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Section 33
The Debate on Turkey –
Creating an Inclusive or Exclusive Europe?

A Bakhtinian approach to EU-Turkey relations

Johanna Nykänen

Finnish Institute of International Affairs
johanna.nykanen@upi-fia.fi

Abstract

This paper is an epistemological endeavour to unearth the underlying dynamics in EU-Turkey relations. It uses Bakhtin's concept of dialogism to explain the asymmetric relationship between the EU and Turkey, arguing that it is essentially a monologist relationship. The EU's monologist approach, the paper argues, has resulted in Turkey strengthening its foreign policy in the East where a "loophole" could be found. Finally, it is argued that in addition to being an unethical position, a monologist approach hinders relations between the two sides, damages the EU's foreign policy strategy and prevents the Union from completing its self-image.

Introduction

Until we learn how to recognise ourselves as the Other, we shall
be in danger and we shall be in need of diplomacy.¹

With the risk of reproducing an intellectual *cliché*,² I attempt to apply the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin in the context of EU-Turkey accession negotiations. Of course, to apply Bakhtin's work in the discipline of International Relations (IR) is not a novel enterprise. Iver Neumann, for example, discusses Bakhtin in his seminal work on otherness in IR.³ Prior to Neumann, Richard K. Ashley and Michael J. Shapiro dealt with Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue-monologue nexus and heteroglossia within the IR field.⁴ Later treatment of Bakhtin in IR include Xavier Guillaume who attempted to develop a dialogical understanding of international relations within the meta-theoretical field of constructivism,⁵ and Barbara Gimelli Sulashvili who applied Bakhtin's theory in the context of identity-security nexus in IR.⁶

After providing the theoretical framework to the study, the paper goes on to apply it in the context of EU-Turkey relations, arguing that the relationship between the EU and Turkey is essentially a monologist one. It provides two concrete cases – the Kurdish question and foreign policy – to show that from a Bakhtinian perspective, the EU's approach towards Turkey is lacking of dialogue. It finishes off with some thoughts on potential repercussions of monologism in EU-Turkey relations.

¹ James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.

² Xavier Guillaume writes that “[s]ince the West discovered his work in the 1970s, Mikhail Bakhtin has been a major influence and source of renewal in many disciplines of the humanities, to the point that he unfortunately has become more and more an intellectual (and fashionable) icon, or even *cliché*, in the field”. ‘Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations’, *Millennium*, 2002, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 4.

³ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1999.

⁴ Richard K. Ashley, ‘Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War’ & Michael J. Shapiro, ‘Representing World Politics: The Sport/War Intertext’, in *International/Intertextual Relations*, eds. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989.

⁵ Xavier Guillaume, ‘Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations’, *Millennium*, 2002, Vol. 31, No. 1.

⁶ Barbara Gimelli Sulashvili, ‘Bakhtinian Dialogism and the Study of the Identity/Security Nexus in International Relations’, Conference Paper, *Annual Convention of the International Studies Association*, Chicago, 2007.

Explaining dialogism – “I utter, therefore I am”

The starting point of Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism is familiar to every student of the constructivist branch of IR theory. In short, Bakhtin argues that the “other” is pivotal in the construction of the “self”. Without the other, the subject cannot know either itself or the world because meaning is created in discourse where consciousnesses meet.⁷ Selfhood is something that is given by one consciousness to another. As Bakhtin writes: ‘One can speak of a human being’s absolute need for the other, for the other’s seeing, remembering, gathering, and unifying self-activity – the only self-activity capable of producing his outwardly finished personality. This outward personality could not exist, if the other did not create it: aesthetic memory is productive – it gives birth, for the first time, to the outward human being on a new place of being’.⁸

Interaction between the “self” and the “other” takes place through discourse which is made up of utterances. *Utterance* is a key concept in Bakhtin’s dialogism. As Bakhtin explains:

The expression of an utterance always responds to a greater or lesser degree, that is, it expresses the speaker’s attitude toward others’ utterances and not just his attitude toward the object of his utterance [...] However monological the utterance may be [...], however much it may concentrate on its own object, it cannot but be, in some measure, a response to what has already been said about the given topic, on the given issue, even though this responsiveness may not have assumed a clear-cut external expression [...] The utterance is filled with dialogic overtones, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance [...].⁹

Bakhtin distinguishes between two levels within an utterance. The first level, as Guillaume writes, ‘is constituted by *dialogism per se*, that is, the universal process through

⁷ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: “The East” in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 13.

⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity’, in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov, Austin: Texas University Press, 1990, pp. 35-36.

⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘The Problem of Speech Genre, 1952-52’, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, p. 92.

which we can actually give meaning to utterances by their interweaving. The second level is *the characterisation of the utterance*, that is to say, in a Bakhtinian perspective, in the style it possesses, which in turn reflects figurations of otherness. In other words, it is a matter of evaluating the extent to which the other is taken into account in an utterance'.¹⁰ In short, a Bakhtinian view of utterance includes both the language itself and the way it is interpreted in action, as an answerable act. In dialogism there is always room for debate.

As stated earlier, the addressivity of the utterance is its essential quality. This addressee, Bakhtin points out, 'can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, [...] a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies [...] And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized other [...] both the composition and, particularly, the style of the utterance depend on those to whom the utterance is addressed, how the speaker (or writer) sense and imagines his addressees, and the force of their effect on the utterance'.¹¹ As such, the application of dialogism is not restricted to the level of individuals but can concern, as in the case of this paper, actors in IR, for example.

The inbuilt responsiveness in every utterance has particular importance in relation to EU-Turkey relations. This will be further elaborated later on in the paper. What is important here now is to note that a dialogic relationship is an ideal form of interaction between two sides with a *monologist* discourse being its very antithesis. Monologism

at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities, another *I* with equal rights [...] With a monologic approach (in its extreme or pure form) *another person* remains wholly and merely an *object* of consciousness, and not another consciousness [...] Monologue is finalised and deaf to the other's response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge it in any *decisive* force. Monologue manages without the other, and

¹⁰ Xavier Guillaume, 'Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations', *Millennium*, 2002, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 6, my emphasis.

¹¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genre, 1952-52', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 93-95.

therefore to some degree materialises all reality. Monologue pretends to be the *ultimate word*. It closes down the represented world and represented persons.¹²

However, there is a limit in the “loving gift” of selfhood that the “other” can grant. A degree of outsidedness allows an escape from a complete *consummation* that imprisons one in his image. As Bakhtin writes:

If I am consummated and my life is consummated, I am no longer capable of living and acting. For in order to live and act, I need to be unconsummated, I need to be open for myself – at least in all the essential moments constituting my life; I have to be, for myself, someone who is axiologically yet-to-be, someone who does not coincide with his already existing makeup.¹³

It is this complex combination of intimacy, on the one hand, and outsidedness, on the other, that constitutes an ideal, aesthetic dialogue from a Bakhtinian standpoint. Having now provided the theoretical backbone to my paper, I will move on to apply Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism in the context of EU-Turkey relations.

¹² Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book, 1961’, in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, pp. 292-93, emphasis in original.

¹³ Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity’, in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov, Austin: Texas University Press, 1990, pp. 12-13.

EU-Turkey relations – negotiations without dialogue

Turkey does not have a “right to membership.” Yet, it does have a right to being treated according to the EU’s norms, rules, and procedures as determined by Turkey’s Accession Negotiations Framework [...].¹⁴

It is essential – yet perhaps obvious – to point out that Turkey’s EU accession bid is like no other we have seen in the past. Historically, Turkey’s predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, represented the most important identity marker for Europe. The Ottoman Empire and Europe stood in a classical self-other relationship, representing different religions, customs, cultures and languages. Europe constructed its self-image vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, and vice versa. Europe ended where the Empire started. As Neumann argues, ‘the dominant other in the history of the European state system remains “the Turk,” and because of the lingering importance of that system, we have here a particularly important other. In contrast to the communities of the New World, “the Saracen” and “the Ottoman” had the military might, the physical proximity, and a strong religious tradition that made it a particularly relevant other in the evolution of the fledgling international society that evolved from the ashes of Western Christendom and that took up a pivotal position in the forging of European identities’.¹⁵

As such, Turkey’s EU membership would mean a merge of the ultimate opposites. Of course, since the dissolution of the Empire, Turkey has been moving towards the West and reinventing itself as a Western state. As Neumann points out: “With the demise of the Ottoman empire in the wake of the 1908 revolution of the Young Turks and the defeat in World War I, a representation of Turkey began to take shape as a normalizing and modernizing nation and, with its entry into NATO, even as a trusted ally. More important, in being represented as a case of normalization, the transformation from a sick man to a reborn and young body politic also made “the Turk” less central as a constitutive other”.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ahmet Evin et al., ‘Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West’, Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 33.

¹⁵ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: “The East” in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: “The East” in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 60.

Indeed, during the Cold War, Turkey anchored itself tightly in the Western camp where it was considered a pivotal strategic ally. The end of the Cold War, however, resulted in Turkey being relegated to a second-class strategic position and, consequently, rejected from the enlarging Union. It was only in 1999 that Turkey was given a candidate status that materialised in 2005 with the negotiations finally commencing.

Given that Bakhtin was first and foremost a literature theorist, it is most fitting to commence with a note on terminology in the EU accession vocabulary. To talk about “negotiations” or “talks” in relation to EU enlargement has become a common practice but, in fact, all that is negotiated between the EU and the candidate country is the timetable in which the EU imposed reforms will be carried out. Now, it may seem natural for a club to define rules for its membership applicants but the EU can hardly be considered a traditional club, not at least in the face of Turkey’s potential membership.

What is at stake here is the EU’s strategic interests – mainly, the fact that the EU needs Turkey as much as, if not more than, Turkey needs the EU. Turkey’s geopolitical value – as a cultural bridge, a model of Islamic democracy and a territorial bulkhead into the Middle East – is indispensable for the EU.¹⁷ Furthermore, Turkey’s role as an important energy transit country and as a growing regional power¹⁸ mean that “losing”¹⁹ Turkey would have significant strategic, political and economic repercussions for the EU. As a report by the Transatlantic Academy argues:

¹⁷ EU Observer, ‘EU and Turkey accession talks advance at snail’s pace’, Valentina Pop, 1 July 2010.

¹⁸ When it comes to Turkey’s role in the Muslim world, Graham Fuller argues: ‘Turkey can demonstrate a positive record on multiple levels: it has managed to enact successful economic policies; it has created a largely stable political order with a tested democracy; it has a vibrant Islamic culture; it has demonstrated an ability to reach some form of reconciliation with political Islam in a way that few other Muslim states have; it has demonstrated a growing realism in the way it treats its own multiethnic problems; it has maintained a close working relationship with the West in the political, economic, and military spheres and continues on a (controversial) course toward EU membership; and it has a strong military and a powerful sense of sovereignty and independence. These are qualities greatly sought after and critically needed by other Muslim societies. As a result, in its new, more independent mode, Turkey is no longer perceived regionally as a mere Western “wannabe”; it is now for the first time being viewed positively within the Muslim world as a state worth watching – and maybe even emulating’. *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008.

¹⁹ Turkey’s position between the East and West is often seen as a zero-sum game in that having more active policy in the East would inevitably mean a turn away from the West for Turkey. Indeed, questions of whether Turkey is “leaving” the West or whether the West is “losing” Turkey have circled around for several years in academic and political circles, to the point that they have become almost a cliché-like exercise.

Whereas Turkey needs the EU for its own domestic and foreign policy projects to succeed, the EU needs Turkey in order to meet the dramatic challenges in their broader neighborhood. This should open the space for a long-needed, rational debate on Turkey in the EU, one which accounts for the complex interplay between identity and institutional, political, economic, and social interests, and above all confronts these questions in an open and outward-looking manner. Mixed signals from the Union have exacerbated the sluggishness of Turkey's domestic reforms, to the detriment of the EU as well as Turkey. Productive relations need to resume, both for Turkey's democratic future, and for the EU to become an effective global power in the 21st century.²⁰

Therefore, to have a monologist dialogue that silences the counterpart is neither for the EU's nor Turkey's benefit. By merely calling this monologist endeavour "negotiations" does not make it a dialogic one. Furthermore, monological utterances, as Guillaume argues, stand on an unsound ethical and epistemological position. In fact, he continues, 'they tend to subvert the other, and do not allow it a proper conscience that is reflexively identical to them. Within a monological figuration, the other becomes an object of the self's own conscience, which can be interpreted and modified at will as a function of the self's own needs as an identity'.²¹

As such, the EU denying Turkey an equal footing in the negotiations, it reduced Turkey into an object and uses it instrumentally to construct its own identity. When the EU is not itself the counterpart, however, it puts a strong emphasis on the practice of dialogue. For example, commenting on Turkey's constitutional reform referendum, the Commission expressed criticism over 'the way in which the reform package was prepared by the Turkish government. It considers that such important reform deserved closer consultation of all political forces and more active involvement by the Turkish civil society "in a spirit of *dialogue and compromise*".²²

²⁰ Ahmet Evin et al., 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West', Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 34.

²¹ Xavier Guillaume, 'Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations', *Millennium*, 2002, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 9.

²² Agence Europe, 'Successful referendum on reform package (12 September) would be a positive step in right direction, Commission says', *Bulletin Quotidien Europe 10204*, 1 September 2010. Own emphasis.

Paradoxically it is precisely the dialogic relationship that is needed for the EU to complete and perfect itself. As Guillaume, paraphrasing Bakhtin, points out: 'Ethically, the completion and perfection of a self is determined by the reflexive and dialogical integration of otherness.'²³ Now, turning to concrete cases of monologic discourse in EU-Turkey relations, I will focus on two issues: The Kurdish question and EU foreign policy. Both of these cases have received a one-sided approach on behalf of the EU that has *denied the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities*.

Asymmetric dialogue on the Kurdish question

Despite the Kurdish question being part and parcel of Turkey's EU membership bid, EU approach has been somewhat arbitrary, often lacking in consistency and been reactionary in nature. Indeed, there has been an ostensible shift in the nexus between human rights and security since Turkey becoming a candidate country. Prior to Turkish candidacy, the EU's emphasis was strongly on human rights: 'A civil, non-military solution must be found to the situation in south-eastern Turkey, particularly since many of the violations of civil and political rights observed in the country are connected in one way or another with this issue'.²⁴ However, following Turkey becoming a candidate country in the Helsinki Summit in 1999, EU emphasis began to shift from human rights to security, with the EU lending its full support to Turkish government's fight against terrorism. In December 2008, as Turkey 2009 Progress Report states, 'the European Union reaffirmed its support to Turkey in the fight against terrorism [...]'.²⁵

At the same time, Turkey has been shifting its emphasis the opposite direction, from a security perspective towards human rights approach. Turkey's recent governmental initiative on "democratic opening"²⁶ is set to deeply transform 'the basic institutional structure of the post-1980 regime through enlarging the understanding of citizenship which would lead to re-defining political community, strengthening association and

²³ Xavier Guillaume, 'Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations', *Millennium*, 2002, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 9.

²⁴ EU Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, 1998, p. 21.

²⁵ EU Commission, Turkey 2009 Progress Report, p. 30.

²⁶ As laid out in a booklet issued by the AKP, *Soruları ve Cevaplarıyla Demokratik Açılım Süreci: Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik*, Ankara: AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, 2010.

grassroots participation, and engaging in a relatively decentralization of the state with local levels of government carefully integrated to the national centre'.²⁷

This demonstrates that the EU has not taken Turkey's domestic situation into consideration in its policy making but rather followed its own agenda, arguably shaped by the changing political climate of post 9/11 era and/or Turkey becoming a candidate country and thus "closer" to the Union. Indeed, Turkey and the EU are going increasingly towards two different directions with Turkey's reform momentum having 'acquired a life of its own. The 2009 Kurdish and Alevi "openings" are the best example of this; both are clearly aimed at Turkey's democratization, but were not spurred by the accession process. That alone underscores the importance of the EU process for Turkey, rather than the destination itself'.²⁸

Mixed Signals in Foreign Policy

In the annually published Commission Progress Reports, the EU is strongly emphasising the importance of Turkey to improve its bilateral relations with its neighbouring countries. For example the 2004 report states that 'the efforts of Turkey to improve and deepen its relations with the neighbouring countries are welcome'.²⁹ The 2006 report points out that 'relations with Syria continued to develop positively', further stating that 'Turkey should be unequivocally committed to good neighbourly relations, and to the other requirements against which progress will be measured'.³⁰ In 2008 and 2009 the progress reports state that

Turkey has enhanced its positive role of regional stabilisation, in particular as regards the Caucasus and the Middle East. Turkey supports the EU efforts to ensure stability in Iraq and has maintained close diplomatic relations with this country, including contacts with the Kurdish regional government. Turkey is

²⁷ Kıvanç Ulusoy, "The "Democratic Opening" in Turkey: A Historical/Comparative Perspective, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12 No. 2 2010, p. 84.

²⁸ Ahmet Evin et al., 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West', Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 32.

²⁹ EU Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, 2004, p.155.

³⁰ EU Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, 2006, pp. 72-73.

contributing substantially to ESDP and seeking greater involvement in ESDP activities.³¹

At the same time, discourse outside the static world of annual progress reports looks rather different. Gone are the calls for more bilateralism in the neighbourhood, replaced by fears over Turkey's increasing regional role. Indeed, Turkey's activism in its neighbourhood is raising concerns within the EU with many prominent voices stating that Turkey is becoming increasingly "Islamist" and non-Western. As a report on Turkey's foreign policy states

The recent activism and independence of Turkish foreign policy has caused political repercussions throughout Europe, the United States, and in Turkey's immediate neighbourhood. In the West, there are fears that Turkey is being "lost," that is becoming more oriented towards Russia or the Middle East, and that it is drifting away from secularism and toward Islamism [...] *it does so by fostering bilateral and multilateral ties*, by using the country's Ottoman heritage as a foreign policy asset, and by exerting "soft power" in its region.³²

While the EU formally encourages Turkey to improve and deepen its bilateral ties with its neighbouring states, informal messages promote a more prudent attitude. At the same time, EU discourse frequently concerns issues that are not in line with or even part of the EU accession criteria. The most obvious example of this is the still continuing debate on whether Turkey is a European country, despite the fact that article 49 of the Treaty on European Union states that '*any European State* which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union.'³³ Turkey's European credentials were accepted and confirmed in 1999 when the country acquired a candidate status and the fact that the issue is still discussed undermines the EU's credibility. Indeed, political considerations feature strongly in EU-Turkey relations:

³¹ EU Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, 2008, p. 83; 2009, pp. 87-88.

³² Ahmet Evin et al., 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West', Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 7. Own emphasis.

³³ Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, *Official Journal C 83 of 30.3.2010*. Own emphasis.

The setbacks in Turkey's reform efforts were also partially provoked by the EU's increasing scepticism of Turkey's EU membership prospects. Until 2002-03, EU scepticism of Turkey's membership was rarely voiced openly. European declarations normally focused on Turkey's shortcomings in the areas of democracy and human rights. However, when the prospects of Turkey's membership became more tangible with accession negotiations in 2005, the underlying concerns of member states came out, and they went well beyond Turkey's compliance with EU criteria. The French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, has repeatedly called on the EU to offer Turkey a "privileged partnership," instead of full membership. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, although a little more guarded in her public statements, has taken the same line. Such statements have not only poisoned the atmosphere of the accession process, they have also led to very practical impediments to progress.³⁴

The conflict between different official discourses within the EU demonstrates monologism in EU-Turkey discourse and, furthermore, adds up to the image of the EU as an incoherent and inconsistent actor. A dialogic relationship entails genuine responsiveness which is currently lacking in EU-Turkey accession process. When it comes to, for example, the Customs Union, Turkey *remains wholly and merely an object of consciousness, and not another consciousness*. As Kemal Kirişçi and Nathalie Tocci argue,

[T]he existing "privileged partnership" in the form of the EU-Turkey Customs Union is not a privileged relationship at all. It allows EU business people to travel to Turkey freely [...] [w]hile the same cannot be said about Turkish businessmen (let alone all citizens), who are prevented by the Schengen visa requirements from traveling hassle free to Europe to promote their products. [...] Furthermore, the Customs Union requires Turkey to implement the EU's Common External Tariff. This works to the disadvantage of Turkey, especially when the EU signs free trade agreements with third-party countries.[...] Turkish officials and business interests argue that Turkey accepted the imbalance present in the Customs Union agreement only with the understanding that it represented a first step toward full membership.

³⁴ Ahmet Evin et al., 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West', Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 32.

In the absence of membership, the imbalance becomes a burden, and an additional source of distrust with the EU.³⁵

A Loophole in the East

A fundamental element in Bakhtin's dialogism is the concept of a "loophole". There needs to be room for the individual, as a unique personality, to remain unfinished, incomplete and with a capacity to change and contribute in dialogue throughout the life span – a process Bakhtin describes as alterity that is arguably expressed best through the confounding nature of the Dostoevskian³⁶ loophole. For Bakhtin, an answer to the other's complete consummation of the self is a loophole that allows the self to free itself from becoming a fixed, frozen image. A frozen image equals the "last word" that, in a sense, is a word that can only be uttered from the perspective of memory and the perspective of death. Bakhtin writes

[O]nly the other human being is experienced by me as connatural with the outside world and thus can be woven into that world and rendered concordant with it in an aesthetically convincing manner. [...] [My] self-activity [...] exceeds both nature and world: I always have an outlet along the line of myself in the act [...] of the world – *I always have a loophole, as it were through which I can save myself from being no more than a natural given.*³⁷

In other words, the self can rescue itself from the inevitable "death" in monologism through a loophole. For Turkey, the loophole can be found in the East where Turkey is not being reduced to a mere object of consciousness. In Turkey's relationship with the EU, there is very little room for debate. Indeed, Turkey's "turn to the East" can be explained by its monologist relations with the EU. In this sense, those who argue that the

³⁵ Ahmet Evin et al., 'Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West', Transatlantic Academy, 2010, p. 33.

³⁶ Bakhtin discusses self-other relations in parallel with author-hero relations, arguing that only a Dostoevskian novel is a dialogic one with polyphonic – as opposed to monologic – author. A polyphonic author grants all the characters their "own voice", whilst a monologic author "silences" and "finalises" the characters. In other words, a polyphonic author provides loopholes to his characters; he never utters the "final word".

³⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov, Austin: Texas University Press, 1990, p. 40. Own emphasis.

EU has pushed Turkey away and towards the Middle East are correct.³⁸ Turkey's actions can be understood as a response to the *style* of utterances by the EU.

Conclusion

The paper has attempted to apply Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in the context of EU-Turkey relations. It has shown that the EU's position towards Turkey is largely a monologist one. It has been argued that although vocabulary related to the EU's accession process might imply dialogist tendencies – as demonstrated by the fact that the whole endeavour is called “negotiations” – the EU's approach towards Turkey, historically Europe's ultimate other, has been lacking of dialogism. This has resulted in Turkey turning more towards the East where more room for manoeuvre – a loophole – has been available.

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³⁸ The most prominent commentator having made this claim is US Defence Secretary Robert Gates who has stated that Turkey has been pushed by some in Europe away from the EU and into closer partnerships with states like Iran by denying Turkey an “organic” link to the West. ‘US Defence Secretary Gates blames EU for Turkey “drift”’, BBC News Europe, 9 June 2010. Accessible at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10275379> (last accessed 30 August 2010).

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