
Orientalization Practices in Mainstream Turkish Foreign News Coverage

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Abstract

This study explores the content, causes and results of Orientalization practices in mainstream Turkish foreign reporting. The analysis is made of the “World” pages of the two national newspapers (Hürriyet and Habertürk), which can be considered the mainstream Turkish media. Limiting the analysis to the field of journalism, news articles published between May 5 - June 5, 2010 are analyzed. Orientalism theories and the cultural strategies of media provide the basis of analysis employed in this study. Foreign coverage in the given articles provides the samples of Orientalization discourse and practices in mainstream Turkish media. This study suggests that Orientalist perspectives are quite common in ‘foreign coverage’ in the Turkish media. Foreign news reports clearly exhibit the Orientalization ‘reflex’, which is one of the most visible legacies of Orientalist cultural strategies.

Key Words

Orientalization, mainstream Turkish media, foreign news coverage, Hürriyet, Habertürk.

Introduction

Media sociology research takes place within three main areas: media organization, message and effect. This paper considers the “message” as fundamental and focuses on media’s representational strategies. In the field of media sociology, even though its framework has been essentially formed by the problematization of media effect, media organization and the content of media are becoming important. Therefore, the methodological perspective adopted in media effect studies can also be observed in the direction and framework of studies of the content and organization. Research in media sociology has to manifest its methodological perspective within the context of the “media effect” in the interests of clarity. In this study, which depends on newspaper articles, it is assumed that, contrary to the “direct effect theory”, media do not impose opinions and attitudes on individuals, groups and communities, as was suggested by research based on “uses and gratifications”, but rather

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individuals get involved with media through their identity, personality, social, political, and economic status, as well as through their prior expectations. People can participate in many different communication processes in daily life while not submitting to the message even though they are exposed to it. While perceiving the message, they can handle many other social practices as well. They perceive it not in isolation but in a context. They are not passive consumers of the message. As presented in social learning theory, media has a socializing role, and as it is described in cultivation theory, those who are in contact with media can gradually make the media reality supplant the social reality, and some situations can occur in which the media symbols supplant the real world.

Discussing Orientalization practices in Turkish foreign coverage means admitting the existence of a sociological reality called “Turkish media” (or Turkish press). It should be stated at once that in this study, the term “Turkish media” refers to mass media in the Turkish language. Turkish media incorporate different assumptions, habits, styles, traditions, vocational knowledge and cultures. However, the domain of social reality referred to as “Turkish media” has a unique historical and sociological reality that can be conveniently perceived as the ideal type by the modernization ideology in Turkey. The practices of media that

developed during the modernization process of Turkey contributed to the formation of a common vocational cultural realm along with different assumptions, habits and styles. Members of the new media generation that socialize within the aforementioned cultural realm maintain their vocational activities by permuting the features unique to the Turkish press. Another important notion in this article is that of the “mainstream media.” Nico Carpentier indicates that alternative media, in contrast to mainstream media, organize in a way that is sharing, open to real participation and usually small-scaled. They offer alternatives to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives outside of the market and state, give importance to local information, and try to give a voice to civil society by being non-hierarchical.¹ These features that are presented as characteristic of alternative media offer some perspectives on the mainstream media as well. The notion of “mainstream media” is mostly used for describing “manipulative”, “ideological”, “monolithic” and “strict” media in recent critical media research.² However, these features aren’t adequate in themselves to describe the “mainstream media”, inasmuch as, along with its close relationship with the formal ideology, factors such as media circulation, its social influence, political clout, economic power and the communication technologies. Through

mass circulation, media organizations that are in accordance with formal ideology have an effect on the political, economical and social agenda, delivering their message through widely-used mass media (newspaper, television etc.) and can be categorized as “mainstream media”.

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Other concepts essential to this study are “Orient” and “Orientalization”. According to Edward Said, the Orient is the combination of symbolic images that the West fictionalizes to build up its own being and legitimacy. The Orient is the “founding other”, which has been avoided as taboo and particularly undesirable to be in. Orientalization is the process of othering. Orientalization might be described as the act of imprisoning within the borders of the Orient. Orientalization is the effort of making each occasion in which “cultural selves” that are identified with the Orient belong to the Orient. In this study, the Orientalization practices in mainstream Turkish foreign reporting, content and causes, and the results of these practices, will be analyzed, though this analysis will be limited to the field of journalism,

based on analysis of the “World” pages of two national newspapers among the mainstream Turkish media (*Hürriyet* and *Habertürk*). Some articles, published between May 5 - June 5, 2010, are analyzed. Their readings are mainly shaped by Orientalism theories and the cultural strategies of media.

Cultural Strategies in Media and Orientalism

The “Orient representation” that can be observed in Western cultural life after the Renaissance became institutionalized as the field of Orientalism. Orientalism has had an immense influence on the dominant forms of representation of the Orient. Edward Said views Orientalism as an academic tradition as well as a thinking style which depends on a strict distinction between the Orient and the Occidental, marginalizing the Orient, and as a Western knowledge system that aims to impose its authority on and rebuild the Orient.³ According to Yücel Bulut, Orientalism might be defined as “the images of the West about the East or the collective imagination related to the East.”⁴ Byran S. Turner associates Orientalism with the Western heritage that regards the East as an entity that is stable, hardwired, disinclined to social change, devoid of modernization, deprived of middle class bourgeois culture and missing a social community.⁵ Edmund Burke III and David Prochaska

suggest that the Orientalism process is a discursive practice that defines the view of the current Western world, especially of the Middle East, and which comprises both culture and power.⁶ Mahmut Mutman suggests that Orientalism “might be called the “style” or “discourse” that disguises the Western imperial agenda.”⁷ As Orientalism is presented as a “Western” experience, how could this notion be useful in analyzing Orientalization practices within mainstream Turkish journalism? Studies of the relationship between Orientalism and Turkey have mostly focused on the image of Turkey in Orientalist thought or knowledge, problematized how Turkey is objectified and Orientalized⁸, or analyzed the progress of Orientalist thought, knowledge or art in Turkey.⁹ Moreover, it has recently also become possible to encounter studies based on Turks’ capacity to generate Orientalism. These studies mainly fall into two categories. The studies that are in the first category mostly depend on Turks’ Orientalizing themselves, and make analyses based on the notions of self-Orientalism or auto-Orientalism. In these analyses, as in that of Matthew Gumpert, it is claimed that Turks Orientalize themselves in a cultural context in which “Orientalism is recalled or reproduced”¹⁰ or, as in the analysis of Hilmi Yavuz, “by transferring from the West at a partial level and so making themselves Orientalized”.¹¹ In spite of the style and genre resemblances, studies

in the second category, which may arise out of the first category in respect of content, have begun to be based on the capacity of Turks to Orientalize their own East. This study falls within that second category and tries to analyze the style in which mainstream Turkish journalism discovers its own East and employs its own Orientalization practices. At that point if the question is revisited, how meaningful would the attempt to posit a relationship between “Turkish media” and “Orientalism” be? If the occidentalization process that Turkey has gone through had not happened, and if the media had not come to the forefront as one of the most important actors in this process, the aforementioned attempt would not be meaningful. In other words, Turkey’s adopting the ideal of reaching a Western level of modernization and the media’s being one of the leading actors in this process make it meaningful to mention Orientalist representation in the mainstream Turkish media. Another reason for problematizing the relationship between media and Orientalism in Turkey can be found in discussions regarding the sources of Orientalism. Some significant Orientalism analyses made in the field of cultural studies, especially after the 1980s, suggest that Orientalism may not be just a Western phenomenon, reality or discourse.

Edward Said, even though he tried to assess the effect of Orientalism on

the elite culture “outside of the West”, regards Orientalism as a Western idea, institution and discourse. For Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, who discusses the topic from the point of view of “reverse Orientalism”, Orientalism also exists in a social context outside of the West within historical myths and identities built around Orientalist images and associated with being ashamed of one’s own history and community.¹² Ussama Makdisi states that “in the era of West-centered modernization every country builds its own Orient.”¹³ This process, to Milika Bakic-Hayden, operates as a “regenerating model of the original dualism on which Orientalism was based, producing the “hierarchy of Orients” and “constantly rising Orientalism”. In this context, Asia is more “Oriental” or more “other” than Eastern Europe. This sort of grading is reproduced within Eastern Europe, with the Balkans being perceived as the most “Eastern”; similarly, new hierarchies were established in the Balkans themselves.¹⁴ In this “hierarchy of Orients” Turks, for instance, could be “othered” by virtue of their features being perceived as “Oriental” by Europeans.¹⁵ According to the approaches encountered, each community makes its existence

meaningful by othering the one that stands to its East as Oriental, so that Orientalism becomes a global notion that does not just belong to Western cultural geography and history. At this point, Orientalism turns into an epistemological device describable by terms such as “Oriental Orientalism”¹⁶, which Yuko Kikuchi suggested while discussing the “Japanese-style Orientalism” that developed through antagonism towards Korea. Nadem Al-Betar’s “Arabic Orientalism”¹⁷ and Arif Dirlik’s “Easterners’ Orientalism”¹⁸

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are other examples of such notions. This discussion of the forms of Orientalism outside of the West does certainly not mean that Orientalism has lost its influence in the West or that its

reflections in Western popular culture have disappeared, but aims to show the theoretical possibilities of Orientalism reaching beyond the West.¹⁹

During the Turkish modernization process, the media adopted three separate but related cultural strategies. The first one is Occidentalism. The Republic formally endorsed the project of keeping up with the pace of the West that began with the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. During this post-republic modernization period, the media was thought to be the

main tool of “social enlightenment”. Certain duties such as “integration”, “moral reformation” and “dismissal of those who came from abroad” were assigned to the media in *Kararname-i Âlî* in 1867. Similar duties were also adopted by the Republic and assigned to the contemporary media.²⁰ Thus, during both periods, those who claimed to be enlightened adopted the mission of “enlightening the crowd by keeping them unified” and this mission became one of the main dynamics of media activities of the time. The Enlightenment culture²¹ gives an ontological existence to the modern-day media, changing language from being a “gift from God” to a “communication tool”, also allowing the concentrating of cultural capital in the direction of Enlightenment. The mainstream Turkish media, which found its own “Enlightenment ideal” in the revolution of the Republic, perceived the political ethics initiated by Kemalism as a benefit, and for this reason, while conducting its activities in accordance with Kemalist power and ideology, assumed that the aforementioned ideology would play an important role in establishing constitutionalism. In this context, the first cultural strategy employed by mainstream Turkish media was to show an ideal image of Western modernization in the fields of politics, community, culture, art, thought and daily life. Occidentalism as defined by Şerif Mardin as “an approach, which

started in the Ottoman Empire and received other forms in the Republic of Turkey, which viewed Western Europe’s social and philosophical unity as a target to be reached”²², was based on the goal of refining traditional values and removing bigotry and ignorance through the help of an enlightening soul.²³ Though the ruling elites of the Republican era criticized “over-westernization”²⁴, many Occidental ideals were adopted and had an important effect on the formation of some cultural policies. Media assumed an important role in the formation and conveyance of these cultural policies.

The second cultural strategy that is presented in the mainstream media is based on the West’s being othered, in other words its being Occidental. Here appear concepts like “other West”, “enemy West”, “and West that needs to hear the voice of Turks”. Some researchers, who regard the arising of Occidental and Occidentalism in the same place as a contradiction, either ignore this situation or choose to perceive one as a fact and the other as cyclical. Yet, as Meltem Ahıska expresses, Europe becomes “both an object of desire and a source of disappointment for Turkish national identity”, and this generates anti-West Occidentalism in a “long and nervous process.”²⁵ As Said Faiq presented in the Arabic world²⁶ and Xiaomei Chen presented in China, Occidentalism also gains currency as a prolongation of power relationships

just as does Orientalism, functioning especially as a means of “internal dominance.”²⁷ During this process, the main medium in which Occidentalism was reproduced and cycled was mass media, and while the media was depicting the “ideal West”, it was emphasizing “extremeness” and “Turkish antagonism” towards the West and picturing it as an enemy to be defeated at the same time. This tension, signs of which can be discerned in the texts written by the New Ottomans in many literary works, from Ahmet Mithat to the culture-technology arguments of the Second Constitutionalism or to the founding texts of the Republic, is reflected in the content of news, entertainment, and advertisement through a challenging rhetoric popularized by means of media.

The third strategy apparent in mainstream Turkish media is the Orientalized representation of Eastern Turkey. This, as mentioned above, legitimizes the connection built between “Turkish media” and “Orientalism”. Mainstream Turkish media is the primary medium in which Orientalism is produced. This so-called Orientalization activity mainly tries to present the cultural legitimacy and superiority of Turkish modernization. The most systematic and effective cultural representation of the East in Turkey, as expressed by Hasan Bülent Kahraman, is “internalized Orientalism”, an Orientalist practice feeding on the consciousness of being

Turkish. Internalized Orientalism is the process in which a subject calls upon a Western Orientalist perspective while rendering judgment on the community he was born in and the conditions that made him.²⁸ This process, according to Sabri Ateş, comes along with “Turkish or Turkey-style Orientalism”.²⁹ Turkish style Orientalism is firstly based on the activity of creating an “imaginary East”, and then generating one’s own identity by othering it. The main object of the “Orientalization” strategies that Maqdisi said were developing collaterally with Ottoman modernization in Turkey were the communities considered not modernized enough. Mahmut Mutman states that being an easterner or being in the East cannot be accepted as a guarantee of being out of or distinct from the Orientalist understanding, because the Oriental is damaged by representation.³⁰

Apart from this representation or the “representation crisis” referring to imaginary Westernization fictions, “Turkish style Orientalism arising during this period comes into existence by feeding above all on dualities such as “West-East”, “modernization-tradition” and “ancient-new, which had a practical role, purposefully providing a socio-political field regarding the psychological necessities of being Western and modern. East is identified with poverty, underdevelopment, traditionalism, violence and terror. The critical approach

feeds on the desire to domesticate. This desire especially appears in the face of “Kurdish” and “Arabian” social reality; in the meantime the borders of this desire merge with the borders of the fear of that same reality. The “advanced”, “hardworking”, “superior”, “devoted to its values” and “clear” Turkish image generates the orientalizing activities that come along with Turkish style Orientalism. At this point, the question should be asked: around which images or in which fields is the Orientalist envisagement in mainstream Turkish media encountered?

Undoubtedly, it isn't easy to give an inclusive and lucid answer to this question. However, it is possible to study the Orientalist overtones in Turkish media

of images such as “Kurdish”, “Arab”, “moral laws”, “woman”, “violence”, and “terror”. Most of the studies conducted on the media/Orientalism relationship are carried out through similar themes and images.³¹ The analysis of Orientalist content and orientalizing practices can be done through these themes, while it may also be done by focusing on the different media technologies, types and fields of work. The relationship between the media channels such as television, newspaper, radio, and cinema, internet, etc. in Turkey can be analyzed in this

framework. Orientalism practices, the representations of the East that are encountered in reality shows, soap operas, local movies and the serials, and the Orientalism that is produced in advertisement and news texts, are also points of analysis. This reading makes it possible to present the differences between mass communication channels and the types of media activities. However, the studies that problematize the relationship between media and Orientalism don't underline the differences between occupational culture

and convention in the media field, and make general readings without paying specific attention to the divisions that affect the production of media, such

as media-press, advertisement-news, advertisement-entertainment, news-comment, etc. In the readings made for this study, the news of finance and politics, foreign news, tabloid or popular culture news are not taken into consideration. This situation could make the relation between the researcher and the object of the research problematic and could lead to reductionist results. Within this aspect, this study makes an effort to analyze the orientalizing practices through the sampling of “foreign coverage” which is encountered

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in recent mainstream Turkish journalism. The main assumption of this study is that one of the fields of Orientalist contents in Turkish media most worthy of exploration is “foreign coverage”. The Orientalization “reflex”, which is shaped by Orientalist cultural strategies, could easily find a place in that field. In the following sections the Orientalist perspective and Orientalization representations in foreign coverage will be analyzed. Primarily, the analysis will focus on the relationship between foreign coverage and Orientalization, then on its representations.

Foreign News Coverage and Orientalization

Ibrahim Al Dakuki’s study of the Turks’ and Arabs’ opinions of each other reveals the negative images Turks have of Arabs. He states that these are: that Arabs abuse the Islamic religion to the detriment of Turkey’s national security, intervene in Turkey’s domestic affairs, put forth claims on the territorial waters of Turkey, lay eyes on Turkey’s lands, provoke Kurds to seek autonomy, are against Turkey and Turks, and abuse Turkish minorities in Arab lands.³² These seven points can be mainly observed in the field of foreign coverage, and these images appear mostly in “foreign news.” Meanwhile, there is no media analysis of representations of the East in the

foreign news or of the kinds of images reproduced.

However, there is an obvious parallelism between the production of foreign news and Orientalism. Both try to carry information about the external to those who are internal and maintain their activities by depending on essentialist internal - external discrimination. Foreign coverage turns external reality - from the daily lives of the outsiders to economical, political, social and cultural lives, from natural disasters to wars, from crisis to migration - into information. Undoubtedly, the people who prepare foreign news don’t just report the events experienced in this process, but at the same time they represent and translate the events within the context of their own interests and limits.³³

Foreign coverage presents the news along with the potential direct or indirect effect it will make on the life of the reader, since it is thought that the externality of the news brings the need to internalize it. The main legitimization strategy in this internalization activity is providing liaison between the foreign news and the lives of the “internal subject”. In this process, the “threats and opportunities” that the reader is subjected to as a nation-state citizen are central. News is prepared around “we” and “they” (collaterally “the good” and “the bad”) categories. An important feature of the images reproduced at that point is that the facts are never presented

in the context of their own historical conditions, but instead are just presented as mere facts. Thus, these so-called facts become the basis for generalization, and partialities, originalities, differences, dilemmas and changes can be just ignored. Many journalists, even though they instinctively question the relation of the event to themselves and the society they live in when they decide whether an event is news or not,³⁴ do this more often in the case of “foreign news”. This situation also feeds on the generally valid assumption that foreign news is read less in Turkey.³⁵ For this reason, the content in “foreign news” could fall behind the possible effects ascribed to the event, and there may be an important gap between the representation of the fact and the fact itself. In the news from Northern Iraq, the potential effects of the event on Turcomans are discussed before its meaning and costs for the direct participants in the event. In the news story of the decline of national income in Armenia, its causes or the people involved are not mentioned, but many comments are made regarding its effects on Turkey-Armenia relations and on Armenians living in Turkey; even the historical controversies and advantages of Turkey are in the news text. This constitutes a violation of the “5 Ws and 1 H rule”, and it seems there is no need for cause-effect analysis.

This obvious effort to relate the foreign news to the lives of the readers

is the result of the desire to make it attractive. This also has the result of foreign news’ being tabloidized. In Turkish foreign news the texts are either made entertaining or foreign events thought to be entertaining are covered. Tabloid culture in the media has started to affect foreign coverage in Turkey, which has begun to deal with the private lives of famous figures.³⁶ This is not only within foreign coverage, as this “tabloidizing” causes more and more production of stereotypes and induces exoticization, marginalization and the othering of cultural realities assumed to be outer or strange. Later in this paper, the forms of this process will also be mentioned. The correlation strategy of foreign coverage makes context supersede text, and individual content is sacrificed for overall inferences. However, this situation doesn’t actually mean that in foreign coverage historical and structural analyses are consulted. As a matter of fact, in their classic article entitled “The Structure of Foreign News”, Johann Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge state that reporters see and present events as human practice, not as a product of social power or structure. They suggest that this approach derives from a cultural idealism in which it is believed that the human is “master of his own destiny and events emerge as a result of free human will”.³⁷ Yet reporters believe that news should be about individuals, not about groups or social processes,³⁸

and problematize individual authority, not fundamental power. However, this doesn't prevent generalizations about the content, causes and effects of the events in question. In this process, news can exist in relation to either the needs of the institution constructing the news or the personal choices of the reporter, either the importance of the event or the demand of the news' source.³⁹

Undoubtedly, it is an essentialist approach to assume that mainstream Turkish foreign coverage embodies a single Oriental imagination. Moreover, the existence of various Oriental representations in foreign coverage is not an obstacle to reveal the Oriental representations. However, emphasizing the importance of Oriental perspectives in mainstream Turkish foreign coverage doesn't mean the same thing as stating that "Turkish or Turkey-style Orientalism" is a "consciousness and reflection style" functioning as a "dominant perspective" when considering what is to the east of Turkey.⁴⁰ Though there may be some cases when Oriental representations sometimes function as the "dominant perspective" in Turkish media, it should be stated that this situation could change with new strategies and tactics; new cultural strategies can be put into practice partially or as a whole in accordance with Michel de Certeau's suggestions. This study will focus on Orientalization reflexes developed by foreign coverage in mainstream Turkish

journalism. Thus, a series of foreign news (world news) stories with Oriental representation power will be analyzed and signs of Orientalization reflexes will be discerned. The news articles in question are gathered from two active and high-circulation Turkish national newspapers' "World" pages between May 5 - June 5, 2010. *Habertürk* and *Hürriyet* newspapers, which are funded by separate capital, are thought to be representative of mainstream Turkish media. During the analysis period of the newspapers, firstly all the news from the determined course and dates are reviewed and from among them news associated with the "Orient" image in terms of geography and/or culture and which contain Oriental images through the body, titles or visual materials are listed. After reviewing all the news items, they are classified, and according to this classification, news items that are thought to have high symbolic power and which exemplify various Orientalization practices are selected and examined. Columns in "World" pages are not included; research is just confined to the news stories. In this study, the newspapers' printed copies are used for analysis. The first reason for this is the desire to see the analyzed news' location in the page, the shape of the visual item (or items) supporting the news text and the contextual and formal features related to their design. The second reason is that the news in the printed version is not found in the same form in their

digital version, and sometimes some news can be removed from publication. Besides, it is important to state that especially “minor news” often does not occur in online copies of the newspapers, but these “minor news” items have the utmost importance for this study. This inadequately processed news published without signature may directly reflect the publisher’s perspective. Another point to be underlined is that it is not the purpose of this study to find the quantitative rate of the Orientalization practices in foreign coverage. Instead, it focuses on how Orientalization practices are reflected in the newspapers’ foreign news. In this study, 191 different sources of news that are thought to include Oriental images are determined; they can be found in the list given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. It is apparent that some of the news which is subject to a critical reading in terms of “Orientalization performances” is generally related to “foreign politics”, some related to “daily life” and among the foreign politics news, “violence”, “terrorism”, actual political figures and the Middle East come to the fore; among the daily life news, “reaction” and “burqa” are frequent. The distinction between the “daily-life news” and “foreign politics news” is an artificial border, which helps us understand the reality as in the “ideal-type”, Max Weber suggested. Yet, news collected around the themes of violence, terrorism, reaction, burqa, the Middle East, etc. can be placed in both “foreign

politics” and “daily life” news. In this context, the news in question will be analyzed around these areas and themes and through those high in representative quality.

Examples of Orientalization in the World News

Among the news examined, terrorism-themed and violence-themed news is remarkably prominent in terms of Orientalization performances. The construct and presentation of both violence- and terrorism-themed news provides a series of images that cannot be analyzed. For instance, the news item entitled “The New Enemy of the USA “Jihad Janes””, talks about “the new national security strategy” of the USA, and states that the notion of threat has changed for the USA. In the news, one is reminded that the primary goal of the security strategy which George W. Bush declared after September 11 was to direct operations primarily towards the al-Qaeda terrorist organization and that the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were carried out as part of this strategy, and it is indicated that the new president Obama distances himself from the ex-president with the strategies he applies. In the news given under the subtitle “Target is Internal Danger”, it is implied that actually the threat is “terrorists born and raised in the USA”. In order to embody the notion of “terrorist born

and raised in the USA”, “Muslim Major Nidal Hasan, who has killed 13 soldiers” and “American Muslim woman, Coleen LaRose, who uses ‘Jihad Jane’ as a nickname on the internet and enlists militants for religious organizations” are held up as examples. In the news it is stated that these two specific examples having “impact on Obama’s focusing on internal threats in his new strategy” is “speculated”, though no data is submitted regarding the source of this speculation. Moreover, in the same news, under the subtitle “New York Impact”, the example of Pakistani Muslim

Faizal Shahza, who has lived in the USA for many years and attempted to blow up a car in New York, is given as a reinforcing example.

In the body of the news, no first hand reference, neither written nor verbal, is given regarding “the new national security strategy”; under the subtitle “renewed once in four years” a “strategy document” is referred to, and it is declared that in this strategy document the notions of “global war against terrorism” and “Islamist Extremism” are not mentioned. Despite this information, the overall construct of the news reflects “global war against terrorism” images and the perception of threat, where terrorism is associated with Islamic properties.⁴¹ Similar news can

be found under the title of “Retaliation to Obama’s Batting Order” about an American citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, and his statements involving the message “Muslim soldiers in the American Army murdering other American soldiers on the way to Iraq and Afghanistan”. Awlaki, who is said to have connections with al-Qaeda in Yemen and whose words are presented as “retaliation”, is declared to be both a political figure calling for terrorism and an American Muslim scholar.⁴² On the same day the same news is given in *Habertürk* under

the title of “Yemeni Imam threatens USA”, in which it is stated that “al-Awlaki, American Citizen Yemeni Imam, calls for attacks on American soldiers and citizens”.⁴³ Similarly, news entitled “Eyes

on Islam Seminar in Germany” is constructed in such a way as to evoke the “Muslim Terrorist” figure, and the concern about the “Islamic Threat” is conveyed through the words of Manfred Munck, deputy chief at the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Hamburg. Focusing on the “notion of threat” produced by the Office, the body of the news about the “controversial seminar” states that the meeting, which will last for three days, will be “followed carefully” during this period. Here,

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negative public opinion regarding the meeting is encouraged by the news, which explains that the seminar will be followed intently; also it is effectively criminalized, though there is no action nor any record of crime yet. The only basis for this coloring of the news is Manfred Murck's concern about "some speakers" attending the meeting being radical. People who write this news simply reproduce this discourse of "threat".⁴⁴ Similar news is entitled "Campaign annoying Muslims".⁴⁵ The news is about the reaction of Muslims to an "advertisement against Islam" and it is reported that posters on which is written "Do you want to quit Islam?" hung on about 30 buses direct people to the website "RefugeFromIslam.com". Conspicuously, people "who want to quit Islam" are represented as people "who need help" and the posters are described as "aid posters". In the news the speech by Pamela Geller, the "manager of the organization" named "Stop Islamization of America", about "the fact that it is a must to evaluate this in terms of religious freedom" as well as the opinion of Fazia Ali, from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, that "the campaign creates the wrong impression that people were forced to be Muslim" and that of Robert Jackson, from the New York City Council, that "the campaign is an attack by extreme rightists on Islam" are referenced.

The news ends with an expert opinion and shares "analysts" ideas that

those posters may get reactions from "radical Muslim parties" and may "lead to terrorist attacks on the buses". It is obvious from the subtitle of the news "Is that an invitation to the terrorists?" that public perception is reinforced of a tendency towards violence as a result of the matter, instead of any actual violence. Finally, it should be stated that the same matter is mentioned in the *Hürriyet* newspaper under the title "Poster that drew Muslims' attention" and that the content of the poster, the ones who prepared it and the relevant parties' views are presented in a more simple and objective way.⁴⁶

Within the scope of news about terrorism and violence, in addition to the news of "East in the West", the Orientalization reflexes also affect news of "East in the East". For instance, the news article entitled "Attack at Council of Peace under Burqa" is about a "suicide attack" on a council in Kabul.⁴⁷ At the beginning of the news, a list of the council attendees is given and, of the attendees in question, first "clan leaders", then "county and district representatives", "members of parliament" and "non-governmental organization representatives" are mentioned. In the news, although it is said that the council of peace was held in a university, no information is given about the university where this major event took place, and instead of focusing on a particular actual institution, a place in need of the protection of 12 thousand soldiers and police is ambiguously

described and associated with rockets and 3 suicide bombers between the ages of 17 and 20, and it is announced that these suicide bombers “posing as women” were planning to blow up the bombs they carried. Though no detail is released about their clothes, the description in the news item “Taliban militants in burqa” openly states that these people hid themselves under burqas. The subtitle of the news and the photograph chosen gives us the impression that Afghani “peaceful and modern women” constitute the “most appropriate answer” to those bad heroes who present themselves in a ridiculous manner in women’s clothes. The news is accompanied with a photograph of the bombers in burqas, which seems threatening, contrasted with a photograph of some women attending the council in colorful scarves and makeup. The Afghani modern woman is not presented as an actual subject, but the photo in question is entitled “Women attend too”. Another message of the news is that all people in the district are used to - even have to get used to - such violent events, whose dates, places or reasons are purely random. As a matter of fact, in the body of the news, the message from Kharzai, the president of Afghanistan, related to the violent events is presented under the title “I’ve got used to that” and it is mentioned that Kharzai said “everybody is used to those events.” So violence is perceived as an element belonging to a certain district and

culture, and performing violent crimes is reduced to a cultural habit.

It is possible to see such news in *Habertürk* and *Hürriyet* as terrorism is restrained to specific margins and wherever it appears, it is presented as an Oriental phenomenon. Within this context, news such as “al-Qaeda Cannot Find Bomber”, “Obama Would Be Killed in Indonesia”, “New York Bomber Caught in Airplane”, “Somali Leader’s Palace is Under Compass”, “Bangkok on Fire, Rebellion Quashed”, “Massage Shoes or Movable Bomb”, “Suicide Attack on NATO Convoy”, “Time to Clean Up In Thailand”, “Wrote ‘Love with Barzani’s Daughter”, “Tortured to Death”, “Judgment like Revolution from Saudi: Girls won’t be Burned”, “Incredible Penalty for Somalian Pirates”, “Caricaturist’s House Sabotaged”, “Attack on Mosque in Pakistan”; can be shown as examples of news in which terrorism and violence are related to a “cultural essence” that is classified as pre-modern and/or anti-modern.⁴⁸ Another category of news that constitutes a meaningful whole in terms of Orientalization practices is news about Iran. Iran and the relationships it has with Turkey and the West is the subject of a lot of news in the world pages, as an image representing “the dark face of the Middle East”. It is very common to see Iran represented as “a nuclear threat”, “an image of tension in foreign politics” and “a country with a conservative life style”.

In the world news examined, there is much about “oppressive and conservative Iran management”. The news is produced in parallel with reactionary news in the world pages, and it mostly mentions the “oppressive and conservative” nature of daily life in Iran; thus Iran is being othered through the concept of being “behind the times”. This othering process can be illustrated with the help of some news examples. For instance, the news entitled “Penalty for Drivers Insulting Women” talks about forty drivers’ cars being taken away from them due to their abusive behavior towards women in Tehran, and is about “the cracking down by vice squads on teenagers in Iran”. It is also stated in the news that those cars are exhibited on a famous boulevard in Iran with anti-women-abuse banners on them. Moreover, a driver’s saying “they caught me with my girlfriend in the car and, yes, the music was a little loud” found a place in the text. Finally, some more information is given regarding the “increasing pressure on youth in Iran”.⁴⁹ News entitled “If she returns to Iran, she will be executed” discusses the Iranian lesbian actress Kiana Firuz’s asylum request in England, where she took refuge two years ago. The title conveys the message that Firuz will undoubtedly be “executed” if she returns to Iran. However, in the text this “certain” information is replaced by the sentence “Firuz’s friends claim that in case the young woman is sent to Tehran, she will

be executed”. It is stated that the reason for Firuz to be targeted by the Iranian officials is the movie *Cul de Sac*, based on her life and revealing “the secret life of Iranian lesbians”.

In the news, the support of homosexual groups in England and Iran as well as that of Iranian opponents is emphasized. It is stated that Firuz should be given asylum, with the justification that “if she is sent back to Tehran, she will be tortured and executed”. In the final part of the news text, it is stated that women identified as lesbian in Iran are sentenced to “100 lashes”, and that “women caught for the same crime four times are executed”, and thereby “violence” applied by the oppressive Iran regime is revealed.⁵⁰ Similar news with titles such as “Emancipation for 300,000 Dollars”, “Ahmedi showed mercy: The American Mountaineers’ Mothers Are Permitted”, “Two Iranian Prisoners Against French Teacher”, “Prisoner Exchange on Paris-Tehran Line”, “Murderer of Prime Minister Is Returned to Tehran”, “Sarkozy Met Him After His Return from Iran”, “The Arrested Are Surely Spies”, “Released With Bail” appear in the world pages.⁵¹ In the context of the foreign policy news, “Uranium Exchange” between Iran, Turkey and Brazil also found much space in the world pages.⁵² In these news articles, Iran is portrayed as a trouble-making Eastern country, and Turkey is

shown as a Westernized country which should concern itself with Iran on behalf of the West. There are comments regarding Turkey's "ideal location" and Turkey's new foreign policy in recent times. "Turkey's turning its face to the East and back to the West" and "paradigm shift" have started to come to the fore in the newspapers' May publications and have been the subjects of many foreign policy news articles, starting from the first week of June.⁵³ In the news studied, it is sometimes stated that Turkey has lost its impartiality towards Iran's nuclear program and has followed a pro-Iran policy. An image of "manipulated", "deceived" Turkey has been conveyed. However, it is also stated that Turkey will or must in the end realize its having been deceived, otherwise there will be the problems indicated by the news texts and titles.⁵⁴ Another attention-grabbing fact is that Turkey and Iran are portrayed as "dependent" and "subject to approval" actors, not as two independent actors located in the same area and having the capacity to enact realistic foreign policy. For instance, in the news entitled "USA: With No Approval, They Went To Tehran", when Turkey-Iran relations are the issue, the USA is presented as an approval authority. In the news text, the USA's independent status, but Turkey's and Iran's dependent status, is implied by reference to a meeting joined by teleconference technology by three unnamed US diplomats.⁵⁵ Apart

from this, we should point out that Iran is mostly represented as an easily offended "theocratic government". For example, in news about the execution of five members of a terrorist group – PJAK - in Tehran, the reason for their execution is suggested to be Iran's considering the terrorists the enemies of God.⁵⁶ At the same time, while Iran is shown as an aggressive power, on the other hand, it is evaluated as a country that is "inevitably violent", "passive" and "poor". For example, in the news entitled "Israel Delivered Submarine To Iran", the claim of Israel's deployment of three submarines armed with nuclear missiles to the coast of Iran tries to show that Iran is vulnerable, and it is stressed that "Israel can hit anywhere in Iran" and "Israel can insert Mossad agents into Iran".⁵⁷ Other news produced with a similar approach is entitled "Obama Is Hard on Ahmedi's Trail", "Ankara Is Waiting For The News About Iran from the USA" and "How Will Israel Stop Tehran?"⁵⁸ This "Iran" and "Taliban" news in the world pages is significant in terms of Orientalization practices. The Taliban is portrayed not only as an actor in pursuit of a state in a certain geography, but also as a group of people who are puritanical and symbolize the darkness of the Middle Ages. Sourced from the British *Guardian*, the news entitled "Taliban Leaders Will Be Exiled" which is about "the exile proposal" by the Afghan Government in exchange for "Taliban leaders' laying down arms"

can be considered an example. The news headline suggests not a proposal but an inevitable situation, and Taliban leaders are shown not as actors but as passive elements that have to accept the proposal offered to them at some point. It is stated that the projected proposal plan has been drafted in an international conference arranged in London, and is also expected to be discussed with Barrack Obama during his visit to Afghan President Hamid Kharzai between May 10 and 13. The news text refers to thousands of jobs available in handicrafts, notably in the field of handmade carpets, for Taliban militants described as “angry brothers”, thereby portraying the existence of the Taliban as related to unemployment; it is implied that if poor Afghans are employed, then it is possible to save them from the Taliban’s trap. Subtitles in the text reveal Orientalization steps: they are published in a different color from the prevailing colors of grey, black and white. For instance, “Thief’s Hand Cut” is in red, as if to inform readers about what the Taliban is actually doing, and it is apparently considered a necessary reminder. The news in which three people accused of robbery in the North Veziristhan region of Pakistan are tried in a court set up by the Taliban, and then have their hands cut off, reminds readers of the assumed relationship between the culture and violence. The text in which court and trial are given in quotation marks gives no factual detail and is not

supported by any file or photograph. In the news there is no photograph directly related to the story, but two men (father and son) in traditional clothes can be seen in the left corner and two military tanks deployed in the desert in the right corner.⁵⁹ Furthermore, news stories entitled “Taliban Has 8 German Militants”, “New Gas Attack From Taliban”, “Mysterious Disease In Afghanistan”, “Taliban Kills For Money”, “Operation From The Army To Taliban”, “Taliban Attacked Ahmedi Mosque” portray the Taliban not as an organization formed for a political cause but as a puritanical and harsh religious organization, and thus the religious teaching motivating the Taliban is shown as an element feeding violence.⁶⁰

Daily Life News

Apart from the foreign policy news analyzed above, other news stories illustrating Orientalization practices include daily life news in the world pages. We can state that, in this news especially, “reaction” and “reactionary” news is frequently seen; among which “burqa” news has a privileged place. Firstly let us consider the reactionary news, and then the burqa news. The reactionary news in the world pages can be described as news that is mainly about “over-religious interventions” in modern social, political, financial and cultural life. Relevant interventions are

criminalized, pushed into an Eastern and out-of-history cultural category based on the modernism-traditionalism opposition. It can be easily seen that in the news of this category, starting with Saudi Arabia and Middle Eastern countries, “religious oppression policies” are especially emphasized. For example, the news entitled “Saudi Police In Search Of Three Arab Guys On MTV” tells how the documentary *Resist The Power* on MTV is “making trouble in Saudi Arabia”. In the news it is stated that the documentary closely examines some Saudi men’s daily lives in Cidde, and that this provoked reactions from conservative people; a Facebook site was set up to foment public opinion against the documentary, and then the Saudi Religious Police went in search of the three men in the documentary. In the news, there are no details given regarding the identities of “conservatives”, “Facebook site makers” or “Saudi Religious Police” and they are represented as part of a unified conservative opposition.

In the world news section, one may often encounter a “modern individual” standing up against traditional and despotic Eastern authorities.

In the documentary, stories about three different people are told. In the first one, Aziz attempts to “secretly

meet a girl he met on Facebook in a shopping mall where only families can enter”. The second one is about Fatima and her attempt “to buy a colorful burqa in a country where black burqas are compulsory”. The last one is about Ahmet, who shows to the camera “his library full of books prohibited by the government” and “complains about oppressive government”. In the news an important detail is given, which is that, although the documentary was shown on the Arabic MTV channel, many Saudi citizens watched it on the web. The statement at the end of the news text that “this is an important test for the country, which is making an effort to reform in recent years” implies the journalist’s Orientalist perspective.⁶¹ Similar news is the one entitled “Saudi Women Wage War on Police”. The news about the “hard week” of the Saudi Arabian vice squad responsible for checking whether strict Islamic rules are observed relates that police were attacked in two different cities. Incidents are described in which “a woman walking in a park with a man not from her family is stopped by a policeman, whom they beat to death”, and “a woman seen with a man in a public place opened fire on the vice squad’s car”, followed by praise for the women’s struggle for freedom against the Saudi Arabian vice squad. While referencing local media, no specific information is given about the identities of the perpetrators nor any

reasons for the incidents, yet an image of “conscious modern women” rebelling against Eastern despots applying strict rules is obviously created by this news.⁶²

In the world news section, one may often encounter a “modern individual” standing up against traditional and despotic Eastern authorities. In this sense, such news as “female rebellion against compulsory headscarves”, “Abu Dhabi opposition to “Sex and the City””, “liberal journalist pressured to resign”, “he became the unwanted man in Pakistan”, and so forth evoke many elements that associate cultural and social realities with the Orient.⁶³ One of the most common types of reactionary news is burqa news. Burqa bans, which seasonally occupy the agenda in Europe, are among the most frequently discussed themes in the world news during the period of this analysis. However, the burqa’s place in the world news is not limited to these burqa ban discussions. The burqa is also discussed as a cultural symbol and marginalized as an Oriental image. The first item of news to be analyzed below is about burqa ban discussions and the second one is about the image of the burqa as a cultural symbol. The news entitled “From Sarko to Parliament: Ban the Burqa”, conveys important clues to Orientalization practices. This news, with its reference to “French media” without giving the name of a specific media agency, refers to French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s will to bring to the agenda “immediate

approval of the resolution of burqa ban in public places in the parliament”. News that draws attention to the “complaint” and determination of Nicholas Sarkozy is reinforced by two sub-titles. The first news, entitled “He will lock up his wife at home”, quotes Bin Salih Ibrahim, whose wife, Amel Mamouri, may have to pay a 500 Euro fine for entering the post office in a burqa. The news is organized in such a way as to evoke an eastern burqa-wearing imprisoned woman dependent on her husband, and concentrates on the decision of the “hopeless husband” about “his wife’s going out”. However, by including in the story “She will never leave home again. There is nothing I can do about it”, the “hopeless husband’ image is reinforced, and in the title of the news the tyrannical Eastern man stereotype is invoked.

The second sub-title, next to this anonymous news, seems to be emphasizing the oppositional perspective of the secretary of Internal Affairs in Germany, Thomaz de Maiziere. However, Maiziere’s opposition to this ban is ascribed to the fact that only 100 women wear the burqa in Germany and it simply suggests its being “excusable”. Once again, by emphasizing the prevailing opinion that there should be more serious problems discussed in an Islam Conference conducted by Maiziere, Islam’s capacity to create problems is recalled. It should also be stated that, while a picture of a woman wearing a black burqa constitutes 40%

of the place reserved for this particular news, a picture of Sarkozy straightening his tie is placed on the left corner of the news.⁶⁴ The other news entitled “Sydney talks about the robbery in burqa” that tells of a robbery by an “armed man wearing a burqa”, is an example of how the burqa, a cultural symbol, is marginalized in the world news. There is no specific information concerning this incident, which is alleged to be the event of the day, and there is no concrete information about the amount of the robbery, time of the robbery, the crime scene or actors in the crime. The news reports that the “poor

courier” “handed over the bag full of money” to the armed man in the burqa, and it amplifies the cultural aspect of the image of the crime.

In this news story about the robbery in Australia, the word “burqa” occurs three times as often as the word “robbery”, an indication of the Orientalist bias in the world-news pages. Obviously what is emphasized in the text is not so much a crime committed by a man as a crime committed by a man wearing a burqa. This situation can be best understood with the help of the last sentence of the news: “It is reported that Muslim women in Australia usually wear a head scarf and that the number of the women wearing a burqa is quite low.”⁶⁵ The picture used is a woman wearing

a burqa. The message conveyed here is that it is actually a man wearing it on this occasion. Although it is a photograph of a woman, since it is decided that it is not feminine enough, this photograph is used to represent “an armed man wearing a burqa” constituting 45% of the news area. The burqa has been the main subject of a lot of news in which it is discussed as a cultural symbol and references are made to the burqa ban. In this news, the main theme is the burqa as an Oriental element and its reflection to daily lives in the East and West.⁶⁶ Along with the burqa news, exoticization, an

important element of the process of Orientalization, is frequently encountered. Such news as “Miss Hezbollah Accuses Miss USA”, “Was the Polygamous Leader

Cheated”, “The most beautiful girl of the USA is a Muslim.” “Don’t make love! warning to Dubai passengers”, “People who attended the concert were taken in custody”, and so forth, reproduce the stereotype in popular culture of an exotic East.⁶⁷

Conclusion

As the analysis of the news so far suggests, news encountered in world news pages has been fundamentally shaped by a journalistic approach that

News encountered in world news pages has been fundamentally shaped by a journalistic approach that concentrates not on the action but on the essence.

concentrates not on the action but on the essence. In the news, details of the incident, quality of the incident, time, place and style or any descriptive detail about the participants are not adequately given; instead, speculation by the producer of the news about the essence of the incident is central to the text. Instead of the uniqueness and/or originality of the news, attention is drawn to its universality and resemblance to other incidents. While constructing the news text, not the content but the context of the incident is being problematized, and most of the time content is reshaped according to the context. In the news text, the uniqueness of the incident, its original aspects, and details about the actors are not presented; instead, attempts to make the news more interesting are made. Another attention-grabbing fact is that the sources and the writers of the news do not seem to exist, and this anonymizing of the news has the effect of objectifying it. In most of the world news studied, dates and places, signatures of the writers or the sources of the news do not appear, and the term “claimed” is frequently used. When reproduction of stereotypes occurs, this anonymizing effect creates an opportunity for the writer. One notable aspect of the news studied is the display of Orientalization practices through the use of simplistic polarities, e.g., “modern vs. non-modern”, “East” vs. “West” oppositions. The social, political,

ideological and cultural costs of not being modern are reflected through images in the news text. In the investigated news, we confirmed the views of Edward Said and Thery Hentch regarding the West’s attitude towards the Orient: the image of the Orient continues to be a negative one, while the image of the West is a positive one.⁶⁸ In the world pages, Turkey is portrayed as a Westernized or Western country, and the biggest threat to Turkish foreign policy is being identified with the Orient. In news where Orientalization practices are encountered, there could be found not only news about the East but also the Orient in the West. News of those physically in the West but “culturally not saved from the Orient” reflects the problems of the West created by the Orient. Especially in daily life news, it is implied that “traditionally Oriental” elements owe their existence to “Western” cultural elements, and some images that are displayed as characteristic of the “Orient” and limited to “pastoral” are criminalized, and thus the borders of concepts such as “normal”, “urbanism”, “Western” and “modern” are drawn. One of the most notable points in the world news is the security reflex after September 11 frequently evoked in speculation about the news. The kind of media portraying violence as a cultural practice and terrorism as related almost entirely to Islam has often been observed in the post-September 11 political atmosphere.⁶⁹ This news-making style, which is said

by Elizabeth Poole to be shaped by the notion of the “war against terrorism”, is to be found in the world pages of the newspapers *Hurriyet* and *Haberturk*.⁷⁰ A lot of news suggests that violence belongs to the Orient and is a commonly observed and ordinary practice in the East. Terrorism is identified with Islam and Muslims, and Islam is classified according to its “potential as a trouble-maker”, and “Arabic Islam”, “Radical Islam” and “Moderate Islam” categories are posited. In this process, Moderate Islam is identified with Turkish Islam, and “Radical Islam” is identified with “Arabic Islam” and “Persian Islam”.

This identification process and other Orientalization practices derive from strategies of alienation, pacification, exoticization and humiliation. Those that are used as objects of Orientalization practices are seen as “alienated”, “pacified”, “exotic” and “comic” elements in different times and on varying levels. For example, sometimes portrayed as alienated or exotic, “Eastern Woman” is mostly presented as a caged, dependent property, with a passive status of secondary importance. News about women could also be qualified as sexist news, apart from the Orientalization practices. Sometimes comic or alienated, the “Arab” image is presented within subtexts of pacification and exoticization. Moreover, the “East” which is othered by being identified mostly with violence, “opposition to the West” and

“stagnation”, is sometimes exoticized by being identified with spirituality, and this shows us how influential “the Spiritual East” approach - which is said to find its equivalents in Walt Whitman’s poems or Charles Wilkins’ texts and is said to be one of the important sources of Orientalism - is in popular culture. Potential Eastern elements are included in the news with the help of these four sub-strategies, and many prejudices can be observed in this area. The existence of these elements in news is related to the way foreign reporting is currently organized, in addition to “internalized Orientalism”. As mentioned above, the news studied was mainly reports with no signatures. The basic justification for this is that a reporter who works for a media organization does not report news; instead most news is simply compiled from various sources. During this compilation process, instead of big news syndicates with a subscription system, websites and news portals that offer tabloid-type reports to the newspapers are more actively used. Development of internet-centered reporting in media activities, and the thought that reporting has become global and foreign news reporting more costly have marginalized foreign news and foreign reporters, thus decreasing the role of foreign reporters in producing foreign news.⁷¹ Instead of the relevant reporter, the page editor in the media center manages the process; the central control of news

increases, and news becomes uniform in terms of content, attitude and design. News production is a selective process and requires the newsmaker's active participation. In other words, selecting what is news is not dependent on its place in social reality, but on the aims of the news producer. In cases where the reporter is close to the news, the reporter mostly does the selection work. Even if under instructions from the editor or from the editor-in-chief, the reporter is the one who mostly creates the content. The reason for this is that the reporter is an "outsider" and claims to have a grasp of "outside intelligence". The fact that the foreign reporter is alienated from the news production process and that an editorial eye is shaping the process facilitates many stereotypes. As the distance between the newsmaker and the publisher increases, it is easier to see more presumptions in the news texts. This produces more problems due to the direction of the information.

The Orientalist images in European and American media are reproduced in Turkish media; perceptions, stereotypes and judgments are translated into Turkish without being critically filtered. This produces a reporting practice shaped by John Urry's "tourist perspective".⁷² Tourist perspective is that which is derived from the will to gain exotic experiences.⁷³ One important feature of tourist perspective is that it overlooks the actual nature of the social reality in which one lives, changes and exists - with its contradictions, hosts of different actors, and the clashes among them, given its tendency to Orientalize the relevant reality. This Orientalization makes the "undistorted communication" ideal of Habermas more unattainable for media, and a reporting culture emerges in which value is placed upon "violence" instead of "word", "sensation" instead of "fact", and "generalization" instead of "detail".

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