MAKING THE SECULAR THROUGH THE BODY: TATTOOING THE FATHER TURK

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ABSTRACT

MAKING THE SECULAR THROUGH THE BODY: TATTOOING THE FATHER TURK

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This thesis examines the recent phenomenon of Atatürk's tattoos through a twofold theoretical framework of body politics and secularism. Firstly, it examines the growing interest on the body in social sciences, which has focused on the body as a site of both docility and subversivity. Additionally, the body has been rediscovered as a fetish object through which selfhood and subjectivity are continually reconstructed and contested. These developments were simultaneously conditioned by and manifested themselves in an understanding of 'the body as a project'. Secondly, the study explores Atatürk's continued legacy in Turkish politics and for the nation-people. 73 years after his death, Atatürk still remains the utmost personification of the secular Turkish nation state. An effort is made to demonstrate how 'the secular', representing the normative nation-identity, and 'the religious', representing its Other, have been made in Turkish history. In light of these theories, Atatürk tattoo almost seems like an oxymoron: 'tattoo' carrying controversial and rebellious, and 'Atatürk' statist and conformist undertones. The main ambition of this thesis is to explore this contradiction through an analysis of whether the Atatürk tattoo is a spontaneous (body) politics on the side of 'the people' or whether it is a symptom of Kemalism's current position in society and politics. Finally, to better understand the subject, field research has been conducted with tattoo artists and people with the Atatürk tattoo, in 3 cities, through the summer and fall of 2010.

Keywords: body politics, secularism, religion, Atatürk tattoo

ÖZ

SEKÜLERİTENİN BEDEN ÜZERİNDEN KURULUMU: ATA-TÜRK'Ü DÖVME YAP(TIR)MAK

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Bu tez son yıllarda ortaya çıkan Atatürk dövmeleri fenomenini iki uçlu bir teorik çerçeveyle incelemektedir: beden politikaları ve sekülerizm. Çalışma ilk olarak, sosyal bilimlerde, hem uysallığın hem de huzur bozuculuğun merkezi olarak odaklanılan bedene artan ilgiyi incelemektedir. Ayrıca beden, kişilik ve öznelliğin tekrar tekrar kurulduğu ve sorgulandığı bir fetiş nesnesi olarak yeniden keşdefilmiştir. Bu gelişmeler 'bir proje olarak beden' anlayışıyla hem koşullanmış hem de bu anlayışı teşvik etmiştir. İkinci olarak çalışma, Atatürk'ün, Türkiye politikasında ve Türkiye ulus-insanları için devam eden önemini incelemektedir. Ölümünden 73 yıl sonra, Atatürk hâlâ seküler Türk ulus devletinin en üst simgesi halindedir. Normatif ulus kimliğini temsil eden 'seküler' ve bu kimliğin ötekisini temsil eden 'dini' olanın Türkiye tarihinde nasıl kurulduğu incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Be teorilerin ışığında Atatürk dövmesi neredeyse tam bir zıtlık gibi görünmektedir: 'dövme', ihtilaflı ve isyankar bir ima taşırken 'Atatürk', devletçi ve conformist bir ima taşımaktadır. Bu tezin ana amacı Atatürk dövmesinin 'halk' tarafından yapılan, kendiliğinden ortaya çıkmış bir (beden) siyaset(i) mi; yoksa Kemalizm'in yakın dönem toplumsal ve siyasal pozisyonunun bir belirtisi mi olduğunun analizi yoluyla bu çelişki incelemektir. Son olarak, konuyu daha iyi anlayabilmek üzere 2010 yaz ve sonbaharında 3 ilde dövme sanatçıları ve Atatürk dövmeli insanlarla alan araştırması yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: beden politikaları, sekülerizm, din, Atatürk dövmesi

To grandma and grandpa,
who are forever the source of all that is good in me.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introductory Remarks on Atatürk Tattoos

It's a wonder if anyone has not laid their eyes on one yet. These last few years, it seems there are more people who got one than those who didn't. It is the new fashion according to some, and the new political symbolism according to others. You might see people who have it on the streets and we receive news of celebrities getting it done too[1]. There is even a Facebook group dedicated to it with over 200 members[2]. Atatürk has recently metamorphosed into tattoos in the figure of his signature and portraits. Among all of his pictures, statutes, busts, figurines, postcards, pins, tie pins, stickers, paperweights and whatnot, a new venue for Atatürk symbolism has currently opened up in Turkey: the body.

Tattooing of Atatürk's signature or portrait is a rather recent popular development in Turkey. There are doubts as to who started it or where, but the number of people demanding and getting these tattoos is noteworthy. While there are a few studies on Atatürk symbolism and the material forms it takes[3], this newly emergent phenomenon has yet received little attention from social scientists. The place Atatürk employs in the memory of the Turkish nation and the lives of the citizens seems an overworked and simple matter. In my opinion, however, the merging of an act as allegedly marginal and allegedly subversive as tattooing with a phenomenon as traditional and conventional as Atatürk symbolism calls for a reassessment of our assumptions and common knowledge on this seemingly simple subject.

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[1] *Tilmaç'ın Atatürk Sevgisi.* (2008), *Gülşen'den Anlamlı Dövme.* (2010), *Levent Kırca Dövme Yaptırdı*. (2010), Ballı, A. (2009), and *Levent Kırca Dövme Yaptırdı*. (2010)

[2] *Atatürk Dövmesini Gururla Taşıyanlar*. (n.d.)

[3] There are a few studies on Atatürk symbolism in the shape of various objects. I will mention these studies later in my thesis and will try to converse with their theoretical frameworks.

Atatürk tattoos, or them becoming visibly popular at least, has a history of 3, 4 years. There doesn't seem to be an agreement among people on where or when or by whom exactly it was started. It is certainly clear, however, that the campaign by Köprüaltı Tattoo Studio in İzmir and its announcement through various websites and television news helped Atatürk tattoos to gain popularity and visibility. This tattoo studio is tattooing anyone who wants a tattoo of Atatürk's signature for free since late 2007. According to the post on their website, Köprüalti alone has done 6425 Atatürk tattoos between the dates of October 2007 and November 2010[4]. Many other studios later followed in suit and had similar campaigns tattooing Atatürk's signature for free on national holidays.

With these developments certain assumptions arose in media about Atatürk tattoos, and certain meanings, reasons, and historical trajectories were associated with it by its practitioners and operators. It has been my attempt in my thesis to understand the matter at hand from the perspective of the tattoo artists who have experience with Atatürk tattoos and their clients who had it done on their bodies. This has proved to be a more difficult task than I had envisioned because it involves different levels of analysis and theoretical implications. Nationalism, secularism, symbolism, even semiotics, body politics and perhaps even psychoanalysis are all intricately involved and all require considerable attention in such a multi-level phenomenon.

My curiosity in the matter of Atatürk tattoos developed through questions such as why people get it done, why now, and how they narrate their own answers to these questions, and I have tried to build my thesis work around this curiosity. In my thesis, I have attempted to observe and analyze the recent practice of tattooing of Atatürk signatures and portraits first through search of popular media and later through in-depth and semi-structured interviews with tattoo artists and people with such tattoos. I have conducted my field research in İzmir, İstanbul and Ankara, with a total of 12 interviews with 13 tattoo artists and 19 interviews with 21 people with Atatürk tattoos. Before going into the details of my interviews and preliminary findings, however, I think it is imperative to attempt a re-telling of the story of the making of the Turkish Republic and the Turkish nation-people with a

[4] Köprüaltı Tattoo and Piercing. (n.d.)

focus on Atatürk, Kemalism, and religion. I think it is interesting and revealing to start out with a personal account I find to be an example of these 'ma(r)kings'.

B. A Short Narrative

As little schoolchildren, I and a few other friends had a secret game. It was almost a ritual, filled with excitement, awe and a bit of fear. The setting for our game was the 'Atatürk Corner' of our primary school, much like any other in any other primary school, with his piercing eyes gazing right through ours. As future citizens, we shivered with the density of the atmosphere as we hesitantly met his gaze. The objective was to stand very still, as if hypnotized with the weight of the moment and to wait for the plastic flowers planted at the foot of the colossal wooden and metallic structure to move, mystically, by themselves. Shaking with awe and fear which we upheld for the confirmation of the whole performance, we believed that it was Atatürk's soul which was roaming the school corridors and which moved the fake flowers.

No doubt that almost all of us were aware that the Atatürk Corner was in the middle of a long corridor, with huge staircases and windows at each side. No doubt we had realized the windows were usually kept slightly open for ventilation and that it was the air circulation that moved the flowers. Nonetheless, we believed, knowingly, because we wanted to believe, or perhaps were taught to believe, that it was the ever-substantial presence of the Father Turk that wandered through the corridors, as he did through the minds and bodies of all citizens of the Republic. Atatürk, probably the most prominent of all figures of the Turkish Republic and the collective memory still is the focus of collective veneration and an internal surveillance mechanism; a unit of measure against which one judges his/her level of worth to citizenship in the Turkish Republic. In retrospect, this little piece of pass-time ironically produced, reproduced and inscribed in our young minds and bodies the all-encompassing, authoritarian and historically deep-rooted statism of the Turkish Republic as personified in the image of the eternal father Atatürk.

The story above perhaps does not strike a Turkish citizen as odd. Having been educated in state schools and having been socialized in a more or less similar environment of excessive veneration for and dominant symbolism of Atatürk, the people of the Turkish Republic have been made and are still being made into the body of the nation through many direct and indirect processes of the state. This might stand out as a redundant statement considering that all nation states and nationalisms work through a similar logic of identification and molding. What is probably specific to the Turkish State is the personification of state processes, institutions, and the past, the present and the future of the nation in the figure of Atatürk as the One Man, the creator and the perpetual leader. While similar personality cults might be said to exist in other contexts, the persistence of the power of Atatürk figure and imagery in official and not-so-official domains is, in my opinion, quite intriguing. This persistence has been instrumental in keeping a politician, deceased 72 years ago, as part of the present and the future, and therefore always as a part of the national memory and imagination on the present and the future, refusing to place him in his place in history and to keep him there.

If the above story indeed seems banal and ordinary, there is all the more reason for social sciences to take account for it, for it is now commonplace in social sciences to intrigue deeper into what seems banal on the surface. Life proceeds through these banal moments and makes and re-makes everyone in the process. Needless to say, it is through such simple and ordinary, thus usually unnoticed processes that subjectification (no matter under what gaze, ideology, statism, religiosity, etc) works. The ghost of the Father Turk indeed still roams the school halls, work places, streets, homes, memories and bodies of the whole nation. As banal as a schoolchild's game might appear, it carries traces of the gist of subjectification the nation embodies and manifests each day.

C. How, Why and When are Atatürk Tattoos Significant?

73 years after his death, and 88 years after the declaration of the Republic, Atatürk still remains the utmost personification of the Turkish nation state and nation-people. What is most interesting is the continuing and insatiable demand for Atatürk in all forms, styles and media. It has almost become commonplace to come upon a never-before-seen photography[5] or something more real than what was thought about his personality each day in newspapers, websites or other media. Reports on how the popular friendship website Facebook is overrun by pages devoted to Atatürk are first page material for many Turkish dailies[6]. Newspapers, somehow, never ran out of material to publish in every national holiday for the last 80 years. Some days it is his never-before-heard voice[7] and others a folk song[8] he allegedly sang, and still others a discussion whether he changed his name before his death[9]. There are innumerable such instances which attest to the prevailing interest in and enthusiasm for Atatürk, his imagery, his trinkets and everything else that symbolizes or connotes him in some way.

This popular interest goes beyond the usual state-led instillations of Atatürk statutes, busts and pictures. This demand for Atatürk is a specifically recent and renewed curiosity on the part of the nation-people and has found novel expressions in various spheres of the citizens' lives. Above examples from newspapers is just one aspect of this revitalization of the Atatürk legacy and recovery of the national memory in the everyday lives of the citizenry. The two most interesting examples of the employment of Atatürk symbolism that I have come across are the one where a barber cut his son's hair in the shape of Atatürk's signature[10], and the one where a man draws Atatürk's portrait in his own blood by

[5] Atatürk'ün Çok Az Bilinen 300 Fotoğrafı. (n.d.)

[6] Facebook'ta Atatürk Fırtınası. (n.d.)

[7] İşte Atatürk'ün gerçek sesi... (n.d.)

[8] Türkü muamması!, 2010

[9] Karslı, 2010

[10] Oğlunun Saçını 'Atatürk İmzası' Şeklinde Kesti, 2009

making cuts in his fingertips with a razor blade[11]. There are many more examples ranging from an unceasing production of movies, documentaries, countless commodities, and etc. with the introduction of the most recent of all such Atatürk symbolisms: the Atatürk tattoos.

Yes, the tattoo of Atatürk's signature is observable and it provokes curiosity, but is it any different from other Atatürk symbolisms, or different from other tattoos for that matter? This has been one of the challenges I had set for myself in my thesis. For Atatürk's signature's tattoos to be significant, in my opinion, they have to prove their specificity in two respects. Firstly, and it was one of my assumptions prior to the study, Atatürk's signature tattoos are different from other forms and figures of Atatürk symbolism for being markings on the skin and for being permanent compared to other forms. Secondly, and this was my second assumption, Atatürk's signature tattoos are different from other tattoo designs, be them ritualistic or non-ritualistic tattoos, for having various connotations other than individuality or uniqueness usually associated with the practice of tattooing. In other words, Atatürk tattoos are a sign in the universe of signs, and it is the network of relations that they posit and find themselves in that gives Atatürk tattoos the specificity and the significance that this study hopes to lay bare.

As I have stated above that Atatürk tattoos were different from state-enforced Atatürk symbolism on the one hand, and from other forms of symbolism such as pins, accessories, pictures and other trinkets on the other. This has been my initial hypothesis and it is why I think Atatürk tattoos are thought-provoking and deserve the attention of social scientists in the first place. Consequently, it was crucial for me to determine whether Atatürk tattoos actually embodied any specificity among other forms and objects of Atatürk symbolism and among other tattoos. Establishing the distinction between Atatürk tattoos and other Atatürk objects was important for me to counter the commonplace theoretical arguments that hold such practices as having Atatürk objects as exclusively personal, done with the dictates of one's free will and conscious and seeing this development as a sign of the rise and strength of civil society. Establishing the second distinction, the distinction of Atatürk tattoos from other tattoos was important for me to argue

[11] Kanla Çizilen Atatürk Resmi, 2009

that this phenomenon is not just about tattooing *per se*, but about tattooing Atatürk, that it is an act quite separate from getting and having just any tattoo. In short, the main question that I will try to answer in this thesis is whether the Atatürk tattoo is a spontaneous (body) politics on the side of the people or whether it is a sign of Kemalism's current retreating position.

Before diving deeper into the subject and the field data, I think it necessary to say a few words on Atatürk symbolism in general. It is especially noteworthy to mention the evolution of Atatürk symbolism from the state-led or state-sponsored examples to the so-called citizen-led ones. This evolution attests to yet another movement of Atatürk symbolism from the public to the private domain; or from the state to the market and the homes of the citizenry.

D. Atatürk Symbolism

> No one who visits Turkey can fail to miss the omnipresence of Atatürk. You will probably arrive in Atatürk Airport in Istanbul. Your bus or taxi into town will pass along the Atatürk Avenue. You may see a concert or a ballet at the Atatürk Cultural Centre. Or an international football game at the Atatürk Stadium. In every town in every school, university, sports center, post office, tax office, public and private foundation and institution, bank, most offices, many shops, you will see pictures and busts of Atatürk.[12]

John Milton is an itinerant who documents his travels on his online blog. This is how he starts out a piece on one of his travels to Turkey where he witnesses the Republic Day celebrations. The 'omnipresence' of Atatürk, as Milton (2006) calls it, is perhaps one of the first things any tourist would realize upon their arrival in Turkey. It is almost as if there cannot be too much Atatürk for a city, a work place, schools, celebrations, and even completely irrelevant events. Turkey is decorated with Atatürk statues, busts, pictures, and paintings from head to toe. From personal experience I can confidently say that some 20 pictures along the wall of the Dolmabahçe Palace that one passes going from Beşiktaş to Taksim are so ingrained to the (physical as well as symbolic) background that the passerby

[12] Milton, 2006

simply does not register them. Even an Atatürk portrait as huge as a ten story building might not attract much attention, much like naming of bridges, roads, avenues, cultural centers, streets, etc. from the most colossal to the smallest 'Atatürk'.

As can be noticed from the above examples, many of the installations of Atatürk statues, busts and pictures are done by the state itself. The state, together with the military establishment in Turkey has been the self-proclaimed guarantor of Atatürk's continued legacy. It is a well-known but not so much noticed fact that the everyday spaces in Turkey are saturated with various forms of Atatürk symbolism. Many examples of this symbolism are state-led and/or state-sponsored. Most of these examples take the form of statues, busts, and on national holidays, Atatürk portrait drawings. Pictures of Atatürk along the wall of the Dolmabahçe Palace stand out in the usual state-led installations as those photographs are kept in place regardless of any special occasion. Alongside statues and busts is the naming of structures with Atatürk's name as hinted above. Despite the fact that these structures and names greet the citizens every single day, they are so commonplace, so much blended to the background and the minds and the vision of the citizens, they go unnoticed most of the time.

In this sense, the state-led and/or state-sponsored Atatürk symbolism resembles Michael Billig's *banal nationalism* (1997). According to Billig (1997), there is a misunderstanding surrounding nationalism which recognizes nationalism only in times of crisis and environments as in the existence of guerrilla wars or separatists that are assumed to be on the verges of nation-states, away from the centers of power, especially far away from the well-established democracies of the west. To counter this understanding Billig (1997) argues that nation-states and the citizenry are made and remade continuously, not only through crises, but perhaps more so, through the production and reproduction of "a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices"[13]. This production and reproduction are done in "a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world"[14]. Consequently, far from being a sporadic condition in

[13] Billig, 1997: 6

[14] Billig, 1997: 6

established states, nationalism is the endemic situation. To explain this phenomena of the everyday implication or 'flagging' (Billig's (1997) word[15]) of the nation in the lives of the people, Billig (1997) develops the term banal nationalism that denotes all those beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices that reproduce a country as a nation state and a group of people as the citizenry, while making it all go unnoticed.[16]

Most of the state-led or state- sponsored installations of Atatürk statues, busts or pictures might be understood in this way of writing the nation on the minds and bodies of its citizenry in their everyday practices and commonplace beliefs. More recently, however, there arose examples with different characteristics from such examples of banal nationalism. The examples of this renewed interest arise partly from the citizenry themselves, but are also nurtured by media and the market to a great extent, and therefore are intrinsically connected to other forms that can be considered banally nationalist. In addition, and this is not to invalidate Billig's (1997) argument, it can be said that Kemalism itself has been in crisis in the later part of the history of the Republic. It is therefore a complicated relation of nationalism, crisis and stability that we find in the examples of Atatürk symbolism. On the one hand, a strong tradition of nationalism has been a defining characteristic of the Turkish nation-state, and on the other, as Billig (1997) holds to be wrongfully characterized, there has been an intimate relation between times of crisis and a reinforcement of nationalism in the Turkish case. In sum, while there have been and are innumerable examples of banal nationalism in Turkey, as there has been and are in other countries, the more recent examples of nationalistic symbolism are surely less-banal and more overt examples, and they point, paradoxically, to both stability and crisis in terms of the most basic categories of Turkish nationalism.

The early signs of Atatürk reverence have attracted some attention in the social sciences as well. Two of the most noteworthy studies attempt to understand

[15] Bilig's most oft cited example of banal nationalism is the American flag that hangs on doorsteps in front of houses in the United States but attracts no attention. This is probably why he chooses the word 'flagged'. Considering my agenda, I would probably use the word 'inscription', or maybe 'writing' in the broader sense of the term.

[16] Billig, 1997: 5-6

this increasing visibility of Atatürk symbolism from the point of view of 'state fetishism' (Navaro-Yashin, 2002) on the one hand and 'nostalgia' (Özyürek, 2006) on the other. What is common to both studies is that this phenomenon is studied in connection to the political power and public visibility acquired by Islam in Turkey starting from late 1980s with significant victories in 1994 local elections, and 1999, 2002 and 2007 general elections. It is indeed in relation to these political, as well as other more symbolic 'victories' of Islam throughout the 1990s and 2000s, together with the liberalist economic restructuring starting from mid-1980s in Turkey that a more possessive and obsessive turn to symbols of modern secularist Turkish state has taken place. It was only after the emergence of such a threat to the secular and republican character of the state that the Kemalists or secularists whom had conceived of and constructed themselves as the norm, the standard, "natural or devoid of symbolism and history"[17] felt the need to legitimize their practices and appearance; something that the visibly religious had already started formulating discourses about[18].

Navaro-Yashin (2002) observes that both the secularists and the Islamists started advancing their own competing versions of *nativeness*. Each side had their own stories about being ingrained to the land, carrying forth the local culture and having primordial ties to Turkey. It was important for both camps to be able to claim organic ties to the motherland and the state through their respective discourses to prove themselves the 'true' Turkish people. To put it very simply, the Islamists saw their appearance and practices as carrier of the true Turkish local (read Anatolian) culture that has been repressed by the secularists for many years under the aim of westernization. In this regard, they viewed the secularists as not being true to themselves and their real culture, and as copying the west. When faced with such a challenge, the secularists, on the other hand, charged the Islamists as having adopted dress and behavior codes of Arabic sources and as attempting to direct the path of the country towards Arabic (read regressive and outmoded, thus in opposition to the Kemalist ideals) countries. The Kemalists, in turn, turned and looked back upon the first years of the republic or the years

[17] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 85.

[18] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 20-1.

Atatürk was alive, and found confirmation for their struggle to survive in the political context of Turkey.[19]

Navaro-Yashin's (2002) arguments might be a good place to start but if they seem a bit rudimentary or not quite able to explain the contemporary setting, it is probably because she was writing sometime during the mid- to late-90s. While I have not researched the narratives of *nativeness* of the secularists, let alone Islamists[20], it is not hard to imagine that much has changed in the following decades. It would not be wrong to say, to say the least, that the subject of discussion in Turkish politics or among the secularists and Islamists as such is much beyond that of nativeness. This, however, has not clarified any of the issues addressed by Navaro-Yashin, but quite to the contrary complicated it even more. Özyürek's *Nostalgia for the Modern* (2006), in this sense is a more recent attempt to answer the challenges posed by the alleged secularist or Kemalist/ Islamist divide.

Özyürek (2006) takes note of the increasing visibility of state symbolism through commercialization and privatization of Atatürk imagery. The onset of this trend was the increasing visibility and availability of Islamic symbols in the public and political domains that started in 1990s. Kemalists, according to Özyürek, responded to this in two ways. Firstly, there was an effort on the side of "the secular state officials and military officers"[21] to multiply the number of public statues, bursts and pictures of Atatürk. Secondly, the citizens of the Turkish Republic, through their "free-willed and consumerist acts"[22] carried Atatürk imagery "out of the traditional realm of the state and into the market and their homes…to nonstate spheres"[23]; "into the private realm of civil society, the market, and the home"[24]. More significantly, Özyürek (2006) points to the fact that "for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic citizens perceived the official

[19] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 20-1.

[20] And I highly doubt that it is still appropriate and relevant to name them as such.

[21] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[22] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[23] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[24] Özyürek, 2006: 100

state ideology as in need of their protection and took personal responsibility for promoting it"[25]. The rise in the visibility of Islam in the public sphere and the above mentioned responses by the secularists, in Özyürek's (2006) view, made it clear that the secularists whom had assumed an overwhelming dominance in both the state and nonstate spheres did not actually have as much monopoly over history writing, and the identity formation, personal lives and everyday practices of the citizenry as they had imagined[26]. In short, Özyürek (2006) in general argues that as religion (read Islam) becomes *publicized*, state ideology and its representation (read Atatürk imagery) becomes *privatized* (enters the domains of the home, the market and the civil society). The argument built this way proves instructive in revealing the particular and carefully carved out spaces of belonging and legitimate places of existence of both religion and secularism as imagined and enforced by the republican structuring of statecraft and the nation-body. What seems most interesting, then, is the trespassing of religion and the secular into each other's legitimate domain. The haunting question becomes what happens when the most basic categories of secularism overflow into spaces deemed illegitimate for both?

The question itself is illegitimate. Better still; the question itself is subservient to the very logic of the secularist narrative; a symptom of which it attempts to explain. Not only does it share the basic assumption of secularism that the public sphere of the state and the private sphere of sentimentality, the home and the market are two mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive areas, but it also has been instrumental in legitimizing this assumption and complicit in making it go unnoticed. An epitome example in this regard is Habermas's understanding of civil society. This was a first step or a fundamental fracture carried out by the secularist narrative to be able to assign such places to the religious and the secular. This was a strategic maneuver to divorce the political from the theological and to thereby construct a firm ground for secularist politics which first and foremost depends on actions of rational and free-willed individuals who are unrestrained by the illogicality of belief and free from dependence to an

[25] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[26] Özyürek, 2006: 153-4

unworldly authority. This, after all, is the doctrine of Enlightenment: *Sapare aude* Kant had dared his readers.

Despite overwhelming 'evidence', however, neither have the sentimental, the home, and the market ever been as distinct from the public domain, nor the civil society from the state as some scholars have imagined. To take the argument a step further, never has there been, empirically, such a distinction. In theory and politics, such a distinction is only imagined, and as hinted above, not quite arbitrarily either. Timothy Mitchell claims that "the apparent existence of such unphysical frameworks or structures is precisely the effect introduced by modern mechanisms of power and it is through this elusive yet powerful effect that modern systems of domination are maintained"[27]. They are the effects of modern mechanisms of power indeed and in my view, the most crucial aspect of these frameworks is their complicity in the creation of the public/private distinction and in creating 'the people' (*halk*) that these mechanisms of power in general, and modern politics in particular so desperately need. It was no mere haphazard happening that the Italian nationalist Massimo d'Azeglio had declared after the Risorgimento (that is after the establishment of a nation state, hence of the public/private distinction), "we have made Italy, now we have to make Italians"[28]. One must be careful here not to misunderstand this 'making' as meaning to create something out of nothing. There surely was some sense of *togetherness* among the future people of Italy as there was among the future people of Turkey, well before the establishment of the respective nation-states. It is highly doubtful, however, if this sense of peoplehood was identical with the peoplehood claimed and demanded by the nation-state[29].

The creation of, or better the insistence on, the public/private distinction was as much a consequence of the newly founded nation-state as it was the prerequisite development for its ontological legitimacy. This was the only possible means through which the form of togetherness of the people mentioned above could be turned into the peoplehood demanded by the nation-state. The people had

[27] Mitchell quoted in Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 135

[28] Azeglio quoted in Billig, 1997: 25

[29] Billig, 1997: 26

to be 'freed' from previous irrational and oppressive ties they were held under and were to be brought together as free-willed political subjects with no other responsibility than the responsibility of governing themselves through democratic means. The politics of the nation state required this move for its legitimization and continuation, which was later translated into economics. It is this dividing of the life world into public and private domains that enabled the creation of 'the people' who were given the chance to do as they pleased in their private lives but were mandated to be rational political and economic subjects in their public lives. It is this assumption put into practice by the nation-state that makes scholars like Özyürek's (2006) interpretation of history possible. It is only after this dramatic maneuver that she can claim the activities of people as "free-willed and consumerist acts"[30] and that it was 'the people' who decided to take active personal responsibility, by themselves, to protect the 'official state ideology'.[31] Özyürek (2006) is perhaps right to claim that Kemalists did not have the degree of autonomy and monopoly that they had imagined to have in terms of history writing, and the identity formation, personal lives and everyday practices of the citizenry.[32] By the same token, however, she was equally wrong in assuming that the people have the degree of autonomy that she imagines them to have, in terms of acting as free-willed, rational and politically unobstructed ways. Özyürek here is just an example and she is in no way alone. The point I am trying to make here is not towards a certain interpretation of nation people. The point I am trying to make is that this is a narrative or perhaps *the* narrative informed by the narrative of the nation state and the kind of politics and people it argues to have organically developed.

As mentioned above, whatever the source of Atatürk symbolism might be, and no matter if it is unnoticed, or quite conscious and free-willed, it serves a very important function: that of subjectification. This function becomes all the more crucial when the matter comes to not just any Atatürk symbolism, but to tattooing of Atatürk's signature on the bodies of the citizens and the active demand for it.

[30] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[31] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[32] Özyürek, 2006: 153-4

This is a new and quite novel version of Atatürk symbolism. The body, in this application becomes the ground on which Atatürk symbolism is carved and inscribed. Considering the degree of attention the body has received in social sciences, this fact alone gives Atatürk tattoos all the significance and the specificity they carry. At this stage, I think it important to say a few words on the body in general, and tattooing in particular.

E. Atatürk Tattoos Revisited

In light of the information I have provided above about Atatürk symbolism, the body in general and about tattoos in particular, the significance of tattoos of Atatürk's signature becomes more significant. The combination of Atatürk and tattoos is curious enough on paper, as one represents a very conformist cultural icon and a whole of national memory, and the other, as I tried to argue, dissent, subversivity and individual identity.

It is evident from these two separate groups of connotations that the inquiry in Atatürk tattoos will require a degree of interpretation of them being inscriptions on the body on the one hand, and a degree of interpretation of them representing century old ties to the nation and the national father. The interesting fact remains, however, that the articulation of the veneration of and ties to Atatürk as the founder of the Turkish nation state and its eternal leader should take the form of tattoos. As mentioned earlier, there have been and still are a variety of products and other ways of expressing fidelity to Atatürk and the ideas that he represents for the nation people. There appear more products in the market and more social and cyber outlets every day. Yet a bunch of people, one way or another, at a certain time in history, chose to carve their love of Atatürk and their respect for him unto their skin in a permanent fashion.

Though it will be very difficult to demonstrate it at the depth of analysis that it deserves, there must have occurred something or some things for the phenomena of Atatürk tattoos to have come into existence. Remembering the operation of disciplinary power as told by Foucault, it would not be appropriate to expect one

major happening behind this emergence but many interrelated, at times minute and at times massive happenings, synchronically and diachronically related that all have some kind of influence on history and people, for a group of people to have come to the choice of getting Atatürk's signature tattooed on their bodies.

Whatever these occurrences might be, an analysis of the phenomenon of Atatürk tattoos, in my opinion, also requires a rethinking of the history of the Turkish Republic with the emphasis on its secular character. The fact that the design of the tattoo in question is Atatürk's signature and not some other symbol of the nation or state, it is necessary to attempt to account for what Atatürk stands for in the nation's cultural memory. I will present a rereading of Turkish secularism in the following chapter. Lastly, I would like to point out one of the biggest challenges of my thesis, which is at the same time one of the reasons making it as attractive and though-provoking as it is: combining Atatürk and tattoos necessitates an analysis and a combination of theoretical frameworks as disparate as body theory, nationalism theory, secularism theory and perhaps others.

All this, of course, depends on an assumption that Atatürk tattoos are different from other versions of Atatürk symbolism on the one hand and from other versions of tattoos on the other. In other words, the underlying assumption, which I hope to validate later in my thesis, is that Atatürk tattoos are significant and deserve the attention of a social scientist for their own right.

F. Methodology

I became interested in Atatürk tattoos when I started noticing more and more people on the streets with their sleeves curled up flashing their love and commitment on their arms. At first I did not think much of it. I couldn't have guessed how big of a phenomenon it has become in the urban scene. My initial searches were for reasons of pass time but my curiosity quickly grew into an academic interest and I became more and more convinced of choosing it as the subject for my thesis.

In terms of methodology, I first collected every piece of news, visuals and user or forum comments on the subject from the internet. After an initial research from which I tried to get a general sense of what Atatürk tattoos might be about in terms of sociology, I started thinking about ways to reach tattoo artists and clients engaged in the performance and carrying of Atatürk tattoos. At this point I was gathering addresses of tattoo parlors in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir and I was also using cyber channels like mail lists, forums and Facebook for making my interest public to as many people as I could. I started receiving news of sightings of people with Atatürk tattoos here and there, of articles in newspapers and forums where people discussed the issue from friends and acquaintances.

For reasons of feasibility in terms of finance, accessibility and time, I choose tattoo parlors in three major cities, namely, İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara. In the summer of 2010, I started interviewing tattoo artists in these cities. Of course, I did not interview every tattoo parlor there was in the three cities. Again for reasons of practicality, I choose cultural and/or commercial centers of the three cities where I knew from personal experience that tattoo parlors would be plenty and in relatively close proximity. Most of these parlors were middle-brow ones and I have to confess that I missed out on many low-profile and high-profile tattoo parlors and artists.

The initial reason for me to start with tattoo artists was a hope that they would direct me to people with Atatürk tattoos. This hope failed on many occasions however, since the tattoo artist is also a business person and most of them did not want to expose the personal information of their clients. I was able, however, on some occasions to receive information from tattoo artists of people they had seen around who carried Atatürk tattoos. As my interviews with tattoo artists progressed, I realized that they too provided valuable information and their narratives became as important as the tattoo clients'. Not only did they encounter many more people who came to them and who had gotten the Atatürk tattoo, but also their professional experiences provided a broader background for my purposes.

During my fieldwork in İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara, I also interviewed people with Atatürk tattoos that either I found myself, or I was directed to by

friends, colleagues, or tattoo artists. In these three cities in total, I interviewed 13 tattoo artists and 21 people with Atatürk tattoos. Not all of the interviews were conducted with just one person. The 10th of November, the anniversary of Atatürk's death was both a challenge and a gold mine for my fieldwork. I had received news that many tattoo parlors were inking people with the Atatürk tattoo free of charge on this date. It was a bit too much into my thesis so I was a bit worried to spend the time and energy on interviews that by that time I probably had to be spending on my computer. I was in Ankara, and I went on a small detour of the tattoo parlors that I had previously visited and I was shocked to find meters of line of people waiting to be tattooed for free. Many of the interviews I conducted that day are with groups of people of 2 to 5 people. I did not want to and in actuality did not have the luxury of isolating people and interviewing the enthusiastic ones by themselves.

I tried to keep the interviews as less formal as I could. What I was most interested in was people's narratives about Atatürk tattoos, therefore I tried my best not to shovel into their mouths the 'right' words (what they might be thinking at that moment as to what I was expecting them to give me). I cannot say I've been perfectly successful on this point, however, I can say that I got more than I imagined. I was more than happy when my interviewees carried on by themselves, almost in the manner of talking to oneself, with as few interruptions and questioning as possible. Nevertheless, there was a method to all the madness. I had a relative degree of structure in my mind and it was basically a two-fold organization of questions, mostly thought out for the reason of establishing the distinctiveness of the practice of tattooing Atatürk on one's body from other such phenomenon as stated above.

The first part of my questions involved the interviewees' thoughts on tattooing in general. Some example questions are why did they think people got tattoos, who was it that did, how was it different from other forms of self-expression (if it was a form of self-expression, of course), what they thought about the society's approach to tattoos, and etc. The second part of the organization, on the other hand, revolved around Atatürk symbolism in general. I asked about why and how they decided to get an Atatürk tattoo, how did they think it was started,

was there something that triggered it, how was it different from Atatürk statues, busts, pins, pictures, t-shirts, ties and figurines, how did they think the society responds to Atatürk tattoos, what did their family, friends and people whom they didn't know react to it, who got it and who wouldn't, how much demand was there for Atatürk tattoos, did people with Atatürk tattoos have other tattoos or did they get others afterwards and etc.

I was eager to listen to my interviewees for as long as they pleased to converse and at times with less talkative ones, I even urged people to go on and tried my best to make them feel comfortable despite the presence of the voice recorder and me as a researcher and an outsider. I should say that tattoo artists in general were less enthusiastic of granting me their time as they did not sympathize with my efforts very much. In the interviewer-interviewee relation, they saw themselves the authoritative one and it was them that they took to be in control of the proceedings. The relationship was quite reverse on the side of the people with Atatürk tattoos. Assuming that these people were people with a statement that they wanted to make through the act of getting a tattoo of Atatürk's signature, this was not very unexpected. In addition, they were quite happy to talk to me and I think most of them felt a degree of being valued by my interest in them. People with Atatürk tattoos were more enthusiastic in terms of the range of subjects they wanted to cover as well. They assumed me to be a person of authority, at times telling me that I should also touch upon this and that wanting certain points to go public through my thesis. At times, their enthusiasm grew into an excessive comfort with the situation, so much so that I also had to endure some not very pleasing bits of information and experiences or completely unrelated stories. In general interviews were typically over half an hour, with some even over an hour. My inexperience with field research showed at first but I think I outgrew it after the first few. The real challenge, however, as I was to learn later into my thesis, was making sense of the mess I called research.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE BODY

A. Body: the Pre-modern, the Modern and the Postmodern

But you know, the body is only a hypothesis.[33]

1. The Body: Pre-Modern

The body has been many things in history. The body is many things at once. One point in time the property and blessing of God, in another the property of the sole individual, natural/ constructed, given/ made, static/ dynamic, being/ becoming, male/ female, it has been an issue of deep concern for many people for infinite number of reasons. It has also been extensively surveyed in academic literature in relation to keywords such as normalization, subversion, blank surface, marked matter, oppression, liberation, limit/boundary, in short and at best, an unheralded ambiguous territory. The body never provided an easy interpretation. It never yielded to a simple reading. Each of these predicates was and is problematized in its relation to it. There are still lively debates as to the significance of body (should one spend the energy to think about it?). As self-righteous subjects created by Enlightenment, the individual's relation to and experience of his/her body has always been complicated. To be or not to be, no doubt that has been the question all along. No founding father, no philosopher king however, could end the complication: being always signaled the mind, but never the body. That treacherous, mortal, decaying, smelly, aching, life creating

[33] A comment by an audience of Anne Balsamo's seminar at UNC- Chapel Hill in September 1996. Quoted in Moi, 2005: 41n.

'thing' could never be brought to being. Such was the earliest general understanding of the body.

It would not be wrong to say that the body first entered into discourse with Greek philosophy. Plato, like Aristotle later on, considered body as matter which is a corrupted and defective version of the Idea. The body has been theorized as a "betrayal of and prison to soul, reason and mind"[34]. Aristippus, the founder of Cyrenaic School was perhaps the most body-positive among the Greek philosophers, claiming that corporeal pleasures were better than mental ones. Epicurus and Epicureans were to join in Aristippus's emphasis on the importance of pleasure in life but were to reverse the equation arguing that mental pleasures were superior to bodily ones. According to Synnott (1990) however, neither philosophy was a serious threat to the Greek life style. A less popular philosophical school was Orphism, found by Orpheus which argued quite insistently for a strict asceticism: abstinence from meat, wine and sexual activities. Though it was not very popular in its time, it is possible to trace influences of Orphism on Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Neoplatonism and Christianity.[35]

Plato was perhaps the most outspoken opponent of corporeality among all the Greek philosophers. Plato maintained that the soul was "a helpless prisoner, chained hand and foot in the body, compelled to view reality not directly but only through its prison bars"[36]. At other places, Plato would describe the body as a 'hindrance', 'impediment', and 'imperfection'. Plato not only distinguished the soul from the body as two separate substances, but, as it is clear from the above quotations, he also considered the body to be inferior to the soul and thus to reason. In *Phaedo* (360 B.C.), Plato praised death for being the only instance where the soul is finally freed from the body and the desires and evils associated with it. Indeed, Socrates did not only accept his fate when he was judged to be killed, he welcomed it. Plato comes closest to an appreciation of the body in his understanding of divine beauty. According to Plato, a beautiful body is the first step on the ladder to Absolute Beauty and God. Plato argues that the steps of this

[34] Grosz, 1994: 47

[35] Synnott, 1990: 82

[36] Plato quoted in Synnott, 1990: 82

ladder start with a beautiful body to lead to love of beautiful souls to love of beautiful ideas to end with Absolute Beauty which is the love of God. Only here can there be a glimpse of a favorable approach to the body in Plato, but in general, his idealism left little room for any consideration or appreciation of the body in his philosophy. [37]

Being a naturalist, Aristotle showed more interest in the body than his contemporaries. In fact, Aristotle rejected the previous dualisms established between the mind and the body, or the soul and the body and instead argued that they were one. According to him, one could not have come about or exist without the other. However, Aristotle, like Plato went on to privilege the soul despite his monist philosophy. He argued that the soul was "the principle of life"[38] and that it governed the body and thus was superior to it. Aristotle encouraged the philosopher to take care of his body, however, but only for the sake of care of the soul.[39]

The Roman influence on Greek philosophy changed little on the subject of the body. While the Stoics showed signs of a more optimistic view of the body, the dualism and hierarchical ordering of the mind/body distinction were ultimately left intact. Seneca, like Plato, urged his readers that "a high-minded and sensible man" should distance "soul from body" and must dwell more on "the better or divine part and only as far as he must with this complaining and frail portion"[40]. Together with Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, however, a curious addition is made to the mind/body dualism which, in my opinion, had significant influence on Christianity later on. Both Epictetus and Aurelius emphasized that the body confirmed a strong bond with the divine. The body in their accounts was the workmanship or God and contained in it a fragment of him. Aurelius added that all things were connected with a sacred bond and that all things were one: "God is

[37] Synnott, 1990: 82

[38] Aristotle quoted in Synnott, 1990: 83

[39] Synnott, 1990: 83

[40] Seneca quoted in Synnott, 1990: 83

one, pervading all things"[41]. Saint Paul and others later on in Christian doctrine would echo Epictetus and Aurelius's philosophies.[42]

Greek philosophy's engagement with the body was actually more ambiguous than the previous statements would make one assume. It is true that Greek philosophy, or to be more precise, the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition on the surface left out the subject of the body in its philosophizing. A more detailed account, though, reveals that its preoccupation with the soul was indeed more imminently connected to an underlying concern with the body.

As Foucault (1994) observes, the most basic and fundamental principle of Greco-Roman philosophy was the *epimeleisthai sautou* principle: 'take care of the self'. This principle, according to Foucault was the main rule of personal and societal conduct and for the 'art of life'. To take care of the self, however, did not simply mean to make sure of one's physical well-being. Taking care of one's body, possessions, health, etc. indeed were not marked as part of this care. This take care principle was primarily about taking care of the soul, but not the soul-as-substance, but the activities of a person: what one does, what one ought to have done and the relationship between the two. Foucault (1994) insists that this Greco-Roman imperative was an "active and erotic state", and not "just an attitude"[43].[44]

However, things start to get complicated when Foucault (1994) starts to trace the examples of the take care principle in ancient documents, teachings, letters and diaries. While some of these documents are simply about the thought processes (on one's acts) and philosophical musings of teachers and disciples, a considerable part of them also include writings on bodily activities such as what one ate or a sore throat, as part of the care principle. Foucault (1994) contents that this points to the ambiguity of the place of the body in the cultivation of the self as demanded and encouraged by the care principle. The principle to take care of oneself in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition was not simply a flamboyant or arbitrary activity for philosophers with time on their hands. It was indeed

[41] Marcus Aurelius quoted in Synnott, 1990: 84

[42] Synnott, 1990: 82-3

[43] Foucault, 1994: 230.

[44] Foucault, 1994: 226-31

deemed to be the major activity of philosophers, since it was the single route to reach the truth and reality of the world. It was this arduous and continuous activity that was the compromise one had to make to attain truth. The body, in this version of achievement of truth was both included and not included in this activity, and was also part of the reality to be embraced in line with *askêsis*.[45]

Although ancient Greek philosophy had a somewhat ambiguous but mainly negative attitude towards the body, ancient Greek culture, art and everyday life are known to be abundant in their attention to the body. Synnott (1990) declares that the Greek culture was 'body-centered'. Indeed, ancient Greek art is a glorification of the body, and especially the naked body[46]. Even today the elementary art education starts out with the Greek Venus torso. Human body and the adoration for its beauty were the main objects of artistic creativity in ancient Greek sculpture, painting, and pottery. In addition to art, Greek culture is known for its emphasis on health and sports. The Olympic Games held once in every four years from 776 B.C. to 394 A.D on Mount Olympus were a venue for the celebration of power and strength of the male body. Greeks also seem to have a casual stance on sexuality, according to Synnott (1990) and they were the first in history to cultivate theories of beauty. In fact, ancient Greeks held beauty pageants for women on Lesbos. Not only that, but in actuality Plato, the philosopher with so many negative things to say about the body, advised exercise for the common man and the philosopher alike. In addition, Laertius maintained that Socrates himself exercised to keep his body in good shape and health.[47]

Christianity was both a break with and in some sense a continuation of the Greco-Roman philosophical understanding of the body. While the mind/body or soul/body distinction was surely continued throughout Christianity, attainment of truth and knowledge of reality, and the nature of this truth and reality were drastically altered. In Christianity, though through different and historically situated activities, the *askesis* principle of philosophy came to be replaced with the

[45] Foucault, 1994: 234-9

[46] Synnott, 1990: 81

[47] Synnott, 1990: 81-2

principle of asceticism, and both the function and the operation of the 'care of the self' principle was fundamentally transformed.

Christianity is first and foremost a salvation religion, which means that its doctrine and associated practices all have another world, or another level of existence as their end. The principle of *askesis* of care of and mastery over one's self was historically a practice aimed at the truth and reality of this world to yield the 'art of living' in the Greco-Roman sense. Christian asceticism, however, comprises an active renunciation of the truth and reality of this world, and inevitably of the self for the truth or reality of another level of existence.[48] This renunciation, needless to say, included the renunciation of the body and any corporal activity.

In addition to being a salvation religion, Christianity, and this is perhaps its defining principle, is also a confessional religion. As Christians were to renounce any truth of the material world and of themselves, confession became, though late in its history, the main vessel of this renunciation. Christianity necessitates that one actively searches for and then reveals, in order to renounce, who s/he is then to be rid of dangerous, this-worldly temptations, desires and faults. Disclosure and renouncing are so intrinsically connected that Foucault (1994) claims that in Christianity, "you cannot disclose without renouncing"[49]. [50] One of the main targets of this investigation is, to be sure, the body: what happens within one's body, what feelings or desires or temptations one's body gives rise to and etc. By implication but not very visibly, with Christianity the body became the locus of attention and the source of preoccupation of each person. It was no surprise that Christ had paid for the sins of all members of the Christian community with wounds, pain and blood and that Christians are born sinners because of their bodies. In short, the Christian tradition maintained that both the mind/soul and the body were God-given, but the first pack was the only hope of attaining salvation in the next world, and was thus immortal, whereas the latter was the imminent obstacle in this respect for its liability for decay, death, immorality, lust and sin.

[48]Foucault, 1994: 238

[49] Foucault, 1994: 249

[50] Foucault, 1994: 242

While it is generally true that body was not regarded very highly in Christianity, there is also a contrary relation established with it, at least in early Christianity. Carrying impressions from the Stoic philosophy, the human body in Christianity was also regarded as God-given and thus holy and spiritual. According to Synnott (1990), "the Christian shares sacramentality in the body and the blood of the Christ"[51]. When it comes to the care of the body, Christianity is perhaps as ambiguous as Greco-Roman philosophy. While the care of the physical body predominates in Christ's teachings and miracles, he also seems to have encouraged self-denial through such things as fasting, chastity, poverty and etc.[52] The body as understood as a gift and craftsmanship of God assumed a significant importance in devotion to and service of God.

It is clear as early as Saint Paul's teachings that Christians were to bruise the body but honor it at the same time, to master it and to hollow it; the body was crucified but glorified and it was an enemy and a temple or a limb of Christ/God all at the same time. This ambivalence, according to Synnott (1990) later caused the ascetics/moderates divide in early Christian Church. Saint Paul is known to have said

> know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? … Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own? … glorify God in your body53

repeating the theme of body as God-given. Yet, the body and sin were not equated yet in Saint Paul. This development was to be established by Manicheans later on.[54]

Contradictions about the place and value of body continue through Saint John Chrysostom's writings. Saint John, who was the archbishop of Constantinople, assured that the body and the soul were indeed two separate substances. He maintained that when one hears the word beauty or thinks of beauty, one should not think of the physical parts of the body and their

[51] Synnott, 1990: 85

[52] Synnott, 1990: 85

[53] Saint Paul quoted in Synnott, 1990: 86

[54] Synnott, 1990: 85-6

attractiveness but of those things 'within': piety, faith, and love. The source of praise for anyone should not be one's appearance as in his body or clothes, but his soul. On the other hand, however, Saint John also celebrated the body for "leading us on by its beauty to admiration of Him who framed it"[55]. Saint Augustine followed in Saint Paul and Saint John Chrysostom's steps and declared that "the human body is a revelation of the goodness of God and of the province of the body's Creator"[56].[57]

Despite such praising of the body, the superiority of the soul over the body remains a fundamental belief throughout the discourse of early Christian figures. Saint Basil the Great, who is the founder of Eastern monasticism, stated that as earthly things were below the heavenly things, so was the body below the soul[58]. As it is clear from the above quotations from Saint Paul, and Saint John Chrysostom, they too regarded the soul to be superior to the body. The only time body is praised or even mentioned is for the sake of glorifying God and any praising of the body is for the sake of praising the soul.

The emergence and establishment of the great monastic orders such as the Benedictines, the Carthusians, the Cistercians, the Franciscans and Dominicans in the second thousand years of Christianity was an important step in the institutionalization of asceticism. This version of asceticism required an overall acceptance of physical suffering and abstinence, or self-denial. By now, the body had been established as the source of sin and asceticism served the purpose of penance as well as mediation for divine grace and bliss. Synnott (1990) clarifies that the new form of asceticism that emerged was a logical outcome of two somewhat contradictory beliefs: the belief in the evilness of body from dualistic philosophy and the belief in the sacredness of the human bodies joined in the mythical body of Christ. Yet, the love-hate relationship towards the body continues into the second millennium. While Thomas Aquinas was arguing for the unity of the body and the soul and that "divine goodness is the good of everything

[55] Saint John Chrysostom quoted in Synnott, 1990:87

[56] Synnott, 1990: 87

[57] Synnott, 1990: 85-7

[58] Synnott, 1990: 87

corporeal", Thomas à Kempis was arguing for just the opposite only approximately a hundred years after him. Thomas à Kempis was quite dismissive of the body and indeed saw it as an impediment.[59] In his own words,

> to eat and drink, to wake and sleep, to rest and labour, and to be subject to all the necessities of nature is a great trouble for the devout man, who would rather be released and set free from all sin … The inner life of man is greatly hindered in his life by the needs of the body[60].

Approximately a hundred more years later, William Perkins again argued that

> whereas our bodies are God's workmanship, we must glorify him in our bodies, and all the actions of body and soul, our eating and drinking, our living and dying, must be referred to his glory: yea we must not hurt or abuse our body, but present them as holy and living sacrifices unto God[61].

Whatever religious figures understood of the body, however, it is highly doubtful that the prevailing culture and life style followed their understanding verbatim. Indeed, not everyone had structured their lives around such asceticism during the medieval period. Examples of enjoyment of physical and sexual pleasures are abundant in medieval literature. The ascetic attitude, Synnott (1990) presumes, was a minority and he claims that "indeed, popular attitudes towards the body may well have been precisely the opposite of what the ascetics and religious described"[62]. Before the dawning of the Enlightenment in the 18th century that would become a defining instance in the move towards modernity, Europe would see yet one last era of utmost significance in terms of the reception of the body: the Renaissance.

The Renaissance philosophers and artists rediscovered the body through their studies of ancient Latin and Greek texts and art. The revival of the human body in art is evident in many artists of the time including Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titan. Not only did body pervade the

[59] Synnott, 1990: 87-9

[60] Thomas à Kempis quoted in Synnott, 1990: 89

[61] William Perkins quoted in Lupton, 1994: 57

[62] Synnott, 1990: 89

Renaissance art from sculpture to painting, but also it was represented in much more detail and color. Philosophers began dwelling on the body as well. Castiglione, for instance, located beauty in the human body and praised it as a holy thing. For him, the good and the beautiful were one and the same, specifically in the human body and that beauty of the body reflected inner goodness.[63]

What is most profoundly different in Renaissance thinking and art, though, was not simply the enjoyment and verbalization of beauty of the body. Renaissance artists and philosophers, perhaps for the first time, indulged in the body so outspokenly for strictly for its own sake. In this sense, the body was not appreciated or glorified as a medium for the appreciation or glorification of the Divine; nor was the body seen as part of a scale of loving God. The body, again perhaps for the first time in its history, was strictly secularized. The body was also privatized through new conceptions of civility. Manners concerning the body and bodily functions were discussed in detail by Erasmus.[64]

In my opinion, this secularization points to the discovery that the body is a social or public phenomenon, as much as an individual or private one. This realization, in turn, is only made possible by the emergence of the public/private divide which proves crucial for the rest of history. Interestingly enough, Synnott (1990) declares that "a 'conspiracy of silence' begins to descend upon sexual matters, and what might be called a 'conspiracy of invisibility' descends upon 'private' parts of the body"[65]. In addition to my argument of the division of life and world into 'public' and 'private', Elias attributed the changes initiated by the Renaissance thought and art to the growth of individualism overwhelming previous group identities as in feudalism and the Church, rising social and geographical movement and technological advancements. Synnott (1990) adds Clavinism, Puritanism, urbanization and industrialization to the list as later developments. Ascetic ideas, of course, were not completely replaced by or during

[63] Synnott, 1990:89-90

[64] Synnott, 1990: 90

[65] Synnott, 1990: 90

Renaissance. However, since the Vatican II era, conceptions of the body in Christianity have been much more positive.[66]

The Renaissance, then, was a very significant era for perceptions of the body. The Renaissance also marks the beginning of the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the coming of the modern period. Together with other historical, economic, civilizational, technological, religious and social transformations, the Renaissance exhibited a weakening of ascetic ideas of the body as enemy and the strengthening of the idea of the body as personal, secular and private[67]. Despite these developments, however, the mind and the body or the soul and the body pretty much remained as separate as they have been conceived to be until the Renaissance. Nevertheless, it was perhaps the Enlightenment tradition that most profoundly dissociated the mind and the body, and which most positively served both the devaluation and the later revaluation of the body.

2. The Body: Modern

One of the most prominent figures of the Enlightenment was, of course, René Descartes and he was one of the major influences in terms of the radicalization of the mind/body distinction. Descartes formulated that there were two major substances: the thinking substance (*res cogitans* or the mind) and the extended substance (*res extensa* or the body). The novelty of Descartes's distinction lay in the break he established with classical philosophy's insistence on the unity of the soul/ the mind and nature. Instead, Descartes argued that only the second kind of the substances, *res extensa*, can be a part of nature and be governed by its material diktats and ontological constraints.[68] In other words, much like Kant's understanding of the mind and reason, it was only the mind that could be infinite, boundless and the source of universal, immortal truths. The body, in this schema was only an *extended* (read not of the original, authentic substance but its extension) substance, which deserved no attention or thought at all. This devaluing

[66] Synnott, 1990: 89-90 and 92

[67] Synnott, 1990: 90

[68] Grosz, 1994: 48

of the body and its inferior positioning is not specific to Cartesian theory, but is symptomatic of the Enlightenment tradition in general. Ann Chill explains the importance and centrality of the mind/body distinction for Enlightenment thought in the following manner:

> Reason promised a host of good that the body could not hope to provide. Bodies lived, grew old, withered; reason worked according to universal laws of logic and produced timeless truths. Bodies distinguished individuals from one another; reason was the common denominator. Bodies were subject to desires, emotions, and derives that were appallingly outside the subject's control; rational thought was a careful, self-conscious process that the subject could undertake in a context of choice and autonomy…Insofar as human beings remained susceptible to bodily dynamics, they were still mired in the realm of the animal, the instinctual, the unfree.[69]

Not only did the body deserve no attention or thought, it was actually perceived as a threat or an obstacle to the workings of reason as Turner expresses and to the creation of the 'rational man' imagined by the Enlightenment thinkers. The body, with all its negative physicality, was fixed, limited, constrained, while reason was limitless and universal. In fact, it was the imperative of reason to transcend the body.[70] As little room as there was for the body in ancient philosophy, together with Descartes and his methodology of attaining the truth, even that little room came to be denied to body in Enlightenment philosophy.

According to Foucault (1994), for Descartes, to reach the truth, it is enough that one is *any* subject – for all subjects *are* rational – with the mental capacity to see what is evident. In this sense, the price the Greco-Roman subject had to pay to be worthy of the truth is done away with. One is released from the ethical obligation to care for the self in order to ascend to truth. With Descartes, the condition to know or reach the truth becomes the observance of direct evidence.[71] There have been numerous attempts to resolve this opposition ever since, but without much success. Arguments went in the one of either ways.

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[69] Cahill quoted in Pitts, 2003*:* 26.

[70] Pitts, 2003*:* 26.

[71] Foucault, 1994: 279.

One wing of the discussions, namely rationalism and idealism, attempted to explain the body in terms of mind, ideas and reason and thus made the former inferior to the latter. The other wing of argument, empiricism and materialism, has done the converse and attempted to explain the mind in terms of bodily experiences and reduced the former to the latter.[72] However, because of the new rules to the game introduced by Descartes, the ambivalence of the position of the body is resolved: the body simply does not have a part to play. The body is now put out of the equation all together, more profoundly then the Greco-Roman's could ever imagine.

Throughout Enlightenment thinking, the body, now being equated with nature, is generally spoken of as a machine. Descartes's understanding of the body as a machine was evident when he declared that the body worked without any help or inference from the mind. Thomas Hobbes agreed with this metaphor of the body being a machine and compared the heart and the nerves to springs. Remarkably, Hobbes and other thinkers used the metaphor of machines as inorganic matter while describing the body and used the metaphor of the body as an organic matter to describe politics.[73]

Another theme that ran through Enlightenment thinking was the relationship between the human body and the animal body. Both Descartes and Hobbes held the human body to be different from that of animals for its ability of conversation and reason. On the other hand, La Mettrie rejected this idea and instead argued that humans were machines just like any other animals were. A decisive moment came when Charles Darwin started to make his theories public, which called into question not only the machine metaphor, but also the assumptions of superiority of the human body. Darwin's theory proposed that humans had evolved from animals and thus human body and animal body were not quite as distinct as those previous to him had assumed. Not only that, but Darwin also contended that humans were still in a process of evolution, though very slow. What was most striking for centuries of philosophical contemplation was that human were evolving first and foremost through the body. The previous hierarchical

[72] Grosz, 1994: 47-9.

[73] Synnott, 1990: 93

dichotomies of mind/body and human/animal were upset to a great extent by Darwin's contribution.[74]

Though the Church had suffered a considerable loss of authority over people's lives by the Enlightenment, its hold upon life and conduct was still reasonably strong. As if Darwin's theory of evolution was not a substantial threat to the teachings of Christianity and the Church, there came Friedrich Nietzsche with his outright and blunt rejection of a vast amount of what the Church stood for. Nietzsche challenged the understanding of the body that he associated with Christianity and developed a controversial new understanding of it. According to Nietzsche, the body was anything but an enemy, a hindrance, a prison, a temple or a tomb. Ascetic and negative ideas of the body developed within Christianity and with the influence of previous philosophies came under harsh attacks in Nietzsche's writing. Instead, Nietzsche strongly argued that the self was the body and the body was the self, thereby removing the self or the soul as it was previously called, from the brain, feelings and thoughts and place and reseated it and identified it with the body. Nietzsche said "behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty commander, an unknown sage – he is called self. He lives in your body, he is your body"[75] and "there is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom"[76]. Nietzsche not only located the self in the body; he also located reason there: what separated humans and animals and what was specifically distinct in the human was no longer the mind, but the body. Reason no longer belonged in the mind, but to that devalued and prone-to-decay secondary substance: the body. With Nietzsche, the lines of separation between the mind, the body, the soul, the self, and reason became indiscernible. However, it was Freud who in his own way proved the mind and the body to be much closer and much more related than those before him thought to have been. After his studies on hysteria, Freud discovered that psychological symptoms could be, and most often were, translated into physical symptoms. Indeed, physical hysterical symptoms, Freud found, were psychogenic. Examining Dora, his famous patient, Freud

[74] Synnott, 1990: 93-4

[75] Nietzsche quoted in Synnott, 1990: 95

[76] Nietzsche quoted in Synnott, 1990: 95

argued that hysteria in origin was psychical and somatic, and that the psychical element does not occur without some sort of somatic symptom. From then on, Freud's therapy proved that the somatic symptoms disappear when the psychical symptoms are addressed and eased. The body and the mind appeared to be of one substance, and much more intricate than the century old mind/body dichotomy allowed for.[77]

The culmination of modernity came around with rapid developments in natural sciences, technology and medicine. Life standards and living conditions were radically improved throughout modernity. Sanitary and health criteria continuously increased in many parts of the world. Vaccinations had been found as early of late 18th century and from then on, their effectiveness in combatting and preventing some then deadly diseases proved crucial. Certain vaccinations were in fact ordered as mandatory for health-risky populations, such as children, in the 19th century by many countries in Europe. States developed legislations on hours and conditions of work, sewage disposal, garbage disposal, location of cemeteries, food and water quality and etc[78]. While the law gradually increased the standards of the general well-being of populations, by the same token, it became more and more involved with and controlling of bodies.

Synnott (1990) clarifies that as "the body politic increased its power over the body physical", "the individual body therefore now became, to a degree, state property"[79]; a point which Michel Foucault would devote a considerable amount of time. Synnott (1990) elucidates, however, as Foucault as well would, that these developments and the increasing involvement of states with the bodies of their citizenry does not mean that the body had been, at some point in time, completely private or autonomous. On the contrary, the body has always been under a substantial amount of control and regulation by the state. However, this control or regulation had been previously localized in time and space. Now, by mid-modernity, surveillance, control and regulation of the body by the state had

[77] Synnott, 1990: 95

[78] Synnott, 1990: 95

[79] Synnott, 1990: 95

become massive, obligatory, universally applicable and prescriptive for the future with a legitimacy borrowed from the doctrine of the greatest good.[80]

3. The Body: Postmodern

Contemporary thought conceives of body in multiple ways. One branch of current debates sees the body as an object of the natural sciences (i.e. biology and medicine), humanities and social sciences (i.e. psychology, philosophy, ethnography). Considering the body is highly organic and socially bound-up, these sciences fail to acknowledge the fact that bodies construct and are constructed by an interior of a signifying consciousness. Another branch of argument regards body as a vessel inhabited by a sentient willful subjectivity and as a tool or a machine at the disposal of this subjectivity. It is possible to find echoes of this tradition in the liberal political speculations, in Locke's writing, and in feminist political struggles. The turning point, in this respect, has been the perception of the body as personal property. Another branch still, argues that the body is an indicative and connotative medium of expression, and a "mode of rendering public and communicable what is essentially private (ideas, thoughts, feelings, affects)"[81]. The body in this understanding works two ways. On the one hand, it experiences and interprets the outside material world and its reality and on the other, it allows for the communication and expression of the inner nonmaterial world and realities of the psyche which would otherwise be shut down and inexpressible.[82]

Pitts-Taylor (2008) tells the same story in terms of s difference between an understanding of the body as natural and cultural. The understanding of the body as a natural thing involves a conception of the body as a purely biological phenomenon which is constant, fixed in temporality and geography. According to this understanding, the body is the pre-discursive and pre-social basis upon which secondary structures like the self and society are built. The biological

[80] Syynott, 1990: 95-6

[81] Grosz, 1994: 50

[82] Grosz, 1994: 49-51

understanding extends to all other cultural or behavioral aspects of human life, explaining all those aspects as a consequence of the biological factor. In this way, the body becomes a universal construct. Pitts-Taylor (2008) holds that the natural body paradigm has been the dominant understanding of the body since the 18th century and that its influence still holds strong in medical and psychiatric discourses. A less popular but surely existent understanding of the body is the cultural one. This understanding is fostered to a great extent with the social sciences and advancements in medical sciences. Together with developments in biotechnology such as reproductive and genetic technologies, the understanding of the body as universal and constant came under attack. These developments confessed to the plasticity of the human body. This cultural body also aided or acted as a prerequisite basis for the later development of the body as a source of identity formation. Theories of feminism, postmodernism, multiculturalism and postcolonial theory have all been instructive in the furthering and maturation of the understanding of the body as a social construct.[83]

In a breath, it can be said that since the Enlightenment, bodies have come to be regarded as personal property the owner of which has the right to invest in, decorate and modify. Not only has it been possible to 'fashion' the body with clothing to a greater extent with each new decade, but also, it has become popular to 'design' it. As the religious forces dictated upon the creation, the persistence and the ownership of bodies decreased in significance, a new understanding emerged that advocated re-creation and modification. Having its roots in very early civilizations and tribes, bodies have then become plateaus of self-expression and identity. Developments in human rights, liberties and the notion of personal emancipation opened up opportunities for ever new subcultures and beliefs aided by bodily alterations ranging from plastic surgery or reconstructive surgery to tattoos, piercings, various implants, cuts, and etc., and lately still to genetic interference or engineering, reproductive technologies, organ transplants, and etc.

Authors of late modernity such as Shilling, Baumann, Ulrich Beck, Giddens, Foucault, Baudrillard and Goffman inform us on the emancipatory aspect of this

[83] Pitts- Taylor (2008): xxii-xxiii

process. Giddens's notion of self as a reflexive project[84], Baumann's understanding of the individual self-projects and the permanent 'identity problem' one finds him/herself in[85], Foucault's notion of 'care for the self'[86], Baudrillard's conception of the body as a capital and fetish and the necessity of investment this conception entails[87] and Goffman's perception of body as a place for staging a self that has no essential/ontological nucleus[88] all point to the paradox of this freedom. The groundlessness of the late modern (or post-modern, as some like to call it) life, the deliberate destruction of essentialist, stable identities and the pulverization of any fixed social relation and solid standing have made it possible to explore new forms, expressions and representations of identities. By the same token however, this privatization of the life-world and the individualization of the body have also swept the ground under our physical and emotional continuity. In this process, the body has not only become open to countless new experiences and sensations, but also it became a 'project' of the custom constitution of the self. As Shilling reminds us, in the West, "there is a tendency of the body to be seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming; a project which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual's self-identity"[89]. Shapiro (2002) further delineates that a world which disembedded "the naturalness of our appearances, even our gender, opens up unprecedented possibilities for choosing the kind of bodies we want and that physically signify who we are. The body, like the self is no longer accepted as fate"[90]. This project, moreover, is not merely voluntary, it is a responsibility on the part of the individual to design and redesign his/her body. Body, a construct which had evoked "relentless efforts to convince people they had no bodies"[91], is today demanded by the social to be at the core of the broader

[84] Shapiro, 2002: 5-7

[85] Shapiro, 2002: 3-5

[86] Shapiro, 2002: 10

[87] Baudrillard, 1998: 277-8

[88] Pitts, 2003: 27

[89] Shilling quoted in Klesse, 1996: 20

[90] Shapiro, 2002: 7

[91] Baudrillard, 1998: 278

project of the self. Shapiro once more repeats that a body's "health, fitness and capability to realize its potentialities is very much up to its "owner" who is responsible for ensuring its optimum viability…Dysfunctions…must be seen as primarily self-inflicted through lack of knowledge, discipline and attentiveness"[92]. With the cyberpunk literature, a further step is taken. Rather than the cultivation of the body and of the self through the body, the question now becomes how to cultivate an existence without the body. The emphasis on cyberspace is thus dramatic: although the cyberpunks' imaginations are still too broad compared to real circumstances and technical possibilities, they are powerful enough to envision an escape from the confinements of the body and the borders that detach organic from inorganic matter.[93]

As stunning as the cyberpunk vision to transcend the body might seem, there has been another shift in the role of the body that is possibly more unsettling for the hitherto philosophical tradition of mind/body or soul/body and the superiority/inferiority debate this distinction entails. According to Baudrillard (1998) the body has in fact taken over from the soul or the mind the function of being the vessel for salvation. Baudrillard (1998) explains that with high capitalism, the body has been rediscovered "in a spirit of physical and sexual liberation, after a millennial age of puritanism"[94]. In Baudrillard's own words

> its omnipresence (specifically the omnipresence of the female body…) in advertising, fashion, and mass culture; the hygienic, dietetic, therapeutic cult which surrounds it, the obsession with youth, elegance, virility/ femininity, treatments and regimes, and the sacrificial practices attaching to it all bear witness to the fact that the body has today become an object of salvation. It has literarily taken over that moral and ideological function from the soul.[95]

Behind this shift, according to Baudrillard (1998), lies the fact that any relation to the body, in any society, is a mirroring of the relation to objects and social relations. The way body is conceived and operated in the social in late modernity

[92] Shapiro, 2002: 15

[93] Shapiro, 2002: 3-15, Klesse, 1996: 19-20 and Springer, 1991: 247

[94] Baudrillard, 1998: 277

[95] Baudrillard, 1998: 277; emphasis original

follows the lines of capitalist production/consumption relations and the maxim of private property. Baudrillard (1998) distinguishes the role of the body in traditional societies or communities, such as the peasantry, from the postmodern condition of the body. For the peasant, he argues, the body is engaged in with an instrumental or magical vision encouraged by the labour processes and relation to nature. The contemporary production/consumption organization in late capitalism, however, causes a split in the conception of the body.[96]

This split is composed of the understanding and representation of the body first as capital, and secondly as fetish. These two notions are interrelated and are joined in their mutual efforts and demands of investment in the body, in both physical and economic sense. After centuries of "a relentless effort to convince people they had no bodies (though they were never convinced)", late capitalism shows "a relentless effort to *convince them of their bodies*"[97]. This effort to convince people of their bodies and the demand for investment in it is such a strong impulse that Baudrillard compares it to puritanism and indeed terms both as *moral terrorism.* What previously was a necessity to care of and investment in the soul has now become a necessity to care for and invest in the body. In this shift, the ultimate authority that the individual is held responsible against if s/he fails this duty is no longer God, but body itself. In other words, if you don't follow the necessary practices of devotion to the body, which means, if you do wrong by way of omission, then you will be punished by your body – "a suddenly maleficent, repressive agency which takes its revenge if you are not gentle with it"[98].[99]

This care and investment, however, is far from the care of the self that we have seen in Greco-Roman philosophy. Baudrillard (1998) acknowledges that the return to the body does not aim a better or deeper understanding of it; quite to the contrary, the aim of this return and the keen attention is a pure narcissistic and fetishistic imperative[100]. While this might sound like a prescription for pure

[96] Baudrillard, 1998: 277

[97] Baudrillar, 1998: 277; emphasis original

[98] Baudrillar, 1998: 278

[99] Baudrillard, 1998: 278

[100] Baudrillard, 1998: 278

jouissance, what Baudrillard here has in mind is far from an enjoyment of the body and its propensities. As he clarifies later on, this imperative, followed and to a certain extent legitimized by the myth of liberation, is always already an economic imperative[101]. And the myth of liberation proves to be of utmost significance in this respect.

Yes, Baudrillard (1998) says, "the body sells products. Beauty sells products. Eroticism sells products"[102]; but that is only a partial, most obvious side to the relation of the body with economics. The body in this rediscovery is appropriated as an *investment*: a product with a surplus, something that requires labour and yields exchange-value, a marker of social status. The body, beauty, health, athleticism, eroticism and all other positive values the body now assumes become signs in a network of signs as exchange-value in the capitalist economic market. Liberation through the body becomes crucial at this point. Just as human labour power was to be liberated and emancipated for it to be exploited and exhausted for instrumental and productivist ends Baudrillard (1998) says, so the body had to be emancipated and freed for it to be exploited and exhausted in the same manner.

> Just as freedom to dispose of oneself and personal interest – the formal principles of the individual freedom of the worker – have to operate for labour power to be able to transform itself into the demand for wages and exchange-value, so the individual has to rediscover his body and invest it narcissistically – the formal principle of pleasure – for the force of desire to be able to transform itself into a demand for rationally manipulable objects/signs. The individual has to take himself as object, as the finest of objects, as the most precious exchange material, for an economic process of profit generation…[103]

As soon as the myth of liberation is peeled of, according to Baudrillard (1998), the body given up to a 'labour of investment' proves to be a more overwhelmingly alienated form of labour than even the body as formal labour power.[104]

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[101] Baudrillard, 1998: 279

[102] Baudrillard, 1998: 282

[103] Baudrillard, 1998: 281-2; emphasis original

[104] Baudrillard, 1998: 279-82

Baudrillard's account is very economic and to a great extent neo-Marxist. One can trace the influence of Marxist discourse throughout his understanding of labour power, exchange and myth of liberation. While this explanation is illuminating in many respects, one is left wondering about the political dimension involved in such an understanding of the body. The last sentences especially call into question the actual possibility of such stripping of the myth of liberation. This assumption carries overtones of a Marxist understanding of ideology which is surely to be lifted and done away with, after which, subjects will be freed from all false consciousness (for instance, here, freedom from the misleading supposition that one is liberated through the body through certain processes) that this conception of ideology entails. Yet, if one considers more contemporary understandings of ideology as being more positive and productive, and the statement voiced many times that people know what they are doing but that they are doing it anyway[105], an account as economic as this one falls short of satisfying a thorough understanding of the situation. It is best, at this point, to turn to Foucault for aid.

Foucault puts the question of the body at the center of his distinct interpretation of power well before he considers it as pertaining to and within an economic context. While Foucault affirms that the disciplinary investment of the body is bound up with its economic dimension as a force of production, he nevertheless stresses that the body is also immediately embroiled with a political dimension: "power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs"[106]. Indeed, Foucault (1995) holds that the development of a certain kind of power, a power at the center of which Foucault positions the body, preceded the emergence and growth of capitalism as an economic enterprise[107].

Foucault observes that there has been a development of change in the operation and character of power since the middle ages. The seeds of what he calls disciplinary power were planted in those times beginning in the 17th century when

[105] Sloterdijk, 1987: 5 and Sharpe, 2005

[106] Foucault, 1995: 25

[107] Dreyfus, 1982: 135

the betterment of the life standards of populations, care for them and their growth became central issues of states[108]. This new concern was made possible, partly by rapid developments in natural sciences, technology and medicine, as was mentioned earlier with Synnott's (1990) account (vaccinations, legislations on hours and conditions of work, sewage disposal, garbage disposal, location of cemeteries, food and water quality and etc)[109]. The more power took on a disciplinary character, the more it inevitable became interested in bodies.

According to Foucault (1995) the body was discovered as an object and target of power in the classical age in two respects. One of these, Foucault (1995) terms the 'anatomico-metaphysical' register, and the other, the 'technico-political' register. While these two registers came about simultaneously, what separated them were their respective concerns of submission and use on the one hands, and functioning and explanation on the other. These two branches in the objectification and targeting of the body by power, however, converged on one point: both were after producing docile bodies and a body is docile only if it can be known or objectified, and subjectified at the same time thus requiring a joint operation of both registers.[110]

From these initial developments onwards, a new science or technology of the body slowly and disparately started to grow. Disciplinary power and the new technology of the body was first observable in places like workshops, barracks, prisons, and hospitals[111]. To be sure, however, this new form of power was not possessed by any person, nor was it possible to pinpoint it in any institution or state apparatus. This disciplinary power, pitted against and exercised on the body gave rise to and reciprocally was enabled and furthered by certain knowledges, or more precisely disciplines on and about the body. In Foucault's words, "in becoming the target for new mechanisms of power, the body is offered up to new forms of knowledge[112]. These forms of knowledges and all the processes they

[108] Dreyfus, 1982: 134

[109] Synnott, 1990: 95

[110] Foucault, 1995: 136

[111] Dreyfus, 1982: 135

[112] Foucault, 1995: 155

allowed for and entailed gave rise to the political technology of the body. Both disciplinary power and the political technology of the body it gave rise to and was made possible by, operated in minute and diffuse ways. For this reason, Foucault calls this specific aspect of disciplinary power, namely the power involved in technologies of the body, a micro-physics of power: not possessed but exercised; not a property but a strategy, a maneuver or a tactic; something that one best gets a grasp of within a network of relations, struggles that go down to the most minute details of time and space and of the fabric of a society. [113]

For the smooth operation of disciplinary power, the main aim of which is to produce docile bodies, the body needs to be made both a useful and an intelligible body. The disciplines that evolved from Middle Ages onwards enabled the co-operation of the anatomico-metaphysical and the technico-political registers of the body. With the beginning of the modern age, the benchmark of which according to Foucault is what he names the Cartesian moment, the care of self imperative of the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition came to be replaced with the know yourself imperative. From that point on the access to truth was made possible only by knowledge, and especially by the knowledge of oneself. This knowledge, however, is far from an ethical investment in one's self as in the care imperative. It is something given to the individual by the disciplines formulated around the body.[114] What is more is that disciplinary power and the technologies of the body are "not exercised simply as an obligation/ a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them; just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them"[115]. In other words, disciplinary power is not simply interested in control from without; quite to the contrary, it comprises an internalization of control by each individual. The individual in general, and the operations and functions of his/her body in particular are both objects and subjects of disciplinary

[113] Foucault, 1995: 26-7

[114] Read, 2009: 56

[115] Foucault, 1995: 27

power. Disciplinary power, to a great extent, is the disciplining of the self by the self.[116]

Foucault's writings on neoliberalism can be considered as a final contribution he makes to the contemporary understanding of the body. Read (2009) explains that according to Foucault, neoliberal governance was an effort to invent a state that would be able to create the "voluntaristic, entrepreneurial and self-responsible dispositions" within individuals that the late capitalistic market needed and depended upon. These dispositions had to be encouraged to be internalized by individuals through certain programs and initiatives of the state.[117] People had to behave in ways that the disciplinary power and the neoliberal governance demanded as though they were acting out of free-will. The new man and woman of neoliberal governance had to be made into *homo economicus*, who is "an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself [or herself]"[118]. This entrepreneurial attitude surely included a vast array of investments including those in labour power as well as the body. What differentiates Foucault's account of self as enterprise from the cultural Marxist account of commodification of subjectivity and experience is that self as enterprise and neoliberal governance actually involve active differentiation and self-responsibility rather than passive consumerism and submission, standardization and homogenization as in the latter case[119]. Neoliberalism involves *governing without governing*, where the subjects are held responsible for themselves and all their entrepreneurial activities. Failure in this system is a failure of the subject and nothing more.[120]

The narcissistic investment in the body as capital and fetish that Baudrillard (1998) explains is just one of examples of the self as enterprise. Baudrillard is right to warn his readers that a failure to follow the necessary practices of devotion to the body has strictly personal repercussions. If, in other words, one fails to live up to the prerequisite processes of making oneself, in every definition of the term,

[116] Mills, 2003: 43

[117] Read, 2009: 68

[118] Foucault quoted in Read, 2009: 28

[119] McNay, 2009: 63

[120] Read, 2009: 44

it is strictly one's own responsibility to bare the results. Not only is it one's fault that s/he has not equipped oneself enough to meet the challenge in the market in terms of an economic sense, but also, when it comes down to it, it wouldn't be surprising if someone accused another person for being ugly. All the 'projects of self' that come under many different names in Shilling's, Baumann's, Beck's, Giddens's, Foucault's, Baudrillard's, Goffman's, Shapiro's and others' writings briefly mentioned here, are not simply opportunities but responsibilities of the entrepreneur that is the subject of postmodernity. Self-creation which takes the most visible form through alterations of the body is indeed an *ideology*[121]; or perhaps even a *moral terrorism*[122] as argued by Baudrillard.

B. How, Why and When are Tattoos Significant?

> *Selfhood has become intrinsically somatic – ethical practices increasingly take the body as a key site for work on the self. From official discourses of health promotion through the narratives of the experience of disease and suffering, we see an increasing stress on personal reconstruction through acting on the body in the name of a fitness that is simultaneously corporeal and psychological. Exercise, diet, vitamins, tattoos, body piercing, drugs, cosmetic surgery, gender reassignment, organ transplantation – for "experimental individuals" the corporeal existence and vitality of the self have become the privileged site of experiments with subjectivity.*
>
> *Nikolas Rose* [123]

[121] Pitts, 2003: 34

[122] Baudrillard, 1998: 278

[123] Nikolas Rose, quoted in Heyes, 2007: 4

Body modification is a general title that covers a large spectrum of body alteration or ornamentation. It can range from corsets, body building, extensive dieting and plastic surgery, from simple and contemporarily socially accepted decorations as piercing and tattoo to more radical applications such as subdermal implants, transdermal implants, extraocular implants, scarification, branding, scalpeling, kavadi, ball dance, skin peel and suspension. It is a form of marking the body that can be temporary, semi-permanent or permanent.

Body modification, however, is by no means a contemporary phenomenon. Many different forms of body modification have been known to be around for centuries, especially in non-Western countries such as the Masai of Africa, the Padung of Mayas, the Ibitoe of New Guinea, the Sadhus of India, the Maori of New Zealand, the Ndebeli of South Africa as well as Japanese, Thai, Samoan, Micronesian, Native American, Hindu and Polynesian cultures[124].

Tattooing, in my opinion, stands out among other types of body modification. The basic reason for this is that tattooing is the only permanent or perhaps most permanent form or body modification as there are degrees of permanency. All other practices of body alteration are either temporary or semi-permanent. Implants can be removed, muscles can be de-pumped to a great extent, even those more permanent forms like cuts, scarification or branding that are desired to leave their marks on the skin can be 'corrected' with plastic surgery. Although laser treatments have gone a long way in the last few decades and although it is claimed that tattoos can be removed with laser sessions, many tattoo artists are doubtful of the success rate, claiming that it is not possible. Since I do not have enough knowledge of the laser technology, and since nothing turned up in my online searches of before/after photographs of lasered tattoos, I am inclined to believe that tattoos are indeed as permanent as you can get in terms of body modification.

[124] Pitts, 2003: 3- 5, 30

1. Traditional Tattoos: Ritual and Mysticism

Tattooing as a practice of inscribing marks on the skin is known to be around for centuries since before the Common Era. The discovery of prehistoric remains in the Alps suggested that people of those times were tattooed, possibly for healing practices. Noble women in Egypt were tattooed as early as 2000 BC. Tattoos are taught to be around in Europe since 500 BC. Tattooing was prevalent in Polynesian cultures and Pacific cultures. Maori people were also known to be tattooed, especially around the facial area. There are studies suggesting that tattooing was widely practiced in Japan beginning with 10.000 BC. Celts in Ireland and Scotland also practiced tattooing.[125]

Traditional and tribal tattoos had different meanings and functions than the tattoos known to us today. In general terms, tribal tattoos usually were marks to symbolically position and fix the individual's status in the community.[126] The meaning of the marks and the process of tattooing had different functions for the two sexes. Tattooing, from its earliest examples, was a gendered practice. According to Pitts-Taylor (2008) in many parts of the globe, tribal tattooing carries a particular female character. She gives the example of tattooing from the Middle East where tattoo specialist women inscribe the hands and faces of other women. Besides this example, there are numerous other ways to suggest that tattooing was (and is) highly gendered. Tribal tattoos for women symbolize their maturity in sexual and reproductive terms, which in turn is a message of eligibility for marriage and childbirth. For men, on the other hand, the function of tribal tattoos is usually to denote their competence in terms of being a warrior, a hunter or a leader. In addition to the common meaning of the marks established by tribal tattoos, the process itself is indicative of different meanings for the two sexes. The pain and blood involved in the process symbolize for women that they are ready and able for the process of childbirth, while for men, they symbolize their readiness and ability to withstand the physical demands of warfare and hunting.[127]

[125] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 481-3

[126] Pitts, 2003: 33 and Sanders, 2008: 6

[127] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 482

Tribal marks also had aesthetic functions, making the body of the women or the men more pleasing and beautiful to the members of the other sex within the tribal community[128].

Moreover, tattoos and the process of getting a tattoo in the tribal context also involve more spiritual meanings and associations. The pain and the blood involved in tribal tattooing practices have connotations of other-worldliness, divinity, and at times, connections with spiritual and/or sacred elements of the tribal culture. Pitts-Taylor (2008) informs her readers that many tribal societies which practice tattooing have societal codes to be followed regarding the newly tattooed. In many examples, the newly tattooed is removed from the daily concerns of the tribe, sometimes being isolated for a period of time. This, according to her, is done for the healing process, as much as inducing a status of distinction upon the tattooed person, as well as the practice of tattooing itself. [129]

Sanders (2008) adds that the pain and blood included in the tribal tattooing process typically signaled the rite of passage into adulthood. Enduring the painful process proves the bearer's courage and durability for the other members of the community. Sanders (2008) also points to the spiritual, magical or religious dimension of tattooing, saying that tattoos were believed to protect the wearer in the afterlife and to provide good luck in his/her lifetime. Other functions associated with tattoos in tribal cultures include attraction of the opposite sex, protection from accidents, and conservation of youth and health.[130]

The Greco-Roman era and later the Christian are significant for the recognition of tattoos encountered in the tribal communities. Romans, like their colonialist successors, were highly hostile towards tribal tattoo practices as they framed them as barbaric and inferior. Romans, like their Greek ancestors, appropriated tattooing as a degenerate practice to mark outcasts of the society like criminals and slaves. Although it was looked down upon in much of the Christian history as well, there were some examples of tattooing as an affirmative practice among pilgrims marking and memorializing their religious journeys. For a brief

[128] Sanders, 2008: 6

[129] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 482

[130] Sanders, 2008: 10-11

period during the wars to capture the Holy Land from the Muslims, Roman soldiers also tattooed themselves with Christian figures[131]. Tattoos were especially important during the witch hunt years of Christianity as they were taken to be evidence of witchcraft.[132]

Captain James Cook was perhaps one of the most important figures in the history of tattooing in the West. Cook brought the practice to Europe in the 18th century with tribe's people he physically brought to Europe for display of their skin[133]. He allegedly had tribal tattoos done on himself during his voyages. Despite an initial fascination among the European and American elite with tattoos[134], the general attitude towards them was hostile, similar to Greek and Roman responses. The European and American response to tattoos in the 18th century was mainly informed by colonial values "where non-white, non-European, non-Christian societies were/are regarded as savage, primitive, and barbaric, and in need of 'civilization'"[135]. In their continued quests to non-European lands, colonizers of these centuries unfortunately caused the loss of many traditional tattooing practices together with many other cultural elements found on these lands. For Europeans and Americans, tattoos were repulsive and they were against the laws of God and civilization that these marked people clearly had no notion about. The tradition of marking outlaws with tattoos continued into the century. Convicts and slaves were tattooed in many parts of Europe and America to display their inferior status. [136]

The infamous reputation of tattooing continued well into the later part of the 20th century. During these few centuries, however, there emerged people who willingly took on the stigma of being tattooed for certain reasons. It was probably the convicts who first adopted the practice themselves, thereby subverted the

[131] Sanders, 2008: 13-4

[132] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 483-4

[133] Sanders, for instance argues that Captain Cook brought a tattooed Tahitian Prince named Omai to Britain on one occasion and exhibited his exotic find to the members of the British upper class. See Sanders, 2008: 13-4 for a more detailed account.

[134] See Sanders, 2008: 15-6 for some examples.

[135] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 484

[136] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 484-5

authority involved in tattooing. Prisoners and outlaws started to tattoo themselves and created a culture among themselves, reclaiming the practice from people of power and authority. In time, they created an elaborate network of meanings and associations through their tattoos which by then, through their practices, became badges of honor and fidelity to certain criminal groups or gangs. This development raised fears among the authorities, desperate to decode the meanings of self-inscribed tattoos of the criminal community. With the beginnings of the institutionalization of disciplinary power told by Foucault, there emerged discourses and disciplines concerned with popularization of tattoos among the lower levels of society. Psychomedical discourses of the times were populated with arguments to the effect that the tendency to mark the body was intimately and inevitably related to internal tendencies of criminality and psychopathology.[137]

In late 19th and early 20th centuries, the practitioners of tattoos widened to include circus show crowd and eventually the working class males. The tattooed body was widely exposed in circus shows or freak shows, and, in fact the Great Depression increased the number of people with tattoos as it had become a highly probable employment chance in circuses[138]. Tattoos were being utilized much in the same way as they were in the European Middle Ages through the years of World War II. Many people of Jewish heritage were tattooed in Nazi concentration camps. Many survivors of the Holocaust later developed mixed feelings towards tattoos, theirs and in general, some going through extreme pains to remove their tattoos, and some holding on to them as remainders of the horrors they survived.[139]

The history of tattooing is mostly a story of a progression from the traditional tattooing practices to Western contemporary tattoos. Writing on traditional tattoos, however, have little or no examples from Anatolia from where new examples are coming to light in a limited amount of literature. It is known that tattooing and facial piercings have been widely practiced in Southeastern region of Turkey. Recent studies have also revealed that similar modification

[137] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 485

[138] Sanders, 2008: 18

[139] Pitts-Taylor, 2008: 485-6

practices have been applied in Central, Southern and Mediterranean region as well. Serdaroğlu names the following cities that he has encountered various forms of tattooing: Adana, Adıyaman, Ağrı, Batman, Çankırı, Yozgat, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Konya, Niğde, Nevşehir, Mardin, Mersin, Şanlıurfa, Van. He also notes that these practices are mostly employed by nomadic, migratory cultures of Turkmens, Arabs, Kurds, Karaçis, and Sazmantus, which according to him, explains the similarities in motifs and designs.[140]

Most reported on, however are those from Southeastern region. İhlas News Agency reports that tattoos in Southeastern region have been indicators of religious, magical, societal, and sexual roles. Common among Arabic, Kurdish, Yezidi and Syrian families close to Syrian border, these tattoos known as *dak* or *dek* in Kurdish, pin down the person's position in the community and are also regarded as prevention against evil, sickness and *nazar*. Serderoğlu argues that the traditional tattoos he has encountered in the Southern Southeastern Anatolia were done to symbolize identification with a community; to portray an idea that belongs to a community; to bring charms, good luck, health, fertility and prosperity; to denote bachelorhood, and willingness for marriage; and to protect against bad spirits, evil, *nazar* and death[141]. Mehmet Sait Tunç who has been conducting oral history in Mardin argues that these forms of body modification should not be seen as decoration, but rather as a form of art, portraying the historical, geographical and sociological repertoire of the region.[142] Another source lists the reasons and beliefs behind the Anatolian tattooing practice as a. protection from evil powers and bringing luck, b. preserving health and curing diseases, c. symbols of belonging, aristocracy and *aşiret* and d. sexuality, fertility and beauty[143]. In Serdaroğlu's words, traditional Anatolian tattoos were

> the only voice echoing from the skin …, in a time when a father and his daughter at the age of marriage, a bride and her mother-in-law, a newly wed man and his wife who cannot have children could not talk to each other. These marks were signs displayed on

[140] Serdaroğlu, n.d.: 73-5

[141] Serdaroğlu, n.d.: 76

[142] Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde Bedene İşlenen 'Dövme' Sanatı, 2008

[143] Dövme Hakkında, 2004

> feet, chin, temples, near the lips, and on the hands; texts that screamed for years, which could never be put to words.[144]

What is new for Turkey is the Western style tattooing and piercing. While there is very limited literature on the previously mentioned more traditional forms of body modification, there is virtually no literature on these Western forms of body modification among mostly urban middle to upper class individuals. While there has been substantial interest in the topic in foreign contexts, scholars have yet remained silent on the Turkish context.

2. Angels, Butterflies, Tribals and Barcodes: Modern Tattoos, Individuality, Subjectivity, and Uniqueness

It was the 1950s and 1960s Europe and America where tattooing took on a different characteristic. While negative attitudes about tattoos continued, as they continue today as well, there emerged subpopulations which enjoyed tattoos more overtly. Social mores were relatively relaxed in comparison to previous times and economics was on the rise for the first time in many countries since a very long time. The hippy and punk movement of the following years adopted tattooing as a part of their repertoire of opposition to mainstream culture. By the 1970s, many members of the rock and heavy-metal scene were seen carrying tattoos as well. With the developments in tattoo technology, the process had become much less painful and bloody, and with more and more sightings of famous people with tattoos, the practice soon found customers among many people of many backgrounds. It was commonplace to see tattoos on models, pop stars, actors and athletes by 1980s. Of course, all this is true for Europe and America.[145] In my opinion, tattoos becoming more widely practice in Turkey only took place in early 1990s. Dates about the Turkish case can only be speculated, as they were in my interviews, as there are virtually no studies on the Turkish body modification scene.

Late twentieth century in particular has witnessed an emergence and rise in discourses concerning body modification. The increasing application and visibility

[144] Serdaroğlu, n.d.: 76; personal translation from Turkish.

[145] Pitts-Taylor, 2008:486-8 and Sanders, 2008: 19-20

of tattooing and piercing, as well as the increase in their social acceptance especially in the West have been but one of the reasons that discussions about body modification have been ever more popular and popularized in social sciences and media accounts. In contrast to traditional tattoos, these modern forms of tattooing did not have the societal functions that traditional ones fulfilled; they were more narcissistic, superficial, consumerist and playful marks of individual self-expression[146]. Body modification is mostly taken as a whole in academic accounts, therefore, the following part uses this term instead of 'tattooing'. However, the writing on body modification and the parts selected as being significant in this section all apply to tattooing as well.

The significance of body modification lies firstly in the conception of bodies and secondly in its highly visible character in the social sphere both for the onlookers and for the practitioners themselves. In this framework, the body is understood as freed from its earlier more traditional ties, especially with respect to religion and is seen, produced and reproduced as a political arena and a source of subversivity. Visibility, on the other hand, is mostly disruptive of established norms of normalcy and beauty, and arouses a certain degree of shock or uneasiness in the onlooker.

Body modification is both a statement in itself and a stand against many aspects of the so-called 'socially accepted' norms. Sanders (2008) writes that tattoos are "a voluntary stigma that symbolically isolates the bearer from the 'normals'"[147]. Furthermore, it is thought to be a way to reconnect with one's deepest natural desires, to be one with one's body and soul, and to test the limits of one's body. Questions raised by the modifiers are mainly directed at the expert-driven medical and authoritative interferences towards the body, the stereotypes of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, the norms of beauty and normalcy, the limits of the new possibilities made possible by technology and what the impacts of the new technologies will be upon the embodied relations of power. Although some lightly tattooed and pierced modifiers report to the fashionable and decorative

[146] Pitts, 2003: 33

[147] Sanders, 2008: 41

aspect of body modification, for most of the more dedicated performers body modification means

a. bodily self ownership,
b. personal, cultural, political expression through the body,
c. new possibilities for gender, sexuality and ethnic identity, and
d. the feeling of control.[148]

Body modification can also be interpreted as the materialization of late modernity's body project; as "attempts to anchor or stabilize one's sense of self-identity, in part through the establishment of a coherent personal narrative"[149]. According to Featherstone (1999), this requires a "strong 'commitment to oneself'"[150]. Shapiro (2002) takes this analysis a step further and somewhat answers Torgovnick's (2005) question: "Is the [modifier] motivated by hatred-self-hatred or hatred for the culture- as some people suggest? Or is love the motivation- self-love unto narcissism or love for minerals and metals unto love of the flesh or cosmos?"[151]. Shapiro's (2002) answer is not a simple yes or no, of course. In emphasizing the narcissistic element in body modification, he draws the readers' attention to a possible fault in interpretation: "It would be a mistake to view the preoccupation with the body as nothing but the commodification of desire. Such a view simply misses the pleasures and satisfaction of the "marking" and "remarking" of the body; the sense of the creative appropriation of one's identity"[152].

Despite the fact that the tattoo community equally attracts women and men, a certain degree of gender bias continues in modern tattooing, similar to that in traditional tattooing. The designs and placement on the body of tattoos differ for women and men and this is mainly due to the differences of symbolic meanings associated with tattoos by women and men. Most women see tattooing as a body decoration and usually go for smaller or more delicate designs than men. Also, it

[148] Pitts, 2003: 12-4 and Bell, 2001:169

[149] Sweetman, 1996: 53

[150] Featherstone, 1999: 5

[151] Torgovnick, 2005: 170

[152] Shapiro, 2002: 7

is still more stigmatizing for women to display their tattoos in public. For these reasons, women generally choose to place their tattoos on parts of the body that can be easily concealed and that only people with whom they are intimate can have access to. Men, on the other hand, see tattoos less in decorative terms. For men, tattoos are important vessels of displaying interests, associations, and masculinity. Designs men choose are usually larger and employ more violent symbols such as skulls, wild animals, dragons, grim reapers, and etc. Placement of tattoos are less restrictive for men while certain places like the face and the hands are still stigmatizing for men too.[153] These comments, however, are huge generalizations and they follow conventional norms of femininity and masculinity. Patriarchy is in fact very influential in decisions about tattoo designs and placement. Yet, there are many women and men tattooees who make tattoo decisions that would greatly upset these neat generalizations. For many tattoo enthusiasts, these generalizations would be insulting as most see one of the functions and appeals of tattooing to be upsetting the established norms of femininity and masculinity.

Tattoos, like many other types of body modification, are "an item in the tattooee's identity-kit"[154]. They have the function of making certain people like each other, and unlike others. Similar to traditional tattoos, Western tattoos might have importance to the bearer as being symbols of an important transition in one's life, such as becoming adults or loss of a loved one. In addition, tattoos usually symbolize freedom, self- control, fulfillment of an aesthetic ideal or courage[155]. Many tattooed people also refer to their tattoos as making them different or special[156]. Unlike other types of body modification, such as piercings for instance, tattoos have the possibility of being unique in their design and placement on the body. That and being a serious part of one's identity, tattooed people definitely

[153] Sanders, 2008: 48-50

[154] Sanders, 2008: 41

[155] Sanders, 2008: 45 and 52

[156] Sanders, 2008: 51

satisfy a degree of individuality, subjectivity and uniqueness through their body marks[157].

3. Tattoos and Body Politics

Alterations in terms of the body in general, and tattoos in particular are intimately related with a postmodernist understanding of selfhood and subjectivity as it is clear from the Nicholas Rose's quote that I opened up this section with. The body and the modifications that some people willfully perform on their bodies is a basis of identity. In other words, the body and body modification are media that people negotiate and establish a relationship to themselves and others. Therefore, tattooing and other such bodily practices are a way to engage in self-identification on the one hand, and identification with some similar others on the other.[158] As individualistic as tattoos are, Grosz points to the fact that they are also invariably social and historical: the body that is made and remade through tattooing emits signs that are meaningful and literate only in their specific context in time and space or a specific system of meaning[159]. Baudrillard (1998) reminds his readers that "the body is a *cultural* fact"[160]. By the same token, the body is immediately implicated in a system of power and economic relations.

As we have seen in Foucault's writings, the body is intimately bound up with relations of power. At times, it might be difficult to discern how much of a potential the body has in resisting power, as Foucault's emphasis on the pervasiveness and diffuseness of power, and its micro-physical character seem to shadow this potential. However, it is also possible to find hope in his account, especially considering his famous aphorism that "where there is power, there is resistance"[161]. On the other hand, Moi informs her readers that "we still do not know whether the body is political in the same way that Sinn Fein is political, or the way that the stock market or Bill Clinton are political, or in some other way all

[157] Pitts, 2003: 8

[158] Kuwahara, 2005: 2- 4

[159] Pitts, 2003: 34

[160] Baudrillard, 1998: 277

[161] Foucault quoted in Mills, 2003: 40

together"[162], yet she does not discourage one to strive to determine "the *specific ways* in which the body may be political and historical and discursive, and so on"[163].

Perhaps one should start out the discussion of whether the body is political at all by reminding that the natural body is not natural at all: it is always already a touched body, artifact of centuries of discipline. This must lead to a rejection of the notion that there is or can be "a place outside of normalization from which the natural body or the authentic self may speak or be revealed"[164]. Any relation of self to self, then, will always remain in the same regime of power. Though this may arouse pessimism as to the ontological likelihood of such a relation, one must not yield to despair. Paul Patton relieves our minds with saying that nothing in Foucault implies that people should not be able to reflect critically on normalization.[165] According to Foucault,

> critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to interrogate truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth… Critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflective indocility. Critique would essentially ensure the desubjugation of the subject in the game of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth. [166]

Since there is no outside to disciplinary power, since there is no ultimate nature or natural body and since subjectivities, bodies and individuals are both constituted by and are the elements of this power, in other words, since a subject becomes a subject only after being subjected to disciplinary power which teaches the norms of normalization, there is plenty of reason to assume that people can use power and their bodies to their advantage, that they, in specific moments and acts, actually can invoke *the art of voluntary insubordination*, that of *reflective indocility*. Elizabeth Grosz elucidates the point saying

[162] Moi, 2005: 52

[163] Moi, 2005: 52; emphasis original

[164] Heyes, 2007: 8

[165] Heyes, 2007: 116

[166] Michel Foucault, quoted in Heyes, 2007: 117

> if the body is the strategic target of systems of codification, supervision and constraint, it is also because the body is thus also a site of resistance, for it exerts a recalcitrance, and always entails the possibility of a counterstrategic reinscription, for it is capable of being self-marked, self-represented in alternative ways.[167]

The politicization of the body goes hand in hand with attempts at its de-politicization through certain forms of knowledges, or disciplines in the Foucauldian sense or the word. Since body in general and body modification in particular can be sources of resistance, many deviant bodily practices have been criminalized and pathologized throughout the 20th century[168]. Many forms of body modification including tattooing are cast as dangerous, harmful and symptomatic of underlying psychopathologies and this understanding continues to dominate psychological, psychiatric and medical discourses. Sanders (2008) claims that after the publication of their book studies continued to be published, which cast tattooing and other body modification types as 'adolescent risk behaviors', a form of 'Russian roulette', and related to illegal drug use. [169] Being and deciding to be tattooed, in Sanders's (2008) view, continue to be stereotyped as being caused by internal malfunctions or psycho-pathologies of the individual, rather than allowing for a chance to interpret it as being a choice on the part of the individual among other possible behavioral options as defined by him/her. A person with tattoos is variously labeled 'simple-minded', 'immature', 'hostile', 'aggressive', 'self-destructive', 'untrustworthy', and 'infantile'. [170]

Tattooing and other body modifications have elsewhere been characterized as perversions, threats to the social unity and linked with psychological disorders. It is true that some of the most extreme forms of body modification can be associated with Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID), also known as Amputee Identity Disorder or Apotemnophilia, or to the Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). The modifiers, on the other hand, persist that it is only a matter of personal choice and an expression of a different kind of existence. Many such

[167] Grosz quoted in Pitts, 2003: 40

[168] Pitts, 2003: 37

[169] Sanders, 2008: xiii and 180

[170] Sanders, 2008: 37

communities have been socially excluded from the public; their forms of information exchange (i.e. internet websites) have been banned or censored, they have been accused of misleading the youth and influencing them negatively, and on the individual level, they have been confronted with dislike and fear.[171] Many influential newspapers and magazines such as the *Washington Post*, the *Independent*, *Boston Globe* and the *Guardian* take pleasure in depicting body modification as a horror story. As an example, in one of the columns of the *Washington Post*, body modification is recorded as one of the many ways to ruin one's life:

> There is alcohol, of course, but also marijuana and hashish and heroin and cocaine and LSD; amphetamines and methamphetamines, barbiturates and airplane glue, and animal tranquilizer and Ecstasy. There are the aesthetic means of self-harm: tattooing, body piercing, scarification, anorexia, bulimia. There is the outlaw life: gangs, guns, crimes, prison.[172]

Remembering that these mainstream accounts are *discourses*, and what is more, discourses of *disciplines*, none of them are politically neutral. They serve a code of normalcy that centuries of disciplinary power created and uphold. Neither medical or scientific discourses, nor discourses of media are neutral or unbiased. They are shaped by dominant relations of power including colonialism and patriarchy. Many non-mainstream bodily practices have always been under a close-nit web of social policing and control. As we have seen in Foucault's writings, modern disciplinary power works in discreet and minute ways to produce docile bodies. The pathologization of corporal practices deemed deviant, read dangerous for the creation and maintenance of docile bodies, is part of a bigger picture where standards of normalcy pertaining to sexuality, fitness, beauty, health and so on are actively fostered through medical-scientific disciplines. Again remembering Foucault, these normative understandings of and discourses on the body are not so much forced or pushed on individuals, but are, Grosz maintains, "written into the psyche through what appear to be 'voluntary' projects of

[171] Pitts, 1996: 294-7

[172] Pitts, 1996: 296

adornment, ritual, habits, and lifestyle, which are encouraged by cultural values"[173].[174]

The 'horror story' representation of body modification, whether in media or common public discourse have been aimed at robbing its potentials of being or becoming an alternative social existence and constituting a possibly subversive identity. Not only is the legitimacy of body modification thereby diminished as a movement or life style; but its practitioners are deprived of any authority or subjectivity in the social sphere. Pitts (2003) argues that the assumption that socially deviant bodies necessarily denote mentally ill selves obliterates any possible meaning of these bodies. According to Pitts (2003), questions of mental competence have been a common tool to discredit certain bodies that some might find challenging.[175] By the questioning of any external authority on one's body such as the Church, God or governments, body modifiers continuously defy socially, culturally and scientifically permitted thresholds regarding body appearance and unity.

The picture seems to be gloomy for the modifiers. However, there is no reason to be pessimistic. The very reasons that body modification in general, and tattoos in particular, fall prey to discourses of normalization and to social policing are the same reasons for their significance, for "to the extent that bodies are spaces where identities are both continually enacted as well as socially patrolled, spectacular bodies can be socially disruptive"[176]. Many examples of body modification are clear poke-in-the-eye symbolizations of dissatisfaction with the society and time that those bodies are a part of. It is in this rebellious and subversive attitude that the significance of tattoos can be found. Although tattoos have lost a great amount of their deviancy since the 1990s due to their popularization in the US and Europe, in Turkey, tattoos can still be regarded as deviant and rebellious. Where body modifiers in the US and Europe are ever searching for newer and at times more controversial and extreme ways to voice or

[173] Pitts, 2003: 39

[174] Pitts, 2003: 37-9

[175] Pitts, 2003: 18

[176] Pitts, 2003: 43

show dissatisfaction[177], this has not been observed, perhaps yet, in Turkey. The body modification scene in Turkey is still overpopulated mostly with tattoos and piercings and these bodily practices still receive a great deal of stares in the public. I can say from personal experience that I have been denied job opportunities, and been warned seriously as to the employer's reservations about hiring me at others; I have been denied medical attention more than a few times at hospitals; and I have been victimized by the police at least two times because of my visible tattoos and piercings.

I believe, therefore, that in a country like Turkey where the body modification scene is not as developed and multiplied in its applications as it might be at other places, tattoos take on a significant political role, sometimes even despite the intention of the tattooed. This fact, that the body and visible modification of the body have a different life of their own when in public adds to the political dimension of the body in general, and of tattoos in particular. This is to point to two important but sometimes overlooked factors involved in body modification or body projects.

One of these factors is the fact that the coding of body modification and/or body projects can differ drastically from their decoding. The author of the body project, so to speak, has limited control over the perception of his/her body once it's out there in the public. This, in turn, can be both a positive and negative factor. The perception of his/her body, whatever his/her intentions might be, can make some find him or her closer to their reference group or just oppositely, can make him or her excluded from that group. The feeling of us vs. them can be founded on interpretation of the signs the body in public emits. And at times, by certain individuals, tattoos can be employed as mechanisms to anchor a social separation of us and them[178].

The second factor that sometimes goes unnoticed in discussions of body and body modification is the factor of agency. Body modification and body projects are taken to be the work of rational, free-willed and calculating subjects, like the entrepreneur of neoliberalism. In reality however, and especially remembering the

[177] Sanders, 2008: xviii

[178] Sanders, 2008: 3

fact that the body is forever implicated in a system of political and economic relations, the subject in question and the kind of projects that s/he carries out on his/her body are greatly conditioned by the available structures of identity formation and the degree of effect of normalizing discourses that they evaluate to be playing on them, not to forget, of course, crude economic factors the subjects find themselves in. Indeed, Pitts (2003) warns that there is a bias involved in the postmodern conceptions of the body. Pitts (2003) says that she is worried that the argument for self-construction through the body is sometimes overemphasized making the postmodern body freer in this respect than previous bodies. She says "my worries include that postmodern bodies are often taken to be ontologically freer to be transformed, and thus unmarked and unlimited by, powerful categories like gender, class, and race"[179]. This assumption carries the danger of presuming willful identity construction through the body to be at the disposal of every person to the same degree. "Self invention is an *ideology*"[180] Pitts (2003) adds, and concludes that "no body projects limitlessly expand the range of possibilities for human subjectivity, nor do they 'invent' the self as a matter of personal choice"[181]. Self-invention through body projects, is a "*technology of naming* that is itself saturated with power relations"[182]. Like Baudrillard, with Featherstone, Pitts (2003) lastly emphasizes the role of capitalism in encouraging and providing the rate for bodily transformations.[183] Still, these two factors should not diminish the possibility of tattoos being active counter-hegemonic acts and their significance in terms of personal, identity and bodily politics.

[179] Pitts, 2003: 34

[180] Pitts, 2003: 34; emphasis original

[181] Pitts, 2003: 34

[182] Pitts, 2003: 48; emphasis original

[183] Pitts, 2003: 34-6

III. THE SECULAR VS. THE RELIGIOUS

A. Introductory Remarks on the 'Rise of Religion', Kemalism, and the Turkish Nation-State

History furnishes to politics all the arguments
that it needs, for the chosen cause.
Romain Rolland[184]

The so-called rise of religion in Turkey has caused the questioning of some of the most sacred elements of the Turkish identity and politics as has been envisioned by Kemalism which has been the official ideology of the Turkish Republic. The rise to power of political parties conceived to be Islamist has caused much anxiety and fear on the side of agents that conceive of themselves as the secularists.

An understanding of this fear of the return of the religious requires an inquiry into the Kemalist nationalist project and the making of the 'secular' and the 'religious' in Turkish politics. This is an approach that goes far beyond the mainstream efforts in social sciences to measure the degree of secularity of the Turkish Republic. These efforts inevitably remain in the essentialist and most often also orientalist space that has been constituted by dominant understandings of secularism. The most common question that is asked is whether or not Turkey is secular and if so to what extent. These questions profess to and also hide in the same move the motives of determining the fixed essences of both the Turkish Republic and of secularism.

[184] A French author (1866- 1944), who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1915 and was close friends with Gandhi.

The question that is operative in these accounts is the question of "what is". Any answer to "what is" could only be one of determination of essences, which inevitably leads to the orientalist position of assuming irreconcilable differences between the East (read Islamic) and the West (read Christian but secular, or read secular and Christian). An essence that is fixed with the "what is" can only be measured against another that is intrinsically fixed with its negative: "what is it not". What is at stake here is not a simple discursive error. It is a highly charged position with concrete political repercussions. An inquiry into the making of the secular and the religious in Turkish politics, however, requires a completely different set of questions, as ones that Asad asks in his *Formations of the Secular* (2003): "how, when, and by whom are the categories of religion and the secular defined? [and] What assumptions are presupposed in the acts that define them?"[185]

An attempt to answer Asad's questions must start with an understanding of the Kemalist rupture of history. Though similarities and continuities can be traced between the Turkish Independence War with Mustafa Kemal's following reforms, and the late Ottoman Empire period[186], the point is to understand how Kemal's reforms and his vision of the newly established Turkish Republic were articulated as a rupture from the Ottoman legacy. This has been crucial for the establishment of the Republic and the new identity that the Turkish nation was given, or was to have[187]. The creation of the modern, secular Turkish state with the accompanying modern, secular, enlightened Turkish nation-people were dependent on the deliberate and constant articulation of the Republic as a rupture from the past (read Ottoman and Islamic). This distancing was, on the one hand a move to

[185] Asad, 2003: 201

[186] Hugh Poulton (1997), for example, sees the founding of the Turkish Republic as a necessary consequence of historical developments since the beginning of the 20th century. The link between Mustafa Kemal and the Young Turk regime of the Empire, the continuation of 85 percent of the Empire's civil servants' and 93 percent of staff officers' positions in the new republic, a general anticipation of change that took shape as the result of the 1912-22 war period, direct foreign threat and the spread of nationalist ideas within the Empire are given as examples of continuity between the Ottoman Empire's last decades and the formation of the Republic, rather than a complete rupture. (Poulton, 1997:88- 91) My point is not to contest such historical connections, but to show that the pronunciation of the establishment of the Republic *as a rupture* was not a politically unmediated or natural articulation.

[187] This identity was actually expressed as having been already shared and internalized by the Turkish nation way before the War of Independence, even before the Ottoman heritage. I will return to this point later on.

legitimize the newly established nation state, and on the other, an attempt to radically alter or at least take under control the influence of religion and tradition on the people and the state. The shift of the source of political authority and legitimacy from the strong absolutist tradition of Ottoman Empire with deep Islamic roots to republicanism of the Turkish Republic with its legitimacy based on 'the people' required such distancing and denial of historical continuities.

B. A Modernist and Secularist History

The nationalist project initiated and to a great extent carried out by Kemal and his associates was composed of consecutive stages of modernization. Much in the way of certain European accounts, modernization in the Kemalist agenda was understood as secularization and Westernization[188] and modernization was deemed the ultimate end because secularization and Westernization were equated with modernization. These two processes were taken to be intertwined with each other as well as with the modernization aim. The tautological logic is evident here: westernization, secularization and modernization were each legitimated on the grounds of the other two concepts, each necessary and desirable because of the others.

Mutman (2008) shows that the peculiar aspect of the Kemalist project was indeed the emphasis on Westernization. This is what distinguishes the Turkish national project from postcolonial nationalist projects as in that instance, any attempt or even mention of Westernization as a social and political program would indicate "collaboration with the old colonial powers, governmental corruption and the elite's luxurious consumption lifestyle at the expense of the masses"[189]. One can easily see that for Turkey, this has not been a problem since it has never been physically colonized by a Western power. What is more, however, is that not only was Westernization no problem at all, but also that it was mostly welcomed. Having attributed all the negative predicates that the postcolonial nationalisms had

[188] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[189] Mutman, 2008: 12

attributed to the West (i.e. governmental corruption, luxurious consumption of elites, etc.) to the Ottoman Empire, and also having accused the Empire and the Sultans of turning their backs to their subjects on the one hand, and to the times on the other, the Kemalists were safe to assume the program of Westernization with the emphasis that the Republic drew its powers and legitimacy from the people.

The modernist bias and the secularist bias in the understanding of modernity are clearly at play at the Kemalist agenda of westernization whereby the values, lifestyles and a whole mode of identity deemed Western (therefore progressive and modern) were idealized and made to penetrate all aspects of the new nation from political institutions to everyday life[190]. The Kemalists, it seems, had internalized the Enlightenment tradition of seeing history as a linear progress from the pre-modern to the modern. The Republic had indeed gone through a most intensive modernization and westernization process perhaps any such nation had ever seen. In the first years of the Republic, it was not uncommon, for example, that villages were swamped with telegraphs from Ankara dictating them to have *Western style* balls. Nusret Zorlutuna, a teacher at Edirne Girl's Teacher's School (*Edirne Muaillim Mektebi*) confesses to one such event as such:

> One fine day it was said that there had arrived an order from Ankara, the black turban and the veil are forbidden. There will be formal balls on religious holidays and independence days and government high officials will come together with their wives and will dance. Attendance of female and male teachers is compulsory.[191]

While the news was greeted with much pleasure among the younger teachers, older ones detested the idea. Governor's wife was heard to have rejected the idea of a woman her age having to dance and becoming a "laughing stock of children"[192]. She maintained that even if she did attend one such ball, she "would sit in a corner with her head covered"[193]. The irony in the situation in Edirne was,

[190] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[191] Quoted in Akçura, 2001: 207. Translations of Nusret Zorlutuna's and governor's wife's quotations from Turkish are mine.

[192] Quoted in Akçura, 2001: 207

[193] Akçura, 2001: 207

in Halide Nusret's words, "we were to dance well; we were obliged to do this as modern Turkish ladies. But how? We didn't know any dances. In this regard, we all were as illiterate as mister governor's wife"[194]. Halide Nusret was lucky that there was a male student in Boy's Teacher School (*Erkek Muallim Mektebi*), Salih Bey, who would teach her how to dance.[195] This story is just one among many[196]. Similar events had taken place throughout the early years of the Republic and these parties were actually called 'Republic Balls'. Such events were part of the grand scheme of westernization in which the West was idealized as the perfection of modernity and civilization. It seems that the Kemalists inherited and unquestioningly followed the understanding of modernity that Andrew Davidson (1998) traces in social sciences.

According to Davidson (1998), the problem with modern social sciences is its modernist and secularist bias. Davidson starts out with the question "what is it that derives us to interpret religiously and culturally different, yet politically efficacious, modes of expression and practice as part of the past and not of the present?"[197] His answer is the popular understanding of modernity and secularism with their intrinsic teleological expectations. These teleological expectations assume, as is well documented in many critiques of the Enlightenment, the law-like, progressive, linear and positivistic unfolding of history. In this sense, the modernist bias operates in a certain way that labels the movements in history as either forward looking or backward looking. In this labeling, the name 'modern' is

[194] Akçura, 2001: 208

[195] Akçura, 2001: 208

[196] Gökhan Akçura also mentions Reşat Nuri Gültekin's book *Anadolu Notları* (Anatolia Notes) in which Gültekin tells the story of another ball in one of the eastern cities. The ball is held at a large tobacco warehouse for lack of a ballroom. The warehouse is decorated for two days as much as the conditions would allow, but nothing could be done about the floor of simple dirt. A jazz band is called for the ball but it is soon realized that it could not make it to the party on time because of road conditions. Upon this realization, musicians from an improvisation theater group that comes to the village on religious holidays, weddings, circumcision celebrations are called. These musicians practice dance songs for days in a shop next to the warehouse. In a house close by, Reşat Nuri teaches his friend from university Şakir Bey dance moves with a pillow squeezed in his arms. After Reşat Bey attends the ball, he tells about its success to a friend eho wasn't there: "oh what a wonderful thing that dance is! It is as if one is flying in the arms of angels…We had such a decent, contemporary night…Dances, … poems, monologues, surprises, ballroom games… Nothing was missing…There was no impropriety. This is how it would be in Europe too" (quoted in Akçura, 2001: 209). (Akçura, 2001: 208-9) Translations are, again, mine.

[197] Davidson, 1998: 20

given to those movements that are deemed to be doing the work of the future as understood in the linear and progressive sequence of time, while those that are left out of this name, namely the 'traditional', are deemed to be intricate with the work of the past, hopelessly clinging on. The conclusion that arises is that authentically contemporary politics should aspire to the modern in suppression of the traditional.[198] It is the logical consequence of such an understanding that "secular and modern futures" should have been "explicitly juxtaposed to traditional and religious ones"[199].

The secularist bias of modernization theory is criticized in the works of Daya Krishna, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Dale Eickelman, James Piscatory, Michael Hudson and John L. Esposito. According to these names, the religious dynamism in politics and in the domain of meaning-creation are taken as dispensable in secular social scientists' accounts because of this bias which treats these as mere epiphenomena and as regressive, anti-modern setbacks to the political development of non-western societies. The myth of the incompatibility of Islam and political development, according to these names, arises as the result of such understandings. Smith and Krishna in particular argue that the problem is not merely ontological, but is mostly energized by an intrinsic problem of Anglophone theory and methodology. In conclusion Esposito assures social scientists that it is the secular presuppositions of the Anglophone theoretical and methodological tradition[200] that constitute the most fundamental obstacle in the understanding of Islamic politics.[201]

Where the secularist bias puts secularism and religion on two opposing ends, the modernist bias puts the modern and tradition. In this understanding anything that is held to be transcending or replacing something that is judged as traditional (read 'older') is given the name 'modern' (read something 'newer'). The modernist bias in theory and methodology conceives anything that is newer as

[198] Davidson, 1998: 20-1

[199] Davidson, 1998: 22

[200] i.e. "acceptance of the 'enlightened' notion of separation of church and state (or religion and politics)" (Davidson, 1998: 25)

[201] Davidson, 1998: 24- 5

better and that nothing is better than the newer. As can be seen, the allocation of the old or the past to a space outside the modern is not simply its transcendence but also involves an assault on it. This does not amount to saying that the modern has indeed succeeded in erasing all that is not modern; the non-modern continues into the time of the modern, but that the non-modern is left no other choice but to become modern or at least strive to that end. This entails that all the traditional or religious (in other words, non-rational) identities and endeavors should be dropped or at least relegated to nonpublic spheres of life.[202]

In my point of view, however, these biases are not confined either to theory or to methodology and neither are they specific to Anglophone social sciences. Such understandings of modernity and secularism are much more wide-spread than that and they resurface at various expressions in social and political spheres in various contexts. Furthermore, what Davidson (1998) provides as certain understanding of modernity and secularism, in my view, is no partial understanding at all. The point, however, is not to contest the truth his and others' account of such biases contains, but to point to the fact that these biases have established themselves as the authoritative understanding of modernity and secularism through various operations. To say the least, these phenomena are not simply neutral concepts that are to be filled and refilled in each instant but are products and accomplices to the writing of the history of the world in the image of those traditions that have come to occupy the position of power and authority. What goes unnoticed in a discourse that portrays modernism and secularism as mere biases is that it is the name, the power of naming; the authority of laying the grounds for achieving or deserving the name that inform any understanding of modernity and secularism. The authoritative rhetoric of modernity has always been attempting "to construct categories of the secular and the religious in terms of which modern living is required to take place, and nonmodern peoples are invited to assess their adequacy"[203].

It is not enough, in this sense, to reveal that what is taken as *the* West does not actually compromise an integrated whole, that there are great differences

[202] Davidson, 1998: 27-8

[203] Asad, 2003: 14

among the nations of the West in terms of their degree of modernity and secularity. This denial of the homogeneity of the West and the equation of modernity with secularism are today commonplace arguments. However, what we are dealing with here is not simply a discursive or mental error. These understandings of the incorporated nature of modernity are the results of a concrete political reality. These understandings direct the way for people's aspirations of and their expectations from others of becoming *modern*. This commitment to act towards modernity does not vanish with the revealing of the fractured character of the West or that secularism and modernism are today questioned in many areas of life even in the West. Asad (2003) reminds his readers that the presentation of the West as an integrated whole has been one of the features of modern colonialism: "although West contains many faces at home it presents a single face abroad"[204]. The issue, therefore, could never be the correction of a misunderstanding of the West and modernity but should always be an attempt to understand how and why modernity (therefore Westernization and secularism) have "become hegemonic *as a political goal*, what practical consequences follow from that hegemony and what social conditions maintain it"[205].[206]

The collaboration of this understanding of modernity (in which westernization and secularism is always implied) and Kemalism is just one example of the becoming hegemonic of modernity as a political end. In other words, the Kemalists did not simply repeat the mistakes of the Anglophone social science theories and methodologies, which is a highly questionable argument in itself. Modernity has been accepted as a political goal for several reasons that manifest themselves best in the Kemalist attitude toward the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The practical consequences that follow from this acceptance of the trajectory of modernity have been apparent in those always ideological apparatuses such as the education system, the writing of history, theories of language and etc. These consequences, the maturity of which are to be measured

[204] Asad, 2003: 13

[205] Asad, 2003: 13; emphasis original

[206] Asad, 2003: 13

with their distance from Islam, and the social conditions that helped maintain this initial acceptance have been mutually constitutive.

C. The New Nation, Twice Removed

The Kemalists, much in the way of those they were mimicking, saw the hold of tradition and religion in society and on politics as remnants of a past era, which for them was personified in the Ottoman Empire. "To rise up to the level of modern civilizations"[207] was the maxim of the new Republic. The modern civilizations meant the Western civilizations, which signified the realization of modernization in line with the above stated biases. In other words, to become modern, that is, to become westernized, the Kemalists saw it imperative that the influence of tradition and religion be transcended, or at least strictly privatized. Tradition and religion were seen as symptoms of a backward looking society whereas the ideas of Enlightenment (i.e. positivism, rationalism, science, freedom, democracy, and etc.) were to be operative in the forward looking Turkish society.

Claiming to be the carriers of the Enlightenment ideals, the Kemalists had deemed themselves the progressivist and thus modern men of their times while those who did not share their vision were deemed religious or traditional fanatics. It was the Kemalists' duty to free the new society and the new national subject from the chains of superstition, religion, tradition, custom, and arbitrary authority that the Empire's subjects were held under during Ottoman rule. Any appearance of religion was interpreted as regressive and un-patriotic as it was seen as a setback to the modernization of society and the making of the modern, enlightened nation people. It was mainly for these reasons and in order for these conceptions to take hold, that the Kemalists sought to distance themselves and their project as away from Islam on the one hand, and from the Ottoman Empire on the other.

Many of Kemal's reforms that were to give to the nation its identity and route towards progress are to be understood in this manner of breaking ties. First in this was the abolition of the office of the Ottoman Sultan in 1922, even before

[207] One of the most famous sayings by Atatürk.

the declaration of the Republic. This, however, was simply a symbolic gesture as the Sultan had already fled the Ottoman country before this date. One of the most striking reforms was the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 just five months after the declaration of the Republic. This has been a decisive move in the way to secularization as the Caliphate had a great deal of political power in the Ottoman Empire. However, there is disagreement on the subject.

Parla and Davidson (2008), for example, in a co-authored essay discussing the level of secularity of the Turkish Republic, do not see this move in the direction of secularization. They hold that the fact that the abolition of the Caliphate and the Sharia was followed by the establishment of General Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği*, later to be named *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) (henceforth DIB) falls short of the argument of secularization[208]. Parla and Davidson (2008) take Toprak's assertion that with the establishment of new institutions dealing with religion, the organization and personnel of these religious state-level institutions became "paid employees of the state"[209] as a proof of a limited form of secularism as religion was only taken under control but was not thoroughly separated from the state or completely disestablished as these two factors according to them are the milestones of secularism in Western contexts[210].

While their argument that religion was not completely taken out of state has some truth, what this account misses is that the Republic had succeeded in replacing something that belonged, in their view, to a past that the Turkish nation was to distance itself from. Not only are the duties and power of the two institutions to a great extent different, but also the establishment of something new or new*er* and to have the power of doing so fits in perfectly with the understanding of modernity discussed above. In addition, it is by now clear that secularization does not only mean disestablishment and examples of continued ties between the state and religious institutions can be multiplied in other contexts as

[208] Parla, 2008: 63

[209] Davidson, 1998: 139

[210] Parla, 2008: 62- 3

well [211]. There are numerous examples of continued structural relations of Church and the state in many self-proclaimed Western secular countries[212]. Not only is it possible to prove such connections, but it is also probable to argue for the existence of secularism, understood simply as the separation of the State and the Church, for instance as done by Parla and Davidson, in medieval Christendom and Islamic empires[213]. However, the point is that the understanding of secularism as a counterpart to modernism is distinctive in its presupposition of new concepts and conceptualizations of "'religion', 'ethics' and 'politics,' and new imperatives associated with them"[214].

What is crucial in the instance of the abolishment of the Caliphate and the religious law (*Sharia*) is that religion was taken under the control of the state thoroughly. This fact points not only to the establishment of control over Islam together with its officers, their salaries and training and all applications and operations of religion in education, but also to the fact that these institutions were made subservient to the ideology of the Republic and that it was not surprising to come across sermons in these years of the beginning of the republic which encouraged obedience to God and obedience to the Republic side by side[215]. By this one move and with the abolition of religious convents and lodges in 1925, any other establishment or institution affiliated with religion was delegitimized and criminalized. The establishment of DIB, quite contrary to Parla and Davidson's (2008) view, was the perfect instance of secularization as this move signaled not only the taming of religion and making it subservient to the State but also the creation of new conceptualizations of religion, ethics and politics and the new

[211] What has been conceptualized as the 'comeback' of the religious already obscures these teleological presumptions of modernization and thus secularization. I will return to this point later in the paper.

[212] For example, Talal Asad (2003) reveals the differential place of religion in modern secular countries such as France, Britain and America. For example, while France has an exceedingly centralized secular state with secular citizens, Britain maintains the connection of the state and the Established Church with a largely nonreligious population, whereas the federal state in America is secular and its population is largely religious. (Asad, 2003: 5) In Asad's (2003) words, "'religion' has always been publicly present in both Britain and America" (Asad, 2003: 5).

[213] Asad, 2003: 1

[214] Asad, 2003: 1-2

[215] Davidson, 1998: 139

imperatives mentioned before. DIB was the first attempt of creating a 'correct' Islam that was to be taught to the Turkish citizen. This Islam was to be part of this process of re-conceptualizations. In fact, according to Mardin, these relations that were established in the first years of the new Republic were to become Turkey's official Islam in the following years[216]. This correct form of Islam was to be distinguished from other forms, which have been hypothesized to be under Arab and Persian influences, therefore seen, again, as reactionary, regressive, unprogressive and archaic. The making of the correct Islam was central to the nationalist project in many respects.

In addition, Roy Oliver (2007) holds that no matter how militant Kemal's secularism was, it could not be antireligious due to the influence of Islam in the country[217]. This is partly the reason why religion was taken under state control and was made subservient to it, rather than being completely separated from the state or being disestablished. Another reason, however, lies in the character of secularism that the Kemalist project imitated, that is French *laicite*. Oliver (2007) argues that "laicite is, above all, an obsession with religion, and it leads to the desire to legislate about religion instead of accepting true separation"[218]. Oliver (2007) takes this to be specific to France and argues that other countries use other means to deal with the religious. However, as is apparent, Turkish secularism is as obsessed with religion (and in both cases, this is not simply any religion but Islam) as French laicite. Another thing that Oliver (2007) judges to be particularly French is the domestication of Islam through the system of laicite[219]. Again, and ironically, the same is true for Turkish secularism.

The abolishment of Caliphate and Sharia, the establishment of DIB, unification of education law, introduction of courses on religion in primary and secondary schools[220] were all in the name of the creation of a 'correct' Islam.

[216] Davidson, 1998: 139

[217] Oliver, 2007: 27

[218] Oliver, 2007: 33

[219] Oliver, 2007: 33

[220] Religious instruction was given in schools until 1930s when it was removed from urban schools' curricula. Courses on religion continued in village schools until 1940. In late forties they were re-issued in primary schools and in late fifties in intermediary schools. Until 1980s, religious courses

Parla and Davidson (2008) observe that the Kemalist regime did not only succeed in subordinating religion to the state, but they also used and utilized it in their political addresses. So an additional achievement with these reforms was the creation and manipulation of what the new regime intrinsically accepted and constructed as the correct Kemalist Sunni Orthodox Islam. Parla and Davidson (2008) evidence this by showing that Mustafa Kemal himself used words like *millet*[221] that were highly religiously charged in his addresses. The leaders of the new regime did not hold themselves back in using and manipulating their version of Islam while condemning other groups' employment of it as reactionary, superstitious, and regressive and making alternative usages illegitimate and un-republican.[222]

A perfect example of this tendency is the insertion of the compulsory *Religious and Moral Culture course* into the national education system. Ironically it was the 1980 coup d'état carried out by Kemalist generals in the face of a perceived threat of civil war that finally did[223]. While this was seen as a grave sin on the part of the military establishment which has always taken pride in being the vanguard protector of the secular character of the Turkish State[224], in truth, the generals could not have been more devoted to their self-appointed duty. The reason for this is that the anarchic environment of the 60s and the 70s (both of which were followed by two military coups) were seen as the outcome of the lack of religious education of Turkish youth and the falling of the religion in the wrong hands (that is, hands other than the State's). The anti-systematic ideologies of Marxism, Leninism, fascism and the increasing influence of certain religious sects

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were offered in schools, first as extracurricular courses that were given with parental request, then as mandatory courses from which parents could ask for their children's exemption in written form. (Parla, 2008: 65)

[221] There are two words for 'nation' in Turkish: *ulus* and *millet*. *Millet* out of these two is heavily used in Ottoman Turkish and has religious overtones. One example is that the Ottoman country was divided among different *millets* (groups) of people. The dividing line among different *millets* was religious preferences more than any understanding of nationhood that we might think of today. We see the increasing use of *ulus* in Kemalist and left-wing discourses later on while the continued use of *millet* is usually reserved for right- wing or what might be called political Islamist discourse.

[222] Parla, 2008: 64

[223] Parla, 2008: 65

[224] Parla is of this view. Please see Parla, 2008: 65.

such as *Ticanilik*, *Nurculuk*, and *Süleymancılık* were the negative results of this carelessness on the part of the secular establishment.[225] The ties of control and submission of Islam had become too lax and they were to be reaffirmed through the *Religious and Moral Culture courses*, the curricula of which were overridden with sections encouraging devotion to Atatürk, his reforms, the Turkish State and secularism[226]. The aim was to firmly reinsert the power of the state or the political over the religious and was thus the fulfillment of the duty of defending secularism.

Kemalists drew their legitimacy in this respect from the self-proclaimed republicanism of the secular nationalist project. Republicanism, indeed, was one of the six arrows[227] that the regime had outlined as the essence of the nationalist program in early 1930s[228]. Republicanism indicated that the regime represented the majority of the nation-people. This could not have been more significant than in a single-party regime that Turkish politics assumed until late 1940s. In this long single party period, the Republican People's Party (RPP) declared itself the sole

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[225] Poulton, 1997: 181- 2

[226] The 'General Aims of Religious and Moral Education' were outlined in 1982 by the coup d'état generals as

> To learn in basic and middle education enough basic knowledge of Islamic religion and morals in accordance with Atatürk's laicist and other principles, along the lines of the general aims of the Turkish national education policies; thus the populace will obtain good morals and virtues to ensure in them a love of people, religion, morals, Ataturkism (*Atatürkçülük*), national unity and togetherness.
>
> (quoted in Poulton, 1997: 182)

In the same document, the 'Principles' section stated that

> The aims of religious education will 1. always take into consideration our state's secular basis and always defend this principle…4. take care to inculcate by instruction of religious knowledge into the pupils the exalted concept of the national value as a *gazi*, or martyr, and of the value of the standard, flag, nation, and fatherland, and to strengthen brotherly and friendly relations, respect, love, togetherness, and national unity…5. to always keep in mind the national worth of our traditions, customs and practices…6. lesson subjects should always be integrated with Ataturk's principles.
>
> (quoted in Poulton, 1997: 182)

Please see Poulton, 1997, page 182 and 183 for a list of subject headings of the courses most of which include references to secularism, Ataturkism, love of nation and fatherland, Turkishness and etc.

[227] The six arrows were the six words chosen by Ataturk and his associates to sum up the program of the Turkish Republic and took on a visual form in the Republican People's Party's emblem. The six arrows were declared in one the meetings of the Party in the beginning of 1930s and they include republicanism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, secularism, and etatism. (Laclau, 2005: 208)

[228] Laclau, 2005: 208

representative of the majority of the citizens of the new republic, which made it possible for the Kemalist regime to concentrate the power and the authority of the representation of, and in this case the discernment of the correct form of religious sentiments of the population as a whole in itself only. Having declared itself the embodiment of the nation, the room RPP reserved for religion in general and the elements or the characteristics of Islam that found representation in that room in particular were taken as the ones prevailed in the majority of the nation. Any other appearance or any other authority in this respect was strictly limited. Their version was the truest of all possible Islams because it was the version that the nation-people were taken to hold dear, or better yet, were made to internalize as their own belief. Not only were all other versions and uses illegitimate, but they were precisely so because they were the reflections of a minority. In this, Turkey has followed a similar path to India where, as Partha Chatterjee tells us, "the publicly recognizable personality of the nation is strongly mediated by representations of a reconstituted high-caste Hinduism" and that "those who do not fit into that personality are inevitably defined as religious minorities"[229]. In the Turkish context, the dividing line was not the actual correctness of interpretation of the religious script though it was most often made to appear as such. It was the sheer self-appointed discursive power that the Kemalists had ensured in their regime which has radically annulled the possibility of the understanding that "'a minority' is not [a] purely quantitative concept"[230].

This points to a second distancing, which is nevertheless connected to the first one, that the Kemalist nationalist project pursued. In addition to the denial of any continuation between their project and the history of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalists also distanced themselves from any use or appearance of religion that was outside the discursive boundaries the nationalist project had drawn. The Orthodox Kemalist Islam was one that was in perfect harmony with the secularist nationalist project. This Islam was one that was to appeal to the sentiments of the newly bundled nation-people, but to that only. Soon enough, the reference to Islam was abandoned all together.

[229] Asad, 2003: 8

[230] Asad, 2003: 174

While it is true that Mustafa Kemal sought the help of religious institutions in the Independence war and in the first years of the Republic[231], Islam as a component of Turkish identity was soon dropped. One aspect of this turning away was that the long established institutional ties between religious authorities (especially the position of *ulema*) and the Ottoman Empire and the overriding influence of local religious figures on people of Anatolia. These were taken to be threats to the sweeping reforms the Kemalists were carrying out. The dissociation of these ties and the closure of local religious convents and submersion of these factors under the nationalist ideology was as much a move towards the elimination of opposition, uncontrolled networks and possible threat, as the eradication of local culture for a unified national culture[232]. This culture was to be composed of a common understanding of Turkish territory, language and history, the climax of which were to be found in the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun- Language Thesis[233], both of which pointed to a so-called pre-Ottoman Turkish identity.

D. The Historical Rupture and the Politics of 'the People'

As it is clear at this point, the secular character of the Republic was dependent on a double distancing: one from the Ottoman Empire's history; and secondly and gradually from religion all together despite the tangible continuities between the Kemalist structuring of the new nation and the era of Ottoman modernization. Laclau (2005) declares that revolution indeed is never the work of a spontaneous generation but works through and with already existing materials. In this sense, the Kemalist revolution was not a moment of magic. However, what was magical about it was Kemalists' success in articulating this as a historical rupture. According to Laclau (2005), the Kemalist conviction that a nation was to

[231] To counter the *fetwa* of religious officials in Istanbul who still retained strong ties to the collapsing Empire, Mustafa Kemal had the religious authorities of Ankara declare the struggle for independence a *Holy War*. (Poulton, 1997: 97)

[232] Poulton, 1997: 99

[233] For a discussion of the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Thesis, please see Paulton, 1997: 100-4 and 109- 113.

come in the form of a completely new establishment and as an 'act of will' was indeed borrowed from the Ottoman history.[234] The modernization of the country, in the eyes of the Kemalist officials, was dependent on the denouncement of religious and traditional values and practices. As I will clarify in the coming paragraphs, this was a crucial step in the legitimacy, maintenance and continuation of the new nation-state.

The Kemalist official ideology's measure for the level of civilization was the level of modernization and westernization achieved in various spheres of life.[235] Yegenoglu (2007) rightly observes that "progress was defined by breaking with the Ottoman backwardness, symbolized in the distance achieved from Islam"[236]. Much in the same way of the European encounter with non-European cultures, the Kemalist regime first had to construct the words and practices that they had associated with religion and the Ottoman Empire "as categories of illusion and oppression before people could be liberated from them"[237]. The doctrine of the Republic of creating modern, enlightened citizens necessitated that they be freed from these sources of error and despotism and that they be endowed with and act in accordance to universal reason. Science was to become "the truest guide in life"[238]. For the Kemalist universal reason to win out, the power of religion, tradition and folk culture had to be downplayed. It was this operation together with the empowerment of new sources and practices of knowledge and culture that the Kemalist regime legitimated its position of authority and gave itself the name 'secular'.

Even the establishment of new institutions such as the DIB, the national education system, the modern military, and many more subtle centers of power, in this sense, can be seen as the empowering of new relations and practices that constituted a rearrangement of the domains of the secular and the religious. The two sources of the distancing, the Ottoman Empire and religion, that the Kemalists

[234] Laclau, 2005: 211

[235] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[236] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[237] Asad, 2003: 35

[238] Another one of Ataturk's famous aphorisms.

saw imperative are indeed so intricate, or in other words, they have been made into such a closed bundle by the regime that it becomes difficult to actually distinguish the religious from the Ottoman and vice versa. Religiousness was backwardness and backwardness was Ottoman. The intensity of this distancing is evident, to use Bromley's term, in the 'draconian' character of the Kemalist reforms[239].

Indeed, the reforms of the new Republic were articulated as revolutions in the new secular nationalist discourse. One of Atatürk's six arrows was named *revolutionism*, not reformism. The symbolic character of this discursive choice is apparent. The sweeping reforms, or in their terminology, revolutions, of the Kemalist project were to be understood as rapid and violent transformation in the political and social spheres. According to Laclau (2005), this is an essential choice: "piecemeal engineering as a method of social change is radically excluded. The constitution of the 'people' has to be sudden and total event"[240]. Kemal's revolutions were conceptualized as attempts at social metamorphosis rather than limited ameliorations of particular sectors or spheres of the nation.[241] Revolutionism signaled the severity and the rapidness of the issued changes, as much as the determination of the regime to portray itself and the new nation as perfectly new and free of the previous Ottoman history. The new, the progressive, the modern, the Western, the enlightened (Turkish citizen) was to be firmly separated from the backward (Ottoman subject) in the ontological and epistemological sense. Neither his/her roots, nor his/her source of knowledge of the world and of his/herself was to include any reference to the Ottoman subject. He/she was to be made anew based on the modern, scientific, positivist, civil Western citizen model.

The discourse of historical rupture was a move directed at the past, as much as the present and the future. The problem facing the new nation state was one of purging itself from the hitherto history on the one hand, and laying the grounds for its present and future on the other. The source of the problem, however, was seen

[239] Bromley, quoted in Davidson, 1998: 135

[240] Laclau, 2005: 210

[241] Laclau, 2005: 209- 10

in similar terms to that of the Ottoman modernization. The haunting question has always been that of why the Ottoman state had fallen so much behind the times and therefore became vulnerable in the competition for power among other states. It seems not much has changed for the Kemalists either and the solution this time around was found in a more extreme and rapid form of social and political change. For this to hold, however, the subjects of the Ottoman Empire had to be turned into the nation-people of the Rebuplic. The denouncement of religion and tradition and the encouragement of the modern, scientific and civil citizen model were crucial in this sense. The legitimization of and any hope of survival for the nation state depended on this twofold discouragement/ encouragement or disempowerment/ empowerment.

The historical and cultural hold of religion and tradition on the Ottoman subject had to be eradicated for him/ her to internalize a new subjectivity and a new source of identification. Previous centers of authority were to be disempowered and new centers and relations of power had to be institutionalized and empowered. The nation-state was to become the only source of identification for the nation-people. The nation-state was to become the only source of belonging for the new citizen, for him/ her to comprise the new nation-people in a world of nations, among other nation-people.

It could not have been enough, however, simply to carry out a verbal or physical attack on age-old sensibilities of belonging of the people. This would be too overt and might meet with strong reaction. The challenge was to emphasize freedom of religion and religious devotion but somehow make it non-authoritative at the same time. For this reason, there needed to be a distinction made between the private and public lives of the citizenry, and hence between the private and the public spheres. As mentioned elsewhere, this distinction is merely discursive and yet has a strong influence on the everyday life and practices of the people. It was a matter of persuasion through minute mechanisms of power such as manners, dress, and code of behavior that a new persona of the citizen in the public sphere was created, while promising a degree of freedom in the private sphere where the emotional and religious parts of life were to be carried out and confined in.

It wouldn't be accurate, however, to see these developments as the willful acts of a few progressivist men for the sheer reason of disliking religion or wanting to fully conquer the people to capture absolute power. These developments were not simply few whimsical decisions on the part of the Kemalists. They are the very basic prerequisites of the regime of power that was historically dominant and the proximity to which was judged to be the measure of belonging to the times, or to modernity. The secular nation state that emerged was dependent on the division of the life-world into two distinct categories and the birth of the rational, free-willed political actor. 'The people' was the single source of legitimization of the new state; for the possibility of the politics of the people, those people first had to be made into political actors. However, it was important to balance coercion and persuasion. It was necessary for the new networks of power relations to be as gentle as possible in achieving the new social structure that was necessary for their operation. The story of the coming of the nation and the making of the people had to be told as a break on the one hand, and as a voluntary and willful action of the people on the other. The public/ private separation, in this sense, was a fundamental step for the secularist narrative in the allocation of politics and faith to their respective domains. By this strategic move, the political was to be divorced from the theological to thereby claim the politics of the people supreme.

It should be further clarified that the togetherness of a bunch of people does not add up to the peoplehood demanded by the nation state[242]. In that sense, 'the people' that figures in this equation is a categorical artifact. There are rules, not all of them in writing, governing the boundaries of this peoplehood. While there might be common grounds of belonging to the people in many examples, there surely are other necessary attributes particular to each case, the totality of which, to a great extent, is internalized through both institutional and non-institutional relations of power and processes of subjectification specific to each nation state in a point of history.

Finally, it should be made clear that no one source of authority has enough power to influence the exact shape and characteristic of the category of the people,

[242] Billig, 1997: 26

just as no one individual or the totality of the people do not have enough power to influence the shape and character of the structure of authority. Power, no matter where it operates and no matter what or whom it creates or is created by, is always a negotiation, or a tug of war between parties. Therefore, the story laid out here of the making of the secular and the religious by the Kemalists proves nothing more than their historical advantage in terms of power relations. Naming, however, is a technology of power, the dominant actor of which is subject to the very logic of operation of power itself as constant struggle and negotiation. As we shall see later on, the Kemalists were or are in no way the only group of individuals in this struggle, nor have they historically been the most effective throughout.

Still, the radical modernization, (read westernization and secularization) of the Turkish nation was unprecedented in any other Muslim society. First in this modernization, in my opinion was the secularization of the source of legitimacy. In place of the Ottoman Sultan's divine power entrusted unto him by God himself, the Kemalists declared their legitimacy to come from the nation people themselves and from the force of law. Second was the secularization of religion, not through a theological reformation, but through control, submission and privatization. The persistence of religion in the school system or the continuation of institutional ties between the state and religious institutions were the epitome of this move as they reinforced the control, submission and the appropriate placing of religion in the private sphere. In what might at first glance seem like a paradoxical situation, these moves actually ensured the secular character of the state through the creation of the un-political and un-public Islam that was most compatible with the secularist project. The secularization of religion was further guaranteed by its indigenization through the purge of Islam of its Arabic and Persian influences. The translation of Qur'an and the call to prayer into Turkish[243] were just two attempts to *Turkify* Islam. Lastly, and perhaps one that encompasses the two others was the secularization of culture and the public sphere through various processes some of which are the Republic Balls, the hat reform, the alphabet reform, the removal of by-names and titles, the idealization of western lifestyles

[243] This was later reversed in 1950s. This reversal is commonly explained to have been done because of lack of popular demand. Still today, the call to prayer is done in Arabic.

and etc. Only by the separation of the public and private spheres was it possible for the public sphere to be "institutionalized and imagined as a site for the implementation of a secular and progressive way of life"[244], and to push the God of religion into the private realm. This distinction between the public and the private is the construction of the modern state and "the scope and content of 'public space' is primarily a function of the Republic's[245] power"[246].

In one last ironic move, the Kemalist rhetoric proposed these transformations not as what the Turkish nation was to possess, but as what they almost always already did. Having their ancestors in that great cradle of civilization the likes of which were foreign even to Westerners for many centuries, namely Mesopotamia, the reforms or revolutions of the new Republic were articulated as a mere re-affirmation of the essence of the Turk (read secular, modern, and civilized) that was contaminated with the wrongdoings of the Ottoman Empire. The actual creation of the nation people through rituals of the state, education, military, citizen books and courses, nationalization of the bourgeoisie went hand in hand with this virtual re-affirmation.

In a more critical sense, this maneuver points to and necessitated an original negativity. In other words the choice of predicates attributed to the West and to the Ottoman Empire has never been nor could they ever have been arbitrary. As it goes in any identity formation, the Turkish Republic needed an *Other* for the possibility of its existence and distinct identity. Where there can no Other be found, or where the *otherness* of the Other is not strong enough for the norm to distinguish itself from it, an Other is always created or empowered in terms of the degree of its otherness, which simultaneously and ironically means a disempowerment. In this case, it was the Ottoman Empire that has been re-created and empowered, thus disempowered, as the Other of all that was to be exclusively 'Turkish', which was taken to be the norm in the national context.

[244] Göle, 2008: 122

[245] The Republic Asad refers to is the French Republic. However I do not think it illegitimate to use this quotation when talking about the Turkish Republic, which has designed itself after the French one to a great extent anyway.

[246] Asad, 2006: 500

There was yet another challenge of definition the new category of 'Turkish' had to face in the international context. There, Turkish (read barbaric, traditional, religious, etc.) had many more and more normative rivals such as civilization, modern, secular and etc. The Kemalists were stubborn not to give in to the tendency of becoming an Other to the West. This was only possible through the above argument that what the Turkish nation was after was actually what it already possessed. This brought about a new history writing practice whereby the roots of Turkish people were sought (and of course found) in civilizations that existed much before the Ottoman Empire and also before many Western civilizations. This new history endowed to the new nation-people was to reach its climax in the claim that the West has been a successor of these earlier civilizations rather than vice versa. In other words, not only was the Turkish people not a derivation from the norm (the West), but they were themselves children of the norm-givers, the norm itself, now forgotten because of the more recent experience of bigotry and corruption of the Ottoman Empire. Not only were the Westerners wrong in their beliefs about the Turkish people and their past, but, according to Atatürk himself, the people themselves had to be taught their own history[247]. The Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Thesis, again, are the two most obvious examples of this tendency that come to mind. The inclusion of certain characteristics and the exclusion of all others from Turkishness was thus naturalized; that is, until 'the religious' started making claims in the public and the political spheres.

[247] The below quotation from Ataturk proves these two tendencies very well.

> The opinion which introduced Turks to the entire world as a primitive underdeveloped nation has taken hold of us as well… In the first place, we have to teach the nation their history, the fact that they belong to a noble nation, and children of an advanced nation who is the mother of all civilizations. (1930)
>
> Atatürk quoted in *History: Atatürk Declares!* (n.d.)

E. Kemalism and Islam, or '*Elhamdülillah*[248] We are Secularists': From the Single Party Period to the Arrival of Erbakan

The place of Islam in the secularist nationalist Kemalist project as we have seen was strictly circumscribed. It was to remain un-political and un-public. The hat reform, the removal of by-names and titles were all in the name of removing the visibility of the religious in the public sphere. This did not only amount to suppression of Islam, but to its taming. Everyone was free to do as they pleased in their private lives, but the public persona of the new Turkish man and woman was to be free of any visible reference to religion or tradition. The Turkish citizen was to appear in modern Western hats and clean-cut trousers and skirts, contrary to the old Ottoman subject of turbans and shalwars, and Islam was gradually downplayed as an element of loyalty and belonging to the nation state and nation people. While the use and manipulation of Islam for political ends are interpreted as another dimension of the failure of Kemalist secularism by Parla and Davidson, this exactly was how the Kemalists gave themselves the name of the secular.

It is true that religion was used by the Kemalists up until the multi-party period for political goals. İsmet İnönü, who became the leader of CHP after Atatürk's death accepted this allegation himself[249]. This appropriation of Islam, however, did not disturb the regime at all. There was virtually no anxiety in terms of religion getting mixed up with politics during those times, as this Islam used by the Kemalists was the Turkified and tamed version of Islam that they held to be the truer version. This Sunni Orthodox Islam, as mentioned before, was the version that was most compatible with the secularist project: it allowed the government to operate without forgoing neither the secular criteria, nor the deep-rooted sensibilities of the nation-people. Religion in this sense was conceptualized as nothing but a matter of personal belief and observance, lived in the privacy of homes or at most at mosques, devoid of any authority of guiding the features or

[248] *Elhamdülillah* is an Arabic word, used frequently in Islamic language and is close in meaning to Hallelujah. It means thank God, glory be to God, praise be to God.

[249] Poulton, 1997: 170

rules of civic and political belonging. Furthermore, it was much easier for the Kemalist regime to claim the position of authority in the technology of naming during the single-party period, as any other possible claim to power was ultimately left out of the political arena.

Starting with the multi-party system, the character of relations of power of being a constant struggle and contestation would become more visible as other parties involved in this struggle and contestation increasingly found legitimate channels to join in. As we shall see, this points not only to the fact that the Kemalists were in fact not as powerful as they thought to have been, but also to the fact that the secular and the religious were not as precisely demarcated into their separate legitimate domains as has been imagined. From multi-party period onwards, Turkish history has been, in my opinion, the perfect example of the understanding of power as contestation. Though it may be argued that many claims are still structurally left out of the system of legitimate politics, it has by now become clear how vulnerable and arbitrary many self-righteous definitions and scopes of power of certain categories almost always are. The vulnerability of the Kemalist position, in particular, was to surface soon after the transition to multi-party governmental system.

1950s was the first serious trial of the Turkish Republic at democracy. Despite few failed attempts previous to this date, Turkish politics was a single-party regime all along. The first national multi-party election was held on 1946 where *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party, abbreviated CHP from now on) of Atatürk under İsmet İnönü's leadership took a majority of the seats in the parliament. By the second national elections in 1950, however, *Demokrat Parti* (Democratic Party, abbreviated DP) under Adnan Menderes's leadership won more than six times the seats of CHP in the National Assembly to the surprise of Kemalist politicians and other government officials. What's more is that, since its formation, the DP portrayed an overtly pro-Islamic appearance but retained from any sign of explicit politicization of Islam[250]. Though not an Islamic party, the support DP received until the 1960 military coup was the first indication of any such religiosity in Turkish politics and the popularity it gained in national

[250] Poulton, 1997:171

elections. During this time, until the 1960 coup d'état, CHP and DP were the two major political parties in Turkish politics. CHP like DP, and especially judging by DP's gradual rise to power, also spoke to the religious sentiments of the people, especially the Bektaşis of central Anatolia[251].

Throughout 1950s the Kemalist military officials were uneasy about this Islamic resurgence, which finalized in the 1960 military coup. The military National Unity Committee which overtook the political rule during the coup, however, was weary of a complete denial or suppression of the emergent Islamic sentiments and instead hoped to intensify the Turkification of Islam[252], in line with the Kemalist Orthodox Islam mentioned above. Military was not in power long enough to observe the actualization of this policy, but the 1961 Constitution composed by coup officers clearly banned politicized religion[253]. DP was closed down and a number of its leading politicians were executed after the coup on grounds of unconstitutional demeanor (mostly attributed to the relaxation of the control over Islam). After a few years of political uncertainty, Süleyman Demirel's *Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party, abbreviated AP), which was seen as the successor of DP became one of the major political parties until the second full military coup of 1980.

The Islamic position through 1950s and 1960s was associated with anti-liberalism and anti-socialism in the face of the rise of left-wing tendencies in the public sphere especially through the 60s. While left-wingers were slowly becoming more and more visible in cities, so were Ticanis, Nurcus and Süleymancıs in villages and towns. Islamic revival of the period casted left-wing attitudes as communist pawns of Moscow and the growing capitalist classes as Masons or Zionists. This period also saw the emergence of a religious petty-bourgeoisie class in opposition to the new capitalists. In addition, there were a moderate number of Islamic publications on the market with emphases on the desirability of Islamic way of life, compatibility of Islam and Turkish secularism,

[251] Poulton, 1997: 172

[252] Poulton, 1997: 173

[253] Poulton, 1997: 173

importance of Islam for Turkish culture, and the Islamic sentimentality of Atatürk himself.[254]

As can be seen, the political atmosphere of 1950s and 1960s provided an environment of opportunity for the entry of Islam into the political and public domains with temperate degrees. While there were examples of fundamentalist Islamic movements and rallies, these remained marginal. For the most part, the Islamic resurgence during these years showed a soft face and came forward mainly as one of the most important elements of the Turkish identity and culture, but one subordinate to greater goals of Turkish nationalism and secularism[255]. The Kemalist response to this resurgence was toleration at first, until the military intervention. However, as we have seen, even the military rule did not choose to deny this emergence as perhaps a more strictly absolutist Kemalism would. The most disquieting development during 1960s was the rising left-wing sensibilities more than Islamic ones, and Islamism, therefore, did not appear to be the first threat on Kemalists' agenda. In fact, despite the underrepresentation of left-wing parties in established politics, Demirel and coalition governments during 1960s must have felt the left-wingers to be a grave threat as they tolerated many attacks on them by Islamic groups (mostly by *İmam Hatip* students)[256]. It was not until 1970s that a thoroughly Islamic party would make its appearance on the political scene and that the Kemalist regime would show some signs of anxiety in the face of the rise of political Islamism. One would have to wait until 1990s, however, to observe the full-fledged fear and a serious sense of immediate threat felt by the Kemalists in confronting Islamism.

By early 1970, there was, what could be called, a relative stability in Turkish politics after the first military coup. CHP was still under İnönü's rule at the beginning of the decade but was soon replaced by Bülent Ecevit who influenced the party's inclination towards left of center. The right-wing parties saw a succession of splits and thus multiplication, out of which emerged Necmettin Erbakan's *Milli Nizam Partisi* (National Order Party, abbreviated

[254] Poulton, 1997: 173-5

[255] Poulton, 1997: 175

[256] Poulton, 1997: 173 and 174

MNP). Although it was closed on the orders of the Constitutional Court for violating the secular character of the state during the semi-coup of 1971, just one year after its formation, MNP marks a turning point in Turkish politics for being the first overtly Islamic party. From 1970 onwards, Erbakan emerged as perhaps the most prominent figure of political Islam in Turkey. Though he was banned from politics from time to time, and was succeeded by a younger and more progressivist section of his followers later on in 1990s, his recent funeral in March 2011 proved his weight in Turkish politics.

After the dissolution of MNP, Erbakan went on to form *Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation party, abbreviated MSP). MSP followed in MNP's steps in condemning Freemasons, Communists and Zionists; its anti-Western and pro-industrialization stance and its call to return to 'true' Islam for further development of the country. MSP took part in many coalitions and was a major force in countering the rise of left-wing attitudes among the people throughout 1970s. According to Poulton (1997), MSP's participation in coalition governments was taken by some to prove that the party was willing to become a part of the system and was not attempting to enforce its Islamic vision. He also adds that having his previous political attempt cut short by the ruling of the Constitutional Court, entering the parliament also gave Erbakan the legitimacy he so desperately needed. During its active years, MSP tried to secure its place and increase its influence in politics through successful claims of certain ministries.[257]

Throughout 1970s, Turkey was shaken up with violence and anarchy on the streets between the left-wingers and the right-wingers, most of whom were ultra-nationalist youth of the ranks of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party, abbreviated MHP) and Islamist youth. Thousands died on riots and confrontations in the streets, while thousands of others died in police detention. Millions were wounded and tortured. The anarchic environment of 1970s culminated in the second full-fledged coup d'état of 1980. These ten-something years were, for many who witnessed them, the darkest years of the history of the Turkish Republic.

[257] Poulton, 1997: 176-7

As mentioned before, 1970s were the first time a strong Kemalist tradition of statecraft and imaginary confronted the politicization of Islam. Together with frequent news of calls to sharia by some radical Islamists, the official profile of MNP and MSP remained strongly nationalist with a desire to Islamicize politics. MNP and MSP emphasized the centrality of Islam in the founding of the nation-state, as well as in the identity of the nation-people[258]. The increasing Islamic emphasis during this time in other right-wing and center-right-wing parties such as AP and MHP is also noteworthy. For Menderes and Demirel, Islam was an important component of the Turkish identity, but for them, it was more of a personal matter than a political one. Erbakan's stance was closer to that of Türkeş but Islam for him was not the central theme as was for Erbakan. Rather, Türkeş attempted to reach out to the religious sensibilities of the populace to strengthen his pan-Turkist message. Yet, it is obvious that together with the switch to multi-party politics, Islam increasingly became an issue to be addressed in varying degrees for almost all political leaders and parties. Even CHP, the stronghold of orthodox Kemalism, made use of religious themes and discourse from time to time in this atmosphere. Whatever the reason for appropriation of Islam, and whatever the degree, one thing was clear: "the original Kemalist nationalism, in which Islam was largely ignored, had become untenable"[259].[260]

In the wake of the post-Cold War era, Turkey followed the general political climate of fear of communism. The atmosphere of anarchy which almost turned into a civil war during 1970s created communism as the enemy in the national imaginary[261]. As can be inferred, the political and military actions taken during and in the aftermath of this period were mainly targeting the increasing left-wing tendencies among the population. Islam's promotion in the public sphere and politics during this time was tolerated to a great extent and this was not seen as the major source of alarm. In fact, the appropriation of Islam in mainstream political discourse was a clear sign that more than being tolerated, it was consciously

[258] Poulton, 1997: 178

[259] Poulton, 1997: 179

[260] Poulton, 1997: 177-9

[261] Cooper, 2002: 124

invoked as the cement holding the nation together. Islam was used as a tool in combatting the civil unrest, in hopes of bringing people of different persuasions together under the same roof. The military, which has unfortunately been one of the major sources of politics during this time, was watchful of the religious revival and surely took steps in quieting it down, but that was nothing compared to the war it waged against communism and left-wing groups. In fact, even after the 1980 coup d'état, the members of the military junta, the officials whom had taken upon themselves the responsibility of guarding the Kemalist unitary nation-state since the beginning of the republican history, would take quite tolerant steps towards Islamic revivalism, in turn for opposing the communist and separatist threats. Years following 1980 coup were the beginning of the end of the dominance of Kemalist ideology for Turkish politics, and the junta's own attitude, though unintentionally, had quite a part to play in it. Although there probably were critics among the leftist or left of center politicians and intellectuals of the attitude of tolerance shown to the divergence of the state from a more strictly secularist path, the point was continually made that the 99%[262] of the Turkish population, after all, are Muslims[263]. 1987 referendum, which allowed the politicians banned after the coup to return to politics, marks an important date in the shifting of relations of power away from previous centers towards new ones. This, as we shall see, caught some self-confident Kemalist sectors of the society and politics quite off-guard.

[262] This is a recurrent theme in political discussions even today. However, the numbers employed are unsubstantiated and it is hard to believe that 99% of the population is indeed Muslims. After all, who you count depends on how you count and ı don't remember anyone asking me what religious community I belonged to or if I belonged to any before the 'religion' section of my identity card being filled in Islam. The matter gets even more complicated considering the situation of non-Sunni Muslims, like Alevis, who would have a hard time accepting the label Muslim in the first place.

[263] Kushner, 1997: 228

F. ‘Religion is Back, Now is a Good Time to Panic!’: 1980s and 1990s

As I mentioned earlier in this section, the military junta of 1980 coup made religious classes compulsory in the national education system. This was a move against the power gained by certain religious groups like Tacinilik, Nurculuk and Süleymancılık over the population. In a report that the military officials issued in 1981, they explained this to be main reason behind their decision. According to them, religion had fallen in the wrong hands. Yet, on the side, the military also believed that a relaxation in terms of religious instruction also yielded other dangerous political currents such as Maxism, Lenninism and fascism. The reinsertion of compulsory religious courses was a move against religious sects, as much as against the communist threat that the officials felt to be overtaking the nation.[264] Islam had finally had a chance at mainstream politics “as the antidote of communism”[265]. Islam’s opportunities would continue through 1990s as well, this time taken as the antidote of Kurdish separatism[266].

This approach to Islam closely resembled the Turkish-Islamic Thesis that had been formulated in 1970s by rightest intellectuals and businessman among the ranks of an organization called *Aydınlar Ocağı* (The Hearth of the Enlightened, abbreviated AO). According to this model, the state would once again assume its authoritarian character and Islam was to be acknowledged as the essence of the society, would be fostered in education, but would remain un-political. After 1980 coup, many ranks of the new government responsible for culture and education such as TRT, YÖK, Ministry of Education and many university rectors were recruited among the ranks of AO. It was also during this time that people from Nakşibendi sect, known for their closeness to Özal, assumed important positions

[264] Poulton, 1997: 181

[265] Kadıoğlu, 1996: 190

[266] Kürkçü, 1996: 5. Also see Poulton, 1997: 198-9 for examples of how Islamic fundamentalism of İBDA-C and Turkish Hizbullah were overlooked for the protection of the unitary state.

in the government. Throughout 1980s, there were dramatic increases in DIB's budget, in the number of mosques, religious schools and Quran courses. [267]

After the referendum of 1987 lifting the ban on political leaders of pre-coup, Erbakan was back on the political scene, this time with Refah Partisi (Welfare Party, abbreviated RP). RP continued MNP and MSP's stress on Islam being the primary focus of Turkish identity and loyalty. RP also made conscious efforts to acknowledge the secular character of state and the legacy of Atatürk for fears of criminalization and closure. According to Toprak (2006) RP leadership was squeezed between the need to be moderate in its politics of Islamism and the need to satisfy its highly religious voters. Erbakan was put in a position where he constantly felt under pressure of the watchful eye of the military and the Kemalist court system and thus often made decisions contrary to his party program. On the other hand, party leadership tried to keep up the loyalty of its supporters, which RP assured through their marginalization and radicalization.[268] Yıldız (2003) confirms that RP's squeezed position of having to appeal to two opposing needs caused its popular rhetoric to be highly problematic and contradictory. He terms the contradiction to be composed of a "duality of 'legality/ Islamicity' or 'cool rationality/ heroism"[269]. It was this heroism that would later become one of the major reasons for RP being banned from politics[270].

Throughout 1980s and 1990s, there also were increasing numbers of attacks on people of different religious beliefs or sects like the attacks on Alevis in Sivas and İstanbul, and on people not fasting during the Ramadan. At times, Erbakan himself voiced concern over physical violence his followers resorted to and to the difficulty of controlling them. Hasan Mezarcı, a RP MP, caused quite a stir in 1990s for his outright attacks on secularism. Though he was eventually expelled from RP, many were outraged by his declarations and he caused serious damage to RP's reputation. By 1994, Erbakan was fast on track promising a change in the constitution towards Islamic principles. The party program which was called 'the

[267] Poulton, 1997: 183-6

[268] Toprak, 2006: 31-2

[269] Yıldız, 2003: 192

[270] Yıldız, 2003: 204, n14 and n15

just order' in short, refrained from overt calls for Islamicization of politics, as this was against the constitution that Erbakan has promised to change if his party came to power. However, many of RP's MPs were calling for the return of sharia in political rallies and even on TV programs. Selahattin Aydar, RP mayor of Bingöl appeared on Kanal-6 before the 1994 local elections and called for sharia. Şevki Yılmaz, RP mayor of Rize was also being investigated on charges of causing religious discrimination in his speeches.[271] Yıldız (2003) includes Halil İbrahim Çelik (former mayor of Şanlıurfa and later RP MP) and Bekir Yıldız (former mayor of Sincan, Ankara) in the list together with the previous names mentioned, as having produced examples of the heroism of RP and having been one of the reasons for the decision of the Constitutional Court of closing RP down in 1998[272].

Late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by the economic liberalization policies of Özal's *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party, abbreviated ANAP), which was the victorious party to emerge from the 1983 and 1987 national elections, and the second party in the 1991 (after Süleyman Demirel's, *Doğru Yol Partisi*, or True Path Party, DYP, later to be led by Tansu Çiller) and 1995 (after RP) elections. Together with others mentioned later on in this section, one influence of liberalization was the development of communication and information flow systems and networks. There emerged privately owned TV and radio channels as alternatives to state-owned TRT, phone lines became electronic, use of mobile phones rocketed and many households now owned computers with internet connection. In this environment of information revolution, not much could be held back from the public any longer. RP was under constant surveillance by the media for any slippage or wrongdoing and it was this close inspection of RP through which much of the before cited examples of 'heroism' were revealed to the public.[273] However, it was also during this time that many corruption and illegal connections regarding other political parties (e.g. the Susurluk scandal) were

[271] Poulton, 1997: 187-91

[272] Yıldız, 2003: 204, n14

[273] Toprak, 2006: 32-3

exposed through the media, further adding to the distrust of a majority of the population of parties of mainstream politics.

Despite signs of a growing support of RP, it came as a shock to secularists and Kemalists came when RP won the mayor seats of major cities like İstanbul and Ankara in the 1994 local elections. There were rumors that RP mayors were going to Islamicize the lifestyle in these cities, that uncovered women were going to be made to feel under pressure, that there would be Islamic rules of gender segregation on public transportation and etc. While Poulton (1997) argues that the mayors kept a low profile and did not reciprocate the fears and the rumors of the secularists[274], there are examples to the contrary.

One of the first things Tayyip Erdoğan ordered after he became the mayor of Istanbul was the removal of tables and chairs on the streets in front of the pubs and restaurants. He also ordered that thick curtains were to be installed on the windows of pubs and restaurants so that the inside would not be visible from the streets. In the following weeks, people organized sit-ins around Beyoğlu where they drank alcohol and socialized in front of the pubs and restaurants showing their dissent for Erdoğan's policy. Though he later withdraw his orders due to pressure from the public, it seemed that the worst fears of the secularists were coming true: the sort of lifestyle they enjoyed was being pushed indoors, out of the public sphere and out of visibility.[275]

Another source of irritation for the secularists came with RP mayors' refusal to organize celebrations for the anniversary of the Republic. Rather, RP mayors chose to organize a grand celebration for the anniversary of Istanbul's conquest by Fatih Sultan Mehmet. The conquest of Istanbul had not attracted much attention before, but now, the Islamists were sure to make a show out of it, while refusing to celebrate perhaps the one most important date in the Republic's history. Their refusal proved to the secularists that they were attacking and showing their disrespect for the established etiquette of statecraft, and there was no reason for the secularists not to assume that they would only rake it farther as time went on. As a response, the 1994 Republic Day was turned into a show for popular and

[274] Poulton, 1997: 191

[275] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 39

voluntary support of the nation-people for the secular and republican character of the state. For the first time, the anniversary of the republic was made sure to be celebrated in a manner of less state and more civil society. Independent organizations and Kemalist foundations took it on themselves to organize huge rallies in city centers, with popular stars on stage entertaining the people. There was a conscious effort to emphasize the voluntary and non-state-led character of the celebrations throughout the media accounts. The beginning of the celebrations at Taksim Square started out with a speaker's words of "for the first time the people are taking possession of their holiday with their organizations of civil society!"[276]. Likewise, Sabah, a mainstream newspaper announced to its readers that "the most meaningful aspect of this year's celebrations is that, aside from official state ceremonies, groups of civil society, or, in other words, the people, are participating in the organization"[277]. By the afternoon, ATV broadcasted that "today, citizens gathered in Taksim only for one thing: to protect the life of the republic"[278]. Interestingly enough, much like the anniversary of overtaking of Istanbul, the Republic Days did not attract much attention besides the state organized militaristic ceremonies held at stadiums where people from the public were largely absent. The ceremonies would be broadcast through TV channels, TRT being the most dedicated, but they usually became the background noise for housewives doing their regular ironing. Before 1994, it seems, there was no need to put much effort into it, as the republic was to a great extent taken for granted and normalized.[279] A year after the local elections, RP won more than 21% of the total votes in national elections and came first among 12 political parties which entered the elections, 5 of which entered the parliament. By this time, Kemalists had survived the initial shock and were looking for ways of showing their dissent for what they saw as the politicization of Islam and the Islamicization of the public sphere.

[276] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 149- 51

[277] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 147

[278] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 151

[279] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 146- 51

One of the main factors of the rise of Islam to the point of influence that it did in politics and the public sphere was the privatization and liberalization policies of Özal's ANAP. In Özal's political speeches to the public prior to national elections of 1983[280], 1987, 1991 and 1995, the emphasis on economic restructuring addressed the secular bourgeois of metropolises, as much as the businesspeople of smaller cities and of Anatolia, many of whom were religious people left out of the economic system due to previous state sponsored economy of development. Özal's message stood well with the aspiring people of small businesses as he himself came from a small town, and also was a previous member of MSP. In a short while, a strong and soon multinational Islamic capital emerged and created an Islamic market for religiously-oriented consumer public. In the decades when the good life measured with the degree of comfort to consume was propagated through media channels, the secularists, as well as the Islamists, had their own markets. Differences in consumption choices in 1980s and 1990s became a matter of and a vessel for cultural differences and the secularist/ Islamist identities. The public sphere was becoming the battleground for the war of secularist and Islamist signs.[281]

This was the context of the emergence of much of Atatürk symbolism in the public sphere that I mentioned in the introduction. The emergence of an Islamic market for the needs and demands of the more religious population caused a serious increase in the visibility of Islamic signs in the public sphere. From then on, the mainstream market had to turn back on itself and realize, perhaps for the first time, that it was actually serving a cultural message and creating a culture itself. Before that, the secular market did not have to acknowledge that the products it was putting out there and the consumption of them could be a matter of identity, as they had taken that identity to be the universal and the modern identity. Now that they had a rival, many companies started realizing their position and to use it to their advantage. Especially during the 1990s, it was commonplace for many companies, even for foreign ones, to employ Atatürk imagery in their

[280] It is questionable, of course, how much the public was motivated by political parties' programs in the 1983 elections as there were only 3 parties left in the political arena after the outlawing of all others by the 1980- 1983 military rule.

[281] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 80-5

advertisements. Many national companies made an additional effort to promote their products and services as signs of the 'secular lifestyle' and the 'civilized identity'. For instance, when Tayyip Erdoğan banned commercials of bathing suits with women models to be put on the billboards, Zeki Triko covered the billboards all around Istanbul with Atatürk in his bathing suit; underneath, it read "we miss the sun"[282]. Starting with 1990s, there appeared commodities for every identity category: the secular, the Islamic and also the pan-Turkist.[283]

It was during this time that a more privatized consumption of state imagery emerged. A part of these commodities were those with the Turkish flag. However, a much bigger venue was Atatürk himself. The most commonplace item on the market was Atatürk pins and it was an observable fact that the section of population which explicitly claimed and embraced the secularist identity made a conscious effort to carry these pins on every piece of jacket, shirt and blouse. State employees, school teachers, and women in the work force were especially keen on this to be even more noticeably distinct from the Islamists[284]. Özyürek's mother was fond of it herself, claiming that "When I am walking on the street, I want to show that there are people who are dedicated to Ata's principles … I push my chest forward to show them [the Islamists] my pin as I pass them. I have my Ata against their veils"[285].

1980s and 1990s were the decades of first serious confrontation between Islamism and secularism defined as Kemalism. Both made their own claims to Turkish history, economy, identity and characteristics. It is obvious that neither acted as if on its own. The Islamist and the secularist narrative developed in close proximity to and in conjunction with each other. While Islamism under RP was alluring the disenfranchised urban newcomers by attacking the Westernization-modernization model of Kemalism, the secularists were appealing to age-old Kemalist sentiments by announcing a serious threat to the secular and republican nature of the state. Together with economic liberalization this took on a character

[282] Özyürek, 2996: 100

[283] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 85-9

[284] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 89

[285] Özyürek, 2006: 99

of visibility politics in the public sphere. As Islamists were more and more eager to show their Islamic identity through certain commodities, the secularist became more and more possessive and obsessive in their attitudes of consumption of commodities that were by now propagated as promoting the secular and civil lifestyle. Both camps found solid grounds of criticizing the other as both Islamism and secularism of 1980s and 1990s publicized their cause in direct opposition to each other. The secularists even carried out a boycott of what they perceived to be companies of Islamic capital to hinder the financial base of the movement[286]. The boundaries separating the two were quite obvious and the war of symbols in the public sphere further encouraged the two sets of identity to become even more categorically and stereotypically distinct.

During this power struggle in established politics and the public sphere, things did not seem to go as good for Kemalists as they were for Islamists. A part of this was because of a change in the government's priorities caused by the economic restructuring. The secularists, or more precisely the Kemalists, had traditionally occupied governmental or bureaucratic positions. Government policy in1980s and 1990s turned away from the support of civil servants towards the support of export-oriented business class with tax reductions, overlooking illegal trade deals and etc. According to Özyürek, this change disadvantaged Kemalists in two respects. One, the Kemalist elite and their families experienced a reduction in their social status from upper-middle class to lower-middle class, and two, they lost their domination over public space and the reputable position that they had previously enjoyed.[287] Together with these real losses, the Kemalists also experienced the real loss of their social basis. According to Kasaba (1998), by 1980s, the population, most of whom had no direct experience of the initial years of the Rupublic, was fed up with the discourse of golden years to come. Some were even irritated with this discourse of a forever delayed future and we no longer willing to hold on and compromise for it. This, according to him, caused a questioning of the basic tenets of Kemalist ideology and of Republican history,

[286] Toprak, 2006: 39

[287] Özyürek, 2006: 17

Turkish identity and culture. The Kemalist modernization project had faced serious questioning by the public.[288]

Toprak (2006) suggests that the decline of the left was also influential in Islamism gaining power[289]. Gülalp (2002) adds the recession of the Kemalist ideology to be one of the major reasons for Islamism's political success in 1980s and 1990s. In addition, he sees this recession as a manifestation of a broader questioning of modernism as a project on the global scale. Gülalp (2002) points to the fact that the universal civilization which has been upheld as the ultimate goal of Turkish (progressivist) history came to be criticized on many arenas of life and the world. It was exceedingly casted as a Euro-centric model and there emerged a general atmosphere of search for more authentic cultures as an alternative. In this environment, the Islamism and Islamic identity politics that RP encouraged and represented became one such alternative to the universalistic modernization project of Kemalism. The Islamist vein criticized the Kemalist project to the greatest degree for its attempts at imitating the Western model thoroughly and eventually accused it of serving the imperialist project of domination.[290] Gülalp (2002) adds that the period between The Gulf War (January 1991) and the bombing of World Trade Center Towers (September 2001) was a time marked by an overall criticism of modernism and its universalist principles and by the emergence of politics based on identities. He argues that Islamism, together with many more identity politics which also included an intrinsic critique of modernity, found the most suitable environment to emerge as an alternative political identity.[291] Yıldız (2003) agrees with Gülalp (2002) but puts the emphasis elsewhere. According to Yıldız (2003) the popularity of identity politics at the time helped shape RP's discourse of Islam[292]. In Gülalp's (2002) view, Islamism with its emphasis of authenticity was much more radical in its anti-imperialist

[288] Kasaba, 1998: 22

[289] Toprak, 2006: 38

[290] Gülalp, 2002: 37-8

[291] Gülalp, 2002: 9-10

[292] Yıldız, 2003: 188

stance. It was this environment that Islamism as a political venture ultimately flourished.[293]

The Kemalist nationalist project did not only suffer ideological attacks but economic ones as well. It is reported in many sources that a majority of the population were dissatisfied with the management of the economy by mainstream political parties[294]. Kürkçü (2002) argues that especially frustrated were the workers, poor people of the cities, Kurds and Alevis, who mostly held CHP responsible[295]. In addition, Gülalp (2002) adds that there were daily news reports exposing yet another example of deep corruption and scandals associated with almost all political parties. Turkey of the time was living through economic stagnation which eventually erupted in the 2001 financial crisis. The nationalist-statist development model of Kemalist modernization failed to deliver the level of economic and social progress that it had promised.[296]

As if all other consequences were not enough, by the beginning of the 1990s, there was a drastic decrease of representation of oppositional parties in the coalitions in the parliament. While *Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti* (Socialdemocratic People's Party, abbreviated SHP) and *Demokratik Sol Parti* (Democratic Left Party, abbreviated DSP) held some hope of taking CHP's place[297] during this time, they were absorbed and absolved in the coalitions they entered even at their strongest. During this time in the absence of any serious oppositional force in politics and where many parties were accused of corruption and were judged to have lost any connection to real issues and problems of the population, RP emerged as the sole candidate for filling these positions. In addition, unlike other political parties, RP leaders had learned their lesson well and combined their Marxist-sounding censure of exploitation and disenfranchisement of masses under the current capitalist system with liberal

[293] Gülalp, 2002: 38 and 10

[294] Cooper, 2002: 121

[295] Kürkçü, 2002: 7

[296] Gülalp, 1995: 54

[297] Democratic parties of pre-1980 coup were banned from politics and use of exact names for new parties was also prohibited until 1992. SHP and DSP emerged from previous CHP ranks during this time.

themes such as the centrality of 'civil society'. By 1993, in the face of such failure of all other self-declared secularist parties, Erbakan was feeling confident enough to announce that had Kemal Atatürk been alive, he would be a Refah supporter.[298]

RP was eventually banned from politics by the Constitutional Court in 1998 on the grounds of violating the principle of secularism, after the fourth military invention in politics of February 1997, which later came to be known as the 'postmodern coup'[299]. From RP's ranks, a new party emerged: *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party, abbreviated FP) under the leadership of Recai Kutan. It was a commonplace knowledge that Erbakan remained the leader of the movement. Kutan's name was only on paper. In 1999 general elections, it was clearly observable that FP was not able to concentrate RP voters for itself as FP did poorly in those elections. The decline in the success of FP, which was after all just a continuation of RP, initiated heated intra-party debates about leadership and party programs. Abdullah Gül challenged Kutan for leadership in party congress of May 2000[300]. It was clear Gül nearly convinced half of the party members but Kutan resumed leadership with just a few more votes. Only a year later than its emergence, Vural Savaş, who was one of the highest rank Public Prosecutors sued FP in the Constitutional Court on allegations of violating the secular character of the state. Constitutional Court finalized the case in 2001 and banned FP from politics.

A year before FP's closure by the Constitutional Court the members of the party were already caught up in heated debates about party leadership and program and two fringes were clearly visible in the party. Upon its closure, two new parties following the internal fracture were formed by its members: *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party, abbreviated SP) and *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice

[298] Gülalp, 1995: 55-6 and Yıldız, 2003:191

[299] The reason for this label was that the military did not physically intervene in the government like it had done in the 1960 and 1980 coups. Rather, this 'postmodern coup' consisted of a document warning the government that the military posted on its official website after a quite unprecedented meeting of 9 hours. An army high official would later celebrate the postmodern character of this intervention for being unlike the previous ones, not shedding blood or upsetting anyone. He even went on to praise it as having been carried out very appropriately, and through 'democratic' means. (Gülalp, 2002: 82-3)

[300] Dağı, 2005: 10

and Development Party, abbreviated AKP). SP was formed under Recai Kutan's leadership and continued to follow in the lines of RP. The members of SP had come to be known as the traditionalists within FP. AKP were composed of members following Abdullah Gül who would leave the leadership to Tayyip Erdoğan. These members were the ones who had challenged Kutan's and thus Erbakan's leadership within FP and were known as the reformists.[301] SP never developed into a strong party and did not occupy any serious position within the parliament. AKP, on the other hand, was to become one of the most popular parties in the history of the Turkish Republic, gathering more than 34% of the total votes in its first national election in 2002. The secularist establishment had by now receded to the background of politics but were nevertheless taken off guard by AKP's electoral success. It was obvious that religion was by no means disappearing within Turkish politics or the public sphere for that matter.

G. Religion is Here to Stay (2000-2010): Kemalism in Serious Crisis

By early 2000s, the secularist section of the population, the members of which had been bundled together, increasingly distinguished themselves from those they viewed to be Islamist. There was a clear divide in the population with secularists on one side and the Islamists on the other. There was also a third group of Kurdist nationalists ranging from separatists to those seeking democratic representation, but the social divide that was the subject of many national and international news reports and studies composed of the previous two groups. The leftist/rightist divide of 1970s had begun in 1990s to be replaced with the secularist/ Islamist divide[302]. The image of Turkey portrayed in and encouraged by the media was a nation divided on this axis.

Despite the electoral success of its successors both in national and local elections through mid-1980 to 1990s, AKP's success of obtaining more than 34%

[301] Dağı, 2005: 10

[302] Toprak, 2006: 34

of the total votes in 2001 national elections still came as a shock for many self-proclaimed secularists. Throughout 2000s, the Republic Day celebrations and other common rallies became shows of the popular support of the secularity of the state with the attendance of thousands of people. Famous chants at these celebrations and rallies ranged from "Turkey is laic and will remain laic" to "we are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal". The population rediscovered Anıtkabir, the tomb of Atatürk as the popular site of reverence for and support of Kemalist statecraft in the face of the threat of politicization of Islam.

Since its founding, however, AKP put up a very different face than its successors. Highlighting democracy and human rights with an emphasis of the importance of Turkey joining the European Union, AKP confounded many secularists. The party descendent of the Erbakanist Islamist fringe appeared quite different than previous party politics on almost all aspects. This upset many easy separations and commonplace expectations that the secularists had felt at home with.

For one thing, AKP did not seem to carry the Islamist sensibilities of its members into politics as RP or FP/SP. AKP was keeping its ties with Islam in the social realm but did not embrace it as a political program. In its own self-definition, AKP claimed to be a conservative democratic party. In fact, it was declared in the party program and speeches of its leaders that ideologies like Islamism were obsolete in the age of globalization.[303] According to Cizre (2008), AKP's views were the product of self-criticism within Islamic discourse, and amounted to a shift from 'Islamist' to a 'Muslim' subjectivity[304]. By declaring itself to be a conservative democratic party, AKP "left its ideological transformation usefully ambiguous"[305].

A second point is that AKP seemed to take over the flag from Kemalism of Westernization. In this sense, AKP was turning out to be much more in line with the Kemalist ideal of modernization than its contemporary secularist counterpart. Secularists of 2000s increasingly turned their back on the West with a discourse

[303] Dağı, 2005: 11-12

[304] Cizre, 2008: 5

[305] Cizre, 2008: 6

interestingly similar to that of RP. The West, in the secularist rhetoric, was plotting against Turkey, still pursuing the Sevres Treaty[306]. The motto of the times was "Turk does not have a friend but the Turk": everyone was against Turkey except the Turks. The West was fostering not only Kurdish separatism, but also the Islamic revival behind closed doors[307]. In this sense, the secularist rhetoric resembled that of RP's dismissal of the West: the only source of survival and progress was to be found in the culture and identity of Turkey itself. The difference was that there was a much more silent treatment of the Islamic character of this culture and identity in the secularist version.

A renowned scholar of Turkish history and politics, Feroz Ahmad (2003) makes the observation that in Turkey, "each time the Islamist party was dissolved, its successor claimed to be more moderate and less Islamist"[308]. However, with AKP, there seems to be something more than this logic. Not only did AKP turn away from political Islamism of its successors, but it gradually turned itself into the most ardent supporter of human rights, the rule of law, entry into EU and the following of other international charters' guidelines. The praising of the particularistic values of Islam of post-Cold War politics was completely abandoned for universalistic values of democracy, law and human rights.

This decision to pursue a pro-western politics by AKP was a conscious and calculated choice. First of all, as mentioned above, AKP leadership had grown weary of the ideology of Islamism in the face of globalization. A second and perhaps more strategic reason was that AKP leaders knew they needed the modern/western concepts of human rights, rule of law and democracy in their aspiration to comprise a stronger and wider front against the Kemalist center. This was AKP's most convincing ground of legitimacy in facing the secularist establishment. AKP leaders had observed that the stronger ties they developed with western values and institutions, the less likely it would be for the secularist establishment and especially the army to find legitimate reasons for intervention. A Kemalist ideology maintained and protected by the military would be less and

[306] Dağı, 2005: 14

[307] Dağı, 2005: 14

[308] Ahmad, 2003: 172

less sustainable in this environment and greater democratization of the political establishment would further AKP's chances, taken to be an Islamist party, of staying as a legitimate player.[309]

The secularists had inherited a conception of religion reminiscent of early Republican history. Religion according to them is a phenomenon that would be swept away as modernization progressed[310]. Religion, especially Islam, is conceived to be a sign of regressive traditionalism and reactionary in character. However, with AKP, Islam started showing a very different face, one that is at home in the globalizing world and within democratic rule. This new Islamism of AKP upset the secularist expectations of religiosity and the endemic responses that secularism had developed in relation to it. As AKP politics were increasingly becoming more and more geared towards further democratization and westernization, Kemalist secularism was becoming more and more conservative hoping for a restoration of elitist republicanism. By early 2000s, it was clear that Kemalism was rapidly losing political and popular ground as AKP was attracting supporters from all levels of society from the urban poor to intellectuals and well-off liberals.

H. Conclusion: Why Panic?

The current 'comeback' of Islam shocked and repulsed many self-proclaimed secularists. Questions were raised as to the secularity of the Republic. There were huge demonstrations of panic in the face of Islamization of politics, or the politicization of Islam. But what was so scary about this so-called 'rise' of Islam and what does it say about the self-identity of the Republic?

First, in order to answer these questions, one must realize that "religion is by no means disappearing in the modern world"[311]. This persistence has put the modernist rhetoric that envisioned a progress from the religious to the secular in

[309] Dağı, 2005: 12-3

[310] Poulton, 1997: 192

[311] Asad, 2003: 1

great doubt (Asad, 2003: 1). However, being the authoritative voice of history, secularization and modernization continue to pose themselves as normative structures and this makes the argument that judges religion to have returned to appear as a subversion of the norm. The question of where religion has returned to, however, reveals a completely different story. But where has it been for so long?

As has been delineated, the self-identification of the Republic has severely pushed religion into the private sphere and denied it any existence in the public and political realms. Religion, however, persisted. Privatized or not, Islam has always been present in Turkish society. What has been recognized as a comeback is in fact not a coming back of something that was nonexistent. Even the choice of the word of comeback implies the coming back of something that already exists but is or has been held in captivity, something that has been marginalized and suppressed; something that has been pushed to the fringes of the identity of the Turkish nation people. Religion, throughout the centuries of single-party rule, had been excluded from and made the Other of the Turkish national identity. However, as in any process of self-formation, this Other, this thing that was non-self, came to constitute the very conditions and definitions of what has been made the authoritative and legitimate national subject. In other words, "in so far as modern Turkey constituted its identity by progressively distancing itself from Islam, Islam functioned as its constitutive outside"[312]. The identity of the national subject has always been under the shadow of this outside. Like any process of exclusion, the constitution of this subject had always carried the traces of that which is excluded. This has made creation of the modern Turkish identity "inevitably an unstable, contingent arrangement"[313].

The coming back of religion, in a global context, as well as the particular context of Turkey, then is its coming back to the public and the political spheres where it has been denied any entry to. This is the source of panic that it has issued. The return of the excluded put the premises of secularism and modernism in many countries in question. From the Muslim minorities in Europe to the increasing

[312] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[313] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

power of politicized Islam in Turkey, religion, especially Islam, has been made into a great danger as it challenged the self-understanding of Europeanness and Turkishness that were products of centuries of such exclusion. In Roy Oliver's (2007) words, "Islam is a mirror in which the West projects its own identity crisis"[314].

Talking of the feeling of anxiety and fear in the face of increasing visibility of Islam in France, Asad (2006) maintains that "these sensibilities go beyond 'the historic conflict with the lands of Islam'; they are integral to the secular project attached to the Republic"[315]. He explains that this was so because the French Republic was to "promote a certain kind of national subject who is held to be essentially incompatible with an 'Islamic subject' – not merely in the legal but also in the psychological sense"[316]. Nothing could be truer for the Turkish Republic as well. One should always keep in mind the decades of ideological struggles and the above mentioned processes of distancing to establish this incompatibility in the Turkish case to make sense of the fear and paranoia any appearance of Islam in the public and political spheres causes. Islam, much in the same way that Roy Oliver (2007) asserts for France, has become an "existential question" calling "into question the very identity of the country, or at least the nature of its institutions"[317]. Mobilization of people in France, again in a very similar manner to Turkey, "for the defense of 'republican values' and 'laicite'" is an expression of this existential nature of the question at hand[318].

The modernist effort of demarcating the economic, the political, the scientific and the religious spheres has clearly failed. The politicized Islam or Islamic politics has put this self-righteous effort in question[319]. As seen in many cases, political Islam is not the advocate of the establishment of Islamic states in place of the nation-state. The responses it develops are responses to strictly

[314] Oliver, 2007: xiii

[315] Asad, 2006: 510

[316] Asad, 2006: 510

[317] Oliver, 2007: 1

[318] Oliver, 2007: 1

[319] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

modern phenomena, and more frequently than not, through a postmodernist discourse. The claims it makes touch upon a variety of aspects of the modern life such as economy, democracy, human rights, education, scientific advancements and projects, and etc.[320]. The religious, as the secularists have created and demarcated it, can no longer be contained in the private sphere, and its entry into the public and political spheres has clearly upset the easy distinctions that the secularists felt comfortable with. In the Turkish context, the increasing appearance of Islam in the public and the political spheres has shown that much in the same way as its western counterpart, the nationalist, modernist, and secularist Turkish identity itself has been in crisis. This crisis finds expression in the paranoid forms of nationalist and secularist responses to the claims of Islam in the public and political spheres, at least since mid-1990s. And it is this form of 'paranoid nationalism' to use Ghassan Hage's term, that makes more meaningful relations with the Other impossible[321].

[320] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

[321] Yeğenoğlu, 2007

IV. ‘TO THE GRAVE!’: ATATÜRK TATTOOS

A. Atatürk Tattoos over the Internet

The phenomenon of Atatürk tattoos have attracted the attention of Turkish dailies and other networks of information sharing on the internet. I had already written about the Facebook group formed by and for people ‘who carry their Atatürk tattoos with pride’[322]. In my online research, I came across pieces on the subject in newspapers *Radikal*[323], *Cumhuriyet*[324], *Hürriyet*[325], *Vatan*[326], *Haber Türk*[327], *Posta*[328], *Milliyet*[329], *Sabah*[330] and *Takvim*[331]. Although a piece of report on Atatürk tattoos appears in more than one of the above mentioned publications, it is still impressive that it should find coverage (through the years 2006- 2010) in so many papers of different political commitments. Atatürk tattoos have also received some attention in international press. Washington based magazine The Atlantic broadcasted an article[332] on the web on the issue in 2010. Also, CNN’s website includes an article[333] dated 2010 about Atatürk tattoos.

[322] Atatürk Dövmesini Gururla Taşıyanlar. (n.d.)

[323] Dövmede yeni moda Atatürk İmzası, 2007

[324] Zaman, 2008) and Türkiye'de Atatürk Dövmelerinin Popülaritesi Artıyor, 2010

[325] Arna, 2006 and Türkiye’nin Yeni Siyasi Sembolü: Atatürk Dövmeleri, 2010

[326] Türkiye’nin Yeni Siyasi Sembolü Atatürk Dövmeleri!, 2011

[327] Dövmede Son Trend Atatürk’ün İmzası, 2006

[328] Bedava Atatürk Dövmesi, 2009

[329] Şen, 2010

[330] Özkeskin, 2010

[331] İngiliz Çift, Atatürk'ü Kalbinde Taşıyor, 2010 and Türkiye’nin Yeni Siyasi Sembolü, 2010

[332] Zalewski, 2010

[333] Neild, 2010

Coverage of Atatürk tattoos in online media, both national and international, proves the fact that they have been certainly observable in the Turkish society, on the bodies of Turkish nation-people. What is more is that many of the above mentioned articles are followed by dozens of comments from readers, who, at times, engage in heated debates about the issue in general and about Atatürk's legacy in particular. The two examples of international media are followed by 37 and 32 comments respectively.

Another venue of much debate about Atatürk tattoos is internet forums. I found six such forums[334] each with over 30 pages where users put forth their views of Atatürk tattoos. The posts range from enthusiastic approval to outright condemnation of those who have or thinking to have Atatürk's portrait or signature tattooed on their bodies. Contrary to expectations of some, the ground for dismissal is rarely religious.

The dissemination of knowledge on Atatürk tattoos have been largely influenced by the efforts of Köprüaltı Tattoo Studio in İzmir which have started the trend of tattooing Atatürk's signature for free, announcing it on the internet. The person I interviewed at Köprüaltı, henceforth called Ahmet, claimed that they were solely responsible for the emergence of Atatürk's signature tattoos. Many of the forums mentioned have copied pieces of writing from Köprüaltı's website[335]. The event that triggered their campaign of tattooing Atatürk's signature free of charge was the event where a person whom they had tattooed with Atatürk's signature came back a week later to have it removed due to a threat from his boss of being fired because of his tattoo. The artists at Köprüaltı, including Ahmet and the senior tattoo artist, refused this client's request, but were greatly upset by it and they decided that they would do it for free from then on.[336] The date was October 2007. They announced that they would continue as much as they could, until "his real value is understood… Until those scums who benefit from insulting

[334] İzmirlilere Ücretsiz Atatürk İmzası Dövmesi, 2009; Konu: Atatürk İmzalı Dövme. (n.d.); Atatürk'ün İmzasını Dövme Yapmışlar, 2007; Dövmede Yeni Moda Atatürk İmzası, 2007; Dövmede Son Moda Atatürk'ün İmzası, 2006; and BravoTR Kullanıcı Forumları, 2008

[335] http://www.koprualti.com.tr

[336] BravoTR Kullanıcı Forumları, 2008

him disappear"[337]. To this day, tattoo artists at Köprüaltı claim that they are inking 4 people a day 5 days a week with Atatürk's signature free of charge. An important entry on Köprüaltı's website is the numbers of people whom they have tattooed Atatürk's signature throughout the years. The following numbers are taken from their website.

2007	People
Oct.	21
Nov.	64
Dec.	79

2008	People
Jan.	187
Feb.	167
Mar.	192
Apr.	227
May	205
June	254
July	228
Aug.	185
Sept.	197
Oct.	169
Nov.	121
Dec.	144

2009	People
Jan.	127
Feb.	132
Mar.	149
Apr.	164
May	185
June	218
July	204
Aug.	229
Sept.	176
Oct.	191
Nov.	186
Dec.	172

2010	People
Jan.	165
Feb.	181
Mar.	189
Apr.	176
May	166
June	183
July	170
Aug.	206
Sept.	181
Oct.	179
Nov.	156
Dec.	162

2011	People
Jan.	171
Feb.	159
Mar.	157
Apr.	67

TOTAL:7241 people[338]

The figures presented on Köprüaltı's website are so massive that it is almost impossible to believe that so many people would rush to Köprüaltı's services. To give a better picture of the enormity of these numbers, I have compared them to population statistics of Turkey as of December 2010[339]. The total number of people that Köprüaltı presents as having the Atatürk tattoo done at their studio

[337] Atamız'a Saygı. (n.d.)

[338] Atamız'a Saygı. (n.d.)

[339] The population statistics I have used come from the website of Turkish Statistical İnstitute of Turkish Prime Ministry: http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=8428

corresponds to 0.013% of total population of Turkey above the age of 14 as of December 2010. 7241 people are also 0.18% of the total population of İzmir regardless of age[340] as of December 2010.

I have taken the number of people above age 14 in the first comparison assuming that no one under this age is eligible for getting a tattoo. The legal age that one can be tattooed in Turkey is 18, however, I have come across people as young as 16 who had Atatürk's signature tattooed. Also, the legal age for tattooing is a consensus among tattoo parlors as there are yet no government policies about tattooing. People under the age of 18 can get tattoos with the permission (and usually with the presence, at least once) of their parents.

Ahmet told me in August 2010 that they give 4 appointments a day for 5 days of the week to people wanting to get the Atatürk's signature tattoo for free. This means that the parlor would tattoo a total of 20 people a week, or 80 people a month. I could not say this for previous months, but the numbers later than August 2010 at least, seem a bit hard to believe considering this calculation. However, these numbers are not presented as pertaining to those who got Atatürk's signature's tattoo for free, so there is always the possibility that more people got it with payment than not. Even if the numbers are grossly exaggerated, the effort to present them as such and publicly is significant enough in itself.

The numbers are enormous, considering Köprüaltı is one of dozens of tattoo parlors operating in Turkey and that these numbers are of people who got Atatürk's signature tattooed and that they exclude those with Atatürk's portrait or full figure. It is thought provoking to imagine how many people out there actually have Atatürk tattoos (signature or not) considering there are at least 4 major cities[341] with people with an interest in this direction that I have noted through my internet research. It is clear that Atatürk tattoos are phenomenal, even if there is half the number of tattoo parlors in other cities than those in İzmir[342], and even if those parlors do one tenth of the work that Köprüaltı claims to have done.

[340] I could not find population statistics of İzmir distributed among age cohorts.

[341] İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya.

[342] Actually, İstanbul is known to be the city with the biggest number of tattoo parlors. However, any argument about tattoo parlors or the practice of tattooing in Turkey can only be assumptions as tattooing is in the strange position of being neither legal nor illegal in Turkey. There are still no

B. Atatürk Tattoos: Interviews and Major Findings

1. Not just any Tattoo

One of the results that I was able to reach after my interviews with tattoo artists and tattooees is that Atatürk's signature tattoos are regarded as different from tattoos *per se*. When asked about why people got tattoos, a general positive emphasis was put on self-expression, life style, permanency, feeling of uniqueness, and body esthetics by the tattoo artists. There were also some negative feelings on the side of the tattoo artists towards a portion of the people who got tattoos for being wannabes, for being ignorant and for their sole motivator being attractiveness. Many of these assumptions were shared by the tattooed people. Upon the same question, they again emphasized self-expression, uniqueness, individuality, lifestyle and permanency. Their negative views of tattoos or people who get tattooed were also similar, accusing (sometimes all and sometimes a part of) tattooed people as being ignorant, wannabes, showoffs, and only to attract the attention of girls and women. When it came to my question about why people get Atatürk's signature's tattoo, the conversation mostly diverged from it being another design of tattoo among many others. Tattoo artists estimated that people got Atatürk tattoos out of love for Atatürk, as a reaction or rebellion against certain things, and to show that people who love and respect Atatürk are still present in Turkish society. Their estimation is to the point to a great extent as tattooees also voiced similar reasons for getting Atatürk tattoos.

Another reason that I was able to judge Atatürk tattoos as being different from any tattoo design or the practice of tattooing is that many people who get Atatürk tattoos, according to tattoo artists, are not tattoo enthusiasts as such. I was

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government policies or regulations pertaining to tattooing. Many tattoo artists, however, have developed their own local associations and some have established ties with local bureaus of the Turkish Tradespeople and Artists' Confederation acquiring license through them. There is also a national association of tattoo and piercing artists called *Döv-Der*, one of the founders of which is the tattoo artist I frequent. *Döv-Der* has accomplished to get in touch with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Ministry of Health and is currently in conversation with these institutions for professionalization and regulation of tattooing as a sector. (Döv-Der Diger Adı ile VÜSAD, 2008)For an interview with Cemil Arabcı, one of the founders of *Döv-Der*, please see http://www.dovmesanatidergisi.com/?p=145.

curious about this and asked the artists if people who came to them to get Atatürk tattoos had other tattoos that they had gotten before then. Only 3 out of 13 tattoo artists said that there were people with tattoos as much as those without one before they got their Atatürk tattoos. 8 out of 13 said that the people they have tattooed with Atatürk's signature (or portrait) in general did not have any tattoos previous to this one. I also asked whether they thought it was likely for those people to get another tattoo after the Atatürk tattoo, 4 of them said that they thought it was very likely. Only 2 said that they did not think so. However, on this subject, it was hard to single out the people with Atatürk tattoos from a general population with tattoos and answers in the positive were conditioned to a great extent by the overriding assumption that tattoos are 'addictive', that once you get one, you will most probably get another one and another and possibly another one. It was a comment by the only woman tattoo artist, I will call her Su, whom I had the chance to interview that convinced me the most. Su said that people who got Atatürk tattoos were, in her opinion, not "passionate about tattoos like you and I". Su was also one of the two people who did not think it likely that they would return to a parlor for a second tattoo.

Interestingly enough, except for a few examples, both the tattoo artists and tattooees tended to value Atatürk tattoos more than other ones. On the side of tattoo artists, many believed the proportion of people who only had tattoos for attractiveness, who they also described as being wannabes were significantly smaller among the people with Atatürk tattoos. The same was true for tattooees, in addition to which many among them who did not seem to be particularly fond of tattoos were zealously defending their Atatürk tattoos. As if to confirm Su's judgment, only 8 out of 27 tattooees that I interviewed had another or more tattoo other than their Atatürk tattoos. Of these people, all but two (Özge and Coşkun), had tattoos either of very classic designs such as a barcode, or the emblem of a football team or of an ordinary nature such as the names of their loved ones. In other words, their tattoos were not significantly unique in design or significantly individualistic, as would be expected from tattoos of whom I have called tattoo enthusiasts. In addition, 2 people were sure that they did not want any other tattoos, whereas 5 said that they would like to get more.

Another sign of Atatürk tattoos being different from the practice or culture of tattooing is that there is a consensus among tattoo artists and tattooees that there are at least a portion of those with Atatürk tattoos get it done only because they know that certain parlors do it free of charge (either indefinitely or on national holidays such as the 10th of November which is the anniversary of Atatürk's death) or for little fees in comparison to tattoos that would require a similar amount of materials, time and effort on the part of the artist. While those artists who are not particularly fond of this practice, this portion of people who get it done just because of this economic dimension is actually greater than those who get it for more appreciated and 'enlightened' reasons.

Furthermore, the tattoo artists affirmed that Atatürk's signature was an easy piece as a tattoo design which adds to, on the hand that parlors have the luxury of cutting people deals and on the other that people choose to have it done as their first tattoo to try out the process, the pain and also living with ink. There was also agreement among tattoo artists that Atatürk's signature was the simplest answer or the first answer that comes to mind when the people who want to get a tattoo ask themselves 'what should I get?' These further the claim that many people with Atatürk tattoos are not very informed on having tattoos or not very used to tattooing as culture. This would not be the case had it been argued that people who get Atatürk tattoos unexceptionally came to parlors wanting *specifically Atatürk's signature* as a tattoo and wanting Atatürk's signature *specifically as a tattoo*.

As I have mentioned, one tattoo parlor does Atatürk' signature's tattoos for free indefinitely. 4 others that I have interviewed stated that they have campaigns of free-of-charge Atatürk's signature's tattoos on national holidays and 5 confessed that they charge less for Atatürk's signature in comparison to tattoos of similar designs. Only 2 out of all tattoo artists said they did not carry out any such special offers. The numbers are again in this direction on the side of the tattooees. 23 out of 27 people with Atatürk's signature's tattoo said that they had it done for free. A part of the reason for overrepresentation of these people among my interviewees is that I have gone to a parlor on 10th of November 2010 which I knew to have free-of-charge offer for Atatürk's signature tattoos on this date. 14 people out of these 23 were people whom I interviewed on that occasion.

However, the remaining 9 had it for free on different occasions and 1 said that the tattoo artist had cut him a deal. 3 people who are not represented here, on the other hand, did not openly state that they paid for their tattoos, but rather either failed to answer or I failed to ask this question to them.

One last theme that I was able to pick out from my interviews is the differences in attitude towards tattoos in general and Atatürk tattoos in particular, on the side of tattoo artists and tattooees both. Despite tattoo artists' general claim that Turkish society has grown used to tattoos in general, they made statements quite to the contrary in their family and close ones' response to them becoming tattoo artists and getting tattoos. 11 of 13 tattoo artists stated that their families were not happy about their decisions of becoming tattoo artists and/or of having tattoos but that they tolerated these facts. Akın's parents even went as far as to disown him upon him getting his very first tattoo. Fortunately later they reconciled. Onur's mother reacted quite harshly to his first tattoo as well, saying "no one should have a child like you [*senin gibi evlat olmaz olsun*]". They too, later reconciled. However, these initial reactions show that even families of tattoo artists are not very fond of either tattooing as an occupation or getting a tattoo. Su claimed that although the people of her city were quite open-minded about tattoos, she still gets condescending and disapproving comments like "*vah vah*" and "*çık çık*"[343] on the streets. Akın quite rightly pointed to the privilege of his profession saying "we live and work in places like Kadıköy and Taksim[344], and of course we only come across 20% of the population who are not against tattoos. However, there is a big section of the society which is against it. I think the Turkish society in general is very much against tattoos". Ahmet, on his part, said that tattooing as a profession was like "selling snails in a Muslim neighborhood"[345].

[343] The closest comment in English would be "oh what a pity".

[344] Kadıköy on the Anatolian side and Taksim on the European side are (regarded as) the two cultural centers of İstanbul. These are the two distrcits that many young people would go for recreation and especially alcohol consumption. Kadıköy and Taksim are densely populated with cafes, restaurants, pubs, and bars.

[345] This is a Turkish saying meaning to sell something where there is no potential for any customer. In a more general sense, it means to do something in a situation where you know it will not be welcomed by the general public.

When it came to the Atatürk tattoo, however, many of the tattoo artists said that the society in general responded very positively to them. I was curious to learn about whom they thought would respond to it in a negative way and at first this took a lot of effort on the side of the artists to be able to conceptualize, as they did not think it very likely to be possible. Only after some encouragement on my part did they come up with possible answers. The question remained hypothetical in their minds, so their answers were mostly speculations as to who those people might be. According to Ahmet, Ali, and Bora those who would respond negatively to Atatürk tattoos could only be people who do not like Atatürk himself. Su simply said that they could be people with different political outlooks, while Onur likened the possibility of such a response to previous responses to Alevis in Turkish society and said "some things are changing, perhaps the Kemalist families are telling their children not to be so outspoken about their Kemalism, as Alevi families were advising their children previously". Şahin and Yasin, the artists that I interviewed together, did not think that such audacity to verbalize a dislike of Atatürk tattoos existed in the Turkish society. They added that families of young people of less than 18 years of age were generally supportive of their decision to get the Atatürk tattoo. Fatih, perhaps most irritated by my question of all the artists, said "one ought to analyze their blood" about the people who might react discouragingly to Atatürk tattoos.

The contrast between the tattoo artists' estimation of the general attitude towards tattoos and the particular attitude towards the Atatürk tattoo is obvious. While a great portion of the artists accept that they do not think tattoos are very well received in the Turkish society as a whole, it is almost inconceivable for them that Atatürk tattoos could be unwelcomed by some people. These sensibilities are mostly shared by the tattooees as well.

It was again evident in the statements of tattooees that tattoos were not much well thought off in the society. Thought most of the tattooees said that attitudes towards tattoos were relaxed to a great extent after the fatwa of DIB in the early 2000s that tattoos were not a sin [*günah*], but were considered disagreeable by Prophet Mohammed and Allah [*mekruh*], there was a distinct feeling of negativity towards tattoos in their statements. On the one hand, the tattooees themselves had

already voiced their disapproval of certain forms of tattooing as stated above. For most, the more extreme forms of tattooing, those which are either too big or too reprehensible by their standards, were excessive and 'needless' in many tattooees words. Again, most of the tattooees regarded people with such tattoos as wannabes or showoffs. On the other, tattooees' families' and associates' attitudes were again indicative of a general dislike of tattoos. When asked what they thought their families' and friends' stance on tattoos to be, almost all of the tattooees said that especially their families were quite strongly against tattoos.

Yet, tattooees had a very different idea of the reception of Atatürk tattoos. Except for a few who did not have any experiences to this effect, all of the tattoos said that they were greeted with a lot of appreciation and respect by people close to them. Some even told stories of how people they did not know also commented positively on their tattoos. Can, for instance, told me that once a middle aged lady stopped him on the street and examined his Atatürk tattoo, after which she displayed appreciation for him and for his tattoo. For Kemal, "none of this is surprising for me because everyone loves Atatürk". As to their families, and considering that many have stated them to be against tattoos, there was a consensus among the tattooees that had their tattoos been of something else than Atatürk's signature, they would have to face a strong negative reaction from them. 9 people out of the 12 people that I interviewed whose families knew of their Atatürk tattoo were of this opinion. 7 out of 14[346] people who got their tattoos on the 10th of November while I was there, whose families, therefore, had not yet seen their tattoos also thought that this would be the case when their families did see it. Özge, who is one of the few people with tattoos other than her Atatürk tattoo, said that her father is very much against tattoos. However, Özge's father congratulated her about her Atatürk tattoo and he was proud of her for getting one. Emir, who was at the tattoo parlor on the 10th of November, told me that he thought his parents "will think that they have raised a good child for Turkey [*Türkiye'ye hayırlı bir evlat yetiştirdiklerini düşünürler*]". Bilge, on the other hand, had told her family that she would be getting the Atatürk tattoo on that same

[346] I interviewed 15 people on this date as I have written above, but one of the people there that day already had gotten the Atatürk tattoo on a previous date.

day and she said that her family, like that of Özge, was proud of her. She said her mother called her to say she was on the way to the parlor too. 3 other people I have interviewed on November 10, Mahmut, Mustafa and Nazım were a bit worried about what their families would think but all three contended that even if their families would react negatively at first, they would later appreciate the fact that "at least they got a tattoo of something decent". This was the reaction of Sinan's two older sisters, who, Sinan told me, are not particularly fond of tattoos.

In a fashion similar to tattoo artists, the tattooees also found it hard to imagine who could respond negatively to Atatürk tattoos. Or rather, tattooees had a clearer idea of who would be disapproving of Atatürk tattoos, but they were equally convinced that no one would dare voice such disapproval. Many of the tattooees agreed with tattoo artists that anyone who would respond in a negative way to Atatürk tattoos would have to be someone who does not like Atatürk himself. However, none but one of the tattooees ever had such an experience, nor did they think it possible for those people to make their opinion apparent. It was only Talat who has talked about an incident where he received a negative comment about his tattoo. Talat said that people on the streets mostly stopped him to congratulate him. Once a lady even stopped and kissed him on the cheek as a sign of her appreciation. On one other occasion, however, Talat also reported a negative comment by a person he did not know. This person, as he told it, was walking behind him on a crowded street when he said "*sana mı kaldı ulan?*[347]" upon seeing his Atatürk tattoo. Of course, Talat was deeply hurt by this comment, the speaker of which he later named a "simpleton" in our conversation.

Insulting Atatürk remains a very strict taboo in Turkish society. This remains the basic reason behind the artists' and the tatooees' conviction that people would not have the courage to voice their disapproval of their Atatürk tattoos. It is interesting that this remains so when both the artists and the tattooees are aware of a general negative attitude towards tattoos in the Turkish society; an

[347] This one is hard to translate. It is close in meaning to 'it's none of your business' however has a more condescending tone towards the person being addressed, implying that it is not his place to take on upon himself whatever he has, as if he is not worthy of such a thing. A direct translation would go something like this "[out of all the people] has this action/behavior/responsibility been trusted with *you*?" Of course, it is a rhetorical question.

attitude which is clear in the artists' statements about their families' opinion as well as in the statements of the tattooees and their estimation of their families'. Yet, the tattoo in question being one of Atatürk's signature, it takes on a different meaning on both sides' comments than simply being a tattoo. The fact that it is a design pertaining to Atatürk, despite being a tattoo as any other, is evidence enough for them that any discouraging thoughts towards it would remain silenced. This conviction, in my opinion, is far from an innocent one and carries with it a degree of threat or dare on their part, should one actually do so.

2. Not just any Atatürk Trinket

A second conclusion that I was able to reach after my interviews was that both tattoo artists and tattooees also regarded Atatürk tattoos as different from other Atatürk paraphernalia. The most obvious reason for this was that almost all of my interviewees stated that Atatürk tattoos were much more permanent compared to other Atatürk paraphernalia. This theme of permanency brought with it other statements that somewhat exceeded the bare notion of permanency/ temporality.

The intrinsically permanent character of Atatürk tattoos, according to Ahmet, also made them a more unwavering form of showing reaction than other Atatürk-related objects. Ahmet claimed that tattooing in general is different from other possible forms and venues of showing one's personal feelings or thoughts such as a t-shirt or a badge, due to its very nature. In terms of the dissimilarity between Atatürk tattoos and other Atatürk trinkets, Ahmet told me that Atatürk tattoos are like "engraving/inscribing [*kazımak*] it on yourself". The two tattoo artists whom I have interviewed together, Şahin and Yasin, also pointed to the importance of the fact of permanency. Şahin said that people who got Atatürk tattoos were doing something more than carrying or owning other Atatürk paraphernalia. According to Şahin, getting the Atatürk tattoo meant on the side of the tattooees as if saying "take me seriously", "I am serious about this". Another tattoo artist, Fatih claimed that the previous examples of Atatürk-related objects were "purely commercial". According to Ali, another artist, people with Atatürk tattoos are thinking "the meaning of this/him will never change for me", while

another, Bora claimed that, because of its permanency, getting the Atatürk tattoo showed those people to be more devoted to Atatürk than having or carrying other objects of Atatürk symbolism. On this subject, tattoo artist Akın told me that all other Atatürk-related items are examples of how everything became commodities in popular culture and that they are part of fashion. Atatürk tattoos differed from them in this sense.

I received similar inputs from tattooees as well. Again, almost all of the tattooees whom I have interviewed expressed the major difference between Atatürk tattoos and other objects of Atatürk symbolism to be the permanency of the tattoo. Statements by Özge and Bilge, two of the female tattooees, show them to be in agreement in that, according to them both, other objects such as t-shirts, pins, stickers or other clothing or accessory items with Atatürk symbolism were part of fashion. Both classified these objects as being specific to a period and that the shape that such trends take changes over time. Another one of female tattooees, Aslı, first showed me her watch with Atatürk's portrait and her necklace with Atatürk's signature but said that the Atatürk tattoo had much more significance for her: "you can lose a necklace or a watch might stop working but the tattoo will be with you forever". In addition, Hüseyin, Talat and Kerem added on different occasions that it is impossible for one to carry other Atatürk-related objects all the time, even if they were pieces of clothing or jewelry. For all of them, the tattoo meant that one is able to show love for Atatürk every day and all the time. Hüseyin, in particular, wanted his devotion to Atatürk to be seen constantly. Nil also stated that the tattoo was different from other Atatürk paraphernalia because with it, one feels "like living with him" and one can "show he is with you every minute". Another tattooee, Mahmut, claimed that the Atatürk tattoo required much more courage than simply carrying or owning other objects of Atatürk symbolism. Mahmut told me that "not everyone can dare to get the Atatürk tattoo".

There were some limited number of statements on the side of the tattoo artists that disqualified a difference between the Atatürk tattoo and other Atatürk paraphernalia as well. For instance, Ali did not see much of a difference and said that things like Atatürk pins were famous in 1990s when tattoos were not so

popular. He seemed to be explaining the emergence and popularity of the Atatürk tattoo in terms of a general increase in the popularity of tattooing in the Turkish context. Similarly, Ege said that "love for Atatürk has caught up with the times". According to Ege, people were choosing to express their love for Atatürk by these tattoos "choosing tattooing as a modern art form". Yasin provided another explanation, again discarding the significance of tattooing Atatürk's signature, by saying "this is the easiest thing to do and plus, girls like it too". Lasty, Onur, one of the least likely of the tattoo artists to appreciate the Atatürk tattoo or people who got it, said that people were quite ignorant of the fact that what they were deciding to do was going to be with them forever. Onur did not see any determinate difference between the Atatürk tattoo and other forms of Atatürk symbolism because, in his opinion, "people are oblivious about tattoos, they do not come here as if they are going to get something that is permanent; they think the Atatürk tattoo is as if wearing a tie with Atatürk's picture on it". This statement, however, can be read to prove just the opposite as well because here Onur is assessing his clients' thoughts and doing it quite disparagingly as well. Therefore, it might not be so farfetched to conclude that he himself actually thinks just the opposite, that Atatürk tattoos are actually very different than other forms of Atatürk symbolism due merely to the fact that they are tattoos.

I did not come across any statement to the effect of undervaluing the difference between the Atatürk tattoo and other methods or forms of Atatürk symbolism on the side of the tattooees. This shows that they evaluated getting and carrying the Atatürk tattoo as an act intrinsically distinct from possessing or carrying other objects of Atatürk symbolism. However, one also has to take into account the psychological need on the side of the inked to valorize and defend their practices in the face of other possible behavioral avenues that might be capable of conveying a similar message to what they are attempting to convey with their tattoos. Such a psychological need might not be present, or be present to a lesser degree on the side of the tattoo artists, as they are only vessels in this practice, and not the actual bearers of the Atatürk tattoo. This might have allowed them to be less self-preserving in their answers.

3. Where to and Where not to? Or to/for Show or not to/for Show?

A further theme that emerged from my interviews was one concerning the matter of visibility of Atatürk tattoos. Before I have gone to the field and conducted my interviews, my assumption was that people who got Atatürk tattoos placed their tattoos on parts of their bodies that they could easily display in public. As far as I could determine from my research over the internet and from my previous observations on the streets, I had thought that most people got Atatürk's signature's tattoo on the inside of their lower arms. Actually, I thought this to be the case almost exclusively: I thought only very few people got it somewhere else, and that their choice was still a part of the body that could be easily displayed in public. I was convinced that a big part of the Atatürk tattoo phenomena was the effect of spectacle enabled and maintained by constant exposition.

After my interviews with tattoo artists, I can say that according to their accounts, this indeed is the case. When I asked them where on their bodies people mostly got the Atatürk tattoo, unequivocally answered with lower part of the arms, wrists, around the neck, shoulder blades and, for men, on the left side of their chest. From what I've seen, I can say that the previous list follows from most common to least common, shoulder and chest area being the least frequent that I came across. I should make a point at this time, however, that people with the Atatürk tattoo I had the chance to interview were mentioned to me by others who had seen their tattoos. For this to have happened, of course, their tattoos were most likely placed on parts of their bodies which yielded to the public gaze. Therefore, I should say that the previous observation of frequency might be a direct result of this, but the tattoo artists' statements were also in this direction. Hence, I think it is safe to assume that people mostly chose to get the Atatürk tattoo on parts of their bodies that are easily displayed in public. Considering the artists' warnings against getting tattoos on the face and the hands, the two absolutely visible parts of the body, wrists, forearms, and the neck are as visible as it gets in terms of tattooing within the limits of artists' instructions.

As I was moving through my interviews with tattooees, however, a different picture started to emerge. After a while, I was able to observe that there was a split

among the tattooees' attitudes towards immediate visibility of the Atatürk tattoo. While 20 of my interviewees had their tattoos in one of the three parts of the body that I have previously outlined as potentially most visible (wrist, forearm, neck), 7 others had their tattoos on either their shoulders or chest. What was interesting to see was that some of those who had their tattoo on relatively visible parts of their bodies were critical of the other group's decision. Talat told me that he sees some people who "get the Atatürk tattoo but they conceal it; they cover it with clothing and etc. But that's not my thing. If you have it, why try to hide it? It's stupid. My thing is to show it, not hide it". Coşkun, on the other hand, despite having his tattoo on his shoulder, said he made an effort to show it whenever he could and that he got it there only because he is a civil servant. Kerem was also of the opinion that one of the reasons of the Atatürk tattoo was to be a poke-in-the-eye directed at *certain*[348] people and that he actually enjoyed seeing them become annoyed by his tattoo.

Others, who had their tattoos on relatively discreet parts of their bodies such as the shoulder or the chest area, had quite a different idea about the argument for immediate visibility. According to the tattooees on this side of the dispute, the people whose Atatürk tattoos are obvious are not as sincerely Kemalist as they are because all they are doing with their tattoo is showing off. The general understanding by these tattooees was that those people who get the Atatürk tattoo on their wrist, forearm or neck are just looking for an excuse to get a tattoo and are not as dedicated to Atatürk as they are. Many of the tattooees whose tattoos are on more private parts of their bodies such as the shoulder or the chest area said that it was enough for them to know about it themselves, that they were not interested in anyone else knowing about it and that they weren't walking around sticking it to other people's faces. Bilge, despite having her tattoo at the back of her neck, was of this opinion. Likewise, Sinan had his tattoo on the inside of his wrist but told me that he usually covers it partly with his thread bracelets, because there was no need to "brag like 'here, look, I've got a tattoo'". It was enough for Sinan that he and his close friends knew he had the Atatürk tattoo. Alp shares Sinan's opinion and said his tattoo was on his heart, and "I think that's where it is ought to be, and

[348] I will return to this point in the following section.

that's where Atatürk himself ought to be". Alp said that the only time someone could see his tattoo is if they went swimming and he was happy about it. Curiously, he chose to post photographs of himself showing his tattoo on Facebook. Had he not done so, I never would have been introduced to Alp through the friend who saw his tattoo in these photographs.

I had not anticipated this disagreement in the interpretation of placement of the Atatürk tattoo. As I have written before, I had taken there to be a conscious effort on the side of the bearers to turn their tattoos into a spectacle through constant visibility. As it is evident, not everyone who carries the Atatürk tattoo value the effect of visibility as much as I initially presumed. For some, the genuineness of the Atatürk tattoo comes from its invisibility. Choosing authenticity over visibility, these tattooees also seem to be choosing an individualistic expression of true love and respect over a *potentially*[349] political attitude.

One last point I would like to make concerns the artists' and tattooees' perception of where *not* to place the Atatürk tattoo. This has been a point of interest for me since my initial online research where I had come across a subtitle "Never below the Waistline [*Belden Aşağı Asla*]"[350] in one of the newspaper articles concerning Atatürk tattoos. The article had borrowed its subtitle from a statement made by a tattoo artist interviewed for the article. According to the article, this artist, who works out of his Bond-style suitcase and does the Atatürk tattoo for free, has two conditions for the Atatürk tattoo: one, he always tattoos it on parts of the body that are visible in the public, and two, he never tattoos it under the waistline. It was interesting to read this as it showed the magnitude of veneration associated with anything related to Atatürk, even if it is only the tattoo of his signature. The specific manifestation of this veneration in this artist's statement brings to mind the veneration shown for religious texts and artifacts, which are also discouraged to be placed below the waistline. In this sense, it is possible to liken the veneration for Atatürk and anything related to him to feelings of sacredness invoked by religious objects.

[349] I will return to this point in the final section of this chapter.

[350] Arna, 2006.

In this sense, it was important for me to see if other tattoo artists or the tattooees shared this sensibility or not. However, I did not want to put the words in my interviewees' mouths', therefore I did not tell them about this article I had read. Rather, I just asked them if they considered there to be any place in the body where, in their opinion, it would not be appropriate to place the Atatürk tattoo. Interestingly enough, many of both the artists and the tattooees had strong opinions about this subject. Many said that they considered parts of the body such as the waist, the groin, the feet, the abdomen area, the legs and other such places to be inappropriate for the placement of the Atatürk tattoo. Ali made it clear that nothing in the world could make him tattoo Atatürk's signature on these parts of the body (his exact words were "*hayatta yapmam*"). Fatih said that he wouldn't tattoo Atatürk' signature on parts of the body "which might imply an insult, just as I would not tattoo religious symbols on certain parts of the body". Su and Ege also stated that no one would want to get the Atatürk tattoo on those parts of the body judged inappropriate anyway because of its meaning. Talat agreed with this general contention because the Atatürk tattoo is "something exalted [*yüce bir şey*]". Kerem further added that the Atatürk tattoo "must be placed on a very innocent part of the body". His choice of word to label those parts he considered not-innocent (perhaps sinful) was, peculiarly, the highly religiously-charged word of *mahrem*[351].

This might be stretching it too far, but there seems to be a continuation of the possibility of associating the feeling of respect towards Atatürk invoked by the Atatürk tattoo with the feeling of sacredness invoked by religious objects, in the statements of a few of the artists and tattooees. This is surely not a conscious association on the part of the artists and the tattooees. However, there is a potential merit of such an association in showing the weight of the respect for Atatürk, conjured up by any form of incarnation of his imagery. Whether such an association is fitting or not, it is clear that where to place and where not to place the Atatürk tattoo, or whether to show it in public or not emerge as significant issues to be addressed by both the artists and the tattooees.

[351] *Mahrem* is an Arabic word meaning private, intimate or something that needs to remain secret or to be kept from the access of others. *Mahrem* is connotatively a religious word.

4. Who, Why and Why Now?

A final topic that emerged from my interviews, and perhaps the very reason for them, was why people who got the Atatürk tattoo did so and why now. To better understand the answers to this question, it was necessary, in my opinion, to also assess what kinds of people my interviewees thought would get the Atatürk tattoo and what kinds of people would not. I had assumed before the interviews that Atatürk tattoos acted as a statement and a statement is always made towards another. Therefore, these questions would demonstrate if it was indeed a statement, and if so, towards or against whom it was being made. This, in my opinion, would reveal or be an additional factor in the answer to the question of why now.

The tattoo artists' thoughts on why people got the Atatürk tattoo usually converged on the statement that the Atatürk tattoo was a reaction. Ahmet, Ali, Şahin and Yasin, Fatih, Akın, Alper, Cengiz, Bora and Onur all agreed on this character of the Atatürk tattoo. There was also an underlying assumption in almost all of the artists' accounts that people with Atatürk tattoos enjoyed displaying them in public. Şahin, Alper, Cengiz and Onur thought that the Atatürk tattoo is a way for one who has it to show "this is who/ what I am", and "I am an Atatürkist". From their statements, it is clear that they estimated the reasons for people to get the Atatürk tattoo both in terms of conveying a socially meaningful message and a deeply personal attachment.

What's more is that the artists gave explanations which confirmed my initial assumption that the Atatürk tattoo acted, for the most part, as a statement towards another. Ali and Alper thought that the Atatürk tattoo stood as a challenge or a dare (their words were "*meydan okuma*") on the part of the tattooees. Alper said that it was also done to show that "the society is full of Atatürkist youth and people". Cengiz's remarks were similar when he claimed that people with the Atatürk tattoo were making statements to the effect of "we exist too. The Atatürkist people do exist in this society. There are many people who love Atatürk". Cengiz and Onur both went on to say that the Atatürk tattoo was also like saying "I am like certain people and unlike certain others". Onur added that people were turning themselves into a group (his choice of word was

"*kitleleşmek*") with getting the Atatürk tattoo. These statements are all important in showing that the Atatürk tattoo, according to the tattoo artists was something done in reaction or as a challenge to some thing or some people. In other words, it is a statement made towards another; an Other that the people with the Atatürk tattoo hold themselves to be categorically different from. It is this Other that also emerged, perhaps not so overtly but definitely in between the lines, in the statements of the tattooees as well.

The most obvious reason for the tattooees to get the Atatürk tattoo was love and respect for Atatürk. At times, this love took on a very strong dimension and manifested itself not just as love as one might feel towards friends, but as *being in love*, a feeling that one might have for a significant other or as longing[352]. Talat was one of the tattooees who most openly declared his love for Atatürk. In his own words, he got the Atatürk tattoo out of "love (*aşktan*), worship (*tapıyorum*) and longing (*sevdadan*) for Atatürk". Aslı also claimed that she was "in love with Atatürk". Erman, on the other hand told me that he adores Atatürk so much that even his own signature is inspired by Atatürk's. Atatürk is Alp's ideal person. Nil and Emir repeated the famous saying of "Atatürk is alive in our hearts"[353] and added that carrying his signature on one's body was very meaningful.

The second most prominent reason why the tattooees got the Atatürk tattoo, in their own accounts, was showing "this is what/who I am, I am an Atatürkist" and "we are here too, the Atatürkist youth is here" as was estimated by the tattoo artists. Talat, Kerem, Emir and Bilge all made comments to this effect. Keeping in mind that there is a diversion among the tattooees on the subject of visibility of the Atatürk tattoo, no such remarks were made by those who thought that too much visibility of the Atatürk tattoo meant being a wannabe. Their basic reason remained within the domains of love and respect for Atatürk, however, the underlying theme of 'us vs. them' was also present in their speech. Talat, Kerem, Levent, Nil, Emir, Coşkun and Sena outspokenly argued that their Atatürk tattoo

[352] In Turkish language, there are a few words with differing definitions that are all translated as love to English. In the first case where it's simply a friendly kind of love, many tattooees used the word "*sevgi*". In the latter cases, some of the words used include "*aşk*" and "*sevda*".

[353] This is a line from a famous children's song that one grows up singing in kindergarten and primary school, on national holidays.

was a reaction and they took pride in their tattoos to be visible in the public sphere. In general, the tattooees' accounts of their reasons for getting the Atatürk tattoo followed the artists' assessments of conveying both a deeply personal attachment and a socially meaningful message. The order of importance, however, seems to have been turned around in tattooees' responses. The most obvious or important reason for them to get the Atatürk tattoo happens to be purely love for Atatürk. The social message figures only latently.

Although this came to the minds of the tattooees as a second thought, the 'us vs. them' was a very strong dynamic in motivating or retrospectively rationalizing the Atatürk tattoo. It became evident through my interviews that this theme coalesced with the question of why people chose to get an Atatürk tattoo in such great numbers in the last few years. To say the least, it would be safe to say that the opposition or rivalry between these two categories of us and them became much more acute in these years. It was also fed by national and international media where an image of a 'divided Turkey' started to emerge. In mid-2007, Time published an article on the polarization of the Turkish society[354]. It was vastly circulated in national media and caused great stir and serious debate.

Interestingly enough, it was 2007 when both this image and the Atatürk tattoo took on a recognizable character. But what was the Turkish society or Turkish politics divided around? Is this divide in any way reflected in the Atatürk tattoo as a statement? Who are part of 'us' and who are 'they'? The easiest answer to the first question is that beginning with the AKP electoral victory in 2002, Turkish society is thought to be divided among the groups of secularists on one side, and the Islamists on the other. To answer the second question, I shall once more give examples from artists' and tatooees' accounts.

Having been exposed to people with Atatürk tattoos many more times than myself, and many of them being active advocates of the Atatürk tattoo, the tattoo artists had a clear idea of the motivating factor behind the Atatürk tattoo. Many of them, though they did not carry the Atatürk tattoo, shared the tattooees' attitude of 'us vs. them'. According to many of the artists, people who got the Atatürk tattoo were educated, secular, young people with a tendency to read. Ali said that most

[354] Please see Purvis, 2007.

people who came to his studio to get the Atatürk tattoo were teachers, doctors, military officials, and students, thereby associating them to professions held in high respect in Turkish society. Fatih told me that his clients were at least high school graduates, whereas Yasin grouped them under the category of Kemalist revolutionaries[355]. In the artists' opinion, in direct opposition to them stood the group of people variously characterized as anti-Kemalist, religious, Islamist, AKP supporters, and women wearing the specific headscarf or turban. The division that the tattooees imagined was similar, but was conveyed in a much more emotionally charged way.

People with the Atatürk tattoo did not make much of an effort to categorize themselves into a group. When it came to the group of people that they thought stood in stark contrast to them however, many were pretty enthusiastic to list their characteristics as they saw them. Most basically, this group, according to the tattooees, included people who did not like Atatürk and disrespected his legacy or his principles and revolutions. When dug a little deeper, other more passionate opinions quickly emerged. Özge, for instance, put Fetullah followers on the other side of the division. Levent named them as PKK supporters. Nil, Bilge and Yunus, Mustafa and Nazım, Coşkun, Talat, Sena, Alp and Sinan all mentioned religious ('*dinci*'[356]) people and women with turban as those they stood apart from. Talat's account included those who speak Kurdish, religious people who felt comfortable with having 3 wives and wearing the turban. Alp also mentioned Kurdish people, who, in his opinion, disrespected Atatürk's principles in their nationalist discourse. Sinan also mentioned Kurds, and named (some of) them traitors, while Mahmut called most of the religious people ('*dinci*') backward. Coşkun, who was one of the most sensitive on the subject, provided clear attributes of people belonging to the two groups. According to him, it was "the religious ('*dinciler'*)

[355] Yasin used the word '*inkilapçı*', which is the word almost eclusively used for 'Kemalist Revolutions' as they are called in national history writing.

[356] '*Dinci*' actually does not correctly translates to simply 'religious'. In Turkish, there are two words that correspond to religious: *dindar* and *dinci*. The first one simply means someone who is devout. The second one, however, is a pejorative word, which still means a religious person, but one who is almost *too* religious. A person who is dinci is a fundamentalist, carrying not less but perhaps more than all the negative implications of this word.

vs. the intellectuals (‘*aydınlar*’[357]). On the one side were Atatürkists, enlightened, intellectual, educated and modern people, and on the other idiots, uneducated, and illiterate/ ignorant (‘*cahiller*’[358]) people. Most eager in this respect were Talat and Coşkun but others joined them with varying degrees of enthusiasm such as Bilge, Mustafa, Sena, Alp and Sinan. In their accounts, the Other was figured variously as backward, outdated, ignorant, brainwashed, greedy, narrow-minded, tunnel-visioned and etc.

At this point, I have to add that most of the tattooees were not very articulate on the subject of who they thought to be ‘the others’. I was very frustrated with this at first because I was expecting a conscious verbalization on their part of whom or what they considered themselves to be reacting against. The Atatürk tattoo, after all, was established in many tattooees’ speeches as a reaction. As I started working on the interviews however, my frustration turned into a whole new excitement because I realized that I was provided with something much better than a clear verbalization: emotive outbursts, here and there, scattered throughout the interviews.

Sometimes it emerged as the disgust Talat feels seeing “these black things[359], walking in front of my shop, even at *this* neighborhood”. Sometimes it was as innocent a comment as Sena’s: “my friend who is a student in Konya[360] did not get one because she was afraid to get in trouble when she returned back for school”. Fazıl took pride in the statement “the best Kurd is the dead Kurd”, made, interestingly enough by a Kurdish friend of his.

Other times, it was as brutal a story as how Kerem’s cousin “slayed a Kurd”, “cut his throat from ear to ear” during his military service. Kerem also took pride in another story, this time about himself where he swore and cursed at a ‘covered’

[357] The word that Coşkun used here is not ‘*entllektüeller*’ but ‘*aydınlar*’. While the first option translates directly as intellectuals, the second one, in verbatim, translates as ‘enlightened’.

[358] A person who is ‘*cahil*’ is essentially an uneducated person. However, among a dozen of words that Coşkun could have used instead, he chose this one because it is a politically charged word, utilized in the Turkish common sense to cast doubt on the authority of the subject position of someone. A similarity might be drawn between the implications behind the word *cahil* in the Turkish case with, for instance, the implications behind the word redneck in the American sense. They are not the same thing but they are close.

[359] Here he means the black dress covering all of the body, similar to burka.

[360] Konya is a city known to be vastly populated by religious people.

(which means wearing the turban) nurse at a conservative hospital for denying to draw his blood after he took his shirt completely off, instead of stripping his sleeve, just to insult her and to show his Atatürk tattoo. According to his account, he took his anger on other people at the hospital, making a scene at the reception area and police was called. By the time an officer came, he was already walking away from the hospital and upon being stopped on the street by an officer, he simply "asked him if he was a Kemalist or a pan-Turkist because police are either one of the two". After an initial shock, the policeman answered he was a Kemalist, upon which Kerem told him to "then get out of my face", thrusting they were on the same side and that he actually approved of his earlier behavior. In Kerem's story, the police gave him a smirk and just left. There was still another story where he got away with beating up a public transportation minibus driver for carrying Tayyip Erdoğan's signature on the back window of his bus. Police were called in this instance as well, but again, he was almost appreciated and let go.

It was not always in the form of elaborate stories that not-so-conscious outbursts manifested themselves. Many of my interviewees made a conscious effort to be politically correct, almost at the level of self-censorship, and their discourse was deliberately liberal. Despite the examples I have given above, the first reaction on the side of the tattoo artists and the tattooees alike was a discourse of toleration towards those who were judged to be unlike themselves and of celebration of plurality of lifestyles. It was often stated that neither Atatürk nor the system of governance that he has created differentiated among people of the Turkish Republic on the lines of language, religion or ethnicity. Arguments to the opposite or of any demand of recognition of difference on any of these categories were dismissed as being treacherous and even immoral. The most famous example given was the Turkish War of Independence where Turks, Kurds, Lazs, Sunnis, and Alevis all fought and died together. Most of my interviewees also found the current divide in Turkish society to be fabricated by either international forces or national media. This, again, was backed up by the argument of impartiality intrinsic to the official Kemalist ideology of statecraft. My interviewees contented that if there indeed is any discrimination or favoritism in Turkish politics or society, it is only because of a diversion from this path.

However, at those precious times when this learned self-discipline failed, the liberal and pluralist narrative was torn apart by suppressed feelings of dislike and suspicion towards, and scapegoating of the Other. Separatist Kurdish people as well as Islamists both were targeted in their speeches. In other words, anyone who my interviewees thought to be un- or anti-Kemalist were grouped together under this heading of the Other. In addition to calling these certain people uneducated, illiterate, ignorant, at times the dislike that the interviewees felt towards them turned into utter hatred. A person who one minute claimed to be tolerant and open-minded by statements such as "we live in a country where everyone is free to do as they please" or "we don't interfere with anyone's choices of lifestyle or belief", the next minute could go on to demonstrate his or her unconscious feelings by statements to the effect of how all those others were only following the trail of money.

Coşkun claimed that "my door is open to anyone, whether it is a woman with a turban or a girl in shorts" but soon added that "being a devout Muslim or wearing the turban does not mean one is clean or moral". Coşkun reached a peak in his arguments when he spoke of how

> There are girls wearing Islamic ankle-long coats with miniskirts underneath. You see these girls in turban wearing tight jeans or blouses. I can even see the lines of their panties or bra straps. I don't understand it, what kind of an Islamic belief is this? So you're telling me that I am not supposed to be aroused by their underwear, clearly visible through their dresses, but be aroused by their hair?

According to him, there were millions of people wearing the turban or following a visibly Islamic lifestyle only because they either get paid for it or they are provided with other privileges or advantages such as free dormitories. Talat considered 'their' religion "is a lie; many of them get degrees from American universities, they are only Muslim in appearance". Mahmut said "people vote for AKP only because of their own interests, to be able to wear the turban and so on". Sinan also implied that people supporting an Islamic lifestyle were in it for the money: "you see these big expansive jeeps stopping at the red lights and it is always a woman with a turban in them. How do they even buy a car like that?"

The situation was no different with the tattoo artists. Like the tattooees, they started out with and tried to keep up a liberal pluralistic discourse. Yet, there were again times when their words exposed a different face. While talking about the people with Atatürk tattoos, Ali, one of the artists who is not a big fan of the practice, asserted that "even a garbage man has Atatürk's signature tattooed on his forearm. I mean, even these hicks, these yokels get it. Even a Kurd, he pushes the garbage bins around, and has the Atatürk tattoo. He wouldn't know its meaning if you asked him, he doesn't know how to read and write yet he has the tattoo". Şahin and Yasin were not very polite or politically correct either. Şahin told me that "previous politicians were governing much better because, you know, they were modern people, not 'covered' people". Yasin joined in the conversation and said "people who do not like Atatürk are people whose brains are covered with spider webs". Yasin also revealed a distrust of the genuineness of certain religious people, in particular of those who vote for AKP saying that people only supported AKP because during elections, they are given two tanks of gas for their cars and are paid 750 TL for each vote. Yasin's further elaborated on his apparent distaste and mistrust of the authenticity of the Islamists: "during the summer I work in a hotel in southern Turkey. You should see the way they [Islamists] enter the hotel [all 'covered'] and then see them fluttering in the pool" (obviously not a very 'Islamic' action). Şahin added that his wife works in a beauty salon and that he has observed similar things: "'covered' women come to the salon and they leave with such clothing you wouldn't believe it!" (again, probably in not very Islamic clothing).

These *certain* people that the tattooees did not sympathize with all belong to the category of 'them' that the Atatürk tattoo distinguishes them from. However, it still remains a question why a division such as the one that has been observable in the Turkish society and politics in the last decade should translate into a mass practice of tattooing the Father Turk. For this to come about, there must have been a moment when the friction between the two groups of Kemalists and Islamists intensified or became more manifest. The assessment of this moment brings us to the last question of *why now*.

Again, as in the instance of questions about who would and who would not get the Atatürk tattoo, tattoo artists had developed ready-made answers to the

question of why this phenomenon emerged and gained popularity during these last few years. This might be due to the fact that they are faced with these questions more frequently than tattooees. For instance, some of the tattoo artists I interviewed had already been interviewed by other people on different occasions. According to many of the tattoo artists, the emergence and popularity of the Atatürk tattoo coincided with AKP coming to power. Şahin, for example, told me that they were incredibly busy during the dates around the republic demonstrations of 2007 and 2009. Alper told me that since AKP's electoral success, "Atatürk's name has become less and less mentioned" and this encouraged the Atatürk tattoo. Likewise, Bora said that the Atatürk tattoo was a part of a general discontent among the people which started to show itself first with the republic demonstrations. Akın's statements were in this direction as well. For him, a motivating factor for the Atatürk tattoo is that "today there are assaults on and many people against Kemalism, and Atatürk's principles. We see it every day". Onur claimed that people are being suppressed by the government and that the Atatürk tattoo is almost a spurt on the side of the people.

The most common statement made by the tattooees of why, in their opinion, people chose to get the Atatürk tattoo in these few years was again AKP's success in national elections. In one way or another, Nil, Coşkun, Sena, Talat, Alp and Sinan all expressed resentment for increasing attacks on Atatürk's personality and principles that they perceived to be carried out by the Islamists and some Kurdish nationalists. Mahmut, Mustafa and Nazım got their Atatürk tattoos as a reaction to "the direction the country is heading towards … it is coming closer to sharia because of AKP". For Aslı, Ayşe and Sinem, on the other hand, rise of the Atatürk tattoo trend was also connected to an *enlightenment* on the side of the people "who, today, read more and more of their history". Upon asking Sena what she thought of this renewed interest in Atatürk, she told me "maybe it is not an interest but a necessity because of a feeling of lack. There is strong defamation against Atatürk … increasing of the turban and the black full body covering … Atatürk tattoo is to say 'here we are and we are against you, we don't want this'". Alp was convinced that the current government "does not like Atatürk. If they did, they would be respectful of his ideology and try to improve his decisions". He went on

to say that "history is being turned back by many of the decisions made by the government, … the style of clothing that Atatürk saw fit for his people is being violated, … the foundation of the Republic is being weakened" and that all these developments were "causing anxiety on the side of the people". Atatürk tattoo, according to Alp, was but one response to this feeling. Sinan, was mostly disturbed how positions of power are today all occupied by AKP's own people. According to him, these people act as gatekeepers and they block the mobility of people of other convictions, especially Kemalists.

What's more is that in a moment of self-reflection, many of the tattooees confessed that their tattoo was just a symbol. It seemed, the tattooees were not completely satisfied with their own repertoire of reaction. Upon this realization, some like Bilge and Yunus reassured themselves saying "yes, ours [reaction/ tattoo] is just a sign, but there is nothing else to do because we don't have any other opportunity to do anything else". For them, public demonstrations are not the answer to their discontent. Demonstrations during the 80s were not successful, so they figured why should they work now? Sinan too, at times became disillusioned with his own behavior: "I know it's just a tattoo. Our reaction is pretentious. I am not happy about the circumstances of my life, but I am blind and mute". In an effort to rescue the significance of their practice, some tattooees like Sena, Talat and Mehmet likened the Atatürk tattoo to the turban. The argument there went something like this: "they have their turbans and we have our Atatürk tattoo. They are out there they are showing their anti-Kemalism through their turbans and we are showing that there are still people devoted to Atatürk through our tattoo. It's true that the Atatürk tattoo is just a symbol, but so is turban".

It is safe to say that the emergence and popularization of the Atatürk tattoo is closely related to the outcomes of the 2001 and 2007 national elections, whereby AKP established itself as one of the most vastly supported political parties in Turkish history. AKP's rise to power also informed the divide that the Turkish society is said to embody and reflect. In this sense, the Atatürk tattoo is a marker of similarity and distinction and is identified by tattoo artists and tattooees alike as a rebellion. I will now turn my attention to my initial question: how

should one conceptualize the Atatürk tattoo sociologically; is it a 'politics of the people' or a symptom of a discursive and practical predicament of Kemalism?

C. Atatürk Tattoos: A Spontaneous (Body) Politics of 'The People' or a(nother) Sign of Kemalism in Crisis?

I have so far argued that my field research shows that the Atatürk tattoo is endowed with a vast collection of meanings and characteristics which make it neither totally a tattoo design as such, nor totally an Atatürk paraphernalia. There is an excess of meaning associated with, and an excess of sentiment felt towards and because of the Atatürk tattoo that makes it difficult to be contained within a discourse of either body modification or secularism. This is the most challenging dimension of the analysis this thesis work is trying to accomplish. I would like, firstly, to remain loyal to the theoretical backdrop that I have previously presented in trying to explain if the Atatürk tattoo is an example of body politics and/or an example of the politics of the people. Lastly, in the final part of this section, I wish to re-read the basic premises of this theoretical framework in an attempt to deemphasize any possibility of a sporadic explanation of the Atatürk tattoo and reemphasize its symptomatic character.

1. Atatürk Tattoo and Body Politics

It must have been clear by now that it has been my desire to be able to come to the conclusion that the Atatürk tattoo is a *critique* in the Foucauldian sense: a movement by which a person can critically reflect on normalization. Anyone familiar with Foucault's work, of course, would realize that effects of critique cannot be universal or permanent. However, what Foucault means by critique can be as subversive as it can be momentary, considering the nature of power Foucault has introduced. As have previously argued, I think tattoos can potentially be the instrument of this critique, of *the art of voluntary insubordination, reflective*

indocility and "the desubjugation of the subject in the game of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth"[361].

Unfortunately, my interviews do not allow me to make an affirmative judgment in this respect. The main reason for me coming to this conclusion is that although Kemalism is evidently challenged by and perhaps has been replaced by other predicates that recently came to be more dominantly attached to Turkishness, it is hard to deny Atatürk's continuing hold upon the self-definition of Turkish nation-people. While the Atatürk tattoo can be viewed as a counter-hegemonic practice through the lens of the receding position of Kemalism as *the* ideology of the Turkish state and people, it is not possible to say that it carries the characteristics of *critique*. It is counter-hegemonic at best, that is assuming that the 'return of the religious' and the new forms of subjectification and identification it has brought with it have indeed unseated Kemalism and now occupies its previously hegemonic position. I continue to believe that my interviewees' statements point just to the opposite of what I hoped for: subordination and docility. However, at this point I feel responsible to ask myself: does this make the Atatürk tattoo completely devoid of any potential for being a significant body politics?

My answer is no. I shall explain why. Remembering the increasing association of the body and bodily practices with identity, the Atatürk tattoo is definitely a genuine expression of selfhood on the part of the tattooees. People with Atatürk tattoos are using their skin to express something so strongly emotional and at such a critical time that their bodies become a site of the play and contestation of the relations of power prevalent in the society. Remembering Foucault's understanding, disciplinary power has increasingly focused on the body as the site of its operation. However, this power is never complete. If, therefore, Kemalism is indeed in a crisis in terms of discourse and legitimacy as *the official ideology* of the Republic, then people with the Atatürk tattoo are indeed doing something remarkable with their bodies. They are, as Grosz has rightly argued about the body, exemplifying the fact that

[361] Foucault, quoted in Heyes, 2007: 117.

> if the body is the strategic target of systems of codification, supervision and constraint, it is also because the body is thus also a site of resistance, for it exerts a recalcitrance, and always entails the possibility of a counterstrategic reinscription, for it is capable of being self-marked, self-represented in alternative ways.[362]

The tattooees, in a sense, are taking up the ideology of Kemalism and its utmost symbol, Atatürk, as the tool of *counterstrategic reinscription*. Whether this is made possible by the potential of the body for an alternative self-marking or self-representation, however, is a question I will have to deal with in the last part of this chapter. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that the Atatürk tattoo creates a spectacular body: it is visible and demands attention in the public sphere, constantly disrupting the hegemonic representation of the normative body.

Then, why do I dismiss the Atatürk tattoo as not being up to the task of voluntary insubordination or reflective indocility if I in fact believe it to be a counterstrategic reinscription? To understand this, we need to recall Pitts's (2003) concern that when talking about body projects, it sometimes goes unnoticed that this body is forever implicated in the broader power, social and economic relations. No body or no self-creation is limitless in enhancing or conveying an identity or subjectivity. Neither is any identity or subjectivity as free as to be a product of pure personal choice. Inventing one's self as a Kemalist subject through tattooing one's body with Atatürk's signature is but one example of an *ideology* of self-invention through bodily alteration. I will consider the impact of Pitts's contribution in more detail later on. For now, I will put Pitts's challenge to use in another dimension of the Atatürk tattoo.

2. Atatürk Tattoos and the Politics of the People

The Atatürk tattoo is shown to be appreciated by the tattoo artists for having emerged from the people, out of their own free will. This interpretation also seems to be behind all the national and international media coverage of the Atatürk tattoo. Interestingly, this explanation is very similar to Özyürek's (2006) reading of what she observes to be a newly emerging phenomenon of privatization and

[362] Grosz quoted in Pitts, 2003: 40

commercialization of Atatürk symbolism. Özyürek has praised this development because of the fact that the "free-willed and consumerist acts"[363] of the people carried Atatürk imagery "out of the traditional realm of the state and into the market and their homes…to nonstate spheres"[364]; "into the private realm of civil society, the market, and the home"[365]. According to her, this was a response by the nation-people due to the fact that "for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic citizens perceived the official state ideology as in need of their protection and took personal responsibility for promoting it"[366]. She has examined the privatization and commercialization of Atatürk symbolism through an understanding that as religion (read Islam) becomes *publicized*, state ideology and its representation (read Atatürk imagery) becomes *privatized* (enters the domains of the home, the market and the civil society). Özyürek's arguments also closely resonates with the discourse employed at the Republic Day celebrations throughout the 1990s, where the massive participation of the people had been congratulated for the fact that "for the first time the people are taking possession of their holiday with their organizations of civil society!"[367].

As I have previously argued, however, these are not singular interpretations. There is a whole apparatus at work here that is at once conditioned by and that enables the discursive and political environment which accommodates these accounts. To put it simply, this is the apparatus of secularism, which is ever prominent in Turkish politics despite the arguments to the contrary. By secularism, I do not simply mean a regime of governance. Secularism is, above all, a regime of power and truth, maintained by the separation of the life-world of a nation into two distinct and exhaustive spheres. This separation is actively created, recreated and preserved through minute and everyday practices that go down to the deepest levels of the social fabric. The separation of the space and time of the nation-state into the public and the private domain enabled the creation of the category of 'the people',

[363] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[364] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[365] Özyürek, 2006: 100

[366] Özyürek, 2006: 98

[367] Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 149- 51

‘freed’ from the irrationality and tyranny of faith and emotional attachments, and endowed with reason and free-will. Modern politics is possible only through such a subjectification.

In light of this analysis, it becomes hard to uphold the tattoo artists’ contention that the Atatürk tattoo is an authentic, independent, unconditioned and unrestrained expression of the free-will and reason of ‘the people’. The will of the people is not as free as some like to imagine. Neither is ‘reason’ absolutely divorced from faith. Therefore, despite the fact that the tattooees themselves unexceptionally told me that it was solely their personal decision to get the Atatürk tattoo, there is not enough reason to argue that it is a spontaneous (body) politics of the people.

For one thing, although the tattooees are joined in their conceptualizations of the Other, the feeling of ‘us’ is very weak. None of them felt such togetherness with other people with the Atatürk tattoo. Many were even quite unsympathetic towards their fellow tattooees, arguing that they were more Ataturkist than others. Let alone being a source of identification, the Atatürk tattoo gives rise to feelings of rivalry and abhorrence. The perfect example of this is Ali’s vocabulary of people with the Atatürk tattoo that he thinks to be unworthy of carrying it on their bodies. Ali was in no sense alone. The pro-show tattooees despised con-show tattooees for not being Ataturkist enough, while the con-show tattooees scolded pro-show tattooees for being nothing more than showoffs.

For another thing, the discourse of the tattoo artists and the tattooees both followed in the footsteps of the version of Kemalism that is termed as *the official state ideology*. In recent years, social science scholarship on Turkey has come to argue the recession of Kemalism in terms of state power to be related to a disenchantment of the nation-people with the official Kemalism of CHP and the military. This version has been deemed too cold and authoritative, causing people to turn away from it. In this sense, the Atatürk tattoo should be praised for its originality of manifestation. It is quite unlike any other appearance of Atatürk symbolism. What is more is that the Atatürk tattoo is also definitely different from familiar expressions employed by the official version of Kemalism.

However, despite its creativity in symbolic terms, this possibility is annulled by the rhetoric of the artists and the tattooees. As it has been demonstrated in the previous section, 'the secular', represented by the figure of Atatürk, and 'the religious' represented by the figure of turban are conceptualized in exactly the same way as in the Kemalism of the founding years. In their rhetoric, religious people are imagined as backward, uneducated, ignorant, and motivated by secret agendas. Even at moments of a conscious effort to use a liberalist and pluralist language, this impulse makes itself felt. Yunus, for instance, said that he also understood the people wearing the turban or the people who do not like Atatürk. The next moment, he was saying "if you have a lack of knowledge, I will fill you in, I will enlighten you, I will tell you about Atatürk and all that he has done for this nation. But don't just talk nonsense about Atatürk if you don't know anything".

This was a recurrent theme in the interviews. Almost all of my interviewees associated people who were not ardent Kemalists with a lack of knowledge or education, or with following underlying practical interests. The problem, apparently, is that people are not enlightened or educated enough to realize neither Atatürk's sacrifices for the country, nor their own long-term and more rational interests. Many were duped or brainwashed by powers greater than them. Their intellect was halted and their vision clouded by these powers. Only if people could be emancipated from these sources of confusion and disinformation, many of my interviewees thought, everyone would realize Atatürk's greatness and people would once more be united like in the good old days.

What motivates these statements is a bit of nostalgia and a lot of self-affirmation. The interviewees were, most likely unconsciously, affirming their own subject position while denying the same for the Other. Through their efforts, interviewees undermined any possibility of a legitimate reason for the actions and thoughts of those they saw to be their opposite. The rhetoric of the interviewees robbed the Other of any authority or any chance at subjecthood and re-affirmed their subject position as the only possibly legitimate (thus normative) one pertaining to Turkishness. My interviewees were yearning for an original wholeness that they thought to have prevailed during Atatürk's time, now lost because of a divergence from Atatürk's ideals.

So far I have contended with the theoretical framework I have presented earlier in this thesis and tried to read the material I have been provided by my interviewees mostly through the premises of this framework. Lastly, I would like to present a final effort to show how none of the responses or actions of my interviewees are (nor could they ever have been) specifically individualistic narratives or acts of singular people. This is not simply because of the lack of *enough* originality of their political rhetoric, or their lack of *enough* rebellious spirit to have qualified as voluntarily insubordinate, reflexively indocile, rationally consumerist, and unrestrictedly free-willed. Having shown why I could not argue in favor of neither of my preliminary questions, I shall now take a bolder step to explain their impossibility.

3. Atatürk Tattoos and the (Im)Possibility of Politics

Body politics and the politics of the people both share an underlying assumption of the existence of an authentic self to be discovered, displayed, enunciated, and emancipated. Both versions promise the actualization of a potential that is always already there in everyone but hindered and deferred by a certain oppressive power. Whether it is patriarchy, the medical scientific establishment, the state or the government, the individual is guaranteed to have the capacity to transcend his or her immediate environment and to achieve a further accomplishment in the liberation of his or her authentic, genuine self and its articulation.

This might sound provocative to some readers of Foucault, but it is interesting how, at times, Foucault's own work falls short of realizing the power of his own analysis. I cannot go as far as to argue that all of Foucault's scholarship is plagued by some sort of inconsistency, however, I believe that his own understanding of the limits or possibility of resistance often exceeds that allowed by his analysis of the modern mechanisms of power.

If modern power is not possessed by any person, if it *manifests itself in minute ways*, if it is a *micro-physics of power that goes deeper than any institution*; if this power is nothing but *a strategy, a maneuver or a tactic*; if it is *transmitted by and through every person*; and if *the self or subjecthood is infinitely produced and*

reproduced through its operations; then it is hard to imagine how anyone could find in him or herself the power to *interrogate truth and power on their discourses and effects* to come to realize his or her own *desubjugation as a subject*. Mind you, the phrases in the above sentence are all those of Foucault himself.

It seems that the only possibility left for Foucault in this matter is a reaffirmation of an essence, or a discoverable authentic selfhood that somehow comes forward and announces itself in spite of the mechanism of disciplinary power. Grosz's argument for the significance of the body as *a site of resistance* for being *recalcitrant*, for carrying the potential for *counterstrategic reinscription* is not far from Foucault's conceptualization of *critique* in this sense. Here too, it is assumed that there is a self, uninhibited by the relations of power surrounding it, even working on and through it, that is able to emerge through a body that is likewise unconstrained and that opens itself up for alternative self-markings and self-representations.

I have argued above that people with the Atatürk tattoo could in fact be considered to be making use of an alternative medium of Atatürk symbolism, namely their bodies, to achieve Grosz's counterstrategic reinscription. I continue to believe this, on the condition that we drop her emphasis on *self-marked*, and *self-represented* nature of this reinscription and reconsider Pitts's rightful warnings about the faith the 20th century has developed for self-expression through the creation of narratives through the body.

At the risk of repeating myself, I shall stress Pitts's reservation that the body has increasingly been considered as a site of endless possibility of self-creation and self-expression, without much thought to the political, economic, social and discursive environment that *any body* or *any self* is always implicated in. This conceptualization of the body not only serves the *fetishization* of the body in Baudrillardian terms, but also makes the role that power relations play in all this indiscernible.

This is how, for instance, interest in the re-popularization of Atatürk's figure and celebrations of national days could be considered as the coming together of the people in their private and individualistic acts, them taking charge in a moment of historical significance, and out of pure free-will. Such arguments have been

prevalent in social science discourse as well as in discourses of the media and the everyday discussions of people. Republic Demonstrations in 2007 and 2009, as well as AKP's electoral success, paradoxically, have both been celebrated as the expression of people's free will. For the former events, it was the people meeting in town squares to come to terms with and react to the increasing visibility of Islam in public and in the government. For the latter, it was the people coming to terms with decades of authoritative statism and political corruption. Though the examples I have given at first appear unrelated with each other and with the phenomenon of Atatürk tattoos, a closer look reveals all to share a common feature: a certain understanding of subjectivity.

I should once more remind the reader that, in accord with Pitts's discussions, no body or no self-creation is limitless in enhancing or conveying an identity or subjectivity. Neither is any identity or subjectivity as free as to be a product of pure personal choice. In this sense, the Atatürk tattoo is, once more, neither a genuine response on the side of the people, nor a body politics of expression of authentic identity, for the very simple reason that both are quite impossible.

In this sense, it was not surprising that the discourse of the tattoo artists and the tattooees for the most part closely followed the official version of Kemalism widespread in the society and the politics. Nor was it surprising that the divide my interviewees imagined to exist in the Turkish society and politics was that between the Kemalists and the Islamist, or the Secular and the Religious. Their feeling of powerlessness in political matters was a direct reflection of the position that Kemalism has come to assume in the last decade. Many were quite inarticulate when it came to why exactly they were against the AKP beyond the point of 'they will take away our miniskirts and alcohol'. It took a lot of effort to get them just to name what they were acting in reaction to. Much like the Kemalist rhetoric, not much was clear to my interviewees except their love and respect for Atatürk.

My interviews, to be sure, were not simply about each person's private thoughts and feelings. What they revealed to me through our conversations is what they chose to reveal at that specific time and place, knowing the political implications of their action which was the only reason for us to be talking in the first place. No words were arbitrary. The characteristics that they attributed to

themselves and to the Other, for instance, were not completely of their own choosing. Everything in our conversations, from what my interviewees judged to be worthy of mentioning to their attitude and tone were informed by a broader framework of power relations that they found themselves in.

I cannot deny that getting a tattoo, no matter of what, is a highly personal act, motivated by emotions more than anything else, and that each of my interviewees indeed make a personal choice to get the Atatürk tattoo. Neither can I deny that the Atatürk tattoo creates a spectacular body, constantly displayed and gazed at. However, the Atatürk tattoo cannot be understood as a sporadic action initiated by a few people who are almost magically unrestricted by anything else but their own will. Rather, the Atatürk tattoo is a symptom of Kemalism's ideological, discursive and practical crisis in confronting politicization of religion in Turkey.

This is not to diminish the importance of the Atatürk tattoo as a visible sign in the public space, much like the turban, but to show that it calls for a realization that any subjectivity, be it Kemalist, is always already implicated in relations of power beyond the limits of any one person's immediate thoughts and wishes. This is the only possibility of politics, in every sense of the term. And, perhaps ironically, this is how the Atatürk tattoo is political.

V. CONCLUSION

In this past decade, the founder of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk, has attracted more attention than perhaps in any other point in the history of the republic. There has been an unprecedented (re)production of the Father Turk in many shapes and contents. Influence of Atatürk has always been present in the Turkish society and politics, but never before has his symbol been so much reproduced and so frequently appropriated than these last years.

Public space in Turkey has been constituted as a sanctuary to secularity and to Atatürk as its sole icon. Atatürk has been one of the first things that one recognizes in familiarizing with Turkey. Bridges, concert halls, theaters, roads, town centers among other things are devoted to his name. His posters appear on almost every occasion the country comes together to celebrate. Atatürk is the first face one sees entering a primary or a secondary school and he is the last. Children memorize Atatürk's life story before they memorize the alphabet. They even make up games where they wait for his presence to make itself felt through the school corridors, as in the story told in the introduction to this thesis.

Starting with 1990s, the figure of Atatürk has started to emerge in ever new shapes and contents, from huge to minute, from authoritarian to humanitarian, and from state-led to citizen-motivated. First objects to appear were the Atatürk pins and postcards, later to be followed by a variety of pictures, statutes, busts, figurines, tie pins, stickers, paperweights, t-shirts, jewelry, coffee mugs, pens, and whatnot. Somewhere along the way, Atatürk became commercial star and a protagonist of movies of his life. It was not long ago that portraying Atatürk in movies was a big taboo for any actor. One would think that Turkey has come a long way since late 1981 when Atatürk was played by an actor for the first time[368], considering the inflation of movies, documentaries, and commercials with a variety of actors

[368] Ironically enough, the first actor to play Atatürk was not Turkish but Belgian. Please see Özyürek, 2004: 384.

playing the part of Atatürk. However, the reception of some recent Atatürk movies such as *Mustafa* by Can Dündar proves that an increase in the number of movies of Atatürk or of any Atatürk commodity for that matter certainly has not shattered taboos about Atatürk completely. And now, 70 plus years after his death, Atatürk has reincarnated in the form of his tattoos.

In this thesis, I have examined the recent phenomenon of Atatürk's tattoos through a twofold theoretical framework of body politics and secularism. The main question I had set out to answer whether the Atatürk tattoo should be considered as an example of *body politics* (individualistic and potentially subversive) or as an example of *politics of the people* (collective and potentially counter-hegemonic). The conclusion that I came to in the last chapter, however, was not something I had originally anticipated.

In the first chapter, I have briefly introduced Atatürk tattoos to the reader. Despite disputes as to when or how this trend has emerged exactly, I have argued that the Atatürk tattoo undoubtedly has become observable in the public sphere. I have also provided introductory remarks on Atatürk symbolism in general. Of the studies done on the subject so far, I have examined Navaro-Yashin's (2002) and Özyürek's (2006) as two very instructive books. Both authors have analyzed the increase in the interest for objects of Atatürk symbolism in connection to the increase of Islam's visibility in public sphere and in governmental power throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This together with Atatürk's significance for the nation-people called for a closer look at recent Turkish history.

Before going ahead with this, however, I had to acknowledge the fact that though it shares many characteristics with them, the Atatürk tattoo stood apart from other such Atatürk paraphernalia simply by being a tattoo. In the second chapter, I examined how the body has been conceptualized through the pre-modern, the modern, and the postmodern discourses. This has been instrumental in establishing the ground for further arguments as to the conceptualization of and the meanings attached to tattoos. The chapter concluded with a discussion of body politics. The basic underlying assumption of this chapter was that the body has increasingly been associated with projects of self-creation or identity construction and that tattoos, and therefore, the Atatürk tattoo could be considered as an example in this respect.

Together with Baudrillard's analysis of *fetishization* of the body in late capitalism and Foucault's analysis of *disciplinary power* and its production of docile bodies, I tried to show that body modification does not immediately yield a counter-hegemonic inscription. Yet, I have argued with Grosz, that the body certainly has a certain potential of being disruptive of normalization. To assess the Atatürk tattoo through the lens of normalization, I turned my attention next to the history of the Turkish subject.

I have considered the symbolic space that Atatürk occupies for the nation-people is of utmost importance in trying to make sense of the Atatürk tattoo. For this, in the third chapter I tried to provide a re-reading of Turkish history motivated by Asad's question of how *the secular*, representing the normative nation-identity, and *the religious*, representing its Other, have been constructed. This construction is of greatest significance for later attempts at analyzing *the rise of religion*, which ultimately is one of the major features of the political and discursive environment that triggered a more possessive and obsessive turn to symbols of modern secularist Turkish state.

It was apparent from the initial stages of my research into the Atatürk tattoo that this was the atmosphere in which it emerged, much like other forms of Atatürk symbolism. However, the Atatürk tattoo has always presented itself to me as involving something 'extra' that makes it difficult to be contained in either one of the categories of state symbolism (*Atatürk*) or body modification (*tattoo*). In fact, the *Atatürk tattoo* almost seems like a contradiction of terms: 'tattoo' carrying controversial and rebellious, and 'Atatürk' statist and conformist undertones. I could not possibly do justice to the multifaceted nature of the Atatürk tattoo without talking to people who are most immediately involved with it. Consequently I have conducted interviews with tattoo artists and people with the Atatürk tattoo. I am proud to say that my field research has delivered invaluable insights into the phenomenon of the Atatürk tattoo.

In the concluding chapter, I have analyzed my interviews, firstly, in terms of their meaning for the tattooees and the motivation behind their decision to get the Atatürk tattoo. The meaning that the tattoo artists have come to attach to their own practice of tattooing people with Atatürk's signature was also of interest and their

reasoning as to why suddenly people decided to get the Atatürk tattoo strikingly similar. Having had much more experiences with Atatürk tattoos and people who have it done on their skin, the point of view of the artists' was very informative. Through these basic inquires and their analysis, a picture started to emerge which at first was challenging because of the nature of my preliminary questions.

In reconsidering my preliminary questions as to whether the Atatürk tattoo was to be understood as an example of body politics or that of politics of the people, I was not able to affirm either. My interviews simply were not convincing enough for the Atatürk tattoo to be judged as such. Interestingly, they made me realize something much more intriguing about the Atatürk tattoo, which had not occurred to me beforehand.

It was not simply a matter of ignorance or failure on the side of the tattooees or the artists that the Atatürk tattoo did not emerge as politics of the body or as politics of the people. This explanation would have to assume the authenticity of the subject and deny the negativity and lack at the heart of subjectivity. Same is true of the affirmation of the kind of politics implied by politics of both the body and the people.

The self or the body, subjectivity and corporality, and politics and embodiment are not merely amorphous and infinite substances to be made and remade and that conform only to the free will of the subject. Any body or any self is always already implicated in a broader framework of power relations that invest in, operate on and are transmitted through them. It is not that the Atatürk tattoo is politically insignificant. However, the politics of the Atatürk tattoo is neither absolutely free nor indefinitely solitary. The Atatürk tattoo is a *symptom*, and not an isolated happening.

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VII. APPENDICES

A. Appendix A: Sample Questions of Interviews with Tattoo Artists

1. Sample Questions about Tattoos in General

1) What do you think is the meaning of tattoos?
2) Why do you think people get tattoos?
3) Whatever the meaning of or reasons for getting a tattoo is, why do you think people choose to convey that meaning or to actualize those reasons with tattoos and not something else (i.e. a t-shirt, a sticker, a pin, a necklace, etc.)?
4) Who gets tattoos? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.)? Do you think there are categories that would define the people likely to or do get tattoos and those who are not likely to or do not get tattoos? Is there difference in terms of designs, placement, size, etc. of tattoos among groups of people? If so, how?
5) Do you think it could be said that tattoos are part of fashion or that they became so in recent years?
6) Could you generalize in terms of what kinds of designs are chosen to be tattooed on the side of clients? Could you generalize in terms of where tattoos are chosen to be placed on the side of clients? Are there any differences in these matters between women and men?
7) What do you think about the relationship between tattoos and religion? What do you thing is the general opinion of the society on this subject?
8) How do you think tattoos are thought of in our society? Who would approach tattoos positively and who negatively?
9) How did your family or people close to you respond to your decision of becoming a tattoo artist? If you have tattoos, how did your family or people close to you respond to you deciding to get tattoos?

10) How many people would you say come to your parlor and get a tattoo in a month?
11) How likely is it, would you say, that a person gets more tattoos after their first one?
12) Have you had experiences with people with tattoos who later regretted their tattoos? If so, why do you think they did or do? What do they regret about it?
13) How long have you been a tattoo artist? Did you observe any change in all the previous points I have asked about in your years of work? If so, could you elaborate?

2. Sample Questions about Atatürk Tattoos in Particular

1) What do you think is the meaning of Atatürk tattoos?
2) Why do you think people get Atatürk tattoos?
3) Whatever the meaning of or reasons for getting the Atatürk tattoo is, why do you think people choose to convey that meaning or to actualize those reasons with Atatürk tattoos and not something else (i.e. a t-shirt, a sticker, a pin, a necklace, etc.)?
4) Who gets the Atatürk tattoo? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.)? Do you think there are categories that would define the people likely to or do get the Atatürk tattoo and those who are not likely to or do not get it?
5) Do you think it could be said that the Atatürk tattoo is part of fashion?
6) Why do you think so many people choose to get Atatürk's signature as a tattoo and not the Turkish flag? Do you think these represent two different things?
7) I know from experience that tattoo artists do not like to tattoo someone with exactly the same design that someone else has. How do you feel about tattooing so many people with exactly the same figure of Atatürk's signature?
8) Do you tattoo Atatürk's signature free of charge? If yes, why? If no, do you have other kinds of offers on Atatürk's signature's tattoos? Do you think tattooing free of charge or to charge less for a tattoo design compared to similar designs could have some disadvantages on the side of the tattooees? If yes, what could those be?

9) Would you be able to say something about the relationship between religion and those who get the Atatürk tattoo?
10) How do you think Atatürk tattoos are thought of in our society? Who would approach Atatürk tattoos positively and who negatively?
11) Who gets the Atatürk tattoo? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.)? Do you think there are categories that would define the people likely to or do get Atatürk tattoos and those who are not likely to or do not get Atatürk tattoos?
12) How many people would you say come to your parlor and get the Atatürk tattoo in a month? Could you at least give a figure as to what portion of people who come in to get a tattoo get the Atatürk tattoo?
13) Would you say that there is another figure that so many people choose to get a tattoo of, in exactly the same design? If so, what is it and how frequent is this decision?
14) What would you say the percentage is for people who get the Atatürk tattoo to have other tattoos previously? What would you say the likelihood of them getting another tattoo after the Atatürk tattoo is?
15) What do you think about Atatürk tattoos (about tattooing them, about people who get them done, about their reasons for getting them done)?
16) How do you think this trend emerged? Where did it emerge? When did it emerge? Has there been some sort of change to facilitate the increase in Atatürk tattoo's visibility?
17) Would you say the demand for Atatürk tattoos have been increasing or decreasing throughout the years? Have you observed any change in terms of Atatürk tattoos in any of the respects we have been talking about throughout the years?
18) Do you think Atatürk tattoos are any different from other Atatürk paraphernalia such as pins, tie pins, clothing items or other accessories with Atatürk's signature or picture, etc.?
19) Where on their bodies do people get the Atatürk tattoo? Do they get them on parts of their bodies which are visible, semi-visible or concealed in everyday

life? Do you think there is a place on the body that would be inappropriate to place the Atatürk tattoo on? If yes, where?

20) Did you ever hear about someone who regretted their Atatürk tattoo? If yes, why would you say they do?

B. Appendix B: Sample Questions of Interviews with Tattooees

1. Sample Questions about Tattoos in General

1) What do you think is the meaning of tattoos?
2) Why do you think people get tattoos?
3) Whatever the meaning of or reasons for getting a tattoo is, why do you think people choose to convey that meaning or to actualize those reasons with tattoos and not something else (i.e. a t-shirt, a sticker, a pin, a necklace, etc.)?
4) Who gets tattoos? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.)? Do you think there are categories that would define the people likely to or do get tattoos and those who are not likely to or do not get tattoos?
5) Do you think it could be said that tattoos are part of fashion or that they became so in recent years?
6) What do you think about the relationship between tattoos and religion? What do you thing is the general opinion of the society on this subject?
7) How do you think tattoos are thought of in our society? Who would approach tattoos positively and who negatively?
8) How did your family or people close to you respond to your decision of getting a tattoo?

2. Sample Questions about Atatürk Tattoos in Particular

1) What do you think is the meaning of Atatürk tattoos?
2) Why did you get a tattoo of Atatürk's signature? Why do you think people get Atatürk tattoos?
3) Whatever the meaning of or reasons for getting the Atatürk tattoo is, why do you choose to convey that meaning or to actualize those reasons with Atatürk tattoos and not something else (i.e. a t-shirt, a sticker, a pin, a necklace, etc.)? Why do you think other people choose to do so?
4) Who gets the Atatürk tattoo? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.) do you think get it? Do you think there

are categories that would define the people likely to or do get the Atatürk tattoo and those who are not likely to or do not get it?

5) Do you think it could be said that the Atatürk tattoo is part of fashion?
6) Why did you get Atatürk's signature as a tattoo and not the Turkish flag? Do you think these represent two different things?
7) Did you have a tattoo before getting the Atatürk tattoo?
8) Did you get more tattoos after the Atatürk tattoo? If not, would you consider getting more?
9) How did your family or people close to you respond to your decision of getting the Atatürk tattoo?
10) What kinds of response did you receive, if any, from people you know or don't know, in terms of your Atatürk tattoo? How do you think Atatürk tattoos are thought of in our society? Who would approach Atatürk tattoos positively and who negatively?
11) I have read on some forums on the internet that some people think that the phenomenon of Atatürk tattoos is a form of idolatry. What do you think about this comment?
12) I have read on some forums on the internet that some people think that the phenomenon of Atatürk tattoos is a form of emotional exploitation. What do you think about this comment?
13) Are you aware of campaigns by some tattoo parlors of tattooing Atatürk's signature for free or for a lesser charge? Did you take advantage of such a campaign? If yes, would you have gotten the Atatürk tattoo if not for that campaign? If no, how much did you pay for your Atatürk tattoo?
14) Who gets the Atatürk tattoo? What kinds of people (age, gender, profession, level of income, level of education, etc.)? Do you think there are categories that would define the people likely to or do get Atatürk tattoos and those who are not likely to or do not get Atatürk tattoos?
15) Would you say that you know many people who have the Atatürk tattoo or who would like to get it too?
16) Do you see a lot of people with Atatürk tattoos? Does it catch your attention? How do you feel when you see the Atatürk tattoo on others? Are you generally

happy upon seeing others with it? Do you feel a kind of warmness towards or similarity with those people?

17) How did you decide to get the Atatürk tattoo? Where did you first see it? Did you see it on other people or on the internet? Do you think that this was a purely individualistic decision or would you say that it has a degree of communality to it?
18) How do you think this trend emerged? Where did it emerge? When did it emerge? Has there been some sort of change to facilitate the increase in Atatürk tattoo's visibility?
19) Do you think Atatürk tattoos are any different from other Atatürk paraphernalia such as pins, tie pins, clothing items or other accessories with Atatürk's signature or picture, etc.?
20) Where on your body is your Atatürk tattoo? How long has it been since you got it? Do you think there is a place on the body that would be inappropriate to place the Atatürk tattoo on? If yes, where?
21) Do you think you might regret getting the Atatürk tattoo? Why or why not?