Orientalism and Invention of Tradition in Cultural Concept of Ziya Gökalp

Yücel Karadaş[*]

Department of Sociology, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey

Abstract

*Ziya Gökalp is an important figure of the Turkish-Ottoman modernization era who not only played an important role in the formation of Turkish nationalism but also poineered the foundation of sociology in Turkey. He is also one of the most outstanding figures who had a great influence on the ideological paradigm of the Republic of Turkey. The present article studies Ziya Gökalp's differentiation between culture (*hars*) and civilization (*medeniyet*) and his invention of tradition when theorizing Turkish nationalism. The article will also handle the orientalist influence on this invention of tradition and differentiation between culture and civilization. It indicates how Gökalp differentiates culture from civilization by taking civilization as the scientific and technological plane that should be open to orientalist influence, and* hars *as the plane that distinguishes the Turkish nation from other nations and thus should be protected from Western influence. This article argues that though Gökalp takes* hars *as the core principle of the Turkish nation, he thoerizes this plane by inventing tradition and via the concepts that arose in the 19th century ideological atmosphere of Europe.*

*Keywords: culture (*hars*), civilization (*medeniyet*), Turkish nationalism, Orientalism, invention of tradition*

Introduction

Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) was one of the most outstanding figures of the late Ottoman period and had a great effect on the ideological plane of not only the period he lived in but also in the period after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. He is known with his nationalistic ideas and played an important role in the formation of nationalistic ideas before and after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. His nationalistic ideas were tinted with Islamism, which was the dominant ideology of the period of the late Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit II (reigned between 1876 and 1909). Thus, studying Ziya Gökalp's ideas will help a better understanding of Turkish nationalism and the political movements of the late Ottoman period and the Republic of Turkey. This article aims to shed light on Ziya Gökalp's nationalistic ideas and

[*] Corresponding author: Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Gaziantep University, Şehitkamil, 27310 Gaziantep, Turkey (**e-mail:** yucelkaradas@gmail.com)

pinpoint their role in the Ottoman-Turkish modernization. The article will study the culture-civilization (*hars-medeniyet*) dichotomy in Gökalp's nationalistic ideas and his invention of tradition and the orientalist influences in this dichotomy. Studying the orientalist influences and the invention of tradition in this dichotomy will contribute to a better understanding of Turkish nationalism, the official ideology of the Republic of Turkey and the political movements of the second half of the 20th century of Turkish history based on the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (*Türk-İslam Sentezi*).

Ziya Gökalp lived during the transition from the Ottoman State to the Turkish Republic. As he lived in this historical turn, his ideas bore the traces of both periods and his writings reflect all the ideological and political tensions of the time. In that respect, although his writings inspired the national, cultural and educational policies of the Republic of Turkey, as an Ottoman thinker, Gökalp disagreed with the administration of the Republic particularly on the issues of Islam and Caliphate.

Gökalp also relied on the background knowledge acquired in the process of westernization in the last phase of the Ottoman Empire that culminated in the issue of the *Tanzimat Fermanı* in 1839, and he played a critical role in the transmission of this knowledge to the forthcoming generations. Gökalp's unique position as an Ottoman and Turkish intellectual and his ideas on the westernization process opens a ground for us to understand the contents and practices of the westernization both in the Ottoman State and the Republic of Turkey.

Historical Background

Partha Chattarjee (1993) argues that anticolonial nationalism created its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it began its political battle with the imperial power and it did this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the 'outside,' of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an 'inner' domain bearing the 'essential' marks of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. According to Chattarjee, although the spiritual plane is defined as something that should remain as it is, here nationalism 'launches its most powerful, creative, and historically significant project: to fashion a 'a modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western.' The fears caused by colonization and the ideas emerged against it in non-Western societies have played a critical role, Chattarjee suggests, in the designation of this 'difference' from the West in the spiritual plane (Chattarjee, 2003).

When handled in this context, the roots of Ziya Gökalp's discrimination between culture and civilization can be traced back to the distinction between the material and spiritual planes made at the very beginning of the Ottoman modernization. However, from the beginning of modernization in the Ottoman society up to Ziya Gökalp's time Islam was perceived as the most important factor of the spiritual plane. Islam was taken on the one hand as the ground where the difference from the West would be designated and on the other as a realm of unification used for the risk of disintegration that might take place due to practices of modernization. The Ottoman intellectuals and politicians did not give credit to the idea proposed by the founders of sociology in Europe that enlightenment and modernization emerged as reaction to religion. The factors of Christianity that

impeded social development gave rise to a conflict in European history between supporters of religion and modernization. The Islam, according to the Ottoman intellectuals and politicians, was in essence not against development but stimulated it. Moving from this stand, although westernization took place in the material plane where the superiority of the West was unquestionable, it was thought that Islamic values should be protected. Ideas that present the Islam and modernization as not excluding but completing each other can be given from the onset of modernization in the Ottoman history. Mahmut II's naming the modern Ottoman Army he founded to replace the Janissary corps as *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (1826), which bears an open reference to the Islam, is one example that shows how the Islam and modernization were conceived as completing each other. Similarly, the constant emphasis on the Islam in the writings of Namık Kemal (1840–1888)—one of the most important thinkers of the Ottoman Tanzimat period—is noteworthy. In a seminar titled *Science and the Islam*, objecting to the French orientalist Ernst Renan's argument that Arabianism and the Islam religion were the most important factors impeding scientific development and civilization in the East, Namık Kemal claimed that the Islam was a religion stimulating development and went one step further stating that at the root of western civilization lied the heritage of Islamic civilization. Furthermore, adding Arabianism to Islam in his advocacy, Namık Kemal pointed out that in the formation of the Islamic heritage, which gave rise to the Western civilization, Arabianism played the greatest role (Berkes, 2004:352–353). Namık Kemal presented that such results of Western enlightenment and modernity as popular sovereignty, republicanism and democracy were not concepts alien to the Islam; on the contrary, he argued, the Islam religion presupposed such form of administration. According to Namık Kemal, the principle of allegiance to Khalif in Shariah and the sovereignty right of the ruler of the community are passed onto the Ottoman dynasty and their co-existence creates an administrative style based on consultancy. Since we are commanded in the Islam to get any sort of development, wherever it comes, we do not need to go back or stay where we are in terms of development. Just because it is experienced in the West, we do not need to create another constitutionalist regime; such a regime already exists in our past (Berkes, 2004:293).

The primary role attributed to Islam in the social and political life also continued after Namık Kemal. Mizancı Murat (1854-1917), who was one of the two leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti), had a fundamentalist Islamic view; the other leader Ahmet Rıza (1859–1930), though he was known with his positivistic ideas, accepted the social significance of Islam. Rıza 'did not give credit to the dogmatic view of Islam as if it was the word of God but he admitted its social significance and saw it as more prone to social development than Christianity' (Mardin, 1996:183). The characterising idea of the Turkish-Ottoman modernization that says 'take only the material from the West and preserve the spiritual as it is' can also be seen in Rıza's writings. In the French supplement of *Meşveret*, it is said: 'For our nation's progression to freedom, we need to preserve the originality of the Eastern values and get only the scientific developments from the West' (Mardin, 1996:200). When he was in Paris, Rıza founded the *Uhuvveti İslâmiye Cemiyeti* (Committee of Islamic Brotherhood) to unite the Muslims there—among which there were Persian, Egyptians and Russian Muslims—and for that reason he was even accused of being an adherent of Islam (Rıza, 1988:24–25). Ziya Gokalp, who had a great role in the ideological construction of Turkism, was also sensitive about the Islam and some of his views were very close to the advocates of Islam. In his

social project *Türkleşmek, İslâmlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*[1] his presupposing 'Islamization' as one of the three important factors of social development can be taken as a result of the role attributed to Islam in the Turkish-Ottoman modernization.

In spite of the constant emphasis on tradition, this image of the Islam in the Ottoman modernization bears the influence of the ideological and social relationships established with the West. The claim that Islam was not against civilization because at the root of Western modernization laid the heritage of Islamic civilization not only reproduced the West as superior but also suggests the need in its advocates to protect Islam from and revise it according to the needs of modernization (Mutman, 2002:201). Besides, Islam was no longer taken as an spiritual issue but began to be defined in terms of its function in the socio-political life. Ahmet Rıza's conception of Islam as a social cement was a kind of response to the question of how social disintegration caused by modernization can be prevented.

However, there was also another group in the Ottoman modernization period that was totally against the Islam and led by Abdullah Cevdet. In line with the western orientalist perspective, this group regarded Islam as the main reason for the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire. They thought that achieving the level of western modernization was only possible for the Ottoman Empire with the abolishment of the effects of the Islam as the main cause of this backwardness. Apart from this group, there were also Islamist intellectuals who were totally against the West and thought that the solution to the socioeconomic problems lied in the devotion to Islamic values. The members of this movement, contrary to such reformist intellectuals as Namık Kemal, were for the rejection of whatever 'western,' and thought that the real salvation of the Islam world lied in returning back to the practices of *Asr-ı Saadet* (Golden Age), which partly included the periods of the Prophet Mohammed, the four Khaliphs, the Umayya, and the Abbasid. However, the movement that marked the Ottoman modernization was led by what could be called Islamist reformers and proposed taking just the technology from the West and protecting the Islamic culture of the Ottoman society from western influence.

The distinction between culture and civilization in Ziya Gökalp's idea of society and political philosophy can be said to rely on the material-spiritual distinction in the late Ottoman ideological life. Gökalp's contribution to the material-spiritual distinction was his adding culture—which was then a novel phenomenon—to Islam in the spiritual plane and thus presenting a re-definition of this plane.

It can be said that Ziya Gökalp was influenced by the German Romantics' view of history when shaping his idea of the distinction between culture and civilisation, especially his idea of culture. The German Romantics saw at the centre of all philosophical activities the 'I' subject and regarded history with regard to this subject. According to the Romantic historian Novalis, historical knowledge can be achieved only by the human subject's realization of its own history. Similarly, real history is a whole in which "an individual can do a self-observation" (Özlem, 2004:132). The 'I' subject (actually, the 'I' subject means nation here), which is the main purpose and point of departure of Romantic historical research, means dealing with the historical 'I' in terms of its present needs and situation. This idea is clearly stated by the German School of History, whose members were followers of the German Romantics. This school put forward its practical aim as the "unity of the German nation and state" and began a detailed research in the distant German past for this purpose (Özlem, 2004:139). There is a striking similarity between German Romantics' and their followers' idea of history and Ziya Gökalp's basing his idea of culture on the distant

---

[1] It can be translated into English as 'Turkization, Islamization, Civilization'

past of Turkish history and his re-inventing history and tradition according to the national needs of his period. Relying on Suavi Aydın's writings on the issue, we can define this similarity as the effect of German tradition on Ziya Gökalp. Aydın argues: "The Germans were concerned with defining the 'strong' culture and tradition that transmitted the distant German past to the present, to the modern state which is its main purpose, without any deformation. A concept of culture based on language and expressing a spirit that distinguishes it from 'others' and the purity of the race carrying this culture were the main notions" (Aydın, 2009:346). Gökalp thought that the Ottoman state had a 'spoilt' and cosmopolite structure. Gökalp was most probably inspired by the above-mentioned German culture concept in his emphasis on the pure and unspoilt Turkish culture existing together with the spoilt and cosmopolitan Ottoman structure.

Ziya Gökalp formed his concepts of culture and civilization focusing on the question of how an underdeveloped and non-industrialized society can be westernized by preserving its national identity. This becomes clearer when the definition of these concepts and their significance in social life are handled. Ziya Gökalp, who was a nationalist thinker, presupposed that the Turkish society was underdeveloped when compared with the West, but he claimed that this state was not the result of 'being Turkish.' Reducing civilization to a technical term, Gökalp assumed that Turkish culture did not impede Western civilization; on the contrary, it includes the values of this civilization. As can be observed, a paradoxical situation seems to exist in Gökalp's definition of culture and the meanings he attributed to it because while he defined culture as something that differentiated Turkish society from other societies, especially from those Western, he accepted the superiority of the West and did his definition by using Western concepts.

When defining culture, Gökalp was inspired by the French word *culture* and the German word *kultur*. However, in his etymologic analysis of the word, he concluded that the Turkish equivalent of the words *culture* and *kultur* was not only *hars*. Culture has two meanings in Turkish: *hars* and *tehzib*. For him, *hars* consists of 'people's traditions, conventions, oral or written literatures, language, music, religion, morals, and aesthetic and economical productions' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:96). On the other hand, *tehzib* is used 'for those people who have high education and are refined.' *Hars* is democratic, whereas *tehzib* is aristocratic (Gökalp, 1976a:96). *Hars* represents a nation's characteristic values and way of life while *tehzib* is rather related to educational refinement. For this reason, *hars* is characteristically national while *tehzib* is international. In Gökalp's thinking, with *hars* a person values his nation's culture; but with *tehzib* he also values the cultures of other nations and sympathizes with their tastes. People with *tehzib* are more humanitarian, forgivable and tolerant to other people and nations (Gökalp, 1976*a*:96). Orhan Türkdoğan's definition of *tehzib* as 'a synthesis of *hars* and civilization' can be helpful for better understanding of the meaning of *tehzib*. Türkdoğan argues that in Gökalp's understanding culture and civilization are not opposed to each other; the link between the two is supplied by *tezhib*, which can be defined as intellectual culture. For him, 'refined culture (*tehzib*) continues its existence by bridging between national culture and civilization' (Türkdoğan, 2005:37).

Hars characterizes a nation's values and way of life while *tehzib* and civilization are acquired in life through education. In Gökalp's definition, *hars* is not something that is acquired with individual will and conscious act. This is the main point in which *hars* and civilization differentiate. The components of *hars* are natural productions of the life of a nation and thus individual will has no role in their formation and evolution. As Gökalp puts it, 'the things of *hars* do not come into being

with individual effort and thus they are not artificial. They originate and continue their existence naturally just like the plants and animals in nature. For instance, language is not something artificially created by individuals. We cannot change its words or replace them with other ones. In other words, we cannot change its natural order' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:26). Durkheim's correlation between individual and social consciousnesses seems to have affected Gökalp's conceptualization of *hars* as independent of individual involvement and as the collective production of a nation's consciousness. Gökalp openly defends Durkheim's ideas on the issue in one of his writings and states that for Durkheim there are two consciousnesses: collective consciousness and individual consciousness:

> Collective consciousness, as its name suggests, refers to society. Each society has a collective conscience which represents the collective feelings, beliefs and ways of thinking of this society. This collective conscience is the base of collective consciousness. ... Every society or nation that has a social solidarity owns a collective consciousness because every nation has its own characteristic logic, will, aims and ways of thinking (Gökalp, 1980:20-21).

Gökalp continues his statements on Durkheim as: 'Since the collective consciousness exists in the society, it also exists in the individuals of the society. If the conscience is not shared by the majority, it cannot be defined as collective conscience. Besides, the consciousness that exists in the individuals of the society is but a reflection of the collective consciousness' (Gökalp, 1980:21). Gökalp's identifying Durkheim's collective consciousness with nation and his defining it as 'the collective spirit' of the nation coincides with his understanding of *hars*. There is also a correspondence between the position of the individual in the collective consciousness and that in the formation of *hars*. In both cases, the individual is not an active transformer but just a carrier. *Hars* or the collective consciousness is paradoxically defined as within but independent of individuals.

Gökalp presents a definition of nation relying on *hars*, arguing that nation is not a group of people who have blood relationship with each other or who collectively live in the same geographic space; instead, what makes a nation is *hars*. He objects to the ideas that define nation in racial or geographic terms (Gökalp, 1982*b*:226-227)[2]. He argues, 'The link that makes a nation is supplied with decency, with *hars*, that is, with the experience of common feelings. A member of a nation begins to experience the effect of mother tongue and common feelings even from the cradle, when he hears his mother sing him lullaby' (Gökalp, 1982*b*:227). The definition of nation in this quotation indicates that Gökalp does not conceive of nation in racial terms or in terms of blood relationships. According to him, nation is togetherness in *hars* and it is a group of people who have the same *hars*.

Civilization, however, is directly concerned with individual will: 'Civilization is the social result of individual will and effort. For instance, the knowledge concerning

---

[2] It is difficult to say the same for Gökalp's early writings. In the Muslim calendar (Hegira) in 26th of July, 1327, in an article in *Genç Kalemler* he presents racist views and defines Turks in Nietzschean terms as 'fevkal başer' (super man). In that article, he states, 'The Turkic race is not spoiled like others with alcohol and debauchery. Turkish blood has become stronger and younger through celebrated battles with other nations. Turkish wit has not decayed as that in other nations, Turkish sensitivity has not been feminized as others and Turkish will has not weakened as others. The rulers of the future are the Turks. Turks are the kind of super people imagined by the German philosopher Nietzsche. They are the 'new people' of every era and thus new life will be born by Turks who are the bearers of youthfulness of every time' (Gökalp, 1982*a*:46).

religion, morality, law, the fine arts, economy, logic, language and applied sciences has come into being with individual effort and the application of certain methods. Therefore, the notions, knowledge and sciences that originate in the same area are the factors that make a nation' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:26). As seen in the above definition, civilization is an artificial and technical issue; moving from the material-spiritual discrimination, civilization can be said to represent the material plane. Ziya Gökalp expresses the word 'technical civilization' more openly in his comments on 'the things we should take from Europe.' He argues that we should take from Europe not a national language but a science of language, not morals but a science of morality, not a religion but a science of religion, and not the results of positive sciences but their methods (Gökalp, 1980:41–42). Gökalp defines the word modernization with regard to this technical aspect of civilization. For him, 'the moderns of an era are those who can create and use the instruments that the most progressive nations in applied sciences do. To modernize means for us today being able to do and use automobiles and aeroplanes like Europeans; to modernize is not to be like Europeans in appearance and way of life. We become modern only when we see that we no longer need Europe for knowledge and the applied sciences' (Gökalp, 1976*b*:11–12).

Hars is national, whereas civilization is international. However, the inter-nationality of civilization does not exclude nationality; it is based on nations. For Gökalp, a nation's possession of *hars* does not mean that this nation cannot be part of an international civilization because civilization is 'the togetherness of the institutions of nations participating in the same internationality'.(Gökalp, 1976*a*:98–99). Gökalp thinks that the presence of different national cultures (*hars*) under the same roof is an opportunity because civilization is a collection of cultures, and in that sense Turkey's being part of European civilization will give it the chance to interact with other cultures' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:99). Ziya Gökalp's tolerance towards the cultures (*hars*) of other nations and his wish to taste them are signs showing that he did not have a racial view of nationalism that rejected any kind of relationship with the outside world.

Gökalp, who was a strict supporter of modernization and westernization, showed the influence of his world view in his writings about 'the past' in which pure *hars* was experienced. Gökalp was a thinker who believed in the superiority of the Western civilization and for him the Turkish-Ottoman tradition of administration should make westernization its main purpose. Westernization that accelerated with the Tanzimat constitutional reforms had turned into a paradigmatic case up to Gökalp's time and that paradigmatic situation affected all the ideological life revolving around the westernization of the Turkish-Ottoman society, from the production of ideas to the analyses on society. The relationship of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization with Orientalizm can be established at this point. Orientalizm is based on the sharp distinction between the East and the West, a distinction which also legitimizes the superiority of the West to the East (Said, 2003:12). This is also the main claim that characterizes the acts of westernization also in non-western societies. Moving from this point, westernization/modernization can be said to be a result of the Orientalist differentiation between the East and the West (Mutman, 2002:198).

The Invention of Tradition with Western Concepts

In Gökalp's nationalistic view there is the tendency to 'invent tradition' in the way presented by Hobsbawn[3]. The proposition that it is its *hars* which makes the Turkish

---

[3] In one of his writings on Ziya Gökalp, Kemal Karpat state that the theoretical framework created with the ideas of some western writers, including Hobsbawn, on the birth of nations

nation different from other nations, particularly from the West, has frequently been used for the invention of tradition. The invention of tradition is not only characteristic of Ziya Gökalp's idea of nationalism or Turkish nationalism in general; it can be said to be a common aspect of the nationalistic movements all over the world (though the invention of tradition is a common factor of nationalism in the world, its content and application change from one country to another). Hobsbawn states that the invention of tradition arose as a result of the fragmentation of the old authoritarian/monarchic social structure based on religious congregations and from the fact that the traditions related to this structure had lost their effect on social life. The core principles of this re-construction are constant reference to the past, ritualization and symbolization. According to Hobsbawn, although the reconstruction of tradition does not mean a total break from the old, it reflects the effect of the productive effort of the new ideological interlocutors. The invention of tradition, according to Hobsbawn, uses history 'as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion' (Hobsbawn, 1992:12). However, this history is not 'what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institution-alized (Hobsbawn, 1992:13). The invention of tradition plays a critical role in the legitimization of nationalism by presenting nationalism with the opportunity to construct an everlasting and 'natural' nation via 'selecting, writing, popularizing and institutionalizing' images of the past. Hobsbawn argues that the search of nationalism for 'origin' inevitably includes a paradox (a similar paradox also exists in Gökalp's ideas, which will be touched upon later in this study). For him, 'modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of the novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition other than self-assertion' (Hobsbawn, 1992:14). However, the modern nation consists of 'constructs' and is associated with 'recent symbols and suitably tailored discourse' (Hobsbawn, 1992:14). For this reason, 'the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the 'invention of tradition'' (Hobsbawn, 1992:14).

The invention of tradition can clearly be seen in Gökalp's arguments in the way Hobsbawn characterizes it above. In his writings, as he describes the old Turkish life in which he claims *hars* was experienced in its pure form, Gökalp frequently uses concepts that originated in the western social and political life and that got fully realized in the 19th century. His emphasis on the feminism of the Turks is a good example for his framing his nationalistic view on western-born concepts. For him, Turks were the most 'feminist' nation of the world (Gökalp, 1976*a*:148). Feminism, he argues, prevails in every aspect of Turkish life, from social and political life to its mythology. In the old Turkish life man and woman equally took place in the working life. Husband and wife were the representatives of *Od Ata* and *Od Ana* (meaning 'Great Father and Great Mother' in Turkish mythology) in the family. Hakan (old Turkish King) and Hatun (the King's wife), too, were representatives of *Ay Ata* and *Gün Ana*. *Ay Ata* that was represented by Hakan lived in the sixth floor of the world while *Gün Ana* that was symbolized by Hatun lived in the seventh floor, that is, a floor upper than *Ay Ata*. Hakan and Hatun participated together also in the

---

and nationality could hardly be applied to the Turkish nation and nationalism (Karpat, 2001:334, the footnote numbered 15). However, as seen in this part of the present study, Hosbawn's conclusions on nationalism and 're-construction' of tradition, prepares a ground for understanding Turkish nationalism and Ziya Gokalp. I believe that a close study of Turkish nationalism in the light of Hobsbawn or Gellner's ideas of nation and nationalism will bring a different dimension to the understanding of the issue.

administration of the country and the use of the statement beginning with 'Hakan and Hatun command that' instead of 'Hakan commands that' is a proof of the cooperation of man and woman in political life. The woman took place with her husband in wars, ceremonies, political congregations and hunting (Gökalp, 1989:278–279).

The Turkish people were in the past not only feminist but also they had a democratic political system (Gökalp, 1976*a*:147–148). 'Turkish democracy was not one that had prisoners and servants in it; the one present in the Turkish history was a kind of republican democracy based on the administrative style of 'referendum.' The Khan had authority even less than the president of a republic in modern times. It was 'the people's assembly' that both brings him to power and unseats him (Gökalp, 1981*a*:6). There is also a similar use of concepts when Gökalp talks about 'the national province,' which was one of the old Turkish political organizations. Gökalp states, 'National province was an organization made up of *democracy* and *imperialism*…in ancient Turkish history, the patricians were called '*Ak Kemikler*' (White Bones). In the political structure, below the patricians came '*Kara Uluslar* (Black Nations)' and clans. 'The province clan' was a democratic compound of this political structure because all the individuals in the province had equal rights and were members of the people's assemblies. Only '*Kara Kemikler*' (Black Bones) were devoid of civil rights and *imperialism* showed its effect only on this group (Gökalp, 1981*a*:47–48).

Gökalp also touches upon the Turkish democracy in ancient Turkish history when he classifies the village. For him, there are three kinds of village: semiyevi village, feudal village and democratic village. The Turkish village, he argues, can be given as an example for the democratic village. He states,

> The Turkish village … was a mobile community. Various families lived together just on the base of neighborhood. Among them, there were people who had and had not kinship with others….The Turkish village had a communal character even when it was a group of nomads. After it had settled, in time its communal aspect became much more apparent. The secret and miraculous treasure in the spiritual world of the Turkish villager was a result of this communal way of living. Commune is the small form of republic. Particularly, Turkish villages were small republics that administered on their own their mosques, schools, pastures, forests and harvests. Each village had its own charity foundation and budget. The Turkish village did its entire work independently of the state, without being depended on any law, and in the form of a people's organization. The Arab and feudal villages could not live without a chief, whereas all Turkish villages were without chiefs and lords. Turks illustrate this situation with the following saying: They asked a Turkmen whether he wants to buy a bee. The Turkmen answers: what I am going to do with a buzz with my money? Apart from the buzz of the village master (landowner) there is also his painful sting (Gökalp, 1981*b*:129–130).

The concepts democracy, feminism, republic, assembly and imperialism that Gökalp uses in his discourse in the above statements are products of the western ideological life and political tradition. The use of these concepts indicates how the West became gradually centered in the ideological atmosphere of the Turkish-Ottoman society of the time. Another reason for the use of these concepts in the invention of tradition was the desire to legitimize the Turks in the eyes of the Westerns and show that they were not alien to the modernism represented with the West. This attitude of Gökalp was a reaction to the orientalist impetus of the West that regarded the Turks as savage and far from the Western values. Gökalp, here, was in the position of defending Turkishness against this orientalist prejudice. For him, 'All the historical books written in Europe [were] full of slander either to our religion or to our nation' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:4). However, Gökalp did this defense via the terminology

used by the accuser and had the aim of being legitimized on the accuser's part. In other words, the defense against the threat was made with the ideological apparatuses of the threatening side. A similar defense can also be seen in Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha's *Les Turcs anciens et modernes*, which was published in 1869 in Istanbul. According to this book, the Turks have blood kinship with the Huns and the Mongols. Besides, the Turks and Europeans belong to the 'Touro-Aryan' race. One of the main aims of Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha's stressing the kinship between the Turks and Europeans in this book was to reduce the enmity about the Turks in Europe (Kushner, 1977:9). Emphasizing the blood kinship between the two parts was a kind of defense against the claim that the Turks were against European civilization, could hardly absorb the values of this civilization and had very little in common with Europeans.

Though Ziya Gökalp and the Republican ideology that he affected distinguished culture from civilization, in their concept of history they emphasized the function of Turkish culture to form civilization and claimed that at the root of Western civilization lied the civilization enterprises the Turkish people did in the past (Aydın, 2009:353–354). Behind this claim lies the impetus to defend Turkishness against the common European orientalist proposition that "Turkishness is against civilization." According the ideological trend led by Ziya Gökalp, Turkishness was not against the present Western civilization; on the contrary, it played a crucial function in its formation.

Ziya Gökalp also uses legends in his writings to invent, through 'recent symbols,' Turkish past in which *hars* was experienced in its pure form. The legends Gökalp handles in his writings correspond to the political and ideological needs of the time and thus centralized the West. Though the heroes in the legends belong to a pre-modern time, their responses to the events are thoroughly 'modern'. The part on Mete Khan's (a Hun ruler lived in the 2nd century B.C.) love of country can be given as example for this. As Gökalp writes, to provoke war with the Huns, the Tatars asked from Mete Khan one of his favorite horses. That horse ran 1000 league in an hour. Mete sent them the horse not to put his country in the danger of war. Not being satisfied with the horse, the Tatar ruler asked from Mete this time his wife. Not to fight with them, he also sent his wife to them. At last, the Tatar ruler asked from the Huns a piece of land without harvest, minerals, forest and human population. To this, Mete responded: 'the fatherland is not our land; our ancestors lying in their graves and our grandchildren who will be born until the Day of Judgment have right on this blessed land. No one has the power to give a piece of land from the fatherland, even if it is an inch' (Gökalp, 1976a:145–146). Mete Khan's envy for the fatherland is a thoroughly modern phenomenon. Weber defines the modern state as 'violence based on monopoly on a piece of land with definite borders' (Weber, 1998:132). The idea of 'a piece of land with definite borders' is one of the main points that distinguishes a modern state from pre-modern political formations. According to Giddens, 'tradition-al states (especially the expansive traditional empires) were delimited not by clear borders but by much more indeterminate frontiers' (Pierson, 1996:30). Though these states were extensive and powerful, 'their territorial limits tended to be set by ill-defined borders rather than by the clearly demarcated borders with which we are familiar' (Pierson, 1996:9). In contrast, as Pierson argues, 'modern states defend their territorial integrity with a quite ferocious jealousy. At times, states have been willing to go to war over seemingly valueless tracts of land or uninhabitable islands, apparently unmindful of the considerable costs and the sometimes very limited benefits' (Pierson, 1996:9–10). Mete's envious response for defending 'the definite borders' of his fatherland reflects rather Ziya Gökalp's nationalistic view and the

ideological atmosphere pervading the Turkish-Ottoman society at the time.

The Eastern Civilization and the 'Otherization' of the Recent Past

Moving from the idea of the *hars*-civilization distinction which he developed, Ziya Gökalp negates the Eastern and its sub-branch the Ottoman civilizations. The purpose of this negation was to prepare an ideological infrastructure for Turkish nationalism that is based on an othered Ottomanism. Relying on the distinction between *hars* and civilization, Gökalp argued that though the Eastern civilization, including also the Ottoman, was spoiled and consisted of the mechanisms obstructing development, Turkish *hars* continued to exist by keeping its purity. The political character of his differentiating between *hars* and civilization comes to the fore at this point. The positioning of the East as lower than the West, which was accelerated with *Tanzimat* (the Constitutional reforms), and negating the East in the context of this positioning show Ziya Gökalp's approach to the Ottoman institutional structure. Here, the Ottoman was othered with an orientalist point of view. His desire to prove that Turkish *hars* stayed erect as the Ottoman was being spoiled or destroyed is the core principle of Gökalp's differentiation between *hars* and civilization. And the criteria for demonstrating the purity of Turkishness was again the Western civilization itself.

In this conception there is the effort to show to the outer world (especially the European countries) that though the Ottoman civilization/society did not fit in the Western values and way of life, Turkishness and Turkish *hars* were not affected by the aspects of this civilization that contradicted with European values, and thus they imminently had the potential to accord with European values and way of life. When handled on these grounds, the effect of Orientalism on Ziya Gökalp's understanding of Eastern and Western civilizations and Turkish *hars* becomes clearer.

Ziya Gökalp contrasted the Turkish people living according to their *hars* in the Ottoman period with the Ottoman civilization, and affirmed Turkishness against the Ottoman. According to him, all the factors of the Ottoman civilization were formed of non-living foremothers[4] (traditions), whereas the Turkish *hars* was formed of living foremothers (traditions) (Gökalp, 1980:39). The Ottoman civilization that was formed of static and non-living elements was an extension of the Eastern civilization. However, it is wrong to identify the Eastern civilization with the Islam because the Eastern civilization was not an Islamic civilization but an extension of the Eastern Roman civilization (Gökalp, 1980:39). Gökalp's differentiation between the static Eastern civilization and the Islam is in accordance with the ground Namık Kemal and the other thinkers of the modernization period defended the Islam. As has already been said, these thinkers objected to the Orientalist view in the West that saw Islam as impeding development in the East and they argued that the Islam was not obstructing Westernization but stimulating it.

Gökalp thought that civilization and religion should be taken separately and argued that as the Eastern civilization is not an Islamic one, so is the Western civilization not a Christian one but a continuance of the Western Roman civilization (Gökalp, 1976*a*:39). The Ottoman, Gökalp claims, is a continuance of the Byzantine civilization and got the 'Eastern' Roman factors from this civilization. The reason behind the identification of the Eastern civilization with the Islam lies in the fact that the Arabs and the Persians took the Eastern civilization from Byzantium before the Ottomans. This identification emerged, states Gökalp, from the co-presence of the Islam and the Eastern civilization on the same territory. The Ottoman civilization was affected by Eastern civilization directly through Byzantium and indirectly via the

---

[4] The old Turkish equivalent of this word is *an'ane*.

Arabs and Persians (Gökalp, 1976a:39).

Gökalp supports his assumption of the difference between Turkish *hars* and the Ottoman civilization in terms of certain points. The first one is language. In the Ottoman period the official language was the Ottoman language, whereas the Turkish people talked Turkish. The Ottoman language was an artificial language created with the blend of Turkish, Arabic and Farsi. On the other hand, Turkish language was the natural result of the Turkish *hars*, spoken by Turkish people, and undergone—like other natural languages—a natural evolutionary process.

Another point is poetic meter. The one belonged to Turkish *hars* was a naturally-born meter that was commonly seen in anonymous folk poetry. The other was an artificial and imitative one taken from Persian poets. The third point Gökalp handles to evince the distinction between the two is music. In the Ottoman period, there was on the one hand the Ottoman music that was part of the Eastern civilization, and, on the other, the folk music among the Turkish people, which was a natural result of Turkish *hars*. The Ottoman music was translated from Byzantine by Farabi (870–950), formed of certain Eastern-originated musical rules, and so it was artificial and imitative. However, Turkish folk music was free of artificial rules and consisted of 'sincere melodies born from the breast of the Turk.' The same duality also exists in literature. There was on the one hand Turkish literature that originated among the folk and consisted of 'proverbs, riddles, folk tales, ballads, epics, folk *cengname*'s (music with Turkish harp) and legends, the hymns and winds of dervish lodges, anecdotes and folk amusing plays. The important characteristic of folk literature is its anonymity. However, this does not mean that some works whose authors are known are not folk literature. These works cannot be taken independently of the folk. Such minstrels as Aşık Ömer, Dertli and Karacaoğlan were folk poets expressing in their poetry the sincere feelings of the common people. But the Ottoman literature was isolated from the common people and formed of individual and artificial ghazals (odes) that were created with the Arab, Persian and, later, with French influence. Each Ottoman poet had relationship in the Persian period with a Persian poet and in the French period with a French poet. Thus, according to Gökalp, none of the poets of the Ottoman literature was original because all of them were imitative of either Arab, Persian or French poets. They did not write their poetry with inspiration but with wit and craft (Gökalp, 1976a:26–31).

A similar duality also exists in morality. Gökalp states,

> The Turks are not boastful and egotistical. When a Turk commits heroic deeds and makes a sacrifice, he is unaware that he has done an extraordinary thing. However, when we look at the Ottoman, we can see that in the old poets boast and in the new egotism prevail. The Servet-i Fünun School of poets is the most brilliant period in the Ottoman literature. The men of letters and poets belonging to this school created characters that are most of the time skeptic, pessimistic, hopeless and ill-spirited. The real Turk, however, is conscious, optimistic, hopeful and substantive (Gökalp, 1976a:26–31).

Another difference between the Ottoman civilization and Turkish *hars* can be seen in the approach to philosophy. For Gökalp, philosophy means the way we perceive value. In the Ottoman tradition of thinking and life the greatest value was attributed to affluence. The Turkish people, on the other hand, gave prior value to happiness and conceived affluence as secondary in their lives. Affluence is the best way of satisfying bodily pleasures, whereas happiness is a feeling resulting from the magnification and realization of social ideals. For Gökalp, this is the main reason why Turkish people have always been happy though bereft of affluence, whereas the Ottoman administrators and elite, though affluent, were unhappy and always

complained about their situation (Gökalp, 1977*a*:47-48).

Gökalp's explanation of the Ottoman life in terms of happiness and affluence, which he presents as binary oppositions, shows the effect of the Orientalist view. As also suggested by Max Weber, at the root of European capitalism lies bodily asceticism and work ethic (see Weber, 2001). One of the prevailing views regarding the East in Europe is the claim that instead of cultivating the body by restraining bodily pleasures the Eastern way of life is based on the satisfaction of bodily pleasures. This criticism of the East (or the Ottoman) is an entirely 'modern' one and represents the values emerged with the birth of capitalism. Gökalp's employing the idea in this criticism implies another dimension of his flirtation with Orientalist ideas. Europe, which founded its industry by restraining bodily pleasures, poses itself as opposite to the East that could not achieve doing the same. Gökalp also seems to employ the same conception concerning the East. Gökalp's touching upon the idea of 'economy just after the satisfaction of pleasure' becomes better understandable when taken from this point. Gökalp argues that there were two understandings of economy in the Ottoman period. The Ottoman understanding rather prioritized consumption and exploitation while the Turkish understanding gave priority to production (Gökalp, 1977*b*:48). His assessing the Ottoman in terms of consumption and exploitation and the Turkish in terms of production can also be handled in the context of Orientalism. The claim that the characterizing features of the Ottoman under-standing of economy are non-productivity and consumption is in accordance with the above-mentioned assertion regarding the Ottoman's inability to restrain bodily pleasures. The productivity paradigm is a modern and European-originated one, and it is one that commonly used by European thinkers when defining Europe as opposed to Eastern societies. The productivity paradigm and the work ethic are two concepts that complete each other. When the West is defined by being mirrored up with the East, 'work' is attributed to the West, whereas the East is credited with 'non-work.'

Another noteworthy point here is Gökalp's definition of the Turkish people as 'productive, and not inclined to affluence and to the satisfaction of bodily pleasures.' As the Ottoman is negated in his idea with Orientalist propositions, with the help of the same propositions Turkishness is legitimized in the European socio-political context. The terms used for the conceptualization of Europe as opposite to the East are also used to explain the character of Turkish *hars*. Besides, explaining Turkishness with the terms emerged in the European context is the result of the need to demonstrate in the European-dominating plane that Turkishness is in fact not far from Europeanism. As the East is presented with the ideological bombardment of Europe as static and savage, Gökalp on the one hand accepts Europe's conceptualiza-tion of the East and on the other claims Turkishness to embrace not the Eastern but Western values. But the defense is made with the concepts of that against which it is made and substantiates itself by accepting the social and political superiority of the context that caused their emergence.

In the triangle of the Ottoman civilization, Turkish *hars* and European civilization Gökalp forms his idea by setting each side of the triangle in opposition with another side or by presenting the three sides as telescoping each other. As Gökalp explains the Eastern civilization—which also included the Ottoman—stressing its distinction from Europe, so does he European civilization emphasizing its difference from the Eastern civilization. The European civilization is defined via 'othering' the East and the Ottoman. Such attempt to define by differentiation is a usually employed method of Orientalism and Edward Said mentions this method from the very beginning of his *Orientalism*. When the development of Orientalist tendencies in Europe is taken into consideration, most of the Orientalist thinkers are

seen to base their propositions concerning the East on its distinction from the West. As has already been stated, the East and the West are defined in terms of their opposition and every part is conceptualized as mirroring up the other. Gökalp's admission of this distinction and his basing his form of thinking on it strengthens the presumption concerning his relationship with Orientalism. However, Gökalp takes the development of European civilization as a technical phenomenon, as something that can only be understood in contrast with the underdeveloped East.

For Gökalp, though the West and the East derived from the same origin, their differentiation began from the time they originated. The origin of both was the Roman Empire and their separation began with the split of the Empire into the East and the West. However, the separation was not so manifest in medieval times as in the modern world. 'The separation between the Eastern and Western Rome was not manifest in the Middle Ages. In medieval times the Muslims could not take the Western civilization under their rule, and neither could the Christians outpace the Eastern civilization in terms of development and advancement' (Gökalp, 1976*a*:54). However, some transformations that took place in the Medieval Europe prepared the ground for later developments. One of the most important of these developments was women's participation in social life with the emergence of *opera*. Opera, which emerged in the feudal chateaus, was a revolutionary phenomenon at that time. With the introduction of opera, harmonic sound replaced the monophonic one. Another important development was women's participation in social life without 'losing their chastity and self-esteem'. Muslims took such customary usages as harem, selamlik, chador, purdah and so on from the Christian Byzantium—which was related to the Eastern civilization—and the Zoroaster Iran (Gökalp, 1976*a*:54–45). The detachment of women from social life is not a requirement of the Islam but a result of the Byzantine and Persian influence on the Eastern Islamic societies.

Conclusion

The origin of the distinction between *hars* and civilization that plays a central role in Ziya Gökalp's idea goes back to the material-spiritual discrimination in the beginning of Ottoman modernization. Gökalp's greatest contribution to the heritage of the Ottoman modernization is his prioritizing *hars* together with Islam. As can be concluded from the quotation from Pertha Chatterjee given in the beginning of this paper, the distinction between the material and spiritual planes is not the characterizing principle of only the Ottoman-Turkish modernization and Ziya Gökalp's idea; it seems also to characterize most ex-western practices of nationalism and modernization.

Relying on the discrimination between *hars* and civilization, Gökalp conceptualizes the theoretical framework of Turkish nationalism by 'otherizing' and negating the Eastern—including the Ottoman—civilization. Gökalp formed his nationalistic view on the presupposition of the superiority of the West and the necessity of modernization. He produced ideas based on the opposition between the East and the West, an opposition on which Orientalism depends, and he negated the Ottoman and Eastern modernization with the influence of Western orientalists. The Eastern and Ottoman civilization served as the opposed other on which he substantiated the Turkish national identity. For Gökalp, as the Eastern civilization is defective and includes in itself mechanisms that obstruct development, Turkish *hars*, which represents the core of Turkishness, was not affected by this civilization. According to this approach—which is based on the presumption of an idealized rustic past in which Turkishness was experienced in its pure sense—Turkish *hars* is in total

accordance with Western values and can easily internalize these values. Besides, the Turks have already been experiencing what are modern and Western since ancient times. To evince the accord between Turkish *hars* and the West, Gökalp makes references to the old times of Turkishness and old legends, and he employs concepts belonging to the modern Western history to define the early practices of Turkishness in history. His definition of *hars* and the tradition in which it is experienced suggests his effort to legitimize Turkishness in the European-centered social, political and ideological plane.

Althuogh Gökalp seems to conceive the Western civilization as a technical phenomenon, he is seen to take it not only in technical terms and to handle it also with respect to certain social and political values. Gökalp usually uses concepts belonging to the modern European history to define Turkish *hars*, which, he assumes, differentiates Turkishness from the West. He defines Turkish *hars* via the concepts and values of that which he wants to differentiate it from.

Bibliography

Aydın S. (2009) Cumhuriyet'in ideolojik şekillenmesinde antropolojinin rolü: ırkçı paradigmanın yükselişi ve çöküşü. In: Bora T, Gültekingil M, editors. Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce. Cilt 2: Kemalizm. Istanbul: İletişim, p 344–369.

Berkes N. (2004) Türkiye'de çağdaşlaşma. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi.

Chattarjee, P. (1993) The nation and its fragments: colonial and post colonial histories. Princeton, NJ: Princenton University Press.

Gökalp Z. (1976*a*) Türkçülüğün esasları. Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı

Gökalp Z. (1976*b*) Türkleşmek, İslâmlaşmak, muasırlaşmak. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1977*a*) Makaleler IV. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1977*b*) Makaleler III. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1980) Makaleler IX. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1981*a*) Makaleler V. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1981*b*) Makaleler VIII. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1982*a*) Makaleler II. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1982*b*) Makaleler VII. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.

Gökalp Z. (1989) Türk medeniyeti tarihi. Istanbul: Toker.

Hobsbawn E. (1989) Introduction: inventing traditions. In: Hobsbawn E, Ranger E, editors. The invention of tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karpat KH. (2001) Ziya Gökalp'ın korporatifçilik, millet-milliyetçilik ve çağdaş medeniyet kavramları üzerine bazı düşünceler. In: Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce – Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in birikimi. Cilt 1. Istanbul: İletişim, p 328–334.

Kushner D. (1977) The Rise of Turkish nationalism 1876–1908. London: Frank Class.

Mardin Ş. (1996) Jön Türklerin siyasi fikirleri 1895–1908. Istanbul: İletişim.

Mills CW. (1958) From Max Weber: essays in sociology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mutman M. (2002) Şarkiyatçılık/Oryantalizm. In: Bora T, Gültekingil M, editors. Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce. Cilt 3: Istanbul: İletişim, p 189–211.

Özlem D. (2004) Tarih felsefesi. Istanbul: İnkılâp.

Pierson C. (1996) Modern devlet. Istanbul: Çiviyazıları.

Rıza A. (1988) Ahmed Rıza Bey'in anıları. Istanbul: Arba.

Said E. (2003) Şarkiyatçılık. Istanbul: Metis.