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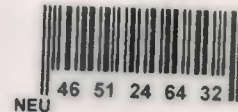
**Question of "Women" in Ziya Gökalp's Turkish Nationalism: Reconstruction of Tradition with a Modernist Disguise**

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## ABSTRACT



### **Question of “Women” in Ziya Gökalp’s Turkish Nationalism: Reconstruction of Tradition with a Modernist Disguise**

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This thesis aims to explore the ways in which Ziya Gökalp located women’s question in his project of Turkish nationalism. It also demonstrates how Gökalp’s crucial distinction but also gradual elaboration of “culture” and “civilization” necessitated him to bring “women” as symbolic subjects into his nationalist agenda.

I argue that Gökalp’s nationalism constituted through masculine practices that have nothing do with invention or adaptation of new traditions. Thus, I focus on the question of how masculinity was reconstructed and then nationalized in the nationalist discourse as modernization took place. Having attempt to point out the difference between Gökalp’s nationalist thought and some reactionary Arab nationalisms in the Middle East, I explain, how women as the objects of patriotic-nationalist discourse were introduced not only as the “bearers of cultural authenticity” but also, more importantly, as the vehicles of political modernity.

The agenda for this discussion includes an initial examination of nature of Gökalp’s nationalist ideology. Then I explain the Concepts of “Culture and Civilization”. I examine “Family Morality” in detail, focusing on women, ideology and nationalism.

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# QUESTION OF “WOMEN” IN ZIYA GÖKALP’S TURKISH NATIONALISM: RECONSTRUCTION OF TRADITION WITH A MODERNIST DISGUISE

## 1 Introduction

Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) was among the leading ideologists of the Young Turk Movement and forerunners of Kemalist Republican ideology of one party period (1923-1946)- a lenient political figure but a preeminent intellectual of his time, particularly well-known by his ideas on Turkish nationalism. Following the years of the disintegration of multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire into a new Republic, Gökalp promoted Turkish nationalism as one of the ideological foundations of the newly established regime and initiated a systematic approach to the discussion of the fundamental problems that had become tangible in Turkey. It was particularly over this period that the question of women’s rights was at the hearth of political debates concerning the questions of political modernity vs. cultural integrity. Within this juncture, Gökalp’s work served as an intellectual endeavour to answer the questions of how Turks could participate in Western civilization and how this attempt should be reconciled with the requirements of national culture. Searching for answers to these questions stimulated Gökalp to discuss the concepts of “culture” and “civilization” recurrently in his major writings.

Despite the massive literature analyzing women’s integration into nationalist projects, there are few substantive attempts to depict the picture as a whole. However, some of the contemporary social scientists have come up analyzing the process through which women’s question is articulated in the nationalist discourse (Chatterjee, 1988; Badran, 1988;



Joseph, 1992; Jayawardena, 1986, El Saadawi, 1988). Despite their divergent points of view, they share an important commonality that women's involvement in nationalist projects follows a different pattern from that of men's. The difference resides in elite attempts in reconstructing gender relations, that is to say, the boundaries between public and private within a new nationalist context. In the Middle East, particularly in the Turkish context, elite strategies of establishing an independent state and consolidating popular sovereignty went alongside with women's involvement in public realm as enfranchised citizens (1934). The founding fathers of the Kemalist Republic, endorsed an extension of citizenship rights, provided an opportunity space for women's employment in public realm and worked closely with women in the project of nation state building. They also promoted formal equality before the law while such improvements did not guarantee women full rights that would enable them to act as men's effective equals and develop an individual consciousness to exist for themselves.

In line with the argument mentioned above, this thesis aims to explore the ways in which Ziya Gökalp located women's question in his project of Turkish nationalism. It also demonstrates, which is the subject matter of this thesis, how Gökalp's crucial distinction but also gradual elaboration of "culture" and "civilization" necessitated him to bring "women" as symbolic subjects into his nationalist agenda. I maintain that Gökalp's nationalism is constituted through masculine practices that have nothing do with invention or adaptation of new traditions. Looking from this perspective, I shall not also argue for unfolding a masculine-based Turkish nationalism (since I believe, every nationalism possesses some degree of masculinity) but rather interpret the process how masculinity has taken new forms during Turkey's encounter with the West-indeed-how masculinity was reconstructed and then nationalized in the nationalist discourse as modernization took place. I shall do so, by reviewing Gökalp's books of major importance mainly *Principles of Turkism (Türkçülüğün Esasları)*, *Turkism, Islamism and Modernism*

***(Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak), The Ideals Of New Turkey (Yeni Türkiyenin Hedefleri)*** and some of Gökâlp's articles and poems on the family morality where Gökâlp glorified the pre-Islamic Turkish family and appreciated its egalitarian character. In the first part of my thesis, I will pose if Gökâlp's Turkish nationalism was a pragmatic solution to the decline of Ottoman empire's political and economic power as a result of military defeat and territorial retreat at the end 19th century or a mainstream ideology as an intellectual device regardless of the factual conditions it inherited, that played a central role in Gökâlp's intellectual thought. The second and third parts of my thesis are constitutive of Gökâlp's ideas mainly on Western civilization and Turkish culture, women's legal status in different family types due to different cultures and Gökâlp's classification of these family types.

## 2 Gökalp's Nationalist Compromise

### 2.1 *A Pragmatic Solution or an Intellectual Device?*

During 19th century, Ottoman Empire went through a process of westernization and modernization. The westernizing reforms, implemented by the educated Ottoman intellectuals, were aimed at reorganizing the state structure according to the requirements of Western Civilization. In the schools set up during the period, new class of officials, to put in Mardin's words, "Paris-oriented statesmen" were trained with the aim of initiating extensive reforms in the fields of legislation, administration and education. The new elite was instrumental in the infiltration of western ideas throughout the political centre and likewise crucial in bringing different ideological viewpoints to the knowledge of public. In the full explanation of the term, the westernized elite promoted an opportunity space where political ideas were harshly discussed and disseminated in return. The Tanzimat period with its modernizing ideals was a first step in the insurrection of new political society with a new political elite at its fulcrum. Bernard Lewis characterizes this new elite as follows:

**"The new class of officials emerging from the schools were often ignorant, superficial, corrupt and separated from those over whom they ruled by a widening gulf; but even this was better than the ignorant self-assurance of those whom they replaced And among these new officials, there was a high proportion of men of loyalty, integrity and responsibility, with a real understanding of the problems and difficulties of their country and a determination to face and overcome them". (Lewis, 1961:124)**



Despite the political and cultural changes that were shaping the panorama of Ottoman society as a whole, the man of Tanzimat generation came to be challenged by a younger generation who radically criticized them. The Young Turks who were trained in the newly established state schools, came to be critical of rapid westernization, since they believed, westernization ended in demise of cultural identity. This was due to the fact that the Tanzimat elite could hardly initiate any substantive changes in the political organization of state and also in the social, cultural and intellectual lives of Ottoman Empire. Tanzimat reformers could not fully grasp "the nature of the social transformation in which they involved" and they inevitably ended in "imitation", "opportunism" and "inconsistencies". Such an imitation of Western civilization resulted in the appearance of various dichotomies effecting every domain of social life (Berkes, 1959:16-17). The dichotomies that stood side by side stimulated the young nationalists to criticize the existing regime and come with a proposal of their own. These men, however, shared the same ideals with the Tanzimat generation, in "modernizing bureaucracy" and "preserving the state" (Mardin, 1969) that played a central role in the ideology formation of the Young Turk Movement and later on Turkish Nationalism. Reminding the fact that the Tanzimat period did not also stand as a period of substantive changes concerning women's social and legal status in Ottoman society. However, it stood as an intellectual period when the secondary position of women started to be debated both among the intellectuals and the bureaucratic elite.

The idea of preserving the state was rigidly pronounced and strongly defended throughout the Ottoman military defeat and territorial retreat in Europe. During the Second Constitutional Period, after which Young Turks gained power, Bulgaria proclaimed its independence and Austria-Hungarian empire annexed Bosnia. These territorial losses were the first political humiliations of the Ottoman Empire (1908-1909). The territorial



retreat was accelerated by Italian's attack in Trablusgarb (1911) that resulted in loss of Ottoman's last land resource in Northern Africa. Balkan Wars (1912) were also crucial in deteriorating empire's territorial strength in Macedonia. The territorial power of the state was later on weakened by the intensification of Serbian, Greek and Arab nationalisms surfaced out of empire's ethnic and socio-economic diversity (Tunaya, 1952:4). During the years following Ottoman Empire's loss of territory, multifarious solutions were provided to save the state. It was within this critical juncture that the downfall of the Ottoman Empire accelerated more favourable grounds for the materialization of Gökalp's ideas. Besides Islamism and Westernism, Turkish Nationalism was put into agenda by the Young Turks, the founding fathers of the ***Union and Progress Party***, who later on turned out to be the vanguard of 1908 revolution by overthrowing sultan and ruling the country till 1918 with despotic one party rule. Ziya Gökalp was an influential member of the ***Union and Progress Party*** and the Young Turk Movement. The Young Turk Revolution was "a patriotic movement of Muslim Turks, mostly soldiers, whose prime objective was to remove fumbling and incompetent ruler and replace him by a government better able to maintain and defend the empire against the dangers that threatened it" (Lewis, 1961:208). For the Young Turks, the newly imported ideas from the West created a situation of cultural degeneration and moral decay. For them, Turkish nationalism was an ideological solution to the rapid liberalization of ethnically diversified Ottoman Empire. Turkish nationalism, although it was stemmed from the liberal climate that was provided by 1908 revolution, was in fact a reaction against liberalism, especially the economic liberalism that previously favoured non-Turkish and non-Muslim minorities living in the empire (Toprak, 1982:21). The nationalism of the Second Constitutional period, in economic terms, represented the ideas impressed by French corporatist thought and Ottoman guild traditions with the aim of creating a middle class consisting of Turkish Muslim entrepreneurs (Toprak, 1980:41-49).

Besides an emphasis on national economy, young nationalists stressed the importance of "national culture", "national education" and "national family" to attain national goals in the process of state building. To promote this project in a short period of time, women's question was politicized in the hands of the political elite and it became inevitable for women to be unaffected from such changes. During the Second Constitutional Period, there was a considerable amount of increase in the number of women's associations, some of those philanthropic, ***Teali-Nisvan- The Society for the Elevation of Women***, some of those feminist, ***Müdafa-i Hukuk-i Nisvan Cemiyeti-The Society for the Defense of Women's Rights*** and periodicals, ***Women's World*** (Çakır, 1991) through which women began to take part actively in women's struggle. Political activism of women led women's issues to become, what I call, a truly "national question". In the 4th congress of Union and Progress Party, primary education was made compulsory and free. As far as the education of women was concerned, it was emphasized in party program that state aimed to improve the conditions of girls' schools and increase their numbers according to its own means. Consequently, first girls' lycee was opened in Istanbul (1913) together with other schools providing girls with practical education and technical skills which would train them in sewing, cooking and child care (Caporal, 1982:112). The curriculum of these girls' schools appeared to be less than egalitarian since they reinforced traditional gender roles presenting women as home makers whose contribution to national development was recurrently pronounced. At this critical point, women's emancipation was discussed in terms of Universalist terms and women were respected as men's equals. However, any change in the social status of women was considered to be one of the serious causes of moral decay. In 1915, an imperial degree was proclaimed allowing the discarding of the veil for female workers during office hours. The image of working women was viewed with an intense male suspicion that most of the women workers were forced to return their homes since their skirts were shorter than the officially stated length in the degree (Yener, 1955:8).



Respectively, in 1917, the police posted the following announcement on Istanbul walls:

**“In the last few months shameful fashions are being seen in the streets of capital. All Muslim women are called upon to lengthen their skirts, refrain from wearing corsets and wear a thick charshaf. A maximum of two days is allowed to abide by the orders of this proclamation”**

Women's question came to be a targeting issue particularly with the effect of wars that provided intermediary channels for women's involvement in public life. During Balkan Wars, middle-class women were involved in social-welfare activities as nurses through the branch of **Red Crescent Society**. A major turning point however, was the effect of First World War creating a demand for female labour as there was a huge loss of male labour to the front. Wars were instrumental in bringing female labour to the public realm, including women's employment in factories, construction of roads and cleaning of streets. By the initiatives of Enver Paşa, **The Islamic Association for the Employment of Ottoman Women** was founded (1916) in employing women workers with the aim of providing them an “honourable life”. For the nationalists, the association served as an ideological tool to rejuvenate the nuclear family which became corrupted under the influence of alien cultures. Eventually, it enforced compulsory marriages for its members, by the age of 21 for women and 25 for men. It assisted brides in their arrangements of trousseau. If a man had a love affair with any of the female workers, the association, via the cooperation of police, was involved in the matter and by other means, it assured if the man was an appropriate marriage candidate. Upon the examination of the bridegroom, they let the couple marry; otherwise, the association gave no financial help to the couples. The main objective of the association was to simulate marriages through its own patronage. Those who resisted this rule or passed the marriage age limit were withdrawn from

membership. Conversely, the ones complying with the rules were rewarded by twenty percent salary increment and similar increments for the birth of each child. In the mean time, the association used newspaper columns for match making and organized impressive wedding ceremonies for its members (Toprak, 1988). ***The Islamic Association for the Employment of Women*** served as an ideological apparatus with the aim of enforcing the project of national family that was one of the Young Turks' aspirations of family life style. This organization was also functional for ensuring women's service to nation as workers increasing female visibility in the labour force. For the first time in Ottoman history, family was used as an ideological tool to harmonize gender relations and consolidate "discipline" and "order" in society.

In 1915 and respectively in 1917, two important legal achievements concerning family affairs and legal status of women appeared on the agenda of Ottoman parliamentarians. In 1915, ***Ottoman Civil Code*** was revisited; women were given the legal right to divorce their husbands in case of husband's leaving the house, having no concern with his home or lacking husbandhood responsibilities and disabled by one of the illness, namely "madness", "leprosy" and "vitiligo". Prior to the civil code, a woman could divorce her husband if the husband was "sexually" and "physiologically" impotent. Coupled with the revision of Ottoman Civil Code was the reception of ***Family Code*** (1917) in which Ziya Gökalp was an active participant. It was the first time that public authorities intervened in family matters in legal terms; till that time family affairs were under the control of religious authorities. State involvement in family life was one of the objectives stated in the code. The marriages under 18 for boys and 17 for girls were made illegal or necessitated the consent of judge. In case of quarrel between the couples, one of the parties resorted to the public authorities (It depended on the will of the parties). Upon the consultation to public authorities, a judge sent a referee for reconciliation between the couples. If the reconciliation was



unsuccessful and the husband was found to be guilty, then divorce took place; if the woman was found to be responsible for the quarrel, the same procedure was applied on the condition that the woman had to give up some of her trousseau. If the referee could not reach a compromise between the couples, then, a third person, having no blood relation with any of the couples, was nominated for the divorce to realize. The referee was the last authority in ending the marriage union and his decisions were final (Caporal, 1982:121-122). Comparing family law with previous Ottoman Civic Code, divorce was made more difficult through reconciliation process, partially benefiting women. The right to divorce was not only left to the final decision of husband but also the consent of wife was to be approved for the divorce to take place. However, as far as the question of polygamy was concerned, Kandiyoti rightly argues that polygamy was not abolished; it was in fact actually legalized although its practice was made more difficult by realizing the consent of the first wife. She furthers her argument claiming that Minister of Justice, Seyit Bey, "wavered on the question of polygamy and finally accepted it not only in view of the clear Koranic license in this respect but also on demographic grounds, since numerous wars had created an imbalance in sex ratio". Those ostentatious supporters of monogamous marriages justified their arguments not on the grounds of "greater equality and basic human rights but in the name of social hygiene" (Kandiyoti, 1989). Since family was shown to be the fundamentals of a society upon which the new nation could rise, reforms were initiated to preserve the "national family" which would in return strengthen the "national state". However, even the good will of the reformers could not fully satisfy the political expectations of some nationalists and Westerners of their time. From a more conservative point of view, they criticized the family code and pointed its lack of seriousness (Findikoğlu, 1944):

**"We are going through a period of serious crisis regarding family and women's affairs. If we assert that in 20th Century, we can solve this problem by building the family**

**upon such inadequate and bad methods, then our nation will not rise upon strong basis" (İkdam Newspaper).**

Women's question was an important tool for the nationalists to redefine themselves, particularly to figure out the characteristics of the newly established nation-state. Through women, modernist-nationalist elite could associate or dissociate itself with the West. In the writings of Ziya Gökalp and Halide Edip, the image of nationalist woman was created, distinguished from western woman by her chastity, dignity, benevolence and self-sacrifice. For the Turkish nationalists, women were not the "property" or "ornament" of men like their female counterparts in the west, on the contrary, they were those who could contribute to the national development of society with their "reason" and "intelligence". Women's contribution to the national development of society was associated with women's function of child giving to the nation. In this sense, women's rights were seen as a means towards the end of nation building, particularly promoted for the well being of the young men who played a leading role in the national politics of empire and later on Kemalist Republic. Young nationalist men stressed the urgency of "educated-social wives" whom they conceived, would in return, advance the nation morally (Durakbaşı, 1988). Using Kandiyoti's terms, women's question gained its legitimating discourse while women were coopted into nationalist discourse as "symbolic pawns".

Regarding women's active involvement in nationalist projects, one wonders why and how nationalism plays a legitimating role in the identity formation of women as well the newly emerging nation states. Partha Chatterjee (1993), analyzing Indian nationalism, poses the question "how did the reformers select what they wanted, what in other words was the ideological sieve through which they put the newly imported ideas from Europe?" He then argues "if we can reconstruct this framework of the nationalist ideology, we will be in a far better position

to locate where exactly the women's question fitted in with the claims of nationalism. We will find, if I may anticipate my argument in this chapter, that nationalism did in fact provide an answer to the new and cultural problems concerning the position of women in modern society and that this answer was posited not on identity but on a difference with the perceived forms of cultural modernity in the West" (pp.117). Although Indian nationalism emerges in a colonial discourse with reactionary impulses against British imperial rule, Chatterjee's analysis of nationalism provides sufficient explanations for analyzing the peculiar nature of gender relations in Gökalp's nationalism. As Chatterjee argues, nationalism separates the domain of culture into two dichotomous worlds which are "material-spiritual" and "home-world". Material domain represents the western notions of science, technology and rational forms of economic organization through which Europeans subjugated all the non-European people and imposed their dominance over them. The colonized countries in order to overcome this domination, do not directly imitate western life style but "utilize the nationalist project of rationalizing and reforming the traditional culture of their people". Rationalization, on the other hand, takes place by over-emphasizing the spiritual domain, which they think, what makes East superior to the West. The material domain is "the outside world that influences us, conditions us and forces us to adjust to it, ultimately it is unimportant. The spiritual, which lies within is our true self; it is that which is genuinely essential". The problem is "to adapt itself to the requirements of a modern material world without losing its true identity" (pp.120-121). In the light of this theoretical argument Chatterjee proposes, one could claim that Gökalp laid down the foundations of an ideological framework within which nationalism provided a solution to women's question. Such a solution came into existence by introducing women as the boundary markers between "material and "spiritual" domains while these domains were viewed as two antagonistic entities of social reality. However, Chatterjee's use of the term "spirituality" in analyzing the ideological discourse of third world nationalisms should



not be associated with the concept of “irrationality”. Nationalist project, in the Turkish context, is not a total rejection of the modern concepts of the West such as rationality, technology and science or it is not a “dismissal of modernity but an attempt to make modernity consistent with the nationalist project” (pp.121).

In the second and third parts of my thesis, I will attempt to trace how Gökalp’s Turkish nationalism conceives the role of woman agency in masculine terms. This will be clarified by Gökalp’s distinction between “national family” (“Milli aile”) and “modern-family” (“Asri aile”). Gökalp’s such an attempt led me to construe, why Gökalp needed to differentiate these concepts, but argued for their gradual unification as well. Were there pragmatic reasons for doing that? Or, looking from Anderson’s perspective is the project of nationalism another way of imagining the nation on the basis of communal identity or not? In the following pages, I shall validate these arguments.

## **2.2 Nature of Gökalp’s Nationalist Ideology**

“Culture” and “civilization” occupy two central themes in Gökalp’s nationalist thought. The conceptual distinction between these terms also characterize Gökalp’s corporatist ideology. In the *Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp*, Parla argues that Gökalp distinguished the technological triumph of capitalism from its liberal logic and suggested the former could exist without the latter (Parla, 1985:57). Criticizing Uriel Heyd\*, Parla goes on to argue; Heyd misinterprets Gökalp’s nationalism associating it with “chauvinistic” nationalism. The reason for that is, according to Parla, Heyd dismisses the ideological foundations of Gökalp’s intellectual thought impressed by “solidarist-corporatism”. However, solidarist-corporatism was not only common to Gökalp’s



thinking, but it was theoretically formulated by some of its founding fathers in the West (Durkheim is an example to this). Gokalp's corporatist ideology also defined the characteristics of his nationalism. In sharp contrast to "racist", "chauvinistic" and "expansionist" nationalisms, Gokalp's nationalism was "egalitarian" and "pluralist" (pp.56). Gokalp did not promote a reactionary type of nationalist project, commanding the individual via feelings excluding reason. That is to say; Gokalp did not disregard the role of "reason" in the socialization of human agency and substitute it with the feelings, representing the "spirit" of the Turkish "nation" or the "folk". Gokalp believed that reason, one of the essential faculties of human beings, can be developed in a society where individuals nurture their potential capabilities as social beings having specialized functions (Gokalp, 1914:124). Individuals are the cells of the social body-different from atomised beings- who can acquire reason from the society they live in. Society, for Gokalp, is not the aggregate sum of individuals-as it is formulated in liberal ideology- but more than that, which represents the common bondage among its members. Nation, family and state are the natural components of this common bondage that make a perfect organic whole for keeping the members of a society together and preserving harmony among different interests. Nation, in Gokalp's use of the term, should not be confused with other collective identities such as "race" or "ethnics", because nation is the outcome of a long historical process which contains various ethnic, racial and religious elements in it and within which there is a complex division of labor on the one hand and functional differentiation on the other (Gokalp, 1917:134) It is because of this reason that nation is a more complex form of human coexistence than ethnics or race. The modern nation is an advanced organic society with a full capability of removing the pathologies in the social body with specialized functions of its autonomous social units (state, family, education system, etc...) For instance, class or gender domination arising out of conflictual situations, engenders a pathology in the social body which must be eradicated by subjugating class or gender interests to "national interest" so that the

harmony which was previously deteriorated, can be restored again. Such a corporatist formulation of society, no matter how it is perceived, makes Gökalp's ideology anti-socialist. Gökalp's solidarist-corporatism also rejects liberalism's analytical and ideological society model because there is a tendency in liberalism to generate conflicts in the social body. Solidarism differs from liberalism in the sense that, in solidarist model, an individual does not only possess "rights" but also pursue "duties" (Parla, 1985:130). "Duty" constitutes the moral part of an individual and it assists the individual to become a truly social being. This type of socialization is not a matter of self sacrificing oneself to the service of one's nation as Heyd argues, but a question of how one acquires the responsibility of defending the moral norms and willingly works for the perpetuation of national morality. At this critical point, Gökalp over-emphasized the role of institutions as the agents of political socialization that would foster a national consciousness.

Gökalp's analytical model of solidarist corporatism brings into existence two overlapping results for the subject matter of this thesis: The first one is, Gökalp's critic of cultural liberalism by offering a first step solution to what he perceived to the ideological paradoxes of western liberalism. To eradicate such a paradox, Gökalp attempted to reach compromise between Turkish culture and economic logic of western liberalism- which is basically capitalism- as he differentiated the cultural components of western liberalism from its capitalist logic. In that sense, Gökalp could offer a critic of western liberalism without falling into chauvinistic nationalism. Gökalp believed that capitalism, as been experienced in the West, could be applied to Turkish context, on the condition that Turks should only import the "concrete" characteristics of western civilization (modern positivist science and technology) and remain its national identity in accordance with the requirements of European civilization. This meant that the capitalist logic of western civilization could be absorbed into Turkish culture and assimilated within it. Gökalp strongly believed, Turks had to accept the civilization of the

West for not to be “enslaved by the powers of the West” (Gökalp, 1923I:266 ):

**“To master the civilization of the West, or to be mastered by the powers of the west: Between these alternatives we must choose! Today this truth is well understood: in order to defend our freedom and independence against Europe, we have to conquer the civilization of the Europeans. European civilization consists of positive sciences, industrial technology and social organization (division of labour)”**

The second implication of Gökalp's corporatist ideology is closely related to the argument mentioned above; it is in fact, the logical consequence of Gökalp's corporatist-nationalist framework. I argue that Gökalp's insistence on “duty” and the “mission” he assigns to women, rather than “right”, in contrast to the gender neutral language of western liberalism, is the key factor in understanding women's secondary role in his Turkish nationalism. In Gökalp's modernization project coupled with his corporatist ideology, women's rights were not pronounced in terms of mere individual rights or they were not promoted with the aim of benefiting women individually. The concept of “women's rights” in the minds of the nationalists was perceived as something by which they could criticize the “morally corrupted” West and its liberal individualism. With this ideological backlash, Gökalp located women's question at the centre of culture-civilization debate and discussed women's status via the status of western women- the women who was portrayed to be essentially different from Turkish women.



### 2.3 *Culture and Civilization (Hars ve Medeniyet)*

In the *Principles of Turkism*, Gökalp argues that there are areas of “convergence” as well as “divergence” between culture and civilization. Convergence is due to the fact that both culture and civilization cover religious, moral, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, economic, linguistic and technological spheres of social life. However, the crucial distinction between “culture” and “civilization” is, “First, culture is national, civilization is international. Culture is composed of the integrated system of religious, moral, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, linguistic, economic, and technological spheres of life of a certain nation. Civilization, on the other hand, is the sum total of institutions shared in common by several nations that have attained the same level of development”. (Gökalp, 1923II:104). Gökalp highlights the distinctive nature of “civilization” and points out its commonalties as well as differences with “culture”; For Gökalp, every culture is unique and seems to have some basic essence that characterizes it, civilization on the other hand is a complex whole that usually contains a multiplicity of cultures among different nations. While culture constitutes the inner domain of each nation which is genuinely original and essential (resembling Chatterjee “spiritual” or “home” domain), civilization surpasses different cultures, in the sense that it represents a supranational totality to which different nations belong and within which they interact. The basic difference between culture and civilization is, while civilization can be shared among different nations, culture is originally vested in one’s nation.

“The elements that constitute a culture, on the other hand, are not creations of conscious individual actions. They are not created artificially. Just as animals and plants grow naturally, so the elements of a culture rise and grow spontaneously. Language, for example, is not made individually or rationally. We can not change the words of a



language, and put new ones, invented arbitrarily in their places. We can not change the grammatical rules which have grown by themselves. The rules and words of a language change, but they change by themselves. We are just spectators of these changes" (1923II:104). Language, the most precious and the most natural ingredient of national culture, constitutes the inner domain of each nation where by it acquires the characteristics that make itself a "natural" corollary. Natural, in Gökalp's use of the term, does not represent any physical quality in the material sense of the term, but it constitutes the "home" domain which evolves autonomously without outside intervention. Culture as a "sui generis" entity is composed of the mores of a particular nation that can not be imitated or imported from other nations. In other words, culture differs from civilization in the sense that it "has its own dynamics that makes a nation what it is and this dynamic should be preserved rather than undercut as modernization takes place" (Davison, 1995: 203).

"Civilization is transmitted from one nation to the other through importation of scientific methods. Culture, on the other hand, is composed of the sentiments which can not be transmitted from nation to nation. While Ottoman music possesses technical qualities, the Turkish music is the melodious expression of sincere Turkish values that is unscientific, without principle and method" (*Principles of Turkism*, pp.23). Gökalp points out the dichotomous nature of Ottoman culture and criticizes it roughly. He appreciates the Turkish national values and differentiates the "distinct" characteristics of Turkish culture from the "concrete" characteristics of western science (technical qualities). For Gökalp, Ottoman intellectuals dismissed the significance of the national culture and coalesced into cosmopolitans with having no idea of what constituted the culture of the common people. While the political elite in power was composed of cosmopolitan Ottoman class those subject to their rule, were the Turks. Gökalp asserts that these two classes "hated each other" because "the Ottoman ruling elite always put class interests above national interests and looked down on their Turkish subjects as a

subjugated nation" (Gökalp, 1923II:23). Compared to Ottoman cosmopolitans, Turks, for Gökalp, were always compassionate towards those under their rule-a national characteristic which signified them as the followers of international peace morality (*Principles of Turkism*, pp.28).

In addition, Gökalp argues that culture and civilization is organically linked to each other: "From the growth of a nation's culture stems its political development and institution of state. Although civilization arises out of culture, it barrows freely from the civilization of the neighbouring peoples". (Gökalp, 1923II:109). Gökalp believes, culture is the essence of civilization and civilization derives its power from culture. Culture and civilization do not represent mutually exclusive categories but rather they are the complimentary entities of social reality. Gradual affiliation of Turkish culture into Western civilization means that a compromise between the two is possible only in technical and scientific matters. In what follows, countries should keep the critical distance between culture and civilization as they become modernized. Civilization should be integrated into national culture and assimilated within it. In other words, modernization should take place without giving harm to national identity. The antagonism between "civilization" and "culture" should be harmonized in such a way that the progressivism of the former should not harm the essence of the latter; for instance if a country has a strong foundation in terms of civilization but has not yet achieved a cultural consciousness, it precipitates the grounds for its own dissolution. For Gökalp, the collapse of the Persian Empire under the alien influences of Greek civilization is the best historical evidence to this.

Despite Gökalp's serious warnings on preserving the essentials of a national culture, he sees no other way that "culture" and "civilization" interact:

**“Eastern civilization (Şark medeniyeti) is not, as some of those assume, the continuation of the Islamic civilization, but a successor of the westernized Roman civilization. Ottomans did not inherit Eastern Roman civilization directly from the Byzantines: Before Ottomans, there had been the Muslim Arabs and the Persians through which Ottomans were influenced from the West.”(*Principles of Turkism*, pp.30)**

Gökalp's remark reveals not merely how Ottoman culture is a part of Eastern Roman civilization but also how interactions among the cultures of different civilizations are indispensable within a context of cultural plurality. This statement is related to Gökalp's general belief that, nations unite “because there is only way to attain which is rational for them” (Gökalp, 1917II:48). In line with this, Gökalp proposes a mission to the Turkish nationalists to discover the national culture that is hidden among the folk and “absorb” Western civilization into Turkish culture provided that the following conditions exist: “Turkish nationalists, on the condition that, remaining Turkish and Muslim, are those who look forward to participating in Western civilization in a definite and a right way. On the other hand before joining to the ranks of Western civilization, we should seek and discover our national culture” (*Principles of Turkism*, pp.31). Gökalp argues that a compromise between “culture” and “civilization” is possible pointing out Japan's modernization- the only country, for Gökalp, whose affiliation in western civilization did not subsequently plunder her national identity. Gökalp also conceives a parallel relationship between Turks' attempts of establishing a nation state and a wide-spread tendency of participating in the western civilization at the end of the 19th century: “Today the West as well as the East shows unmistakably that our age is the age of nations. The most powerful force over the mind of this age is the ideal of nationalism” (Gökalp, 1913I:72). One might think that, Gökalp could justify his extensive program on Turkish nationalism at a time when all the nations




were uprising to build their own nation states. However, Gökalg's nationalist ideology should be studied in a broader context, since Gökalg was no more a pragmatist and his program on Turkish nationalism was not simply an ephemeral intellectual device but it was a comprehensive work with an ideological significance still dominating the parameters of national politics in contemporary Turkey. Gökalg's nationalism prepared the grounds for the emergence of Kemalist nationalism as one of the ideological foundations (one of the six principles) of the Turkish Republic.

## **2.4 Gökalg and Family Morality**

For Gökalg, families are the small bodies whose primary function is to keep the society together (*Principles of Turkism*, pp. 105). In the "Modern and National Family" ("Asri Aile ve Milli Aile", 1917II: 251), Gökalg notes admirable changes pertaining to women's rights in Turkey. For him, these positive changes stemmed from accepting the European conceptions of family and womanhood. Gökalg's remarks reveal an important fact that women's affairs were becoming a political issue in the west, however, in every European country, one could observe parochial tendencies unique to one's nation, and that is to say, women's issues were becoming a truly national question at a time modernizing reforms were being introduced. This particular experience meant, every nation in Europe adjusted a different conception of family and womanhood although each of them belonged to the same Western civilization. It was due to the fact that "within the same European family pattern" says Gökalg "we find the varieties of the typical English family, French family and German family". There was a tendency in each nation to protect its national identity before introducing reforms on gender issues because each nation was too "jealous in preserving its own





uniqueness." Although Gökalp did not pronounce explicitly, he would probably agree with the argument that this attempt was the perfect evidence of how national goals superseded gender issues when the necessity of preserving the cultural difference was to be taken into consideration. Gökalp critically evaluates the limitations as well as the significance of the westernizing reforms on the legal status of women. Gökalp is against both the extreme Westerners, who imitate the model of western family by leading to the destruction of the national family and conservatives who reject the modern conceptions of family and womanhood because of their "fear" of the dissolution the traditional family. For Gökalp, two of the tendencies are extreme: "There is no doubt that the Turkish family will be westernized by the introduction of new conceptions from European civilization. But the Turkish family will be a copy neither of the French or English nor of the German family. Turkish womanhood will better itself by benefiting from the progress of modern civilization. But the Turkish woman will not be copy-cat of French or of English or of German womanhood". Gökalp's formulation of a new type of female identity exactly fits his aspirations for a new understanding of family morality. This leads us to ponder how gender and family interlock within a new nationalist framework under those prevailing conditions of modernity.

In his well known poem, *Kızılelma (Red Apple)*, Gökalp characterizes a new woman personality, named as Ay Hanım. Ay Hanım is born in Bakü, a daughter of highly noble family. Baku represents the ideal city of Turan, a kingdom of Turks and a national home where all Turks unite. Ay Hanım loses her father and mother while she is having her education in Paris. She always dreams of opening schools in Turan, but to do that, she strongly believes, she has to commit herself to the training styles of Turks. In the end, she can not resist her desires and comes to Baku to open schools for both boys and girls. She knows that it is not only acceptable to be informed about the West but she has to get to know the East as well, remarkably the Islamic spirituality. Ay Hanım devotes

herself to the service of Turan living for the purpose of modernizing the national home. To do that, she represses her desires for passion trying to forget the young boy she met in mountains and fell in love with. Gökâlp criticizes such a behaviour and harshly bursts out "how can she give new life to nation if she is involved in such a foolish love?". The name of the young boy is Turgut, a painter, educated in Istanbul. He is also interested in Ay Hanım. Meanwhile, in order to alleviate her passions lying deeply in her heart, Ay Hanım works strenuously for the development of Turan, for instance she opens agriculture, commerce and art schools where both of the sexes, hand in hand, contribute to the modernization of the ideal kingdom. Turgut, in the mean time, can not forget Ay Hanım; he sees her and *Kızılelma* (Red Apple) in his dreams so many times that he decides to send a letter to the director of Ay Hanım's school, requesting to be appointed as an arts teacher. Upon the arrival at Bakü, Turgut keeps in touch with Tomris Hanım, another teacher in the same school. He falls in love with her pretending that she is Ay Hanım. When he learns that the woman he is assuming to be Ay Hanım, was going to marry, he attempts a suicide. However, Ay Hanım rescues him and the story ends with their marriage at a time when *Kızılelma* (Red Apple) turns into heaven.

As Gökâlp's *Kızılelma* is read symbolically, one gets the feeling of a nationalist female identity come into being. Ay Hanım is not a traditional woman in the common sense of the term but one educated abroad. She has, along side with this, developed a nationalist consciousness and has not become alienated to common people (halk) in sharp contrast to the Ottoman cosmopolitans. Although Ay Hanım is educated in Europe, she resembles nothing of western female identity and she is distinguished from western women by her "dignity" as a diligent woman and by the "sanctity" of her mission. Ay Hanım devotes herself to the national development of Bakü through repression of her sexuality since she strongly believes; this is a necessity for her in order to commit herself to the service of her nation. Here, Ziya Gökâlp draws the portrait of an a-sexual woman. This woman only practices love in her dreams but can not

exercise it in reality. Nationalist woman also condemns love as a “foolish” practice because love, for her, is “destructive”, “silly”, “unimaginable” and “far-reaching” hence should be avoided; so a nationalist woman keeps a critical distance between her sexuality that constitutes her individual autonomy and the ideal values she has to represent. In this sense, Ay Hanım denies most of the things that could nurture her personal capacity and help her develop an individual consciousness to exist for herself.

Another perplexing point in *Kızılelma* is that, Ay Hanım, as a woman, represents the ideal city of Turan. It is not man but a female figure, representing a symbolic value for the exaggeration of unimaginable and far-reaching country. This ideal (Red Apple) seems to be far reaching. However in the end it becomes practical and possible through hard working and faith in job. Here, Gökalp depicts the portrait of a Kemalist female identity of one-party period (1923-46), a woman of education (*Muallime*) assigned with the sacred duty of upbringing generations for the modernization of Turkish Republic.

Although women are assigned with the responsibility of servicing to their nation, they are not respectively employed in fighting projects at the fronts. In most of his poems (*Şehit Haremi*, for instance) Gökalp narrates a house-wife waiting for a husband as she prays with her children. Nationalist women value their men because they believe; their husbands are fighting for a sacred ideal. For a nationalist woman, to wait is not a burden; on the contrary, it is an honor through which she indirectly shares the responsibility of defending the nation.

The originality of Turkish women is more evident in Gökalp's other poems namely ***Woman*** and ***Housewife*** (Tansel, 1952):

### ***Woman***

*There are three fundamentals of a society: The first one is the family  
It is you woman, founding this holy nest*



*It is you, handling the civilization flag  
It is your name that will be written on it, in golden words*

*The second one is the state, man had created it  
While he was a hunter, he became a shepherd  
Being a shepherd, he became a sovereign  
To believe that power is right, he established just courts  
To believe that right is power, he arranged iron arms*

*The third one is the nation, from first humane friendship  
Then on, spirits are pining for attaining this period  
Religion was born in the family, law on the other hand, in the state  
The last ideal in the nation is the right kind of morality associated with  
science*

*Nation can not be built alone but in solidarity  
Woman and man, two consciences uniting together, shall do it  
First temple had been separate but now together  
Two sexes in one "arafat" will worship to one god*

## ***Housewife***

*My house is Heaven  
I am an angle of it  
I am an angle, bringing  
Prosperity to my house*

*In my house every nigh,  
I give a feast  
My husband comes from his work  
My children from school*

*Columns are porphyry  
In emerald dome  
From hundreds of oil lamps  
Green brilliance is pouring*

*In one flowery room  
Gathers us our table  
This room is a temple  
Our making love, our worship*

As being narrated in the first poem (*Woman*), Gökalp equates “family” with woman, “state” with man and the “nation” with the unity of them. Power is associated to be an essential feature of “man” who represents the “justice”. Might constitute “power” and power represents “right” in the hands of men to preserve the unity of the state. “Religion” as a spiritual domain (the inner domain) emanates its power from family which is said to be woman’s realm and “laws” from the state, which is the said to be man’s domain. Nation derives its power from a “humane friendship” of man and woman instead of their “sexual partnership” and the essential characteristic that makes the Turkish nation “humane” is expressed by the “solidarity” of male and female “souls”. Keep in mind that male and female souls are also devoid of sex and the emphasis on “humane” is rigidly pronounced as a sign of sexual chastity. State is granted to be built alone by men. Gökalp does not mention the participant role women in state building. However, the same attitude is not observed in Gökalp’s attempts of describing the “nation”. Nation, for Gökalp, is more meaningful than “state” or “family” because it represents the “unity” of man and woman” that is also “natural” and “holly”. In Gökalp’s use of the term, “nation” connotes different meanings in different contexts. The meaning of nation, for Gökalp, is two-fold. At one level Gökalp constructs nation as a “segment of land” portrayed as “motherland” and at the other level, he defines nation as a “union of man’s and woman’s consciences”. When the eventual progress in the modernization of society is strongly articulated, the role of the two sexes and their equal contribution that would facilitate this process, is mentioned (at this point, nation represents the “unity of man’s and woman’s consciences”) but when the country is narrated to be under the occupation of alien forces, Gökalp over-emphasizes the role of “man” as soldiers who fight for the defense of the mother-land. Here, “nation” is narrated to be a segment of land depicted in feminine figure. Women’s centrality to nation is affirmed by portraying woman’s bodies as an arena of national struggle protected and defended by men.



Family (home), in the second poem (*Housewife*) constitutes the inner domain of cultural life. Using Chatterjee's term, it represents the realm of "home" as opposed to the realm of "world" or "material life". Family is encompassed by holy and spiritual things emanating from women. The essential characteristic that makes the Turkish family "holy" is associated with woman's capacity of generating prosperity in the house. The home is narrated in such a way that it engenders fantastic qualities like "emerald dome" and "green brilliance", two indicators of woman's prosperity in the house. Women also serve as the angles of the house who give "feast" to family members. To put in a right word, they are *devoted wives*, pursuing the mission of preserving the holy conjugal union and keeping the family members together. Although, women are the founders of the "holy nest", they are not the effective members of the family union, that is to say, women do not act as equal partners of their husbands. Equality is not understood in terms of a fair division of labour between the sexes because equality is pronounced to be the distinguishing element of the material world (West). For Gökalp, Turkish men and women are already equal in their "consciences" and "souls" (their souls are equal) - what he perceives as the non material components of equality between the sexes.

In the first poem, Gökalp does not see any contradiction between women's traditional roles and the responsibility of "handling the civilization flag". For him, these two tasks are not mutually exclusive of one another; on the contrary, they are the complimentary traits of the social reality. Handling the civilization flag, in this sense, becomes compatible with women's traditional roles in a gender segregated Turkish family. Compared to western woman, Turkish woman is not the only mother of her child in the family but also the "competent" mother of the whole nation having a reproduction function.

Women in Gökalp's poems are used as symbols while men represent the reality. For instance, man "creates the state", "establishes courts"

and "runs armies". Man as a human being operates in the realm of world contrary to woman who operates in the realm of home ("*my house is heaven*") but this should not be evaluated that Gökâlp has no conception of participant active woman. In one of his poems, ***Professional Woman (Meslek Kadını)***, Gökâlp criticizes those who believe, girls should marry at an early age:

*You say, when her time comes, a young girl  
Certainly finds herself a husband*

*Husband brings house some bread  
So no need for woman to work?*

In *Mektepli Hanım Kızların Marşı*, Gökâlp delineates a woman personality who is in full recognition of her duty as a comrade woman:

I

*We are the little girls of this country  
We study our lessons...  
For us the great God  
We get use to what he orders*

II

*We don't have guns  
We have needles in our hands  
With needle is our war  
Who wraps up your pain ?*

III

*Who everyday after work  
Sews for you a folder and a shirt?  
When you go far away  
Who looks after your house?*

IV

*As you bomb the enemy  
Who draw your animal?  
The burden on her shoulders  
Who carried to the border?*



VIII

*My obligation if it is under treat  
To save my country  
But following that, my duty  
Is to be a house-wife*

VIX

*I too learn science  
But don't call my house a dungeon:  
Can't be separated, says my elder  
Woman from house, house from woman*

XII

*Hey, my brother! You too work  
Cheer up the mother land with your horse  
Go to Europe, experience science  
Convey what you borrow*

XIV

*We are all from one cradle  
From the same school Turkish son  
Your heart is made up of pure steel  
Mine is full of benevolence*

Young nationalist women carry the burden of national struggle though they never complain about it. It is honorable for a nationalist woman to sew a folder for a husband who goes to front. The husband (soldier) is an intermediary between the nationalist woman and the nation; it is through their husbands women devote themselves to the service of their country. As husbands fight against the enemy, women feel the same; it is via husbands women feel proud of themselves. Young nationalist women in the poem also argue that "learning science" and "being a housewife" is not mutually exclusive of one another. Because of this, they do not depreciate their house as "dungeon" and enjoy being "respectable" house-wives together with following the rules of science. They are aware of the fact that their first obligation is to save the country and to be a house wife after that. Thus for a nationalist woman, defending the nation becomes the first, being a house wife, the second and learning science, the third. Gökalp, in this poem, also takes a position on the classical dichotomy between man and woman. While men's hearths are said to be made up of "pure steel", women's hearths are associated with "benevolence".

When Gökalp was in exile, he spent some of his time sending letters to his wife and daughters, stressing the importance of family life and the responsibilities of fathers and mothers towards their children. He describes in a paternalistic way how a child should be brought up and a proper kind of family morality should be adopted. He is a kind of educator and a strict pedagogue in these letters (***Limni and Malta Letters***), (***Limni ve Malta Mektupları***, Durakbaşı, 1988):

***"Everyone is free in whatever he wants to do but after being a mother and a father, parents are the slaves of their children. For the happiness of their children, mothers and fathers have to live a long life and avoid illness"***

In the below mentioned quotation, we see the authoritative educating father:

***“From now on, I shall arrange a life program that will make you happy. I, myself, shall educate our children. We, Turks, don’t know family life.. An individual, after his country, should mostly think of his family and work for the welfare of it”***

## **2.5 Ziya Gökalp Reconsidered: Women, Ideology and the Politics of Nationalism**

In this thesis, I aimed to show, how cultural difference and the formation of Turkish national identity were articulated as forms of control over women. I argued that women’s question was central to culture-civilization debate in Gökalp’s repetitive discussions of Western civilization vs. Turkish culture.

Although Gökalp stressed the urgency of preserving the essentials of a national culture, he did not formulate a nationalist ideology explicitly based on cultural difference. As Chatterjee (1986) argues, in their attempts to respond to western civilization, the nationalist project that is predicated upon the creation of a national identity, posits this particular identity as an arena of negotiating with the West. Criticizing Anderson’s analysis of third world nationalisms, Chatterjee argues, the nationalist projects in third world countries are not posited on an identity “but rather on a difference, with the modular forms of national society propagated by the modern West” (Chatterjee, 1991) The nationalist discourse creates its own domain before negotiating with the West. According to nationalists, the material domain that represents Western superiority, should be acknowledged and carefully studied, but the inner domain,



carrying the essential marks of a cultural identity should be preserved. In this sense, family as the essential mark of the inner domain should be protected and women as the boundary markers of their communities should retain their traditional roles.

As it happened in the Turkish experience of one party period, the position of women underwent a considerable change as modernizing reforms were introduced. Coupled with this process, such changes created unexpected consequences in the world of nationalists. Newly emerging national elite brought into existence a new patriarchy, different from the traditional family, but one that was explicitly claimed to be different from the Western family. As in the case of "invented traditions", Hobsbawm rightly argues, nationalism is a modern as well as an "invented" phenomenon. The emergence of nationalism is a long process by which new traditions are invented to meet new demands. However, the invention of traditions is different from the adaptation of old traditions to new conditions. The former is only seen in so called "modern societies" during the rapid modernization engendered by industrial change. In times of rapid social change (1870-1914), societies witnessed political mobilization of the masses that threatened the stability of the old system. To counter the possible emergence of mass democracy, the ruling elites sought ways to control the consequences of rapid social change. In putting this project into effect, the concept of nation was introduced which underlined "social cohesion", hierarchy and order among the members of a community. It was in the interest of the ruling classes to promote a feeling of cohesion and impose such feeling on the masses so that they could control the unexpected consequences of modernization (Hobsbawm, 1983). Following this perspective, I could strongly argue that women's question was central to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and rapid liberalization of cultural life, which, in the minds of nationalists, created a situation of moral decay and perpetual anarchy. Nationalism could serve as an ideological tool by which the ruling elite could eliminate the so called "anarchical situation" of political

society. However, nationalist thought in Gökalp's context, can not be seen as a simple instrument in the hands of the ruling elites to mobilize the masses. The emergence of the nation states is a process of reconstructing the already existing traditions and institutions of a community rather than inventing new traditions (Smith, 1991). Instead of inventing new traditions which would take sometime and much more energy, Gökalp reconstructed the national culture and incorporated some of the elements of the old culture into new one. At this critical juncture, the control of women was central to nation-building. Modernity was constructed differently in the minds of nationalists and women's integration into nationalist project was seen as a necessity which would facilitate the process of state building. Reconstruction of tradition came into existence by introducing women as the national actors: practical wives, mothers of the nation or even comrades who were seen as the repository of cultural values. The concept of "modern" was then "justified as the more authentic and discontinuity presented as continuity" (Kandiyoti, 1991).

Discourse of Turkish nationalism was not constructed on cultural and spiritual foundations of "nation" as some of those Arab nationalisms in the Middle East. The nationalist-modernist elite (Ziya Gökalp) always looked for indigenous models to justify women's equality with men or acknowledge women's emancipation. Instead of denying the notion of gender equality that would not insure good will and sympathy, Gökalp always sought models to reconcile traditional values with the European norms. However this strategy was another way of maintaining the gender segregation between the sexes. Similar argument is also expressed by Jayawardana and Massad who conceive the gender objectives of nationalist reformers as two-fold:

***“....to establish in their countries a system of stable, monogamous nuclear families with educated and employable women such as was associated with capitalist development and bourgeois ideology; and yet to ensure that women would retain a position of traditional subordination within the family.”(Jayawardana,1988)***

In putting the project of nationalism into effect, nationalists' attempt to combine European norms with existing gender regime did not result in cultural antagonism; instead, it was an attempt whereby European norms negotiated with the traditional ones (Massad, 1995)



### 3 Conclusive Remarks

This thesis traces some of the ideological viewpoints of Ziya Gökalp and critically evaluates how Ziya Gökalp paradoxically locates women's question in his project of Turkish nationalism.

I tried to show throughout this thesis that Gökalp's nationalist thought and the gender relations it wished to reinforce had nothing to do with invention of new traditions. Having attempted to point out the difference between Gökalp's nationalist thought and some reactionary Arab nationalisms in the Middle East, I argued, how women as the objects of patriotic-nationalist discourse were introduced not only as the "bearers of cultural authenticity" but also, more importantly, as the vehicles of political modernity. Whatever the concept of "modernization" implied in Gökalp's mind was, he strongly believed, as societies evolved into modern ones, women's secondary position would be altered and such changes would give way to modern conceptions of womanhood. However, I also argued that Gökalp was aware of the cultural gap existing between East and West, an essential problem and a fundamental discussion of his time he felt indebted to deal with. This necessity compelled him to construct modernity differently from the liberals of his time. Proposing a corporatist-nationalist alternative where the national interest was seen superior to individual interest or any conflicts of interests (class+gender), Gökalp represented women as "symbolic pawns" to facilitate the process of attaining national goals. This attempt was not simply an outcome of inventing new traditions but reconstructing the already existing gender relations as new metaphors. As Massad underscores, "the new gender norms are modern inventions dressed up in traditional garb to satisfy nationalism's claim of a national culture for which it stands" (Massad, 1995), he also agrees with the fact that the new gender metaphors "are not so much *traditional* as they are

*traditionalized*" (Laroui, 1976). One could easily comprehend the gender norms of nationalist thought based on the assumption, "women are equal but different", allegedly articulated in Gökalp's discussions of "modern" and "national" as conceptual categories. In Gökalp's writings, women's equality with men was strongly emphasized at a time women were expected to assume new responsibilities in nation-state building. However, such a participation that would also incorporate women into its nationalist project, was supposed to be in harmony with women's traditional gender roles. The notion that women were "equal" but "different" was articulated by portraying "family" as the ultimate place of naturalness, fertility-mother's function of child giving to the nation-, companionship, morality and sexual chastity, all the characteristics that made women essentially "different" from men. Modern Turkish women would assume new roles in the articulation of these values while they were expected to behave "modern-yet-modest" (Najmabadi, 1991). Such a romanticizing of national family also inferred that the Turkish family was substantively different from the Western family while the West was portrayed to be lacking family morality and cultural integrity.

The way in which nationalist ideology was articulated brought into existence some paradoxical results in the world of nationalists (including Ziya Gökalp). The instrumental role assigned to women served as a legitimate channel by which women appeared in public realm as enfranchised citizens while they were mobilizing the resources introduced to them. Turkish women expressed their demands as citizens struggling for national rights but not as Turkish women struggling for universal women's rights, where Turkish was always conceived in the masculine. Despite its masculine rhetoric, the nationalist ideology provided and opportunity space for women's inclusion in public realm and later on prepared the grounds for the emergence of a unique feminist movement where women appeared as real actors this time (1980).

Apart from the instrumental role of Gökalp's nationalist ideology, one might also argue that feminism is not autonomous but bound to gender norms of standing nationalist ideology that engenders it. Since nationalist ideology looks retrospectively to the past and celebrates the essential female body (women as "mothers of the nation" or "founders of the holy family nest"), it automatically perpetuates patriarchal ideology, remaking women secondary and subservient. This comes into existence through a process of what I call "reconstruction of tradition with a modernist disguise." It is a big debate, however, when and how, women as full participants will involve in this process without becoming aliens to it.



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