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MASS MEDIA AND THE REPULSIVE ALLURE
OF RELIGIOUS HEALING: THE *CINCI HOCA*
IN TURKISH MODERNITY

[Fade in from commercial, sonorous male voice advertising the evening news.]

Once again a *cinci hoca*, once again a sexual harassing . . .

Recently in our country, this exorcizing of spirits, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and mediumship, which are all products of primitive, magical thought, have been spreading like an epidemic. For years, either knowingly or unknowingly, they have been given extensive advertisement in newspapers and on television stations that seek to increase their circulation with dramatic news.

—Dr. Orhan Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet*, 1997

The discordance of this essay's subtitle is difficult to grasp for those unfamiliar with the connotations of the term *cinci hoca* or, alternatively, *üfürükçü*. As practitioners of a popular form of religious healing that treat individuals being afflicted by *cin* (jinn) with a combination of curative amulets (*muska*), Qur'anic verses (*ayet*), and ritual prescriptions, figures such as the *cinci hoca*, and the complex of marginal religious practices they index, are commonly regarded as antithetical to the ideals of a modern society. For many observers, in fact, the former obstructs the proper development of the latter; they are not in, or better yet of, Turkish modernity, but a lingering disruptive reminder of what came before.¹ As such, in characteristic circular logic, the *cinci hoca* and related "superstitious" social practices are to be expunged from the nation's already unfolding history in order to allow a rationalized, orderly unfolding to occur. Not surprisingly, figures such as the *cinci hoca* are popular targets of ridicule for those seeking to legitimize a particularly modern national image.

Taking the pervasive and recurrently scandalous appearance of religious healers within Turkish print and television news media as its focus, the aim of this article is twofold. First, it considers how media attacks on marginal religious and social practices (variously labeled superstition, heterodoxy, heresy, or simply ignorance) serve to assert a set of prohibitions constituting an ideal image of a modern, national community and to enact the state's legitimacy as guardian and protector of its citizenry. Second, countering the

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apparent desire to eliminate superstition, I argue that such attacks have become a vital site for not only the staging of state authority but also the expression of a series of widespread social, political, and economic anxieties. In this second instance, the attempt to eliminate the *cinci hoca* in the name of the modern has transformed into a reliance upon their presence so that they can then be disavowed. Within their attempted delegitimization, marginal religious and social practices are thereby included as a menacing presence around which a series of public fears converge and become manifest. In this regard, the figure of the *cinci hoca* represents what Victor Turner might refer to, in a different context, as a “condensed symbol” through which “many ideas, relations between things, actions, interactions, and transactions are represented simultaneously.”² Yet in this case, the condensed symbol of the *cinci hoca* only gains its meaning through the spectacle of public and mass mediated denunciation. It is in this play between the despised and alluring that this essay considers the question underlying Dr. Öztürk’s concern with “primitive, magical thought”: why does the *cinci hoca* make for such dramatic news?

Initially I found media apparitions of the *cinci hoca* as something peripheral to my study of the utilization and practice of religious healing within two *gecekodu* (squatter) communities of Ankara, Turkey. As time passed, however, and I talked with more healers and spent more time in their homes, in front of their televisions, it became clear that the media was far from peripheral to the lives and practices of such healers as the *cinci hoca*. Moreover, in daily conversations within and outside the communities, much more than simply the *cinci hoca* was talked about in discussions (and frequently arguments) inspired by these scandals. Initially, as well, the media’s concern with portraying the immoral conduct of those regarded as religiously pious was simply a means of ridiculing pro-Islamist political parties and their supporters who were becoming increasingly influential over the course of my fieldwork. As such, it appeared as but an extension of Bobby Sayyid’s argument concerning Kemalism’s use of Islam as the antagonistic and necessary other for the consolidation of its legitimacy.³

As I got further into my field and archival research, the *cinci hoca* scandal took on a deeper, historically larger significance. From 17th-century scandals involving Sultan “Deli” Ibrahim’s (Ibrahim the Mad’s) close relationship with *cinci hoca*,⁴ to medical journals of 1930s,⁵ to conversations with local religious leaders, it became clear that the recurrent theme of scandal surrounding the *cinci hoca* predated and implicated something more than the contemporary concern with Islamist politics. In addition, such scandals appeared in media outlets with varied ideological commitments and, in the *hoca*’s association with marginal religious practice, inspired antagonism from within both Islamic orthodoxy and pro-Islamist circles. In this regard, the *cinci hoca* appeared as necessary, but not solely in Sayyid’s sense. More than just an “other” against which (Kemalist) state legitimacy is articulated, four deeply disquieting concerns knotted together around the figure of the *cinci hoca*: in stories about their financial prosperity, they tapped into an intense uneasiness over the impact of a neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish economy in the 1980s; in their characterization as a village practice, they marked a prevailing nostalgia of village life and its perceived degradation; in scandals involving sexual relations with female patients, they became tethered to a nexus of libidinal-economic tensions that held the threat of disrupting preexisting structures of gender authority; and, finally, in their cultivation of religious piety, they became associated with the growing electoral influence of Islamist politics.

While other marginal figures and groups find themselves caught in media scandals,⁶ the ways in which the *cinci hoca* is represented and misrepresented sheds light upon the intersection of historically contested fields of social, political, and religious significance—an intersection at which the *cinci hoca* is uniquely positioned. For the present discussion, two points of convergence are critical. First, as practitioners of a form of healing, they overlap with competing, state-sponsored forms of biomedical healing that are inextricable from progressivist notions of rationality, scientific enlightenment, and modernity.⁷ Second, as religious specialists with claims to religious authority, they become entangled in both core religious debates over Islamic orthodoxy and, by extension, political disputes over the implications of Islamist political mobilization. But whereas this essay is concerned largely with the criticisms leveled against the *cinci hoca*, the relationship between actual *cinci hocas* and their various media tropes is highly significant. Beyond the obvious observation that *cinci hocas* are also affected by media scandal, one must keep in mind that their practices are embedded within the same set of conditions within which the media works. To point out that *hocas* are misrepresented in the media is not, therefore, to argue for or validate the *cinci hoca* as a “traditional” figure born of an “authentic” past that is unjustly maligned. In fact, it is precisely that the representations are partially correct which contributes to the *cinci hoca*’s ability to capture so many of the perceived ills plaguing Turkish society.

I will treat the terms *cinci hoca* and *üfürükçü* as synonymous in the following discussion, frequently referring to both simply as “*hoca*.” Although such healers commonly reject these labels for reasons that will become apparent (referring to themselves as everything from shaykh to simply *hoca*), they nonetheless recognize that their practices are those of what is popularly known as the *cinci hoca* or *üfürükçü*.⁸ It should be pointed out that actual *cinci hoca* comprise a significant dimension of local health care systems and treat a range of illnesses and problems (from minor headaches to adultery, from epilepsy to impotence) that typically involve people being struck, harassed, or possessed by *cin*. Hence, the title *cinci* (exorcist) *hoca* (teacher, or Muslim teacher or cleric; alt. *hodja*). In that they may also work to control *cin*, and thus bring harm upon others, they are also frequently regarded as practitioners of magic (*büyü*). Whereas *cinci hoca* tend to be men, there are instances of female *cinci hoca*; similarly, men, women, and people of all backgrounds are known to seek the *hoca*’s assistance (although with varying degrees of commitment and openness in admitting as much). Although regarded as religious and ritual specialists, the vast majority are not charismatic leaders of religious sects; rather, they are individuals who, like others, assume a variety of social positions (neighbor, greengrocer, relative, acquaintance) but have acquired a body of specialized knowledge that bestows upon them a certain degree of reverence. Although inspired by and grounded in ethnographic research with a range of religious healers and their patients, this article is based primarily on a review of print media sources between 1997 and 2002 and television media broadcasts between 1999 and 2000.

MEDIA AND THE IMAGINATION

From relentless newspaper reportings to lurid television news broadcasts, from vulgar cartoons to pornographic websites (entitled “A *Cinci Hoca*’s Webpage” promising access to “A *Cinci Hoca*’s Beauties” for those who click on the “*Hoca*’s Instrument”—an image

of a penis), the media in its multiple modalities seems obsessively fascinated with the various improprieties of the *cinci hoca*. Although figures such as the *cinci hoca* have long been surrounded by scandal, this article's point of departure in considering the media's fascination with the *cinci hoca* is the emergence of a privatized media industry in the 1980s. It is this privatization and expansion of the media industry that both broadened the means of attacking cultural practices perceived as antimodern and, in the process, revealed a deeper logic whereby the public disavowal of "superstition" serves to sustain the Turkish modernization project.

Throughout most of the Turkish republic's history (1923–), the state has maintained a hold on the production and dissemination of ideological discourses aiming to mold a new citizenry. In at least the past fifteen years, however, especially since the 1990 breaking of the state broadcasting monopoly, Turkish Radio and Television Authority, and the introduction of the first private television channel, the roles of the state and the media have undergone a remarkable reversal. As compared to the early relationship between the state and the media, it is now the newly privatized media, although still accountable to state censors, that has moved to the foreground as the principal provider of news and entertainment. Meanwhile, with the proliferation of inexpensive television sets in the past decade, television has become a ubiquitous presence in homes throughout Turkey. Taken together, these interrelated shifts mark at once the expansion and privatization of the historical link between the media and the nation-building project of the Turkish state.

This shift in the media industry also reflects a major transformation in the types of neighborhoods where this project was located—established squatter communities of Ankara made up of densely clustered, self-made homes that house staggering numbers of the unemployed and working poor. Where residents had previously been principally producers for the national and global economy, they are now also its major consumers. Images of stylish consumer goods and slender models, of both foreign and domestic provenance, that previously only cluttered the newsstands of upscale neighborhoods are now equally at home in these newly emerging consumer markets. In the now commonplace sights of young, thin women in tightly fitted clothing and neatly styled hair (the staple of fashion magazines) walking alongside their thick-set mothers wearing loose combinations of homemade sweaters, skirts, and headscarves (the staple of tourist brochures), it is not difficult to discern the rapidly burgeoning role of the private media, and the accompanying advertising industry, in influencing daily lives within such neighborhoods. Nonetheless, the scope of this article is considerably broader than a particular neighborhood and signals one of the specific characteristics of the Turkish media: its dominant national, rather than local, generative framework. That is, the media industry in Turkey is closely monitored by a state authoritarianism that is deeply distrustful of local autonomy, which is prominently reflected in campaigns against Kurdish-language media.⁹ In such a nationalist ideological climate that refuses locality (inasmuch it does not contribute to an innocuous "Turkish culture"), virtually all media is "national" media.

At this intersection of Turkish nationalist thought and mass mediation, the work of the imagination stands as a privileged site of struggle that spans and constitutes relationships between the personal, local, and national. In what Arjun Appadurai describes as the "imagination as social practice," mass mediation (in its realistic and fictional modes) profoundly shapes and creates "ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects."¹⁰ In this regard,

the history of Turkey's nation-building project can be regarded as, along numerous fronts, a project of the imagination.¹¹ Yet, according to Appadurai, such nationalist projects of imagination have given way to something new (and critical) occurring today. That is, for Appadurai, the imagination has become "an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility."¹²

Although Appadurai overstates the case, presuming that the imagination was not already a field of social practice and site of negotiation, he nevertheless correctly draws attention to the contemporary significance of the interconnectedness of the media, the imagination, and everyday lives. As a productive site of emergent possibilities, it is at this intersection where new futures are fashioned and the place of one's life within them plotted. Crudely put, as the slender young woman and her heavy-set mother walked along the *gecekondu* road that cut between newly constructed apartment complexes, they imagined very different futures for themselves.

Appadurai's framing of the constructive or generative intersection of the media and imagination is significant in that it opens our consideration of media representations of the *cinci hoca* to a deeper reading than simply as instances of repression or desired elimination of unwanted remnants of a political and cultural past. At this intersection, rather, new worlds are being imagined as old ones are being rendered unimaginable, or at least obsolete. In the case of the *cinci hoca* scandal, for example, it is not that the *hoca* is experiencing a form of censorship in which something is edited out before being published or broadcast (an absence without lack). Instead, as a scene of denunciation that is at once a productive site for re- or unimagining, the *cinci hoca* is first presented and then publicly disavowed. A brief introductory example will illustrate this point.

"THE VILLAGE WHERE THE DRUM ISN'T PLAYED"

Babacan, a television program classified alternatively as a "news program" and a "reality show" but nonetheless cast in the "realistic mode," was a weekly, one-hour program hosted by the Turkish cinema star Cüneyt Arkın. Whether it was the misery of abject poverty or the horrors of false belief, *Babacan* devoted itself to traversing the country in search of the unbelievable, miraculous, or simply bizarre. For this discussion, the episode, titled, "The Village Where the Drum Isn't Played," which aired in October 1999, is particularly illustrative. Although not specifically about religious healing, it nonetheless has one of its characteristic features—the *yatır*, a place where a holy person is buried—and treads on similar conceptual grounds. The particular destination of this episode was a village renowned for prohibiting the playing of the drum, an instrument of central importance for celebrations throughout the country (e.g., weddings, circumcisions, soccer-match victories, and the departure of young men for military service). According to villagers interviewed, the dead holy person disliked the sound of drums, and their playing was thus forbidden for fear of retribution.

Into this visibly impoverished village rides Cüneyt Arkın in his new, unmistakably expensive sport utility vehicle. Over ghostly music and shifting camera angles noticeably seeking to create an aura of mysteriousness, *Babacan* confronts villager after villager with what he regards as their "irrational belief." With little restraint, he forcefully

interrogates them on why they believed in this prohibition. He then becomes more threatening, questioning them on what would happen if he played a drum. “How will this hurt that dead person laying over there?” he asks. Villagers repeated the prohibition. If they played the drum, a great calamity would befall them, perhaps even death. If he played it, however, nothing would happen. He is, after all, an outsider.¹³ He pushes on, again, in awe at their ignorance. Questioning older residents, he learns that they had never heard the sound of a live drum playing. With a contrived air of bafflement, Cüneyt Arkin leaves the village.

The vehicle is then shown returning from a nearby town where they had hired a drum and *zurna* (a reed instrument) player. Turning to follow the road sign pointing toward the village, one of the musicians insists on getting out of the truck. He too is struck by fear. (One questions the sincerity of this response, particularly considering the camera is somehow already outside of the vehicle, at some distance, when the musician insists on getting out.) Picking up the drum, Cüneyt Arkin, the intrepid warrior against irrationality, nevertheless forges forward.¹⁴ As he enters the village, again accompanied by eerie music and shifting camera angles, he prepares to play the drum. There is a peculiar expression on the villagers’ faces; they try to stop him with what seems to be half-serious effort, joking and smiling as Arkin readies the mallet to strike the drum. One can also sense trepidation in their remonstrations, betraying the conviviality as politeness masking palpable unease. However, Cüneyt Arkin continues undaunted, eventually convincing some of the villagers to begin dancing along to his drumming. He leaves the village with a visible air of accomplishment. He had, as he discussed, opened their belief. After a commercial, Cüneyt Arkin reappears on the screen, months after the initial taping, and explains that he had not experienced any harm since he left the village.

What is left unclear, however, is the impact of this event on the village he has long since moved beyond. Nevertheless, in this spectacularized confrontation of realities, a now public drama that would reach millions of viewers, the subtext was difficult to ignore: “rationality” had encountered and vanquished the “ignorance” and “superstition” of “tradition.” Cüneyt Arkin, with a theatrical flourish, pulls into daylight and questions what is taken for granted—“no drum is to be played in the village”—and, mockingly, attempts to refute other worldly injunctions through the earthly, yet ethereal, technology of television. In depicting the place of superstition at the intersection of a national media and local imaginaries, this episode also reveals the staged characteristics of its disavowal (e.g., the “spontaneous” reaction of the hired musician) and the alternative community it seeks to articulate. Within the village, the injunction against drum playing is one of the community’s constitutive prohibitions, the breaking of which is accompanied by sanction. In turn, Arkin, representing an important segment of the Turkish elite, callously rejects inappropriate superstitious behavior in order to replace a local, communal prohibition with a set of prohibitions (against superstition) that designate a distinctly national community.

READING AND VIEWING THE *CINCIHOCA*

Particular types of viewers are presumed and readings encoded within the *Babacan* program. As opposed to the “mainstream secularist” press,¹⁵ for instance, the station

airing *Babacan* (TGRT) has discernible Islamist roots. Although TGRT was undergoing a transition toward the mainstream during the period of fieldwork, its promotion of Islamist-oriented politics in the 1990s and, more generally, its desire to promote appropriate religious practice within a modern world were still evident. In this context, Cüneyt Arkin's attack on superstition carried a dual valence. On the one hand, it portrayed superstition as an example of inappropriate behavior not befitting a properly modern individual. On the other hand, it referred to superstition in its connotative association with notions of orthodox Islam and inappropriate religious practice. This point of convergence highlights two important factors. First, the condemnation of the *cinci hoca* is not only a secularist outlook, but also one shared within orthodox Islam. Second, although religious condemnation of figures such as the *hoca* predates the Republic by centuries, its contemporary configuration is inseparable from the history of Turkish secularist development and its promotion of a specifically "modern" national image. This situation parallels Jenny White's and Yael Navaro-Yashin's arguments in that, like Islamist politics in Turkey,¹⁶ Islamist-oriented media also work through conditions framed by secularist discourses. Furthermore, and beyond Stuart Hall's argument that the media industry tends to share the dominant code of the nation state,¹⁷ the media in Turkey must by default work through a national-secularist lens in order to be allowed to operate.

Despite differences, these scandals appear on channels and in newspapers maintaining a range of ideological positions. And since the privatization of the media industry, this range has become significantly fragmented along political and religious lines, with each media outlet frequently linked to larger media conglomerates owned by identifiable families and catering to specific audiences. Although some attract very specific and loyal audiences, those characterized as "mainstream secularist" are the most watched and frequently draw a mixed audience. Especially when it comes to television news programming, where these scandals most frequently appear, the "mainstream secularist" stations are extremely popular and attract a wide viewership. In both the pro-Islamist and ardently secularist/Kemalist neighborhoods where I conducted research, residents most commonly turned to these stations when it came time for the evening news.¹⁸

Although audiences are roundly cognizant of each media outlet's ideological position, and approach the outlets accordingly, one cannot presume that messages are decoded as anticipated. Although a full consideration of "audience" or "reception studies" within media theory is beyond the scope of this discussion, one must bear in mind that audiences receive messages in particular ways and make use of them in divergent contexts. As such, this essay addresses calls to take television seriously in making sense of the sorts of ethnographic realities within which social scientists work¹⁹ and, in its consideration of cartoons and satirical magazines, diverges sharply from other textual analyses of political cartoons in the Middle East.²⁰

Building on recent work in the anthropology of the media that stresses a contextual analysis of media representations²¹ and following Purnima Mankekar's ethnographic study of television viewing in India,²² I am situating my analysis in a tension between reading the *cinci hoca* scandal locally versus translocally—in this case, nationally. As opposed to ethnographic analyses considering the viewing of television serials and melodramas,²³ however, the unique structuring of televised news segments more

directly encodes a particular interpretation and significantly reduces the range of potential readings. Although the richly developed plots and affectively laden symbolism of serials and melodramas provide viewers with multiple points of identification and a narrative flexibility within which they can locate their own life experiences, the television and print media's reportings of the *cinci hoca* scandal are typically short, admonishing, and didactic. Consequently, in the tension between focusing on localized interpretations of the *cinci hoca* and their significance as national figures, the following discussion places greater emphasis on the latter.

Locally, nonetheless, it is important to recognize how television, for instance, is watched. Broadly speaking, television watching is a lively, collaborative event in which items are noted, commented upon, and argued over. The audience in this case is not frequently a passive or quiescent one. Media representations that capture the various improprieties of healers, for example, are not merely absorbed but rather become subjects of debate, used to ridicule characters on television or relatives in the same room. In both neighborhoods where I worked, viewers reacted with disdain and frequently ire—at times spitting at the television—when these programs aired. That the viewers I worked with came from poor, working-class neighborhoods is significant in that it counters relentlessly drawn associations between poverty and the *cinci hoca*. As opposed to common portrayals of elite segments of society acting as enforcers of an appropriately modern national image, one that frequently takes as its target the “ignorant” (*cahil*) social practices that are presumed to be endemic among the poor and less educated, my neighbors' reactions to the *hoca* scandal attests to the fact that such an ideal is very much a national ideal in which they, too, are deeply invested.

ANATOMY OF A SCANDAL: SEX AND MONEY

Media scandals pervade the entirety of the *cinci hoca*'s world, profoundly shaping how, where, and when they do their work. Well-established fears of secret agents, *MIT* (National Intelligence Organization), and informers are now met with suspicion over hidden cameras, concealed microphones, and undercover reporters. For instance, one day while visiting Ahmet, a local *cinci hoca* who had spent some time in prison, he talked at length about a recent visitor whom he instinctively suspected of being an agent, possibly from MIT. He then showed me a microcassette recorder he had recently purchased and proceeded to play back the taped meeting with the suspected agent. “If he were to take me to court for doing the work of those fake *hocas*,” Ahmet explained, “I'd have something for my defense. I could just play this tape . . . Prison taught me a few things.” Trepidation of being caught on television, and then by the police, has pushed the *hoca* largely underground. In the course of fieldwork, there was no more prominent yet elusive figure than the *cinci hoca*.

Repeatedly, and with striking consistency, however, *cinci hoca* after *cinci hoca* were caught in compromising positions on the national news. No less frequently than once a month, news broadcasts featured a story involving a *hoca*, with trailers repeated throughout the show until the final revelation of yet another *cinci hoca*'s improprieties. The distinct pattern and recurrent themes of news reports featuring the *cinci hoca* are illustrated in the following two accounts:

ShowTV, 20 October 1999: As the central teaser of the evening news program, commercial breaks and transitions between segments are filled with video and audio clips proclaiming “once again a *cinci hoca*, once again a sexual harassing.” When the segment finally begins, a common scenario unfolds: a female complainant carrying a concealed camera (supplied by the ShowTV crew) reveals an older man, a *cinci hoca* living in an impoverished neighborhood, as a fraud. After entering the building, the hidden camera shows the complainant entering a small room where the *hoca* receives visitors. Once seated, the *hoca* places his hands across the upper part of her chest and on her back as he begins to pray. Periodically he blows over her. He then begins to pray over sugar, again putting his hands across her upper chest and back. At this point, she begins to express discomfort over the way she is being touched. When the treatment is complete and he tells her that we wants 50 million lira [U.S. \$105] in total, she holds forth a 5 million lira note. Repeatedly, she extends the note, he takes it, and she snatches it back. Intermittently, she pushes the *muska* he prepared for her into the camera. [In all of this, it is clear that she is working the camera.] She then allows him to keep the 5 million lira, telling him that she already gave him 20 million and will give him the rest if she gets better. Transitioning to footage recorded on an unconcealed camera, ShowTV interviews the complainant and follows her into the *hoca*’s house as she confronts him. The segment concludes with a visit to an “expert” who can read the *muska*’s Arabic script.

StarTV, 4 February 2000: Tellingly placed between stories about the discovery of a corpse in Adana (one of many murders linked to Hezbollah) and the Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party),²⁴ the *cinci hoca* segment begins with a hidden camera entering a room full of men waiting to see a *hoca*. In a side room, a group of women can be seen praying. As the camera enters, the *hoca* can be heard praying in another room. After rough and blurry footage shows the person with the hidden camera enter the room where the *hoca* receives visitors, the camera cuts to the building’s exterior where a van of gendarmes arrive. Between six and eight gendarmes file out. The cameraman follows them inside, pausing briefly over a pile of shoes (10–15 pair) at the door. Capturing the startled look of several waiting patients as they walk in, the gendarmes and news crew proceed directly to the *hoca*’s office, demanding his identification papers. They pick up a stack of papers, with the same phrase, in Arabic, repeated over and over. They then seize two, much larger stacks of paper (approximately six inches tall each). The camera again pauses briefly on several jars of herbs on the table. Over the footage runs a narrative explaining that the *hoca* considered himself to have much knowledge, the knowledge of a doctor, but no training (*bilgim çok, eğitim yok*). As in reports of drug confiscations or the infiltration of cells of militant Islamists or leftists—where weapons, propaganda, and paraphernalia are displayed on a table at the police station—the segment cuts to a table holding a copy of *Gizli İlimler*²⁵ and a handful of packets containing prescription medicine.

Although many dismiss stations such as ShowTV and StarTV as sensationalizing media organizations that can be only loosely described as providing news, they are nonetheless hugely popular. ShowTV and StarTV, with respective ratings of 58.8 percent and 54.6 percent, were ranked as the third and fourth most popular channels (out of a total of sixteen private television channels broadcasting nationally) at the end of 1997.²⁶ The popularity of *cinci hoca* scandals in the print media is also worthy of note. Based on a recent national survey, 62 percent of men and 32 percent of women nationwide read newspapers or magazines weekly, and most likely more often.²⁷ Furthermore, even the “most serious broadcast agencies,” as one contributor to the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* explained, have not stayed away from the lure of the *hoca*.²⁸

As opposed to the Cüneyt Arkin episode, however, rarely does such reporting simply conclude with a reporter leaving. Rather, they commonly—if not inevitably, for this

is part of their script—come to a resolution with state intervention and the appearance of the police or a gendarmerie. In unraveling the multiple themes that converge around the *cinci hoca*, the following discussion will be framed by the dominant motifs of *cinci hoca* scandals, two themes already evident in the earlier excerpts and themselves the universal trappings of news scandal: sex and money. Although historically these are not unfamiliar themes to be associated with the *cinci hoca*, their content and details reveal a shifting set of contemporary social, political, and economic conditions.

SEX: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE *HOCA*

The association of *hocas* with sexual impropriety runs through an array of settings—from newspaper reporting to television news broadcasts, from arguing and joking on street corners to pornographic websites.²⁹ Take a cartoon that appeared in the 21 January 1997 issue of the secular, left-wing daily *Cumhuriyet* (Figure 1).³⁰ This cartoon lends itself to several interpretations. The conventional reading would focus upon the duplicity and hypocrisy of its central characters: the immoral conduct of the religious revealing piety as but an outward pretense. As such, it follows a recurrent trope that juxtaposes a religious exterior with its underlying immorality. Widely circulating stories of covered young women wearing tight jeans beneath their modest outer garments is perhaps the most common version of this juxtaposition. In this case, it is the image of the woman lifting up the most concealing form of Islamic dress (itself rare in Turkey) to show her naked body (itself marked with Arabic script). A similar play between exterior and interior can be seen in the turbaned mask that the *hoca* has discarded so that he can “exorcise her *cin*.” Although this is undoubtedly a critical aspect of the cartoon’s humor, I want to focus on the dynamic of the relationship between characters and the inversions of authority on which its humor relies.

In this regard, the specific context of the cartoon is significant. Published in 1997, it appeared alongside the arrest and trial of Ali Kalkançı, an infamous figure labeled a *cinci hoca* who was accused of illicit sexual behavior with a young female follower, Fadime Şahin. Although Kalkançı worked on a much grander scale than the local *hocas* of the neighborhoods where I conducted research and unlike the local *cinci hoca* in that he assumed the position of leader of a religious order, or *tarikât*, and was also referred to as a shaykh, he was notwithstanding depicted as a *cinci hoca* and thereby instrumental in reinforcing popular, daily images of the *cinci hoca* as lustful, indecent, and licentious.

At the end of 1996, based on statements from a young female follower named Fadime Şahin, Ali Kalkançı was arrested. As the mainstream secularist newspaper *Milliyet* recalls, “The fearless words of Fadime Şahin about *tarikats* and fake shaykhs created the effect of a bomb.”³¹ At the opening of his criminal trial, he was officially charged with “violating a person over 15 years of age by using force, violence, or threat.”³² Meanwhile, other charges (civil offenses of getting married in a religious ceremony, gathering unlawful support, fraud, and opposing the law prohibiting dervish lodges) were imminent. As the trial began and investigations intensified, the power and influence of Ali Kalkançı was found to far exceed expectations. In addition to

having built a significant following, particularly among businessmen and young women, he had vast holdings in numerous companies, connections with high-ranking government officials, and intimate associations with several “radical” Islamist groups. As befits a paradigmatic *cinci hoca*, he was “unimaginably” wealthy, powerful, and libidinous.

Throughout the trial, Fadime Şahin’s tearful face filled television screens as she explained that she had been lied to, that he had taken advantage of her sexually, and that she was now a ruined woman. The explicit details of their relationship only came out later, with the publication of her memoir in August 1997, not a year after Kalkancı’s arrest.³³ In it, after broadly tracing the trajectory of her life—highlighting themes of poverty and *gecekondu* life already commonly associated with the *cinci hoca*—she reveals her steadily intensifying devotion to Ali Kalkancı. She eventually becomes “married” to him (*imam nikâhu*), although not legally,³⁴ and after reporting to the police that she had been raped, he was arrested. The trial, and the events that unraveled around it, assumed a prominent position in newspapers for months before and after the trial. In addition to continual reporting on the sordid details of their relationship, there was an onslaught of commentaries and editorials about Ali Kalkancı, as a *cinci hoca*, and Fadime Şahin, as a victim of his sexual allure. In *Milliyet* alone, there were some eleven commentaries or editorials in a two-month period talking about Kalkancı and Şahin. Most involved explicit associations between the broader category of *cinci hoca* and themes of nudity, illegality, and sex.

In the outpouring of editorials and reporting that accompanied the trial, a broad set of themes, associations, and anxieties were drawn into debates over the *cinci hoca*. Duygu Asena, for instance, took the opportunity to promote “imaginary sex” on the Internet for Turkey’s youth in order to release their stifled sexual desires. She went on to lament hearing time and again “how many times a day, with whom, and how the young girl from wherever makes love with the frauds that are taken to be religious men and with whom they marry (*imam nikâhu*) in order to more freely love.”³⁵ Elsewhere, Şahin Alpay used the events around Kalkancı’s trial as a means for understanding the implications of a “sexual revolution” for Turkey, specifically among the religiously conservative segments of Turkish society.³⁶ Another columnist writing for *Milliyet*, Metin Toker, complained that television watching had “turned to torture” because of the incessant sensationalism it promoted. “Tomorrow,” as he joked, “nude Aczmendi Muslim first, wearisome chatterer Fadime second.”³⁷

Ali Kalkancı fulfilled all the contemptible expectations one had of the *cinci hoca* and, in this regard, the implications of his trial extend well beyond him. Although Kalkancı and Şahin represent a prominent case, the images of the *cinci hoca*’s sexually libidinous behavior that fueled it are not exceptional. If anything, the Kalkancı–Şahin case amplified preexisting sentiments. Television and print media, in scandal after scandal, reproduce the image of the lustful and indecent *cinci hoca*. Recall, for instance, both the news program described earlier (its emphasis on the *hoca*’s touching of the patient’s chest) and the cartoon in which the young (covered) woman receives “treatment” from an impotent *hoca* (Figure 1). The association between the *cinci hoca* and sexual licentiousness has become so commonplace that the phrase the cartoon used to describe the ritual practice of the *hoca*—the exorcising of *cin* (*cin çıkartma*, lit. “extracting *cin*”)—has entered

GADDAR DAVUT NURI KURTCEBE

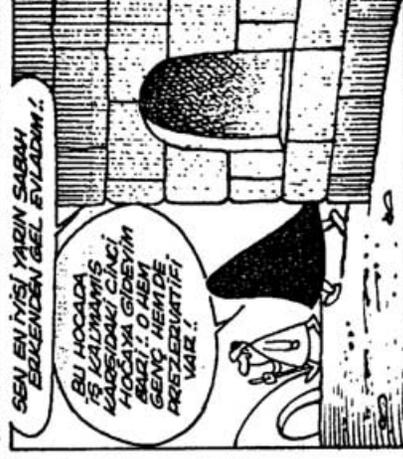
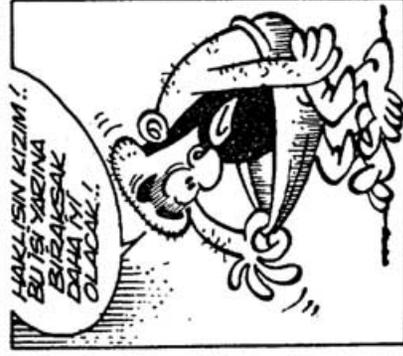
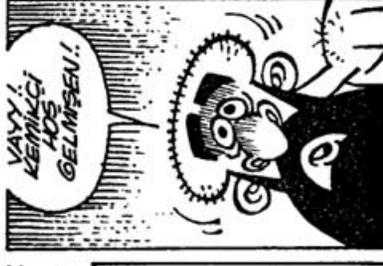


FIGURE 1. Gaddar Davut by Nuri Kurtcebe, *Cumhuriyet Newspaper*. Used with permission of the artist, Nuri Kurtcebe.

Woman: My *hoca*, when will this *cin* leave? I already went hot all over by God.

Hoca: Be patient dear! It'll surely go! You think this is easy? We've been here since morning exorcizing *cin*. And what's more, it turns out that your *cin* are really big! How marvelous, where were you raised to get *cin* like this, puff-puff, puff-puff!

Kemikçi: Hey you, you dishonorable wretch! Still up to the same chicaneries, huh! Bravo to you!

Hoca: Oh! Kemikçi (bone-setter), welcome!

Woman: My *hoca*, it looks like you aren't going to be able to exorcize these *cin* today!

Hoca: You're right my girl! If we leave this work until tomorrow, it'll be better.

Hoca: You had best come early tomorrow morning!

Woman: Apparently this *hoca* isn't up for the job [i.e., impotent]. I'll go to the *hoca* across the way at least! He is both young *and* has a condom!

popular language as an idiom for sexual intercourse. A series of satirical diary entries of a “young female member of a *tarikat*” published in the popular, leftist satirical magazine *Dinozor* illustrates this well³⁸:

April 12, 1996: My toothache has gotten much worse. My mother said, “Going to the public hospital in the morning, then taking a number, then getting in line, that is too hard. Come, I’m taking you to the Shaykh.” We went. The Shaykh looked at me and said, “I am exactly what you need. What you have is not for doctors.” Then he mixed two colorless liquids together. From that a juice that was white like milk appeared.³⁹ I poured it in my mouth and swallowed it. My head began to spin a little. My toothache went away.

May 21, 1996: I began to go continuously to the Shaykh’s *tekke*. When my toothache continued, the Shaykh had said, “You have *cin*, they need to be exorcized.” Today, everyone except me was sent to the Egyptian bazaar to get supplies for *uskas*. The two of us remained alone. He had me take my clothes off. And he undressed himself. We were spotlessly clean, immaculate. He read prayers. Then we got into bed and extracted *cin*. Oh, it was beautiful.

June 15, 1996: So I could more easily exorcize *cin* with the Shaykh, we got married [*imam nikâhu*]. In the ceremony, the Shaykh’s witness was a *cin* named Abuzer, and mine was Peter Pan. At the reception after the ceremony, Azrael [Angel of Death] gave us a little concert. The gold embroidered bath towel set that Medium Memiş⁴⁰ sent was eye-catching.

The entries continue with the *hoca* losing interest in her. She becomes depressed, and her mother takes her to other *cinci hoca*. When one *hoca* finally says she had *cin* that needed to be exorcized, she writes, “Oh, the hope for my troubles is this man.” Soon after again undergoing a religious marriage ceremony (*imam nikâhu*), he is arrested and she enters the media spotlight.

A great deal can be said about the case of Ali Kalkancı, as well as the outpouring of representations of *cinci hocas* in the media coverage that followed. On the one hand, humorous cartoons and satirical diaries found in leftist media organizations are clearly lampooning the surging presence and political influence of pro-Islamists within state politics. Portraying the religiously conservative (who are presumed to be supporters of Islamist political parties) as immoral, duplicitous, and lacking in self-control serves both as a source of humor and, in its indignation, as a form of critique. To return to the interactional dynamic captured in Figure 1, the cartoon’s humor relies on an inversion of status and authority: instead of the dominating elder male and submissive young woman, one encounters the weak and impotent religious man confronting a strong and independent woman. In contrast, especially in the less humorous instances of real life sexual harassment, the cartoon’s inversion becomes unsettling.

In media scandals that portray actual young women falling prey to the uncontrollable sexual power of the *hoca*, the intent is not humor. Moreover, they speak toward something more than the need to protect helpless young women. If Ali Kalkancı inspired dread not only in terms of moral fear (as someone who could seduce young women) but also in regard to political power (with his associations to radical Islamists and their perceived threat to the viability of contemporary state structures of authority), a perhaps not obvious question should be posed: exactly whose authority is threatening or being threatened in accusations of sexual misconduct? In other words, is it only a question of the *cinci hoca*’s authority and persuasiveness animating media attacks?

In an analysis of satirical magazines in Istanbul (the magazine *Dinozor* being one), Ayşe Öncü notes a similar set of concerns in relation to the cartoon figure of the *maganda*—“a ribald and bawdy . . . figure of derision who is totally oblivious to his own uncouth and offensive masculinity.”⁴¹ Situating this term’s invention in the late 1980s, coinciding with Turkey’s neoliberal integration into a global culture of consumerism, she argues that “this was also a historical moment when the dangers of sexuality, publicly flaunted as a form of commercial consumption, emerged as a major focus of public anxiety, and produced an extended discourse on its problems.”⁴² Figure 1 is clearly informed by this genre of humor. In addition to highlighting the multiple ways in which anxiety over sexuality infused public imagination, Öncü’s analysis locates this discussion within a specific set of historical and economic conditions.

It is within the same set of historical and economic conditions that we must locate the contemporary *cinci hoca* scandal. In this case, however, it taps not only into concerns over public sexuality and consumerism, but also into transformations in structures of gender authority. Note, for instance, that the woman in both the cartoon and the satirical diary were not merely passive objects of the *hoca*’s persuasion. In each, it is ultimately the principal character—the young woman—leaving one *hoca* to go to another. With the final cell of the cartoon in particular, the story of an elder man’s exploitation of a powerless young woman becomes radically subverted when the woman reveals her complicity in the affair—that she is not simply being deceived—as she leaves in search of another *hoca* who will satisfy her (and wear a condom). In this respect, what is threatening is neither merely the *hoca*’s sexual appetite nor necessarily the woman’s desire, but rather her willingness to abandon one man for another.

A similar dynamic appeared in the earlier mentioned connection between the *cinci hoca*, religious marriage (*imam nikâhi*), and Turkey’s “sexual revolution.”⁴³ As Şahin Alpay argues, one finds the daughters of religious families using *imam nikâhi* as a means of achieving the sexual freedoms they see other youth having. In this respect, the use of *imam nikâhi* represents the appropriation of older social practices for contemporary demands. As opposed to Alpay’s emphasis on sexual desire as the motivating force behind *imam nikâhi*, however, the demands underlying “sexual freedom” have as much, if not more, to do with authority than they do with sexual desire—the authority and ability to choose one’s sexual partner. Although caution should be taken in generalizing Alpay’s argument (because the extent to which *imam nikâhi* is practiced is unclear, and it is likely that *imam nikâhi* is utilized most often to assert men’s authority), it nonetheless reveals how charged struggles over transforming notions of sexual propriety and their threat to inherited norms of social authority converge around the image of the *cinci hoca*.

Representations of lascivious *hocas* and their desirous clients should not be read simply as critiques of invading Western notions of sexuality, pleasure, and desire. Beyond problems of identifying what constitutes Western desire, this was not how they were received within the neighborhoods where I worked. Although linked, sexual pleasure is not viewed as being problematic—as long as it is within marriage. In addition, it is in marriage and associated expectations of women’s submission where the first dimension of our discussion becomes entangled with the *cinci hoca*. For instance, a news segment airing on ShowTV that described a *cinci hoca* being hacked to pieces for luring away a man’s wife concerns not only the dangerous influence of a *hoca*’s power, but also the woman’s willful decision (however constrained) to leave her husband for another

man. Hence, on the one hand, the public dismemberment of the *cinci hoca* stands clearly as an example and warning to other *cinci hoca*. On the other hand, and although we can only speculate about the fate of the man's wife, it captures a sense of threat to men's authority emerging from ongoing societal transformations. Although on the surface cartoons and satirical diaries appearing in secularist and leftist publications are utilizing accusations of widespread immorality to deride those regarded as religiously conservative (who are linked, however inaccurately, to the *cinci hoca*), a deeper anxiety courses through the humor. The *cinci hoca*, as represented in the news media, is a figure that threatens patriarchal structures of authority—submission both to one's father and one's husband—and, in his sexual relations with young women, signifies the rapidly transforming position of women within homes, the labor force, and the global economy.

MONEY: ECONOMIES OF HEALING

Inextricable from the sexual implications of the *cinci hoca* scandal, recurrent images of the *cinci hoca* as a swindling profiteer out to make a quick profit at the expense of vulnerable patients highlight a further set of anxieties arising from the economic transformations of the 1980s and, in particular, the uneven and frequently destructive repercussions of the opening of Turkey's economy to the vagaries of global capital. While charges of defrauding helpless patients have a long history, they take on a particular dynamic in contemporary Turkey that marks their divergence from older scandals. In addition, because these accusations are not unfounded, the media's focus on the *cinci hocas'* financial exploitation serves to confirm frustrations over making sense of the newly emerging economic order.

Broadly speaking, the practice of the *cinci hoca* has undergone a process of deprofessionalization and reprofessionalization since roughly the mid-19th century. Under the Ottoman Empire, many persons practicing the forms of healing represented by the *cinci hoca* emerged from or claimed association with such state-authorized institutions as the *medrese* (theological school or *medresseh*). Although such practices as the exorcising of jinn was certainly not part of formal *medrese* education (being long regarded as against orthodoxy by the ulema), oral historical data show that many *medrese* trained clerics—as they traveled into villages—regularly engaged in such practices. It is in such official training in or claimed association with the *medrese* that we see resonances of professionalism. As *tarikats* were banned (but certainly not eliminated) and *medreses* closed under the secularization reforms of the early Republic, however, the claiming of authority based on association with religious institutions took on radically different implications. In the past several decades, however, the *cinci hoca* has become reprofessionalized under alternative models of professionalism—what some refer to as the *ticaret*, or commercial, *hoca*. Furthermore, with the political and economic transformations of the 1980s—most notably, a military coup and the radical liberalization of the economy—this reprofessionalizing process has greatly accelerated and resulted in the proliferation of self-taught *cinci hoca* (although they may have received sanctioning from a noted religious figure).

Despite increasing commercialization, the *cinci hoca's* historical association with the religious establishment remains relevant for how the *cinci hoca* is positioned in relation to contemporary Islamist political mobilization. For committed Kemalists who regard themselves as defenders of Turkey's secularist future, these healers (and their patients)

epitomize the increasing influence of an Islamist politics that is viewed as oppositional to the ideals of secular democracy. While the association between figures such as the *cinci hoca* and either Islamist politics or religious conservatism is far from self-evident, it nevertheless persists as a popular trope for denigrating Islamist politics. That the media fervor created by the Kalkancı scandal emerged soon after the leader of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party, Necemettin Erbakan, became Turkey's prime minister is highly suggestive in this respect. When one recognizes that many forms of religious healing have historical roots within the same religiopolitical structures that were suppressed with the establishment of Turkey and that are currently being mobilized within pro-Islamist circles, it is not surprising that religious forms of healing have emerged as targets of widespread antagonism.

The *cinci hoca's* new professionalism must also be understood in relation to the history of biomedicine in Turkey. Alongside commercialism as an emblem of authority, *hocas* also commonly employ medical symbols, rhetoric, and paraphernalia in their cultivation of therapeutic legitimacy. It is not surprising that physicians roundly condemn such practices as ignorant and potentially harmful to patients. This is not, however, simply an instance of concern for or competition over patients; the medical establishment's critique of the *hoca*, in other words, is not merely a medical critique. When one recognizes that the modernization of Turkey's medical system was a prominent site for the articulation of the state's broader modernization project (encoding many of its central themes, such as individual autonomy, rationality, faith in scientific progress, and the health of the national body), medicine's critique of religious healing folds into the larger project of marginalizing particular religious and social practices so that they can be supplanted in the name of a national image befitting a properly modern nation.⁴⁴

Countering portrayals of the *cinci hoca* as antimodern, many contemporary *hoca* have thus turned toward commercialized and professionalized models of self-legitimation. In other words, and in sharp contrast to past *cinci hocas'* reliance on *medrese* authorization (or claims to *medrese* association), there are now healers associating legitimacy (as a healer) with the legitimacy of the financial transaction. On one occasion, while visiting Ahmet, a *cinci hoca*, one of these scandals serendipitously appeared on television. Clearly incensed, he explained:

If you have a certificate [of taxation] . . . this, this is fake. Being that they didn't pay [taxes]. If you submit an application and get a free certificate [*serbest kağıt*] . . . How is this like this. Where in the world are these fakes? When you open a shop, you pay taxes, right? And I am paying. You are bound to taxes, and I am bound. If you are doing commerce are you bound? I am. Where is this swindler? Where is this?

For Ahmet, the *cinci hoca* on television was counterfeit precisely because she did not pay taxes, although Ahmet still did all he could to avoid paying them, often cutting receipts showing sums much lower than actually paid. This in itself, however, reflected standard business practice. In addition to intriguing implications for understanding the role of the state in legitimating healer-patient relations (i.e., are they taxable?), Ahmet's comments highlight how business models of professionalism are impacting *cinci hocas'* struggle to reproduce their own legitimacy. For Ahmet, issues of taxation communicated his legitimacy as both a healer and a businessman. As this suggests, accompanying a series of broad structural transformations in Turkey, an array of novel modes of capital

accumulation have emerged. With this, religious healing has become a legitimate (for some) source of income.

In the case of Ali Kalkancı, the troubling scope of his financial exploitation (in the form of a massive accumulation of wealth) slowly emerged to reveal, at the opening of his trial in 1997, that he was part owner of six companies, ranging “from medicine to food, from construction to textiles and leathers.”⁴⁵ Although local healers work on a far smaller scale than Kalkancı, they nonetheless become trapped within similar sets of associations. If a *cinci hoca* such as Ali Kalkancı can accumulate such wealth based on the manipulation of vulnerable individuals, who else might be out there? While the sexual appetite of the *hoca* is typically the most sensationalized justification for disapproving of them, more pervasive perhaps is a critique of their unbridled commercialism. Furthermore, whereas accusations of sexual impropriety are somewhat specific to the *cinci hoca*, complaints about healers treating something spiritual as a form of business (and hence as a path to wealth) represents a widespread discourse through which religious forms of healing more generally are criticized.

In the context of daily discussions and arguments, then, it is the ways by which money is received and the substantial amounts of capital the *hoca* is able to amass that causes consternation. It is not surprising that similar indictments can be found throughout media accounts of fraudulent *cinci hoca*. In the ShowTV news segment discussed earlier, for example, considerable attention was drawn to the amounts of money being paid and the haggling that followed. In addition to gaining media attention, the financial dimension of the *cinci hocas*' practices—and the charges of fraud and swindling (*dolandırıcılık*) that frequently ensue—is what most commonly serve as the justification for their arrest. A 5 December 2000 article in *Milliyet* Newspaper captures the images of the undeservedly affluent *cinci hoca* and his resulting arrest well:

The Channel-D news crew that moved into action based on a tip made an appointment with Hocaoğlu to have him write a *muska*. According to the official announcement of the crime, The Special News team went to the *cinci hoca*'s luxury home in Karaduvar neighborhood that had a pool and resembled a villa set within a grove of citrus trees. Earlier, a female reporter who had given the *cinci hoca* 200 million lira . . . had wanted a *muska* written under the pretext of having a disagreement with her husband. Hocaoğlu, after getting the money, began to perform a pseudo *cin*-summoning session. The police in the area that had come as a precaution caught the fake *hoca* red-handed.⁴⁶

To such specific accounts can be added recurrent depictions of “swindling,” “hoodwinking,” “fake,” and “fraudulent” *cinci hoca* “filling their pockets” and driving “solid gold Mercedes” with the public’s money.⁴⁷ The central characteristic of all of these stories is the precise recording of the amount of money that had been exchanged. For example, a 23 April 1999 story about a physician referring patients to a *cinci hoca* explained, “In authorized denunciations, it was clarified that they wanted 200 million lira at the start of the session and that it would be divided between them.”⁴⁸ Elsewhere, the same newspaper recounts a *cinci hoca* swindling U.S. \$50,000 from hadj candidates.⁴⁹ In addition, more recently, *Hürriyet* reported a *cinci hoca* “snatching” 20 billion lira from a group of “customers” who included “professors, doctors, wealthy businessmen, and unemployed persons he was to find jobs for.”⁵⁰

When it comes to the *cinci hoca*'s insatiable lust for money, however, there is a specificity to the accusations that distinguish them from earlier scandals and locate them within particular political-economic conditions. In media accounts, as well as in repeated conversations in the course of fieldwork, critiques were grounded in two interrelated dimensions of the *hoca*'s finances: the modes of exchange that framed healer-patient relationships and the *hoca*'s ability to accumulate capital. In other words, although they draw on longstanding idioms of fraudulence and quackery, contemporary criticisms focus on the commercial nature of the *cinci hoca*'s interactions, where money is exchanged for services, coupled with distrust about his or her ability to prosper financially (in trying economic times). "If the *cinci hoca* was a real healer," as countless people explained, "he wouldn't take money."⁵¹ Because the media accounts ridiculing the commercialism of the *hoca* are largely correct—many *hoca* are in fact (successful) entrepreneurs—the *cinci hoca* is able to condense widely felt frustrations over recent societal transformations.

Although the interpenetration of capital economies and religious forms of healing, such as the *cinci hoca*, is far from surprising as an outgrowth of Turkey's capitalist development, it has nonetheless given rise to novel reconfigurations of the play between corruption and legitimacy, scandal and authenticity. As the case of Ahmet instantiates—where being a *cinci hoca* is a legitimate business, and hence taxable—the same forces that opened a space within the Turkish economy for a commercialized economy of healing have also created the potential for additional forms of exploitation, and legitimacy. For many, this form of legitimization is deeply unsettling and, through scandal after scandal, it becomes publicly expressed through accusations of corrupt claims to religious authority and authenticity. Around images of *cinci hoca* as exploitative profiteers thus converge a wider set of anxieties linked to the impact of Turkish capitalist development and, in particular, the dramatic restructuring of the Turkish economy in the 1980s. Through scandals that portray the ruthless and shameless greed of the *cinci hoca*—"Real healers wouldn't take money" (at least, not in the ways and to the degree that they now do)—one encounters themes of the corrupting nature of money, the degradation of an "authentic" Turkish culture (a mourned for village life), and a palpable fear of an imminent disenchantment of the world.

Paralleling the anxieties over the rationalization of the economy and its feared effects on cultural life, reactions to the *cinci hoca* scandal also reflect a bewilderment over and frustration with the seeming irrationality of the new economy. In attempting to gain access to the promised economic fruit of transformed economic policy, people, especially in the types of poor neighborhoods where research was conducted, were continually thwarted in their efforts to obtain secure employment, establish new businesses, and trade successfully in the stock market. More often than not, they persisted in the same economic condition as they had, but now with the burden of an unfulfilled dream. Yet, according to the news, the *cinci hoca* has been able to make it big. In this light, a question posed earlier can be reworded: if an ignorant man such as Ali Kalkanlı can accumulate such wealth, *why can't I?* Thus, linked with melancholic sentiments of cultural loss and religious corruption, the *cinci hoca* scandal expresses frustration over something that should not be: not only were *cinci hocas* not meant to survive Turkish national development, they certainly were not supposed to represent a "legitimate" means of succeeding in the new economic order.

CONCLUSION: TELEVISION VIOLENCE AND THE TENACITY
OF ADVERTISING

Despite their popularity as objects of media derision, it is important to bear in mind that figures such as the *cinci hoca* are central dimensions of local health care systems and people (from all backgrounds) seek their assistance for a variety of reasons: for the treatment of problems not defined as treatable within biomedical settings; in instances where one has no access to or cannot afford biomedical treatment; or, most commonly, alongside biomedical treatments that are seen as overly impersonal and fraught with divisions of class and authority (divisions similarly encountered, for instance, in the *Babacan* episode). From this perspective, going to a *cinci hoca* for treatment is neither necessarily an act of devotion nor a consciously strategic act of resistance against the state, but a decision driven by the desire to receive appropriate and effective care. Such forms of healing are deeply embedded in social life and, against the ostensible hopes of many, show no signs of disappearing.

Yet, the tension between what is hoped for (i.e., how the *hoca* is imagined and represented in the media) and the actual practices of *cinci hoca* has run throughout this discussion. While the broader study from which this article emerges considers specifically how healers of various sorts reformulate religious authority in relation to overarching discourses aiming at their deligitimization, recognizing the interconnection between the real and the represented *hoca* is crucial for understanding how the media can function as a means of social surveillance. In its influence on how *hocas* are regarded and how *hocas* practice, the media stands as a productive and imaginative site for the policing of the disreputable and undesirable.

Many healers and patients, for instance, discussed repeated instances of spousal violence or fears thereof for either continuing to practice such modes of healing or seeking the *cinci hocas'* assistance, each time making explicit reference to media reporting that involved such figures as the *cinci hoca*. With the media attention drawn to *hocas*, individuals seeking their care not only run the risk of being the target of local suspicion and gossip but also gamble with being caught within a nationally broadcast exposé. In addition, especially in urban contexts, as people seeking the assistance of *cinci hoca* move more and more frequently through neighborhoods they do not know and whose residents do not know them, local systems of social surveillance have become less effective and decreasingly significant. In this sense, the *cinci hoca* scandal marks the nationalization of localized systems of surveillance, with the emerging community of the nation taking up its determined role as guardian within a reconfigured national village culture.

For this reason, the attack on the *cinci hoca* bears a historical genealogy within Turkey's project of modernization and aligns itself with a host of other discourses aimed at eradicating marginal social and religious practices regarded as contrary to the image of a modern nation. In this capacity, the critics that see these scandals as but a form of advertising are in some ways correct, albeit for the wrong reasons. As one columnist wrote, "One note to *Babacan* . . . his program has become a broadcast that advertises the veritable hoodwinker *hoca* and waters, caves, and homes that are said to be extraordinary."⁵² Returning to our opening epigraph, "[T]hey have been given extensive advertisement in newspapers and on television stations that seek to increase their circulation with dramatic news."⁵³ In their insistence on blaming the media for

promoting healers (through the very scandals that target them), these critics fail to ask why, exactly, the *cinci hoca* scandal makes for dramatic news. Thus, they take the properly modernist stance: these healers are antithetical to modernity and, because this is a modern country, they must not persist. For them, the presence of the *cinci hoca* is a symptom of the incompleteness of Turkish modernization and the *cinci hoca* persists at those sites where Turkey has failed to fully embrace modernity.

By framing the *hoca* as an anachronism, critics misread the relationship between the set of marginal religious practices represented by the *cinci hoca* and Turkish modernity. Writing about witchcraft in postcolonial Cameroon, Peter Geschiere, for instance, argues that witchcraft should not be conceptualized as a “traditional” obstacle to development; rather, in the close conceptual link between witchcraft and power, it represents a political and economic discourse located squarely within Cameroonian modernity.⁵⁴ Similarly, Jean and John Comaroff have written extensively about witchcraft discourse and ritual in Africa as an “especially likely response to contradictions created and (literally) engendered by processes of social, material, and cultural transformation, processes re-presented, rationalized, and authorized in the name of modernity.”⁵⁵ In each of these instances, witchcraft is not an anachronism but is instead a set of practices and discourses that is deeply enmeshed within the modern. By failing to recognize how embedded the figure of and discourse considering the *cinci hoca* are within contemporary political and economic conditions, media critics of the *cinci hoca* thereby underestimate the function that the scene of denunciation has come to assume.

That is, the critics ignore the simultaneously alluring and repulsive qualities of the *cinci hoca* both as the transgressor of prohibitions and as a particular knot within Turkish modernity that condenses a series of unsettling social anxieties. The figure of the *cinci hoca* thus points beyond the ostensible desire to eradicate “backward” and “ignorant” social practices. On the one hand, through the condemnation of *cinci hocas* (and their potential clientele), a set of prohibitions is asserted that constitute an ideal image of a modern, national community. On the other hand, such scandals hold the ability to condense a series of contentious debates concerning reconfiguring notions of sexual propriety, transforming economic conditions, a perceived threat to the institution of the family, the degradation of a social harmony issuing from an idealized village life, a resurgent Islamist political mobilization, and the implications of each of these for the persistence of inherited systems of authority. As an object of fascination and animosity, the *cinci hoca* becomes in many regards a necessary figure of Turkish modernity through which its boundaries are marked, its margins are enforced, and the unity of a national political imagination is rearticulated.

Rather than reading the image of the *cinci hoca* in relation to Turkish modernity as a symptom of its failure (the persistence of an underlying “traditional” core, as loathsome as it may be), I have taken it as a figure of modernity that serves to stage state authority and enact its position as sovereign protector. As such, the attempt to eliminate *cinci hocas* in the name of the modern transforms into a reliance on their presence so that they can then be disavowed. Not only is the *cinci hoca* not a threat to Turkish modernity and state authoritarianism, but the repeated performance of disavowal in many respects serves to sustain them. The actual elimination of figures such as the *cinci hoca* can thus be regarded as more of a threat to the imagined unity of Turkish modernity than their persistence.

NOTES

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¹Defining “modernity” is an inherently problematic endeavor that runs the risk of essentializing and reifying a complex and dynamic set of processes. However, my argument hinges not on what modernity is, but on what is clearly regarded as not belonging to the sphere of the modern. By examining figures and practices that are excluded or marginalized from modernity, we begin to gain an understanding of both its shifting boundaries and the ways in which they, in their exclusion, play a constituting role in the staging of the modern. My use of the term modernity is informed by Timothy Mitchell’s argument that modernity is defined by both its universalism as a project (its claims to uniqueness and unity) and its singularity as an always incomplete realization of the project: Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

²Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967).

³Bobby Sayyid, *The Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 1997).

⁴See, for instance, Ahmet Refik Altınay, *Samur Devri* (Istanbul: Kütüphane-i Hilmi, 1927), and M. Turhan Tan’s historical novel *Osmanlı Rasputini Cinci Hoca* (Istanbul: SLE Sühulet Kitabevi, 1938).

⁵F. Gökay, “Türkiye’nin Hijyen Mental ve Psikiyatri Sahasındaki Hizmetleri,” *Tıp Dünyası* 12 (1939): 4185–86; idem, “Hastaneler Mes’esi,” *Tıp Dünyası* 12 (1939): 4287–89.

⁶While one can identify numerous popular targets of media scandal—“corrupt” politicians, “militant” leftists, “militant” Islamists, Kurdish “separatists,” misguided youth (especially “satanists” accused of sacrificing neighborhood cats), “quack” doctors, prostitutes, and so forth—the *cinci hoca*’s unique position within a constellation of religious, political, and economic discourses (all transected by themes of authority and exploitation) makes it a particularly useful figure for thinking through Turkey’s staging of the modern.

⁷For a discussion of the relationship between religious healing and the history of medicine in Turkey, see Christopher Dole, “In the Shadows of Medicine and Modernity: Medical Integration and Secular Histories of Religious Healing in Turkey,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 28 (2004): 255–80.

⁸Many more terms are used to describe the *cinci hoca*, such as *muskacı* (writer of *muska*), *büyücü* (‘sorcerer’), and, at times, the more general *şifacı* (‘healer’).

⁹Particularly in light of the Kurdish separatist movement, local media is seen as but another means of establishing regional autonomy and thus threatening the unifying goals of Turkish nationalism. The struggle between MED-TV (a leading Kurdish-language broadcasting agency) and the Turkish state does well to highlight this resistance to local media: see “RTÜK Yerel Basına Ceza Yağdırdı,” *Hürriyet*, 16 January 2003. Of late, however, there does appear to be an increase in the availability of local news sources and programming.

¹⁰Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7.

¹¹The now classic analysis of the importance of the imagination in nationalism is Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

¹²Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 31.

¹³Interestingly, as well, it is acceptable to have a drum playing on television within the confines of the village.

¹⁴Cüneyt Arkin’s role in *Babacan* should be understood in relation to his long cinematic career, where he is easily one of the most recognizable figures in the history of Turkish film. Especially during the 1970s, his role as a great Turkish warrior capable of killing throngs of attackers with a single swing of a sword captured the imagination of a generation of Turkish youth and was critical in popularizing the nationalist

image of the Central Asian ethnic Turk endowed with superhuman strength and the natural disposition of a warrior.

¹⁵I use the term “mainstream secularist” to refer to a number of television stations (ATV, StarTV, ShowTV, etc.) and newspapers (*Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, etc.) that may not be explicitly prosecularist/laicist (although they frequently are) but that claim an objectivity that clearly works through the state’s normative secularist code.

¹⁶Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹⁷Stuart Hall, “Encoding/Decoding,” in *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128–38.

¹⁸I refer to “secularist” and “Islamist” not as exclusive oppositions. To say one neighborhood is pro-Islamist is not to imply that it is opposed to secularism. Nor is this intended to suggest that “secularist” and “Islamist” capture the full range of ideological, religious, and political positions available—within and without the neighborhoods. Despite their analytic imprecision, these terms stood as cogent social categories used by residents to characterize themselves and their neighborhoods. The distinction I draw between the two neighborhoods is most clearly reflected in their political alliances: where one overwhelmingly supported the Kemalist Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party), the other supported the Islamist Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party). Both neighborhoods were in the Mamak municipality of Ankara and reflected little, if any, class difference.

¹⁹See Lila Abu-Lughod, “Modern Subjects: Egyptian Melodrama and Postcolonial Difference,” in Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity*, 87–114; Purnima Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Faye Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, ed., *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For a consideration of the sociality of television use, see Ron Lembo, *Thinking through Television* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²⁰See Fatma Göçek, ed., *Political Cartoons in the Middle East* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 1998); Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Arab Comic Strips: Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

²¹Ginsburg et al., *Media Worlds*; Abu-Lughod, *Questions of Modernity*; Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics*.

²²Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics*.

²³*Ibid.*, Abu-Lughod, *Questions of Modernity*.

²⁴The *Fazilet Partisi*, or Virtue Party, is regarded as the pro-Islamist party that replaced the Welfare Party that came to power in 1996 when Necmettin Erbakan became prime minister. This party is often criticized by secularists as, at best, religiously conservative and, at worst, seeking to replace Turkey’s democratic state structures with Islamic law. In 2001, the Virtue Party was closed by the Constitutional Court.

²⁵*Gizli İlimler* is a popular and readily available book of ritual prescriptions that serves as a manual of sorts for many *cinci hoca*.

²⁶Not to be left behind in the Internet era, ShowTV’s website, ShowTVnet, has dedicated an entire portion of its news section to “hidden camera” segments in which three of its four subcategories (health, magic, and harassment) focus almost exclusively on the work of religious healers such as the *cinci hoca*. The fourth targets prostitution. See http://www.showtvnet.com/haber/gizli_kamera/.

²⁷*Turkish Demographic and Health Survey 1998* (Ankara: Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, 1999), 28.

²⁸Orhan Öztürk, “Cinciler, Dinciler ve Medya,” *Cumhuriyet*, 18 January 1997, 2.

²⁹It should be noted that female *cinci hoca* are rare and that I have never heard of a female *hoca* being criticized for inappropriate sexual behavior. They are not, however, as we shall soon see, immune to attacks based upon economic exploitation.

³⁰Nuri Kurtcebe, “Gaddar Davut,” *Cumhuriyet*, 21 January 1997.

³¹Tunca Bengin, “Sahte Tarikatların İçyüzü,” *Milliyet*, 24 August 1997.

³²Atilla Dışbudak, “Kalkancı Ağır Cezalık,” *Milliyet*, 28 January 1997.

³³Fadime Şahin, *Fadime Şahin’in Anıları: Sahte Tarikatların Perde Arkası* (Fadime Şahin’s Memoirs: Behind the Scenes [Curtain] of Fake Religious Orders) (Istanbul: AD Yayıncılık, 1997).

³⁴ *İmam nikâhu* refers to a wedding ceremony conducted by an imam. In secular Turkey it carries no legal weight. It is frequently used to bypass legal prohibitions such as taking more than one wife or engaging in premarital sexual relations.

³⁵ Duygu Asena, "Sanal Seks ve Fadime," *Milliyet*, 18 January 1997.

³⁶ Şahin Alpay, "Zina Çarpması," *Milliyet*, 16 January 1997.

³⁷ Metin Toket, "Haydi Hocam, Bastır!" *Milliyet*, 28 January 1997.

³⁸ Fikret Bekler, "Tarikatçı Bir Genç Kızın Hatıra Defteri'nden," *Dinozor*, 15 January 1997.

³⁹ This is a reference to the Turkish alcohol *rakı*, which, when mixed with water, turns white. It is referred to by some as "lion's milk."

⁴⁰ Medium Memiş is a popular medium who often appeared on television.

⁴¹ Ayşe Öncü, "Global Consumerism, Sexuality as Public Spectacle, and the Cultural Remapping of Istanbul in the 1990s," in *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 174.

⁴² Öncü, "Global Consumerism," 173.

⁴³ Alpay, "Zina Çarpması."

⁴⁴ Dole, "In the Shadows of Medicine and Modernity."

⁴⁵ Cem Eser, "Benzinciye Baskın," *Sabah*, 22 January 1997.

⁴⁶ Ali Ekber Şendha, "'Cin'i Hocayı Sattı," *Milliyet*, 5 December 2000.

⁴⁷ M. Ali Birand, "Bu Kargaşayı Ancak Refah Temizleyebilir," *Sabah*, 20 January 1997; Nurettin Kurt, "Sosyete Üfürükçüsü Milyarları Üfürmüştü," *Hürriyet*, 26 January 2002.

⁴⁸ "Üfürükçüler İşbaşında," *Radikal*, 23 March 1999.

⁴⁹ "Hacıları da Dolandırmış," *Radikal*, 12 January 2000.

⁵⁰ Kurt, "Sosyete Üfürükçüsü Milyarları Üfürmüştü."

⁵¹ Although most healers receive remuneration of some sort, the "real" healers do not ask for them. In these cases, money is not typically exchanged as in a commercial interaction, in exchange for services. It is rather understood as a gift that is discretely left for or passed on to the healer.

⁵² Hürol Dağdelen, "O Günler," *Yeni Asır*, 21 January 2000.

⁵³ Öztürk, "Cinciler, Dinciler ve Medya," 2.

⁵⁴ Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997).

⁵⁵ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Introduction," in *Modernity and Its Malcontents*, ed. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), xxx. For further writing on this topic, see Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony," *American Ethnologist* 26 (1999): 279–303; idem, "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial Capitalism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 (2002): 779–805. For a collection of essays indebted to the approaches of Geschiere, Comaroff, and Comaroff, see Birgit Meyer and Peter Pels, ed., *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003). To this could also be added Michael Taussig's description of the power of magic and sorcery in colonial imaginations of Indian wildness in southwest Colombia in *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).