unconditional enemy and rediscovered the economic importance of Middle East during the first oil shock of 1973. Back in the 1960s and the 1970s, the term "Arab" had negative connotations. It invariably implied a heightened orientalist sense of Turkey's superiority over the eastern, Islamic countries without the ambivalent curiosity in orientalist gaze in constructing Arabic and Islamic cultures as objects of desire. This selec-

tive orientalism in Turkey was in part due to the estranged diplomatic relations between Turkey and Middle Eastern countries. In other part, the self-constitution of national identity which has been dictated by the state-centred discourse of westernisation inherited an orientalist conception of Islam.

Without going into the historical details, it suffices to note that the process of westernisation that was undertaken in the early Republican years under Atatürk's leadership constructed a monolithic identity of Turkish nation as a secular counter-part to the Islamic construction of nation as a religious community. At the height of the modernisation drives of the 1960s and the 1970s, Islam was considered as a major obstacle to western inspired progress, development and civilisation. Religious elements in the social fabric of Turkish identity were suppressed by constitutional means and were marginalised by means of a prejudiced outlook to Islam as the symbol of a backward world view. This orientalist discourse was instrumental in shaping Turkey's foreign relations with its eastern neighbors. Since the late 1980s, however, Turkey renewed its relations with Middle eastern countries mostly in economic terms and started reclaiming its Islamic identity both in domestic and international politics.

Since the mid 1990s, the ambivalent stand on Europe gained a new political/cultural twist as a result of the signing of the Custom's Union. In this context, the domestic political flux has been the most important factor in the reproduction of a rich pastiche of contradictory discourses on Europe. In what follows are three predominant discourses on Europe which have been in circulation in Turkey since the 1960s.

We Want to Be European But Europe Does Not Want Us

To start with state-centred discourses, in the 1960s Turkey's foreign policy was tied to the United States on economic and military grounds. As one of the Turkish diplomats put it bluntly, for a poor country like Turkey, becoming a recipient of foreign credit provided by the U.S.A. at a cheaper rate was more appealing than joining the French military industry.³¹ This, however, did not prevent the Turkish government to sign the Ankara Treaty with the European Economic Community in 1963 as part of the bi-lateral association agreement which eventually led to Turkey's membership to the Custom's Union in 1995. In terms of the vernacular political language at the time, the 1963 agreement was considered as "getting hooks into Western Europe."³²

The price for getting hooked to Europe was to adopt an apologetic stand on the 1960 military coup and the subsequent execution of the former prime minister, Adnan Menderes. With regard to the military interventions in 1960, 1971 and 1980, France has been a strong opponent of Turkey's membership in the EEC. In the state-centred discourse, France was considered as one of those sinister European forces not only because of its criticism of the violation of democratic rights in Turkey, but also for supporting Greece and ASALA.³³

The double-talk in state-centred discourse which I identify as the indecisive Europhobic/Europhile stand continued all throughout the 1970s and 1980s on the specific issues concerning the opposition from Greece and France to Turkey's membership to the EEC, the ongoing controversy over Cyprus and the national state sovereignty in the Aegean.

On the eve of the signing of the Customs Union agreement, the European parliament required from the Turkish government a series of political reforms including constitutional amendments on freedom of speech and thought and human rights violations concerning Kurds living in Turkey. In response, President Suleyman Demirel invoked the spirit of the Sevr treaty by arguing that "the conditions required by the European Parliament create an image as if Turkey is not wanted in Europe. If the excuse is because the Turkish people is Muslim, then this does not fit well with the idea of Europe and with today's understanding of humanity."³⁴ The prime reason why Demirel's response was indecisive about Europe is that in denouncing the political conditions of the European parliament he reinvents Turkish/Muslim origins as the inferior other of Europe. Yet, in domestic political struggles between seculars and Islamicists, Demirel has been an ardent supporter of Atatürk's reforms and the western, European civilizational values.

We Are Turk, We Are European, We Are Businessmen

The Europhobic construction of Europe as a sinister force to divide the national unity has been countered by pro-European nationalist discourses of the business community and by the populist/Kemalist secularists. On the eve of the signing of the Customs Union agreement, Okan Oguz, the President of the Assembly of Exporters claimed that "today the meaning of being a westerner has changed. . . . To be a westerner is a function of parliamentary democracy in its institutions and rules, to observe human rights, protection of nature, and the creation of a clean environment, free economic initiative, non-intervention into the market, ending of the monopoly of big firms, the protection of small producers, provision of consumer rights, and working in an orderly, disciplined and productive manner." He argued that Turkey is obliged to approach the question of westernisation in this framework.³⁵

This broad definition of west was shared by those in the business community who have been in favour of Turkey's membership in the European Customs Union. Depending on which organisation they represent, the members of the business community viewed the Customs Union as a means for economic stability, as an opportunity to enter free trade agreements with NAFTA members and Pacific countries, and as a way of strengthening the stock market.³⁶ In political terms, the pro-European position aimed to "elevate the standards of democracy in Turkey to the western level". Within the specific parameters of the power struggle in the mid 1990s, the question of democracy was debated in relation to the Kurdish problem and the politicisation of Islam. As to the former, a select group of industrialists used the Custom's Union as an instrument to voice their critical position against the centralised state structure in Turkey.

Cem Boyner, the owner of one of the exclusive chain stores in textiles and the leader of a short-lived political party, the New Democratic Movement articulated an eclectic platform of democracy which consisted of respect for religious toleration, individual rights and freedoms for Kurds, and a neo-liberal plan for the privatisation of state-assets. In his criticism of state policies on the violation of human rights and on the politically neglected case of the disappearance of Kurdish intellectuals, Boyner argued that "the proper place for Turkey is to be among the advanced industrial countries of the world". In drawing attention to the need for reforming the "archaic" economic structure and the legal framework

of the state, he raised the issue of the inferiority complex in Turkish identity. In Boyner's frame of reference inferiority complex stems from viewing Europe and the West as an enemy force which he considers as outmoded, old-fashioned and un-pragmatic.³⁷

Echoing Boyner, the President of the Association of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists, Halis Komili, argued that "we have to get rid of the inferiority complex of viewing democratisation as a western coercion." He supported a "polyphonic representation of Turkey by civic organisations in Europe." This position has been articulated clearly by a newspaper columnist, Mert Esin who argued that "until now the relationship between Turkey and Europe has been conducted at the state level. It is time for pluralist representatives, political parties and civic organisations to be independent from the state."³⁸ In these different articulations of liberal democratic pluralism, the state centred conception of Europe as the enemy and as the sinister force is reversed in presenting Europe as the centre of pluralism, individualism and market economy. The remedy to the inferiority complex is to strengthen Turkish identity along the lines of individual initiative and self-interest as were conceived by classical liberal thinkers in eighteenth century Europe.

On the question of the politicisation of Islam, the inferiority complex of Turkish identity vis-à-vis Europe resurfaced in a different political standpoint. Some businessmen viewed Turkey's membership in the Customs Union as a means to check the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey.³⁹ This pro-Europe position has been influenced by the internalisation of an orientalist dislike of Islamic identity in Turkey. In this specific context, the notion of Europe has come to be identified with the French model of laicism, the all too general framework of Enlightenment thinking of reason, rationality and scientific progress as well as the idealised pastiche of a civilised, progressive, western culture. To be European has been presented as the alternative to living under the acclaimed regime of Islamicists. The ratification of the Customs Union agreement in December 1995 was celebrated as a national incident by Kemalist newspaper columnists, businessmen, industrialists and the public at large.

We Are Who We Are: Forever Undecided on Europe

Within the specific parameters of power struggle in Turkey, the Welfare party—the national representative of Islamicist groups—appeared to represent an anti-Europe position. Before coming to power, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan promised to establish the rule of Islam and to abrogate the Custom's Union agreement. In his words "the deal [was] a poisonous chalice" and he promised that his government would not "recognize this dog and bone of an agreement."⁴⁰ During his brief stay in power Erbakan tried to change Turkey's foreign policy by paying visits to Libya, Iran, and Malaysia. Yet, his depiction of Europe as the enemy has had strong affinities with the state-centred discourse. Erbakan used the notion of west and Europe interchangeably and considered the U.S.A., France and Great Britain as the axe-head of west. According to Erbakan, these forces jeopardise the national interests of Turkey by supporting the PKK, Cyprus and Greece. In his framework, west also refers to NATO and the UN which "have chosen Islam as the enemy" by not only "opposing to a Muslim state in Bosnia" and preventing the dissemination of Islam in Somalia, but also by supporting Armenia against Azerbaijan. In Erbakan's world view to become a member of the European Union would have implied joining a "colonialist, hostile and Christian community".⁴¹

Polarized politics of opposition in its heightened stage resembles Hegelian resolution of conflicts in the universal spirit of oneness. In order to stay in power, Erbakan formed a coalition with Tansu Ciller's True Path Party. Ciller has been known for her pro-Europe position and her westernised, modern, American outlook. The synthesis that came out of this coalition was the reproduction of Europhobic/Europhile discourse represented by Islamicist politics on one side and Ciller's political alliance with western European powers on the other side. In terms of the economics of the equation both parties were ardent supporters of free market economy. Their economic plan consisted of a Thatcherite version of aggressive privatisation of state assets. In the context of the European parliament's continuing demands for a resolution of the Kurdish problem, Erbakan and Ciller spoke in one voice: we are Turks, we are Muslims, Europe has no business in interfering into our national affairs. In its depiction of the Turkish nation as an indivisible whole and in its emphasis on national interests, this anti-Europe position has been the mirror image of Thatcherite neo-liberal, nationalist discourses in Europe which among other things obliterate class differences in their conceptions of free market economy and the spiritual unity of a nation.

Yet, this resemblance at the level of political imagery has had serious flaws. For one thing, in Turkey neo-liberal economic policies coexist with an anachronistic state-centered economy. Second, in spite of the existence of a multi-party structure, the military plays an important role in domestic politics. In accordance with these anachronistic tendencies, in June 1997 Turkey experienced 'a soft coup' which resulted in the removal of the coalition government from power and the closing of the Welfare Party by a Constitutional Court decision. Concomitantly in July 1997, the European Commission decided to exclude Turkey from its list of six countries invited to open membership negotiations. In December 1997 the European Commission stated that it wants to strengthen relations with Turkey on conditions that Turkey improves its record on the protection of human rights and minority rights, implements political as well as economic reforms and maintains stable relations with Greece. As a result of these new developments, there has been a sudden shift in the state-centered, business-centred and Islam-centered discourses on Europe.

Roughly since November 1997 Islamicists within the now defunct Welfare Party have dropped their anti-European rhetoric. Abdullah Gul, a moderate member of the Welfare Party said he supported Turkey's entry into the E.U. with the hope that membership would prevent another coup. Erbakan has decided to contest the Constitutional Court's decision to close the Welfare Party in the European Court of Human Rights. Within the confines of dualist thinking and oppositional politics, the cultural constructs of "colonialist", "imperialist", "Christian" Europe have now been transformed into "Europe as a center for democracy and human rights" as well as a political ally against the internal enemy which is the centralized power structure of the state and Turkish military.

On the other side of the polarisation, in December 1997 during the enlargement summit of the EU, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz represented the military centered Europhobic view. At the Luxemburg summit although Turkey's application to EU membership was rejected, Turkey was invited to participate in a European conference along with present and potential members to EU to discuss the problems of migration and international drug trade. Turkish Prime Minister not only rejected this invitation but also suspended political relations with the EU. He accused European leaders for discriminating against Turkey as an Islamic country. In the present configuration of this anti-Europe

stand, shared by the government, the military, the newspaper columnists, and the Confederation of Turkish Labour Unions (Türkis), the cultural/political construct of Europe is identified as a national enemy and an imperialist power.

On the economic front, the government decided to impose non-tariff barriers on EU goods. The confederation of Turkish Labour Unions urged a boycott of products from Greece, Luxemburg and Germany. The military threatened to put an embargo on the military hardware produced by European companies.⁴² Immediately after the December summit, Turkey signed a deal with Russia to import \$20 billion of natural gas over a period of twenty-five years. Agah Oktay Guner, deputy chairman of the ruling Motherland Party, claimed that Turkey should retaliate against the EU by forming a joint market with Russia, Central Asian countries and the states surrounding the Black Sea.⁴³ Unlike the political conjuncture on the eve of the signing of the Customs Union agreement when the business community univocally took a pro-Europe stand, in December 1997 the representatives of the business community remained conspicuously quiet. The only explicit statement in favor of the military-government centered anti-Europe position was made by Ishak Alaton, chairman of Alarko (Construction and Real Estate Conglomerate). In his words "why should I continue banging on a closed door if I had two open doors", implying Russia and Central Asia as new opportunities for private investment.⁴⁴

What gives a paradoxically rich character to the new articulation of anti-Europe stand is that it revitalizes the east-west split from the cold-war period. A group of unidentified generals claimed that by including former communist countries of Eastern Europe, European Union has constructed a new western curtain against Turkey. Cevik Bir, Deputy Chief of Staff, stated that "if we had been a communist country instead of a NATO member working to free Eastern Europe from communism, the EU would have invited us on a red carpet."⁴⁵ In this anachronistic cold war rhetoric Europe now embraces former communist countries whereas Turkey moves closer to Russia, the arch enemy of the free world in the yesteryears. In so far as the military dimension of the former east-west conflict is concerned, shortly after the Luxemburg summit, NATO signed accession documents with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland aiming at making these former Warsaw Pact countries members of NATO by 1999. Within the Turkish government there has been a call to block NATO's expansion as a reprisal to EU's decision to exclude Turkey from membership.

CONCLUSION

These recent developments both in Turkish politics and within the EU and NATO indicate that the present geographical, political and cultural boundaries of Europe have once again been subject to a major flux. As was argued in the first section, although both the geographical boundaries and cultural representations of Europe historically change in conjunction with political and economic developments, there has always been a discrepancy between physical geography and centers of economic and cultural activities. This results in a series of historically specific contradictory discourses on the one hand and the cultural reproduction of a uniform idea of Europe by means of dualist thinking.

In the present stage of the enlargement of the EU and NATO the dualist thinking of politics is in the process of reconstruction. The former enemies from the cold war era are now included within the "friendly" constructs of neo-liberal democracy in Europe and the

western military alliance. When such countries as Poland and Bulgaria become a member of the EU, then historically, culturally specific exclusionary connotations of Europe being non-Slavic and non-Orthodox need to be reformulated. In this regard, from a purely logical point of view there is no reason why Turkey would be excluded on the basis of its non-Christian identity.

The new demarcation line which denotes both the geographical and cultural boundaries between Europe and non-Europe is as contradictory and ambivalent as it has historically been. The EU decision in the 1997 enlargement summit suggests that the major criteria for inclusion are an effective free market economy and the predominance of democracy which implies the rule of law, the protection of human rights and minority rights and a stable multi-party regime. In accordance with the paradoxical nature of the self-constitution of Europe, these criteria on the one hand refer to concrete political and economic platforms set by the 1993 Copenhagen Summit report. But on the other hand, these criteria also refer to the metaphysical notion of the free spirit of the market economy.

In so far as the metaphysical dimension is concerned, freedom and democracy as the new European spirit remain subject to political debates within the present power structure of the EU. The question as to what extent this new free spirit as well as the debates themselves are intrinsically a "European" phenomenon is of no significance because globalization of a neo-liberal interpretation of democracy is contested both inside and outside of Europe. To the extent that an Islamic country like Turkey abides by the 1993 Copenhagen report and by the new "spirit of the free western world", it can be included in the EU as well as within the vague construct of western civilisational values.

In drawing the new geographical boundaries of Europe and the political boundaries between the allies and enemies of Europe, there will be some changes in the future. Although it is too early to say with any degree of certainty, it appears as if the cultural/political construct of "Islamic revivalism" will lose its potency and it will be replaced by the newly emerging political and cultural constructions of "drug problem" and the problem of the illegal smuggling of refugees. In this respect, although it has not yet been picked up by the state-centred discourse in Turkey, Turkey is already considered as a close ally of the EU in its newly emerging crusade against the illegal international drug trade. As for the problem of refugees in the new enlarged EU, there will be new constructions of "illegal immigrants and refugees" to reproduce the hierarchical self-identification between us/Europeans and them/non-Europeans. Already the influx of Kurdish refugees into European countries have replaced the former concern of the influx of immigrants from former communist countries.

In conclusion, the constantly changing political struggles both in Europe and its periphery will reproduce the paradoxical logic of Europe in new geographical and cultural constructs of Europe versus non-Europe. Both the geographical position and the anachronistic political and economic structures in Turkey will continue posing the question of where Europe ends and non-Europe begins. As the historical relationships between Turkey and Europe suggest there is no end to the bi-polar conception of reality, nor is there an indication of coming to "our senses" that like all reality in the present conjuncture, Europe is both a fixed entity taken for granted and lived in the dualist perception of the world, and a product of a rich, multilayered imagination reproduced by means of myth and contradictory cultural symbols.

NOTES

1. İsmet Berkan, "Bütün Türklerin Ortak Paydasi: Avrupa", *Radikal*, Dec, 21, 1997, p. 5.
2. Çigdem Kosovali, "İste Avrupa Geçiyor", *Varlık*, no. 1041, 1994, p. 4.
3. "Financial Times Survey of Turkey", May 23 1988, p. 4, quoted in Meltem Müftüler-Baç, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, Manchester: Manchester University, 1997, p. 18.
4. Karl Leyser, "Concepts of Europe in the Early and High Middle Ages", *Past and Present*, no. 137, 1992, pp. 26–27. In John Hale's account of the same myth, Europa, swam with Jupiter to Crete where she was forcefully impregnated by Jupiter. He argues that "there is, however, no hint that Europeans actually thought of themselves, or their continent, as owing anything to this Europa." "The Renaissance Idea of Europe", in Soledad Garcia (ed.), *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy*, London: Pinter, 1993, p. 48.
5. Klavs Randsborg, "Barbarians, Classical Antiquity and the Rise of Western Europe: An Archaeological Essay", *Past and Present*, no 137, 1992.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 13–15.
7. Karl Leyser, "Concepts of Europe in the Early and High Middle Ages", *Past and Present*, no. 137, 1992, p. 41.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
9. M. E. Yapp, "Europe in Turkish Mirror", *Past and Present*, no. 137, 1992, pp. 137–138, 142, 145, 152.
10. Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*, London: Macmillan, 1995, p. 26.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
12. *Ibid.* p. 30–31, 47.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 3 and Chapter 3.
14. Soledad Garcia, *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy*, London: Pinter 1993, p. ix.
15. Helen Ahrweiler, "Roots and Trends in European Culture", in S. Garcia (ed.), *op. cit.*; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Unpacking the West: How European is Europe?", in A. Rattansi and S. Westwood (ed.), *Racism, Modernity, Identity*, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.
16. The exception to this historical periodization is Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* which examines "an apparent contradiction between the striking cultural similarities found among populations all around the Mediterranean and the fundamental linguistic and cultural division between the peoples of its North and South coasts." In Bernal's framework, the roots of cross fertilization date back to the Greek culture which had arisen as a result of colonization around 1500 BC by Egyptians and Phoenicians and that Greeks continued to borrow heavily from Near Eastern cultures. Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, London: Vintage, 1987, pp. 14, 9.
17. J. Nederveen Pieterse, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
18. Vilho Harle, "European Roots of Dualism and its Alternatives in International Relations", in V. Harle (ed.), *European Values in International Relations*, London: Pinter, 1990; also by the same author "Exclusion and Particularism as the Basis of Order", mimeo, 1996.
19. V. Harle, "European Roots of Dualism and Its Alternatives in International Relations", 1990, pp. 3, 6.
20. V. Harle, "On the Concept of the 'Other' and Enemy", mimeo, p. 19.
21. V. Harle, "The Concept and Tradition of the 'Enemy' in Light of European Politics and Integration", mimeo, p. 25.
22. M.E. Yapp also argues that "the idea of Europe was formed partly as a consequence of the contemplation of that which was not Europe". Accordingly, Europe "has several negatives and each of them may be said to have contributed to our ideas of what is distinctly European." In addition to the Islamic Near East, he includes India, China, the United States as fruitful sources of negative recognition for Europeans. "Europe in Turkish Mirror", *Past and Present*, No. 137, 1992, pp. 134–135.
23. V. Harle, "The Concept and Tradition of the 'Enemy' in Light of European Politics and Integration", mimeo, p. 39–40.
24. Seamus Deane, "Introduction", in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Edward Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp. 18, 8.
25. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to examine the British, French and German colonial policies in the Middle East prior to the first world, but it suffices to note that the present Kurdish Diaspora

dates back to the partition of the Kurdish populated regions between the Ottoman empire, France and Britain. The ongoing national dispute between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus and the islands in the Aegean sea, 'originates' from the British control of Cyprus in the nineteenth century, and from the subsequent territorial trade off between Britain, Greece and Turkey which was ratified in 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

26. The western reforms conducted under the Ottoman empire included: the establishment of permanent diplomatic missions in Europe in 1795, military and educational reforms during 1789–1807, the establishment of a professional army in 1826 and the 1839 Tanzimat charter which was based on the protection of life, property and honour as fundamental rights. The 1856 Islahat Charter aimed to achieve formal equality before law. Serif Mardin, "European Culture and the Development of Modern Turkey", in Ahmet Evin, Geoffrey Denton (eds.), *Turkey and the European Community*, Leske Verlag Budric, 1990. Esin Örcü argues that between 1840 and 1881 a number of other Codes were enacted. "The first Ottoman Constitution of 1876 was inspired by the Belgian constitution of 1831 and the Prussian of 1850". As for the three major Codes enacted under the Turkish Republic in 1926 Örcü lists the Civil Code borrowed from the Swiss Civil Code, the Penal Code borrowed from the Italian Code of 1889 and the Commercial Code from the German Code of 1887 and the Italian Code. Esin Örcü, "Turkey: Change Under Pressure", in Esin Örcü, Elspeth Attwool and Sean Coyle (eds.), *Studies in Legal Systems: Mixed and Mixing*, London: Kluwer Law International, 1996, pp. 92–93.
27. Of these early Republican reforms, the Law on the Unification of Education (1924), the Hat Law (1925), the Law on Closing Down Dervish Orders (1925), the Law on the Turkish Alphabet and the Adoption of International Numerals (1928) and the Conduct of the Act of Marriage according to article 110 of the Civil Code are preserved in the 1982 Constitution as "safeguards for the secular character of the Republic" and as means of "raising the level of Turkish Society above the level of contemporary civilisation". Esin Örcü, "Turkey: Change Under Pressure", 1996, op. cit., p. 93.
28. For an elaboration of this paradoxical constitution of Turkish identity see my "L'ambiguo nazionalismo in Turchia ("Hybrid Discourses of Nationalism in Turkey")", *Futuribili*, 1997, pp. 112–126.
29. Bedia Akarsu, "Doğu ile Batı'nın Ayrılmazlığı", *Varlık*, no. 1041, June 1994.
30. As recent as 1996, Tansu Ciller, then the prime minister of Turkey sent the navy to Kardak/İmía, a tiny island, occupied only by goats, as a sign of a political statement to Greece. Referred to as the "Kardak crisis" in Turkish media, the mobilisation of military forces on both sides of the Aegean was prevented by the intervention of American President Bill Clinton. In December 1997 Turkey and Greece signed a NATO agreement to set up regional commands at Larissa/Greece and Izmir/Turkey where both sides will share control over military flights in the Aegean. The agreement was considered as an attempt to promote peace and co-operation between Greece and Turkey both which are NATO allies.
31. Hamit Batu, *Avrupa'yla Bunalımlı Yıllar*, İstanbul, Altın Kitaplar, 1995, p. 30.
32. Mehmet Ali Birand, *Türkiye'nin Gümrük Birliği Macerası: 1959–1995*, İstanbul: Ad, 1996, pp. 37, 38, 95.
33. ASALA was an Armenian terrorist organisation which politized the 1915 Armenian genocide by killing Turkish diplomats in Europe in the 1970s.
34. Suleyman Demirel, interview in "Turkish Daily News", reprinted in *Yeni Yüzyıl*, May 22, 1995, p. 4.
35. *Yeni Yüzyıl*, July 3, 1995.
36. This 'pro European' position is articulated by the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce, The Association for the Stock Market Exchange, Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Market Exchange and Association of the Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists.
37. For a systematic collection of these views see Cem Boyner, "Türkiye Güclüdür" in *Yeni Demokrasi Hareketi*, İstanbul, 1994.
38. For both remarks by Halis Komil and Mert Esin see "Avrupa" section in *Yeni Yüzyıl*, June 14, 1995, p. 14.
39. This position was shared by the representatives of Koc and Sabancı Holdings, İstanbul Chamber of Commerce and the Foundation for Economic Development.
40. Quoted in Celestine Bohlen, "Right aside, EU widens Trade with Turkey", *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 14, 1995, p. 5.

41. Necmettin Erbakan, Erbakan'ın Konuşmaları, Refah Partisi Yayınları, September 1993, pp. 16, 76; October 1993, pp. 70, 76, 117.
42. Although a national embargo would violate the Custom's Union Agreement, the military decided to screen bids for civilian and military aircraft and military hardware in an attempt to discriminate against Germany which has been a vocal opponent of Turkey's entry into the EU during the last enlargement summit.
43. Quoted in *Financial Times*, Dec 16, 1997, p. 14.
44. Quoted in, *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 12-13, 1997, p. 6.
45. John Barham, "Turks Sense Time is Running Out Over European Ambitions", *Financial Times*, Nov. 19, 1997, p. 3; Also see *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 16, 1997, pp. 1, 4.