Kemalism in Turkey is often presented as an exemplary case of paternalistic and authoritarian modernisation from above, and lauded or condemned for that very reason. Represented in these terms, certain analytic and political binaries are also activated: state versus society; world-view versus life-world; universality versus particularity; inauthenticity versus indigeneity; homogeneity versus heterogeneity/resistance. By contrast, in this paper I seek to sidestep these organising categories to focus on Kemalism and Islamism as rival forms of the same social imaginary signification, and not as shorthand for these polarities. Using a number of representative texts, I argue that the extravagance of Islamist resistance in Turkey post-1980 brings to light the fantastical power of Kemalism itself, exposed as a project of the triumph of the will. This being the case, what has been written in anthropology about acts of 'self-institution'? The work of Nigel Rapport and Cornelius Castoriadis emphasises, in different ways, the arbitrariness and gratuity of social creation out of nothing or self-institution. Pierre Bourdieu's work, on the other hand, is radically contrary to Rapport's in its structuralist elaboration of agency as guided action. My analysis of processes of change within both the Islamist and Republican social movements in Turkey from the early 1990s to the present seeks a temporary rapprochement, at least in this case, between Rapport's methodological individualism and Bourdieu's methodological holism.

In this paper, I seek to illuminate key processes of change within the Islamist social movement in Turkey over the last two decades. I will argue that the extravagance of Islamist politics in Turkey post-1980, characterised by ongoing innovation, gratuitous invention, florid polemics, rejection or rehabilitation of 'tradition', and radical breaks with political positions strenuously defended only a few years before, diagnoses or brings to light the fantastical power of Kemalism, exposed as a politics inspired by a doctrine of the triumph of the will. In other words, and following Abu-Lughod's (1990) suggestion that we read resistance as diagnostic of power, Islamist opposition reveals the power of Kemalism as originating in its creation of 'self-instituting' individual or collective subjects. Further, when we reverse this perspective to examine the resistance of Kemalists as diagnostic of transformed modes of Islamist power in Turkey, the efficacy of Islamism is also seen to reside in its own processes of self-institution 'out of nothing'.

Interpreting the political history of the Turkish Republic in this way leads us to consider what variety of anthropological theory might be useful in illuminating its defining characteristic. Castoriadis' and Rapport's sketching out of what has been described as an 'ontology of creation' (Arnason 1999) is particularly suggestive. Kemalism in Turkey is
often presented as an exemplary case of paternalistic and authoritarian modernisation from above, and lauded or condemned for that very reason. Represented in these terms, certain analytic and political binaries are also activated: state versus society; world-view versus life-world; universality versus particularity; inauthenticity versus indigeneity; homogeneity versus heterogeneity/resistance. My odd pairing of Rapport and Castoriadis helps me partially sidestep these organising categories to focus on Kemalism and Islamism as rival forms of the same social imaginary signification (to use Castoriadian terminology), and not as shorthand for these polarities. Bourdieu’s work is useful in a different way. Not only is his social theory radically contrary to Rapport’s in its structuralist elaboration of agency as guided action, but it is also worked out in a context (Kabylia) where there is no pronounced intention on the part of a state to transform social practice. Yet despite these differences, Bourdieu’s theorising partially supplements what I feel is Rapport’s lack of attention to agents’ power to dominate—that is, to the power of people and the things they create (from institutions to social movements to built environments) to condition the ‘transcendent’ individual’s unique devising of personal constructs, not to mention their conduct.

In the first theoretical section, and before engaging with the claims of the Islamist movement (on the part of the governing AKPARTİ), I want to show how the ideas of Rapport and Castoriadis on creation, autonomy and the individual differ from more ‘internalist’ analyses of domination, as seen in the work of Bourdieu. The second and third sections build upon this discussion to analyse the conflict in Turkey between Islamists and Kemalists, as well as to use that interpretation in turn to revisit these earlier theoretical remarks. My brief notation of differences between Rapport and Castoriadis below mirrors the particular rhetorical bravado that invests contemporary political life in Turkey.

Three polemical claims

1. Rapport argues individuals to be self-instituting, whereas for Castoriadis the self-instituting power is society itself, the ‘collective anonymous’. Both theorists deny the possibility of ‘intersubjectivity’ in constituting selves or meanings; Rapport on an individual level (individuals are primarily self-fashioning, rather than cross-subjectively, collaboratively produced); Castoriadis on both an individual and social level (intersubjective relations, although fabricating individuals, are not the origin of social-historical creation, whilst societies are self-preserving entities, opposed to the self-institution of other societies).

2. What Rapport (2002) calls the randomness of the individual mind, Castoriadis might call the arbitrariness of the social institution. Neither understands the creations of the random mind or of the instituting society to be determined by or inversions/transpositions/transformations etc. of prior structures, nor as explainable by reference to the bricolage of existing elements.

3. Rapport denies Castoriadis’ implicit understanding of the anthropological project as built upon and partially illuminating the different and distinct imaginary significations (‘webs of significance’) of separate societies. For Rapport, a Geertzian stress on singular cultural systems of meanings, signs or symbols obscures private meaning and individual creation. By focusing on individual aspects of world making, Rapport also evades the theoretical problems produced by such visions of cultural apartheid vis-à-vis relations with other similarly conceived sealed cultures or civilisations.

These three brief statements on creation, society and the individual open up a particularly interesting set of issues in relation to the experience and analysis of domination and resistance. First, what are actors dominated by or resisting if we reject in the name of the
transcendent individual (Rapport) any encompassing theory of corporate or collective frameworks of meaning, politicised or otherwise? Bourdieu presents us with the epitome of such a model: in *Masculine Domination*, for example, he writes that ‘when the thoughts and perceptions of the dominated are structured in accordance with the very structures of the relations of domination that is imposed upon them, *their acts of cognition are inevitably acts of recognition, submission*’ (2001: 13, my emphasis). For Bourdieu, this is invariably, unexceptionally the case. A less systematic concern to ground freedom, resistance and submission in cultural and relational networks is seen in Abu-Lughod’s ‘fundamental premise [that] humans are social beings, always raised in certain social and historical contexts and belonging to particular communities that *shape their desires and understandings of the world*’ (2002: 786, my emphasis). Forms of resistance here are culturally provided (i.e. Bedouin oral lyric poetry), and subordinated selves acquire ‘oppositional authenticity and agency by drawing on aspects of the dominant culture to criticise their own world as well as the situation of domination’ (Ortner 1995: 190). Less optimistically, Abu-Lughod (1990) also argues that such resistance primarily reveals power, being oriented to existing cultural elaborations of the world and more limitedly to the particular social experiences and modes of domination. Useful mainly as a diagnostic tool (for the anthropologist), resistance points to political aspects of social relationships.

Second, and in radical contrast, how might we understand resistance and domination if we reject in the name of the social institution (Castoriadis) even this minimal ability of subordinated selves to acquire ‘oppositional agency’ through their drawing on ethical ideals of the culture to de-legitimise the situation of domination? In his more polemical moments, Castoriadis would not allow individuals in *heteronomous* societies even this degree of social-analytic lucidity. Unlike Rapport, Castoriadis never prises apart individual and society: as an *incarnated fragment* of a particular instituted society, individuals have no scope for imagining themselves as self-constituting other than through their internalisation of the imaginary significations created by society. The social institution and the individual presuppose each other, and the significations of any particular society function through ‘organizational, informational [and] cognitive closure’ (Castoriadis 1997a: 16). It is only *autonomous* societies that fabricate the new anthropological type of autonomous individuals. Only in autonomous societies does politics translate as a struggle for explicit self-institution. In these societies, mere interpretation of existing social laws or controversy over their right application is not at issue. By contrast, it is their altering or replacing of existing laws through the positing of new laws that constitutes ‘resistance’, although resistance is hardly the correct word here. In his less polemical moments however, Castoriadis does admit a more nuanced possibility for the alterability (or at least, historical alteration) of heteronomous societies, even by the individual. His discussion of the limits of the power of the instituted society—what we might call threats to heteronomy—allow for a potentially less severe dichotomy between traditional/tribal or religious societies and modernity. The most serious of these threats include time or the future; the capacity of the psyche to thwart the schooling visited upon it; the crisis of instituted meaning or the potential a-meaning of the world; the threat of other societies; and most importantly, the continuing flow of the instituting imaginary itself (cf. Castoriadis 1991).

Despite an identical claim then that social existence is ontologically characterised by creation ‘out of nothing’ (i.e. by self-constitution), Castoriadis’ argument that individuals in societies other than the ‘Greco-Western’ are incapable of lucidly questioning the significations that create their world—that is, a claim for their *creativity without agency*—is intrinsically opposed to Rapport’s delineation of the transcendent individual. This chasm between them can only be bridged by a universalisation of the autonomous subject. In other
words, their positions can be reconciled only by extending to everyman and to everywoman what Castoriadis reserves for the particular men and women of autonomous societies. Obviously, this is what Rapport does, although not in explicit reference to Castoriadis. And obviously, also, Castoriadis would not agree with this attempt to allow the individual in general to usurp the instituting power of the social imaginary. For Rapport, the words and actions of individuals are related to but undetermined by social context, even when subjects appear to reproduce broader cultural forms or idioms. Far from individuals’ lives being conditioned by their ‘socio-cultural environment’, subjects’ ‘acts of cognition’ (Bourdieu) and ‘desires and understandings of the world’ (Abu-Lughod) are self-selected and idiosyncratic. Action in essence is de-contextual, anti-relational and non-necessary (non-functional). At best, individuals’ actions and practices might be elucidated by the examination of context, historical social relationships and collective cultural orientations, but these do not explain them. The key aspect of an individual’s social action is creation ex-nihilo. Creation ‘out of nothing’ then, acts as a counter to the idea of creation out of something, say creation as ‘structured improvisation’ bound to a subconscious ‘strategy-generating principle’ (Bourdieu 1977), or creation as connected to and partially conditioned by existing cultural elaborations of a world (Abu-Lughod).3

Finally, if we allow this convergence between Rapport’s and Castoriadis’ discourse on self-institution (or autonomy), one immediate objection that needs to be addressed—there are others—is the danger of social and individual solipsism. That is, how is the arbitrary self-creation of society to be related to political and economic context, to time and place, to interaction? And on what grounds or through which mechanisms do transcendent or autonomous individuals, who create themselves in an originary fashion, relate to each other? Castoriadis’ (1997a: 15) notion that society ‘leans’ upon the ‘presocial world’ or its physical environment—but in an ‘utterly trivial’ way—can be used as an analogy to conceptualise how gratuitous new institutions of society might be related to the significations of other societies from which they seem to emerge. The Roman imaginary institution is re-signified by Christianity by being invested or endowed with a new meaning, which is not determined by the significations of its previous form. ‘The old enters the new with the signification given it by the new and could not enter it otherwise’ (Castoriadis 1997a: 14). New social-historical forms are creative of a world as well as irreducible to historical antecedents. For Castoriadis, the theorist/anthropologist can elucidate the vital relationships, connections and historical transmissions between the social imaginary significations of different societies, but not account for, explain or predict change and development. Similarly, individual autonomy can be understood in an analogous way: minimally, pre-constituted collective symbols and practices (conventions) are dependent on individuals’ choice and vitalisation for their continuing social presence. More polemically, however, Rapport draws attention to what we might gloss as the semi-solipsism of social life: precisely because autonomous and transcendent individuals are the ‘origin of what will be and know themselves as such’ (Castoriadis 1993: 3), miscommunication, indirection and lack of mutuality or acceptance are ever-present outcomes of interaction.

**The never ending dance**

In the second and third parts of this paper I want to use this abbreviated discussion to explicate processes of change within the Islamist social movement in Turkey from the early 1990s to the present, the years in which I have, unavoidably intermittently, been following its development. To do so, I will take up Abu-Lughod’s (1990) suggestion to track power via resistance. In keeping with her Foucauldian inspiration, Abu-Lughod proceeds to
analyse new forms of Islamism, at least amongst younger Bedouin in Egypt, as resistant to and hence diagnostic of both the demands of a Westernised and capitalistic Egyptian state and of the kin-based authority of elders. Although some analysts of Islamism might claim Muslim resistance in Turkey is partially revelatory of similar structures of power (Yavuz 2000), I will argue that its key features diagnose much more specifically the power of the political-cultural project of Kemalism (Republican-Turkism).4 Islamism resistance here reveals Kemalism’s power to be the power of explicit self-institution or unceasing creation ‘out of nothing’. Indeed, this form of powerful Islamist resistance can be systemically related to, even interpreted as intimately conditioned by, Kemalist society. Furthermore, contra Rapport’s stress on the individual’s original experience and construction of the world, Islamist and Kemalist acts of constant creation indicate that the key imaginary signification constituting both secularism and Islamism in Turkey is conscious self-institution. Self-institution ‘out of nothing’ then, interpreted in this case as a practice generated by the social and political world in which subjects are involved, allows us to find a middle path between Bourdieu’s systemic and ‘internal’ analysis of agency, and the indomitable understanding of the transcendental individual in Rapport.

I will proceed by analysing a number of eclectic yet not unrepresentative texts—an advertisement placed in Time magazine by the Turkish state; a recently published and lengthy document of the governing ‘Islamist’ AKPARTi; and a speech in Parliament by the Chairman of the opposition People’s Republican Party (CHP). The most detailed of these is Muhafazakar Demokrasi (Conservative Democracy), commissioned by the Justice and Development Party (AKPARTi) with a foreword by Tayyip Erdoğan, party chairman and current Prime Minister of Turkey (Ak Partisi 2004). Following Abu-Lughod, I will read it relationally, that is primarily as diagnostic of forms of Kemalist power.5 Written by Erdoğan’s political advisor Yalçın Akdoğan, the work (also published as a book) is intended as a ‘modest contribution’ to the endeavour of producing new concepts and ideas useful for ‘our political life’ (p.2). Although its scholarly nature disqualifies it from being read as a ‘political declaration’ (p.2) or manifesto, in his foreword Tayyip Erdoğan states that the work should be seen both as a vital contribution to the political identity of AKPARTi and as bringing a new perspective to politics in Turkey (Muhafazakar Demokrasi...yeni bir soluk ve açılım getirir, p.3). To locate or diagnose the power of Islamism in turn, I will briefly examine a much shorter speech expressing Kemalist opposition and resistance to the electoral success of the Islamist movement.

To begin, let me present an arbitrary but not atypical interlocutor for Muhafazakar Demokrasi. In 1998 Tekel, the state-owned General Directorate of Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises, placed an advertisement in Time magazine to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Republic. The advertisement featured a photograph of Atatürk, ballroom dancing in suit, bowtie and tails, bare-headed men and women watching in the background. Wearing a transparent veil, his partner eyes the crowd while Atatürk faces the camera. Inscribed in the centre of the page in large font were the words ‘The never ending dance’. Beside this a smaller text in column read:

Seventy-five years ago, a new leader created a new nation on a historic strip of land where Europe meets Asia...Turkey emerged as a modern and ambitious republic from a turbulent past and became a model for the developing countries of the world. Now, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the year it became a democratic republic under the leadership and inspiration of Kemal Atatürk, Turkey remembers those who built the nation and made it strong for succeeding generations. This is the dance that began in 1923 and, with strong and confident footsteps has taken Turkey to its rightful place in the modern world.6
The striking metaphor of nation-building as Atatürk’s continuous dance (in Republican style) suggests that the founding of the Turkish Republic is made actively and ceaselessly in the present. The Republic is not something that is ever accomplished, even if it has a definitive beginning. The steps must be danced perpetually, the revolution constantly lived. Atatürk’s never ending dance and those of succeeding generations effects the unfinishable instituting of the Republic.

Can we confirm in the primary themes expressed in Muhafazakar Demokrasi the exercise of this continual and activist creation? That Kemalism’s power is experienced by Islamists as rooted in a social and political project committed to never-ending creation or continuous self-instituting (communal or individual) is seen in at least three of the key and repetitive points made in the document. Particularly pertinent is its appropriation of conservatism’s critique of the Enlightenment project of total revolution and rational (as opposed to reasonable) social transformation. (It also makes use of conservative and liberal anti-communist and anti-utopianism arguments from the 1960s and 1970s.) Some of the words used to condemn this form of radical change are buyurgan (despotic); baskıcı (oppressive); dayatmacı (forced); tektipçi (homogenising); tepeden inmeci (proclamation from above). Similarly, the document rejects social engineering (toplumsal muhendisliği) and utopian programs of change while advocating evolutionary, gradual or ordered development of traditions, history and cultural values. At the same time however, the document defines AKPARTi’s politics as ‘New Conservative’, neither against change in principle nor defenders of the status quo. Thus, it is not preservation of culture or tradition as such that is lauded but muhafazakarlık as a form of ‘negative philosophy’ (olumsuzlama felsefesi), directed against both the radicalness (thoroughness) and elitism (despotism) of political projects of social engineering. Limiting the power of the political sphere safeguards against ‘arbitrary and oppressive regimes’. (İktidarın sınırlandırılması keyfi ve baskıcı yönetimlere karşı geliştirilen bir çözümdür, p.26).

Second, the document claims that muhafazakar concern to limit state and governmental power is connected to a related acknowledgment of naturally occurring social diversity (toplumsal çeşitliliği), cultural difference and local values, as well as to its desire to have these reflected in the political sphere. Here ‘variety is richness’ (AKPARTi’ye göre de farklılıklar tabii bir durum ve zenginlik), p.10). This rending of conservative multiculturalism is complemented by an insouciant acceptance of the inevitability of political and economic reforms demanded by globalisation and informed by new ‘universal dominant values’, in particular those of democracy, human rights, primacy of law, the internalisation of pluralism, protection and representation of minorities and the free market. Along with a rejuvenated importance given to locality and region, these are all interpreted as manifestations of a reaction to the homogenising and interventionist politics of authoritarian nation-states (ulus devletler, p.73). Accordingly, Muhafazakar Demokrasi calls for a less aggravating mode of politics than one whose ceaseless instituting is produced via an antagonistic representation and negating of ‘social realities’ like religion. This call is also functionally justified: religion—but not Islam specifically—brings social stability and if properly harnessed can contribute to Turkey’s development and leadership in the Middle East and Caucasus. It also provides an antidote to fundamentalism and terrorism. These themes are brought together under a single masterword, democracy: AKPARTi conceives politics as an ‘arena of compromise’ (siyaset bir ulaşım alanı, p.113), and democracy as a ‘system [or procedure] that enables different or even opposed styles of life, as shaped by different goals and values scales, to live in the same place together in peace’ (Demokrasi...farklı amaç ve değer skalalarına göre şekillendirilmiş, değişik hatta zit hayat tarzlarının barsız içinde birarada yaşammasına zemin hazırlaya bir yöntemdir, p.76).
Third, *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* redefines secularism (*laiklik*) to mean state impartiality towards religions and between denominations (*mezhep*) as well as freedom for individuals to live their lives in accordance with their religious or irreligious beliefs. In the process it seeks to shift the focus from the oft-asserted *a priori* of secularism as necessary pre-condition for democracy to the question of how *laiklik* should be developed in order for democracy to operate in its broadest freedom. In other words, how might *laiklik* itself be made to conform to forms of democratic practice (p.94)? One strategy would be for the state to cease using *laiklik* as a tool to wage war against or interfere with religion or believers. Another would be to separate religion from state or government control (p.95). By the state and government remaining neutral amidst the different life styles of citizens, *laiklik* becomes the guarantor of religious freedom. Here AKPARTi seeks to ‘out-laicise’ the laicists, to use the ideals of secularism to critique its impoverished implementation in Turkey. In brief, and despite the discourse on the virtues of social continuity, *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* maintains that AKPARTi’s political practices and understandings constitute a new synthesis, a synthesis mediating tradition and modernity; historical values and new values; idealism (utopianism) and realism; the local and the universal; and the individual and society.

Read as resistance, what modes of domination might be indexed by this cluster of themes? First, *Muhafazakar Demokrasi*’s opposition to the instituting of new order via erasure of existing institutional structures (*radikalizm*) diagnoses the power of Kemalism to inhere in its self-alignment with a necessary universal future. The document’s privileging of historical continuity in response testifies to Kemalism’s attempt to rationally reform society and state procedures ‘in accordance with the foundations of and forms of science and technology in modern times’ (from the 1931 statutes of the ruling Republican People’s Party, as cited in Mardin 1993: 365). Second, and equally revealing, the text’s critique is made in the abstract: rather than analysing and condemning any *actual* governing practices and understandings in Turkey, it merely disapproves or opposes certain *possible* understandings and practices. Thus we have general comments such as ‘*laiklik* perceived as a life style or as a Jacobin, totalitarian or monolithic ideology is a cause of conflict not of social peace’ (Tekelci, *totaliter, jakoben bir ideoloji veya yaşam biçimleri olarak algılanan bir laiklik, toplumsal barış değil, çatışma sebebi olabilir*, p.94). Not that any regime applies *laiklik* in this way of course! Likewise, in principle the document is strongly in favour of minority (*azinlik*) rights—‘Democracy’s success can be assessed not by majority rule but according to whether minorities are self-determining or not’ (*Demokrasiler coğunlukun iktidarından çok, azinliğin iradesini gerçekleştirdir gerçekleştirememelerine göre başarılı sayılmaktadır*, p.77). But it is not specifically in favour of the rights of Kurds. Read as a discourse of subversion (Abu-Lughod 1990), *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* indicates that the dynamics of Kemalist domination derives also from its totalitarian ability to close down political parties and charge individuals in the constitutional court on the basis of their acts and published or spoken words. The insistence on democracy in resistance to this form of power is an act of self-preservation. But third and most significant, AKPARTi’s self-proclaimed creation of an alternative synthesis, even one construed as less antagonistic towards the past, diagnoses the power of Kemalism to reside in its own unfinishable and ever new self-institution. These three dimensions of Islamist resistance reveal Kemalist power in its narrative, coercive and ‘ontological’ forms.

How might we interpret *Muhafazakar Demokrasi*’s claims that AKPARTi political practices involve a new synthesis, or that it opens up space for new political practices and understandings in Turkey? In the context of previous Islamist policies, practices and discourses from the 1980s and 1990s (say the obsession with veiling or the polemical rhetoric over the genius and specificity of Islam for example), the political program it
sketches out is an unprecedented and rival self-institution, open for sure to elucidation in relation to the cut and thrust of everyday politics and improvising upon wider resurgent Western political philosophies, but not accountable to them. Thus, the document makes finely drawn distinctions between different varieties of conservatism (‘traditional’, ‘liberal’, ‘classic’, and ‘new’), notes how they articulate with the different historical experiences of separate societies and uses them to construct its own synthesis between conservatism and democracy. But what is most noticeable is that whereas the Islamist parties and their texts in the 1980s and 1990s produced an Islam antagonistic to its binary other (the West, Kemalism, the modern), in the 2000s Muhafazakar Demokrasi talks overwhelmingly about democracy. Indeed its first mention of Islam comes on page 91, with a brief and selective presentation of verses from the Koran claimed to foreshadow the modern framework of human rights. The second and only other discussion of Islam is on the question of its compatibility with democracy, relating various arguments for their association and concluding that in theory there is no necessary antagonism between them. The headscarf issue itself is not mentioned.

Even more significantly, the document refuses to spell out beyond generalities and key words—gelenek (tradition); halkin değer (people’s values); toplumsal düzên (community order); toplumsal kurumları (community institutions); tarihsel koşulları (historic conditions); toplumsal birikimleri (historic sedimentations); mevcut birikimleri (existing accumulations); yerel değerleri (local values)—what in Turkey community or traditional institutions might be, what sources of wisdom have been tried and tested through the sieve of history or everyday life and what existing values that organise the private sphere should be quarantined from reform or abolition. This neglect is read by anti-Islamists as deceitfully opening the back door to a restoration of Islam, to Islamic practices that are both backward and oppressive. (In like vein the document’s championing of democracy as a regime characterised by dialogue and forbearance (tahammül) is seen as an excuse for debating the unacceptable and tolerating the unendurable.) Yet by contrast this refusal can instead be interpreted as opening the door to the arbitrary definition, creation and institution of the local and traditional by the Islamist movement itself. Interestingly, the potential conflict in the document between muhafazakarlık being interpreted as opposition to revolutionary change in the name of gradualism and traditional values and muhafazakarlık being interpreted as resistance to despotism in the name of social diversity and dispersing concentrations of power, is reflected in the two different responses above. Muhafazakar Demokrasi claims that despite the existence of very different strands of conservatism, one unifying feature is their stress on limiting not only the power and authority of the government and the state but also ‘any other centres of power’ (Muhafazakarlığın ’sınırlı iktidar’ vurgusu sadece siyasal iktidar anlamında hikemetin değil, devletin ve her türlü iktidar odagının sınırlandırılması anlamındadır, p.26.) Yet general critique of monopolistic power (military, economic, religious or external) and advocacy of its dispersal leads to a project of self-institution and autonomy. The slippage can be traced in the quote below:

Power in all its dimensions should not be based on a monopolist or monolithic structure. Both in the political arena and in other areas of life power should not be concentrated, and as much as possible power in all its forms should be diffused to the lowest level...The reason for limiting political power is to protect the distinction between the private and public spheres, as well as for political power to have only a limited impact or influence on what is accepted in the public sphere.

(Iktidar tüm boyutlarıyla tekeli ve monolitic bir yapıya oturmamalıdır. Siyasal iktidar kadar hayatın diğer alanlarında da güç yoğunlaşması yasannamalı, iktidarın tüm türleri mümkün olabildiği kadar tabana yalnızmalıdır...Sınırlı tarzda
The document attempts to negotiate this potential conflict by appealing to a kind of common sense realism of the prior existence and value of civil society institutions, the family and the wisdom of the ages. Presented as somehow naturally occurring, these are also posited as pre-political social forms. Yet the choice of community, tradition or family as the preferred site of value-production, autonomy and self-institution (as opposed to their being imposed upon by the state for instance) is never properly discussed or analysed. Granted, _Muhafazakar Demokrasi_’s critique of radical social engineering’s imposition of its own alien preferences on society from above applies in theory to revolutionary Islamism as well. But the careful absence of a discussion about the actual content of ‘traditional values’ as well as their hinted political neutrality (as seen in the battery of euphemisms used to describe them) prepares for the possibility of a rival project of self-institution and social engineering ‘from below’, through an arbitrary and alternative politicisation of the private sphere or tradition.

Indeed, some interesting parallels can be seen in James Scott’s critique of high modernist ideology in his book _Seeing Like a State_ (1998), to which _Muhafazakar Demokrasi_ might be profitably compared. Both texts cite Michael Oakshott’s critique of rationalism, although Scott dislikes Oakshott’s support of whichever ruling institutions have historically dominated. Scott (1998: 6) conceives of his book as ‘making a case against an imperial or hegemonic planning mentality that excludes the necessary role of local knowledge and know how’. Similarly his critique of social engineering designs is made in the name of ‘real, functioning social order[s]’ (Scott 1998: 6). Revealingly, where _Muhafakar Demokrasi_ and Scott part company is in Scott’s concern to theorise from where and how this functioning order is produced. His discussion of the Greek word _metis_ as paradigmatic of the virtues of the practical and local gives reasons for privileging it over state simplifications and utopian schemes. Thus, ‘Broadly understood, _metis_ represents a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment’ (Scott 1998: 313). By contrast, _Muhafazakar Demokrasi_’s emphasis on _heritage_ (rather than _practical knowledge_ or _nous_) manipulates a modernist distinction in which formal scientific knowledge and technique is instrumentally appropriated while tradition is posited as pertaining mainly to moral values. As with high modernism then, _Muhafazakar Demokrasi_ appears also to devalue local knowledge, practices, informal improvisation and practical skills.

Crucially there are other differences—unlike _Muhafazakar Demokrasi_, Scott admits local politics were sites of bitter class struggle. Equally important, Scott traces what he sees as the project to map (make legible) and rationalise society to its origin in early modern European statecraft, even if its full fruition is only encountered in the twentieth century. Although he doesn’t examine the policy regime of the Ottoman state, other authors have made convincing arguments about the modernity of Ottoman imperial projects and their efficacy in reorganising culture and daily life to constitute a ‘state society’ in the core Ottoman provinces in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Meeker 2002; Deringil 2003). This being the case, to what local or traditional values and to which history would AKPARTi orient itself except to an arbitrary institution? For these various reasons then—the explicit claim to innovation, the radical disinterest in previous Islamist concerns and themes, the refusal to sketch out what traditional values or practices might be—_Muhafazakar Demokrasi_ is in its turn an act of self-recreation.

Let me conclude this section by briefly turning our gaze from the diagnostics of
Republican power via Islamist resistance to what Kemalist opposition might indicate in turn about the power of Islamism. To do so, I will examine an article published in *Radikal* newspaper (4 January 2004) titled ‘Islam in Turkish Identity’ (*Türk Kimiliğinde İslam*), which cites a speech made in parliament by Ali Topuz, Parliamentary Group Chairman of the Republican People’s Party (CHP). Given that the success of ‘Islamist’ parties over the last decade has made them the dominant electoral force in Turkey, it makes sense to analyse as resistance a rival political ‘manifesto’, albeit one presented in very abbreviated form. In his parliamentary address, Topuz states:

Islamic culture is not our true culture. The cultural foundations of the Turkish Republic rest on Turkishness. This is the culture of Anatolia. Influenced in its development by other cultures, Anatolian culture has acquired many diverse dimensions.

(The newspaper article goes on to note that the contents of the extended speech were ‘identical’ to the arguments of anthropologist Bozkurt Güvenç in his 1994 book *Turkish Identity: Cultural Historical Sources* (*Türk Kimliği: Kültürel Tarihin Kaynakları*), although parliamentarian Topuz doesn’t reference this work. Whereas *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* (published around the same time as the address) avoids any speculative history about origins and essential identities—and as we have seen studiously refrains from identifying what ‘tradition’ might encompass—Topuz/Güvenç are not so retiring. According to the article, Güvenç’s more elaborated thesis divines Turkish national culture (*ulusal kültürü*) as beginning four or five thousand years ago in Anatolia and two or three thousand years ago in Central Asia. Over time, two other traditions merged with these sources—Christianity and Islam. These influences converged in Anatolia around 1000 AD to create a still evolving synthesis, one of whose works was the birth of the Republic of Turkey. For Güvenç, in comparison to the lasting influence of these Anatolian and Turkish traditions, Islam is only of minor importance in the shaping of contemporary Turkish identity. Accordingly, Islam should not be understood as independent but as a dependent variable directed by the more influential streams of Turkish ethno-history. (Boylece Güvenç İslami, daha genç ve kapsayıcı bir medeniyet denkleminde bağımsız bir değişken olarak görmeiyip, Türk etno-tarih denkleminde bağımlı bir değişken olarak ele alıyor). Two powerful currents in these streams are nationalism (*ulusalcılık*) and laïklık. Fascinatingly then, laïklık is represented as a component of ethnic identity—true Turkish identity is essentially secular—rather than as a political system or procedure.

What do these assertions, succinctly declared by Topuz in opposition to AKPARTi but worked out in more detail by Güvenç and a host of other academicians, reveal about the power of Islamism in Turkey today? Topuz’s claims about the creation and makeup of an Anatolian synthesis indicate an intense interest in and anxiety over the fabrication and articulation of the particular and the universal in Republican politics. Navaro-Yashin (2002) shows that this enterprise has a long history: the constructing of a correspondence between ‘Turkish Anatolia’ and the West was of particular concern in the first two decades of the Republic. In the same period, the nationalist historiography of Turkish art, architecture, folk studies and archaeology (still the dominant paradigm taught in state university studies even now) produced an affinity between *Türks* and Western civilisation that was denied to Kurds, Arabs and other minorities inhabiting the new territorial space. Topuz and Güvenç’s nationalistic attempt to marginalise Islam through denying it any major influence on ‘Turkish culture’ diagnoses Islamism’s power to be its creation of rival practices and
narratives that articulate authenticity and universality in an alternate way.\textsuperscript{15}

Yet as we have seen, \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} itself is disinclined to engage in this well-rehearsed polemic, i.e. in the provisioning of a pedigree for Turkish culture. In this case, Islamist power is deployed through a shifting (never-ending) self-institution that undercuts or evades secularists’ self-affirming reading of and fearful response to Islamist practices and intentions. Indeed, in \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} the ability to self-institute appears to occur without specification of a ‘constitutive other’. That is to say, unlike the conflicted representations and discourse produced by Islamist and secularist forces up to the late 1990s, \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} has not enlisted in the ‘war of symbols’ between them nor does it enact a politics of mobilisation. As a result, and somewhat ironically, Kemalists like Topuz/Güvenç now talk much more about Islam, the Turkish Republic and Atatürk than do \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} or AKPARTi. Resistance to AKPARTi’s current diffidence on the question of cultural origins and its championing of plural democracy is exercised by vehemently proclaiming that such a position is purely instrumental.

In sum, what does all this sound and fury signify? These acts of creation (see the explicit claim to new synthesis by both Islamism and Kemalism) show self-institution in Turkey to be simultaneously a mode of resistance and domination. In his novel \textit{The Black Book}, Orhan Pamuk (1994: 373) writes that Istanbul (post-1923) was changing ‘in imitation of an imaginary city in a non-existent foreign country’. The phrase alludes to the Occidentalism inspiring Republicans in the single party period, but can be extended to the more recent re-ordering of the built environment and spatial production of Islamists as well (see Bilici 1999; Bozdoğan 2001). Far from an exercise in self-eclipse or cultural imperialism, mimesis (or imagining oneself in and through selected significations of other societies, whether Hittite, Western, \textit{Asri-Saadet} or any other) is an act of self-institution. Creation here is irreducible to historical antecedence or legacy, even if it is explicable in relation to previous political innovations of either fellow travellers or opponents—i.e. to the work of other Islamists or secularists. Thus on the problem of Turkish chauvinism \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} no longer opposes it by citing Koranic verses detailing Allah’s creation of different tongues and nations, as Islamist discourse did a few short years ago. Nor does it anymore seek to Islamise democracy or democratise Islam, through expanding the notion of \textit{ijtihad}, or reconstructing \textit{shari'a} through the attempted proceduralisation of \textit{fiqh} (Islamic jurisprudence), or through the call for a Medina-type constitution. This being the case, some might interpret \textit{Muhafazakar Demokrasi} and AKPARTi as heralding the dissolution of Islamism in Turkey. More than a decade ago, Olivier Roy (1994) called somewhat comparative developments elsewhere the ‘failure’ of political Islam, even if AKPARTi’s electoral success signals even more so a disillusionment with popular republicanism. But dissolution—what Nietzsche, naming it self-extinguishment, saw as the highest expression of autonomy (see Ambrose 2003)—is not necessarily the end of Islamic politics, especially when Muslims do it to themselves.

\section*{The domination of creation and the power of self-institution}

In the second part of this paper I have followed Abu-Lughod’s suggestion to track power via resistance and applied it to central political antagonisms in Turkey. In this process, Islamist and Kemalist practices of resistance and domination have revealed the key imaginary signification constituting the field of politics in the Turkish Republic: creation out of nothing or lucid self-institution. Stepping back slightly from this analysis, I now argue that this interpretation of politics in Turkey allows us to mediate between Bourdieu’s more systemic and social analysis of subjection and domination, and the indomitable understanding of the individual in Rapport. (Rapport ascribes an ontological sovereignty to
the individual to ‘make himself or herself ex nihilo in an originary fashion’ (1997: 1) and thus to institute their own life as a work of art beyond structured meanings, cultural conventions and inculcated sensibilities.) As we have seen, for Abu-Lughod (2002: 786) anthropology’s ‘fundamental premise’ conceives that forms and understandings of resistance and freedom are culturally shaped, pursued through and against collective cultural meanings. Nevertheless, this resistance (what Bourdieu (1977) calls ‘heretical discourse’, in that it expresses an alternative objectification of unformulated or repressed experience) should not be seen romantically as signs of ‘human freedom’ (à la Rapport) or of the ‘ineffectiveness of systems of power’ (Abu-Lughod 1990: 42). On the contrary, resistance, ineffectual or otherwise, can be used strategically to show ‘forms of power and how people are caught up in them’ (Abu-Lughod 1990: 42). More usefully then, and to continue to collapse for the moment important theoretical differences between Abu-Lughod and Bourdieu, resistance tells us (anthropologists) of the social relations and structures of domination, the domination that structures the ‘thoughts and perception of the dominated’ (Bourdieu 2001: 13).

More particularly, for Bourdieu agents have practical but not conscious or theoretical knowledge of their acts, and are thus unaware of the generative principles which organise action and from which their improvised practices emerge. This symbolic violence of the social system means dominated agents give a coerced consent to the masculine bias of physical and social order. Similar to Castoriadis, Bourdieu disparages intersubjectivity or inter-sociality as capable of providing any scope for subjects or their experiences to be constituted independently from social structure. Subjects are instituted prior to encounter, or they would be unable to relate. Thus Bourdieu (1977: 79, 81) argues that phenomenological approaches disregard the objective structures that allot subjects their relative positions in interaction and produce the dispositions of interacting agents. Hence, ‘communication of consciousness presupposes community of “unconsciouses”, i.e. of linguistic and cultural competences’ (Bourdieu 1977: 80). As the social order produces individual’s dispositions, their choices are pre-adapted and made compatible with objective conditions, making alternative actions and feelings un-nameable (Bourdieu 2001); ordinarily, then, ‘resistance’ is collectively authorised and hence ultimately reproductive of existing social relations.

In a different but related way Asad also analyses the ‘un-nameability’ or unthinkability of dissident actions and conceptions. He notes the difficulty an emphasis on ‘meaning’ in itself, as the basic social object of anthropological thought, has in trying to explain social change. For if we accept the ‘social origins of concepts (the social determination of cognition)’ (Asad 1979: 611), from where might alternative conceptions, schemes of appreciation and perception, and experiences derive that will facilitate effective criticism of existing social relations? For Asad (as for Bourdieu), the problem inheres in the assumption that society and social change is ‘essentially a matter of structures of meaning’, so that ‘social criticism is not merely sometimes a necessity but always a sufficient pre-condition for social change’ (Asad 1979: 612, emphasis in original). By contrast, Asad (1979: 618) argues that social change needs to be tied to the ‘systematic historical aspects of social forces and relations by which the material bases of collective life are produced’, including most influentially world historical capitalism. Although he does not call it resistance, he does draw attention to the plurality of different concepts held by people within the same society and their conflicts over the desirability and forms of social transformation. These varying discourses, and the possibility of their undermining or sustainability, are explained by their material production and maintenance as authoritative systems (Asad 1979: 619). Whereas Bourdieu, then, seeks to ground reproduction in material interests identifiable by the analyst yet obscure for agents, Asad focuses on the material conditions of change.
Despite this, their emphasis on the necessary connection between non-change/change and objective conditions means both would agree: ‘the relation of complicity that the victims of symbolic domination grant to the dominant can only be broken through a radical transformation of the social conditions of production of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant ... on themselves’ (Bourdieu 2001: 41-2). Without such transformation, dominated subjects ‘apprehend all reality and in particular the power relations in which they are held, through schemes of thought that are the product of embodiment of those power relations’ (Bourdieu 2001: 33).

By contrast, politics in Turkey indicates that unlike Bourdieu’s grounding of subordination in dispositions incessantly and unconsciously inculcated over time (which in the process ‘eternalise’ history, reproduce action and self-adjust in response to external change), the structures of domination in Kemalist and Islamist projects work much more by exculcation. That is to say, they function most significantly not by ‘treading in’ but by ‘beating out’ dispositions and sensibility, in a process of never-ending self-institution (transvaluation). Performing the ceaseless dance (in whichever style) requires the continual evacuating of the individual and communal self, a turn to permanent self-reflexivity and cultural critique. Consciously and constantly policing the institution or inflammation of Islam or Kemalism in selves and society, partisans of each synchronise their steps in terms of opposition to the other. As such, Kemalism and Islamism are projects of anomaly as much as autonomy: the exculcation of the other in themselves is driven by a desire to become anomalous—not according to law (nomos)—in relation to each others’ practices and discourses. Each act of self re-creation of identity and political practice (i.e. Muhafazakar Demokrasi) takes place against the backdrop of the other’s self-recreative acts.

Yet unlike Rapport’s celebration of the ontic semi-solipsism of the meaning-creating individual (in this case both Kemalists and Islamists), we see how their inventiveness—but not their inventions—is conditioned, even partially generated, by a common imaginary signification whose currency of power is creation ex-nihilio. Here self-institution, while the act of an individual or ‘communal particular’ subject (Ambrose 1998) who create themselves through it, is also an act demanded by the social and political world in which subjects are involved. It occurs not despite the constraint of the ‘socio-cultural environment’ but because of it. Self-creation is a social norm. The power of lucid autonomy is the essential political practice of secular society through which forms of dominance are exercised. Gratuitous creation subordinates those unable or unwilling to institute themselves similarly gratuitously. In such a situation, alternative self-institution becomes a key mode (the only effective mode?) of resistance. Authoring the past—imagining, appropriating, revitalising or rejecting it—enables action in the present, on both a personal and collective level. This interpretive reflection and the action conjoined with it are also how otherwise inert forms and institutions of the past are generated and sustained—actively sustained so that they might be profited from or revolutionised.

Never-ending self-institution is the reason, then, why Atatürk is prohibited from stopping dancing or from being dead by those who commemorate him in the present. His lack of movement, his deadness cannot be remembered: each national ceremony forces him to dance again, not merely in the forms of intersubjectivity experienced with him by participants in carefully structured state rituals but equally in the never-ending Republic, the work that is presented as his creation, the bequeathed thing he dies for and which generates his continual life. For while the act of dying—i.e. the death of Socrates—can sometimes be an expression of autonomy (cf. Ambrose 1998), the state of death itself is always the final negation of the subject’s autonomy. The moment of Socrates’ triumph is followed by his permanent state of heteronomy. Atatürk’s continual dance is choreographed...
by the living, in the same way as they re-enact and use as political resources the foundational practices of nation-building and state formation in the present. Why else the periodic revival in the ‘Atatürk cult’?

**Conclusion**

In her article on the romance of resistance, Abu-Lughod (1990) asks why it was that in the late 1980s and early 1990s scholars from different disciplines and theoretical paradigms converged on this theme. What work was performed, what academic voices enabled by focusing on the weapons of the weak? We can ask these same questions of the current vogue for ethnographic analysis that seeks to identify and explicate cultural creativity. Or to personalise the question, why my stress on self-institution as both act of resistance and domination?

Certainly I would defend my interpretation by noting that the critique of tradition and the claims to new synthesis by Islamism and Kemalism indicates that self-institution out of nothing is an indigenous practice and not just a discourse of the anthropological observer. But beyond this, I would also claim that the political struggle enjoined between Islamists and secularists in Turkey after the 1980 military coup is a contestation over which creative self-institution will prevail. If my interpretation is plausible, analyses that present (and camouflage) the Islamist movement in Turkey as a binary opposite to secularism could not be further from the truth. Rather than intrinsically different, Islamism and Kemalism are varieties of the same cultural and political project, disarmingly similar. Whether this feature of Islamism in Turkey holds true for radical Islamism in other places is a complicated question and beyond my concern here. Nevertheless, even as we note that some Islamists (and much present academic and media discourse) assume that we are living a clash of civilisations, we should acknowledge that civilisations too self-institute themselves in the present. In that case, the vital questions are not the intrinsic incompatibility or otherwise of ‘modernity’ (or the West) and Islam but an examination of how the constitution of civilisational incompatibility produces broader political struggles. How do these projects of civility produce identity in the present and what forms of political power do they generate?

Even more vitally, given my argument for the resemblance between Islamist and secularist projects of self-institution (but not necessarily their form), the processes and forces that suppress recognition of their essential commonality or their mutual mimicry need to be investigated.

Why is this so vital? In April 2005 the Dutch parliament published a report, recommending that ‘the country’s Muslims should henceforth effectively “become Dutch”’ (BBC News, 28 April 2005). Similarly, Olivier Roy (2005: 7) notes that if Muslims wish to stay in the Netherlands they must now follow ‘enculturation courses’. In that same article, however, he argues that the murderers of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004, one of the acts that inspired the report’s conclusions, were not ‘traditional Muslims, barely able to speak Dutch’ but Dutch citizens fluent in that language. Rather than expressing a clash of cultures or civilisational divide then, Roy claims that such Islamists typically have very antagonistic relations with ‘traditional Islam’. Indeed and I quote, theirs ‘is an endeavour to reconstruct a “pure” religion outside traditional or Western cultures, outside the very concept of culture itself’. Further, their ‘quest for authenticity is no longer a quest to maintain a pristine identity, but to go back to and beyond this pristine identity through a non-historical, abstract, and imagined model of Islam’ (2005: 6-7). In other words and in the terms of this paper, Roy’s Islamist actors are engaged in a project of arbitrary self-institution ‘out of nothing’. Yet his sociological analysis of the factors associated with such ‘uprooted’ Islamism is not convincingly extended to the contemporary
(or historical) creation of Dutchness, Frenchness or Europeanness pursued by secular nation states, as witnessed in their very programs of forced assimilation referenced above. Perhaps it is no great insight to remember that the originary impulse of secularism is gratuitous self-institution—what Castoriadis calls autonomy. What is surprising is how Islamism’s resemblance to laicism is so often passed over, resulting in the current dominant politics enforcing Western or Islamic exceptionalism.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, whose generosity financed the fieldwork carried out in Istanbul for this article. Joel Kahn, Kenan Cayir, Alex Edmonds and the three anonymous referees of The Australian Journal of Anthropology suggested many useful changes, all of which I am very grateful for, but not all of which I was able to incorporate into the text. Accordingly, the remaining shortcomings are mine.

Notes

1. This claim needs to be qualified. Bourdieu (1962, 2000) describes his critical period of fieldwork (during the war of liberation in the late 1950s) as making him witness to a social experiment—Algeria’s forced transformation under French colonialism. His ethnographic authority is produced by situating himself in such a pivotal position, both spatially and temporally—thus his ability to reconstruct a stateless Kabylian society that presumably still existed problematically in certain lives and practices in the present (producing incoherence for some agents), while simultaneously using that model to analyse modernity, also represented in certain apostate Kabylian lives.

2. Are subjects partially able to interrogate the dispositions with which they have been inculcated? Even if they could (Bourdieu thinks not), consciousness raising in itself is not socially transformative: social change requires more than social criticism or a change of social cum ideological concepts (Bourdieu 2001). Bourdieu articulates the habitus with ‘objective conditions’ or structures: change requires transformation of the objective conditions of existence that produce determinate types of dispositions. In this way, and despite the idealistic tenor of the quote above, Bourdieu concurs with Asad in a materialist critique of the idea that the ‘object of anthropological discourse [should be] primarily constituted in terms of human meanings’ (Asad 1979: 611).

3. For Castoriadis, an individual or society’s self-creation ‘out of nothing’ does not literally mean creation of all the constituting elements of its world. As he puts it: ‘We are speaking of the self-constitution of the living being qua living being—not of its matter. We are not saying that the living being gives rise to molecules out of nothing...The living being creates something other and much more important: the level of being we call life, as well as the infinity of modes of being and of laws that bear on life...It creates, each time, a proper world...There is obviously an infinity of things “outside” the living being, but they are for the living being only inasmuch as the latter has sampled, formed and transformed them’ (1997b: 337-338, original emphasis).

4. Technically, Kemalism describes the official program of both Mustafa Kemal’s Republican People’s Party and the new Turkish state in its key formative period between the World Wars. As formulated in 1931, its six guiding principles were republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism and revolutionism. Since then, Kemalism has acquired a range of contradictory meanings, and it is a matter of continuing debate in Turkey as to what the political program of a Kemalist party should encompass. Nevertheless, neither the dispersal of the ideal nor the irresoluteness of those defining its meaning should not be exaggerated—the most powerful institution in Turkey, the military, continues to police the political and cultural fields in the name of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), and Kemalist as a signifier of political identity is a live option.
5. Other possible ways of proceeding might have been to draw attention to Kemalist power via different forms of Islamist resistance as revealed in a range of innovative spatial, textual and consumerist practices: for example, in Islamist tea-gardens or cafes in Istanbul (Kömürçuoğlu 2000; Houston 2001); in Islamist novels (Cayir 2004); in Islamist fashion shows and department stores (Navaro-Yashin 2002).

6. Özyürek (2004: 382) analyses both the original photograph and the more extended propaganda campaign organised by the Turkish Republic for its 75th anniversary on the theme of Atatürk’s dancing, broadcast on CNN in the USA.

7. This is a somewhat ironic critique, given the Islamist movement’s stress in an earlier manifestation on the revealed source and authority of the Koran.

8. Significantly the document pursues the same strategy of power when it assumes the inevitability and desirability of—and its own conformity to—‘globalisation’ and a new more advanced system of international law over and above the now parochial nation state.

9. Mücahidakar Demokrasi’s occasional use of neo-conservative arguments attacking the welfare state for encouraging irresponsibility in families is an unconvincing digression in the Turkish context, given the absence of such a political structure as well as the centrality of the civilising role of the family and the mother in particular in Kemalism’s social policies (see p. 37 for example). The document also makes an irrelevant foray against state funding of abortion and sex changes.

10. AKPArTİ’s failed legislation to have zina (adultery) punishable by law in late 2004 might be interpreted as attempted social engineering of social relations in the ‘private sphere’.

11. Nevertheless, Scott does have a slight bias for discerning metis in the field of ecological adaptation and practical knowledge of the natural world, as well as an accompanying anthropological systems bias that minimises imperial penetration and regional standardisation, and overplays the assumed isolation and self-sufficiency of pre-modern communities. For me, his chapter on Le Corbusier and Brasilia is the least convincing and disregards Holston’s (1989) sympathetic discussion of the metis of Brasilia’s own inhabitants.

12. The CHP were established by Atatürk in 1924 and have always been the political party closest in tenor to the secularist state and Turkish military.

13. In her 1990 article, Abu-Lughod does not reverse her procedure by re-reading men’s acts as ‘resistance’ that diagnoses, in turn, the power of Bedouin women. To do so, she might retort, would be to obscure distinctions between their greater or lesser capacity to control or coerce the behaviour of the other. Even if we interpret men’s actions as pre-emptive strikes to counter any possible future redistribution of power, this should not be named resistance. Nevertheless, by focusing on resistance diagnostically (that is as a symptom of power), with no assessment of its efficacy or otherwise in countering domination, is it implied that it can have no liberatory outcomes?

14. Obviously the place and nature of the Ottoman Empire and its inspiration by Turkish or Islamic sources becomes of key controversy here, as the concern of the rest of the article in Radikal indicates. See Kafadar (1995) for an analysis of Turkish nationalist accounts of the origins and construction of the Ottoman State that stress its Turkish genius.

15. In an article titled ‘Turkish social anthropology since the 1970s’ (Erdentuğ and Magnarella 2001), the authors make a loose distinction between popular anthropology and academic anthropology in Turkey. Presumably Güvenç’s work, as befitting his status as professor of anthropology at Hacettepe University in Ankara, would be catalogued under the academic. Their example of popular anthropology is a work by Ibrahim Yılmaz (1995) detailing an alternative cultural fusion to Güvenç, one in which Islam plays a greater part in the historic development of a unique ‘Turco-Islamic’ culture. The cover of Yılmaz’s book (Ecdat Kültürlü or ‘The Culture of the Ancestors’) reads: ‘We set out from Ergenekon with Turkish blood in our veins/ We joined with the divine light of Islam in our hearts/ With countless martyrs, we reached the oceans and ruled the world’. Why the author’s use this as an example of popular anthropology (and not Güvenç’s work) is unclear.
16. Other writers concur—Veena Das (1997) and Iris Jean-Klein (2000), for example, analyse how cultural meanings as constructed through hierarchical intersubjective relationships can simultaneously produce selves that are constrained by this socially instituted and culturally informed relationality, as well as enable individuals and groups to negotiate their own divergent projects and meanings. Over and beyond these and other treatments of the production of self-hood cross-culturally however, anthropological analysis typically expresses a disciplinary horror over isolating the agent from social relationships and/or social structure within which subjectivity or selves are seen as constituted. This horror is sometimes supplemented by a critique that argues that to do so is ethnocentric at best, importing historic Western notions of the individual self into alien contexts, and at worst, expressive of the ideology of Enlightenment thinking and/or capitalism, with its imaginary signification of self-made bourgeois men as authoritative authors of the self. Jonathan Friedman’s (2002) assessment in his concluding remarks of his review of Rapport’s (2002) article ‘Random Mind’ is only slightly different—rather than trace an archaeology of the idea of the autonomous self in the constitution of the West, he historicises Rapport’s work to the particular global moment of deregulation and the neo-liberalisation of the subject.

17. Although not the focus of this paper, this injunction to gratuitous self-creation applies also to Kurdish movements in Turkey, in relation both to Republican laicism and Turkish nationalism.

18. In Formations of the Secular, Talal Asad (2003: 13, emphasis in original) asks these questions somewhat differently: ‘The important question, therefore, is not to determine why the idea of “modernity” (or the “West”) is a misdescription, but why it has become hegemonic as a political goal, what practical consequences follow from that hegemony, and what social conditions maintain it’.

References


Ak Partisi 2004. Muhafazakar Demokrasi (Conservative Democracy). Foreword by Tayyip Erdoğan.


Arnason, J. 1999. Unpublished talk on Castoriadis, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Politics, La Trobe University, Australia.


Castoriadis, C. 1997a. The Imaginary: creation in the social-historical domain. In his World in
Copyright of Australian Journal of Anthropology is the property of Australian Anthropological Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.