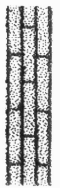


go traveling” amid the “far flung ruins and debris” of this “prison-world,” which television “bursts . . . asunder.” Thus when a medium from the cult says, “I don’t know if I’m going to transport today,” things are truly up for grabs. But if she does—her receiver-body tuning into a vast array of media characters and faraway perspectives and potencies—we know for sure that it is traveling time.



## Production of Fundamentalism: On the Dynamics of Producing the Radically Different

*Werner Schifflauer*

Fundamentalism, particularly its Islamic form, is regarded in both academic and media discourse as the “other” par excellence. Depending on how the concept of one’s own is determined—as the modern, as enlightenment, as civil society, as reason—fundamentalism is seen as embodying the antimodern, the antienlightenment, totalitarianism, or the rule of folly.<sup>1</sup> Because this particular other appears to be equipped with power—is preparing to reconquer the world—it is not uncommon for it to be embellished with mythical qualities. It appears not only as strange, but also as threatening, and, in a precise theological meaning, as evil. Part of this mythologizing view is to depict what is different (like what is one’s own) as a unity—one speaks of “fundamentalism” as if a great variety of movements could be reduced to a single common denominator, like “the modern,” as if technical modern, philosophical modern, certain forms of exchange and distribution, and, ultimately, a certain type of political entity had created a structured system in itself. What is different seems, here, to be used as a means of unifying and verifying what is one’s own. Even theoreticians who elsewhere adopt a decidedly critical attitude toward the modern—the dialectics of enlightenment, for example—can use reference to fundamentalism to indicate what they are *not*.<sup>2</sup>

Such initial assumptions obstruct any understanding of the indisputable fascination currently exerted by political religions. Real understanding would require dissolving mythologizing oppositions and instead, as Lutz Ellrich suggests, viewing the relationship between the modern and

fundamentalism as a kaleidoscope of complexly related differences, which cannot be reduced to a single concept.<sup>3</sup> One would then speak of "fundamentalisms" (or would drop the term entirely), just as of a fragmented "modern."

Here, I will examine how the mythologization of fundamentalism has contributed to constituting the phenomenon itself. In addition, I will show how the contemporary media environment encourages this process. The Islamic community of Cemalrettin Kaplan is almost a cliché of "Islamic fundamentalism." A *chaisanatic mullah stands in front of a fanatic group of followers prepared for battle, who declare their unconditional readiness to follow him*. This image, in which the community presents itself, has developed in a complex interplay with the press. We do not have, on the one hand, a community with a certain picture of the world that expresses itself in a definable system of symbols and, on the other hand, an audience of publicists or academics that interpret and present this system of symbols. Better, this is only half the truth. The other half is that the picture that develops in public of a particular group exists in a constant state of exchange with the picture that the group generates of itself.

The community of Cemalrettin Kaplan was formed in Germany in the early eighties as a breakaway from the National View—the European branch of the National Salvation Party (later the Refah [Welfare] Party), the party of the former Prime Minister of Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan. In 1983–84 the leadership of the former National Salvation Party split on the issue of whether the party should be reestablished after the coup d'état of 1980. All parties had been outlawed, but now new national elections were scheduled. When Erbakan and the party establishment opted to found a successor party (the Refah [Welfare] Party), a revolutionary wing headed by Kaplan, the former Müftü<sup>4</sup> of Adana, separated. For them the history of the coup d'état had demonstrated the limitations of a parliamentary route to Islamic rule. As soon as an Islamic party became strong enough to form a government and to introduce serious reforms, it would be suppressed. Instead, he chose an extra-institutional grassroots movement that would take the Qur'an to be the sole foundation for overcoming a perceived split among European Muslims, to establish a mass movement, and to seize power in Turkey. The movement got off to a good start. Many sympathizers of the National View in Europe were weary of the compromises made by the party establishment. It soon became evident, however, that the movement was unable to keep up its initial momentum: it remained re-

stricted to the Turkish diaspora communities in Europe. Even there, it did not appeal in a significant way to Muslims who were not members of the National View but belonged to other Islamic communities. In 1985 the Kaplan movement stagnated, and in 1986 it began to erode. After one of the founding members seceded in 1987, Kaplan reorganized the hitherto rather open movement into a closed sect—an elitist cadre party, which increasingly viewed itself as the spearhead of the Islamic revolution. This development expressed itself in an increasing dissociation from the outside world (one example of which was the condemnation of Erbakan as an apostate), but above all in the proclamation of a government in exile and the reinstatement of the office of *locum tenens* for the caliph by Kaplan in 1992, culminating in his self-appointment to caliph in 1994. With Kaplan's death, the movement seems to have come to an end. His son Mevin, who succeeded him in the caliphate, does not have his father's charisma. In 1996 the Berlin community split, and a counter caliphate under Ibrahim Sofu was proclaimed.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Press Review in *Ümmet-i Muhammed*

A review of the press appears regularly in *Ümmet-i Muhammed* (*Muhammed's Community*), the journal that is the central organ of the movement. The journal is published in English and has been appearing fortnightly in Cologne since 1989. Its predecessors were, from August 1985 to June 1988, the magazine *Tebliğ* (*Proclamation*) and, from June 1988 to March 1989, the magazine *Ümmet* (*Community*): Renaming was necessary to circumvent bans imposed by German courts. The Press Review is of particular interest for the issue of "intervening space," inasmuch as there excerpts from discussions outside the movement are brought into its own sphere. The column, which takes up between one and three pages, first appeared in *Tebliğ* no. 20 (June 1986); ever since, it has been an integral part of the publication. However (for reasons that we will return to later), it did not appear between *Ümmet-i Muhammed* nos. 5 (May 1989) and 51 (November 21, 1991), with the sole exception of issue no. 40. The first issues of the Press Review concerned reports of court proceedings against Muslims in Turkey, items on the arguments concerning headwear, and reports on the German president's visit to Turkey. *Tebliğ* no. 35 (March 1, 1987) saw for the first time reports about Cemalrettin Kaplan or the movement itself

quoted from the daily press. Reporting in the established Turkish press (*Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Terziman*) about the Kaplan movement has since constituted an important part of the Press Review.

The Press Review in *Ümmet-i Muhammed* no. 68, of November 15, 1992, for example, includes three reports, a commentary on Kaplan announced as a "message," and a news item on Erbakan. The main report—"The Islamic State of Kara Ses"—and the accompanying photographs are taken from the daily newspaper *Milliyet* and refer to heğira meeting 1413 (1992). **This meeting is the most important ritual of the Kaplan movement:** every year, on the anniversary of the heğira, the supporters of the community come from throughout Europe to Cologne (or Düsseldorf) to celebrate the beginning of a new Islamic year. The meeting reported in this news item was the first after the proclamation of the government in exile and Kaplan's self-appointment to depury for the caliph. The photographs capture elements of this meeting: a parade of young "warriors of faith" (*genç mücahid*) with imitation machine guns; a photograph of the symbolic toppling of a statue of Atatürk; and a picture of the press conference. A second item (whose source is not indicated) reports the principal public prosecutor's investigation into this matter. The third item is again taken from *Milliyet* and refers to Erbakan, who, to mark the celebrations of the fifty-fourth anniversary of Atatürk's death, had paid a visit to the Atatürk mausoleum: the newspaper *Hürriyet* reports that Kaplan had condemned this festival and summoned the participants to repent. Finally, the commentary is taken from *Sabah* and in essence states that an Islamic constitution is irreconcilable with individual freedom and democracy.

The first feature of the Press Review that strikes one is the selection of periodicals: here (and in the other Press Reviews) the largest and most influential Turkish daily newspapers are quoted—however, the wide range of Islamic newspapers that has grown up over the years is not represented. Similarly absent are the German daily newspapers. Second, very negative opinions on the movement are printed and even singled out. This starts with the name used to introduce Cemalrettin Kaplan: "Kara Ses" literally means "Black Voice." This evokes associations with darkness, with a period of obscurity (see for example the commentary in *Sabah*), and, above all, with anticivilization (Turkish *aydınlanma devri*, literally "epoch of illumination") or anti-intellectualism (*aydın*, literally "brightness, the enlightened one")—I will henceforth render "Kara Ses" as "Voice of Darkness." The tendentious character of the items selected is shown even more clearly

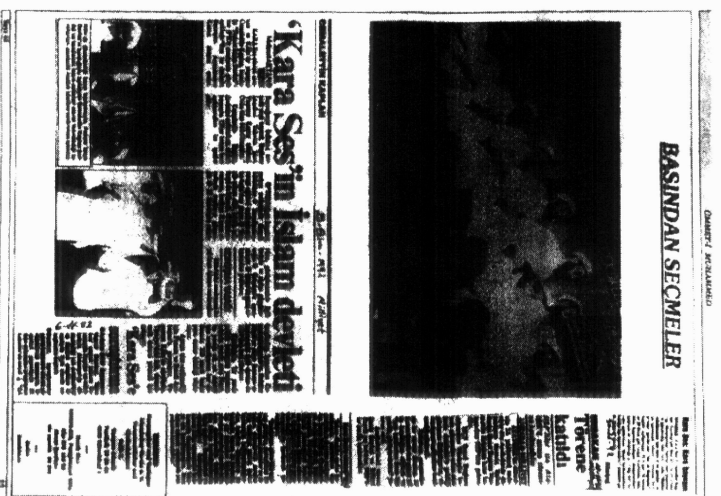


FIGURE 6. At a press conference organized in Cologne, Cemalrettin Kaplan announces the foundation of the Federal Islamic State (left); his followers, described as "warriors of faith," symbolically topple a statue of Atatürk. Press review in *Ümmet-i Muhammed* no. 68, of November 15, 1992.

in citing *Hürriyet*—although no particular care is taken in distinguishing between opinion and reporting—as saying that Kaplan "is spreading nonsense."<sup>6</sup> Third, these items are printed without any further comment. The editors must therefore be certain that the reports and commentaries will be understood "correctly," that is, in their own interests. This calls for a "model reader,"<sup>7</sup> the *seriatçı*, the Muslim who stands for the establishment of the Sharia and who, if not already a member of the Kaplan community, probably belongs to one of the other Islamic groups, most likely the National View (Millî Görüş). I will refer to this model reader as "Islamicist."

The editors of the journal thus set up a complex cabinet of mirrors: they reproduce news items and articles that refer to Kaplan and his main opponent. By being reproduced in the central organ, some of these reflections are in turn reflected back. It is thus possible for model readers of the journal to view the image that the movement (and they themselves) conjures up in others.

The model readers receive a reflected image of the news items (or a part of them) that appear in the public domain about Erbakan and Kaplan, the two people who claim to represent Islamists in the narrow sense and Muslims in the wider sense. "Represent" is used here in the multiple sense, as formulated by Bourdieu.<sup>8</sup> Kaplan and Erbakan represent Islam both in the sense that they conjure up a certain picture of it, and inasmuch as they claim to speak for Muslims—thus representing the Islamic community in the political sense. The success or failure of their representative work in this field depends on the extent to which they succeed in gathering around them a community that recognizes itself in the image and feels represented by it. Because this arena is not simply viewed (by being subjected to analysis or comparison, for example), but instead is represented in the light of the press, it constitutes a process of reflection: the amusing feature here—as with every glance into the mirror—is identity formation. If you can see how your own representative is perceived by third parties (and hence how you are), and are thus able to compare how the representative of the others affects third parties (and hence how others themselves do), you are able to ascertain your own identity. From this it also becomes clear why the third parties (that is, the stage of press publicity) are needed: they stand for "objectivity" in the sense that they are neutral in the battle for representation in the Islamic field. As they are opponents of both Erbakan and Kaplan, they are in a certain respect unbiased. If they record something, then it has a higher reality value than if it were to come from one of the other two parties. This "objectivity" is not destroyed by the fact that their statements are "the wrong way round": they are so only in the sense of "mirror images," so that it is simply necessary to exchange left and right or (to employ yet another metaphor) to view them as the negative of a black and white photograph.

If, as the Press Review clearly shows, one is interested in others' reactions to oneself, then it is only a small step to taking others' reactions into account from the very beginning of an action, and but a further small step to carrying out actions solely for the sake of the reactions evoked in others.

The former means that an action is staged; the latter, that stage directions and actions become indistinguishable. The steps to the caliphate are to be viewed against this background.

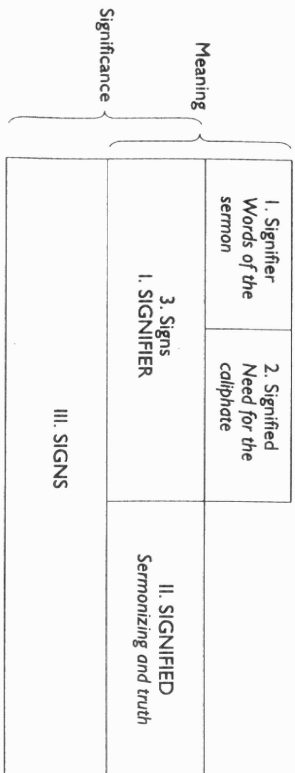
#### The Phase of the Constitution:

##### The Hoca and the Politician

Let us first consider the starting point of the movement: after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Turkish Muslims were in a state of ferment; many had the impression that the time was now ripe for an Islamic Revolution in Turkey. An Islamic demonstration in Konya provided the final impetus for the military putsch. Under the new government all parties were formally prohibited—including Erbakan's National Welfare Party (Milli Selamet Partisi). In the following years it was politically prudent to keep a low profile. In Turkey the party managed to discipline its members, but not in Germany, where individuals had less to fear. In this situation the party decided to send the former Müftü of Adana, Cemalrettin Kaplan, to Germany, in order to reintegrate the local groups there. It turned out to be a case of setting the fox to keep the geese. Shortly after his arrival, Kaplan began preaching that the Islamic *din* is creed and law, and that it is not conceivable without the state. The Kemalistic Revolution and the institutionalization of a secular state had resulted in the unity of creed and law being annulled; an order ordained by God had been replaced by a man-made one. Not *akıl*, the common sense that derives from insight into the role that God had intended for Man as his deputy, had prevailed; but *nefis*, the instinctive nature of Man, whose basis is human needs. The consequence of this hubris is excess, despotism, and tyranny. Instead of God, in the State cult the idol Atatürk is worshipped, with innumerable memorials being erected in tribute to him. By contrast, the task in hand is to reinstall an Islamic government and reestablish the office of the head of all Muslims, the caliphate. In this way it would be possible to overcome the calamitous split in the Islamic world.

Many Muslims in the National View reacted with enthusiasm to these new tidings. The conflict with the party leadership that inevitably resulted from Kaplan's sermon was seen by the Muslims involved as conflict between a preacher concerned with the truth and politicians preoccupied with party reason. In the words of an eye witness: "Why are we actually

Scheme 1:



SCHEMA 1. The semantic structure of Kaplan's sermon in the early phase (1983-84). Following Roland Barthes, we have a structure of signs that operates on two levels. Level 1 refers to the immanent meaning of the sermon—the proclaimed need for the caliphate. Level 2 refers to the significance of this proclamatory act, namely, sermonizing and truth.

bringing hocas [*hocalı*; Islamic preacher, teacher, scribe] to Germany? Why are we giving them the use of our assembly rooms? So that they teach Islam! If now some of the people in the supervisory committees want to prevent this, our solidarity will naturally lie with the hocas." The conflict can be graphically visualized in the contrast between Erbakan, a professor of mechanical engineering, who habitually portrays himself as a modern Islamic intellectual (wearing, for instance, a suit and tie) and Kaplan, the classic scribe, who habitually portrays himself as an Islamic preacher (thus appearing in robe and turban).

The distinction between meaning and significance in Roland Barthes's thoughts on everyday myths can help classify the structure we see here.<sup>9</sup> The *meaning* of the sermon, formulated briefly, is that the caliphate should be reestablished. The *significance* of the sermon develops from this as a secondary sign system: it is "actually" concerned with the conflict between truth and politics; embodied in the preacher's battle against the party establishment. Barthes captures this intertwining of meaning and significance in a diagram, which I have modified to fit the situation. The act of the sermon and the content proclaimed within it now obtains an "elevated," a "mythical" significance on the second level. The words of the sermon are written into a greater story, and they become stylized. We are dealing here with a comparatively simple basic structure, which serves as an

appropriate starting point because at the time (at least according to my knowledge) the fourth actor, media coverage, was not yet playing any role. This changes in the next phase.

### The Phase of Challenge

Starting in about 1985, Kaplan developed a new form of preaching, which was added to the forms he had hitherto practiced (sermons, articles). He wrote a series of open letters, first to the Turkish president, Kenan Evren, then to professors in Turkish universities, to members of the theology faculty, to consulates, to public prosecutors and judges (all in Turkey), and so on. A new quality of self-representation was thus introduced: whereas a sermon, an article, or a conventional letter creates a bilateral relationship (a person or a public is addressed); an open letter creates a triangular relationship between author, addressee, and public. Kaplan appears as an admonisher or preacher, who is writing a concerned or demanding letter to public figures, the president and the public prosecutors, and at the same time he ensures that this act is publicly observed: others are intended to see that (and how) he directs a letter to the head of state. Everything indicates that this secondary glimpse is of prime interest.

Now that one explicitly focuses on the view of others, the moment of stage production becomes apparent. In the first phase, the *significance* of the sermon mainly established itself in the view of others ("mainly" because Kaplan was already a preacher who was playing the preacher—in analogy to Sartre's waiter who plays a waiter): the sermon was integrated by them into a greater story, namely, into the story of the battle of truth against the *siyaset*, politics in the sense of party politics. Now, however, Kaplan himself worries about the secondary level. The weighting has shifted: whereas Kaplan was first concerned mainly with the meaning of his sermon, and only secondarily with the significance, now he appears to focus on the significance, while the meaning (the warning to the president) assumes a secondary role. Instead of being mythologized and stylized by others, he now mythologizes himself.

At the same time, the story generating the significance has grown. The gestures Kaplan employs in his performance are those (familiar to all Muslims) of a prophet taking rulers to task. According to the view of his story in the Qur'an, times of revelation, in which the purity of teaching, ab-

solute monotheism, is established, are regularly followed by a period of decline, the worshipping of other idols alongside God, and tyranny. In such times a prophet regularly appears and confronts those in power with Islam's monotheistic commandment: "There is no other God but Me, serve Me" (Qur'an, sura 21:25). In the words of a follower: "He challenged the state and insisted on Islam. Only Seyh Sait had done this before him."<sup>10</sup> Hence, when Kaplan writes an open letter, he not only challenges the state—but also and primarily wants to be seen as the one who is challenging the state and who thus takes his place in a great tradition.

But who (apart from the addressee) is intended to read the open letter—who is to take note of this act of challenging? First, it is certainly the model readers: through the figure of self-mythologization, Kaplan signals to them his claim to leadership. The significance of this figure of the uncompromising challenger, committed to the truth and only the truth, with prophetic characteristics, lies in being an antitype to the figure of the compromising party politician, Erbakan. Political change (as the complementary message has it) cannot come about through tactical manoeuvring—where one only loses oneself—but only through a courageous manner and undaunted preaching of the truth.

Kaplan, however, had yet another audience in sight—namely, the Turkish public. Ahmet Polat (one of the founding members of the community, who broke away from the movement in 1986) said in an interview with Metin Gür:

If his [Kaplan's] name did not appear in the press, he would become ill. I once found out that he had obviously been writing letters to Evren in the name of the association. He would simply say whatever came into his head. In the end we warned him a couple of times, but it didn't have any impact on him. Eventually Kaplan hoca achieved what he was after. President Evren mentioned him in a speech in Adana. You should have just seen Kaplan that day. He had finally taken a public stand against Turkey. And he was a subject of public discussion.<sup>11</sup>

The Press Review came into being at about the same time as the letter campaign, which shows that Ahmet Polat may be exaggerating but is basically correct. The fact that later items such as the following were reported in the Press Review speaks for itself: "Cemalrettin Kaplan, the 'Voice of Darkness,' arouses further anger by sending his incoherent/incongruous/ill-considered [*abuk sabuk*] messages [*tebliğler*] conveying his opinions to public institutions in Turkey, such as those of teachers, the public prosecutor, and judges' associations, as well as military and police organizations."<sup>12</sup> The

printing of these reports in the Press Review shows what Kaplan is aiming at when he wants to appear in the press. He is obviously less concerned with a public echo in itself than with the Muslims who have joined him or whom he would like to win over to his movement. The Press Review shows them that Kaplan is successful as a prophet and challenger of the State—it demonstrates that the challenge has been taken up, that Kaplan has been accepted as an important opponent who has to be taken seriously. In contrast, it would have been catastrophic had he attracted no attention: a challenger whose challenge fizzles out into nothing runs the risk of being branded a fool. What Kaplan thus gains through the effects in the press is *credibility*, a guarantee of reality. The indirect route via the press is a way of consolidating his position, of making it more credible.

Why does he need this? When Kaplan started writing the open letters, the initial momentum of his movement had already dissipated. Hopes that the message would be interpreted as an oriflamme had not been confirmed. Other communities in Germany had not joined forces with Kaplan, nor had he been able to mobilize the *hocas* in Turkey. His original dream, that one Friday they would set out from the mosques to march on the centers of government, had faded into the distance. Moreover, the revolution in Iran had yet to find a successor and instead was increasingly merging into routine daily life. The movement first stagnated and then began to crumble visibly. This was revealed in the attendance figures for the hegra festival: in 1987, ten thousand of the faithful were supposed to have come; in 1988, I estimated seven thousand; in 1989, there were approximately five thousand; and in 1990 there were only twenty-five hundred visitors. Of equal importance were several breakaways—Ahmet Polat in 1987 and Hasan Hayrikişic in 1989. Conversely, Erbakan began to recover rapidly and strengthened his position with each election. The elections to the National Assembly of October 20, 1991, are commonly regarded as a breakthrough. His Welfare Party won thirty-eight seats in them and thus became the fourth strongest party in the Turkish parliament.

A charismatic movement has its own characteristic pattern of development. It thrives on the enthusiasm that it generates. In this process success breeds success—it "infects," or "sweeps along" its followers. There is no secret to this, merely the fact that "charisma" is not so much a quality as the bestowing of this quality by fanatical followers. In every mass event charisma is "created" or "manufactured."<sup>13</sup> In consequence, charismatic movements either grow exponentially or decay exponentially. In a complex

society this phenomenon becomes especially critical as a result of the media. The media play a decisive role in the production of charisma—they report on it, disseminate it, and, in so doing, objectify and consolidate it. Every press report documents the power of the movement—it is proof that it is necessary to take note of a movement or person.<sup>14</sup> If a charismatic movement is in the process of growing, this is a straightforward matter: it is the media's duty to report on it. Evidence that the movement exists gushes forth in great abundance—"exists" meaning that it actually is what it claims to be, namely, an entity to be taken seriously; a real alternative and not merely the coming together of a few visionaries (about whom it is simply not worth reporting). A movement that is in the process of growing is thus reinforced by media coverage—and vice versa. A movement that is experiencing a downward trend must, for the sake of its own existence, try to find its way into the press. This (and not the vanity suggested by Ahmet Polat) is, in my view, the reason for the open letters.

### The Phase of the Symbolic Policy

Provocation peters out. This seems to have been the problem between May 1989 and the end of November 1991, the only time when the Press Review did not appear. It is probably no coincidence that this occurred during the time when, with the breakaway of Hasan Hayrkişig, the movement seemed to be on the brink of complete collapse. It is reasonable to suspect that the disappearance of the column was connected to the fact that there were simply no items on Kaplan during this time.

Yet Kaplan did manage a "comeback," and did so via a strategy of theatricalism. In hegira meeting 1412 (November 1991), he began making belligerent noises. He then made the press with a meeting of the youth of his movement in December 1991, to which fifteen hundred young men had come. He hit a tone that showed he was clearly on the offensive and for the first time called openly for a battle against Kemalism. He was "back"—as expressed by the fact that it was now possible to fill almost the whole page of the Press Review in *Ünmer-i Muhammed* no. 54 with reports of this gathering. It is in the nature of tabloid journalism that the dramatic aspects of the meeting set the tone of the report. Under the headline: "Şeriat cries at a meeting of Kaplan youth in Cologne," Metin Gür in *Milliyet* of January 2, 1992, highlighted the fact that the youths had traveled to the

gathering in Islamic clothing and quoted in detail the preacher Seyit Ali Setaroğlu:

"Islamic youth is ready for any sacrifice. When the time comes, they will not hesitate to risk all their worldly belongings. We shall march against all man-made systems—above all against Kemalism. Islamic youth is an army that has raised its head in protest against the man-made systems. We have set out to settle the account for the blood spilt by the Kemalist regime. We shall become martyrs; we shall fight till the last warrior of faith has died." Cemalrettin Kaplan also explained that we were engaged in a dreadful battle and said, with reference to Atatürk statues, that we would smash all idols. Kaplan was often interrupted by cries such as: "Strike and we shall strike; Die—and we will die with you." "You are the people of this century. You say that the Islamic State will arise. Indeed it will."

Significantly, the preacher, who sets the warlike tone, is quoted in relative detail, whereas Kaplan, still the main speaker, is quoted briefly and (with the exception of one sentence) indirectly. A report in the newspaper *Meydan* of January 8 began: "A gymnasium in Cologne: inside the hall 1500 youths. Cries: 'Strike—and we will strike; Die—and we will die with you.' At the event: Cemalrettin Kaplan, alias Voice of Darkness, with black talar and black beard." There are several points to note about this item. First, it appeared very late (six days after the report in *Milliyet*). Second, the journalist had obviously helped himself to secondary sources (probably also from *Milliyet*): Kaplan has a conspicuous white beard (which produced an ironic comment on the report in *Ünmer-i Muhammed*). It thus appears that the editors of *Meydan* did not notice the significance or press value of the event until afterward. Both are characteristic of a "comeback": first the event is simply overlooked, because Kaplan has become too insignificant; and then the news item describes the theatrical moments that have, surprisingly, made the event worthy of media coverage after all. The dramatization paid off. Not the least successful result of this meeting was that Kaplan took a further step three months later: in April 1992 he proclaimed a government in exile and appointed himself to *locum tenens* for the caliph. In the period that followed, he drafted a constitution (which has since become available in German) and set up state offices. Although the proclamation of the government in exile received surprisingly little attention at the time, obviously because it had not been expected, this changed with the hegira meeting of 1992, at which the newly founded Islamic state presented itself for the first time.

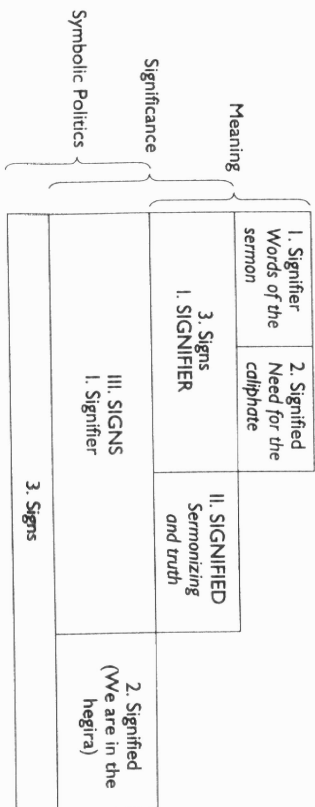
The Press Review we are using as a reference deals with this meeting.

Unlike earlier Press Reviews, it contains illustrations that clearly show the new dramaturgy: Islamic clothing, government and dramatic interludes reflected in the parade of the warriors of faith, the attack on the Atarürk statues. Apart from the words of the sermons, the accompanying text also reproduces the slogans in detail. In a remarkable way, these reports of aggressive iconoclasm are contrasted with others in which Erbakan pays respect to the State cult.

The way the community developed its representation between 1991 and 1993 can be described as a translation from a hitherto verbally articulated message into a drama: the caliphate and an Islamic state are no longer simply the subject of demands but are acted out. They are translated into images and thus become visible, tangible, and capable of being experienced in a new way. We can again turn to Barthes's scheme to explain the implications of this act. I believe that this translation brings in a third level to join the two already in existence—without replacing them: A third level has joined the two initial levels of meaning and significance—the level of symbolic politics. This now allows for a particularly rhetorical strategy: if at this time the reinstatement of the *locum-tenancy* of the caliphate was criticized, it was possible regularly to return to the position that fundamentally nothing had changed. The appointment of the *locum* amounts to nothing more than a dramatic way of demonstrating the need for the office. Kaplan would of course resign from the office of *locum* as soon as a leader had been installed by the Islamic world as a whole. Nevertheless, the whole atmosphere that now prevailed at the meetings demonstrated that a new significance had been added: "We have now seized the initiative; the act of founding the government shows that Muslims have transformed from a passive state into an active one; they are no longer demanding a caliphate—they are starting to implement one." Hence a new quality of mythologization had been achieved. Muslims were not only coming together to a meeting that commemorated the hegira of the year 622, but they actually felt themselves to be in the hegira. Just as Muhammad's community fled for its life from the political pressure and the idolatry of Mecca in 622, founded the Islamic state in Medina, and then returned triumphally to Mecca to topple the idols, so Kaplan's community had gone into exile, had founded the Islamic state in Germany, and was now preparing for the return to Turkey and the reintroduction of monotheism.

In the sermon in which the Islamic state was proclaimed, "The Return of the Right to the Claimant,"<sup>15</sup> Kaplan explicitly drew parallels to

Scheme 2:



SCHEMA 2. The semantic structure of Kaplan's sermon in this second phase (1989–94). A third level of meaning has joined the two initial levels of meaning and significance—the level of symbolic politics.

the meeting in Agaba in the year 621, that is, the year before the hegira, when the oath was taken that was to be the germ of the Islamic state. After describing the situation in Agaba, Kaplan applied this directly to the meeting ("We find ourselves at this stage of a proclaiming movement"). He began to proclaim the Islamic and qur'anic state and accepted—as had Muhammad in his time—homage.<sup>16</sup> *Umme-i Muhammed* describes the scene:

After the proclamation of the Islamic state all male and female participants stood up and to the cheer of: "Allahu Akbar"—Allah is the Almighty—the tenth verse of the Sure Feth was recited and then the homage was read aloud and repeated by all present. . . . "We pay homage and give you our pledge before Allah to heed you while you are on the path of Allah and his messengers, to obey you even when this does not suit us; to give from those gifts that Allah has bestowed upon us, to demand Good and reject Evil in good times as in bad, and in so doing to fear no-one, to protect our women and children just as we protect ourselves, to protect our cause and our hodja and this with our utmost effort."

This meeting finally saw the arrival of a phase where Kaplan's followers present themselves as picture-book fundamentalists. I have therefore quoted the press reports in detail because through them the interplay of two moments becomes distinct. First is the need to "saddle up" to get back into the press—with the press reports showing that this strategy paid off. Second, no less important is the obvious interest of broad sections of



the press in a mythologizing or demonizing coverage of Islamism.<sup>17</sup> When Kaplan is cast as "Prophet of Darkness," then he is also given his place by the press in a great history: namely, a history that interprets the Kemalist Revolution as a triumph of enlightenment over darkness, of progress over stagnation, of rationality over superstition. It becomes apparent that both great histories exhibit structural parallels: in both, the other party (Mustafa Kemal or Kaplan) is seen as a relapse into the beliefs of a former age—to the age of darkness before the enlightenment by one party; to the age of darkness and idol worship by the other.

Both forms of mythologization play into each other's hands. In fact, the Press Reviews do not print all items on the Kaplan movement. Commentaries that have taken a detailed and discriminating approach toward the movement—the series on Kaplan in the *Cimbürçiyer* in February 1987 or in December 1992, for example—were *not* included.<sup>18</sup> The movement's interest in the demonizing or mythologizing press coverage may lie in the fact that these exaggerate—and thus in the reader's eyes provide confirmation of Kaplan's greatness and importance. In the end the reader simply needs to reverse the "charge sign" to arrive at a "correct" version.

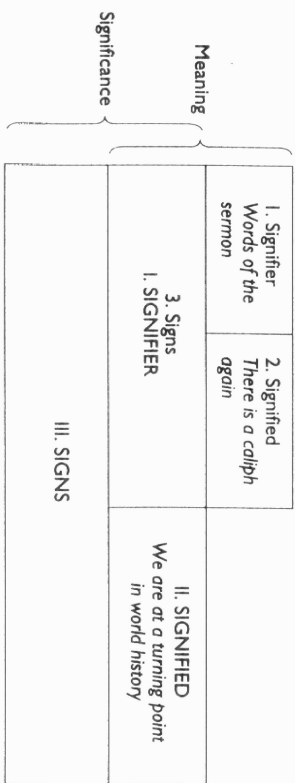
Precisely this interplay has contributed in a major way to radicalizing the Kaplan movement: a press that mythologizes and demonizes looks for examples. The more radical Kaplan's behavior was, the greater would be the attention granted him—since he then fit the picture even better. A need to appear in the press became matched by a readiness to take on a certain form of self-portrayal.

### The Phase of the Caliphate

In 1994 Kaplan proclaimed the caliphate. Thus the structure of the sign system that the movement used to portray itself changed a further—and final—time. With this act, the complex three-tiered semiological system was again replaced by a simpler, two-tiered one. However, in the process the message changed surreptitiously.

The most important change concerned the status of reclaimed reality. What was previously—even for Kaplan himself—"political theater" or "symbolic politics" now passed as "reality."<sup>19</sup> Until this point, his followers could claim that "actually" nothing had changed, and that was no longer possible. There was clearly a new message. At the same time, the story-gen-

Scheme 3:



SCHEMA 3. The semantic structure of Kaplan's sermon in his third phase (1994). The structure again operates on two levels, which marks the shift in the status of reclaimed reality, from symbolic politics to real politics.

erating the significance became greater: the proclamation of the caliphate declared that not an Islamic state but *the* Islamic state was being reestablished, and that in consequence the turning point of an era had been reached. Until now—according to the message—the powers of darkness, of idolatry have been continuously growing and have even had a hold on Muslims—just look at Erbakan. Now, at the period of absolute darkness, the caliph has appeared. The group of believers who have flocked around may still be small—but then how many followers did Muhammad have when he founded the new state in Medina?

We have already mentioned two causes for the dynamics underlying this renewed radicalization: first, the necessity that a charismatic movement imposes upon itself to find its way into the press in order to be taken seriously at all and, second, the demand for ever more spectacular acts to attract the gaze of the press—underlined by the fact that the press is interested in certain images and dramatizations. A third cause became evident in this final phase of the movement (even though it had played a role throughout): because the movement was portraying itself to others—the public—and being observed by others, an image of the movement developed independently. Let us take the metaphor of the mirror seriously: the movement saw its reflection in the Press Review and developed more and more (always with reversed polarity) into the image that it saw in this mirror. As time passed, the image of itself converged more and more with that seen by outsiders. The tabloid press did not merely caricature Kaplan—it also exagger-

ared. Thus, not only did Kaplan express himself more radically as time went on in order to make the headlines—but the press seized upon this and further embellished it. In a press report on hegira festival 1414 (November 1993),<sup>19</sup> for example, Kaplan is said to have described himself as Muhammad's heir. However, what he actually said was: "After the age of the prophet, teaching passed onto the scribes [*ulama*]. The scribes are the heirs of the prophets. I too belong to them. I too am one of his heirs . . . HE [Allah] also said to me: 'Cemalettin you too are a scribe. You personally have taken his (Muhammad's) place.'<sup>20</sup> Hence Kaplan said—strictly speaking—that he was only *one* of the heirs of the prophet. However, he appears in the press report to have been distorted—so to speak—toward recognition: shortly afterward he did proclaim himself to be the caliph and therefore did set himself up as *the* heir of the prophet. As a further example, a press clipping (with no reference given)<sup>21</sup> reported (still five months before the proclamation) beneath the heading: "The Voice of Darkness is preparing the armed uprising," that Kaplan had appointed himself caliph. In brief, Kaplan came more and more to resemble the picture the press was drawing of him. This opens up two interpretations, between which I am unable to decide. The more cautious interpretation is that Kaplan used the assistance of the press to say what he really wanted to say, but found inopportune to say directly at the time. This was plain to see at the time of the Rushdie affair, for example: everything suggested that the affair came at a relatively inconvenient time for Kaplan. He was criticized for keeping a very low profile,<sup>22</sup> whereas the younger hotheads in the movement were pressing for action. When he was finally more or less forced to comment, he talked abstractly about the stance taken by the *seriat*—that in a case of apostasy the death penalty should apply. Under the headline "Even the 'Voice of Darkness' demands the head (of Rushdie)," it was reported in *Hürriyet* that he defended the necessity for imposing the death sentence upon the author of the Satanic Verses.<sup>23</sup> This press coverage conveniently enabled Kaplan to play a two-sided game. To the German public, which had become very nervous because of the Rushdie affair, he was able to refer back to his position that he had merely conveyed the divine commandment. To the critics from his own ranks, by referring to the press reports, he was able to "prove" that he had taken a very clear line.

A similar structure may also play a role in the issue of the caliphate: Kaplan may have actually meant that he was the prophet's heir, but first cautiously expressed that he was one of the prophet's heirs. Here too the exag-

gerated press coverage might have come at the right time for him: it had, in a manner of speaking, the function of a test balloon, with which he was able to gauge the response to his claim. On the other hand, this always allowed him the opportunity to retreat to the position that he was only the symbolic caliph, that he was just acting as a marker for the vacant position, and so on. In such a rhetorical game the exaggeration of what was literally said represents what was actually meant, and does in fact have a higher reality value than what was actually said. From here it is but a small step to the harsher interpretation that the image of the self only emerges in such an interplay. This would then mean that it was not merely strategy when in 1992 Kaplan appointed himself *locum tenens*—and not the caliph himself, but that this thought only emerged from the interplay that we have analyzed here. If this is so, the mask that he donned had, over time, gained possession of him.

### On the Dynamics of Producing the Radically Different

I have analyzed a process in which, during a period of ten years, images were manufactured that enabled a movement to present itself to others—the public at large—and images were created in which it could identify itself. The interplay of two factors explains the dynamics of this process.

On the one hand, we find a charismatic movement is dependent upon producing a press echo so that it does not disintegrate, and it therefore presents itself in a way that will have an impact on the media—with the theatrical element increasingly gaining the upper hand over the years. On the other hand, we find a press that, in order to assert itself in a landscape increasingly determined by competition, is dependent upon dramatic reports and is therefore interested in radical material. However, by its very definition the "radical" takes an axe to his own roots. Today this applies especially to those who most closely approach the current cliché of fundamentalism as that of the opponent posing a threat to what is one's own. Thus a mutually reinforcing connection is established, which, with Kaplan, ultimately resulted in the movement coming more and more to resemble existing images of Islam.

It would be possible to take this interplay less seriously if it were not so dangerous: violent conflicts could very easily arise between religions and cultures. However, their causes do not lie in the essential incompatibility of cultures or religions, but in the dynamics of producing something radically different.

*Appendix: Press Review of November 15, 1992 (Figure 6)*

## THE ISLAMIC STATE OF BLACK VOICE (MEHMET AKTAN, BONN)

Cemalettin Kaplan, a resident of Cologne who has become known as the "Voice of Darkness," has given the following statement on the "Islam Federal Republic" (FID) of which he is the founder: "I am the emir of this state. Our basic law is the Qur'an; our legal system is the *seriat*; our flag is the green flag of the prophet. The capital is Istanbul. The calendar is the *hegira*; our script is the qur'anic alphabet. Our army is all Muslims." Cemalettin Kaplan was very assertive in his remarks about the state. The following are some of the more striking remarks:

He who says the government is entirely of the people is an unbeliever.

The training of our people takes place in the Qur'an school, the dervish convent and in the barracks.

Hands that can slide the *Tespah* [prayer beads] can also pull the trigger.

We will solve the Kurdish problem by all uniting on the Qur'an.

We will send the 27 university rectors statements and brochures of our views.

Do not believe Erbakan.

In Islam one does not join a party.

## BAN ON SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

Kaplan, whose Islamic school was closed by German authorities two years ago, has been supporting the campaign connected with the death sentence on Salman Rushdie since 1989. In actual fact he is forbidden to engage in political activities; however, it is said that his lawyers transfer the 500 DM fine for each of the hoec's frequent violations of the ban. As he is not granted a visa, he is not able to enter France or Saudi Arabia. He lives in Cologne and is working for the destruction of the secular democratic system in Turkey.

## INVESTIGATION CONCERNING "BLACK VOICE"

The Chief Prosecutor of the Ankara State Security Court, Nusret Demiral, has started enquiries in connection with the ceremonies against the secular republic and Atatürk, which was organized by Cemalettin Kaplan, known as "Voice of Darkness," and his pupils.

Demiral requested that the team of "32. Tag" [television program by Mehmet Ali Birand] hand over the cassettes of the transmission of the celebration so that extensive investigations can be carried out.

## ERBAKAN: PARTICIPATION IN THE CEREMONY

*The elected representatives of the HEP [Halkın Emekçi Partisi: Workers' Party of the*

*People, the Kurdish Party] did not, however, take part in the commemorative celebrations for Atatürk.*

Ankara. *Millyet*. The Chairman of the Refah Party, Necmettin Erbakan, took part in the event to commemorate the 54th anniversary of Atatürk's death held yesterday at the Anıtkabir, whereas the elected representatives of the HEP did not come. Erbakan, who was seen arriving at the Anıtkabir very early, immediately after the General Secretary of the MÇP, Alparslan Türkeş, apparently did not attend the receptions prior to the ceremony. Questioned by journalists, Erbakan said that he had also taken part in the celebrations last year on the 10th November and commented: "In fact you can see that we have come here before everybody else." Deniz Baykal and Bülent Ecevit arrived late at the celebrations; the elected representatives of the HEP did not take part at all.

## A MESSAGE TO BLACK VOICE (SABAH)

In a religious state organized according to the rules of the Sharia of the Islamic religion there is no place for Man; Man is a slave. We demanded the republic, we became people, we acquired the status of people. Our desire is to choose those who govern us ourselves; Cemalettin Kaplan, however, will not vote on our behalf. We must therefore protect secularism and the constitution.

Even if they should become established in elections, the opinions of the *seriatç*, their peculiarities and aims are incompatible with democracy; even when they embrace democracy, the theocracy and the *seriat* are totalitarian orders like fascism, because they are incompatible with human rights. Even if they accept a series of elements on formal grounds, they are still not democratic in principle. But nobody should enjoy such matters. Nobody should expect that we will obtain a replacement for democracy and republic. Nobody should besmear the republic. The only destination for he who denies this is darkness.

## VOICE OF DARKNESS: A SINISTER FESTIVAL

In a fax message from Germany directed at the Turkish newspapers, the "Voice of Darkness," Cemalettin Kaplan, has been disparaging the celebrations of the republic and spreading nonsense: "This is a black day for every single Muslim." In the publication distributed by the Association of Islamic Communities under the title: "What kind of festivals are these?" the national holidays such as 23 April, 19 May, and 29 October are derided. In the publication it is claimed that Muslims who attend the celebrations are straying from the faith and the law. The publication says: "If you have actually taken part in these celebrations, then discard your faith immediately and do penance" (30.10.92 *Hürriyet*).



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and a section from Niklas Luhmann's monumental *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (*Society as a Social System*).

This volume has grown out of two international workshops, held at the Institut Néerlandais, Paris, in December 1997 and at the Chateau de la Breesche in September 1998. Like the conference *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*, which took place in Amsterdam in July 1994 and led to a volume published by Stanford University Press in 1997, the present project was a joint venture of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the UCLA Paris Program in Critical Theory. Helen Tartar, Joost Bolten, and Kiven Strohm assisted us wonderfully during the final stages of the preparation of the manuscript of this book. We would like to thank Prof. dr. P. W. M. de Meijer, former rector magnificus of the University of Amsterdam, Lionel Veer, the former Director of the Institut Néerlandais, and Peter Blok, the head of the International Office of the University of Amsterdam, for their generous support and their advice about the daily organization of the Paris workshop. Also, we are extremely grateful for the support and hospitality, in 1998 as in 1994, of Dr. Behling of the Borchardt Foundation, for making it possible to work through difficult issues in ideal circumstances.

Amsterdam/Los Angeles, Summer 2000

Hent de Vries

Samuel Weber

## Table of Contents

<i>Contributors</i>	xiii
PART I. INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS	
In Media Res: Global Religion, Public Spheres, and the Task of Contemporary Comparative Religious Studies	3
<i>Hent de Vries</i>	
Religion, Repetition, Media	43
<i>Samuel Weber</i>	
"Above All, No Journalists!"	56
<i>Jacques Derrida</i>	
Theory on TV: "After-Thoughts"	94
<i>Laurence A. Rickels and Samuel Weber</i>	
The Deconstruction of Christianity	112
<i>Jean-Luc Nancy</i>	
Reading a Modern Classic: W. C. Smith's <i>The Meaning and End of Religion</i>	131
<i>Talal Asad</i>	
PART II. SEEING AND BELIEVING: HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Mimesis and the Ban on Graven Images	151
<i>Gerrit Koch</i>	

In the Workshop of Equivalences: Translation, Institutions, and Media in the Jesuit Re-Formation of China <i>Hawn Saussy</i>	163
Images of Iron: Ignatius of Loyola and Joyce <i>Burcht Pranger</i>	182
Luther with McLuhan <i>Manfred Schneider</i>	198
Tele-vision: Between Blind Trust and Perceptual Faith <i>Jenny Staman</i>	216
"The Catholicism of Cinema": Gilles Deleuze on Image and Belief <i>Paola Marrati</i>	227
Mission Impossible: Postcards, Pictures, and Parasites <i>Mieke Bal</i>	241
PART III. LOCAL RITES, GLOBAL MEDIA: CRITICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES	
<i>Kiblat</i> and the Mediatric Jew <i>James T. Siegel</i>	271
The Cassowary Will (Not) Be Photographed: The "Primitive," the "Japanese," and the Elusive "Sacred" (Aru, Southeast Moluccas) <i>Patricia Spyer</i>	304
A Remaking of Hinduism?: or, Taking the Mickey Out of Vålmiiki <i>Julius Lipner</i>	320
Mirror Image: Layered Narratives in Photographic and Televised Mediations of Ise's Shikinen Sengū <i>Rosemarie Bernard</i>	339
Reconciliation Without Justice <i>Mahmood Mamdani</i>	376
Channel-Surfing: Media, Mediumship, and Stare Authority in the María Lionza Possession Cult (Venezuela) <i>Rafael Sánchez</i>	388

Production of Fundamentalism: On the Dynamics of Producing the Radically Different <i>Werner Schifflauer</i>	435
Filmic Judgement and Cultural Critique: The Work of Art, Ethics, and Religion in Iranian Cinema <i>Michael M. J. Fischer</i>	496
The Aboriginal Medium: Negotiating the Caesura of Exchange <i>Andrew McNamara</i>	487
Before the Law: Reading the Ywendumu Doors with Eric Michaels <i>Rex Butler</i>	514
PART IV. TWO DOCUMENTS	
The Religious Medium <i>Theodor W. Adorno</i>	531
Morality and the Secrets of Religion <i>Niklas Luhmann</i>	555
Notes	569