The Permanent "Other"? Turkey and the
Question of European Identity

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Two images utilized by French groups campaigning against the European Union constitution during the 2004 referendum were distinctive. One was a "Polish plumber," a symbol that played on job-security worries of French workers. The Polish plumber evoked economic fears of what a tighter union might mean for France, where unemployment had reached double digits. Many critics of the EU integration process in other states also referred to its possible negative economic implications. The other image was more unusual, particularly for secular France. It was a picture of a group of Muslim women, clad in EU flags that fully covering their heads. Its purpose was to provoke cultural angst among the increasingly conservative French people by bringing to mind Europe's changing cultural and religious landscape. Underlying this image was the prospect of Turkey's membership in the EU, which, the anticonstitution campaigners believed, would be made easier with the proposed constitution.

By launching a negotiation process with Turkey, the EU officially acknowledged that Turkey had met the Copenhagen criteria for admission. Although Turkey's progress in implementing the democratic reforms that it passed in recent years will be closely monitored, the main obstacle to Turkey's membership seems to be European public opinion, which overwhelmingly remains opposed to it. In this sense, the issue of Turkey's membership has become a question less Turkish than European. Hence, the question needs to be focused within Europe, by examining the growing cultural angst of the Euro-

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pean public and the way it is expressed in the discourse of political leaders who capitalize on such worries.

In contrast, opinion polls in Turkey have consistently indicated that the majority remains supportive of the idea of joining the EU, despite emotional reactions to the EU's slowing of the process due to reasons perceived as unjust, such as the issue of Cyprus. Even more interesting, the current ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP or AK Parti), known for its Islamic orientation, is most aggressively pushing for this goal. In Turkey, religion or religiosity does not appear to be a decisive issue in shaping perceptions of Europe. So why in Europe, which is known as behaviorally and attitudinally more secular than Turkey, is there such a strong anti-Turkish opposition that is increasingly expressed in a religious and cultural framework? In this essay I locate the answer to this question in the way European identity is defined both in Turkey and in Europe. My principal argument is that the primary obstacle for Turkish membership is rooted in a clash over how to define the European integration project itself. I first examine the evolution of Turkish perceptions of Europe and how hegemonic views of Europe have changed over time from that of the center of a singular civilization to a meeting platform of many civilizations. I then compare this to historically rooted European perceptions of Europe and Turkey to show contradictions. In conclusion, I argue that, unless a civilizationally neutral redefinition of Europe is achieved, Turkey is bound to remain the permanent "other" of Europe.

The Meaning of Europe in Turkey: An Evolution of Perceptions

During the past hundred years of Turkish history, a process of defensive modernization was implemented, based on the view that in order to be strong against the West one needs to adopt its civilization, getting rid of one's own tradition and moral codes. For self-empowerment, a comprehensive Westernization process was necessary. As expressed quite eloquently by Ahmet Agaoglu (1869–1939), who played a key role in intellectual development of concepts of Turkish nationalism and Westernization:

> First of all, we need to be sincere; do we accept and admit the superiority of the Western civilization? If yes, then we cannot explain that superior-

ity only by referring to its science and knowledge or even its politics and social foundations. The superiority of the Western life over our life is comprehensive. If we want to escape from this and maintain our existence we have to accord our entire life not only through our dress and some institutions but also with our minds, hearts, views, and mentalities. There is no other way for salvation.[1]

Ziya Gokalp, a major philosopher of Turkish nationalism, eloquently expressed this view in one of his poems, "We were defeated because we were so backward,/To take revenge, we shall adopt the enemy's science./We shall learn his skills, steal his methods./On progress we set our heart."[2] Turkey's defensive modernization was characterized by this eagerness to learn from "the enemy" rather than to integrate. In embarking on a process of Westernization, the new Turkish regime saw the social and political influence of Islam as its most significant challenge to establish for itself a political hegemony and associated it with backwardness (*irtica*). From the tradition that viewed Islam as an obstacle to progress, the modernizing elites sought emancipation in the West through a *civilizing* process.[3] Thus, Westernization for the sake of resisting the West required de-Orientalization or alienation from the Oriental residues, a process that was never fully completed. In trying to catch the train of modern civilization, Turks had to wait in the train depot seemingly forever. As Meltem Ahiska notes, "Catching the train is a metaphor that signifies the destination of history to which the 'latecomers' are always already late."[4] This was perfectly in line with modernization discourse, which conceived of modernization as requiring a takeoff, a departure from the traditional.[5] In order to modernize, one has to leave the original location and be emancipated from original conditions.[6]

1. Ahmet Agaoglu, *Uc Medeniyet* (Istanbul: Milli Egitim Basimevi, 1972), 13.
2. Quoted in Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gokalp* (London: Luzac, 1950), 79.
3. Nilufer Gole, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 57–82.
4. Meltem Ahiska, "Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102 (2003): 354.
5. W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).
6. Gole, 13.

Hence, these opposing and contradictory constituent others run as constituent units of what can be called the Kemalist identity: "political Islam" as countered by the principle of secularism and Westernization, on the one hand, and "the West" as countered by the principle of Turkish/Muslim nationalism and national sovereignty, on the other.[7] On one side of the coin lies the perpetual domestic threat, *irtica*, and on the other lies the perpetual external enemy, Europe. Against the former, Kemalism is an ideology of Westernization in its domestic battle against Islamic identity, but against the latter, it is an ideology of Turkish nationalism, historically developed as Islam-less Muslim communalism for the remaining members of the Ottoman Muslim *millet* within the territory that could be liberated from the European occupation. On foreign policy, the first image suggests an anti-Arab and anti-Islamic isolationism from the Middle East strengthened by historical memory of "the Arab treason," or the Arab Revolt of 1916–18, while the other image implies isolationism from Europe, an external threat that occupies and foments seeds of national disintegration fed by the historical memory of events such as the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) and the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), a Kurdish uprising that aimed at Kurdish independence and was believed by the Turkish state to be a provocation of the British. Hence, Europe is both the center of the civilization, which Kemalists are eager to join through a *civilizing mission*, and a threat to Turkish independence and national integrity, from which Turks seek to escape.[8] These two sides of the Kemalist coin may be found in the mindset of individuals equally, or they may be emphasized to varying degrees by different individuals.

7. *Political Islam* is a highly contested term that is often employed in the public and academic discourse uncritically. In the Turkish context, Islamism is a label that is often used to refer to those who express both their religiosity and interest in politics. For an incisive discussion of this term, see Mohammed Ayoob, "Political Islam: Image and Reality," *World Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2004). Also see his *Many Faces of Political Islam* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming 2008).

8. For an elaboration on the role of historical memory on Kemalist opposition to the EU, see Hasan Kosebalaban, "Turkey's EU Membership: A Clash of Security Cultures," *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 2 (2002); Ihsan Dagi, "Pro-Western Kemalists: A Western Illusion," *Today's Zaman*, 15 March 2007. For an opposite view that suggests the political establishment in Turkey, including the military, remains the force behind EU membership aspirations, see Ersel Aydinli, Nihat Ali Ozcan, and Dogan Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March toward Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2006). Ozcan, who is a retired major from the Turkish armed forces and a prolific writer on strategic studies, himself suggested to the author that the membership process is destabilizing Turkey's efforts to maintain its territorial integrity.

The image of European security and cultural threat in the Kemalist mindset often reveals itself in soft means of expression such as political cartoons. Political cartoons often express what is otherwise hidden in the mindset of the cartoonist; they provide windows through which to perceive elements of identity. In this regard, European and Turkish depictions of each other as the other of their respective identities can be examined through political cartoons.

Turkish cartoons in the secularist media express a strong dramatization of the Western other on religious grounds. In a recent instance, Turhan Selcuk, Turkey's leading Kemalist cartoonist, drew the EU as a mother pig nursing numerous baby pigs, while the lone Turkish lamb waited aside, desperately hungry and isolated, suggesting the existence of a strong and irreconcilable biological difference between Europe and Turkey.[9] No matter how badly Turks want to drink from European milk, they cannot have it: not necessarily because Europe does not want to give it, but because it will not be accepted by the Turkish body. Europe as the pig image essentially stems from a religious imagery of difference; it reflects a religiously charged description of folk Europe as a pig, the untouchable of Muslim cultural identity. A pig is dirty (*necis*) and therefore one should stay away.[10] In a related case, Selcuk illustrated the Islamist support for EU membership in the shape of a headscarf-wearing girl carrying a pig's head and turning her face to the EU logo.[11] Clearly, a Turkey-versus-Europe dichotomy expressed with a discourse of Islam-versus-Christianity runs in the background of Kemalist nationalist imagination of the West. The Kemalists criticize the transformation of Islamism in Turkey and the idea of supporting EU membership as a cultural deformation, or a process of *piginization*. In this process, one loses his or her cultural authenticity and becomes similar to the cultural other. Yet the irony of the matter is that the Westernization process implemented by Kemalism

9. Reprinted in Turhan Selcuk, "Karikaturun Notu," *Cumhuriyet*, 25 April 2006.
10. In pre-Islamic Turkish nationalist discourse, a pig was a symbol of settled and urban China, the other of pre-Islamic Central Asian Turks. Turks despised pigs, as, unlike lamb, they were not suitable for their nomadic life-style. See Emre Akoz, "Turhan Selcukun Niyeti Ne?" *Sabah*, 24 April 2006.
11. *Cumhuriyet*, 19 April 2006. For a discussion of the image of the United States as expressed through cartoon in the Turkish media, see Ayseli Usluata, "U.S. Image Reflected through Cartoons in Turkish Newspapers," in *Images of the U.S. Around the World: A Multicultural Perspective*, ed. Yahya R. Kamalipour (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

as a civilizing mission is itself about losing cultural essence and becoming similar to the West. This is an essential contradiction rooted in the ideology of Turkish secularization.

It is possible to derive from Ataturk's ideas a liberal and secularist nationalist view that does not oppose the idea of EU membership and rather views EU membership for Turkey as the culmination of Kemalism's civilizing mission. Such liberal nationalists agree with the view that modernization equals Westernization and the process of modernization would be best consolidated through Western political institutions and a liberal world economy. As Tanil Bora suggests, "The civilizationist discourse of liberal nationalism considers liberal market economy perfectly in tune with the ideal of 'attaining the rank of modern civilization' inherited from Ataturkism and defines a cultural identity in terms of its ability to 'achieve' and 'catch up with' the modern lifestyle."[12] An example for such a counterimage of the West in the secularist media is another controversial illustration that appeared in the liberal Kemalist newspaper *Radikal*. It depicted the transformation of Turkish Islamists into proponents of EU membership in the form of steps of biological evolution. In the illustration, a monkey-shaped, traditionally dressed heavily bearded, radical Islamist walks through the steps of evolution and finally evolves into a modern looking, Western-dressed, EU-embracing person that looks like Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan.[13] Apparently, in the imagination of the illustrator, the EU is represented as the final step in the evolutionary process of civilization, and support for the EU represents a higher, culturally superior form of evolution. As opposed to how Selcuk sees it, the newspaper accepts the EU as a civilizing process for Turkey's "culturally backward" Muslims.

In this view of liberal secularism, Turkey will achieve elevation of its civilizational standard by joining the EU. Full membership in the EU is seen as the logical evolution of Ataturk's cherished goal of making Turkey an equal member of the family of European nations. The Kemalist nationalists, on the other hand, interpret this goal as requiring a modern but fully sovereign Turkey, an impossible goal, in their view, if Turkey should fully implement the

12. Tanil Bora, "Nationalist Discourses in Turkey," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102 (2003): 443.
13. "RP'den AKP'ye Kabul Degistiren Turkiye," *Radikal*, 13–15 June 2006.

reforms required for membership.[14] Kemalist nationalists often quote Ataturk's description of sovereignty as a notion that "does not accept sharing in any meaning, form, color and appearance." General Yasar Buyukanit, Turkey's military chief, said, "We can foresee today that the political side of globalization can bring more harm than good through eroding the concepts of nation-state and sovereignty."[15] The word *globalization* can be replaced with that of European *integration* as the meaning of the concepts of *nation-state* and *sovereignty* are transformed through the European integration process.

While the original modernizing ideology of Turkey has evolved into these two streams, a parallel ideological evolution has taken place in the Islamic movement. Following the 28 February 1997 process, which led to the collapse of the Erbakan government, two political parties with Islamic orientation emerged: (1) the Felicity Party, which was under the firm control of the veteran Islamist Necmettin Erbakan, and (2) the AKP of Erdogan, whose successful challenge to Erbakan eventually ended in his electoral triumph in 2002 and the subsequent formation of the current government. The AKP positioned itself as the continuation not of the traditionally anti-Western Milli Gorus (National Order) movement of Erbakan but of the center-right tradition of Adam Menderes and Turgut Ozal, marked by a strong pro-Western and liberal orientation. The Felicity Party continues to defend a decisively anti-EU view.

The current AKP emerged from an internal leadership challenge against Erbakan who opposed the rise to power of several young leaders. The young leaders voiced demands for internal democracy and transparency, but their difference with Erbakan was also due to their increasingly divergent views on foreign policy, including the issue of EU membership. The AKP that has finally emerged was based on a liberal and pro-Western political platform and defined its mission and ideology as "conservative democracy." After winning a landslide victory in the 2002 general elections, the AKP formed a single-party government and single-mindedly embarked upon its goal of

14. Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

15. Yasar Buyukanit, "Kuresellesme ve Uluslararasi Guvenlik" ("Globalization and International Security") (Ankara: Genel Kurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etut Baskanligi Yayinlari, 2003), quoted in M. Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Ozcan, "The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Justice and Development Party," *Middle East Journal* 13, no. 1 (2006): 112.

starting negotiations for full membership in the EU. The enthusiastic efforts of the government is in contrast to the formation of a movement embracing a common political platform, the Ulusal Cephe (National Front), comprising nationalists of all varieties, including conservatives and Kemalists. While nationalist Kemalists oppose Turkey's eventual admission to the EU, they are also concerned with the reform process itself, which according to them is likely to negatively affect the territorial integrity and security of the Turkish Republic.

The AKP, which comes from traditional society, is supposed to be resisting Westernization, if the modernization school's description of Turkey was accurate. However, it has been the most prominent supporter of the EU membership process. Some attempted to explain this contradiction by claiming that the AKP was simply pretending, others by explaining the transformation of Islamic identity due to several domestic and global structural changes. According to the former view, the AKP's change was due to the success of the Kemalist secularization and modernization process, forcing its opponents to transform themselves and become enthusiastic supporters of the Westernization process. According to the latter view, however, transformation of the AKP's position on globalization and EU membership is rooted in comprehensive social and economic changes in Turkey's conservative belt, which includes economically booming cities such as Kayseri, Konya, and Kahramanmaras. It is probably not a coincidence that the AKP, with its liberal economic outlook, gained close to two-thirds of the votes in these cities during the general elections of July 2007. Triggered by Ozal's liberalization reforms (1983–93), this irreversible transformation was crucially tied to the emergence of a vibrant, export-oriented, central Anatolian middle class that sought to benefit from the process of globalization and European integration. Hence, it represented a cognitive shift, as opposed to a mere tactical one, whereby interests and identity have become mutually constitutive and transformative.[16]

16. See M. Hakan Yavuz, "The Role of the New Bourgeoisie in the Transformation of the Turkish Islamic Movement," in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 1–19. See also Yavuz's "Islam and Europeanization in Turkish-Muslim Socio-Political Movements," in *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein and Timothy A. Byrnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Does AKP support for EU membership attest to the fact that the Turkish process of Westernization and civilizational reorientation has become a hegemonic ideology, regardless of what Kemalist nationalists believe? This is a hard question for any AKP leader to answer and perhaps cannot be examined without looking at the larger context of foreign policy followed by the AKP. It is important to note that the AKP leadership has redefined the EU integration project. Initially voicing the view that EU membership for Turkey is a civilizational project, the AKP leadership came under criticism from its own popular base and intellectual elite and eventually began to present EU membership as a dialogue or meeting of two civilizations rather than as an entry of Turkey into the civilization represented by the West.

Erdogan has come to embrace Turkey's entry into the EU as an opportunity for a "reconciliation of civilizations." He has stated that to have "a country like Turkey, where the cultures of Islam and democracy have merged together, taking part in such an institution as the EU, will bring harmony of civilizations. That is why we think it is the project of the century. We are there as a guarantee of an entente between the civilizations. The countries that want to exclude us from Europe are not playing their roles in history."[17] Similarly, Erdogan asserted that "our greatest claim is that of civilizational alliance. We claimed that [if Turkey is rejected] the EU is doomed to stay as a Christian club. Only if Turkey joins the EU, then it will not be remembered as a Christian club, but rather as the address for civilizational alliance."[18] On another occasion, Erdogan criticized the EU's position against Turkey on the issue of Cyprus and stated that Turkey has followed a win-win strategy as a reflection of its distinct civilizational identity: "They win and we lose; this is not fair. We win and they lose; but this is against our principle of justice. We come from . . . a *civilization* [in which] there is no oppression but justice, no discrimination, but justice."[19]

2006), 225–55. The AKP's perspective on globalization in comparison to those of other Islamic movements in Turkey is examined in Ahmet Kuru, "Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements: Three Turkish Cases," *Political Science Quarterly* 120, no. 2 (2005): 253–74. For the impact of globalization on the AKP's identity, see Hasan Kösebalaban, "The Impact of Globalization on Islamic Political Identity," *World Affairs* 168, no. 1 (2005): 27–37.

17. Tayyip Erdogan, interview in *Independent*, 13 December 2004.

18. *Yeni Safak*, 29 January 2006.

19. "AB'yle Muzakereler Dursa da Limanlari Rumlara Acmayiz," *Hurriyet*, 17 June 2006 (emphasis added).

Hence, the AKP position on the EU membership issue is accompanied by a new orientation of civilizational identity. By demanding participation in Europe while refusing Europe's civilizational centrality, the AKP departs from both traditional secular-nationalist and Islamist-nationalist discourses. The AKP civilizational discourse demands authenticity for a Turkish/Islamic civilization within Europe. One strong indication of this new civilizational orientation was Erdogan's move to cosponsor with Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero the Alliance of Civilizations initiative launched by UN secretary-general Kofi Annan in 2005. In this context Turkey assumed the role of representing Islamic civilization in an international diplomatic campaign. The AKP's dynamic Middle East policy as indicated by Erdogan's participation in an Arab League summit held in Riyadh in March 2006 and Turkey's sending a delegation to Israel to observe archeological work near the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on behalf of the Muslim world also contributed to the perception that Turkey had begun to assert its civilizational authenticity.

Islamist intellectuals regard this transformation as a discourse within the AKP and believe it has not yet become the principal state identity of Turkey. Ahmet Tasgetiren, a leading Islamist intellectual, observes that while the AKP has brought a new civilizational discourse to Turkish-EU relations, it has failed to make this discourse a part of Turkish state identity, as various units within the state continue to debate the AKP perception of Islamic belonging.[20] On the other hand, the attempt to redefine Turkey's relations with Europe by the AKP leadership has received sharp criticism from secular and liberal elites, who assert that the AKP's insistence on authentic civilizational identity creates an obstacle to Turkey's relations with Europe.

Despite such criticism, the AKP appears determined to support EU membership for Turkey, and in fact appears more eager to support full membership than is the secularist political establishment. This redefinition of Europe by the AKP contradicts the liberal secularist notion of Europe, which is printed on one side of the Kemalist coin, characterized more by a desire to assimilate into *the civilization* than by an eagerness to integrate into Europe with an authentic civilizational claim. EU membership is widely supported in Turkey, but Europe is no longer seen as the center of civilization into which

20. Ahmet Tasgetiren, interview with the author, 6 July 2006.

Turkey needs to be assimilated. Turks increasingly consider EU membership in instrumental terms. The transformation of the AKP position into one that supports membership reflects an ongoing transformation of the Islamist discourse on Europe, from that of confrontation to that of cooperation, competition, and expansion of opportunities. The AKP change of discourse on Europe also points to the fact that Islamists have "succeeded in challenging the Kemalist equation of urban with modern and secular, and rural with backward and Islamic."[21]

Overall, Turkish conservatives tend to view Turkey's integration into Europe in a more positive light than do many nationalist secularists, who are inclined to defend Turkey's sovereignty. The cultural conservatives of Europe, however, are either skeptical or apprehensive about Turkey's entry into the EU. They view the EU as a civilizational project rather than as a union that supports the coexistence of civilizations, and thus they question the place of Turkey within this body.

Turkey in Europe: The Historical Question of Defining Europe

Identities do not emerge in a vacuum. Identities are defined through relationships with *others*, which are constructed through historical experience. The project of imagining Europe as a singular entity shifts the focus of shared memories from the level of nation-state to the level of European culture. While the shared historical memory of European nation-states primarily evokes a history of an intra-European construction of others, the construction of a European common identity depends on the existence of Europe's cultural others. European "civilized" peoples are juxtaposed against a multitude of "barbarians."[22] According to Edward Said, the Orient was a European invention as a space of romance, exoticism, and fear, upon which Europe painted its other and, by projecting its internal differences, came to know itself and

21. R. Hermann, "Political Islam in Secular Turkey," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, no. 3 (2003): 265–76.
22. While Islam is often regarded as the other of European identity, the influence of European exchanges with Muslims on European civilization itself is often neglected in the present civilizational discourse in Europe. For a classical study on the Turkish influence on French intellectual and cultural legacy, see Clarence D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature: 1520–1660* (1940; New York: AMS Press, 1973).

define its identity.[23] Similarly, Iver Neumann and Jennifer Welsh state, "The very idea of what Europe was from the beginning was defined partly in terms of what it was *not*. In other words, the Other, i.e., the non-European barbarian or savage, played a decisive role in the evolution of the European identity and in the maintenance of order among European states."[24] Throughout history, a common European identity was built upon a variety of external and internal others, of which Muslims are primary. Turks with their military might and physical proximity represented the most serious political and religious challenge to Europe and served as a common source of fear.[25] Talal Asad observes that "in the contemporary European suspicion of Turkey, Christian history, enshrined in the tradition of international law, is being reinvoked in secular language as the foundation of an ancient identity."[26]

The experience of the Crusades was particularly instrumental in building a European shared identity and in the formation of long-lasting perceptions of Europe's primary other, the Muslims. Following the defeat of the Byzantine emperor Romanos IV by Seljuk Sultan Alparslan in 1071 at the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert), and within a mere ten years following the capture by the Seljuk Sultan Suleiman in 1081 of Iznik (Nicaea), a city of great importance to Christianity only a hundred miles from Constantinople, the Crusades were initiated to drive the Turks out of the domain of Eastern Christianity.[27] Between the era of Seljuk Sultan Suleiman and the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66), Turkish power was firmly established in Eastern Europe and the image of the Turk permanently imprinted on the

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23. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
24. Iver B. Neumann and Jennifer M. Welsh, "The Other in European Self-Definition: A Critical Addendum to the Literature on International Society," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 329 (emphasis in original).
25. Ibid., 330.
26. Talal Asad, "Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?" in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 213.
27. Pope Urban II informed his audience that "nay, base and bastard Turks hold sway over our brothers" in his historic call for the First Crusade in 1095 in Clermont, France. This is according to the version of Baldric of Dol. See August Charles Krey, *The First Crusade, the Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1921), 33–6. For a comparison of different account of this speech, see Dana Carleton Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," *American Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (1906).

mind of the European public. Even though the Crusades were militarily a failure, the Crusader became a unifying ideology of Western Christian unity and the name "Turk" represented in European Christian consciousness a power that was both feared and respected.[28] As Tomaz Mastnak claims, "The ideas, iconography, and discourse associated with the Crusades made a profound imprint on 'all Christian thinking about sacred violence' and exercised influence long after the end of actual crusading. . . . The crusading spirit has survived through Modernity well into our own postmodern age."[29] A similar argument is offered by Roger Ballard:

> The Crusades can usefully be regarded as a mould-setting development. In the face of the emergence of an overwhelmingly powerful Islamic order to its south and east, a sense of collective identity began to crystallize amongst the population of the territory which was subsequently to identify itself as Europe—and most especially as western Europe. However the banner under which collective mobilization began to be organized was that of Christendom, while the other at whom this nascent power was directed was perceived as being Muslim, oriental and black. The foundations around which contemporary conceptualizations of Europe were to be constructed were now in place.[30]

The slogan "chasing the Turk out of Europe" motivated Europeans to rally around Christianity against the expanding Ottoman Empire. Most dramatically, the siege of Vienna by the Ottomans in 1683 helped consolidate a common European fear and panic. Even centuries later, the historical memory of the siege of Vienna serves as the most significant reason why Austria remains the most ardent opponent of Turkish membership. The Austrian government's attempt to block the start of negotiations with Turkey was welcomed by the Austrian press as a modern defense of Vienna. In September 2004, the liberal Viennese weekly newsmagazine *Profile* headlined its editorial the

28. Halil Inalcik, "Turkiye ve Avrupa: Dun ve Bugun," *Dogu Bati* 1, no. 2 (1998): 13.
29. Tomaz Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order*, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002), 346.
30. Roger Ballard, "Islam and the Construction of Europe," in *Muslims in the Margin: Political Responses to the Presence of Islam in Western Europe*, ed. W. A. R. Shadid and P. Sj van Koningsveld (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 26–7.

"Turks at the Gates of Vienna," characterizing Turkish demands for the start of negotiations as "not so much a risk as a danger."[31]

The weakening of the Ottoman empire transformed the image of "base and bastard Turk" into the "sick man of Europe." As noted by Neumann, the "sick man" was a Russian description of the Ottomans and "of Europe" was later added, "adding ambiguity to the Turk by offering him a principled place among the European hale if he could only heal himself."[32] During the nineteenth century, under the influence of social Darwinism, Europe perceived itself as the center of civilization in distinction from the barbarians. In this Eurocentric civilizational order, Turkey's place was hotly debated among experts of international law. James Lorimer, a nineteenth-century natural law theorist, suggested, "In the case of the Turks, we have had bitter experience of the consequences of extending the rights of civilization to barbarians who have proved to be incapable of performing its duties, and who possibly do not even belong to the progressive races of mankind."[33]

With the decline of the Ottomans, Europe entered into a process of internal competition characterized by two world wars. Europe did not have external challenges during that period. The end of the Second World War led to the Cold War, when a strong Soviet Union shifted the dominant other in European identity to Russia. Now it was Russia and the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe that marked the boundaries of Europe.

The end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the unification of Western and Eastern Europe under the umbrella of European integration created a new geopolitical context in which Russia lost its salience as the other. The new context was also geocultural, as European streets were increasingly marked by cultural diversity with increased visibility of Muslims. Turks in Germany, North African Arabs in France, and Pakistanis and Indians in Britain, all of whom were once tolerated as immigrant guest workers, became a new center of attention. Around these minorities Europeans created a deeply embedded fear of losing their cultural integrity. In this con-

31. Cited in Ian Traynor, "In 1683 Turkey Was the Invader: In 2004 Much of Europe Still Sees It That Way," *Guardian*, 22 September 2004.
32. Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 55.
33. Quoted in ibid., 57.

text, Turkey's demand for membership in the EU only fuelled such fears and hence faced strong opposition. Despite Turkey's attempts since the founding of the republic in the 1920s to project itself as European, Turkey and Islam have continued to be seen largely as synonymous as far as the dominant European perception is concerned.

Turkey and the EU's Civilizational Identity

Today, there are two opposing perspectives in Europe on Turkey: Turkey as an integral part of Europe, and Turkey as the essential historical other of Europe. Underlying these two perspectives is the debate on the definition of European integration. Is European integration based on a single civilization, defined as European civilization and marked by distinct European cultural heritage and values? Or is Europe based on common ideals and a common destiny, a union that members of different civilizations can join on equal terms? Imagining Europe as a civilizational project allows others the possibility of becoming "European" only if they can be assimilated into Europe's civilizational—read Christian—values. It is also a matter of civilizational conversion for Europe's cultural minorities. This is clearly not acceptable to Turkey, which sees Europe as a meeting place for civilizations. The first view emphasizes a culturally homogeneous Europe, while the second emphasizes multiculturalism and advocates a pluralistic interpretation of civilizational identity. In contrast to Turkey, which demands recognition of its civilizational authenticity, an increasingly powerful view in Europe suggests the contrary, that European integration is a singular civilizational project. From this perspective, the expansion of the EU will reach its end point with the membership of the Balkan countries. According to this increasingly widespread view, Turkey is not part of Europe because of its different civilizational roots. It is not a member of Europe's cultural heritage based on Christianity and Enlightenment values and thus is doomed to remain outside its boundaries.

Hence, the essential debate boils down to whether European identity can be defined in noncultural terms. References to Christianity as well as Europe's common secular history and culture—such as the Enlightenment and Hellenic-Roman traditions—automatically exclude Turkey, which does not share the same cultural heritage. Defining Europe as a culturally

open space, however, would assist the integration only not of Turkey but also Europe's increasingly large Muslim minority. However, religion continues to inform the ideological subconscious, particularly when it comes to drawing the boundaries of a perceived European civilization. This is also evident in the electoral support of political parties that openly refer to their Christian identities. Paradoxically, in Germany, where church attendance is low, Christian Democrats are a very important political force, having emerged as the leading party in the 2005 general elections. They are known for their firm opposition to the idea of multiculturalism, which envisions a culturally neutral Europe.[34] German chancellor Angela Merkel openly states that "democracy is unthinkable without Christian values."[35]

At present, the majority of Europeans are opposed to the idea of Turkish membership in the EU. According to the Eurobarometer poll conducted between 9 May and 14 June 2005, support for Turkish membership among the fifteen original members of the EU was only 32 percent, while it was 48 percent among the newer ten members. Overall, 52 percent of respondents in the EU indicated that they did not wish to see Turkey as a member of the EU, in contrast to 35 percent of the respondents who stated their support. Opposition to Turkey is stiffest in Austria, with 80 percent of respondents against it. In contrast, according to the same poll, 61 percent in Turkey viewed the EU in a positive light.[36] Despite a dramatic decrease in the support rate in Turkey, according to a Eurobarometer poll conducted in fall 2006, the percentage of those who indicated that membership in the EU would be a "good thing" was 54 percent, while those who indicated that becoming a member of the EU is an advantage for Turkey reached 63 percent.[37] On the Turkish side, the results of the July 2007 general elections were a further confirmation of the Turkish people's desire to become a part of the European community. The 67 percent that that the AKP obtained in the elections was a clear message to Europe in favor of full membership. Out of the three parties that entered the

34. Viviente Valt, "Life on the Front Lines," *Time* (Europe), 28 February 2005, www.time.com/ time/europe/html/050228/story.html.

35. "Merkel: Demokratie ohne christliche Werte undenkbar," *Rhein-Zeitung*, 11 June 2005.

36. *Standard Eurobarometer* 63 (spring 2005): 29, europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/ eb/eb63/eb63.4_en_first.pdf.

37. "National Report, Executive Summary," *Standard Eurobarometer* 66 (fall 2006), 3, ec.europa .eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb66/eb66_tr_exec.pdf.

parliament, the AKP was the only party that explicitly defends the country's full integration with global and European institutions, despite being labeled Islamist by the secular political establishment and the media.

Although the EU started its negotiation process with Turkey as agreed at the EU summit in December 2005, it appears certain that Turkish membership will be killed in almost all EU countries if brought to referendum at the end of the negotiating process. It is not clear when the negotiations will end or whether they will end successfully. There are key issues unsolved between the EU and Turkey, most specifically that of Cyprus. The EU's acceptance of the Republic of Cyprus as a member prior to a settlement of the Cyprus question effectively killed chances for any future intercommunal settlement. The rejection of the Annan Plan for Cyprus in 2004 by the Greek Cypriots was not a surprise. Turkey found itself in a situation where it was trying to enter into a union a part of whose territory it technically occupies. Hence the EU expects Turkey to give up its position on the Cyprus issue at a minimum before it is accepted as an EU member state. It seems highly unlikely that any Turkish government will accept conditions related to the Cyprus issue, including the opening of Turkish ports and airports to vessels and aircraft from Greek Cyprus, particularly in the context of increasing uncertainties surrounding the prospect of Turkish membership. Even after the start of negotiations, key European leaders continued to talk pessimistically about prospects of Turkish membership. Such statements were made by Luxembourg's prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, who asserted that Turkey would never be a member with the same status as Germany, Luxembourg, France, and Belgium, and by Austrian prime minister Wolfgang Schüssel, who said in effect that Turkey would be given a different status than that of full membership.[38] Schüssel was talking in his capacity as president of the European Council.

According to French historian and journalist Alexandre Adler, "If Turks would like to enter Europe as a Muslim nation or with their Muslim identity, this would never take place."[39] Adler is known as a pro-Turkish membership intellectual in France, but he shares the view of many that Turkey's entry will

38. *Yeni Safak*, 29 May 2006; *Zaman*, 24 June 2006.
39. Cengiz Candar, "Reflections from Paris: Rising Worries on Turkey's EU Prospects," *New Anatolian*, 3 April 2006. Candar reported on a dialogue forum organized by the Abant Platform in Paris held 31 March through 1 April 2006.

not be possible if it maintains a visible Muslim identity. Yet this is precisely how the EU membership is viewed by its leading supporter in Turkey, the Islamist-oriented AKP.

From a cultural rather than religious perspective, former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who led the drafting of the EU constitution, has said, "Turkey has developed its own history and its own culture, which deserve respect. However, the foundations of Europe's identity, so vital to the cohesion of the EU today, are different. Turkey's accession would change the nature of the European project."[40] Former French president Jacques Chirac has also expressed his conviction that Turkish values, traditions, and its lifestyle are incompatible with those of Europe.[41] Either way, Turkey is regarded as being outside the boundaries of Europe as a specific cultural entity that does not share either Europe's common religious background or its common historical heritage rooted in the Enlightenment.

The proposed European constitution, which was voted down in France and the Netherlands, specifically referred to the common religious heritage of Europe. While Pope John Paul II personally lobbied for the inclusion of a direct reference to Christianity, such a direct reference was opposed by European bureaucrats, and a compromise solution was reached by referring to religious values. As stated in the preamble of its draft, the European constitution draws "inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, the values of which, still present in its heritage, have embedded within the life of society the central role of the human person and his or her inviolable and inalienable rights, and respect for law."[42] While this explicit reference to the "religious inheritance of Europe" does not appear to have convinced conservatives, it is nevertheless a radical break from earlier draft texts, which did not refer to religion at all.[43]

In the context of growing reference to the religious and cultural heritage of Europe, the idea that Turkey represents an anomaly cannot be digested

40. Valery Giscard D'Estaing, "A Better European Bridge to Turkey," *Financial Times*, 25 November 2004.
41. "Jacques Chirac met en garde contre 'l'effet boomerang' du non," *Le Monde*, 14 April 2005.
42. See register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00850en03.pdf (accessed 7 June 2005).
43. Ludger Kühnhardt, "From National Identity to European Constitutionalism," Discussion Paper, Center for European Integration Studies, University of Bonn, 2004, 33.

within the European body. In this sense, there exist strong similarities between Turkish and European culturalists who talk about fundamental and "undigestible" cultural differences between Turkey and Europe. The term *absorption capacity* in EU jargon has been interpreted as having more cultural than economic or institutional connotations.

Due to the difficulty of digesting Turkey, many Europeans have called for another solution, the idea of "privileged partnership," an idea that is increasingly becoming a shared position of the conservative political camp from Austria to France. As expressed by Hans-Gert Poettering, a German conservative, Christian Democratic Union politician, and the president of the European Parliament, the reason why Europe needs to offer this less-than-full membership solution lies in the psychological opposition in Europe rooted in political, cultural, and philosophical differences: "I believe that Turkey and the European Union will have a more fruitful and satisfying relationship if they develop a privileged partnership, where they work together as closely as possible, but still remain autonomous in their decision-making."[44]

The idea of a privileged partnership had its origins in eighteenth-century European political thinking. In order to tackle the problem of Islam surrounding Europe, French social philosopher Charles-Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743) offered in his "Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe" the idea of a defensive partnership with Mediterranean Muslim neighbors of Europe, including the Turks. According to this notion, however, Muslim lands would not have a say in making policy decisions:

> Once the Mahometans were associated with the Union, the advantages of such a settlement for Europe would be numerous. First of all, the institutional incorporation of Mediterranean Muslim countries into the Union — as a "partnership for peace" avant la letter, that is to say, not as equal partners — would neutralize their military power. . . . Once associated with the Union, Mahometans would have to provide troops for European security. They would also have to contribute financially to the maintenance of the Union. . . . [I]t was certainly beneficial for European

44. Hans-Gert Poettering, "Reasons for a Privileged Partnership between Turkey and the EU," *Today's Zaman*, 14 December 2004.

commerce. The imagined and proposed settlement would open the borders of neighbouring Muslim states to unrestricted commercial activity.[45]

Certainly the current proposal of privileged partnership has much in common with Saint-Pierre's ideas. Turkey should be kept defensively within European parameters, and the Turkish market — Europe's fastest-growing market — must be kept open to European exports. Like Saint-Pierre, the contemporary defenders of this idea subscribe to a notion that Turkey presents an irresolvable issue to Europe, and it is better to reorganize and leave it as such. So Turkey should be anchored off the shore of Europe but never be allowed to dock at the European harbor. As Fadi Hakura observes, "Privileged partnership boils down to certain potentially dangerous propositions, namely, that Turks should not be judged by the values of democracy, human rights, good-neighborly relations and cultural diversity. This is somewhat reminiscent of the prejudicial nineteenth- and twentieth-century Orientalist views of Turkey, summed up by the Scottish essayist and philosopher Thomas Carlyle: 'The unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country be left to honest European guidance.'"[46]

Culturalists both in Turkey and in Europe may find that this solution serves their own purposes. With this arrangement Turkey would be able to maintain its national sovereignty and independent decision-making abilities, and Europe would be able to keep Turkey both in and out at the same time. An offer from Europe that falls short of full membership under the pretext of irreconcilable cultural differences, however, risks a strong nationalist backlash in Turkey that will eventually haunt the proponents of Turkish Westernization. In Europe itself, the idea of privileged partnership remains unofficial and is largely opposed at the bureaucratic level within the EU. EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn has observed that Turkey is already a privileged partner: "There is a customs union for trade and economy. The political

45. Saint-Pierre later abandoned this partnership plan, embracing instead the idea of a universal crusade to "chase the Turk out of Europe and even out of Asia and Africa." Tomaz Mastnak, "Abbe De Saint-Pierre: European Union and the Turk," *History of Political Thought* 19 (1998): 585–86. Also see Mastnak, "Europe and the Muslims: The Permanent Crusade?" in *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, ed. Emran Qureshi and Michael Anthony Sells (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
46. Fadi Hakura, "Partnership Is No Privilege: The Alternative to EU Membership Is No Turkish Delight," Chatham House Briefing Paper, September 2005.

dialogue is deepening. Turkey is part of the EU's crisis management opera-
tions in the Balkans. In other words, some would say this already represents
a privileged partnership."[47] As more parties and leaders who embrace this
idea come to power in key European countries, the situation may change.

In any case, any definition of a European common identity as being dis-
tinct from its others will not be without serious implications for the question
of integrating Europe's cultural minorities. Recall that the controversy sur-
rounding the Danish cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad in derogatory
ways served as a basis for solidarity in which a small Danish newspaper was
seen as defending "European civilization" marked by its freedom of speech
against the "intolerant" and "fanatical" Muslim masses. Numerous other
newspapers in Norway, France, Germany, and other European countries
expressed their solidarity by reprinting the images as though they were open-
ing new fronts in the perceived battle of civilizations. This discourse is often
expressed through a language that flirts with the limits of normal cultural
respect.[48] However, evoking Islam as the other in order to prepare the ground
on which to build a common European identity is potentially destabilizing in
the context of increasing cultural diversity within Europe itself.

Many European nations host significant cultural and religious minori-
ties, most significantly Muslims. The ethnic turmoil in France in 2006 is a
reminder of this reality. While Europe needs to face up to challenges to inte-
grate these minorities, the singular civilizational identity of Europe demands
cultural assimilation of others rather than their social, political, and eco-
nomic integration. In the political vocabulary of Europe, particularly conti-
nental Europe, integration has come to mean cultural assimilation as opposed
to multiculturalism. In the words of German chancellor Merkel, "The idea of
a multicultural society cannot succeed. It is prone to failure from the start.
Multiculturalism is not integration."[49] *Integration*, however, is a structural

47. "Rehn: Turkey Is Already a 'Privileged Partner' of the EU," Euractiv.com (EU News and Policy
Positions), 13 July 2005, www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/rehn-turkey-privileged-partner-eu/
article-142431.
48. Illustrative of this new language is Der Spiegel's title, "Cartoons 1 Muhammad 0," 16 February
2007, English edition, which can dangerously be taken to suggest that the entire conflict is actually
with Islam rather than what are considered intolerant interpretations of it.
49. Viviente Valt, "Life on the Front Lines," *Time* (Europe), 28 February 2005, www.time.com/
time/europe/html/050228/story.html.

and institutional term without cultural connotations. Integration means a recognition and appreciation of multiculturalism. Assimilation is melting of the peripheral identities into the dominant cultural identity, while integration is the movement of all identities toward each other to create a culturally neutral space of coexistence. Assimilation places the burden on the politically dominated and "morally inferior" group, integration on the politically dominant and "morally superior" one. As John Murphy and Jung Min Choi suggest, "The tenets of assimilation are based on a dualistic philosophy that is antagonizing to equality. Clearly stated, assimilation reflects a racist ontology where there are two separate ontological places of existence: whites and others. Accordingly, the assimilation perspective is grounded on racist principles where one group is automatically accorded a high status."[50] The contours of twenty-first-century racism are not marked by color but culture.

Clearly, at the center of Europe's integration problem lies the question of a hierarchical notion of civilization, which accepts civilizations in terms of their proximity to the European center. Hence the European self can meet the Muslim other — in the form both of minorities and the EU candidate Turkey — at the European center only on the condition that they are willing to be assimilated. The insistence, for instance, among many European intellectuals on referring to "Muslims in Europe" rather than to "European Muslims"[51] is rooted in the perceived incompatibility between these two notions: Europe as civilization and Muslims as its others.

This issue cannot be resolved without tackling first the question of how Europe defines itself. Europe has to decide whether it will accept multiculturalism as its basic principle and see itself as a civilizationally neutral geography based on common fate and future of its inhabitants or whether to continue to see itself as a common civilizational project for people who share a common religious heritage. Certainly, Europe as a multicultural project will

50. John W. Murphy and Jung Min Choi, *Postmodernism, Unraveling Racism, and Democratic Institutions* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), 45.
51. In many of his works, Egyptian-Swiss intellectual Tariq Ramadan highlights this problem and calls for a perceptional and discursive change in these terms. See his *To Be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context* (Leicester, England: Islamic Foundation, 1999). See also "A Radical Idea: How Muslims Can Be European, Too," *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 October 2006.

be strengthened by the membership of Turkey. On the other hand, if the latter view remains hegemonic, then the Turkish efforts to become part of Europe will be successful to the extent Turks prepare themselves to be culturally assimilated.

Conclusion

In October 2005, the EU started the negotiating process that aims at Turkey's full membership but does not guarantee full membership as the final outcome. In late 2006, EU foreign ministers agreed to partially freeze the membership talks because of Turkey's failure to open its ports and airports to Greek-Cypriot vessels and airplanes. The EU voted to suspend eight of the thirty-five chapters or policy areas covering trade and transport into which the talks are divided, and review Turkey's compliance annually until 2009. A final diplomatic initiative by Turkey to open one port and one airport in exchange for direct EU trade with northern Cyprus was not taken seriously by Brussels. The symbolic exclusion of Turkey from the celebrations of the EU's fiftieth birthday celebrations in March 2007 darkened an already gloomy picture. To the further dismay of many Turks, German chancellor Merkel presented a gift to outgoing French president Chirac, an eighteenth-century beer mug, embossed with a relief representing Napoleon's military victory over the Ottoman army in Egypt in 1799. Was she reminding him of France's Napoleonic mission, as the Turkish media suspected? If Chirac needed such a reminder due to his occasional support of Turkish membership, his successor, Nicholas Sarkozy, is a perfect partner for Merkel, as both agree that the best Turkey can hope for in Europe is a privileged partnership. Both politicians represent the ascendancy of conservative European political ideology whose main political agenda is opposition to immigration, multiculturalism, and Turkish membership in the EU.

The EU's ambivalent attitude vis-à-vis Turkey gives ammunition to EU opponents and discredits its supporters inside Turkey. Besides the issue of Cyprus, many members, including France and Austria, have signaled their intention to bring the membership issue eventually to referenda in their countries. Given the current level of support in those countries, there is almost no chance that such referenda would result in favor of Turkey. Hence the cel-

ebratory tone of the advocates of membership in Turkey is very much muted, and the level of public support is rapidly decreasing. It is becoming difficult and politically risky to support Turkey in the EU in European politics these days. Supporters have chosen to emphasize the longevity of the process itself and the necessity of keeping Turkey close to Europe, rather than the necessity of changing the cultural basis of European identity.

The debate on defining European identity will have strong implications for Europe's future and that of Turkey. Accepting or rejecting Turkish membership demands will also have long-lasting effects, not only on the future of Europe's relations with its own Muslim minorities and the larger Islamic world, but also on its global role. Europe appears to have a choice. On the one hand, by rejecting Turkey, Europe would stress its commitment to a culturally defined European identity with a singular civilizational identity. On the other, by embracing Turkey, it would move beyond the cultural paradigm and transform itself to a geographically defined entity embracing a multiplicity of civilizations. The dominant tendency in Europe, especially in key continental EU members including France and Germany, is to define European identity in terms of its unique cultural heritage, with an emphasis either on Christianity or more secularly on Enlightenment values. Cultural minimalists who subscribe to a Eurocentric notion of civilizational order do not perceive Turkey as belonging within these cultural borders. However, demographic changes within Europe will exert strong pressure on this definition. In other words, Europe has to face up to the reality of changing demographics and define itself as neutral on the question of civilization, regardless of the Turkish membership issue. On the other hand, the issue of Turkish membership itself has become more problematic in the context of an increasing self-confidence in Turkey that leads to it emphasizing its own unique civilizational and Muslim identity. The change in the balance of civilizational discourse in Turkey in regard to the EU has added additional fuel to Europe's cultural angst.

Turkey's desire to be part of Europe while maintaining its civilizational authenticity will result in a negative attitude toward Europe if European identity remains defined by reference to its others. Integration of either Turkey or European Muslims cannot be achieved through cultural assimilation. An

identity that would respect the authenticity of different civilizational claims within the multicultural European platform would be the only solution if Europe is ever to emerge as a successful model of integration with a global credibility. Turkish membership in this sense is an opportunity for the task of a redefinition of what Europe means. Europe is about to lose its last chance of becoming multicultural.