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## THE DISCOURSE OF ISLAMISM ON ISLAMIST TERRORISM IN TURKEY

*“On the face of tremors that derive from new truths, both Islam and West can transfer the basic analysis to polemics and experiences to fantasies. The respect to the concrete details of human experiences approaching other with sympathy, the knowledge assembled and distributed in accordance with the working ethics, it is certain that these are all better and achievable goals than today’s conflicts and humiliating hostility” (Edward Said, 2000).*

It has been observed that a political context as an outcome of the relation between terrorism and Islam amplified and generalized by September 11th events, has promoted debates over violence and Islam, not only in the global scale but in Turkey as well. A phenomenon sustained rather than debated by propositions such as “There is no violence in Islam” “Islam is the religion of love, peace, and fraternity” and even “it is impossible for such a thing called Islamist terrorism to exist”, has become apparent by exceeding, concealing, and delimiting the framework of the discourse itself. This phenomenon has become apparent not only in the country-wide realization and undertaking of certain terrorist acts by some Islamist organizations<sup>1</sup> and formations, especially from the 1990s onwards but also became visible as harmful outcomes of some

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<sup>1</sup> By “Islamist organizations” I mean entities which try to make visible their political demands by referring to Islam, like Hizbullah, Ibda-C, Al Qaida, Muslim Brothers etc.

violent attempts to include Islamist tones rooted in social consciousness. Generally speaking the phenomenon which exceeded the optimistic principle that can be crystallized in the assertion that “there can be no Islamist terrorism/violence”, is the sum of various facets of “Islamist terrorism” which is more or less sustained in Turkey and arose in parallel with the development and growing strength of Islamist political movements in the last decade.

The existence of Islamist violence and terrorism, whether it is because of Islam or in spite of Islam, is a presupposed assumption in this paper. It is possible to establish a historical relation between Islam and violence, and Islam and terrorism. History demonstrates enough stories about possible relations between all kind of religions and violence and terror in general. The claim for any religion that its own sublime project, worldwide peace, fraternity and welfare can be established without blood and tears is like the precautionary singing of someone walking through a graveyard. Rationally he knows that the dead will not arise and walk through him; still his singing is a precaution for his own fear of such a surreal possibility. He is more or less aware that between his passing through the graveyard and the occurrence of a problem, between what he intends to do and what may happen, there is always a possibility of incompatibility. It is known that, unfortunately there is usually an irreducible gap between aims and their actual realizations. In this paper my aim is to critique an ideological operation of the Islamist media which embody, and affirm its existence by continuously denying it. Ironically, this denial operates as the very reverse of its aim.

Defining the problematic in this way brings with it the necessity to acknowledge various difficulties from the start. In fact human history is passing through a period that US- led Western calculations concerning the Middle East peaked with attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Humanity got caught up in an era in which the barbarism and brutality in the activation of these estimations and plans have overridden the meaning of being human, not only for those who are subject to it, but for the others who witness. The time we've been passing through has turned into one of the most painful periods of history. To use or combine the words “Islam”, “terrorism”, and “violence” is a delicate as well as complex issue these days. In such a global political atmosphere, dealing with how Islamist terrorism is framed in Islamist media, and the meaning of this framing, by focusing on Turkey's own context and dynamics can be considered as a challenge to the existent political sensitivities, although this would be contrary to its original aim. The most genuine answer, in this case, is probably in Edward Said's words quoted above.

It is also beneficial to say a few words on the irrelevancy of such concerns by trying to point out the approach on which the study is based: Needless to say, all analysis should and does imply the analyst's political claims on the issue one way or another, under the legitimacy of being scientific. The analyst who invites the reader to a certain framework of plausibility by his/her text can construct and sustain a scientific/political stance only in terms of justifications of his/her theses. I use the word “political” here in a broad sense to refer to the occupation of certain positions in life and having an ethical consciousness to maintain the conditions of coexistence of these positions. This study is a limited political/scientific attempt to expose a political claim that the dynamics of the principle that “there is no Islamist terrorism and violence, and there can not be” by looking at it through the Islamist press. I retain the bar between the words political/scientific not as a separation of the political from the scientific, but as the very

“barrier” which provides a genuine connection between them. Not only the retention of this supposed bar but also that the concept of “discourse” to which I referred throughout this study asks for this analysis to be placed into a political/scientific position by its theoretical premises combined with the notion of ideology. The meaning of the concept of discourse reveals that why it should be done. Discourse, in the absence of a fixed center, is a temporary unity of chains of signification. Meaning, along this chain, is constantly renegotiated (Torfing, 1999, pp. 84-6). That is to say, we can only speak of discourse’s temporary fixations rather than its final unity or closure. The partial fixation of meaning within discourse produces an irreducible surplus of meaning. It does not merely designate a linguistic region within the social, but is rather co-extensive with the social. Discourse(s) are concrete systems of social relations and practices that are intrinsically political<sup>2</sup>. To analyze the one that is itself political and which will obtain only a partial success towards the closure of meaning, that is to analyze the discourse, is nothing but a political attempt in its nature (partially successful of course due to its inability to close the meaning completely). Therefore a general objection in the form of “well, but is this analysis itself not a self-closed ideological discourse?”, which was faced at times while developing this study, becomes irrelevant due not to its references to the ethical position of the “political/scientific study” issue (which carries a danger of falling into an insipid relativity) but to the fact that this analysis is worked out through a paradigm in which discourse, right from the beginning, is accepted as nothing but an effort (desperate still essential) to achieve such a closure and fixation.

## **On Method and Approach**

While trying to perceive how terrorism and violence is framed in the Islamist media, particularly in the press, we will at the same time be questioning more less whether such framing is “useful” or not. The criteria of usefulness here is who constructs the power of this discourse and whose interests are realized by doing this. There is no doubt that it is difficult to distinguish for whom a discourse is trying to become hegemonic<sup>3</sup> is “useful” as well as to measure the level of it<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, here, we focus on the subjects of the

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed discussions on the theory of discourse and discourse analysis, see Torfing: 1999; Howarth, Norval & Stavrakakis, 2000; Laclau, 1990; Zizek, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Hegemony is defined as an expansion of a discourse or set of discourses into a dominant horizon of a social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments in a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces (Torfing, 1999, p. 101). In their efforts to construct hegemony, producers of the discourse “there is no violence in Islam and there is no Islamist terrorism,” are also trying to hegemonize it by attributing a specific content to the sign Islam, though temporary may be.

<sup>4</sup> What is more, the liberal utilitarian political subject that seeks interest by merely depending on rationality is quite different from the ideological/political subject that is referred to in this study. A potent and positive subject designed as a rational and coherent unity by the liberal political approach to seek personal utility, and while doing this provide the collective good for the society

discourse that the Islamist media is trying formed and make hegemonic. Tending towards subjects that are both constitutive of and constituted by a certain discourse is an act that does not necessitate collecting data through survey or interview using certain techniques. In fact by trying to identify the basic elements and their interrelations with the discourse of “there is no violence in Islam; Islamist terrorism is impossible” as well as its subject and fantasy horizons enables some deductions of its power. To work through the said discourse with its main actors, certain ruptures and continuities in specific historical moments from its constitution is beyond the scope of this study. To repeat, the aim of the study is to try to perceive the fantasy framework of this discourse which has become increasingly widespread since the 1990s, while at the same time underlining how the act of negation threatened its very existence. Accordingly I prefer an analysis which highlights moments of continuity rather than one focusing on ruptures or discontinuities among various samples of Islamist media. The main intention by doing this is to capture the similarities among the Islamist press in terms of formation of the discourse through the relation between Islam and violence and between Islam and terrorism. This is why I included only leading examples of the Islamist press such as *Yeni Şafak* (New Dawn), *Zaman* (Time), *Türkiye*, and *Akit* (Convention) into the analytical universe.

Islamist press or Islamist media is a common phrase that emphasizes the ideological tendencies of newspapers, magazines, TV channels and radio stations in Turkey. This term is attributed by the popular secularist media to the part of the media which has national circulation and broadcasting, and more a Islamist political ideological orientations at a first glance. There are twenty main national circulating newspapers in Turkey and the most popular (*Hurriyet*) has a circulation of 750.000 per day. Total circulation of all newspapers is between 3 and 4 million each day since 2000. Although there are newspapers representing different religious sects published by different religious enterprises, critics of the Turkish secular and laic state structure, demanding a public life in accordance with the religious principles where possible, and the desire for moral/religious conservatism are the common features of this press and media, regardless of their sect affiliations. Of the most popular and influential examples of Islamist press mentioned above *Zaman*, reached the highest circulation figures for the first time on March 2004 with a circulation of 785.000. Their relative circulation figures are shown in the following table:

| Islamist Newspapers | September 2000 circulation | September 2002 circulation | September 2004 circulation | September 2006 circulation |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Zaman</i>        | 220.000                    | 207.000                    | 495.000                    | 500.000                    |
| <i>Yeni Şafak</i>   | 45.000                     | 55.000                     | 115.000                    | 110.000                    |
| <i>Türkiye</i>      | 370.000                    | 107.000                    | 185.000                    | 195.000                    |
| <i>Akit</i>         | 75.000                     | 57.000                     | 57.000                     | 65.000                     |

(what a chance!) as well, is not similar to the subject who could not construct the psychic unity of the ideology theory itself but always attempts to manage that, and who organizes worldly affairs along frameworks of fantasy in order to overcome his self-fragmentation, as well as making himself gain a positive existence through negativities. They are two distinct, one depending on positive ontology, the other on negative, persons belonging to two different worlds.

There is no doubt that especially since the 1990s in Turkey, various forms of religiously motivated or religion-related acts of terrorism and violence, from assassinations of secular Kemalist intellectuals and writers to massive bombing acts, have been witnessed. Three models of religious terrorist acts are dealt with in the analytical universe of this study: first is the Islamist-expected political assassination that targeted Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, who is one of the leading figures of Kemalist, secular intellectuals in Turkey, in 1999; second is the (resolution) of chain massacres that were uncovered when moderate Islamist figures were found in “cemetery houses” in the year 2000; third are the terrorist acts that are claimed to be Al Qaida related and which resulted in the deaths of dozens of people on November 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003, when the British Consulate and HSBC Bank were bombed. Each of these three modes of terrorist movement looks directed towards different targets because their practical aims were at first sight different: the first is targeted at Turkish Kemalist secularists to make them feel weak and insecure; the second is targeted at moderate and devoted Muslims to obtain their unconditional cooperation with the illegal organizations; and the last is directed at safety of foreign people living in Turkey. Nevertheless all types of terrorist acts threatened to the wholeness of human existence, which is one of the main aims of terrorism.

While analyzing how Islamist terrorism and terrorist acts were framed in of the selected newspapers, I tried to explore the discursive processes as they appeared in articles and news pieces. Therefore attention is given to the flows of indication which construct the Islamist discourse of the Islamist media, as well as their inter-relations. In order to expose the discourse as they are set up in the articles and news, cause-effect relations and the logic of these relations are focused on. This focus of attention provides a feasible domain of study in terms of its recognition of the basic theoretical premises of an analytical approach to ideology.

The procedure of the ideological analysis which enables us to turn attention to the courses of discursive processes is based on the one hand on the recognition of stimulating the fantasy of the possibility of a final social consistency and unity, and on the other hand, displays the central mechanism of the operation of ideology. According to its operation, ideology cannot affirm a notion of unity without simultaneously producing the idea of a threat to that unity. That is to say, what is at debate is a paradoxical situation in which ideology, without simultaneously producing a threat towards unity and coherence, cannot provide these notions. In this way an element of negativity makes possible the positive coherence of ideology. The determination which makes both possible and impossible the social objectivity in which a discourse is constituted and which constitutes it, is derived from negativity. The dialectical movement negativity engenders is constitutive of the social actors and their identities as well<sup>5</sup>. When strengthening a realizable notion of coherence and wholeness, ideology puts special emphasis on the “other” in terms of the one that either prevents us from being totally ourselves or steals this wholeness from us. That is to say, being responsible for the decline of a formerly existing harmony in the society, the *other* arises as a blockage

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<sup>5</sup> The main reason of this is that negation which makes possible the production of a certain discourse and the subject of the discourse, in essence, enables for the «thing» an opportunity to express itself in positivity.

which prevents us from being ourselves. While loss of social harmony, decline of order, social dislocation, disorder, fragmentation, threats of chaos as constitutive negativities operated especially by totalitarian ideologies function significantly, constructed otherness presented the “threat” as something that can be overcome (Daly, 1999). In short, the formal characteristic of the ideological process is the simultaneous working of both the construction of the threat and the promise to overcome it. Žižek especially highlights the determining power of form in the functioning of ideologies (Žižek, 1991 and 1998). Yet this formal functioning does not entail the subordination of content. Žižek justifies his understanding of ideology through Hegel’s relation of form/content, the ontological route through which content realizes itself via the realization of form, and form is considered as the realized state of content or matter. Following this ontological route, Žižek considers the continuous *effort* to say things as the leading engine of ideology instead of what is said of each ideology. This means that the movement itself is the authentic foundation of any ideology: “Contrary to the usual conception, it is the form of the proposition which conveys difference, whereas the content remains stuck within inert identity” (Žižek, 1991, p. 35). The fact that in the Hegelian system an *a priori* source or power to the movement is put as pure negativity enables Žižek to claim that ideology structures reality on the basis of negativity. The self-referential functioning of the power of negativity is the condition of the positive structuring of the thing<sup>6</sup>.

The theoretical context in which Žižek defines ideology as a structured reality due to the negativity’s determinate power on movement, which enables positivity, is the context we rely on. Analyzing the ideological character of the assumption “There is no violence in Islam and there is no Islamist terrorism” is one of the perfect cases of the operation of ideology which is based on a negative ontology. Through this approach, ideology is considered not as an illusion to disguise the reality of things but as an (unconscious) *fantasy* that structures the social reality that is experienced by people. Fantasy has a vital role in the functioning of the ideology. Fantasy is not in contradiction to the Real; it belongs to the social world from the very beginning and should be considered as the structure of the framework in which our desires in order to meaningfully and coherently experience the world are coordinated. Through the fantasy constructs of ideology individuals produce social reality itself in the form of a state of unity and wholeness that does not actually exist. Reality is constructed in order to escape from the Real<sup>7</sup>. The

<sup>6</sup> A mobilizing “third thing” is not necessary because of this. Subject and object are considered as two distinct entities, a “third thing” to relate them will come to mind, that is movement will be external which is what is exactly criticized by Hegel (Hegel, 1977). Whereas, for Hegel, self movement is *de facto* reality. The subject through the movement it realizes in order to overcome its identicalness, realizes mediation. Neither mediation nor negation is external to it. Žižek, too, in his approach to ideology shares the idea that the mobilization of the subject to construct ideological reality is neither external nor comes from the other; and that it is existent in itself. Yet the ideological subject does not experience this as such in its conscious. Negation that leads to movement, therefore, originates from the other.

<sup>7</sup> The scary reality which is insistently avoided is that it is impossible to reach the Real in the sense of a state of perfection. It is impossible because, in simplest terms, the possibility to construct the socio-symbolic order depends on the lack of the possibility of reaching the Real as the promise of unity, wholeness, and pleasure.

fantasy construction of an ideology, that its domain or frame is a space where both the subject's relation with reality and the way in which this relation is lived, is constituted. In Zizek's words "ideological fantasy structures the reality itself" (Zizek, 1989, p. 44). This approach is of course different from the classical conception of ideology to be an illusion and to function as a dream-like illusion to escape from reality. The function of the ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from the reality. Inspired by Lacan, as Zizek mentions its function is to "offer us the social reality itself in order to escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (Zizek, 1989, p. 45). The traumatic kernel to be escaped from and left behind is the reality of the nonexistence of the social as a wholeness and a coherent unity, whereas attempts can only be made to achieve such coherence by signification. Through this ideological operation, the "other" being responsible for the present lack of harmonious order that once existed but now lost, is appeared as blockage and ideology is a domain dynamized by both the constituting of this blockage as well as its overcoming. While strengthening the notion of unity and wholeness as realizable, ideology puts special emphasis on the other defined as the one that prevents us from accomplishing our own unity or stealing it from us.

According to this systematic of functioning of ideology, the subjectivity that Turkish people are continuously interpellated by both religious and liberal secular media, in its broadest terms, is nothing but "Muslims who have nothing to do with violence and exclude it". An interesting thing here is that in Turkey all discursive attempts to emphasize Islam's exclusion of violence and the irrelevancy between the Muslim believer and violence intensify soon after those violent or terrorist acts that are claimed to be Islamism-affiliated. That is to say, the very moment when Islamist violence expresses itself de facto, the discourse of "Islam has no place for violence" is stimulated. The irony of this discursive mobilization is that the discourse itself, in which the content is strictly fixed in fact functions formally in opposition to its aim and posits the relation between Islam and violence. The very discourse that tries to deny a connection between Islam and violence with statements like "There is no violence in Islam", "There is no such thing as Islamist terrorism" operates just in just such a way to construct and confirm the connection. The effort to put these claims resulted in a constitutive and affirmative way although their contents claim the reverse. Negated propositions of the discourse of "there is no Islamist violence/terror" are affirmed by the very movement of negation itself.

A second finding related to the first is the Islamist's newspapers' insistence on the definition of "real agents" of the terrorist attacks: Islamist newspapers are primarily pointing out "dark, deeper and secret powers of the state" as the main agents of the all types of terrorist or violent acts from political assassinations to the bomb attacks. According to them, some 'uncontrollable dark components of the deep state mechanism' are doing these attacks in the name of Islamism because by removing unity and harmony they the existence of democratic rights and progress in Turkey. Through the discursive operations as they appear in the newspapers Islamist violence and terrorism is ignored as the focus of questioning and instead the news frames that include critiques concentrate more on state functioning and structure. In terms of the construction and meaning-attribution of these frames, the terror and violence atmosphere in the past which was mobilized by the ideological and sectarian fragmentations of the pre September 12<sup>th</sup>,

1980 period<sup>8</sup>, and which was deeply inscribed into the social consciousness provides the most important and convenient historical context of reference for Islamist journalists. That is to say, all the meaning of the violent acts that are coded not as “Islamist terrorism” but just “terror” by the Islamist newspapers is constructed through some reference to the general “meaning of terror” created by the violence and terror before September 12<sup>th</sup>.

This conceptual line we constituted between ideology and discourse provides two opportunities in order to analyze the discourse of “there is no violence and terror of Islam” that is developed in the discourses of the Islamist newspapers: On the one hand it is possible to draw attention to the articulation of flowing referents of the ideological domain, while on the other hand it is possible to emphasize the social antagonism from which this discourse derived. It is not within the scope of this study to discuss whether or not there is any place for violence in Islam. The aim is to expose how the ideological fantasy that becomes apparent in the statement “There is no violence in Islam and there is no such thing as Islamist terrorism” is constituted in the Islamist media and while doing this, to point out how this negativity of the discourse through its self referential functioning entails a positive embodiment of Islamist violence and structures it.

## **Heel of Achilles in Islamism: Terror and Violence**

It has been observed that as a result of the rise of the Islamic movement, especially from the 1940s and accelerated since the late 1960s, a relation between Islam and violence or terror has emerged historically. Although European direct confrontation with Islam can be traced back to the military struggles during the expansion of this religion, modern Europe had focused on Islamic civilization by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Edward Said has displayed the ideological functions of those confrontations especially at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. According to him, the construction of the “threat of Islam” by Western thought has ideological effects by discrediting this civilization as a serious rival of the Christian civilization (Said, 2000, p. 30). Edward Said has emphasized that for most Western intellectuals’ consciousness Islam had a place only it has gained a ‘news value’ because of oil, of Iran and Afghanistan terror events and civic war in Lebanon, though discussions on Islam has always appeared after the political or regional crises. After the

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<sup>8</sup> A military intervention was made and Turkish army forces tookover political power by closing the national parliament on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980. Before this coup d’état, dislocation of social structure caused by illegal political organizations both from left and right ideologies and political oscillations in a highly fragmented parliament has resulted in massive terrorist attacks and assassinations against intellectuals and significant political figures in Turkey. Horror and terror on the streets of big cities, lack of political stability and loss of political consensus were the main characteristics of the pre-1980 period in Turkey.

<sup>9</sup> Said analyzed the origins of Orientalist thought and the imaginary constitution of Occident/West v East. He discussed Islam as the only civilization which has not totally yielded to Western civilization and has a resistance to it (see Said, 2000).



Second World War, the United States took over the dominance of Muslim world from France and the United Kingdom. By the middle of 1979, all Islamic movements were labeled as “Islamic revolution”, “crescent of crisis” and “return of Islam” (Said, 2000, p. 92). Said noticed that the identities of Muslims were represented as future terrorists or petrol millionaires in the news.

Outcomes of this relation between Islam and violence have become concrete, according to some, at the moment when political Islam declined the most (Roy, 1994). As Roy points out, while Anvar Sadat’s assassination in 1981 was perceived as a problem of domestic politics, Islamist terrorism and violence increasingly became the means to resist Western influences (Roy, 1994, p. 154). Domestic support from the governments of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya has given power to the various Islamist groups. An anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist discourse of Islam has matured while political opposition to the West was expressed in religious terms. Islam-based anti-imperialist and anti-Western discourse acquired its power not only from “Islam as a unity of faith” but also from Islam which is an “encompassing and absolute order” (*nizam*) that enclose all aspects of life. That is, it has been long time since Islam became more than as issue of faith in individual conscience<sup>10</sup>. Islam has been transformed to a political ideology which has foundational problems with Western modernization and civilization, including all its cultural, political, social implications (Roy, 1994; Lewis, 1997). The issue of how to establish an Islamic society as an alternative to Western society has driven Islamist politics to two main movements: the first one, as preferred by moderate Islamists, is reformism, which starts with a grassroots Islamist project that will proceed as an ongoing socio-cultural movement and continue by putting pressure on political elites in order to promote top- down Islamism. In this framework, revolt is a political way of expression only when all peaceful means of protest have failed and the state has undertaken a definite anti-Islamic attitude (Roy, 1994, p. 65). The second political way of expression is preferred by radicals and assumes an overthrowing of all state institutions by a revolutionary political rupture instead of negotiating with the existing Islamic societies.

As Islamist movements<sup>11</sup> felt empowered to realize their political projects in Islamic regions during the 1970s, an Islamist party was established in 1970 in Turkey<sup>12</sup>. Of

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<sup>10</sup> It is known that Islamism, as a political and ideological project of the nineteenth century’s Muslim societies, has arisen by referring to its genuine resources, the first being the Quran. By inherently renovating (*tecdid*), and with the objective to find urgent solutions for that period’s crisis of faith, politics, and ideology, Islamist thinkers and politicians aimed at uniting all Muslims. This aim was called as *ittihad-ı İslam* (see Kara, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> The term “Islamist movements” signifies a reactionary political ideological strain which has intended to protect and preserve the Islamic character of society against the influences of western modernization (Laçiner, 1989, p. 12). The term was first used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and refers to the discontent about the excellence and dominancy of Western societies.

<sup>12</sup> This party, Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party), was the predecessor of succeeding Islamist parties in Turkey. When the party emerged by using the Sunni doctrine and ideological notions, the founder figures declared that it will be a purely militant and morally conservative Islamist party which would put an end to the moral decadence. Their political strategy was the struggle with modern world on the basis of economic welfare and justice as well as on the emergency of authentic values and Islamic spirit (Yıldırım, 1994, p. 51).

course this party was just one of the pursuers of political opposition to the Western modernization since 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although this party, which has defended the re-traditionalization of social life according to the Islamic principles, was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1972, other parties immediately succeeded it. Islamist party first entered the Turkish National Parliament in 1973 and has become a significant political actor since then. A religious world view, independent industrialization, moral conservatism has been the foundational principle of the Islamist parties' official doctrines. Though they made sharp criticisms of the western way of modernization in terms of its cultural and social aspects, Islamist parties have always pursued modernist economic programs. Foundation of Turkish Republic and its revolutions forced Islamist sects to an illegitimate existence until the 1970's. Hence Islamist movements acquired a legitimate existence as being represented in the parliament. Secularism has thought to have penetrated into the way of life in modern Turkey by diminishing the effects of underlying religious structures such as religious communities and sects (tarikats) which have reigned during the period of Ottoman Empire and continued to reign after the foundation of the new Turkish Republic (1923).

The term "Islamist violence and terror" has appeared strongly in the political context of Turkey in the 1990s. One of the well known forms of Islamist or religious terrorism in Turkey is, particularly from the early 1990s onwards, political assassinations oriented towards Kemalist-secular intellectuals and resulting in the deaths of seven intellectuals. Political assassinations which were quite common in Turkey in the period prior to the coup of September 12th, restarted after 1990 against defenders of secularism in public, intellectuals, writers and scientists known for their closeness to the secularist foundational Kemalist ideology. These serial assassinations continued for nearly a decade after those that targeted Muammer Aksoy, Çetin Emeç, Turan Dursun, Bahriye Üçok, and Uğur Mumcu at the beginning of the 1990s, and came to an end when a Kemalist academician Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, lost his life on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in a bomb outrage. It has been widely accepted that assassinations had the effect of leading to the creation of controversies such as secular vs. Islamist, Kemalist vs. anti-Kemalist which arose especially after the 1980 coup. The main reason for this is that those who lost their lives were symbolic figures in terms of their being defenders of the Kemalist ideology and in their critical stance towards the political role of religion in society.

The public faced the second type of Islamist terrorism in security forces' operations against Hizbullah<sup>13</sup> in January 2000. Hizbullah is an illegal organization in Islamist-identity that in fact emerged in Batman and Diyarbakir (the southeast) in Turkey from the mid-1980s onwards but is claimed to have been ignored at first by state units in their struggle with PKK terrorism. The governments began seriously an armed struggle against Hizbullah in 1993. Having traced and captured of Hizbullah's founding leader, Hüseyin Veliolu, in a raid on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2000 in İstanbul, security forces caught significant numbers of Hizbullah militants in many subsequent nationwide operations.

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<sup>13</sup> Hizbullah is commonly known as a Shi'i Islamist organization which was introduced in 1983 with the support of Iran and tolerated by Syria. Its foundational aim is the struggle with the Western military presence in Lebanon (Haddad & Khashan, 2002, pp. 812-813). However there is another Sunni Hizbullah mentioned here. It is introduced in Turkey in parallel with the period of Hizbullah in Lebanon and also known as supported by Iran.

Bodies of their victims of their murders, found buried in what were called “cemetery houses”, were identified and the identity of the perpetrators was made public. Considering the Islamic character and fundamentalist objectives of this organization, whose name meant the “Party of Allah,” that its victims were ideologically moderate Islamist figures was shocking. The barbarism of their techniques of murder, as well as the victims’ being buried either in the basement or the yards of houses, paved the way for the revival of debates over the relation between Islam and violence.

The third and last example of religious terrorism that will be dealt with here are the bomb attacks against synagogues, HSBC Bank, and the British Consulate in November 2003. The attacks which occurred in a period when Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party), a political party whose basic references are Islamic, had governed since 2002, seems to have created a socio-political context in which debates over Islam and violence and Islam and terrorism were strongest after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s words “The phrase Islamist terrorism disturbs me”. When evaluating the intensified debates on Islam and violence in Turkey, it has to be considered that the relation between Islam and terror has become the most important theme of the global agenda in post 9/11 period and any government, whether it is Islamist or not, can no longer ignore this agenda.

It is only time that will determine these three types of terrorist acts can be called Islamist or religious terrorism. In fact - if their perpetrators be caught or not - some official findings that these terrorist acts were somehow committed by religious terrorist organizations such as İBDA-C, Hizbullah, Al-Qaida, or Islamic Movement (İslami Hareket), or these organizations were involved either as perpetrators or subcontractors, were became public knowledge in Turkey. The more these findings were shared in public via the media, the more wide spread became the perspective that the terrorist attacks were the acts of fundamentalist and radical Islamist formations. Nevertheless there are also several other factors specific to Turkey, which aim at removing the relationship between Islam and terror/violence and which attribute some rationality and credibility to discursive operations that developed especially in the Islamist media. One of the most important of these factors are the questions arising around some concrete findings that came out in recent years about the secret uncovered properties of state structure and functioning in Turkey. What is refereed to here is the “Susurluk incident”, a car crash that happened in near Susurluk (Turkey) in 1996, which uncovered and an inappropriate association between a deputy member of the governing party, a police executive, and nationalist terrorist on the run. This accidental revelation initiated serious debates by the public on issues like the limits of the legitimate functioning of state mechanisms and the relations between legal and illegal figures. Both left and right wing parties have believed and insisted on the issue that the state has a “deep” structuring which goes beyond the legitimate limits of its own functioning and which is still preserved, despite it being made obvious by the car accident. After the accident, an opinion which supposes that behind all social dislocations, terrorist events, violent revolts and extraordinary political cases, those deep and secret components of the state are at work became the common view. This Susurluk car accident caused the people to believe that behind violent and terrorist acts there is a possibility of the existence of an organization like the “state within the State”.

To the extent that this belief recognized by nearly all ideological sides became widely circulating, Islamist media was able to constitute the frame of causality based not only on elements of the Islamist narrative, but at the same time based on the concrete facts that made the issues of violence and terrorism more complex in Turkey. Thus Islamist media could invalidate the relation between violence/terrorism and religious fundamentalism. Some other conspiracy ideas which claim the involvement of most powerful states in the September 11 attacks were being discussed all over the world, made it easier for the Islamist media on not to see these terrorisms as “Islamist”.

A principle difficulty in combining Islam and terror/violence in Turkey derived from Islam’s being a central element of ‘Turkishness’ (Waxman, 2000). This centrality finds the strongest emphasis in Turkish-Islamist synthesis discourse where Turkish history is considered to be the history of a split between those clans, tribes, and states who were not Muslims and for this lost their identity and nationality, and those who were able to preserve their Turkishness because they preferred to become Muslims (Dursun, 2003a). That is, the precondition to be a Turk and to remain as a Turk is to be Muslim. This very ideology, especially after the 1980 military intervention, was empowered in the ensuring of “national unity and coherence” as well as social control; i.e. consciousness of national identity is designated via Islam. Islam, becoming the constitutive element of Turk’s own identity in time, cannot be associated with any negativity (violence, injustice, brutality, evil etc.) that results from it or is in the name of it as it is the religion “chosen” by the Turk’s own will. Islam is always associated with a content that includes all positive elements such as ‘commands right, good, mercy, justice, fraternity etc. being the most sublime and final of all faiths’. In Turkey, people try to constitute their own identifications by gaining power from this dominant positive status of Islam in the imaginary and symbolic fields. Therefore all the contexts in which the Muslims are put together with violence and terrorism are threatening in terms of destroying the coherence of their identity.

The discourse of Islamist media, which claims the impossibility of Islamist terror and violence, in fact attempts to retain the element that is Islam as the principle point of identification, which promises the society to provide its unity and wholeness. In its efforts to retain and preserve, Islamist media is not alone. Remembering the general modes of representing the relations between Islam and violence, and Islam and terrorism in the Turkish media for decades, from the most extremist to the most moderate, from leading newspapers of Islamist press to liberal-stance, secular, highly circulating newspapers, it can be observed that readers are invited to a similar kind of political subjectivity when it comes to religion, i.e. Islam. The characteristic attributed to the Turkish people by both religious and liberal secular press in its broadest terms is nothing but “Muslim believer who has nothing to do with violence and excludes violence forever” (Dursun, 2003b). However constant negation challenges the ‘success’ of this ideological effort. This difficulty is related to the nature of the movement of negation. But in what sense?

## Trapped by negation

“*Determinatio Est Negatio*”<sup>14</sup>  
(Spinoza)

When encountering the types of terrorisms stated above, the proposition “there is neither violence nor terrorism in Islam” is immediately circulated by the Islamist media, associated with other statements<sup>15</sup> like: “There can be no Muslim terrorist”; “Those who have to do with terror and violence are not Muslims”; “One who turns to wilderness is a pseudo-Muslim”. Yet these statements mobilize negation’s paradoxical functioning as an outcome of the discomfort that emanated from the unconscious of those who pronounce them. Why are terror and violence being negated if there is no connection between Muslim believer and these acts? Why are terrorist attacks being rejected if Islam and terror are incompatible? If everything about Islam is proper, then why there is a need to emphasize this? There are two levels of speech in such propositions: the level of enunciation, that is content and what is being said, and the level of enunciation, that is form. While explaining the mechanism of negation Robert Pfaller asserts that there is a unique relationship between these two levels (1998, p. 227). As he emphasizes, the content of the statement builds a first message, then there lies a second message: the sending of the message is the second, hidden, message. What is interesting here is that the second message is in contradiction to the first one; that is, with the content: “This split, this contradiction between what is being said and what is being signaled by saying it, conveys the level of enunciation (and its difference from the level of the enunciated). In negation this elusive dimension of speech is brought to its (negative) representation” (Pfaller, 1998, p. 228).

<sup>14</sup> Spinoza’s famous quote which reveals the basic principle of dialectic in Latin means “determination is negation”. For the basic character of dialectic and the relation between negation and determination ,see Yücel Dursun “Bir İçinde İki’nin Hareketi: Hegel’in Diyalektiği” (The Movement of Two in One: The Dialectic of Hegel) “Felsefe Logos”, 21 (2), 2003.

<sup>15</sup> For Islamist news articles on this expression see: Mehmet Aydın, “İslam barış dini” (Islam is a peaceful religion), *Zaman*, 21.01.2000; Mesut Yılmaz, “İrtica siyasidir” (Religious reaction is political), *Zaman*, 23.01.2000; Emine Dolmacı, “Bunların İslam’la ilgileri yok” (They are nothing to do with Islam), *Zaman*, 24.01.2000; Abdullah Gül, “Gerçeği bilmeyen yok” (Everybody knows the truth), *Zaman*, 24.01.2000; Altan Öymen, “Dinle alakası yok” (Unrelated with religious), *Zaman*, 25.01.2000; Ahmet Sağırlı, “Terörün dini ve milliyeti olmaz” (Terror has no religion and nationality belonging), *Türkiye*, 18.11.2003; *Yeni Şafak*, 17.11.2003; Mustafa Karaalioğlu, *Yeni Şafak*, 19.11.2003; Mahir Kaynak, “Saldırı İslami terör değil,” (Attacks are not Islamist terror), *Yeni Şafak*, 17.11.2003; Sami Hocaoğlu, *Yeni Şafak*, 21.11.2003; İbrahim Karagül, “Ey Al-Quaide!”, *Yeni Şafak*, 22.11.2003; Sadık Albayrak, *Yeni Şafak*, 23.11.2003; Ahmet Taşgetiren, “Adını koymak” (Naming terror), *Yeni Şafak*, 24.11.2003; Hüseyin Gülerce, *Zaman*, 21.11.2003; Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz, “Müslüman insan öldürmez,” (Muslims do not kill people), *Zaman*, 24.10.1999; Ahmet Taşgetiren, “Türkiye’ye yönelik komplo” (The conspiracy directed to Turkey) 22.10.1999; *Yeni Şafak*, 24.10.1999; Ahmet Taşgetiren, *Yeni Şafak*, 26.10.1999; *Türkiye*, 24.10.1999.

It would not be wrong to say that negation implies inexpressible presumptions of our enunciations, makes us believe in what was said was indubitable, and responded to something that is unquestionable<sup>16</sup>. Yet, while just making these presumptions appears obvious, negation makes all these questionable. At the same time negation indicates background and origin of common-sense. According to Žižek due to such mechanism of negation, the level in which we can search for truth is not the content of it but the enunciation itself<sup>17</sup> (Žižek, 1998, pp. 40-1). A positive content implies the negative and a negative one brings with itself the positive; that is, it obtains a presence. What is actually embodied should be searched for not in the content but at the level of enunciate or, let's say, the form itself. This mechanism of negation makes denial as a very part of ideology's operation.

Now let us reconsider this: The persistently stated proposition of the Islamist press negates Islam's relation with terrorism and violence. The phenomenon of terrorism is in fact related to terror<sup>18</sup>. To achieve social and political goals, it comprises the excessive and illegal usage of violence and threat of violence. Terrorism is also a symbolic act aiming at manipulating people's political behavior. It is the means to determine people by intimidating, assimilating, and panicking them (Mallison and Thornton cited in Yayla, 1990). In order to achieve political goals, particular strategies, all of which embrace violence, are applied in terrorism. Therefore it can be claimed that terrorist violence is not arbitrary and irrational but calculated and rational in accordance with certain objectives (Yayla, 1990, p. 342). What the Islamist press negates are all negative elements, foremost of which are the horror and violence that terrorism involves. To illustrate this here are some news statements: "It is impossible for genuine Muslims to recognize, use, or accept murder and terrorism..." (*Türkiye*, 24.10.1999); "These brutal murderers who lack of mercy and humanism are defaming our religion which is pure. God forbid, the Islam, our sublime religion, can in no ways be related to them. Disgusting mud from the hollow of brutality is splashed on a religion in which mercy is paramount" (*Türkiye*, 24.01.2000); "Can a person being a Muslim commit such murders, have evil intentions for the lives of pregnant women, children and those who are innocent when there exists the eternal penalty in hell?" (*Zaman*, 21.11.2003).

As can be conceived from these quotations from the news and columns, even the possibility of Islam as being a system which might operate in the status of an "ideology" that can offer an ideological fantasy framework which can somehow comprise violence

<sup>16</sup> Negation in a sense is a matter of censorship: It is a way to exist for that what is not allowed to be explicitly expressed. Yet it is not the only way. It is one way among others. Ideological contexts in which this proceeds as such, that is, the problem of identifying whether negation is employed cunningly (whether the meaning arising by negating the content is deliberately aimed or not), according to Pfaller, prevents it from being one of the most privileged ways of representation. (Pfaller, 1998, p. 233).

<sup>17</sup> The example Žižek gives in relation to this is interesting: During a conversation between a human being and an android in the film *Blade Runner*, the android becomes a real human subject the moment it says "I am a copy," the moment it assumes its own situation as copied, that is when the content is included in the enunciation, in contrast with the actual expression (Žižek, 1998, pp. 40-41).

<sup>18</sup> Terrorism is etymologically a Latin word meaning "trembling out of fear and to cause trembling out of fear".

and brutality for those who intend to realize their political project via terrorism is fully negated. Ideological fantasy is structured on the basis of absence or lack of something. All kinds of orientations in order to fill the supposed lack are political in essence. Our fantasy constructs, which are the constructs of reality, owe their ontological horizons to this impossibility, this lack and this negativity. Besides being political they are constitutive of our subjectivities. When we look at the representation of any form of Islamist terrorism that is included within the context of this study we can find the clues of how this construct itself paves the way for the constitution of a subject as well as how this negative dialectic works in the Islamist press:

1. All the newspapers representing the Islamist press consider terrorist actions as attacks committed *against* the unity of social and *against* the possibility of social development and progress. Therefore all terrorist realized attacks in Turkey are defined interestingly not as actions of those who hold different ideological political positions in the country but as actions of “external focal points.” This means the enemy is externalized. Some developments in the international conjuncture (Access to EU processes, Baqu-Cayhan pipeline etc.) to strengthen this externalization are supposed ‘certainly existent’. The possible responsible agent of terrorist attacks must first be externalized, and then their association with the current terrorist act or assassination is accomplished<sup>19</sup>. Without this externalization, Islamist organizations are located in Turkey and the other claims to the disconnection between Islam and terror can not go further.
2. The Islamist press on the one hand, by excluding the terrorism and the enemy, attempts to overcome the fragmentation among the different ideological/political positions in Turkey, on the other hand leads the circulation of another statement which weakens its own attempt: the Islamist press emphasizes that terrorist acts aim primarily at polarizing the Turkish society into secular vs. anti-secular (Islamist) and accordingly nobody should be trapped by this deception. However those unknown power focal points who invest in such polarizing are interestingly sought and caught not abroad but at home: accordingly, the perpetrator itself is the “deep state”. Following their arguments, “some dark powers” within the state are both committing assassinations and, by promoting Hizbullah, are victimizing Islamists into the system’s logic of functioning, if necessary! That is to say, all actions of violence that appear and become visible in the form of Islamist terrorism are incorporated within the state functioning in order to sharpen social division.
3. The Islamist press, on the one hand, associates the reasons of terrorist attacks to the long-lasting issue of “unity, wholeness and survival of nation” by constructing the enemy both inside and outside of Turkey; on the other hand, it continues its ideological struggle by never naming these terrorist acts as Islamist. Naming is an important process in which the identity of the object or sign is retroactively constructed and effectively supported (Zizek, 1989, p. 95). The term ‘Islamist terrorism’ in this sense attempts to *guarantee* its own referent/object in its naming. Zizek claims that “what guarantees the unity and identity of a certain

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<sup>19</sup> “Target: Prevention the entrance to EU and interrupt the Baqu-Cayhan pipeline project?” (*Zaman*, 22.10.1999)

ideological experience is not the real object; on the contrary it is the reference to a pure signifier which gives unity and identity to our experience of historical reality” (Zizek, 1989, p. 97). Historical reality is something which is always symbolized. The way we experience history is always mediated through different forms of symbolization; because there is an irreducible gap that exists between the Real and the ways it is signified. Though naming aims at overcoming this gap, in fact it strongly posits the gap.

The attitude of the Islamist press of not naming Islamist terrorism emerged first when political assassinations began. However it has become a problem of sharpened ideological struggle, especially after the Istanbul bombings in November 2003. The Islamist press, from the most radical to the moderate, did not name this terrorist act as Islamist terror. This tendency of not naming is also apparent in the assassination of Ahmet Taner Kışlalı. When we look at what kinds of naming were made, we see that the assassination is “a butchery and provocation” (*Zaman*, 22.10.1999); “a murder by an unknown perpetrator” (*Zaman*, 22.10.1999); “the state mechanism is the offender” (*Zaman*, 23.10.1999); “a dirty game” (*Zaman*, 23.10.1999); “an act of political sabotage” (*Zaman*, 25.10.1999) etc. Though the Islamist press aims at the reverse, not naming these terrorist attacks as Islamist or religious terrorism that is the *ideological effect of the lack of the name itself*, this has not resulted in removing the relation between Islam and terror. A sign above all represents a lack or a void. The term Islamist terrorism, in fact, exists in the symbolic order as the sign of the absence of Islamist terrorism. That is, the expression of Islamist terrorism, first of all signifies either the place or the void in which it is inscribed into the symbolic order. However not circulating the term Islamist terrorism in the Islamist press just leads to the paradoxical situation where Islamist terrorism embodies itself and gains a positive presence. When the term is not used, the void is filled out by the real event itself not by the word. As a result of this ideological operation, its existence is represented.

While struggling to delete or remove the term “Islamist terrorism” from the symbolic order (by avoiding to name it) the Islamist press has two modes of ideological operation:

- The first one is to oppose the relation between Islam and terrorism by setting a logic through rational propositions. According to this created logic “Islamists cannot intend actions that will lead to the equation between terrorism and Islam which will put Islam in charge”. They try to emphasize the logic that Islamists do not take up actions that will put them in hardship and under suspicion. Again, the Islamist press tries to posit in this logic and rational frame an argument that the bombing events that have an obvious Islamist connection could not be attempted by any ‘rational, logical, intelligent’ Muslim. The main question in introducing this logic is the question of “Who benefits from the terrorist actions?” (*Yeni Şafak*, 19.11.2003). The understanding that an answer to this question will, by itself, naturally save Muslims from being offenders is dominant in this press. This logic, whose answer is hidden in the question, in fact discards a certain dialectical movement: Negation of the negation. Negation is a mode or code of meaning production. It is a form of representation. This meaning and representation may be produced either consciously or unconsciously. Negation provides the overcoming of the problem of enunciation of a particular thing in conditions when its direct and positive enunciation is impossible. Let us consider the famous



expression to conceive this: This terrorism is not Islamist. The content of this expression comprises the first message. Yet its enunciation is the second message, or rather is the second and most important dimension of the message. That is, sending the message, too, is a message. And this second message, that is, to keep the phrase “there is no Islamist terrorism” in circulation is contradictory with the first message (that the terrorism is not Islamist). Therefore there exist a contradiction between what is said and what is referred to by saying. The subjects (Islamists) who pronounce this are completely and sincerely identical with the content and are even pleased with it; however the second message carried by its mere enunciation is quite displeasing. This second message which contradicts with its content, negates it, is the one refused by the Islamists. Then, under these conditions what does the Islamist press do? Just in order to suppress this unwanted message, it desperately goes on repeating it. An alternative usage of negation to this is its conscious usage and the effect is completely different in this case. The Islamist press could have expressed and circulated the displeasing content, for example it could have pronounced “this terrorism is Islamist”. It could have prevented it becoming identical with this content so as to make it questionable the moment this was expressed. Here the negation could have been realized when the subject estimates a position beyond this content, and identifies itself with this transcendent position it proposed for itself. However, when we consider the Islamist press in Turkey we recognize that this second option is nonexistent. On the contrary, as the Islamist press prefers expressions like “there is no such thing as Islamist terrorism”, “there is no violence and terrorism in Islam”, and frames the news in a certain way so as to leave no trace of suspicion on this issue, it remains deeply sunk into ideology by supporting this ideological fantasy.

- As a second strategy, the Islamist press tries to create a rupture between acts of terrorism and Islam by emphasizing some positive characteristics that are attributed to this religion. By positing the “smiling face of Islam” (*Yeni Şafak*, 16.11.2003); reminding that “mercy is the distinguishing mark of the Muslim” (*Yeni Şafak*, 21.11.2003); emphasizing that “it was forbidden for a Muslim to touch innocent blood by Allah (God)” (*Yeni Şafak*, 21.11.2003); and by mentioning that “Muslims are not heartless but are aggrieved” (*Yeni Şafak*, 22.11.2003), the incompatibility of Islam with violence and terrorism is displayed. It is a frequently mentioned proposition that four things are preserved by Islam, even in war. According to this proposition, “protecting women and children, respecting those in worship, protecting religious buildings, and not setting wood fire and not cutting trees” are used as supporting rules by the Islamist press to claim the disconnection between Islam and violence (*Yeni Şafak*, 24.11.2003). These newspapers also underline that “Islam only legitimizes war when it is necessary and only with state permission” (...) and had “rules such as avoiding harm to civilians, inappropriate behavior towards women, and hurting the feeling of the defeated” (*Yeni Şafak* 21.11.2003). In all the definitions and descriptions of what kind of a religion Islam is, two things are always emphasized: that violence is completely incompatible with it and even during holy war (jihad) all was carried out within the limits of the rules of Islam. These

positive attributions to the religion itself serve as the grounds to remove and deny the relation between Islam and terror/violence.

## Conclusion

*The dignity of human comes from the awareness of its helplessness:  
a tree is not aware that it is helpless. Therefore one who aware his helplessness  
is helplessness, yet there is dignity in this helplessness.*  
(Blaise Pascal)

The discourse of “there is no terrorism in Islam and there is no Islamist terrorism” of the Islamist press tries to construct the causality of terrorism by referring to the social, political, and economical achievements that are existent in Turkey and which are targeted by terrorism. The Islamist press constructs these achievements as concrete reasons for terrorist actions which have no relation to Islam. These achievements and the developments targeted by terrorism according to Islamist press are as follows:

1. Unity, solidarity and peace in Turkey.
2. Democratization and progression of democracy.
3. Opportunity of development and progress with the entry to EU.
4. Improvement of economy.

In the Islamist press, terrorist actions are depicted in terms of their negative effects which are meant to remove all these positive developments. What is obviously functioning here is terrorism’s own logic, which is based on the effect of the horror it produces. Fear of terror initiates a questioning of new ideologies and identifications in this context. The Islamist press suggests that this questioning would be better if it is focused on the split between “those who love Turkey and those who do not” instead of the controversy between secular vs. Islamist. The Islamist press, to the extent that avoiding naming terrorism as Islamist terrorism to the extent that refuses this signifier’s place in the symbolic order, accepts, approves and reinforces the phenomenon’s self positing; that is, its embodiment. Moreover the Islamist media’s efforts to invalidate the secular/Islamist controversy within its own ideological framework seems to be destined to failure due to the paradoxical outcome of Islamist terrorism’s not being (able to be) named. Whereas the moment when the naming is done (that is the moment the signifier is included within the symbolic order) the existence of Islamist terrorism will be really interrogated for the first time for Islamists.

Expressions that are asserted as if true, *sui generis*, or as if irrelevant to ideology are not in fact outside ideology. Their inclusion within the ideology is indirectly validated by their very denial of inclusion, that is, by their movement of negation. Considered, the possibility whether there is a formula for getting out of or overcoming the ideological realm, Žizek finds a possibility in becoming evident of the immanent (Žizek, 1998). Becoming evident of the immanent is a self-revealing of positivity that is immanent in negativity, and of negativity that is immanent in positivity. That is to say what limits the

existent ideological domain is not external to it but is actually inherent in it. Only under this condition is it possible to transcend the ideological field which tends to be self-closed. This mechanism of overcoming or transcending is both valid for the Islamist discourse and secularist discourse. Because negation, according to Zizek, being loyal to the Hegelian thought, is the only means to overcome a self-enclosed domain. Starting from here, we can say that by negating Islamist terrorism, the Islamist press does not posit an obvious truth supposedly non-ideological or external to ideology. A secular discourse which recognizes the existence of Islamist terrorism limits the discourse which denies it. Still this "secular" discourse, too, may have the possibility of transcending the ideological domain on the condition that it clarifies what is immanent in itself and that its own proposition (there exists Islamist terrorism) is also inherent in the "Islamist" ideological domain of which it is constitutive.

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