

PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS IN OTTOMAN INTELLECTUAL LIFE AT  
THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND THEIR IMPACT ON  
YOUNG TURK'S THOUGHT

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---

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Prof. Dr. Erdal Cengiz	(A. U., DTCTF)	_____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul R. Turan	(A. U., DTCTF.)	_____

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Name, Last name : Fatih Taştan

Signature :

## ABSTRACT

### PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS IN OTTOMAN INTELLECTUAL LIFE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG TURK'S THOUGHT

Taştan, Fatih

Ph. D., Department of Philosophy

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan

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The aim of this study is to examine scientific and philosophical understanding of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (CUP in short), which takes an important place in Turkish history of politics, and the Young Turks who vitalized it.

CUP is an organization remained in the power, during Ottoman Empire, between 1908 and 1918. The great majority of both national and international sources, subjecting the rulership period of CUP, identify this term with Young Turks' power. This identification is right to a large extent. For, the mentality vitalized the Ottoman CUP directly refers to a modernist group which is called Young Turks.

Our study does not have an aim of realizing a purely historical discussion. It rather scrutinizes the reasons of how and why a political organization, mentality of which is subjected, even today, to different discussions, needed scientific and philosophical arguments. Understanding the kind of shape it has given to its own political program by starting from those arguments is one of the purposes taken into consideration throughout the study.

In terms of the goals of our study we first identified the scientific and philosophical approaches commonly adopted in Young Turks' period, both in the West and in the Ottoman world of thought. We observed that these approaches consist of positivism, evolutionism and materialism and that they are defended by Young Turk figures very single-mindedly. This observation is deduced from the examination we carried out on the periodicals published by Young Turks individually and institutionally. One needs to point that these periodicals determined the limits of our study as well.

We scrutinized the effect that is created by the positivist, evolutionist and materialist understandings of science and philosophy on the traditional philosophies of religion, ethics and aesthetics. At the end, we found the opportunity of observing how Young Turks reinforced their nationalist approach by means of a discourse which is decorated with modern scientific and philosophical concepts. This circumstance constitutes one of the conspicuous themes of our study since it refers to the reality that science and philosophy have been instrumentalized by Young Turks.

**Keywords:** Young Turks, Science, Religion, Ethics, Aesthetics

## ÖZ

### YİRMİNCİ YÜZYILIN BAŞLARINDA OSMANLI DÜŞÜNCE HAYATINDAKİ FELSEFİ AKIMLAR VE BUNLARIN JÖN TÜRK FİKRİYATI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

Taştan, Fatih

Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Türk siyasi tarihinde önemli bir yeri bulunan Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti (İTC) ile ona hayat veren Jön Türklerin bilim ve felsefe anlayışlarını incelemektir.

İTC 1908-1918 yılları arasında iktidarı elinde bulundurmuş bir örgüttür. İTC iktidarını konu edinen yerli-yabancı kaynakların büyük bir kısmı bu dönemi Jön Türk iktidarı olarak nitelendirmektedir. Bu nitelendirme büyük oranda haklıdır, zira İTC'ye hayat veren zihniyet doğrudan Jön Türkler olarak isimlendirilen bir zümreye işaret etmektedir.

Çalışmanın amacı hiç şüphesiz salt bir tarih tartışması gerçekleştirmek değildir. Daha ziyade kendisi tarihe mal olmakla birlikte, temsil ettiği zihniyet günümüzde dahi çeşitli tartışmalara konu olan siyasal bir örgütün bilimsel ve felsefi argümanlara nasıl ve niçin ihtiyaç duyduğunu incelemeye çalıştık. Bu argümanlardan hareketle İTC'nin kendi siyasi programına nasıl şekil verdiğini ortaya koymak çalışmamızda gözettiğimiz amaçlardan birini teşkil etmektedir.

Çalışmamızın amaçları bakımından öncelikle Jön Türklerin yaşadığı dönemde yaygın olarak benimsenen bilimsel ve felsefi yaklaşımları tespit ettik. Söz konusu yaklaşımların pozitivizm, evrimcilik ve materyalizm olduğunu ve Jön Türk figürleri tarafından bunların kararlı bir şekilde savunulduğunu gördük. Bu tespitimiz Jön Türkler tarafından bireysel veya kurumsal bir şekilde yayınlanmış süreli yayınların incelenmesine dayanmaktadır. İşaret etmek gerekir ki bahsi geçen süreli yayınlar aynı zamanda çalışmamızın sınırlarını da belirlemiştir.

Pozitivist, evrimci ve materyalist bilim ve felsefe anlayışlarının din, ahlak ve estetik felsefeleri bakımından yarattığı etkileri irdeledik. En nihayet Jön Türklerin modern bilimsel ve felsefi kavramlardan örülü bir söylemle kendi milliyetçi yaklaşımlarını ne şekilde tahkim ettiklerini izleme fırsatı bulduk. Bu durum, Jön Türklerin bilimi ve felsefeyi araçsallaştırmış olduğu gerçeğine işaret etmesi bakımından çalışmamızın dikkat çekici bir temasını oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jön Türkler, Bilim, Din, Ahlak, Estetik

To My Family

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Some Introductory Remarks

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of modern Western scientific and philosophical understandings on Young Turks and the Ottoman CUP as a Young Turk organization. Leading periodicals which are published by them, whether individually or institutionally, have been chosen as the subject of examination with this purpose in mind. The primary criteria taken into consideration in selecting a periodical related with Young Turks is to see if it starts from a certain philosophical ground with regard to scientific, religious, ethical and aesthetical issues constituting the framework of our study. Further information about the general qualities of selected periodicals will be provided in the following pages.

The phrase of Young Turks refers to an important period in terms of Turkish history of politics. They are the figures of an era in which Ottoman Empire came across with modern scientific and philosophical concepts intensively. What makes Young Turks special as of the position they occupied is that they represented a mentality which is knitted with those philosophical and scientific concepts. As it shall be pointed within the next chapter, Young Turks studied in schools which can be regarded as modern vis-a-vis their contemporaries and wherein Western curriculums are followed. The education they received changed their weltanschauung and yet caused them to envisage the political struggle they undertook as a philosophical and scientific fact.

There are two interrelated hypothesis, among others, on which this study depends. The first one is that Young Turks moved from a philosophical and scientific point of view in their political careers. And the second one is that the philosophical ground

which constituted a starting point for Young Turks take part, within a certain unity, in periodicals published by them.

One of the most important reasons of our selection of Young Turks' understanding of philosophy and science as a topic of study is the connection they structured between philosophical thought and corporatism. This connection, which is regarded by them as a matter of life or death, resulted in an important historical experience in terms of Turkish intellectual history. How is it possible to transform a society through an institutionalized understanding of philosophy? On which philosophical background is based the critical perspective, which is also initiating the corporatism? What kind of reflections this perspective has in the areas of philosophies of religion, ethics and aesthetics in particular? Such like questions are the ones that must be answered to ensure an analysis with regard to the situation which can basically be regarded as the institutionalization of philosophy.

As a matter of fact, these can be seen as questions that must be taken into consideration with regard to human beings' adventure of thought. The transition from individual state of consciousness to the level of social existence is a story about philosophy's acquirement of an institutional character. If one thinks about human being's trial with philosophy, recognition of a number of interrelated points would always seem possible.

First of all, philosophy is defined as –a cliché statement though- love of wisdom. Human being exists, in the truest sense of the word, when he explores that he has the ability of thinking. And the meaning of this existence depends on his comprehension of the differences he observes between himself and other things within the universe. Therefore, philosophy can be characterized as the activity of *self-disclosure* of the individual consciousness. The contact with the outer deploys human being's curiosity and enables him to produce several successive reasoning. These thoughts head towards a certain systematic, which also refers to another essential character of philosophy. In other words, putting aside the system owner philosophers in particular, philosophy presents a cumulative nature. On the other hand, one needs also to point that philosophy carries within itself a continuous revolutionary soul.

For, as a result of the authentic structure of thinking, consciousness is always on a movement. And this is why philosophy needs to be seen as an uninterrupted process.

Although philosophy depends on an individual basis, it nonetheless starts to acquire an exceeding nature with regard to the effect it creates. Thus, it is demanded by the cumulative nature of philosophy as well. Contemplations of different consciousnesses about the same object bring philosophy in a creative power. Different states of consciousness make it possible to catch the points overlooked previously. In this way, selecting the most suitable form through the whole possible states of things that corresponds to the truth becomes possible.

That philosophy is an intellectual activity depending on an individual basis constitutes its most crucial aspect. It is because of this circumstance that the way to truth is more than one and, therefore, conceptions about truth are manifold. The fact that truth cannot be restrained within a single conceptual framework is another issue supporting philosophy's productivity. Philosophy migrates from a world of thought wherein it becomes fixed in a certain framework and thinking is encouraged in that direction. One can come across with different instances of this circumstance in human history. Scholasticism, as an approach representing the established way of thinking of the middle ages, is the most remarkable example of it.

The most important reflection of scholasticism in the history of thought is that it attempted to strangle the rebel spirit of philosophy. Since philosophy stays away from obedience, it can be satisfied only within a soul which is in a constant movement and the intellectual creativity of which is at the highest level. It seems possible to say that no thinking can be philosophy in the truest sense of the word unless it depends on a constantly questioning and never satisfying doubtful state of mind. It can be argued, on the other hand, that the annihilating attitude scholastic understanding maintained towards philosophy arises from its institutional framework.

Well, can it be argued that all institutional glances result necessarily in the devastation of philosophy? As a matter of fact, this is one of the basic questions that led us to prepare this study. Some historical examples remind that this may not be the case prevailing in all times. In other words, one may be able to mention some circumstances reminding that institutionalization of philosophy or its establishment by way of certain institutions do not entail the execution of philosophy but imply, on the contrary, its revitalization. In effect, the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress as a Young Turk organization refers to a historical example that can be thought strengthening such an argument.

One can say, as a part of the hypothesis mentioned earlier, that although institutionalization does not necessarily annihilate philosophical thinking it still keeps this situation on the agenda as the strongest possibility. For, every institutionalized and established thought starts to become conservative and introversive and loses its creative energy. Considered from this perspective, it is possible to argue that all institutional schemes, no matter of what kind they are, possibly remove philosophy from its essential nature.

One of the basic assumptions of the Ottoman CUP, and the Young Turk mentality which generated it, seem to be that philosophy must be supported and fortified by a certain structure in order to exist. Thus, philosophy will grow stronger as a world view and solve all the problems experienced by Ottoman society whether they are political or cultural or ethical. However, as it will be brought to the agenda within next chapters on several occasions, this argument implies that philosophy must be seen as a process progressing within a given set of conceptual framework. One needs to point, as a start, that this supposed circumstance refers to a problematic approach with regard to the nature of philosophy. Is it making analysis by using accepted concepts, for example, that philosophy is expected to do? It will most probably be responded negatively. It seems difficult to be realized within the terms of rebel soul of philosophy at least. It could not go beyond a scholastic thinking even if one responds that question in a positive way.

To put the main theme of this study, which subjects the effects of modern scientific and philosophical concepts on Young Turks, one needs to open the intention by the terms of philosophical institutionalism or institutionalization of philosophy a bit more. Institutionalization of philosophy does not imply an accumulation that philosophy creates on its own specific direction but rather refers to a supposition that this accumulation can be taken and used as a whole.

The Ottoman CUP represents an interesting example within the terms of Turkish history of thought. It tried to accomplish a political agenda, which is intensively woven into scientific and philosophical concepts, by a methodology yet is decorated with scientific and philosophical discourses. As it is going to be examined circumstantially within the next chapter, it is possible to see the subject of their struggle as a living monument of philosophy. Young Turks' individual backgrounds, which have ultimately turned into an institutional attitude, convinced them that the construction of a new philosophical language is inevitable. Modernity resembled, in the eye of Young Turks, a doomsday of philosophical paradigms. The only possible way out of this milieu is to use a language which overlaps, or shares the same philosophical or scientific ground, with it.

When considered from the view of Committee's establishment and rulership periods, it can be witnessed that they attempted to create the philosophical framework by means of institutions directly. The most concrete example of this circumstance is the periodicals they published; some of which constitute also the subject of our study. Modern philosophical and scientific understandings transferred into Ottoman world of thought institutionally through the agency of periodicals. Of course it can also be seen as a crime committed against the authenticity and weight of philosophical thinking. Philosophy does not depart, at the end of the day, by a desire of indoctrination or of becoming accepted. It rather makes every type of established thoughts a subject to itself, without being liable to any limit, and leaves a transformative effect on them.

The connection between philosophy and institutionalism brings an interesting situation into agenda. One can argue by taking the philosophical and scientific

adventure of the West into consideration that philosophy has given birth to an authentic institutional structure by itself. It can also be read, essentially, as a relationship between thinking and result. To put it a bit more clearly, Western thinking firstly established a philosophical ground and then this ground created a sui generis transformation. Renaissance, Reformation and Industrial or French revolutions are the most remarkable examples of this circumstance. Of course these historic breakups cannot be said to happen without a cause. There is a serious philosophical accumulation that created them. The Ottoman CUP can be seen as the incarnational state of the struggle towards actualizing historical events mentioned above within Ottoman intellectual life as well. One can come across with quite plain expressions, in Young Turk periodicals, supporting this assertion. In an article published in the journal of *Şura-yı Ümmet*, for example, the period of 2<sup>nd</sup> Constitutionalism (Meşrutiyet), which represents the taking over of Young Turks, and the French Revolution is compared and characterized as two important revolutions that changed the history of human being.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the Constitutionalism is an enlightened Turkish revolution and the Young Turks, who pioneered it, are the projections of the philosophical reason that created the French Revolution.

Likewise, articles written and published by Musa Kazım Efendi in *İslam Mecmuası*<sup>2</sup> are remarkable in terms of the connection they establish between Young Turks' mentality and French Revolution. In these articles, Musa Kazım Efendi argues that the terms of "liberty", "fraternity" and equality", which also constitute the basic concepts of the French Revolution, are accepted by Islam as well. These articles are conspicuous also as they are reflections of the typical Young Turk approach of reconciliation. What lies at the basis of Musa Kazım Efendi's struggle of reconciling is a concern with regard to showing that the scientific and philosophical understandings adopted by Young Turks are not contrary to the essence of Islam. We

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<sup>1</sup> İ. C., "İki İnkılâp," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 9, no. 205 (14 January 1325/27 January 1910), pp. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> The full identity of articles by Musa Kazım are as follows: "İslam ve Terakkî-1", *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 1 (16 Rabî' al-Awwal 1332/30 January 1329/12 February 1914/), pp. 1-6; "İslam ve Terakkî-2", *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 Rabî' al-Awwal 1332/13 February 1329/26 February 1914), pp. 34-36 and "İslam ve Terakkî-3", *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 3 (14 Rabî' al-Ākhir 1332/27 February 1329/12 March 1914), pp. 75-77.

will have the opportunity of touching on similar attempts of reconciliation throughout the study.

However, one needs to point to the fact that Young Turks seem to read the adventure of science and philosophy in Western world of thought backward. In other words, they firstly established certain institutions. And then, they tried to provide the development of a philosophical language and thought through the agency of these institutions. This circumstance can also be seen, with respect to the purposes we determined for our study, as a struggle of re-defining or re-designing the relationship between language and thinking. The issue to which we point can be problematized by searching for the preceding factor in this relation. In other words, one needs to specify whether the language precedes the thinking, or the thinking precedes the language. As a result by nature, thinking is expected to precede the language. For, we seem to think before anything else and construct a specific content. And then we match up this content with certain concepts which are also created by us. Language can only be possible just after this matching up. But Young Turks' mentality seems to follow this process backwardly. To put it more clearly, they seem to think that one needs first to construct a philosophical language and then develop a type of thinking which is compatible with that language. There are several examples of this circumstance and these examples provide important clues in terms of the connection that we attempted to establish between institutionalism and philosophical thinking above. In the 54<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> issues of the journal of *İçtihat*, for example, an article titled "İstilah İstimzacı"<sup>3</sup> is published. In this article, ten scientific and philosophical concepts in French language (*Concret, Abstrait, Objectif, Subjectif, Induction, Déduction, Type-Sous-Type, Conscient, Inconscient, Constatation*) are selected and readers are invited to coin Turkish meanings for these concepts. One can argue that the purpose of the publishers of this article is not restricted solely with finding Turkish equivalents for different concepts. When the periodicals are taken into consideration as a whole, it can be said that they were trying to reach to an idea from concept. To reach to an idea by starting from a concept can be a way of learning or

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<sup>3</sup> See Anonymous, "İstilah İstimzacı," *İçtihat* 4, no. 54 (14 February 1328/27 February 1913), p. 1222; Anonymous, "İstilah İstimzacı," *İçtihat* 4, no. 55 (21 February 1328/6 March 1913), p. 1238; Anonymous, "İstilah İstimzacı," *İçtihat* 4, no. 57 (7 March 1329/20 March 1913), p. 1270.

thinking but it obviously is a difficult endeavor when it conceived in terms of the spontaneity of thought.

Another concrete indicator of the relationship that is tried to be constructed between philosophy and institutionalism is the works of reformation actualized delicately by Young Turks' governments to create a modern philosophical thinking and language. They established, for example, a Council which is called "İstilahât-ı İlmiye Encümeni" [Council for Scientific Terminologies]. This Council has been established in 1913 and aimed to find Turkish equivalents for foreign scientific and philosophical terms. The Council completed its activities with 3 works. These works are dictionaries comprising Turkish equivalents proposed for scientific, philosophical and aesthetical concepts respectively.<sup>4</sup> However, it seems that this Council could not find the opportunity of realizing the obligations, encumbered to it, at full length. On the other hand, "importing" the western scientific and philosophical concepts by means of institutions gives hint about the quality of their attitude towards philosophy. In the third chapter, some interesting examples regarding how Young Turks legitimized this idea of "importing" shall be presented.

One can witness that a similar language, to the one which is tried for science, philosophy and arts, is attempted for the area of religion also yet by depending on an institutional basis. Daru'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye, the founding declaration<sup>5</sup> of which takes part in the 63<sup>rd</sup> issue of *İslam Mecmuası*, can be seen as the projection of the struggle of constructing a modern philosophical language within religious area. Created in 1918, at the end of the Young Turks' sovereignty, this institution could not find enough time to fulfill obligations attributed to it.

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<sup>4</sup> The respective titles of these dictionaries are as follows: *Islahat-ı İlmiye Encümeni Tarafından Kâmus-u Felsefede Münderic Kelimât ve Ta'birât İçin Vaz'-u Tedvîni Tensib Olunan Islahat Mecmuası* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1330 [1911]); *Islahât-ı İlmiye Encümeni Tarafından Sanâyi'-i Nefisede Mevcûd Kelimât ve Ta'birât İçin Vaz'-u Tedvîni Tensib Olunan Islahât Mecmuası* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire 1330 [1911]) and *Kâmus-u Islahât-ı İlmiye*. For a detailed information with regard to the studies of the Council of Scientific Terminologies see İsmail Kara, *Bir Felsefe Dili Kurmak: Modern Bilim ve Felsefe Terimlerinin Türkiye'ye Girişi* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2005), 392 pp.

<sup>5</sup> Daru'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye, "Daru'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye Beyannâmesi," *İslam Mecmuası* 5, no. 63 (24 Muḥarram 1337/30 October 1335/30 October 1918), pp. 1173-78. For a detailed information about this institution's activities, see Zekeriya Akman, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Son Döneminde Bir Üst Kurul: Dâru'l-Hikmeti'l-İslâmiyye*, (Ankara: DİB Yayınları, 2009), 152 pp.

## 1.2 General Framework of the Chapters

One must denote, with regard to the restrictions of our study, that the activities of the institutions touched upon briefly above do not constitute the subject of our study. The basic purpose set here is to put forward the scientific and philosophical approaches played a role in shaping the mentality of Young Turks' who materialized those institutions as well.

In the second chapter the history of Ottoman CUP as a Young Turk organization is being outlined. Making direct historical discussions is out of the limits of our study. However, it seems inevitable to consider the political power Young Turks constructed by depending on this intellectual framework. Therefore, a quick glance at the issues dealt with by Young Turks before and after the establishment of the CUP, the general profiles of the founders and the impact the Committee created on the Ottoman political life seemed to be useful.

The third chapter functions as the skeleton for our study. Because the discussions carried out within next chapters are based, in large part, on the results acquired in the third one. The scientific and philosophical approaches, effects of which can be observed clearly in periodicals, are examined under three titles: *positivism*, *evolutionism* and *materialism*. Impact of these movements on Young Turks' mentality is traced through the ideas put forward by Young Turks themselves.

The fourth chapter examines the results, specific to the philosophy of religion, created by the scientific and philosophical approaches adopted by Young Turks. This chapter includes the most obvious reflections of the observable effects that modern thinking caused in Young Turks' intellectual world. For example, the discussions about agnosticism, deism, pantheism and atheism that are revived with regard to the existence of God can be seen as indicators showing the extent of importance Young Turks attributed to the problem. Similarly, the concrete reflections of the paradigm shift within the context of some classical issues of philosophy of religion like the life after death, predestination, miracle and the relation between science and religion are being discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the connections between Young Turks' philosophical and scientific approaches and their idea of ethics. This chapter, wherein the essential issue of discussion is the possibility of a philosophy of ethics in Young Turks' mentality, also presents remarkable examples of the intellectual breakage. The chapter observes that they tried to rescue the idea of ethics from mediocrity and raise it to the position of "first philosophy". These results are worthy of insistence within the context of purposes of this study. The discussions made by Young Turks within the area of ethics imply that their goal of creating a new philosophical language is expanded in a way to include the goal of constructing a new consciousness as well. This circumstance is important since it shows the place where Young Turks wanted to arrive by constructing a new philosophical language.

Young Turks' discussions about philosophy of arts and aesthetics are examined within sixth, and the last, chapter. In this chapter the aesthetical terminology used by Young Turks and the main aesthetical problems they addressed are being studied. Young Turks characterize the arts and aesthetics as the way of "returning to the essence" or "discovering the essential nature". And this characterization functions as a founding principle for their intellectual systematic. Therefore, an examination of the aesthetical aspect of the effects they received from modern scientific and philosophical approaches seems to be a complementary part of this study. Although the problems of aesthetics are handled by Young Turks within an aesthetical terminology, the duty that it is obliged to fulfill is covering a much larger frame. It would be useful to note that they identified the idea of "returning to the essence" and the historical fact of Renaissance and that the "new life" which is attempted by them can be seen as a struggle to create a Turkish Renaissance. Within this regard, examination of the writings appeared in Young Turks' periodicals about the philosophy of aesthetics seemed as a necessity for our general purposes.

Of course, one needs also to draw a frame about the Young Turk periodicals which constitute the backbone of this study. First of all, it must be noted that the periodicals examined within this study are not the whole periodicals published by Young Turks. However, there are some important qualities differentiating the periodicals that are

selected as subjects to this study from others. In these publications, leaving *Meşveret* and *Şura-yı Ümmet* aside, the propagandist discourse appears at the minimum level. On the contrary, scientific and philosophical approaches make their presence felt. There are some other periodicals which we examined but not included in our study and these were lacking an intellectual dimension and rather devoted to a pure political propaganda.

### **1.3 Descriptions of the Young Turk Periodicals Examined**

Eleven periodicals, in total, have been examined within the context of this study. These are *Meşveret*, *Şura-yı Ümmet*, *İçtihat*, *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası*, *Muhit-i Mesai*, *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, *Genç Kalemler*, *Yeni Mecmua*, *İslam Mecmuası* and *Tabiat*. The journal of *Servet-i Fünûn* also examined within this scope. Although it is not a Young Turk periodical yet it includes articles by many Young Turk figures. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's articles about philosophy of aesthetics, which are published in *Servet-i Fünûn*, are particularly remarkable.

The basic characteristics of the periodicals examined can be summarized as follows:

#### **1.3.1 Meşveret**

*Meşveret* is the first Young Turk periodical published by the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. Its first issue carries the date of 1 December 1895. It is published bimonthly and the total number of its issues is 30. The publication date of the last issue of *Meşveret* is 7 May 1898.

The founder and editor in chief of this journal is Ahmet Rıza Bey. The journal carries a superscription which says that it is “the media organ of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress”.

The journal generally includes articles relating to the issue of rescuing Ottoman Empire politically. There is an anxious and severe style within articles it covers. It is also possible to say that a nationalist approach stand occasionally out in these

writings. However, *Meşveret*'s basic purpose is to ensure the re-announcement of Constitutionalism which is conceived by it as the only way of keeping Ottoman elements together. Considered in terms of its intellectual character *Meşveret* can be said to be the most superficial journal among Young Turk periodicals. For example, concepts of “philosophy” and “philosopher” appears at two points<sup>6</sup> only and the philosophical discussions can be observed nowhere in it. It essentially is an understandable circumstance. For, the basic purpose of its publication is to make the propaganda of CUP. Therefore, it does not concentrate on serious intellectual matters. It is used effectively, however, in expressing the basic political concerns of Young Turks and is a useful source for acquiring information with regard to the establishment and purpose of the CUP.

Ahmet Rıza Bey, Halil Ğanem, Mizancı Murat Bey, Şerafeddin Mağmumi and Abdullah Cevdet (by the pseudonym of “Bir Kürd”) are among Unionists who made publications in *Meşveret*. One may note that the majority of the articles published in *Meşveret* are signed within the form of abbreviations, like “H. H.”, “F. M.” and “S. T.”. It is because *Meşveret* is the media organ of CUP, being regarded as an outlawed organization yet. Those signing their articles by their full names are generally people who declared their opposition to the regime openly.

On the other hand, *Meşveret* has a supplement in French. This supplement is first published on 7 December 1895. Only the issues published in Ottoman Turkish are examined within the context of this study.

### 1.3.2 Şura-yı Ümmet

The first issue of the newspaper of *Şura-yı Ümmet* is published on 10 April 1902. Purpose of the publication of this newspaper is to gather opposition movements together around a Unionist organization. Thus, newspapers like *İntikam*, *İstirdad* and

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<sup>6</sup> Adzî (?), “İstanbul’dan Mektûb,” *Meşveret* 1, no. 4 [Supplement] (15 January 1108/10 Şaban 1313/26 January 1896), p. 4; H. H., “Habs, Nefy, İdam,” *Meşveret* 1, no. 6 (15 February 1108/2 Ramadân 1313/16 February 1896), p. 3.

*Sancak*, which are published by different fractions, are united with *Şura-yı Ümmet*.<sup>7</sup> Bahaeddin Şakir and Samipaşazade Sezai are the first editors of *Şura-yı Ümmet*. And it is published, in due course, in Thessaloniki, Paris and Istanbul as well. The 220<sup>th</sup>, and the last, issue of the newspaper is published on 12 March 1910. One can observe that it carries the superscription stating that it is “the media organ of Ottoman Committee of Progress and Union”, as of the 96-97<sup>th</sup> issue.

Among the writers of the *Şura-yı Ümmet*, which is published bimonthly, are Yusuf Akçura, Selanikli Nazım, Ahmet Saip, Bahaettin Şakir, Samipaşazade Sezai, Rıza Tevfik, Cenap Şahabettin, Bedii Nuri, Mahir Sait, Resmolu Cevat and Ahmet Agayef. The situation encountered within *Meşveret* is valid for *Şura-yı Ümmet* as well. Accordingly, the majority of the articles in the newspaper are published either anonymously or in a manner to include just the first capitals of the writers’ names. This is probably to protect the writers since the newspaper is an opposing media organ.

Discussions carried out in *Şura-yı Ümmet* resemble the ones handled in *Meşveret*. Political problems experienced by Ottoman Empire constitute the topic of the large part of the articles published in *Şura-yı Ümmet*. However, this journal differs from *Meşveret* in terms of the language it used, which can essentially be seen as a related issue with the profile of the persons whose writings published in it. For, the topical variations in *Şura-yı Ümmet* are larger in proportion to *Meşveret*. Additionally, articles taking part in *Şura-yı Ümmet* can be said to have a more intellectual deepness compared to the ones in *Meşveret*. Philosophical analyses are encountered more frequently within this regard. This circumstance becomes clearer in due course of the time and the intellectual perspective within the periodicals, which will be touched upon in the following pages, takes a well-coordinated shape.

### 1.3.3 İctihat

The journal of *İctihat* is established by Abdullah Cevdet. As it is going to be handled within the next chapter, Abdullah Cevdet is one of the founding figures of CUP.

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<sup>7</sup> This information is given in Anonymous, “İhtar”, *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 1 (10 April 1902), p. 3.

Publication of the journal of *İçtihat* continued even after the announcement of Republic, until 1932. When the general publication policy of *İçtihat* and the topics handled within it taken into consideration one can argue that it had a function in terms of supplying an intellectual basis within the foundation period of Republic. It defends, for example the acceptance of the Latin alphabet, application of the principle of secularism, changing the role of women in society etc., all of which are adopted after the Republic. The purpose of this study made it necessary to limit the examination on the journal of *İçtihat* with the issues published in Ottoman Turkish, before the announcement of Republic.

The first issue of *İçtihat* carries the date of 1 September 1904. There are some postponements, caused by different reasons, in its publication. The last issue we examined within the context of this study is published on 2 January 1919, with the number of 137. One can observe that it is published with different names like *İçtihat*, *İstişhat*, *Cehd* etc. particularly in the periods of marital law.

The most remarkable character of the journal of *İçtihat* is the commitment it showed, from beginning to the end, to the Unionist idea(l)s. Its basic purpose was the westernization of Ottoman society. With this purpose in mind, it included translations of the articles and books of western writers and philosophers. Most of these translations are made by the founder and editor in chief of the *İçtihat*, Abudllah Cevdet, himself.

Another important feature of this journal can be observed within the content of the writings it included. As it is the case with almost all Young Turk periodicals, the journal of *İçtihat* also gives a great importance to political issues. However, assuming that the social, political and cultural problems with which Ottoman society came across are the results of its distance from modern scientific and philosophical understandings, it made a great effort to get the Western approaches accepted by it. Therefore, in addition to its propagandist aspect the journal of *İçtihat* can be said to have a significant intellectual basis and it has a serious publication policy due to its philosophical articles in particular.

Abdullah Cevdet, Rıza Tevfik, Celal Nuri [İleri], Haydar Rıfat, Ahmet Agayef, Kılıçzade Hakkı, Satı [el-Husrî], Şevketî, Ethem Necdet, Peyami Safa, Bahor İsrail, Suphi Ethem, Ali Suat and Keçecizade İzzet Fuat are among writers who published in *İçtihat*. On the other hand, one can witness that innumerable articles are published in it either anonymously or just by the first letters of writers' names.

#### **1.3.4 Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası**

Publication of *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası* is started by Mehmet Cavit Bey, Ahmet Şuayip and Rıza Tevfik, in İstanbul. Although it is said in the first issue of journal, which carries the date of 28 December 1908, that it will be published once in a month, one can observe that this period is shortened sometimes. Its last issue is published on 1 March 1911. Total number of the issues of *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası* is 24. It is quite voluminous compared to other Young Turk periodicals. Some of the articles taking part in it are longer than 60 pages.

The purpose of the publication of the journal is to make suggestions for the CUP with regard to economic, financial, social and cultural areas. The articles it covered are expected, by the publishers, to function as a source of inspiration for the parliament and the writers were asked to make policy suggestions within this direction.

Topics examined within it resemble the ones held in *İçtihat* rather than in *Meşveret* or *Şura-yı Ümmet*. Just like the journal of *İçtihat*, *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası* also gives a great importance to philosophical issues. Articles about different philosophical issues by Rıza Tevfik and Bedii Nuri, for example, are particularly remarkable. In philosophical articles, the positivistic character of the new scientific and philosophical framework, adopted by Young Turks, come into prominence.

Writers of the journal include Mehmet Cavit Bey, Ahmet Şuayip, Rıza Tevfik, Bedii Nuri, Salih Zeki, Faik Nüzhet, Ahmet Muhtar, Âsaf Nef'î, Satı el-Husrî, Ethem Necdet, Fazıl Ahmet, Hasan Tahsin, Mahmut Esat, Nazım Ragıp and Ali Kami.

### **1.3.5 Muhit-i Mesai**

The journal of *Muhit-i Mesai* is published in İstanbul by Abdullah Feyzî, H. Faik and İ. Hamdi. It is published 10 issues in total, first of which carries the date of 6 January 1911.

Most of the articles in *Muhit-i Mesai* have rather philosophical contents. And the ideas put forward within these articles generally seem to be written under the effect of positivistic and evolutionist understandings of science. This circumstance can clearly be observed particularly in Suphi Ethem's articles.

Editorial staff of the journal includes Suphi Ethem, Cemaleddin Efendi, İ. Hamdi, Kavukçuzade Ahmed Hamdi, M. Adil and Ahmet Mithat.

Articles by Cemalettin Efendi, who signs his writings as "Hukuk Reisi Cemalettin", are among most remarkable articles of the journal. His articles carry the most observable effects of John Locke and can be evaluated within the context of philosophy of law. On the other hand, Suphi Ethem's article titled "Yenilik" revives some of the ideas, defended by Young Turks consistently, in a well-coordinated manner. The journal includes translations from western thinkers, Gustave Le Bon being in the first place, as well.

### **1.3.6 Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası**

*Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* is the only journal, among Young Turk periodicals, established for making publications in the area of philosophy. Its founders are Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi and M. Zekeriya Sertel. As a matter of fact *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* is established in place of *Muhit-i Mesai*. Its first issue is published on 15 August 1911. And the last issue of it carries the date of 15 April 1912. It is published for 17 issues in total.

The most obvious character of the articles published in this journal is that they include ideas reinforcing the conception of "new life" which is a Young Turk motto.

This, in fact, refers to an intellectual framework supported by new understanding of philosophy away from tradition. Positivist and evolutionist approaches are particularly prevailing in the journal. In addition to these approaches one can also come across to some understandings, which deserve to be regarded as materialistic. Another remarkable aspect of the *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* is that a distant attitude towards religion is put forward quite clearly. Moreover, there are strong indications that a Turkist policy is adopted within it.

The editorial board of *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* is composed of Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi, M. Zekeriya Sertel, Suphi Ethem, Kazım Nami, Ali Haydar, Rıza Nüzhet, Rasim Haşmet, Selahattin Asım, Mustafa Nermî, Nezihi Cevdet and İsmail Hakkı. Additionally, philosophical understandings of western philosophers like Charles Letourneau and Alfred Fouillée are examined in a comprehensive manner. There is an article in the journal which is written for the journal by Alfred Fouillée himself.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, it includes many anonymous articles as well.

### **1.3.7 Genç Kalemler**

The journal of *Genç Kalemler* is established as a continuance of the journal of *Hüsün ve Şiir* which is published previously by a group of men of letters. Since the journal of *Hüsün ve Şiir* is published for 8 issues in total, the first issue of *Genç Kalemler* is numbered as 9 (1). And the fact that it is the continuance of the journal of *Hüsün ve Şiir* is plainly expressed in an article written by the editorial board of *Genç Kalemler*.

The first issue of the journal of *Genç Kalemler* is carrying the date of 11 March 1911. Managing editor of the journal is Nesimi Sârim Bey. It is published bimonthly. The last issue of it is published on 15 October 1912. It is published for 33 issues in total.

Ali Canip (sometimes with the pseudonym of Yekta Bahir), Ziya Gökalp (sometimes with the pseudonyms of Demirtaş, Celal Sakıp or Tefik Sedat), Âkil Koyuncu,

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<sup>8</sup> Alfred Fouillée, "Le Rapprochement des Races," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, 1, no. 8 [Supplement in French] (1 December 1327/14 December 1911), pp. 1-10.

Cenap Şahabettin, Ömer Seyfettin, Mustafa Nermî, Rasim Haşmet, Suphi Ethem, Kazım Nami and Reşat Nuri Güntekin are among the writers of the journal.

When the general profile of the articles published in *Genç Kalemler* is considered, one can observe that the literary articles are predominant. Literary works such as poems, novels and essays are given a wide coverage. In addition to this, it is remarkable that there are an un-ignorable number of articles devoted to the different areas of social sciences. Philosophical articles by Ziya Gökalp, Suphi Ethem and Mustafa Nermi, in particular, are of a great importance. It seems possible to argue that Ziya Gökalp's article titled "Bugünkü Felsefe", for example, represents an extremely authentic approach.

*Genç Kalemler* represents itself as the proponent of the conceptions of "new language" and "new life". New language and new life are essentially mottos used by Turkish nationalists of the time. As a result of cleansing Turkish off foreign vocabularies, or rather turning to the essence of Turkish, a new language different from Ottoman will be emerged. And this new language will result in a new way of thinking, which is the ultimate objective for Young Turks. A new life also needs to accompany with this language overlapping with the requirements of the period. Considered from this aspect, the prominence must be given to Turkish language and construction of a new life suitable for the world view of Turkish nation. *Genç Kalemler* represents the most obvious Turkist attitude among the Young Turk periodicals, except the journal of *Yeni Mecmua*, which are examined within this study. It can even be seen, in consequence, as the pioneer of Turkism, which became widespread among Young Turks.

### **1.3.8 Yeni Mecmua**

*Yeni Mecmua* is established by Ziya Gökalp. It is published weekly. The first issue of it showed itself on 12 July 1917. It is published for 66 issues in total, the last of which carries the date of 26 October 1918.

Ziya Gökalp acted also as the editor in chief of *Yeni Mecmua* and his Turkist tendency can be said to be prevailing in the generality of articles published within it. One can argue, in this respect, that it is the journal of *Yeni Mecmua* which most obviously and systematically defended Turkism following *Genç Kalemler*. It also supported the Turkist conceptions of new life and new language.

The journal of *Yeni Mecmua* includes articles spreading through a large area from economics to arts, from politics to sociology and from religion to philosophy. Figures like Ziya Gökalp, Ali Canip, Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, Nazmi Ziya, Mehmet Vahid Bey, Necmettin Sadık, Tekin Alp, İsmail Hakkı, Şerafeddin Yaltkaya, Zekeriya Sertel, Yahya Kemal and Refik Halit are among its writers.

### **1.3.9 İslam Mecmuası**

*İslam Mecmuası* has an exceptional place among Young Turk periodicals. This journal is published to examine discussions directly devoted to Islamic issues. However, one needs to point that the reformist identity of the journal is highly remarkable. It carries the superscription of “life with religion, religion with life” and better be characterized as an important struggle towards developing an understanding of Islam corresponding to the conditions of the time.

On the other hand, it is an extension of the nationalist attitude that became obvious particularly following the publication of *Genç Kalemler*. That the nationalism is contrary to Islam is a criticism directed by Islamists to nationalists all along the line. It can be argued, keeping this criticism in mind, that one of the reasons led Young Turks to publish *İslam Mecmuası* is the need of showing the reconcilability of religious belief and the emphasis on nationality.

Editor in chief of *İslam Mecmuası* is Halim Sabit. The first issue of it is published on 12 February 1914 while the last issue carries the date of 30 October 1918. It is published bimonthly. However, one needs to add that some postponements happened in its publication periods and that the regular publication period could not be followed from the second volume on.

*İslam Mecmuası* is a voluminous journal and the total number of its issues is 63. Its editorial staff includes Ziya Gökalp, Musa Kazım Efendi, Ahmet Agayef, Ragıp Hulusi, Halim Sabit, Mustafa Şerif, Ahmet Besim [Besim Atalay], Şerafeddin Yaltkaya, Şemseddin Günaltay, Ömer Seyfeddin, Ahmet Muhyiddin, Abdüllatif Nevzat, Mansurizade Said, Kazım Nami and Tekin Alp.

One can observe, considering the general profiles of the articles took part in the journal, that almost all of the basic Islamic sciences like fiqh, tafsîr, hadîth, kalâm, aqâid and tasawwuf constitute the topics of discussions. Additionally, a prominent place is given to philosophical articles.

### **1.3.10 Tabiat**

The journal of *Tabiat* is a project carried out in the direction of a publication policy which is parallel to the ideas adopted in other Young Turk periodicals. However, only the first issue of this journal is obtained. No data with regard to the next issue(s) of it could be acquired in centers and libraries that include Ottoman periodicals, whether here in Turkey or abroad.

The sole issue of *Tabiat* is published on 23 July 1911. 23 July (10 July on Julian calendar) is the date when the second Constitutionalism is announced, which gives the impression that this date is specially selected for the publication of the journal of *Tabiat*. Thus, this circumstance is expressed on the cover page of the journal by the sentence of “happy supreme day of 10 July for all Ottomans”.

The purpose of Young Turks in publishing *Tabiat* is to promote western understanding of science and philosophy among Ottoman society. In the introductory article, written by editorial board, this purpose is expressed quite clearly. It is possible, in this regard, to argue that the journal of *Tabiat* also has an aim similar to other periodicals’.

*Tabiat* is established by Suphi Ethem. He planned to publish the journal monthly. Its editorial board is composed of Suphi Ethem, Ragıp Hulusi and Mustafa Nermi. There are 7 articles in it. All of them, except the article titled “İlk Söz” by Editorial Board and Suphi Ethem’s article of “Felsefenin Mesâili”, are translations from western thinkers. Quality of these translations is of a great importance for this study. Translations made by Ragıp Hulusi, who thereafter will make a name for himself because of his articles on philosophy of religion published in *İslam Mecmuası*, by the titles of “Felsefe-i Müspete” and “Wundt’un Felsefesi: Psikoloji ve Ahlaka Dair” are particularly remarkable. Other articles that took part in the journal are translations from one of the most prominent materialist philosopher of the time, Erns Haeckel. One of these translations is made by Sadrettin Kasım under the title of “Ernst Haeckel’den: Havarik-i Hayat-1” and the other one is made by A. Rafet with the name of “Tarih-i Hilkat-i Tabî’î veya Meslek-i Tekâmülün İzah-ı Fennîsi”.

The last periodical which is examined within the context of this study has been the journal of *Servet-i Fünûn*. As a matter of fact, one needs to say that this journal is examined partly. For, *Servet-i Fünûn* is not a periodical which is published by Young Turks or CUP institutionally. However, articles of many Young Turk figures are published within it. Ahmet Şuayip and Suphi Ethem, for example, are among those figures. And the articles having importance in terms of the purposes of this study have been those by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, written within the context of philosophy of aesthetics, under the title of “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair”. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın is an important figure because he was both one of the ideologues of the Ottoman CUP and following the scientific and philosophical understanding of the time very closely. Therefore, his ideas associated with philosophy can be seen among factors constituting philosophical ground for the political activities tried by CUP institutionally. It is also possible to say that he had a serious impact on Ziya Gökalp, who becomes one of the leading figures in CUP. Thus, Ziya Gökalp indicates that he owes his acquaintance with Durkheim’s ideas to Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın.

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s first article in *Servet-i Fünûn* appears in its 370<sup>th</sup> issue which is published on 14 April 1898. And his last article takes part in the 396<sup>th</sup> issue of

*Servet-i Fünûn* which carries the date of 5 November 1898. Total number of his articles subjecting the philosophy of aesthetics is 18.

These articles reflect the obvious impacts of positivistic and evolutionist philosophies. It is also possible to observe a materialistic approach in them. Despite the fact that these articles were written during a period in which the Young Turk movement was still in its formation stage, they represent an intellectual deepness with regard to their content.

One of the issues, which need to be mentioned particularly within the context of periodicals, is related with the type of calendar used in them. Some of the periodicals used Hijrî calendar while some others used Julian or Gregorian calendar. It is even possible to observe that some of the periodicals used both of them while some others used all at once. Moreover, it is observed that the journal of *Meşveret* included the positivistic calendar as well, in which the history begins with French Revolution. In order to refrain from the confusion that these manifold of calendars would possibly create, and to ensure that a consistent method is followed during the study, Gregorian equals of the dates that are given on periodicals also added in parenthesis both in footnotes and references.

## CHAPTER 2

### A SHORT HISTORY OF OTTOMAN COMMITTEE OF UNION AND PROGRESS AS A YOUNG TURK ORGANISATION

The main objective that we are going to pursue through this chapter is to provide information on the historical background of Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress.

As it has been pointed out in the previous chapter, analyzing the philosophical and intellectual roots of an organization that played an important role in the Ottoman political life is our aim and, therefore, we think that one needs to take its historical background into consideration. However, we would like to undertake our discussions by clarifying two points which have direct relations with our general aim.

Our study is not a *historical* one in the truest sense of the word. Consequently, information that is going to be given here is not aimed to be as detailed as it can be expected from a historian. There are a number of reasons retaining us from providing such a detailed historical discussion.

First of all, we do not aim to enter into pure historical discussions. Although we try to scrutinize the intellectual basis of a political organization which have made history, our main objective will be to put forward the transformative effects of CUP within political and cultural areas and the philosophical context that created this effects. And secondly, the Ottoman CUP's history has already been a subject of numerous detailed valuable scholarly works to date.

## 2.1 History of Establishment of the Committee

It seems relatively difficult to give an exact date on which the Ottoman CUP has been established. Different dates have been referred to in different sources as the date of establishment of the organization. İbrahim Temo, for example, one of the establishing figures of the CUP, states in his memoirs<sup>9</sup> that the Committee has been instituted in May of 1889.<sup>10</sup>

In an article published in *Meşveret* on 2 February 1896 it is said that the Committee has been established “twelve years earlier”.<sup>11</sup> As a result of this assertion one needs to conclude that the Committee has been instituted on the year of 1884.

In his article titled “Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti”<sup>12</sup> which has been published in the journal of *Şura-yı Ümmet*, Bahaeddin Şakir, who is also one of the persons played an important role in the latter times of the CUP, gives the year of 310 as the date of establishment of the Committee. And the year of 310 in Julian calendar corresponds to 1895/1896 in Gregorian calendar.

On the other hand, in worthy of consideration studies carried out both in national and international levels the year of 1889, the year that has also been referred to by İbrahim Temo, is being accepted as the date of establishment of the Committee.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 Founders of the Committee

As to the information we received from İbrahim Temo, the CUP has been instituted by a number of students studying at the military faculty of medicine.

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<sup>9</sup> See. İbrahim Temo, *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Teşekkülü ve Hidemat-ı Vataniye ve İnkılâbı Milliye Dair Hatıratım in Biz İttihatçılar*. Edited by Nurer Uğurlu. İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2009. pp. 47-285.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Sâ'î, “Tohum ve Semereleri.” *Meşveret* 1, no. 6. (15 February 1082/Ramađân 1313/16 February 1896): 3.

<sup>12</sup> Bahaeddin Şakir, “Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti.” *Şura-yı Ümmet* 8, no. 203 (31 December 1325/13 January 1910): pp. 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Mithat Şükrü Bleda, *İmparatorluğun Çöküşü* (İstanbul: Destek Yayınevi, 2010), p. 80.

Among other founding figures of CUP were İshak Sükuti (1868-1902), Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932) and Mehmet Reşit (1873-1919).<sup>14</sup> In a later time Şerafettin Mağmumi, Giritli Şekik, Cevdet Osman, Kerim Sebati, Mekkele Sabri ve Selanikli Nazım have joined to this quadripartite.<sup>15</sup>

### 2.3 Denomination of the Committee

There are various views with regard to the original name that the Committee has been assumed to carry in 1889. In fact İbrahim Temo does not write in his memoirs the name which has been given to the Committee. He contents himself with explaining the efforts made for the establishment of it. Some sources remarks that the Committee was originally instituted by the name of “İttihad-ı Osmani” (Ottoman Union) and denominated as “Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti” following the connections entered with Young Turks in Paris.<sup>16</sup> As for Ahmet Rıza Bey, the Committee was carrying the name of “İttihad-ı İslam” (İslamic Union). According to him, the official name has been changed as “İttihat ve Terakki” following his objections against the name of Islamic Union.<sup>17</sup> It is a high probability that this change of name has been taken place in 1895, a bit later following the institution of the Committee.<sup>18</sup>

There is a common indication in sources that an observable delicacy came into prominence among founding figures with respect to the name the Committee expected to carry. It is not possible to state that this widespread delicacy of the founding persons, like İbrahim Temo and Ahmet Rıza, was baseless. Because the

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<sup>14</sup> Temo, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Erneste E. Ramsaur, Erneste E. *Jön Türkler ve 1908 İhtilali*. Translated by Nuran Yavuz. (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Tanık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*. Vol. 3. (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984), p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmet Rıza, *Hatıralar in Biz İttihatçılar*. Edited by Nurer Uğurlu. (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2009), p. 315. Mithat Şükrü Bleda says that the organisation has been established as “İttihad-ı İslam”. See, Bleda, *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2009), p. 51.

Committee was established in order to unify the Ottoman components (anasır) coming from different religious and ethnic backgrounds around a single purpose. In the way of creating this idea of union the Committee needed to carry a more comprehensive name. A denomination signifying a direct relation to Islam or Turkness would be creating disaffection among other national subject belonging to different religions and nations. As a result of this concern the founding figures took over the name of “İttihat ve Terakki” that seemed to them as a more inclusive name.

Ibrahim Temo writes in his memoirs that during the works to establish the Committee different discussions happened relating to the procedure of electing people as members. In the course of these discussions some members states that only Turkish and Muslim people need to be allowed as members. But as a result of İbrahim Temo’s objections the idea of accepting people, regardless of their religious or ethnic identity, who are reliable and have good personality, has been adopted.<sup>19</sup>

That direct references to be made to the religious and national identity brought to the agenda even at the phase of establishment carries a remarkable meaning for the latter periods as well. Because, as we are going to point out in further chapters of our study for a variety of reasons, Turkish and Islamic identities had been two determining elements within the official ideological line of the Ottoman CUP. So much so that, Ziya Gökalp, who can be regarded as political brain of the Committee, determined Turkish language and Islam as main constituents of the Ottoman identity which has been tried to be reconstructed as a modern nation. In other words, religious and lingual unity can be said to have drawn a new direction for the idea of *union* (ittihat). When viewed from this perspective, it seems reasonable to claim that Turkism and Islamism -as a related political view to Turkism- are deeply rooted principles in the political mind of the Committee from the beginning rather than reflections of an ideology which has temporarily been accepted due to different historical reasons. As a matter of fact, the “first official statement”<sup>20</sup> issued by the Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October in 1895 upon the incident of Armenian raid into the Sublime Porte (Babiali)

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<sup>19</sup> Temo, *ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p. 185.

which took place on 30<sup>th</sup> of September in 1895, carries the title of “O Muslims and beloved Turkish citizens!”.<sup>21</sup>

It cannot be said that the Committee used the name of “Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress” continuously during the whole period starting from 1889 until 1918 when its political activities came to an end to a large extent and it re-denominated itself as “Teceddüd Fırkası”. For, even starting from the First Congress of Young Turks, conducted in 1902, separations between members have already begun. As a result of this separation the Committee has taken the name of “Terakki ve İttihat Cemiyeti” (Committee of Progress and Union) for a short period of time and then, after uniting with “Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti” (Ottoman Committee of Freedom) which instituted in Selanik, it restarted to use its previous name, the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress.

## 2.4 General Profile of Founders

If we look at the general profile of the persons established the Ottoman CUP, we see that beyond personal differences they meet on a common ground. This ground is that they have been studied in educational institutions which can be regarded as modern in respect to their era. İbrahim Temo being in the first place, Abdullah Cevdet, İshak Sükuti, Şerafettin Mağmumi and almost all of the other famous founding figures of the Committee have studied at the military faculty of medicine. This organization among the students of military faculty of medicine were started quite secretly and gained wide currency in other higher education institutions, especially in the School of Civil Services (Mülkiye) and the Naval School (Bahriye).<sup>22</sup> In other words, the Ottoman CUP came about as the political organization of the students who were either graduated from the School of Medicine (Tıbbiye), instituted in 1827; the Military Collage (Harbiye), instituted in 1834; the School of Civil Services

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<sup>21</sup> For the whole text of the announcement see. Temo, *ibid*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>22</sup> Temo, *ibid*, p. 67. For a detailed explanation with regard to the organisation in the abovementioned schools see also Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılâp Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler* (Tan Matbaası, İstanbul, 1945), pp. 223-233.

(Mülkiye), instituted in 1859; or still studying in these institutions.<sup>23</sup> As we are going to argue in future chapters, this condition constitutes one of the reasons of their adopting an approach that can be seen as “elitism”.

It is remarkable that this rebellion against Abdulhamit regime starts to obtain basis in educational institutions. But we think that is not accidental. It is not accidental, because those who felt the impact of the West were the generations not entered into the line of their fathers yet. And secondly, they had no enough opportunity of studying but in those intrastate military institutions.<sup>24</sup>

It is important for us to note here that the education received by Unionist figures has shaped their world of thought. It is certain that the Committee emerged in modern educational institutions. And the most important element giving vitality to this fact is that these schools met with modern scientific thought earlier and denser compared with other educational institutions implementing traditional training programs, i.e. *medreses*. As it has reasonably been pointed out by M. Şükrü Hanioglu, the huge difference between the thinking style of the students studying at aforementioned higher education institutions and the scientific activities and findings of the time created serious impacts on their minds. M. Şükrü Hanioglu felicitously regards the reflection of this circumstance as the “problem of mentality”.<sup>25</sup>

This mentality constitutes the primary source of objections Unionists articulated against Abdülhamit’s regime, as well as the starting point of the severe critical discourse they have adopted, with regard to the social living and thinking styles, following the announcement of Constitutionalism (Meşrutiyet).

The basic discourse which determined the mentality of Unionists’ was “new versus old.” What has at the start been meant by “old” was purely political. They were demanding a transition from a political structure in which the Sultan had an absolute

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<sup>23</sup> Akşin, *ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ramsaur, *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Hanioglu, *ibid*, p. 173.

sovereignty to a political system where the power were restricted and allocated between relatively different centers.

And in the next phase, the areas of the things subjected to the demand of change have enormously been widened and consequently this brought a serious power to that demand. The change is no longer limited with a restriction to be imposed on the sovereignty of the Sultan. The social life as a whole is wanted to be changed from top to the bottom. The thinking and living style of the society would be renewed by means of creating new values. It is also possible to characterize the new demand as the first step of the process of reconstruction. The tools of the process of reconstruction are meant to be new values to be created in political, ethical, philosophical, scientific, aesthetical and economical areas.

## **2.5 The Relation of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress as a Young Turk organization with other Young Turk movements**

Although the adjective of Young Turk seems to be used to characterize the prominent figures of the CUP, it has a much longer history in fact.

It is possible to state that the identification of Young Turk has been used to characterize educated fractions which were estranged from traditional Ottoman living and thinking styles in one way or another. Those who are interested in Ottoman literary or intellectual life are familiar with various similar characterizations attributed to the mentality described above. Young Ottomans or New Ottomans has also been used synonymously with the characterization of Young Turks. All of these characterizations were applied to those persons who were affected by Western way of thinking, literary movements being in the first place. Of course the usage of the idiom of Young Turk in a way to describe the major part of the disaffected Ottoman thinkers and activists is not coincidental. Hence, with regard to the ideals and methods followed there are so many similarities between the Unionist intellectuals and the thinkers who were members of the group called New Ottomans. In addition, one needs to note that there are also some persons who played a part in both organizations. For example, İsmail Kemal Bey, Samipaşazade Sezai Bey, Murat Bey

and Salih Münir Bey were among the members of the CUP who were previously took part in the activities of the organization of New Ottomans.<sup>26</sup> Besides, it has been argued in *Meşveret* that the struggle pursued is a fruit of the seed sprinkled by New Ottoman thinkers like Ali Suavi, Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, the connection between New Ottomans and the later Young Turk generation does not arise solely from a partnership on thoughts. One of the major elements brought about the Unionist opposition was the oppressive attitude shown by Abdülhamit to the representatives of New Ottoman ideals including Mithat Paşa and Namık Kemal.<sup>28</sup>

“Freedom” takes the first place among the ideals shared by the members of the group of New Ottomans and the CUP both. The most important change they referred to by “freedom” is limitation of the absolute power of the Sultan. This limitation would be realized by implementing the Western parliamentary system in Ottoman Empire as well. Sultan’s absolute authority would be limited by means of a Constitution (Kanun-u Esasi) and a Constitutional (Meşrutî) regime would be established instead. Thus the people would have a voice in administration and the discretionary ruling would come to an end.

Another similarity between the Ottoman CUP and the group of New Ottomans shows itself in the method they followed. Just like the members of the Ottoman CUP are going to do in the future, New Ottomans started to live abroad and to tried to propagate their ideas within the borders of Empire through various periodicals. The first periodical coming to mind within this context is *Hürriyet* which has been published by New Ottomans in 1864 in London.<sup>29</sup> And *Meşveret*, *İçtihad*, *Şura-yı*

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<sup>26</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasî Fikirleri: 1895-1908* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), p. 34.

<sup>27</sup> See, [Mekteb-i Tıbbiye Firarilerinden] Nazım, “İstibdad Hizmete Mani Olur Mu?” *Meşveret* 1, no. 3 (6 January 1108/15 Rajab 1313/1 January 1896): 1.

<sup>28</sup> For interpretations about this relationship see. Cevrî, *İnkılâp Niçin ve Nasıl Oldu* (Mısır: Matbaa-i *İçtihad*, 1909), p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 20.

*Ümmet* and *Osmanlı* are among first official periodicals published by the Ottoman CUP itself.

There is one another point which can be regarded as constituting a similarity on method they used. Both the group of New Ottomans and the Ottoman CUP maintained their activities secretly. There is nothing surprising in it if the extent of the power and sovereignty of the central authority taken into consideration.

The movement of New Ottomans emerged in 1865 after the establishment of a secret organization called “İttifak-ı Hamiyyet” (Alliance of Patriotism) by a group of young persons among of which were Namık Kemal also.<sup>30</sup> The organization of İttifak-ı Hamiyyet and whole of the subsequently generated political entities were organized according to Carbonari model.<sup>31</sup> The Ottoman CUP is not an exception as such.

Carbonari organization was constituted in Italy in 19<sup>th</sup> century and its members were recognizing each other just as fractional numbers.<sup>32</sup> While making reference to the division of labor made between members following the establishment of the Ottoman CUP, İbrahim Temo gives us the clues of getting organized according to Carbonari method by saying, for example, that “Ali Ruşdî Efendi elected as chairman -because he was oldest person among us and turbaned-, Şerafeddin elected as recording clerk and Asaf Derviş elected as treasurer. And I became top of the line in 1/1 series of the sequence numbers to be used.”<sup>33</sup>

It is also possible to observe that this method has continued in later years. In some issues of *Meşveret*, for example, names of the people, who supplied financial aid to the families of the persons accused of being members to the Committee and

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<sup>30</sup> Akşin, *ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma* (Ankara: Bilgi Basımevi, 1973), p. 202. See also Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi: Islahat Fermanı Devri (1861-1876)*. Vol. 7. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1977), p. 129.

<sup>32</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> Temo, *ibid*, p. 66.

consequentially banished, have been given as numbers instead (like “five hundred and sixteenth person of the fifth division”.)<sup>34</sup>

However, it would be highly assertive to state that there was a perfect similarity between the members of New Ottomans and the CUP. Therefore, we need to point to the fact that there were also some serious differences between the qualifications of the members of both organizations. For example, the group of New Ottomans was constituted largely by the persons experienced with regard to administration. While knowledge about how to administer the state was giving acceleration to the movement carried out through persons, on the one hand, and insuring to have a weight and reputation among the people on the other. In spite of this, members of the CUP were belonging to nascent occupational groups which was generated by teachers (müdürris) teaching at newly instituted public schools, advocates studied Western law, journalists, civil servants, bureaucrats, secondary officers working at Western type military collages. More importantly, there were no persons in the CUP who were experienced within the administration of state.<sup>35</sup> This lack of experience created the biggest problem encountered by the members of CUP after the announcement of Constitutionalism. After its failure in showing the success of bringing out people competent to administer the state among its own staff the CUP had to share the government with those Paşa’s of the Sublime Porte who were dexterous in political conspirations.

This case of alienation made the Unionists face a difficulty with regard to getting the values they shared and defended acceptable before the ordinary Ottoman citizens. That the members of the CUP received education in institutions which can be regarded modern as far as their period concerned and that the Western ideals they were defending over against large mass of people enables us to claim that they became alienated to the traditional Ottoman world of thought. What can be seen as

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, *Meşveret* 1, no.19 (23 September 1108/12 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 1314/20 September 1896): p. 6; *Meşveret* 1, no. 20 (8 October 1108/27 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 1314/5 October 1896): p. 6; *Meşveret* 1, no. 8 (23 October 1896/23 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1314/30 October 1896): p. 8; *Meşveret* 1, no. 23 (23 November 1896/27 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1314/3 December 1896): p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914*. Translated by Nuran Yavuz. (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2007,), p. 34.

the biggest reflection of this situation has been that the Unionist demands toward Westernization and modernization put forward in exceedingly traditional forms. In other words, once Unionists saw that their claims were creating a resistance among people, they had to articulate their demands by decorating them with Islamic motives. At the start Young Turks seemed to be moving from the same social values defended by New Ottomans. However, this later orientation also could not provide Young Turks with the same dignity in the eye of the ordinary people.<sup>36</sup>

One another difference, which can be said to exist between New Ottomans and Unionists, originates from the interest shown by members of both groups to the Islamic thoughts and notions and the source of this interest. For example, it is known that “the formative affect of the concept of justice, the special place and function of Sharia in society ... and mysticism [tasawwuf] on thinking”<sup>37</sup> has left deep traces on New Ottomans. As against the central role which played by Islam within the thinking of New Ottomans, the CUP has used Islamic concepts and thoughts as means to reach its political purposes instead. Young Turks, as persons who felt detached from Islamic thinking, rather preferred to formulate their ideas within the frame of certain Islamic concepts. Otherwise these ideas would obviously be found unfamiliar by and get serious reactions from Ottoman society. “What has needed to be done was to refrain from making the approaches, which the society would most probably ostracize, a matter of debate in an effort to influence the mass”<sup>38</sup> at least until coming into power.

The major case made by similarities and differences between the members of the Ottoman CUP and New Ottomans shows itself in the commitment towards the will of changing the present structure. No matter from which source it was inspired and which ideal it targeted to achieve, the disaffection felt from the actual constitutes the prime element that created these political ideas. The ideals of changing the old and replacing it with the new one have left deep traces on members of both sides that can somewhat be regarded as “fetishism of newness”.

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<sup>36</sup> Ahmad, *ibid*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>37</sup> Mardin, *ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Hanioğlu, *ibid*, p. 625.

## 2.6 Purpose of the Founders of the Committee

The major purpose of the founders of Ottoman CUP can be summarized in a seemingly quite simple demand.

This demand was to reactivate the Constitution which has been announced in 1876 but suspended in 1878 by Abdülhamit. Even a superficial study on the first official publications by Unionists would be enough to put forward the extent of the importance they attributed to the announcement of Constitution. This demand carries within itself both symbolic and vital meanings. The symbolic meaning of it lies in the fact that following the announcement of the Constitution Abdülhamit's autocratic governance would come to an end.

When we keep in mind the Unionists' perspective of life the vital meaning of this demand will be better understood. Because, as it is pointed out earlier, Unionists are representatives of a new mentality which is not restricted solely by a demand regarding to type of governance. A possible alternation in the type of governance would also pave the way for realizing the background that created this demand of change. As we are going to elaborate in later stages, the emphasis on political change and transformation will be started to be made on social and cultural change and transformation.<sup>39</sup>

There is no doubt that this circumstance was also a sign of political disengagement from traditional thought. It is interesting enough to read, for example, in an article by Mizancı Murat Bey (1854-1917) which he published in *Meşveret* that Unionists are characterized as "conservatives".<sup>40</sup> Why these people called themselves conservatives while they were trying to change the traditional political structure with a modern one? Can a struggle towards replacing Absolutism with Constitutionalism be regarded as conservatism? We think that the answer lies in the fact of their

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Ziya Gökalp, "Türkçülük Nedir?" *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 25 (27 December 1917): pp. 482-83.

<sup>40</sup> Mehmed Murat, "İkiden Hangisi?" *Meşveret* 1, no. 17 (23 August 1108/12 Rabi' al-Awwal 1314/21 August 1896): p. 1.

awareness about the strong social commitment to the Sultan. Therefore, they tried to use as much careful language as possible to refrain from creating reactions among society. This Unionist sensitivity leads us to a conclusion which has also quite reasonably been referred to by M. Şükrü Hanioğlu that they were supporters of a reconciliatory modernism.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it has continuously been argued by Unionists that changing the traditional governance style with modern one is also a religious requirement because the Western political model of parliamentarianism and Islamic methods of council (şûra) or consultancy (*Meşveret*) were overlapping. Hence, when we look at the first periodicals published by Unionist staff we come across to different denotations referring this argument. This is why election of names making reference to Islamic consultation procedures like *Meşveret* or *Şura-yı Ümmet* cannot be seen as accidental. That is also why *Şura-yı Ümmet* carries a verse from Qur'an as superscription which states that "amruhum shura baynahum" ("their affairs are run on the basis of their consultation.")<sup>42</sup>

This demand caused to serious frictions between Unionists and Abdülhamit until the announcement of Constitutionalism in 1908 for the second time.

## **2.7 Young Turks' Problem with Abdülhamit**

As a matter of fact, the problem that the Ottoman CUP had experienced with Sultan Abdülhamit was very similar to the one that is experienced by the group called Young Ottomans or New Ottomans with Sultan Abdülaziz.

Both of the groups were seeking for "freedom". New Ottomans has tried and partially been succeeded in persuading Sultan Abdülaziz that a reform in the administration of the Empire is necessary. But there was a big difference between the expectations of Sultan Abdülaziz and New Ottomans from reform. Sultan Abdülaziz was expecting that Mithat Paşa, the leader of New Ottomans, and his proponents will show a serious performance to meliorate the Empire's financial condition. However, New Ottomans were trying to carry out their intention of limiting authority of the

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<sup>41</sup> Hanioğlu, *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Qur'an*, 42:38.

Sultan by means of diminishing the power of his inner circle. Ultimately, the scramble between Sultan and New Ottomans came to an end with deposition of Abdülaziz after a coup d'état designed by New Ottomans on 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1876. After a while later from coup d'état Sultan Abdülaziz committed suicide. In substitution of him Murat the 5<sup>th</sup> were enthroned. Murat the 5<sup>th</sup>'s Sultanate endured nearly three months. But thereafter he has lost his mental balance and been replaced with Abdülhamit the 2<sup>nd</sup> who promised to get the Constitution prepared and to announce the Constitutionalism.

After he became the Sultan, Abdülhamit appointed Mithat Paşa as his Grand Vizier (Sadrazam) and authorized him to prepare the Constitution. Thusly the Constitutionalism was announced by the Sultan on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December in 1876 in accordance with the Constitution (Kanun-u Esasi) prepared under the leadership of Mithat Paşa.

Preparation of the Constitution and announcement of Constitutionalism has been perceived as great achievements by New Ottomans. However, this sense of achievement did not last long and Abdülhamit sent Mithat Paşa into exile holding him responsible from the death of Sultan Abdülaziz. And in 1878 he abolished the parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan), which were generated in accordance with the Constitution, and announced that he temporarily suspended the Constitutionalism. Although Abdülhamit said that the duration of this suspension will be short, it continued exactly for 30 years, starting from 1878 until 1908 when the Constitutionalism announced for the second time.

As of 1878, when the Constitutionalism was suspended, Young Turks never got along with Abdülhamit. The truest concept to describe Abdülhamit's regime has been "oppression" (istibdat) in Young Turks' discourse. According to them, Abdülhamit was using an insufferable policy of oppression throughout the Empire by means of a wide network of sleuth he created. Their major purpose was to put an end to this policy of oppression and to ensure the re-announce the Constitutionalism suspended in 1878.

One of the noteworthy points is that the accusations made by members of the Ottoman CUP against Abdülhamit's regime have firstly been directed to the interest groups aggregated around the Palace. Criticisms directly targeting the personality of the Sultan are extremely rare. Even the most ingrained opponents of Abdülhamit were submitting some petitions to and feeling hopeful about him nonetheless. The respect shown to the post of Sultanate can be arising both from the conservative sides of Young Turks and a pragmatic method they followed to refrain from getting people's reaction. After a certain period of time this method has been renounced and Abdülhamit became a direct target of criticisms by any means.

## **2.8 The Methods Abdülhamit Followed to Cope with Young Turks**

Just like every rulers wanting to preserve the might and potency they have, Abdülhamit also acted very unpermissively against oppositional movements. A short time after his enthronement Abdülhamit had banished Mithat Paşa, to whom he promised the announcement of the Constitutionalism, deeming him responsible from the death of Sultan Abdülaziz. Then, Mithat Paşa has been killed and his death remained unsolved. Opponents of Abdülhamit considered him, quite reasonably, responsible from this death. Although death of Sultan Abdülaziz has been used as an occasion for sending Mithat Paşa into exile, it can be said that the main reason of this exile was Abdülhamit's regarding New Ottomans as a danger in terms of his regime. Mithat Paşa's banishment and his subsequent death are seen as primary reasons of rise of the Ottoman CUP.<sup>43</sup> It would be useful pointing to a case in Mithat Paşa example. In Abdülhamit's era execution essentially remained as an exceptional punishment. "In course of Abdülhamit regime, death penalty was an exception, not a rule. Insurgents were being incapacitated by means of segregation. It was always possible to return for those who were sent into exile because of their insurgency."<sup>44</sup>

Existence of strong intelligence agency was the most remarkable aspect of Abdülhamit regime. By means of its paid sleuths, the Palace was able to receive intelligence about and take measures against the activities of opposition movements

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<sup>43</sup> See Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul, 1948), p. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Ahmad, *ibid*, p. 197.

within the Empire particularly those located in Istanbul. It was because of this intelligence agency that the Ottoman CUP arose as a secret organization and maintained its activities underground for a long time.

Money was Abdülhamit's biggest ammunition he used against opposing movements. A great majority of opponents were trying to continue their lives without having financial opportunities. Ahmet Rıza's memoirs, for example, include the most conspicuous expressions about the extent of negative influence created by financial problems on members of the Committee. As we learn from his memoirs, Ahmet Rıza had to sell his books because of indigence.<sup>45</sup>

To what extent would it be possible, for those who were also having difficulty even in maintaining their daily lives, to scramble successfully against an Empire? Thus, a big part of prominent Young Turks either cancelled their activities or suspended them for a certain amount of time in return for the money offered by Abdülhamit.

It was not only the members of the Ottoman CUP who experienced a deprivation of financial opportunities needed for enabling an organization to sustain its fight. New Ottomans also had similar difficulties before them. New Ottomans were a bit luckier. They "had the opportunity of working as an organized power by virtue of the wealth of Mustafa Fazıl Paşa."<sup>46</sup>

Mustafa Fazıl Paşa's role in protecting New Ottomans similarly played by Damat Mahmut Paşa for the Ottoman CUP. Damat Mahmut Paşa was brother in law of Abdülhamit and has taken refuge in France together with his sons Prince Sabahattin and Prince Lütfullah in 1899. Damat Mahmut Paşa was a person who adopted the activities carried out by the members of Ottoman CUP and supported them financially. It is also possible to state that the Khedive of Egypt has also undertaken a partial role of protection for Young Turks. For example, Khedive Abbas Hilmi

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<sup>45</sup> Ahmet Rıza, *ibid*, p. 306.

<sup>46</sup> Mardin, *ibid*, p. 143.

supplied financial support for enabling the publication of *Osmanlı*, one of the official periodicals of the Ottoman CUP, in Egypt.<sup>47</sup>

Having enough intelligence about the difficulties experienced by Young Turks Abdülhamit found the best way of using it in his favor. He planned, accordingly, to suggest Young Turks to stop their activities in exchange of money. He assigned duty of persuading Young Turks to Ahmet Celalettin Paşa, the sleuth in chief.<sup>48</sup> As a dexterous negotiant Ahmet Celalettin Paşa realized this duty with a great success. Mizancı Murat Bey, for example, who contributed to the Committee as a psychologically reinforcing figure among its leader staff, decided to suspend his activities and returned to Istanbul on 20 July in 1897 following the negotiations he made with Ahmet Celalettin Paşa.<sup>49</sup>

Of course Mizancı Murat Bey was not the only person who made a deal with Ahmet Celalettin Paşa. Abdullah Cevdet and İshak Sükuti were also among the persons, who played a prominent role in the Committee, made a similar deal with him and suspended their activities. “In 1900 İshak Sükuti accepted the position of doctorship at the Ottoman embassy in Rome and Abdullah Cevdet accepted a similar position at the embassy in Vienna.”<sup>50</sup>

In the deal they made with Ahmet Celalettin Paşa Young Turks generally stipulated the realization of reforms. Abdülhamit were supposed to make the reforms and Young Turks closed the journals and papers making news against Abdülhamit and returned to Istanbul.

That Mizancı Murat Bey agreed with Ahmet Celalettin Paşa and accepted to return to Istanbul constituted a destructive impact on the Committee and it could not

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<sup>47</sup> Akşin, *ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>48</sup> See Tahsin Paşa, *Abdülhamit ve Yıldız Hatıraları in İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanı*. Edited by Ö. Andaç Uğurlu. (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2008), p. 433 and Mardin, *ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>49</sup> Hanioglu, *ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>50</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 73.

recuperate for a long time after this disengagement. Although the Committee is refreshed following Damat Mahmut Paşa's desertion to Paris in 1899 it could not be reconstructed within Turkey until 1906.<sup>51</sup> And it is really interesting to see that Ahmet Celalettin Paşa also participated in the opposition movement of Young Turks in 1904.<sup>52</sup>

## **2.9 Young Turks' Struggles for Unification**

### **2.9.1 First Young Turk Congress**

We have pointed out above that Damat Mahmut Paşa undertook a role of "protector" for Unionists, who were carrying out activities against Abdülhamit in Europe to a large extent by publishing periodicals. This role of protectorate can be seen as a natural result of Mahmut Paşa's financial support for Unionists. But if we examine closely, we see that the meaning attributed to him was a reflection of the search for a unifying figure. It is because they were constantly having heated arguments with each other and consequently experiencing partitions among themselves. On the occasion of Damat Mahmut Paşa's desertion to Europe, Young Turks reached the conclusion that it was possible for them to reunify and create goal congruence.

Along with Damat Mahmut Paşa's directions and the invitation published by Prince Sabahattin and Prince Lütfullah Beys', which carries the title of "General Invitation for Ottomans", Young Turks living in different countries came together on 4-9 February of 1902<sup>53</sup> in Paris.

Prince Sabahattin and Prince Lütfullah Beys' purpose in publishing this invitation was to unify persons who were sharing common interests but were also dissociating because of methodological differences. They were struggling to gather all the Ottoman citizens -who are assumed to be exposed to a disaster compensation of which is impossible- including Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Albanians, Armenians,

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<sup>51</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> Kuran, *ibid*, p. 184.

<sup>53</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 86; Akşin, *ibid*, pp. 80-81.

Macedonians, Greeks, and Jews etc to meet in the middle. In this way, they were targeting both to give an end to the current regime and to try to build up the basis of new government by depending on the consensus of Ottoman elements.<sup>54</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Young Turk congress has not been successful because of sharp disagreements between two groups. These disagreements can be said to have essentially arisen from two subjects. One of them was the role and limit of the central authority in the administration of state. And the other was the attitude to be adopted with regard to intervention of foreign states.

Although both of the groups were feeling anxious about preserving the unity between Ottoman elements, they were failing to reach an agreement on methodology of that.

The group under the presidency of Ahmet Rıza Bey was requesting that the central authority should be preserved in any case. On the other hand, the second group, which is represented by Prince Sabahattin Bey, was supporting the idea of application of a decentralized structure. Ahmet Rıza Bey and some other Unionists like Doctor Nazım were interpreting the idea of decentralization as “lack of state”<sup>55</sup> (adem-i devlet).

Prince Sabahattin Bey was regarding the intervention of other states as a methodology to be employed at the point of changing the regime. But Ahmet Rıza Bey and his proponents were against foreign intervention in any case.

Prince Lütfullah Bey established the group of “Private Enterprise and Decentralization” (“Teşebbüs-i Şahsî ve Adem-i Merkeziyet”) which negotiated in terms of liberal ideas he has. Ahmet Rıza Bey and his supporters, who constituted the minority in Congress, called themselves as “proponents of constitutional government

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<sup>54</sup> Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi*. Vol. 1. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), pp. 295-296.

<sup>55</sup> Kuran, *ibid*, p. 171.

and general reform”.<sup>56</sup> Afterwards, this later group has taken the name of “Committee of Ottoman Progress and Union”.

Prince Sabahattin Bey tried to propagate his ideas through the newspaper of *Terakki*, first issue of which has been published in 1906.<sup>57</sup> Ahmet Rıza Bey and his proponents started to publish the newspaper of *Şura-yı Ümmet* in 1902.<sup>58</sup>

Prens Sabahattin has a profile drawing attention with liberal ideas. Following Edmond Demolins he presents an approach prioritizing the individual and giving importance to the idea of free enterprise. He can be said to have adopted a liberal economical view. In this respect, his ideas differ from other Young Turks’. On the other hand Ahmet Rıza Bey seems to have more inflexible and authoritarian approach with regard to political and economical issues. His idea of unification can be said to be Jacobin and not prefer demands of social basis or individual freedoms.

Ahmet Rıza Bey and his proponents continued to criticize Prens Sabahattin Bey in later years also. Hence, in different issues of *Şura-yı Ümmet* we come across important critiques directed towards the political approach adopted by Prens Sabahattin.<sup>59</sup> This shows us how big is the extent of separation took place in the Congress of 1902.

For example “Osmanlı İttihat ve İnkılâp Cemiyeti [Committee of Ottoman Union and Revolution], Cemiyet-i İnkılâbiye [Revolutionary Committee], Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti [Committee of Motherland and Freedom], Ohri Cemiyet-i Hususiye-i İslamiyesi [Special Islamic Committee of Ohrid], Cemiyet-i Ahadiye-i Osmaniye [Committee of Ottoman Union], İhtilalci Asker Cemiyeti [Committee of

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<sup>56</sup> Mardin, *ibid*, p. 257.

<sup>57</sup> Kuran, *ibid*. pp. 172 and 234.

<sup>58</sup> The first issue of *Şura-yı Ümmet*, published on 10 April 1902, explains the purpose of the publication of newspaper as “to transform the arbitrary regime into a constitutional government and get the rules of Constitution –dated 7 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1293- applied.”

<sup>59</sup> For criticisms directed by Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir, see *Şura-yı Ümmet* 5, Supplement of no. 95 (27 July 1906): p. 4.

Revolutionist Soldier], Harbiye Yüksek Mektepleri İttihadı [Union of Military High Schools]”<sup>60</sup> and “İntikamcı Yeni Osmanlılar Cemiyeti [Committee of Avenger New Ottomans]”<sup>61</sup> are some of them.

## 2.9.2 Second Young Turk Congress

As the analysis made above makes it clear the 1st Young Turk Congress has given diametrically opposed results to the expected ones. In other words, it caused to disengagements in main political body. Therefore, in 1907 a 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress has been convened in Paris in the autumn of 1907, approximately 5 years later then the 1<sup>st</sup>.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Young Turk Congress convened as a consequence of Armenian Dashnaksution’s insistences. Prince Sabahattin Bey’s group of “Private Enterprise and Decentralization” and Ahmet Rıza Bey’s group of “proponents of constitutional government and general reform” have participated into this Congress In addition to Dashnaksution.<sup>62</sup>

Although it has not met the expectations, the Congress has produced a useful result to a large extent. Parties have decided to refrain from discussions about decentralization causing disengagement. After completing the discussions a mutual declaration published in which the attendants specified 3 purposes, including: a) compelling Abdülhamit to abdicate, b) changing the current administration fundamentally, and c) establishing the methods of counseling (*Meşveret*) and constitutionalism (*meşrutiyet*).<sup>63</sup> And the steps specified to realize these purposes were: a) resisting with guns against the actions and behaviors of the government, b) carrying out civil resistance by means of strikes in political and financial areas, c) withholding the taxes to be paid to current government, d) making propaganda

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<sup>60</sup> Nurer Uğurlu, ed. *Biz İttihatçılar* (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2009), pp. 34-37.

<sup>61</sup> Hanioglu, *ibid*, p. 377. [Brackets added.]

<sup>62</sup> Kuran, *ibid*, pp. 234-238; Temo, *ibid*, p. 202-203; Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>63</sup> Kuran, *ibid*, pp. 240-241.

among military men, e) starting a general movement of insurrection, and f) appealing to different kinds of actions needed according to the stream of events.<sup>64</sup>

It can be said that the decisions taken in the Congress constituted a turning point for Young Turks. Because the acceptance of armed struggle as a method shows that the Young Turks have moved to another phase. Of course there have been persons who defended this method in previous phases as well. But the main body has always consciously preferred to stay away from guns. For example, Ahmet Rıza Bey – maybe because of the effect of his positivist tendencies- has always protested against the ideas of revolution and armed struggle. Hence, by his draft resolution requesting that the sultanate and caliphate should not be made subjects of discussion in the course of Congress, he attempted to get it finished even before it was kicked off. In this respect, it is reasonable to argue that the decisions written on the declaration of Congress adopting both revolution and armed struggle as methods have not pleased Ahmet Rıza Bey.

Despite the fact that Ahmet Rıza Bey has not found the final decisions taken during the Congress, he has not objected to them -which is remarkable. The most probable explanation of this case can be found in unification of the Committee of Progress and Union with the Committee of Ottoman Freedom, which is another Young Turk organization centered in Thessaloniki.

The Committee of Ottoman Freedom established in 1906 by a group of military officers working at the 3<sup>rd</sup> army in Thessaloniki.<sup>65</sup> The aim of this Committee was, like any other Young Turk Organizations', to depose Abdülhamit.<sup>66</sup> It is argued in some sources that founders of this organization were members of the Ottoman CUP. But some other sources remark that the members of the Ottoman CUP were not

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 242.

<sup>65</sup> Tunaya, *ibid*.

<sup>66</sup> For a detailed information with regard to the establishment of the Committee see Bleda, *ibid*, pp. 28-30.

aware of existence of the Committee of Ottoman Freedom until 1907 and that two groups were unified just incidentally.<sup>67</sup>

Ahmet Rıza could not object to the decisions taken in the 2nd Congress of Young Turks because he remained in minority. Similarly, he acquiesced to the acceptance of armed struggle and intimidation as means by the members of the organization which established as the Committee of Ottoman Freedom and redennominated as the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress after unifying with the Committee of Progress and Union.

As a matter of fact, one can say that there was a mutual distrust between the cliques of Thessaloniki and Paris. According to Tarık Zafer Tunaya, the clique of Thessaloniki constitutes the real CUP which has always remained distant to the clique of Paris. Ibrahim Temo gives detailed information about this case in his memoirs.<sup>68</sup>

The reason of the attitude of the clique of Thessaloniki is, possibly, that the armed struggle securing announcement of the Constitutionalism has been coordinated by them. And the clique of Paris, as pointed out earlier, has always protested against armed struggle.

Despite all of these conflicts, Ahmet Rıza Bey elected as the speaker of the parliament by the Ottoman CUP after announcement of the Constitutionalism. This, in fact, was an appreciation shown to a person who lost nothing from his tenacity of struggling in spite of numerous material or spiritual boredoms he faced. Although he has been elected as the speaker of the parliament, he could not have a power –just like other Unionists belonging to the clique of Paris- with regard to administration of the Committee. It has been administered by the Headquarters which carried out its activities in back of the stage and the center of which remained in Thessaloniki until 1911.

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<sup>67</sup> Ernest E. Ramsaur also makes similar interpretations. See, Ramsaur *ibid*, p. 144.

<sup>68</sup> See Temo, *ibid*, pp. 214-215.

In later stages Ahmet Rıza Bey's relations with the Committee are stretched and he started to direct severe criticisms against the Ottoman CUP following his election to membership of the Senate (Meclis-i Âyân).<sup>69</sup>

## 2.10 Announcement of the Constitutionalism

There has been a serious increase in the number of rebellious movements in consequence of adoption of armed struggle as a method. These revolts were happening rather in the Balkans and they were getting organized and carried out especially by military men. For example, Resneli Niyazi, who was a senior captain (kolağası), started a gang together with a group of his friends and became outlaw by revolting against administration.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, the wave of rebellion has not remained limited with Balkans and spread in Anatolia as well.<sup>71</sup>

Members of the Ottoman CUP were especially targeting, within armed struggle, the high level officers of Abdülhamit. Hence, Sami Paşa, who has been assigned by Abdülhamit to investigate and quell the riots, was died following an armed attack run against him.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Mufti of Manastır [Bitola] was killed and Nazım Paşa, central commander of Thessaloniki, wounded by Unionists as well.<sup>73</sup>

Intimidation policy pursued by the Ottoman CUP has given result sooner than expected and Abdülhamit had to announce the Constitutionalism on 23 July in 1908 after coming to the conclusion that turmoil is no longer manageable.

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<sup>69</sup> Rıza, *ibid*, pp. 326-327.

<sup>70</sup> Temo, *ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>71</sup> Ramsaur, *ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>72</sup> For an explanation of this event that is regarded as one of the reasons prepared the announcement of Constitution, see Ahmad, *ibid*, p. 23; Temo, *ibid*, p. 208; Bleda, *ibid*, pp. 56.

<sup>73</sup> Bleda, *ibid*, pp. 47-49, 51-52.

## 2.11 The Ottoman CUP's Seizure of Power

As a result of its long struggle, the Ottoman CUP finally achieved its goal and got the Constitutionalism announced. Together with the announcement of Constitutions after nearly 30 years the absolute power of Sultan has been limited and the Ottoman Empire met with Constitutional regime for a second time in its history. The alteration of the regime welcomed enthusiastically by opposition movements.

Although the alteration of the type of regime brought prestige to Young Turks it caused to some interesting cases also, which they were not expecting to happen very swiftly. The first of these cases, maybe the most interesting of them, was that the Committee caught unprepared to the Constitutional regime for the announcement of which it struggled for years.

The Committee has come to the power after the announcement of Constitutionalism. No need to say that it had a political program to be applied after taking over the government. This official program was published in *Şura-yı Ümmet*.<sup>74</sup> Despite the existence of a political program, Unionists have lacked a clear program reflecting the philosophical background -which we are going to examine in future chapters- with regard to the social and cultural transformation they were aiming to apply just after the transition to Constitutional regime. The absence of the latter can be regarded as a sign of an important intellectual gap between the *weltanschauung* they had and the transformation they were striving for.

What is interesting is that the issue of the absence of a program were ascertained by Young Turks themselves and handled as a subject of concern. For example İbrahim Temo, narrating a meeting he made with Ahmet Rıza, says that:

We are gathering, chitchatting and sharing concerns. We are also continually criticizing the Ottoman administration and this bane of despotism on our heads. What if one day Abdülhamit comes to reason, understands that the way he is taking is dead ended and says to us, by disinfecting his surroundings,

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<sup>74</sup> Anonymous, "Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: Siyasi Programı", *Şura-yı Ümmet* 7, no. 140 (1 September 1908): p. 2.

something like this: “come on gentlemen, let me give the bridles of the cart of administration to you; please come and start the reform and rescue the motherland”? Since we are passing the time just by a vain criticism we do not have a preparation or a serious program. What can we do if we take over following our return to the motherland? We need to get ready and train personnel to function within a program and to start to reform in every branch.<sup>75</sup>

The second interesting case that the Ottoman CUP encountered following Constitutionalism is inexperience. Along with their lack of comprehensive program Unionists lacked experienced members also whom they could appoint to administrative levels. The fact that they showed no skill of producing a leader among themselves constitutes one of the most serious criticisms against the members of the Ottoman CUP.

Of course there are some concrete truths that these criticisms were depending on. For example, after the announcement of the Constitutionalism the Committee executed an “observer” role on government. It was interpreted as having the power without taking any responsibility. Thus, those who criticize the Ottoman CUP are generally regarding it as an unaccountable organization which intervened into the function of government without responsibilities required for a ruling body.<sup>76</sup>

To beat this weakness, the Ottoman CUP followed a pragmatic way and shared the power with experienced Paşa’s of the Sublime Porte, who have already gained a permanent seat as important centers of power in traditional government games.

Governments, for example, of experienced statesmen like Sait Paşa, Kamil Paşa, Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, İbrahim Hakkı Paşa, Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa and Tevfik Paşa were formed by the Ottoman CUP’s support. However, there happened a continuous tension between those Paşas and the Committee. Both parties had a share on this political tension. On the one hand, the Ottoman CUP imposed its agenda on Grand Viziers which means that it blocked them to function freely. On the other hand, Paşas continued their political activities in accordance with their own personal agendas and

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<sup>75</sup> See, Temo, *ibid*, p. 191.

<sup>76</sup> Ahmad, *ibid*, p. 32.

pursued, from time to time, policies directly targeting existence of the Committee. It is argued, for example, that the government of Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa, which has been called as the “great cabinet”, was functioning to erase the Committee from political stage.<sup>77</sup>

In order to keep up with the inexperience issue the Committee wanted to nominate parliamentarians as deputy ministers into the cabinet. Thereby the Unionist parliamentarians were going to gain experience with regard to the administration of the state. And, as a result of this, the Committee would, supposedly, be able to stop sharing the government with the Paşas of the Sublime Porte. But this plan could not be applied for a variety of reasons and the Unionists failed in this respect. The basic reason of this failure was the Constitution’s 67<sup>th</sup> article, mandating that “membership of parliament and a governmental mission cannot be convened in one person”.<sup>78</sup>

The Committee has tried so hard to change aforementioned article of the Constitution. But it could not get it changed and, consequentially, preferred to nominate ministers themselves. It was Manyasizade Refik Bey who participated in the government as the first Unionist. He was appointed as the Minister of Justice and died after a while. Following his death, Cavit Bey, the representative of Thessaloniki, has participated in the government as the Minister of Finance.<sup>79</sup>

The battle of power between the Committee and the Paşas of the Sublime Porte, who were very dexterous in political intrigues, continued for a long time. It is because of these battles of power that at least 11 governments have been formed, as far as we determined, between 1908 and 1913, when Sait Halim Paşa was appointed as the Grand Vizier.

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<sup>77</sup> Ahmat, *ibid*, pp. 137-142.

<sup>78</sup> For the full text of the Constitution (Kânun-u Esâsî) come into effect in 1876 see Şeref Gözübüyük and Suna Kili. *Türk Anayasa Metinleri: 1839-1980*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları (No: 496), 1982, p. 35.

<sup>79</sup> Ahmad, *ibid*, p. 75.

## 2.12 A Government Unable to Raise its Head amid Wars and Political Turmoil

The Committee's 10 years of sovereignty have been passed under the shadow of various acts of violence and wars which caused to repressive policies.

The first act of violence experienced by the Committee was the case of 31 March, which organized by opponents and has almost been successful.

The surface cause of this case was the unsolved murder of the editorial writer of the newspaper of *Serbestî*, which is known by its opposition to the Committee. The opposition regarded this murder as a political assassination and held the Committee responsible. That the murderers have not been identified reinforced this accusation among the ordinary people as well.<sup>80</sup>

Following the tension, opposing fractions have started a rebellion and caused a huge chaos by taking the support of some of the military forces on 13th April in 1909 which corresponds to 31st March of 1325 in Gregorian calendar.

Insurgents have descended the Parliament and the government of Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa has resigned. The Committee has completely lost its control on Istanbul during the revolt.

A great deal of sources seems to be of the same opinion that the case of 31 March was a purely religious movement of revolt. Indeed, if the important role played by the newspaper of *Volkan* -the media organ of Derviş Vahdeti's Committee of Mohammedan Union (İttihad-ı Muhammedî Cemiyeti)- in rising the revolt taken into consideration, the truth of this assertion can be acknowledged. However, one needs to bear in mind the political fragility of the period as well. The event has taken place just after months following the announcement of the Constitution. It can be regarded as quite natural for parties, for the proponents of old and new regimes both, to use Islam as an instrument among their struggle of power. But an argument identifying

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 60.

the Islamic tendencies as the unique reason of this event may keep it partly in darkness.

The continuance of the revolt has just been quelled by Army of Movement (Hareket Ordusu) at Mahmut Şevket Paşa's command.

It is observed that, the Ottoman CUP has headed towards oppressive policies following the case of 31 March. Thus, the state of siege has been declared on 25<sup>th</sup> of April in 1909, when the revolt has been appeased by Mahmut Şevket Paşa's forces. It has been maintained until 23<sup>rd</sup> July of 1912. Normalcy did not last long and, consequently, the stage of siege has been declared for the second time on 6<sup>th</sup> of August in 1912. This second state of siege has been the longest one in the history of Ottoman Empire and lifted in 1919. It seems possible to characterize the period that Ottoman CUP remained in power as a period in which the state of siege becomes ordinary.

There is nothing astonishing in the fact, actually, that the Ottoman CUP, as an organization which had a strong basis within army from the very beginning and came to power by an armed struggle, has taken the advantage of the conditions of the period and used the state of siege, oppression and violence as opportunities to deepen its sovereignty.

Hence, the political assassinations realized during the Committee's sovereignty are not limited with the murder of Hasan Fehmi that mentioned above. This time, Ahmet Samim -a severe critic of the Committee and also the editorial writer of the newspaper of *Sada-yı Millet*- has been a victim of murder on 9<sup>th</sup> of June in 1910.

Another example of the oppressive and violent policies applied by the Ottoman CUP is the event which passed into history as the "raid on the Sublime Porte".

This raid has taken place on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January in 1913 when the Grand Vizier was Kamil Paşa. Kamil Paşa has never gotten along with the Ottoman CUP. The reason of the raid seems to be an idea that the government was planning to give Edirne to

Bulgarians in order to finish the Balkan war which erupted in 1912. A group of Unionists, arguing against the exchange of Edirne, has raided the Sublime Porte under the leadership of Enver Paşa. Nazım Paşa, the Minister of War, was killed during the raid and Kamil Paşa has been compelled to resign.

After the resignation of Kamil Paşa, Mahmut Şevket Paşa has been appointed as Grand Vizier by the support of the Ottoman CUP. But, strangely enough, he has also been murdered on 11th of June in 1913 following an armed assault.

The assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa is quite meaningful. Because, despite the fact that he became the Grand Vizier after the raid on the Sublime Porte, he also created problems for the Committee as a result of the strength he got by controlling the army, particularly following the case of 31 March. The actors of this murder have never been found. If the struggle of power between Mahmut Şevket Paşa and Unionists taken into consideration, it can be argued that there are enough reasons to suspect that the Committee were behind his assassination.

A government, which can be regarded as purely Unionist, under the presidency of Sait Halim Paşa has been formed after the murder of Mahmut Şevket Paşa.

Sait Halim Paşa can be seen as an interesting political figure when we keep in mind the mentality that Unionists generally had. The point which makes Paşa interesting has been put forward by Niyazi Berkes in the following way:

[His books] were probably translated into Turkish from French by Mehmed Âkif, as the Sadrazam could not write in Turkish. At a time when the Turkish Government was accused of pursuing a policy of Turkification, its Sadrazam was an ardent Islamist who wrote only in French and Arabic.<sup>81</sup>

Sait Halim Paşa's cabinet took the office from the middle of 1913 until the beginning of 1917. His cabinet resigned following the debates about the entrance of Ottoman

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<sup>81</sup> Berkes, Niyazi. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Hurst&Company, London: 1998), p. 349.

Empire into the World War I. After his resignation, the last unionist government under the presidency of one of the most influential unionist figures, Talat Paşa, is formed. As a result of the conditions created by the war, the Committee of Union and Progress literally terminated its political existence (1918). Following the end of the war, unionists created another political organization, in 1918, which is the continuation of CUP. It is named “Teceddüd Fırkası”. This party, as one of the latest remainders of the unionist mentality, is dissolved.

## CHAPTER 3

### PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE AS THE WAYS TO “NEW LIFE” IN THE THOUGHT OF YOUNG TURKS

#### 3.1 Science and Philosophy in the Thought of Young Turks or “Reproducing a Result”

Science and philosophy are the results of the process of an inquiry immanent to human beings' nature. Human being regards the universe as an autonomous fact and tries to understand it. The universe, seeming at first as a “totality of unknowns”, starts to be known slowly as a result of this process. There is no doubt that this inquiry has been dominated by a pure curiosity before anything else. Human being strives to satisfy his curiosity by asking questions, like “what is ...?” or “how it becomes?” or “why?” It is also possible for the mind of human being, depending on the more systematical form science takes, to adopt a more pragmatic approach and to ask questions like “how can I change?” or “how can I use?” However, if there is an element nonexistence of which cannot be imagined within the scientific form of thought, it is the hunger of the mind towards learning and knowing.

If we take the essential character of science and philosophy into consideration and ask a question, like “what kind of a scientific and philosophical approach has been adopted by Young Turks?” we come across with a vital difference in their approach from the one that is described above. It is because Young Turks' thinking about science has been dominated by the way in which they encounter with science, not by an intellectual curiosity. Their way of encountering with it has led them to concentrate directly on the “result”, by compressing the process of scientific activity or by realizing a mental bounce. And the same can be regarded as valid in terms of the philosophical ideas they had.

In the following pages we are going to examine the scientific and philosophical ideas fitting into their mentality on the one hand and the reasons that led them to adopt a more pragmatic approach on the other. Still, one needs to point to the fact that Young Turks' experience of science as a pure result does not mean that they had no desire to learning. However, when we look closely into the thing that they problematized within the context of their discussions about science and philosophy, we see that it was not an issue to be resolved by a demand for a pure learning. In other words, Young Turks have concentrated on the practical aspect of science and philosophy rather than their theoretical sides. The clearest expressions of this circumstance come in an article published in *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası*. It is said in this article that:

The universe is a book and a bewildering thing presented all along to our full of admiration glances. All the ins and outs of the images and figures it has are mysteries desired to be resolved. I said desired; but not just for satisfying our curiosity. It is for making us continue our lives and reach to the amenity and salvation on this world.<sup>82</sup>

Young Turks' ideas of science and philosophy depend on the questions of "what can I change?" and "how can I change", rather than the questions of "what can I know" and "how can I learn?" They have quite clear answers for both of the questions. We will argue that the term of "status quo" constitutes the answer of their question of "what can I change?" The thinking type, shaped by tradition and reflection of which can be found both in the idea of political sovereignty and in the social life of the period, represented the status quo for the Young Turks. And their answer for the question of "how can I change?" lies in science which is referred above as a concrete circumstance they met. Science and, as a discipline nested with it, philosophy are the only ways to be followed for the purposes of the Young Turks. When viewed from this perspective, the scientific and philosophical thought of Young Turks can be said neither adopted through discussions at theoretical level nor functionalized after it grew into maturity to a certain degree. Young Turks have accepted scientific approaches theorized in different thinking climates as instruments without questioning.

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<sup>82</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Tasnif-i Ulûm: Bazı Mukaddemât-ı Felsefîye [1]." *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 3 (15 February 1324/28 February 1909): p. 364.

Of course science has a transformative function on the living and thinking styles. Thus, when we look into the history of science we can see various examples of transformations produced and fed by this function. But one might argue that such changes and transformations can only be regarded as natural results or “side benefits” and not as purposes in themselves. Scientific approach focuses on research, inquiry and production and pays attention to its results just after they become established. Although it is true that human beings use scientific data in the direction of this or that purposes, this circumstance needs not to erase the intellectual impartiality or objectivity of science. To talk about the history of science means to talk about this intellectual impartiality, to a large extent.

Young Turks seem not to encounter with science and philosophy within a natural process in this respect. In other words, the scientific and philosophical ideas they had are not results of inquiry into and wonder about the universe. They met with science just as a “result”. Besides, this encounter has not taken place in a normal way. There are, of course, a number of historical and cultural causes prepared this extraordinary encounter. There is a point on which all of these historical and cultural causes intersect. The most suitable term to use in describing it can be “crisis”. Using a similar point made by İsmail Kara, it is possible to argue that the encounter of Young Turks “with western philosophy has been manifested in the form of a result or pressure of a crisis period, various dimensions of which were still continuing.”<sup>83</sup> Indeed, one of the primary results to be reached in any possible examination on Young Turks’ periodicals would indicate that they were products of a crisis period. Therefore, it can be said that the whole Young Turk thoughts were determined by this sense of crisis.

So, what kind of a crisis was that?

What we refer here as a crisis is seemingly lies in the question of whether Ottoman Empire will be able to survive or not. However, the real crisis lies in somewhere

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<sup>83</sup> İsmail Kara, *ibid*, p. 6.

deeper as a problem of mentality. The tension between old and new, the traditional and the modern, presents itself both in the forms of an existential and intellectual crisis.

Since the great majority of the Young Turks were craving for the sumptuous days of the past, the crisis can also be characterized as “emotional”. They are romantic in this respect, and the weight of reality is deepening the perception of crisis in their minds.

One needs to refer to another point with regard to the crisis. Just as it is possible to speak of a crisis which science causes by its existence, it is also possible to talk about a crisis it causes by its absence. The existence of science is a crisis for Young Turks because the irrational circumstance experienced by the Ottoman Empire was originating from uninterested attitudes towards scientific developments. On the other hand, the absence of science was also a crisis because the distance from it was securing the continuance of what is non-scientific and, consequently, irrational. This is why becoming subject to the current understanding of science seemed to the Young Turks as the only solution to the crisis.

While Young Turks were trying to get the traditional Ottoman society out of the crisis that we are currently describing, they can actually be said to open some doors to a different crisis. A struggle to overcome the crisis by means of imported notions or ideas caused to disengagement from tradition. Hence we know that Young Turks were remaining very distant from tradition. They were disengaged from tradition and, as a result, positioned themselves out of the common way of thinking. On the one hand, they underestimated the crisis by their superficial approach to Western science and philosophy, and caused to a more essential crisis by refusing tradition categorically on the other.

Undoubtedly, the perception of crisis affected the Young Turks’ thinking is not a blank one. The periods when the description of Young Turk has been made were the ones in which Ottoman Empire were constantly losing ground in front of the West. The Ottoman society has experienced an exact opposite situation for centuries and had self-confidence as if it would go on forever in this way. However, the scientific

developments which proceeded in the West uninterruptedly and hit the top by industrial revolution run the usual reading and observing styles upside down. Moreover, it was not the Ottoman society alone that effected by these developments and revolutions. Western societies themselves also have experienced serious crisis as a result of these rapid transformations. What has made the Western societies lucky was the fact that they have been able to produce sophisticated thinkers through their struggles of overcoming crisis. Setting aside the discussion of whether it was a matter of luck or not for a moment, this fact can also be seen as Ottoman society's misfortune. For example, as opposed to the existence of Auguste Comte who created a new scientific and philosophical framework in the wake of social crisis lived in France, it is meaningful to see in Ottoman society an intellectual circle which did nothing except reiterating Comte's statements. Western world of thought has been able to develop intellectual mechanisms to deescalate the breakage created by the transformation in scientific thinking. But the same situation is not valid for the Ottoman society which was following the scientific developments from the outside. Traditional Ottoman thinking lived without having enough intellectual security mechanisms and experienced the effect of Western scientific developments severely. Since the society was left intellectually vulnerable, the intensity of effect has become much stronger.

The crisis can be said to carry the rebirth as a possibility within itself. But to be able to talk about this possibility an intellectual view, which equipped against the crisis, is needed to exist. Western thinking is ingenious within this context. Because an intellectual accumulation is always out there to foresee the crisis arose in theoretical and practical levels, and to transform these crisis by their felicitous diagnosis once they appear. But, the crisis has not been seen by Young Turks as a fact that can be overcome with reference to a theoretical basis. And this is why science and philosophy has been reduced to a mere function. It is true that science and philosophy have "enlightened" Young Turks. But they welcomed it not as a mental enlightenment but as a salvation. And the salvation was only possible with progress (terakki) which is the most concrete result of science and philosophy.

### 3.2 Scientific and Philosophical Quests against Crisis

The philosophical approach that helped Young Turks most in their search for a way out of the crisis they experienced burningly has been the positivistic understanding of philosophy and science which put forward by Auguste Comte.

#### 3.2.1 The Place of Positivism in Young Turks' Thought

The concept of “progress” (terakkî), which has been used in denomination of the Committee of Union and Progress as a Young Turk organization, inspired by positivistic thought. With the guidance of Ahmet Rıza Bey, who lived in France for a long time and collaborated with Pierre Lafitte (1823-1903), the Committee has been given this name and inspired by Auguste Comte’s motto of “ordre and progress”. Ahmet Rıza Bey initially wanted to denominate the Committee as “Ordre and Progress” (Nizam ve Terakkî) but in consequence of various discussions the name of “Union and Progress” (İttihat ve Terakkî) has been accepted.<sup>84</sup> However, one can witness to the usage of “proponents of ordre and progress” which refers to the members of the Ottoman CUP in Young Turk periodicals.<sup>85</sup>

In fact, it is not a wonder that positivism become very attractive to Young Turks. Because it has a content which overlaps with the meaning Young Turks attributed to science. Just a single glance at the classification of sciences designed by Auguste Comte, who has been accepted as the founder of positivism, would be enough to get it understood why Young Turks gravitated towards positivism.

It would be useful to refer to one more point before passing on the positivistic classification of science. Positivism stays distant from speculative thinking and sets its sight on physical universe. The primary criticism directed towards Young Turks in remarkable studies about them is that they were away from producing speculative

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<sup>84</sup> Kuran, *ibid*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>85</sup> Anonymous, “Ermeni Konferansı-Paris Sefiri.” *Meşveret* 1, no. 4 [Supplement] (15 January 1108/28 January 1896), p. 5.

thoughts.<sup>86</sup> This criticism is substantially legitimate. But it is possible to put forward various rationales with regard to the causes of Young Turks' distance from speculative thinking. For example, none of the prominent Young Turks were a regular philosopher. But it seems that the type of Young Turks' encounter with science and philosophy needs to be taken into consideration as one of the reasons of the aforementioned distance. Hence the following statements appearing in the newspaper of *Şura-yı Ümmet* can be seen as a reflection of a mentality in need of an immediate solution against crisis:

We receive beneficial articles from persons who have a desire to serve our country. Some of them include redundant methodology and theory. However, our country is exclaiming that "I am burning into flames, haven't you heard?" and waiting for urgent remedy and devices from us.<sup>87</sup>

Whatever the reason of their staying away from the speculative philosophy is, it is for sure that they attributed a practical value to science and philosophy. And this emergent need for solution led Young Turks to adopt certain scientific and philosophical approaches, notably positivism, which have been broadly discussed and accepted within Western circles of thought.

Positivism is both a scientific and philosophical understanding. According to it, there is an overlap between the historical developments of science and philosophy. This overlapping is handled within the scope of "law of three stages". Because of this correspondence in the history of thinking, the methodology that should be followed by philosophy needs to be compatible with positive sciences. In other words, positivist philosophy is a scientific philosophy as well. Therefore, positivism compounds science and philosophy in its framework and constitutes a philosophy of science for Young Turks as such.

Although the Young Turks remained under the influence of positivist understanding of science, the periodicals we examined show us that they do not get into theoretical

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<sup>86</sup> For a criticism to this effect, see Mardin, *ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> Anonymous, "İhtar ve İ'tizar." *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 12 (18 September 1902): 4.

discussions regarding to positivism either. Nevertheless, existence of some articles examining the basic principles of positivistic philosophy of science comprehensively can also be witnessed. For example, a mutual article which is titled “Auguste Comte: Felsefe-i Müspete”<sup>88</sup> (“Auguste Comte: Positive Philosophy”) and published by Salih Zeki<sup>89</sup> and Halide Salih in *Ulûm-u İktisâdiye ve İçtimâiye Mecmuası*.

In this article, written to examine philosophical and scientific understanding of Comte, science has been described as an ability of explaining an event with reference to another one by depending on their clearly observable relations. In other words, science is a process of deduction by means of data procured.<sup>90</sup> The distinctive sign of positivism lies in its assertion that these relations have an *unchangeable* character. It is because of this assertion that positivist philosophy calls these relations as “laws of nature”.<sup>91</sup>

Of course it is true that the terms of “law of nature” or “scientific law” have not penetrated into scientific literature just after Comtean positivism. They rather have a longer history. Moreover, it has been argued that Auguste Comte appropriated some concepts put forward by others while developing his own positivist understanding of science. Some sources argue, for example, that the famous Comtean idea of “law of three stages” is taken from Turgot<sup>92</sup>, while some others attribute it to Condorcet.<sup>93</sup> Our purpose is not to examine the way wherein positivism has been formed or the historical and intellectual processes that produced positivism. What we want to do here is to analyze the kind of effect that Comtean positivist understanding of

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<sup>88</sup> Salih Zeki and Halide Salih. “Auguste Comte: Felsefe-i Müsbete.” *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 2 (15 January 1324/28 January 1909), pp. 163-197.

<sup>89</sup> Salih Zeki is one of the famous positivist among the figures who wrote in Youn Turk periodicals. Information about his general understanding see Remzi Demir, *Philosophia Ottomanica* (Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2007), Vol. 3, pp.145-148.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 184.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p. 189.

<sup>92</sup> See Murtaza Korlaelçi, *Pozitivizmin Türkiye'ye Girişi* (Ankara: Hece Yayınları, 2002), p. 84.

<sup>93</sup> See M. Zekeriyâ Sertel, “Condorcet.” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 45 (23 May 1918), p. 362.

philosophy and science created on Young Turks. Therefore, what we refer to as positivism is the philosophy of science put forward by Auguste Comte.<sup>94</sup>

Positivism conceives the nature as a unity which functions systematically under the effect of some laws. It is because of these laws that positivist sciences are able to reveal the relation between events and to show the success of explaining other events by starting from those relations. What have been referred to here as “other events” are “social” events. To be more precise, Comtean positivism argues that not just natural events but also social events are dependent on some unchangeable laws.<sup>95</sup> Viewed from this perspective, positivism does not depend on speculative thoughts and is not an approach systematized as a result of intellectual fantasies detached from life and factual reality. It reflects the skill of constructing a concrete link with life. It has been this skill of positivism that appealed to Young Turks.

Before detailing this point a bit more it would be useful to deal with the “law of three stages” that put forward by Auguste Comte and his positivistic classification of sciences within this regard.

### **3.2.2 Law of Three Stages**

According to Auguste Comte, human mind, in its effort to explain the natural events, has passed through three stages. These are *theological*, *metaphysical* and *positive* (scientific) stages respectively.

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<sup>94</sup> For the general framework of Comte’s positivist understanding of philosophy and science see, for example, Auguste Comte, *A General View of Positivism*, Translated by J. H. Bridges (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880). A short but a concise discussion about Comte’s positive philosophy can be found, e.g., in Annie Besant, *Auguste Comte: His Philosophy, His Religion and His Sociology* (London: Freethought Pub. Co., 1880). See also Andrew Wernick, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity: The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>95</sup> Salih Zeki and Halide Salih, *ibid*, p. 185. For the detailed discussions Comte makes about these three stages see Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1896), e-book, vol. 3, pp. 5-223. For a further discussion about the said division see also Mike Gane, *Auguste Comte* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

In the first stage, the human mind concentrates its attention on the *first causes* and *purposive causes* of events it is observing. In the theological stage, which is composed of fetichism, polytheism and monotheism, human beings characterize the events occurring in nature as “immediate results of the absolute will of various agents.”<sup>96</sup>

In the second stage some more “abstract powers” substitute the concrete divine entities. Metaphysical stage is, actually, a revised version of the theological stage. It is witnessed, in this stage, that some abstract powers take the place of effective entities which have been conceived as having a transformative power on nature. Those abstract powers exist without having a personality and they have the power of causing the natural events to happen. The explanation of an event is possible only with the acceptance of an “abstract power” or an “abstract property” that is able to produce it.<sup>97</sup> The essential difference between theological and metaphysical stages lies in this point. In the metaphysical stage, “the thing that conducts the universe is not an anthropomorphic god; this is rather a power, a might, a principle. These powers govern the whole events.”<sup>98</sup>

The third stage is the positive stage. In this stage, the major objective is to find the relation between events or, in other words, to discover the laws of nature. And human being prohibits himself, in this stage, from doing meaningless things like examining the true quality of these events.<sup>99</sup>

After enumerating the stages which have been followed by the development in human thought, Auguste Comte identifies three types of philosophy corresponding to these stages. There is a theological philosophy in theological stage, a metaphysical philosophy in metaphysical stage and a positive (scientific) philosophy in positive stage.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 188.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>98</sup> Korlaelçi, *ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>99</sup> Salih Zeki&Halide Salih, *ibid*, p. 189. See also Auguste Comte, *ibid*.

### 3.2.3 Auguste Comte's Classification of Sciences

The ultimate stop of human mind, passing through these stages, is positive stage. Auguste Comte classifies the positivistic sciences as follows: Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Organic Physics, and Social Physics.<sup>100</sup>

One can say that this classification of sciences is one of the most important reasons that have gotten the positivism appealing to Young Turks. What has been meant by "social physics" is the idea that the social events also are taking place within certain "laws of nature". In the positivistic understanding of science, social events as well as natural ones are included within this classification. That means that events taking place in social realm are not happening without any reason. Discovering these reasons or "laws of nature" will enable human beings to make some precise predictions with regard to society. The concept of "social physics" is an important concept in this respect.<sup>101</sup>

The concept of social physics has led the Young Turks to the idea that there is not an essential difference between human beings and other existents.

Ahmet Şuayip, for example, says that:

Human being also is a part, like any other chemical and physical objects, in the lake called nature. They are also subject to laws like various complicated objects. ... Therefore, one needs to examine human being like the nature itself. ... Human being has always insisted that he and the nature are subject to different laws. Philosophers of the eighteenth century are gradually trying to connect the chains between the laws of nature and laws of human being. They are interconnecting the natural sciences and social sciences by constructing an iron bridge on the deep hole which has been dug between the two.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 191. Cf. Auguste Comte's comprehensive account of classification of science in the first volume of his *Positive Philosophy* that is translated by Harriet Martineau.

<sup>101</sup> See Auguste Comte, *Social Physics: From the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (New York: C. Blanchard, 1856). This book comprises book V, chapters 1 and 2 of Harriet Martineau's translation of Auguste Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive*.

<sup>102</sup> Ahmet Şuayip "Fransa İhtilal-i Kebiri-3," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 3 (15 February 1324/28 February 1909), p. 419. Ahmet Şuayip has continued this attitude throughout his authorship career. For another example where he represents a similar approach, see Ahmet Şuayip, "Yirminci Asırda Tarih," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 1 (15 December 1324/28 December 1908), pp. 23-24. Bedii Nuri also supports this attitude

We come across to a similar approach in the articles published by the signs of Satı and Doctor Ethem. Satı tries to show “the strength of the relation between social and natural sciences”<sup>103</sup> by referring, generally, to data obtained through natural sciences. On the other hand, Doctor Ethem emphasizes the necessity of adoption of an understanding of a monist science by arguing, for example, that “material and spiritual things are completely interconnected and they cannot be disassembled.”<sup>104</sup>

### 3.2.4 Determinism

As it is seen, the difference between human being and other existents is removed. This approach, showing the effect of positivism in a clear way, hereafter adopts the ideas that the type of existence observed in the physical realm survives within certain rules and that this is true of social realm as well. There is no doubt that this kind of idea will bring a deterministic approach within itself. If any event occurring in the nature are happening within certain laws and, consequently, if the anomaly is not running as a general mode of existence, then the final point that we can reach seems to be determinism. In that case, the most important role of the human mind will be to extract these laws and rules from nature. The understanding of science adopted by Young Turks led them to such a deterministic approach, the clearest statements of which can be seen in Hüseyin Cahit’s articles. According to Hüseyin Cahit, the supreme scientific discovery of the nineteenth century is the general law which suggests that none of the events taking place in the universe, whether it is material or spiritual, can do so suddenly and incidentally and that they are occurring as unavoidable results of various preexisting large and small or hidden and explicit

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particularly in his “Tahavülât-ı Fikriyye,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 24(12) (1 December 1326/14 December 1910), p. 1157.

<sup>103</sup> Satı, “Uzviyetler ve Cemiyetler,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 8 (1 August 1325/14 August 1909), p. 454.

<sup>104</sup> Doktor Ethem, “Terbiye-i Akliyye -1- Terbiye-i Akliyyede Usûl-i Umûmi,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 8 (1 August 1325/14 August 1909) , p. 525.

causes.<sup>105</sup> In this respect, we can say that at the top of the characters attributed to scientific knowledge by Young Turks comes the deterministic quality.

Since the concept of “social physics” does have certain reflections with regard to the very basic dynamics of the social life, it can be handled in a connection with Young Turks’ demand for social transformation.

The term which has been used most by Young Turks in their efforts to overcome the aforementioned crisis is “terakkî”. And it means the progress and evolvement of Ottoman society in a direct proportion to the ground it covered within the scientific area. The West, think Young Turks, has developed in virtue of science. And that the progress is the fate of human beings in positivistic approach. But there are some requirements to be met for realizing this fate. First of all, one needs to have the ability of thinking independently of conditions in any type by having a free point of view. The case that makes the approach of Young Turks to science and progress problematic appears at this point. Because they regard the science itself as a result and rule out the entire process that brought it out. As a result of the deterministic approach they adopted, it has been assumed by them that this process will be both taking place in every society and causing to the same results necessarily.

The deterministic quality attributed to scientific knowledge by Young Turks makes it easier for us to understand why they regarded the presumptions referred to by concepts like “terakkî”, “temeddün” (civilizing) or “teceddüd” (renaissance) as having contents above of suspicion and being uncriticizable. It is emphasized in Young Turks’ periodicals that the progress made by the West due to science is an unavoidable process<sup>106</sup> and that the Ottoman society has to participate in it. We come across with the following statements, for example, in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*:

Today we see that it is the West that progressed most in the areas of science, technology and civilization. The West is far away from the century that we

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<sup>105</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâî’e Dair -5- Edebiyat-ı Cedîde, Menşe’ ve Esasları,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 376 (14 May 1314/26 May 1898), p. 183.

<sup>106</sup> Anonymous, “Yine Neşriyat,” *Şura-yı Ümmet* 3, no. 61 (10 October 1904), p. 1.

are currently living in. The laws of progress necessitate it for us to follow the way of progress that is followed by it. Yet, in order to progress we have to use the tools that have been used by developed societies.<sup>107</sup>

### 3.2.5 Universality

One needs to point also to the emphasis that made by Young Turks on the universality of scientific knowledge. What is meant by universality here is not the fact that the scientific data are valid in everywhere. Of course science purports to be universal in this sense. But the universality of science meant for Young Turks that the efforts made for obtaining scientific data need to be seen as efforts made for everyone. It is surprising, in this respect, to see that the scientific achievements accomplished by others have been regarded as the results of efforts made for all. Because, as it is partly pointed to above, Young Turks' relations with science has not been realized by means of scientific theories they produced themselves. On the contrary, they have met with science as a result produced by others. In other words, Young Turks tried to justify their shortcomings in theoretical level with the character of universality they attributed to scientific knowledge. According to them, "the intellect always has to progress and mature by means of the products of the intellect of others."<sup>108</sup>

### 3.2.6 The Exclusion of Metaphysics

In its efforts to explain the natural events, including the social ones, positivistic science never tries to show their "purposive causes". It rather tries to analyze the conditions generating these events and to put forward the kind of relations they have with other events about which it has information. The case of explaining facts in a factual way, in other words, clarification of an event with another event determines the limit of science. Positivism applies to the explanations emerging as a result of the immediate contacts of human mind with physical realm and corresponds to the thing Young Turks were expecting from philosophy and science or from a philosophy of

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<sup>107</sup> M. T., "Yeni Hayat Cereyanı." *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 August 1327/12 September 1911), p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Anonymous, "Erbab-ı Kalemin Vazifesi," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 2 (24 April 1902), p. 4.

science. Hence Ragıp Hulusi, for example, regards the positivistic approach as a “philosophy of sciences” (felsefe-i ulûm).<sup>109</sup>

This quality of positivistic science has led Young Turks to assume a distanced attitude against metaphysics. Indeed, when we take a glance at the Young Turks’ periodicals we see that the metaphysical approach, as an interpretation of the facts, has become a subject of keen criticisms. One can mention the criticisms put forward by Rıza Tevfik. In his article which is titled “Canlı mı Cansız mı?” and published in *İctihat*<sup>110</sup> Rıza Tevfik gives us the clues to answer the question of why new understanding of philosophy and science has been accepted by Young Turks, by comparing it with the old one.

According to him, philosophy has been conceived as a pure metaphysical discipline or as metaphysics in itself to the extent that the term of metaphysics replaced the term of philosophy. And the major problem of metaphysics was the “absolute being” and its relation with the universe. But when the human mind turned back and examined the distance it covered, it suddenly realized that it has not advanced even a step.<sup>111</sup> Together with this awareness there happened an essential change in philosophical thinking. Human being recognized that he has not comprehended yet the place where he lives. And then he saw the impossibility of apprehending the absolute being or eternity. This is why he diverged from the metaphysical thinking style which is processing independently from experience. And, consequently, he adopted a new approach carrying an experimental attitude within. Rıza Tevfik calls this way of thinking as “exact and experimental science”.<sup>112</sup>

This anti-metaphysical attitude caused Young Turks to accept the method of observation and experience which have an important place in positivistic sciences. If

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<sup>109</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, “Felsefe-i Müsbete,” *Tabiat* 1, no. 1 (10 July 1327/23 July 1911), p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> See Rıza Tevfik, “Muhasebe-i *İctihat*: Canlı Mı Cansız Mı?,” *İctihat* 4, no. 101 (10 April 1330/23 April 1914), pp. 1-5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

the scientific and philosophical level of the time taken into consideration, it is inevitable to regard this acceptance as an overdue approach actually. However, the place that observation and experiment have as methods in scientific thinking is really important in terms of signifying the disengagement of Young Turks from tradition. One can come across with this approach in almost all of the Young Turk periodicals.<sup>113</sup>

It would be useful to point to the fact that experiment, as it is used by Young Turks, is unable to go beyond rhetoric. And experience as a pure rhetoric is a sign of an essential deviance in their understanding of science. The clearest indication of this deviance is the fact that experience has stopped to be something carried out personally and started to become experience of others.

One can argue that there are various reasons of this deviance. The most important reason that can be brought to the agenda within the context of studies we realized on Young Turk periodicals is the *deterioration* took place in their *conception of time*. It is the crisis to which they ascribed a vital meaning that deteriorated their conception of time.

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<sup>113</sup> For the emphasis made on the place of experience and observance in scientific and philosophical understanding see, for example: Bedii Nuri, "Tahavvülat- Fikriyye", p. 1156; Rasim Haşmet, "Felsefe Karşısında Fen," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 5 (15 October 1327/28 October 1911), p. 17; Suphi Ethem, "Felsefenin Mesâili," *Tabiat* 1, no. 1 (10 July 1327/23 July 1911), pp. 4-8; Dr. Julius A. Wenchel, "Wundt'un Felsefesi: Psikoloji ve Ahlak Dâir," translated by Ragıp Hulusi, *Tabiat*, 1, no. 1 (10 July 1327/23 July 1911), pp. 9-15; Doktor Sadrettin Kasım, "Earnest Heackel'den: Havarik-i Hayat-1," *Tabiat* 1, no. 1 (10 July 1327/23 July 1911), p. 17; Kazım Nami, "Yeni Ahlak-1," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 August 1327/12 September 1911), pp. 18-21; M. Nermi, "Alfred Fouillée ve Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlâk," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 11 (16 January 1327/29 January 1912), pp. 18-27; Ziya Gökalp, "Ahlâk Buhranı," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 7 (23 August 1917), p. 123; Ziya Gökalp, "Muhtelif İlim Telakkileri," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 46 (30 May 1918), pp. 382, 383; Ahmet Şuayip, "Hürriyet-i Mezhebiye: Hilafet ve Saltanat 3," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 4 (15 March 1325/28 March 1909), p. 437; Charles Letourneau, "Milletlerin Rûhiyetleri: Birinci Kitap – Hayvanlarda Ruh Tekâmülü – Vicdan," translated by A. Rıfat, *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 11 (23 October 1327/5 November 1911), p. 182; Ali Canip, "Bed'îyyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bed'î Hayatta Mevkii," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 26 (3 January 1917), p. 506; Rıza Tevfik, "Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler," *İçtihat* 4, no. 99 (27 March 1330/9 April 1914), p. 2223; Rıza Tevfik, "Tasnif-i Ulûm: Bazı Mukaddemât-ı Felsefiye – Mâba'd ve Son," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 4 (15 March 1325/28 March 1909), pp. 515, 520; Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii-2," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 5 (13 Jumâdâ al-Ülâ 1332/27 March 1330/9 April 1914), p. 152; Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 7 (1 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1332/24 April 1330/7 May 1914), p. 212; D. A. Mensi, "İlmî Tetkikler: Psikoloji Tetkikatının Takip Ettiği Yol," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 August 1327/12 September 1911), p. 14; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -6- On Dokuzuncu Asrın Temâyülât-ı Rûhiyesi: Dekadanizm-Sembolizm," *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 377 (21 May 1314/2 June 1898), p. 195.

The deterioration in their conception of time appears in the form of concentrating on the scientific productions as if the long historical process that secured the development of scientific thought and production, which is the theory and practice, has never been actualized. In other words, the cause of the deterioration in Young Turks' conception of time is the tension created by the demand for compressing time. And the deterioration finds its most apparent reflection in the idea of reproduction.

It seems that there are two remarkable liaisons between reproduction and the case that we referred above as deterioration in the conception of time. The first one is the sense of belatedness. And the second one is a related sense, which is the sense of precipitation. Thus, it can reasonably be argued that Young Turks' understanding about philosophy of science settles on an emotional ground rather than a rational one. It is interesting enough to see that the deterioration of the perception of time has been tried to be legitimized in different ways. For example, Tekin Alp writes in an article published in *Yeni Mecmua (New Journal)* that:

We are the latest nation awoke in Europe. We will bear the ominous results of this delay for a long time. But it is not possible to deny one point. This delay has also a good aspect. By behaving with reason, precaution, discretion and premonition we can research the way followed by the nations that awoke before us; take advantage of their experiences thoroughly; and acquire quite easily the things they produced in decades at the cost of too many sacrifices and experiences.<sup>114</sup>

A similar attempt of legitimization can be seen in Ziya Gökalp's articles as well. Ziya Gökalp also, just like Tekin Alp, sees the delay in scientific area as a serious problem for the Ottoman society. He tries, with a pragmatic point of view, to legitimize devastation this delay has created in their conception of time:

We will take advantage of the newest theories and truths in every levels of civilized life. In order to get into the new life we will apply to the torches of new sciences and new philosophy. Therefore, the philosophical systems that we are going to accept in every levels of life will be more contemporary. For example, we will not deign to small businesses and will attempt to become industrialists. In order to dominate the seas we will possess the dandiest trade

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<sup>114</sup> Tekin Alp, "Tesanütçülük – Solidarizm," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 26 (3 January 1917), p. 518.

ships. Our social life will not be based on the principle of community but on the principles of solidarity and organization which are the productions of free wills.<sup>115</sup>

One needs to add that this deterioration was permanent rather than having an accidental quality. We find traces of it even in *Meşveret* which is one of the first Young Turk periodicals. And the same can be said of other periodicals that have been published by Young Turks until 1918 wherein they were overthrown.

As to the anti-metaphysical discourse: There is no doubt that this discourse has not been used by Rıza Tevfik alone. Except Rıza Tevfik, there are many writers, who directed similar criticisms at metaphysical thinking in various Young Turk publications.<sup>116</sup> Although metaphysics is a “negative science” which exceeds human beings’ knowledge domain and leaves them to some inextricable questions, one needs also to take into consideration the positive impact it has with regard to the development of new sciences. Using Rıza Tevfik’s own words one can say that “a negative science also is beneficial though not inasmuch as the degree of a positive science. Knowing where a thing stands in reality is very useful knowledge. But in case that it is not possible, knowing what something is not is better than remaining on an absolute ignorance about it.”<sup>117</sup>

When we look into the criticisms directed by Young Turks, under the influence of positivism, to metaphysics we see that these criticisms can become more understandable together with Young Turks’ expectations from science and

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<sup>115</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Türkçülük Nedir?,” p. 485. The statements are not the results of an exceptional case but of a conscious approach that can be come across within the writings of several Young Turk figures. For a similar approach, see, Ahmet Şuayip, “Avam-il-İçtimaiye 1 – Irk Nazariyesi,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 5 (1 May 1325/14 May 1909), p. 50.

<sup>116</sup> For a similar criticisms against metaphysics, see, for example: Rıza Tevfik, “Muhasebe-i İctihat: Mesâil-i Hakikiye,” *İştihâd* 4, no. 92(3) (6 February 1329/19 February 1914), pp. 2049-53; Bedii Nuri, “Hikmet-i İctimâiye -1: Tarih-i Hudûs ve ve Neş’eti,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 5 (1 May 1325/14 May 1909), pp. 81-108. Bedii Nuri, “Tahavvülat-ı Fikriyye,” p. 1154; M. Nermi, “Ertuğrul’a Mektuplarım 1: Aile-Vatan-İnsaniyet,” *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 15 (1 February 1327/14 February 1912), pp. 51-53, 56-59; Ragıp Hulusi, “Felsefe-i Müspete,” pp. 18-26; Ahmet Şuayip, “Fransa İhtilal-İ Kebiri 3,” pp. 413-424; Suphi Ethem, “Felsefenin Mesâili,” pp. 4-8; Ahmet Şuayip, “Yirminci Asırda Tarih,” pp. 11-24; Harold Höffding, “Alfred Fouillée’nin Tekâmülcü Felsefesi,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 3 (6 May 1327/19 May 1911), p. 47.

<sup>117</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Muhasebe-i İctihat: Canlı Mı Cansız Mı?,” p. 2.

philosophy. If philosophy and science are to have a meaning, they need to put it forward only with their functions. In other words, Young Turks are expecting science and philosophy to get into contact with the real life. Getting into contact with life needs to be understood as being deduced from life itself. As we are going to examine later, it is one of the reasons that led them to a materialistic philosophy. The following statements can be seen as typical expressions of Young Turks' expectations within this regard:

If we accept that science and philosophy on the one hand and philosophy and real life on the other are converging in our time to enable the human mind and human dignity evolve, would science's esteem to philosophical theories seem weird? For, we are no more standing in the face of some brilliant but ambiguous and barren methods and ways of thinking that viewed as philosophy. ... That means that philosophy, science and life are becoming philosophy in its truest sense by converging again.<sup>118</sup>

It seems that we need to interpret these statements to the effect that philosophy and science are processes not excluding but supporting one another mutually and that they are strengthening by means of taking a more vital state through data put forward concurrently. Thus Ziya Gökalp, for example, re-determines the area of philosophy from a positivist point of view and gives the signs of a philosophy of science by stating that "no approach, which is not based on science or is contrary to it, can be called as philosophy today"<sup>119</sup>

What kind of a relation is there between science and philosophy? Or, how the scientific developments change the way of philosophizing (tefelsüf)? There was an assumption since Bacon that human knowledge is obtained by depending purely on sense organs and in an experimental way. There are some Young Turks also, remaining under the influence of Comtean criticisms directed to this approach, who are criticizing the understanding of knowledge that depends solely on senses and assert that the quality of knowledge has been changed together with psychology. Psychology, as a positive science, has founded the experimental point of view onto a

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<sup>118</sup> Anonymous, "Felsefede Teceddüd," *İctihat* 4, no. 97 (13 March 1330/26 March 1914), p. 2189.

<sup>119</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "Eski Türkçülük, Yeni Türkçülük," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 42 (2 May 1918), p. 302.

much stronger base by adding the emotion, reflection and volition into the process of emergence of knowledge.<sup>120</sup>

When viewed from Young Turks' perspective, philosophy is philosophy as long as it opposes to the current ways of living and thinking; just as science is science as long as it transforms the existing political and social structure. It is because Young Turks regarded science and philosophy as tools in their struggle against status quo. Pulling down the status quo can be realized only by an efflorescence of scientific and philosophical thinking in Ottoman society. According to Young Turks, there is an inherited attribute of status quo like obstructing people to think freely and to express their ideas freely. This is a method used by all types of status quo, whether it is Western or Eastern, in order to protect its sovereignty. And this is why there is no difference between the oppressive policies Roman Catholic Church used against those philosophers who opposed to its official doctrine and the one that used by Abdülhamit against Young Turks.<sup>121</sup> Policies adopted toward blocking scientific thinking had a unique objective which is to keep the masses ignorant. For, the continuance of the irrational administrations can be secured only by an unconditional obedience of the ignorant masses. The scientific thought is the unique mentor to be followed in getting human being free from all types of restrictions and tendencies that are contrary to his essential nature. Since Western societies followed this real mentor they became able to "take the sovereignty, happiness and welfare of their societies under their control and downgrade the monarchs from the position of mastership to the degree of servants."<sup>122</sup>

"Zulmet" (darkness) is the synonym of status quo in Young Turks' literature while "nur" (enlightenment) is synonym of science. "Zulmet" is an eclipse of reason within social level. And "nur" is a situation in which this eclipse of reason is disappeared, thinking became free and human being is enlightened. According to Young Turks,

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<sup>120</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *ibid*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>121</sup> A remarkable examination about the conflict taking place between scientific thought and oppressive regimes can be found in L., "Nur ve Zulmet," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 21 (29 January 1902), pp. 2-3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

“all of the social revolutions evolve out of the unification of reason with the light of science.”<sup>123</sup> Science is not going to take a back seat after helping the realization of this revolution. The social revolution also, which has to be realized just after the political revolution, needs to move forward in the light of science. Therefore, societies –that actualized their social revolutions- need to have minds full of the latest and liveliest scientific thoughts and studies in order to continue their evolution (tekâmül) and progress (terakkî).<sup>124</sup>

This is the classical Young Turk approach to science. In fact, such an approach makes it easier for us to understand why Young Turks have developed a scheme which is away from theoretical discussions, indifferent to speculative philosophy, unscheduled and rather propagandist.

We had referred that the Comte’s classification of sciences has been brought to the agenda in different Young Turk periodicals. We see that the classifications about science made by positivist thinkers, like Auguste Comte or Herbert Spencer, are accepted by Young Turks just because of their catalyzer role in the realization of the “new life” and “new way of thinking” they idealized. In other words, these classifications have been regarded as meaningful according as they support the disengagement from traditional way of thinking but not as an important part of a scientific theory. Thus, while the writer of the article titled “Nur ve Zulmet” was talking partly about Comte’s and Spencer’s classifications of science, he interjected that sciences are classified into two groups, as “appropriate” and “forbidden” sciences, by Abdülhamit’s administration. We understand from the article that almost all of the social sciences directly related to freedoms of thought and personal liberties, like philosophy, law and political and economic sciences,<sup>125</sup> have been banned. Young Turks regarded this oppressive attitude towards sciences as the clearest reflection of the eclipse of reason experienced by Ottoman society.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, “Mesleğimiz,” *Muhit-i Mesai* 1, no. 1 (24 December 1326/6 January 1911), pp. 1-2.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

### 3.2.7 Quality of Scientific Knowledge

According to Young Turks, the major property of scientific knowledge is its dependence on experience before anything else. Observation and experiment are principal methods to be used in the process of acquiring empirical knowledge. In this respect, they have a factual approach. On the other hand, it is also possible to come across with some further interpretations, in Young Turk periodicals, with regard to the experimental character of scientific knowledge. For example, Rıza Tevfik's aforementioned trio of "emotion, recognition and volition" can be said to express a positivistic suspicion with regard to the idea that knowledge depends on pure data received through sense experience.

The process of acquisition of knowledge starts within senses. When viewed from this aspect the scientific knowledge is an experimental knowledge. But senses cannot secure the maturation of knowledge by themselves. To process the data received from senses and to transmute them into knowledge a second mechanism, which is human mind, also needs to be included in the course of construction of knowledge. And this is another version of an idea stating that knowledge cannot exist independently of the subject. Together with the inclusion of the subject into the process of construction of knowledge subjectivism comes, unavoidably, to the agenda.

This is a point in need of examination in terms of Young Turks' understanding about objective science. The belief in the *objectivity* of scientific knowledge is very common in the Young Turk periodicals that we examined. According to Bedii Nuri, for example, "since the scientific knowledge is completely out and independent of human beings' desires, it continually emerges in accordance with a number of fixed and unchangeable laws."<sup>126</sup> Likewise, it is said in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* that the way to scientific knowledge passes from "behaving *objectively* and keeping out of any kind of effects including spiritual, material and even religious ones."<sup>127</sup> And,

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<sup>126</sup> Bedii Nuri, "Tahavvülat-ı Fikriyye," p. 1149.

<sup>127</sup> D. A. Mensi, "İlmî Tetkikler: Psikoloji Tetkikatının Takip Ettiği Yol," p. 16.

similarly, Ziya Gökalp sees science as “consisting of examination of all events in the world with an *objective* method.”<sup>128</sup>

Indeed, one can say that if it is asked to Young Turks whether the scientific knowledge is objective or subjective, we receive the answer of “both”. It is true that science is independent of us in its collection of data. It examines the reality which exists independently of us, our thoughts and expectations. Therefore, it is objective in this respect. However, it is subjective in terms of procession of data and creation of judgments. Ragıp Hulusi, for example, seems to think in this respect that scientific knowledge exists with respect to human recognition but not to nature itself.<sup>129</sup> According to him, the major function of scientific knowledge is sorting out the senses and, therefore, the existents that reveal the nature to us. And this case, he assumes, reminds us that the scientific knowledge is in need of being handled with regards to the “subject” but not to the “object”.<sup>130</sup> Rıza Tevfik explains this situation with reference to scientific data as follows:

For example, we see the light by our eyes and hear the voice by our ears. But science demonstrates positively that the thing we feel as light or voice is different from those extrinsic causes revealing these senses. It is understood that the capital of our recognition is the inferences which our consciousness makes! Who loses a sense loses a science.<sup>131</sup>

In fact it seems also possible to characterize this approach as relativism. What we mean by relativism is not a type of absolute skepticism. An argument stating that the scientific knowledge is relative is not an abnegation of the possibility of knowledge. It rather is a reforming view towards the empirical quality of knowledge. Accordingly, knowledge is restricted. The relativity of scientific knowledge that subjected to various articles in Young Turk periodicals is a restriction of this kind. And this restriction needs to be interpreted connectedly with the participation of subject in the process of knowledge. Young Turks seem to have adopted a relativistic

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<sup>128</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Eski Türkçülük, Yeni Türkçülük,” p. 302.

<sup>129</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, “Felsefe-i Müspete,” p. 22.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Tasnif-i Ulûm: Bazı Mukaddemât-ı Felsefîye [1],” p. 371.

understanding of scientific knowledge in the sense that the reality cannot be comprehended as a whole. Viewed from this perspective, it is argued that the truth can only be known just as it seems to us but not in its entirety. Thus Rıza Tevfik, in his discussion about the properties of knowledge, characterizes relativism as a matter regarding the limits of knowledge and concludes that the scientific knowledge is relative.<sup>132</sup> Of course Rıza Tevfik is not the only writer in putting forward this claim. One needs to point to the fact that there are other writers also, who have written in Young Turks periodicals, supporting this idea. For example, Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi [Ülkümen]<sup>133</sup> (1888-1969), Rasim Haşmet<sup>134</sup> (1886-1918), M. Zekeriya Sertel<sup>135</sup> (1890-1980) and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın<sup>136</sup> (1875-1957) have put forward their arguments, in different ways, that the scientific knowledge is relative.

There is one more remarkable quality of scientific knowledge which has been revived by Rasim Haşmet. It is the *temporality* of scientific data. Science does not claim that the theories it puts forward are eternally prevailing. Scientific laws present us data explaining the nature of things. But these data needs to be accepted temporarily. In the course of time, the way of interpreting the scientific data obtained will be changed and, therefore, new scientific theories will be able to replace the old ones. Thus, Rasim Haşmet brings this case to the agenda quite reasonably and says that there are no unchangeable truths in science but rather temporary truths. And these truths are depending on experimentally examinable and controllable hypothesis and knowledge obtained. There are also, in scientific process, laws ensuring to identify the relation between causes and results.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 370.

<sup>133</sup> Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi, “Sanatta Güzellik İlimde Hakikat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (30 September 1327/13 October 1911), p. 23.

<sup>134</sup> Rasim Haşmet, “Felsefe Karşısında Fen,” p. 13.

<sup>135</sup> M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Ahlak, Fazilet ve Namusun Manası,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 15 (15 March 1328/28 March 1912), p. 18.

<sup>136</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -6- On Dokuzuncu Asrın Temâyülât-ı Rûhiyesi: Dekadanizm-Sembolizm,” p. 194. See also Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -7- Bir Eser-i Edebînin Kıymeti Hâvi Olduğu Vesâik-i Beşeriyenin Mikdârı İle Mukâyese Olunur,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 378 (28 May 1314/9 June 1898), p. 214.

<sup>137</sup> Rasim Haşmet, *ibid.* For another interpretation regarding the objectivity and relativity of science see: Tahrir Heyeti. “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 15 (15 March 1328/28 March 1912),

Strictly speaking, this relativistic interpretation with regard to the limitedness of science and scientific knowledge is ideally suited for the general political attitude of Young Turks. Because Young Turks think that the current social foulness arises from an unflinching obedience. And the unflinching obedience is expression of an attitude distant from the mentality interrogating the thing accepted as truth. Society is prone to accept those temporary truths in an unconditional way. However, the most fundamental quality of a developed society is not an absolute obedience but having an interrogating mentality. Comprehending that there is not an absolute truth is the major element to enlighten the human mind. Even if science, which is the only mentor leading human beings to the light, does not have a claim of absoluteness, the traditional ways of thinking and living can never have an absolute truth. The way to freedom passes through the belief in the absence of an absolute truth.

### **3.3 Young Turks and the Idea of Evolution**

There are some other writers also, like Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), who had an impact on Young Turks' approach to science except for Auguste Comte. Darwin's and Lamarck's theories of evolution are subjected to both a wide range of articles published in periodicals and books written by some prominent Young Turks.

If one takes the general profile of Young Turks into consideration, the effect of the theory of evolution on them can be reacted naturally. For, most of the prominent figures of Young Turks have studied in the area of natural sciences. As has been pointed out in the first chapter, the four persons who established the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress were students of a military medical faculty. This profile cannot be said to change substantially in later periods. For example, Ziya Gökalp and Suphi Ethem were Unionists following the scientific developments of the time very closely and intellectually productive figures of the Ottoman CUP. However, the education they received has been in the area of veterinary medicine.

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p. 1; and also Rıza Nüzhet, "Hıristiyanlık: Mazisi ve Âtisi," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), p. 26.

This circumstance is noteworthy because it shows the relation between the education Young Turks received and the mentality they had. The emphasis made in *Şura-yı Ümmet*, for example, on the fact that “those who struggled against the administration of Abdulhamit have received education in the area of natural sciences”<sup>138</sup> is also remarkable.

It would be useful to point a case before starting discussion about the way theory of evolution impacted the Young Turks’ systematic and the results they collected from it in terms of their agenda.

It seems possible to assume a remarkable affinity between the theories of evolution and positivism though they are theorized by different scientists. This affinity can be deduced from the logic of the famous “law of three stages” that is put forward by Auguste Comte. What Auguste Comte deals with, when he talks about the levels that human thought crossed through, can be regarded as a parallel evolution to the one took place in biological area. The transition from the primitive way of thinking to the most advanced one, in other words from the theological to the positive (scientific) level, is the story of mental evolution. Moreover, both theories are sharing a common ground in the sense that they are trying to explain the factual reality by depending on the facts. This later circumstance constitutes a methodological aspect of the affinity we assumed between them.

It is because of this affinity between the theories of positivism and evolution that Young Turks used the concepts of “terakkî” and “tekâmül” which are referring to the mutual central theme of the positivist and evolutionist theories respectively.<sup>139</sup> The

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<sup>138</sup> L., “Nur ve Zulmet,” p. 3. There are particularly remarkable expressions in this article: “... Is not it the case that the cardinal source, which educated the majority of the proponents of freedom, is especially those schools of medicine that occupy themselves with natural sciences in particular?”

<sup>139</sup> “Tekâmül” (evolution) is one of the most frequently used concepts within Young Turk periodicals. Tekâmül, which is accepted by them as a deterministic process prevailing within the universe, points to a natural law as well. For articles emphasizing on the conception of “kanun-u tekâmül” (law of evolution) and referring to the inevitability of evolution, see: Ahmet Şuayip, “Yirminci Asırda Tarih,” p. 19; Ahmet Şuayip, “Fransa İhtilal-i Kebiri-3,” p. 420; Ahmet Şuayip, “Devlet ve Cemiyet,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 1 (15 December 1324/28 December 1908), p. 55; Âsaf Nef’î, “Demokrasi ve Sosyalizm,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 6 (1 June 1325/14 June 1909), p. 163; Salih Zeki and Halide Salih “Auguste Comte: Felsefe-i Müsbete,” p. 187; Abdullah Cevdet, “Kastamonu’da Kurûn-u Vusta,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 58 (14 March 1329/27 March 1913), 1273; M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Tarih Muzırdır,” *Yeni*

theory of evolution, as it is put forward by Charles Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, seems to point a rule going for the biological area. Positivism, on the other hand, widened the area of evolution by applying it to the mental area within the framework of the concept of “terakkî”. It can be argued that the form of change is constituted by the concept of “tekâmül” while its spirit is constituted by the concept of “terakkî”, in Young Turks’ understanding of *new life*. Thereby, Young Turks reached to a complete conception of change by adopting both the mental and biological evolutions. It also can be seen as a result of the perfection they attributed to the development.

The fact that Young Turks adopted scientific and philosophical approaches reflecting the same intellectual spirit, even though they are created by different scientists within the framework of different concepts, makes it easier to state that they did not approach to science as a result of a pure ostensible interest. For, deciding on the scientific and philosophical way to choose is ultimately a result of an informed choice, which is identified by the goal Young Turks aimed to achieve. Young Turks can be said to act in an apparent consistency while specifying the scientific and philosophical point of view that suited to them.

Adaptation, shrinking of disused organs, struggle for life and natural selection are among the most mentioned evolutionist rules used in Young Turk periodicals within the context of discussions about the theory of evolution.

As a matter of fact, the ideas put forward by Lamarck and Darwin supported passionately and mustered up a crowded mass of proponents in the history of Western thought. And Young Turks are not exceptions in this regard. The Ottoman intelligentsia received this evolutionist effect rather through Young Turks.

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*Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 7 (15 November 1327/28 November 1911), p. 15; Ethem Necdet, “Fatalizm: Tenkîd-i Felsefi,” *İşhâd* 4, no. 78(1) (29 August 1329/11 September 1913), p. 1722; Satı, “Tanzimatçılık Meselesi,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 64 (2 May 1329/15 May 1913), p. 1382; Rıza Tevfik, “Hürriyet: İngiliz Hakîm-i Meşhûru John Stuart Mill Hürriyeti Nasıl Anlıyor? [2] Mâ-ba’d,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 6 (1 June 1325/14 June 1909), p. 206; “Hukûk-u Esâsiyeye Medhal,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no 16(4) (1 April 1326/14 April 1910), p. 568.

Lamarck's arguments are scientific as well as philosophical. Thus he expresses his own version of the theory of evolution in his book titled *Zoological Philosophy*.<sup>140</sup> Scientific explanations revived by Lamarck through biology effected the world view of Young Turks deeply, supplied them a philosophical basis and penetrated into their ideal philosophical understanding on which they aimed to base the social transformation. The same applies to Darwin's theory of evolution as well. Darwin's arguments are purely scientific in quality. But it is philosophical for Young Turks as far as it is scientific. No doubt that it has a strong relation with and derived from life and thusly corresponds to a philosophy of science for Young Turks. This is why Rıza Tevfik calls the reflections deduced from Darwin's theory of evolution as "philosophy of Darwinism".<sup>141</sup>

The main lines of Lamarck's theory of evolution can be summarized up as follows: Every organism maintains its life in a certain physical environment. It is inevitable that some changes take place within this environment from time to time. The changing environment creates observable effects on the organisms living within it. And these effects produce a number of successive results. First of all, the organisms react against the changes it experiences in terms of its way of living and types of behaviors. Although it is the environment which is giving the first move to the change, the observed transformation cuts in a second mechanism that advances automatically. In other words, organism responds to the change in environment by a drive of transformation it produced by itself. Changes in environment result in a change of the needs of an organism as well. And changes in needs will change the behaviors of the organism. Organism loads a vital role to its organs while maintaining its life. Therefore, it is inevitable for the organism to respond to the changes through its organs. In the mean time, organism uses some of its organs more, while using some others lesser. At the end, organs are becoming different in accordance with their usage. They outgrow, shrink, dwindle or disappear depending on the frequency of its usage. While speaking of this situation Ahmet Şuayip gives the example of giraffe. Since giraffes make a habit of eating leafs on the high trees,

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<sup>140</sup> The exact name of Lamarck's book is *Zoological Philosophy: Exposition with Regard to the Natural History of Animals*. Translated by Hugh Elliot. (New York and London: 1914.)

<sup>141</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler," p. 2226.

their necks and forelegs lengthened but their less used hind legs became shorter.<sup>142</sup> Another mostly given example with regard to the disappearance of disused organs is lobster. As a result of change in environment, lobster's eyes turned into bristles. That is to say, a tool which no more has a relation with outer world disappeared after a number of generations.<sup>143</sup> Rıza Tevfik gives an interesting example within the context of this issue. According to him, since a couple of generations mothers in Western countries made a habit of not breastfeeding their children because of scurries of the daily living or the conditions imposed by modern life. As it continued for a long time, the nature took the quality of producing breast milk back from those women. Their property of giving breast milk is dwindled now.<sup>144</sup> Although Rıza Tevfik's example is rather related with the dwindling of a property than an organ, it is obvious that he is inspired by Lamarck.

Another argument that became prominent in Lamarck's thought is that the dwindle or outgrow -caused by the level of usage- in the organs reveals itself a number of generations later, as a result of inheritance.<sup>145</sup>

Why it is that Lamarck's aforementioned scientific explanations attracted Young Turks' attention? Or, to ask it in another way, what is interesting in Young Turks' adoption of an idea received a broad acceptance in their period?

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<sup>142</sup> Ahmet Şuayip, "Avâmil-i İctimaiye-1-Irk Nazariyesi", s. 40.

<sup>143</sup> D. A. Mensi, "Psikoloji Tedkikâtının Son Safhası," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), p. 11.

<sup>144</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Ahlakın Nüfusa Tesiri," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 2 (15 January 1324/28 January 1909), 241.

<sup>145</sup> For similar discussions and expressions about Lamarck's theory of evolution, see, for example: Âsaf Nef'î, "Mücadele-i Hayatiye ve Tekâmül-i Cem'iyât," *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 8 (1 August 1325/14 August 1909), p. 466; D. A. Mensi, "İlmî Tetkikler: Psikoloji Tetkikatının Takip Ettiği Yol," pp. 13, 16; Suphi Ethem, "Antropoloji Dersleri," *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 14 (13 January 1327/26 January 1912), p. 31; Suphi Ethem, "Antropoloji Dersleri," *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 16 (16 February 1327/29 February 1912), p. 81; A. Mithat, "Bir Medeniyetin Esbâb-ı İnkırâzı," *Muhit-i Mesai* 1, no. 6 (1 April 1327/14 April 1911), p. 14; Samipaşazade Sezai, "Fas," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 5, no. 88 (24 February 1906), p. 1; M. Nermi, "Alfred Fouillée'ye Göre Fertte Hayatî Veraset ve Terbiye," *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 12 (18 November 1327/1 December 1911), pp. 197-199, 202-203; Ahmet Şuayip, "Fransa İhtilal-i Kebiri-Mâ-ba'd," *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 4 (15 March 1325/28 March 1909), p. 546.

If we are allowed to remind the theme that we expressed in this chapter on several occasions, which is the argument that Young Turks used science and philosophy as tools to achieve their purpose of modernization, the meaning of their acceptance of this -but not other- scientific theory becomes clearer.

The “milieu”, on which Lamarck put a premium, has become an “intellectual milieu” in Young Turks’ thought. The new milieu is not the one that human being needs to surrender passively, but the ideal one which is in need of being reconstructed in the light of science. Human being, just like any other organisms, lives in a certain milieu and there is a reciprocal interaction between these two. However, although human being has no difference with other organisms in terms of being a subject to physical and biological rules, he still has a fundamental character that differentiates him from them. This character is his ability of creating an impact on the physical milieu, in which he lives, by means of the transformation to be carried out within the intellectual milieu. The major objective of Young Turks who were feeling a huge unrest in front of the existing situation is to actualize this ability in a dynamic way. In other words, the theory of evolution led them to struggle for a creation of a new milieu.

Young Turks’ desire towards constructing a new intellectual milieu is a reflection of their opposition to the old one. The old intellectual milieu is the tradition identified with darkness and ignorance by Young Turks. The tradition needs to be transformed because its obsolescence makes it fall behind the life whereas new mentality, which is a requisite of new life, needs not to follow human being from behind but to carry him to a further, progressed position.

Considered together with other sources fed Young Turks, Lamarck’s theory of evolution also can be said to lead them to enlarge the distance they kept against tradition and to use a severer language against it. Suphi Ethem, for example, characterizes those who protest against Lamarck’s theory because of various religious reasons as “senile and pious people”<sup>146</sup> Similarly, Abdullah Cevdet invites traditionalists who are applying pressure on proponents of the theory of evolution to

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<sup>146</sup> Suphi Ethem, “Antropoloji Dersleri,” p. 81.

give up their reactions against it “if they do not want their heads to be smashed.”<sup>147</sup> Keçecizade İzzet Fuat’s statements are even harder. According to him, “a nation which subordinates itself to the laws of life after death is not subordinated to the laws of evolution and can never do so.”<sup>148</sup>

Together with science it will be possible to develop new organs suitable for new milieu. Social thoughts and beliefs can be regarded as vital organs of a society in maintaining its existence. Development of new organs fitting in new milieu is to mean a creation of new beliefs and values suitable for modern life. And the final point it arrives is the interrogation of the tradition. Tradition is like an organ which is losing its function and dwindling in front of the new environment. The Ottoman society, Young Turks seem to think, has to replace its dwindled organs with newly developed ones as well as beliefs and values that may enable it to survive. They are seeking after their ideal of “new life”, the realization of which is possible only together with new beliefs and values suitable for modern life.

Darwin’s theory of evolution also, like Lamarck’s, has left an impact on Young Turks’ thought and helped them to disengage from tradition.

Young Turks attributed to Darwin’s scientific assertions, which were generally exclusive to biological area, a role that facilitated the attainment to political purposes for them. In fact, the political meaning that the theory of evolution assumed to carry has not appeared together with Young Turks. There is the approach of “social Darwinism” which has been created with reference to Darwin’s theory of evolution and has tried, by using Darwinian conceptions of “natural selection” and “struggle for life” as basis, to re-define social and intersocietal relations. This approach has been broadly accepted throughout Europe. Therefore, it is an understandable fact that Young Turks have been subject to the impact of social Darwinism and have

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<sup>147</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Kastamonu’da Kurûn-u Vusta,” p. 1273.

<sup>148</sup> Keçecizade İzzet Fuat, “Kanaatkârlık,” *İştihad*, 15, no. 133 (5 December 1918), p. 2840.

interpreted the political events –which they regarded as life or death issue for Ottoman Empire- from the point of view of this social theory.<sup>149</sup>

Before examining the effects of Darwinism on Young Turks it would be useful to point to the aspects of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution that highlighted in their periodicals.

There are some articles in the Young Turk periodicals which implicate that Darwin’s theory of evolution has an economical basis rather than biological one. This argument is valid at least for Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) who has been seen as one of the most important inspirational sources of Darwin. It is argued, for example, that Darwin has remained under the influence of Malthus’s theory of population. Rıza Tevfik<sup>150</sup>, Ahmet Şuayip<sup>151</sup> and Âsaf Nefî<sup>152</sup> are among the Young Turk writers who share this idea and claim that Darwin has adopted Malthus’s theory of population and reformulated it in his own theory.

Malthus seems to think that if we want to understand why human population is increasing or decreasing, we need to look at the proportion between the amount of food and population growth rate. Under normal conditions, human population grows geometrically while the amount of food grows arithmetically.<sup>153</sup> That means that the human population always grows faster than the amount of food. There is a mechanism in the nature to remove this imbalance. As a result of famine population

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<sup>149</sup> One can note that the effect of Darwinist understanding of science on Ottoman intelligentsia did not start with Young Turks. It rather has a longer history. For a good examination of the effect of social Darwinism, for example, on Ottoman intelligentsia see Atila Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006). However, there is an important work written within Young Turk circles, on Darwinist understanding of science, by Suphi Ethem. See his *Darwinizm* (Manastır: Beyne’l-Milel Ticaret Matbaası, 1327).

<sup>150</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler,” p. 2226.

<sup>151</sup> Ahmet Şuayip, “Avamil-i İçtimaiye 1 – Irk Nazariyesi,” p. 42.

<sup>152</sup> Âsaf Nefî, “Mücadele-i Hayatiye ve Tekâmül-i Cem’iyyât,” p. 455.

<sup>153</sup> For the details of Malthus’s argument about the growth of population see T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: 1798), e-book, pp. 4, 6-7, 33. Cf. Âsaf Nefî, *ibid*, p. 456 and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -3- Mahsulât-ı Fikriyye-i Beşeriyye, Mahsulât-ı Tabiiyye,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 372 (16 April 1314/28 April 1898), p. 118.

decreases and in this way a rational compensation becomes ensured. The source of the conception of “struggle for life”, which constitutes one of the main themes of Darwin’s theory of evolution, lies in this insurance of compensation.

According to Darwin, there is a huge struggle within one or between different species. Nature motivates organisms to survive. Because of this motivation, there happens a constant struggle between organisms.<sup>154</sup> Those win this struggle are those deemed worthy to survive by nature, which are stronger organisms. Darwinian evolution theory explains this situation as the “survival of the fittest”.<sup>155</sup> That the stronger organisms survive and that the weak are eliminated in the course of process constitutes the basic reason of another Darwinian rule’s prevailing in nature, which is called as “natural selection”.<sup>156</sup> The process that referred here shortly has a deterministic character and is compatible with Young Turks’ general understanding of science as such.

As it is seen, the economical dimension on which Malthusian theory of population depends is transferred to biological area in Darwin’s theory of evolution. Of course the extent of the change that took place in theory is not limited to this. The idea of “social Darwinism” reflects another modification in both Darwin’s and Malthus’s theories. Darwin’s theory of evolution is no longer having a purely economic or a purely biological quality. It rather disguised in a political character which also includes economical and biological dimensions. This is one of the aspects of Darwin’s thought that appealed to Young Turks.

Young Turks regard the crisis, which we mentioned above on several occasions, as the crisis of existence. And they believe that the only way of overcoming this crisis passes through becoming stronger. The notion of struggle for living is no more valid just for individuals. It became valid for societies as well. Ottoman society needs to

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<sup>154</sup> See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, A Facsimile of the First Edition with an Introduction by Ernst Mayr (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), chapter 3.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4.

preserve its existence in front of the West that grows stronger. And its only way is science. As Rıza Nüzhet puts in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*:

In this century the struggle for life caused to too many difficulties and resulted in chaos. Nations, which are weak and unable to progress, are destroyed by others in compliance with the law of “natural selection”. Those nations which are stronger enough to resist against all difficulties and violence of life and that equipped with recently produced guns are surviving.<sup>157</sup>

The idea that life is based on a struggle is highlighted in almost every issues handled in periodicals.<sup>158</sup>

One of the clearest signs of the fact that Darwin’s theory of evolution is used by Young Turks as a tool of opposition against the existing political and intellectual structure prevailing in Ottoman Empire can be found in Abdullah Cevdet’s articles. He says, for example, that “where talking about the theory of evolution and explaining Darwin’s theories is regarded as a lingual outrage, that place can be said to be still living in the middle age. And the middle age does not have the right to exist in twentieth century.”<sup>159</sup> If the Young Turk demands of renaissance, progress and development are taken into consideration Abdullah Cevdet’s statements in this regards can be seen as typical examples of their general approach to science. In the

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<sup>157</sup> Rıza Nüzhet, “Yirminci Asırda Türk Gençleri,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (30 September 1327/13 September 1911), p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> For the discussions about Darwinian conception of “struggle for life” see, for example: Rıza Tevfik, “Hukûk-u Esâsiyeye Medhal,” p. 559; Rıza Tevfik, “Nüfus Meselesi ve Ehemmiyet-i Siyasiye ve İçtimaiyesi,” *U.İ.İ.M.*, 1. Cilt, 1. Sayı, 15 Kanunuevvel 1324 [28 Aralık 1908], s. 46; Rıza Tevfik, “Nüfus Meselesi ve Ehemmiyet-i Siyasiye ve İçtimaiyesi,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 1 (15 December 1324/28 December 1908), p. 46; Abdullah Cevdet, “Fenn-i Ruh,” *İçtihat* 2, no. 24 (1 June 1327/14 June 1911), p. 733; Abdullah Cevdet, “Yaşamak Korkusu,” *İçtihat* 3, no. 35 (15 November 1327/28 November 1911), p. 913; Âsaf Nef’î, “Demokrasi ve Sosyalizm,” p. 168; Âsaf Nef’î, “Mücadele-i Hayatiye ve Tekâmül-i Cem’iyyât,” p. 455; Fazıl Ahmet, “Terbiye, Tahsil,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 9 (1 September 1325/14 September 1909), p. 97; Anonymous, “Şark Meselesine Dair,” *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 19 (31 December 1902), p. 1; A. M., “Softaperverlik mi Softakerizlik mi?,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 99 (27 March 1330/9 April 1914), p. 2231; Ali Suad, “Kuvvet,” *İçtihat* 5, no. 122 (20 November 1330/3 December 1914), 398; Abdullah Cevdet, “Türkiye’nin İdam Hükümünü Hazırlayan Şeyler: Dünkü Düşünceler Bugünkü Neticeler,” *İştihad* 15, no. 131 (21 November 1918), 2807; Ahmet Şuayip, “Fransa İhtilal-i Kebiri-Mâ-ba’d,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 1, no. 2 (15 January 1324/28 January 1909), p. 288; Tahrir Heyeti. “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), p. 2; Harold Höffding, “Alfred Fouillée’nin Tekâmülcü Felsefesi,” p. 47.

<sup>159</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Kastamonu’da Kurûn-u Vusta,” p. 1273.

eyes of Young Turks science represents the new, while objections against it represent the old. Thus, Abdullah Cevdet characterizes the struggle between those who adopt Darwin's theory of evolution and those who oppose to it in the same article as the struggle of "old and new, ignorance and science, darkness and light".<sup>160</sup> According to him, people who oppose to Darwin's theory on behalf of religion or religious beliefs are so ignorant. They are even unaware of the fact that it is pointed in Quran also that the evolution is a law inserted into universe by God.<sup>161</sup>

Abdullah Cevdet's struggle to legitimize the theory of evolution by characterizing it as an idea which is also found in Quran is compatible with the conciliatory attitude assumed by Young Turks' in describing the relation between religion and science. Since the great majority of Young Turks regard science as a new "religion", scientific data are unquestionable truths for them. It does not add up that they adopt – in the truest sense of the word- the theological statements reflecting the first level of intellectual evolution, that is to say "divine messages", and use them as mentors in their quests. In order to block the possible reactions of society to new conception of truth they rather highlighted that there is not a conflict between religion and science. The clearest sign of the fact that this affirmative look onto religion is a result of conjunctural necessity and that religion is functionalized as an element in facilitating modernism can be seen yet in Abdullah Cevdet's articles. According to him, for example, Muslims accept the progresses which are products of modernity as long as they are inferred from an Islamic source.<sup>162</sup> Therefore, it is indispensable for the modernizing discourse to give different references to Islam. Abdullah Cevdet is one

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. One needs to point here to the fact that there were in the history of Islamic thought also some thinkers who talked about the process of evolution, though not in the same manner as it has been put forward by Darwin or Lamarck. It is possible, within this regard, to mention old or relatively contemporary thinkers like Ikhwān al-Safā, Jāhez, Bīrūnī, Mohammad 'Abduh and Ali Shariatī. However, arguments made by those thinkers about the process of evolution have not created a breakage in the history of Islamic thought. For, their explanations have always carried within themselves a connection to a divine will. In other words, the process of evolution to which Islamic thinkers refer is a process supported by traditional thinking and belief as well. It is believed, for example, in Islamic thought that the human being has been created by God in the "best of moulds." And the biggest foundation for this belief is a verse which says that "[w]e have indeed created man in the best of moulds." (95:4.)

<sup>162</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Mısır'da Necmü't-Terakkî el-İslamî Medresesi," *İctihat* 2, no. 1 (July 1906), p. 17.

of the Young Turk thinkers who used this attitude, which is called as “conciliatory modernism” by M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, most. The articles that he has published in *İçtihat* or the translations he has made from Western thinkers are typical examples of such an attitude.<sup>163</sup>

It is witnessed in the periodicals that Young Turks have used Darwin’s theory of evolution in a wide range of areas, from literature to art and from philosophy to science. And this is a case that needs to be pointed separately. In an article published in *İçtihat* by Bahur İsrail, for example, it is argued that the struggle for life is not valid just between organisms but is in the area of language as well. Accordingly, languages also carry out a struggle to maintain their existence.<sup>164</sup> This argument is remarkable as a reflection of social Darwinist thought. Similarly, Hüseyin Cahit claims that Darwinian hypothesis of “natural selection” is valid also in the area of art. According to Hüseyin Cahit, products of human thought, just like products of nature, can preserve their existence to the extent of their harmony with the milieu in which they live. If a product of art goes against the milieu where it grows, natural conditions no longer allow it to maintain its existence and ensure other works of art, which are in harmony with it, to be in demand.<sup>165</sup> We would like to refer to some interesting statements, taking part in an article published in *Genç Kalemler*, as the last example in this context. It is argued in this article, which is a translation from Harold Höffding, that the process of evolution is valid between thoughts as well. To put it clearly, movements of thought constantly try to annihilate each other in the struggle for life. The process of natural selection gives the right to exist to the one which is most suitable to the *scientific milieu*.<sup>166</sup> Young Turks believe that they are following such an idea. In other words, they purport both to accept a modern understanding which has a chance in maintaining its life and to get this

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<sup>163</sup> As we are going to point within the next chapter, Abdullah Cevdet tries to reconcile religion and science in an interesting manner. For an example of his attitude to this effect, see: Abdullah Cevdet, “Fenn-i Ruh,” p. 732; Abdullah Cevdet, “Yaşamak Korkusu,” p. 914.

<sup>164</sup> Bahur İsrail “Ma’reke-i Hayatta Lisanımız,” *İçtihat* 5, no. 109 (5 June 1330/18 June 1914), p. 172.

<sup>165</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -3- Mahsulat-ı Fikriye-i Beşeriye, Mahsulat-ı Tabiiyye,” pp. 117-120.

<sup>166</sup> Harold Höffding, “Alfred Fouillée’nin Tekâmülcü Felsefesi,” p. 47. See also Charles Darwin, *ibid*, pp. 3, 10, 43, 85 and chapter 5.

understanding adopted by society. The war of power between tradition and modernity, think Young Turks, necessitates the annihilation of the previous one.

The annihilation of tradition will necessitate also the annihilation of various concepts related with it. Or these concepts will have to be revised at best. In this context, one can point to three concepts that can be argued to have undergone transformation. These are the concepts of God, nature and human being. The meaning that attributed to them will be examined in the next chapter within the scope of discussions of philosophy of religion. We may content ourselves for now by saying that the theory of evolution, whether it is put forward by Darwin or Lamarck, is a serious indication of Young Turks' disengagement from tradition. What we mean by tradition is the way of thinking and living decked with religious beliefs. Evolution is also a sign of conflict, specific to Ottoman intelligentsia, with Islamic beliefs. The existence of conflict is indispensable. Because one of the most vital questions that can be inferred from the theory of evolution is whether the universe is created by a "will" or whether the progress and development are determined by that will. An affirmative answer will lead to the idea that every existent in the universe, including human being, is created according to a purpose and that human being needs to maintain its life in line with the aim of his creation. And the principles presented by evolutionist approach are breaking up the patterns of traditional thought and supporting a new purpose of existence which is more distinct from the holy and is more profane. If we need to talk about a purpose, it can only be the purpose of surviving.

Understanding the kind of impact that scientific theories of the time, positivism and evolutionism, created on Young Turks and the type of the relation Young Turks established with tradition (religion) as a consequence of this impact was necessary for the objectives of our study. However, since the concept of God and the discussions made around it fall within the area of philosophy of religion we heal the breach for now, to handle them in the next chapter, and move to another scientific and philosophical approach which can be said to have an effect on Young Turks – that is materialism.

### 3.4 Young Turks and Materialism

Materialism, which is derived from the term of “materia” argues that the only existent is matter. Accordingly, there is nothing except the matter and the changes taking place in it. Matter –existing by itself and having the ability of movement– forms the unique constituent of the universe. Philosophically speaking, materialism is a reductionist approach which attributes the quality of being to matter alone by arguing that the matter is the only substance, that there is not a spiritual substance and that the existence has a material quality.<sup>167</sup>

Matter is the constitutive element in materialism. Consequently, materialism rejects the philosophical teachings, like idealism, that overlook the matter. Idealism, in its explanation of the term of being, depends on the mind. In other words, it refers to the mind as the constitutive element. In idealist understanding, being is the reflection of thought. However, materialism characterizes every fact we witness as the transformed modes or functions of matter. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about any reality apart from matter itself from a materialistic point of view.

Materialism acquires currency in the history of philosophy in different ways. In ancient Greek era, for example, Democritus theorized it in an atomistic form. The universe came into existence as a result of the coalescence of the atoms moving freely. According to Democritus, atom is the only uncreated, indivisible and indestructible substance. In this respect, it is possible to regard Democritus as one of the pioneering naturalist philosophers who developed a materialistic language in the truest sense of the word.

Another approach which made a distinguished name for itself within the context of materialism is dialectical materialism. According to this approach, which has been theorized by Karl Marx depending on Hegel’s dialectical thought, the universe is material and matter exists outside of and independently from the mind. And the mode of existence of the universe, of the matter in other words, is movement. There

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<sup>167</sup> Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Ekin Yayınları, 1993), p. 342.

can be no matter without movement. And movement cannot be thought of without matter. The universe is not an accomplished fact. It is rather a process that progresses dialectically. The links between events are necessary connections. They are also the necessary rules of improvement of the matter, the essence of which is movement. The process of development appears not just as a quantitative change but as a progress from quantitative changes to qualitative changes as well. The human mind also has a relation with the dialectical structure of reality.<sup>168</sup> Starting from this point of view, materialism characterizes the mind as the reflection of the actions of human being in the face of nature. Human mind evolves as a result of the “modes of productions” –the sense that attributed to material conditions in Marxist theory.

There is another remarkable approach that deserves a reference within the scope of materialistic approach. It is biological materialism. Biological materialism can be seen as a reflection of the monistic understanding of science. It moves from an assumption that the data acquired by natural sciences, biological ones being in the first place, have the power of explaining the whole reality.

The impact that materialism created on Ottoman thinking circles has a much longer history. One can mention the names of Hoca Tahsin Efendi (1811-1881) and Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844-1912) as the writers who adopted the materialistic thinking and tried to propagate it, not in a systematical way though, among Ottoman savants.<sup>169</sup> Hence, Young Turks cannot be seen as the first Ottoman intellectuals who adopted materialistic approach.

The access of the materialism in Ottoman world of thought is realized by means of higher education institutions, particularly of schools of medicine, before Young Turks. These schools were following a curriculum that can be regarded as more modern for their era. And the curriculum followed was depending on the latest scientific data acquired in the West. The curriculum, as well as the books made available for students was leading them to experience an ideational change, just like

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<sup>168</sup> Bedia Akarsu, *Çağdaş Felsefe: Kant'tan Günümüze Felsefe Akımları* (İstanbul: İnkılâp Yayınları, 1998), pp. 118-119.

<sup>169</sup> Mehmet Akgün, “Materyalizmde Kimlik Problemi,” *Türk Yurdu* 13, no. 66 (1993), p. 51.

it caused a similar result on Young Turks in a later time. Materialism was among the top approaches triggered this transformation most. The example given by Niyazi Berkes is highly remarkable within this context.<sup>170</sup> According to Berkes, the education given in the School of Medicine (Mekteb-i Tibbiye) was totally materialistic.<sup>171</sup> The school's library was full of books written by philosophers who prepared the French revolution. As a matter of fact, Charles MacFarlane says that he has never seen such a library collecting books of materialism to such an extent. One of the most conspicuous books is Baron d'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*. The interpretation that a student makes during his conversation with MacFarlane, about some parts of the book where d'Holbach deals with the "absurdity of belief in God's existence" and "the impossibility of the immortality of the soul", is important in showing the impact of materialistic ideas. Student characterizes d'Holbach as "a great philosopher" and his book full of materialistic ideas as "a great work".<sup>172</sup> Adnan Adıvar also points out to the fact that reading materialistic books, like Ludwig Büchner's *Force and Matter*,<sup>173</sup> was in vogue among students of natural sciences and medicine.<sup>174</sup>

The materialistic approach under the influence of which can Young Turks be said to remain has been biological materialism. It has been easy for Young Turks to adopt biological materialism, because it is *scientific* before anything else. On the other hand, the data it acquires depend on a material basis and are rolled up from matter itself. And these data, again, put forward the natural laws to which human beings and society are subject. When we compare this consideration with the meaning Young Turks attributed to reality, it becomes easy for us to understand why they adopted biological materialism. It is pointed out earlier that Young Turks did not

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<sup>170</sup> See Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, pp. 205-206. Berkes adapts the information referred here from Charles MacFarlane who visited the School of Medicine in 1847.

<sup>171</sup> Mekteb-i Tibbiye has been instituted in 1826, during Sultan Mahmud the Second's era. This school is the first School of Medicine, of the Ottoman Empire, established in European sense. For more detailed explanations about it see, for example, Korlaelçi, *ibid*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>172</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *ibid*.

<sup>173</sup> Ludwig Büchner, *Force and Matter*, Edited and Translated by J. Frederick Collingwood (Cambridge: 2012.)

<sup>174</sup> Adnan Adıva, *İlim ve Din* (İstanbul: Evrim Matbaacılık, 1980), p. 5. See also Mehmet Akgün, "1839-1920 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Aydınlanmanın Uzantısı Olarak Temsil Edilen Felsefi Akımlar," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 40 (1999), p. 490.

approach to reality with reference to a curiosity towards the whole of the universe. They are highly detached from speculative thinking in this respect. They were searching for results deduced from life itself. According to them, if one to speak about a reality he or she needs to proceed from an inquiry about the meaning of being human, the relation human beings have with other creatures, the similarities they reflect and the general laws that govern all types of existents. In this respect, a comprehension of reality means, in Young Turks' thinking, finding out the way to transform the human being and society. And the biological materialism, in their understanding, is one of those ways to understand, interpret, change and transform the human being and society.

Darwin's theory of evolution played an important role in Young Turks' acceptance of biological materialism. For, his theory can be seen as one of the basic foundations of biological materialism. Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) is the leading figure in interpreting Darwin's theory of evolution with a materialistic eye and putting forward the biological materialism as a scientific and philosophical approach. It is possible to come across with the name and ideas of Haeckel in numerous articles published in Young Turk periodicals.<sup>175</sup>

In biological materialism, as understood by Haeckel, the universe is both unique and everything. It is a moving material mass in an eternal time and space. There is nothing out of it. Nothing can be over it. Nothing can exist before or after it. And our world constitutes a small part of this universe. No essential difference exists between living and non-living things. The living thing is nothing but a special and complex type of mechanics. Darwin's theories of "struggle for life" or "natural selection" have taken the shape of a fascinating formula for biological materialism and made the origin of living things comprehended. The whole spiritual life can be reduced to the movements of atoms. And the human being is not created by the hands of God.

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<sup>175</sup> See, for example, Ernst Haeckel, "Tarih-i Hilkat-i Tabiî veya Meslek-i Tekâmülün İzah-ı Fennîsi: Birinci Ders –Usul-i Şecerî veya Menşe' Nazariyesinin Mana ve Mefâdı," translated by Pıriştineli A. Rafet, *Tabiat* 1, no. 1 (10 July 1327/23 July 1911), pp. 27-30; Doktor Sadrettin Kasım, "Ernst Heackel'den: Havarik-i Hayat-1," pp. 15-18; Suphi Ethem, "Antropoloji Dersleri," p. 31; Ethem Necdet, "Fatalizm: Tenkîd-i Felsefi," p. 1720; Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (28 Rabî' al-Âkhir 1332/13 March 1330/26 March 1914), p. 108.

He stemmed from deepness of nature. His first condition is not a heavenly story but being animal.<sup>176</sup>

One of the particular names, among Young Turks, that attracts attention with his publications supporting biological materialist attitude is Suphi Ethem. The basic reason that led Suphi Ethem to adopt biological materialism seems to be his understanding of a monistic science. Starting from Darwin's theory of evolution, he is of the opinion that the laws governing material realm are effective in spiritual realm as well.<sup>177</sup>

Suphi Ethem made a distinguished name for himself in almost all of the Young Turk periodicals because of the works he carried out within the area of natural sciences. Young Turk figures generally speak about him with a great praise. He published numerous books, including translations. *Darwinizm*, *Ulum-u Tabiiyye Lügati* and *Lamarkizm* are among his most notable books.<sup>178</sup>

When we read articles of Ethem Necdet we witness that he put forward some arguments enabling us to regard him as a proponent of biological materialism. Ethem Necdet, like any other Young Turk figure who adopted biological materialism, received education in the area of medicine. He also seized upon a monist understanding of science and regards the dualistic attitude, which differentiates between material and spiritual realms, as the remainder of the thought of middle

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<sup>176</sup> Bedia Akarsu, *ibid*, ss. 106-107.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Suphi Ethem, "Antropoloji Dersleri," p. 31.

<sup>178</sup> Arda Odabaşı gives a comprehensive account about intellectual biography of Suphi Ethem. See Arda Odabaşı, "Subhi Edhem Bey ve Beşer ve *Tabiat* Dergisi," *Bilim ve Ütopya*, no. 159 (2007), pp. 28-42. For an intellectual biography of Suphi Ethem see also Remzi Demir, *ibid*, pp. 149-163. Suphi Ethem's works have always been greatly appreciated in Young Turks' periodicals. It is said in *İçtihat*, for example, about his work of *Ulum-u Tabiiyye Lügati* that "the world of press has not witnessed to the publication of such a great and serious work since the announcement of Constitutionalism." See Anonymous, "Ulum-u Tabiiyye Lügati," *İçtihat* 3, no. 25 (15 June 1327/28 June 1911), p. 758. And his work of Darwinizm presented in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* by saying that it is "a quite serious and useful work of Suphi Ethem Bey, who is a member of our editorial board. Darwin's theories, the law of natural selection and some other issues are plainly explained in it. It is highly recommendable to whole youth." See the end cover of *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 7 (15 November 1327/28 November 1911). For similar complimentary statements about Suphi Ethem's work of *Darwinizm* see the end cover of *Muhit-i Mesai* 1, no. 1 (24 December 1326/6 January 1911).

ages. According to him, the only idea that needs to be taken into consideration in all areas, from medicine to psychology and from anthropology to education, is an approach reducing spiritual to material.<sup>179</sup> There is no need to say that this is an obvious materialism. As a matter of fact, Ethem Necdet argues that mental faculties are compatible with the brain and that they differ in accordance with brain's qualitative and quantitative changes. Although psychological events present spiritual character, one needs to examine them by keeping in mind what lies in the origin, which is matter.<sup>180</sup>

It is Abdullah Cevdet, among Young Turks, who supported biological materialism in the most systematical way.<sup>181</sup> In this context, one needs to point to the translations he made from Ludwig Büchner and Felix Isnard. Particularly Büchner's work of *Force and Matter* created an enormous impact on Abdullah Cevdet's thinking. Abdullah Cevdet translated a part of this book under the title of "Fenn-i Ruh" and published in his journal of *İçtihat*.<sup>182</sup> Another part of this book is also translated by him and published in *İçtihat* under the title of "Tefekkür".<sup>183</sup> The translated parts of *Force and Matter* are published by *İçtihat* Kütüphanesi as a separate book.<sup>184</sup>

Ludwig Büchner's work of *Force and Matter* is translated and published as a whole by Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil. And this translation is strongly recommended to readers by the journal of *İçtihat*.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> See Doktor Ethem "Terbiye-i Akliyye -1- Terbiye-i Akliyyede Usûl-i Umûmi," p. 525.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Şerif Mardin, *ibid*, p. 233; Emel Koç, "Klasik Materyalizm ve Pozitivizmin Türkiye'ye Girişi ve İlk Yansımaları," *Dicle Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (2009), p. 81.

<sup>182</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Fenn-i Ruh," pp. 729-733.

<sup>183</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Tefekkür," *İçtihat* 3, no. 29 (15 August 1327/28 August 1911), pp. 813-817.

<sup>184</sup> For this information see *İçtihat* 4, no. 56 (28 February 1328/13 March 1913).

<sup>185</sup> Anonymous, "Yeni Kitaplar: Kuvvet ve Madde," *İçtihat* 3, no. 29 (15 August 1327/28 August 1911), p. 823. Baha Tevfik's works are also praised by a short article in *İçtihat*, published upon death of Baha Tevfik: "... His translation of Büchner's work of "Force and Matter", which created a terrifying revolution in the minds of all, is enough to make his name unforgettable." See Anonymous, "Baha Tevfik Bey," *İçtihat* 5, no. 109 (5 June 1330/18 June 1914), p. 168. The translation made by Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil from Büchner has been published recently. See Louis [Ludwig]

Büchner's work of *Nature and Science* also left deep traces on Abdullah Cevdet's thinking. A part of this book translated by Abdullah Cevdet in an interpreted form and published in his work of *Fünûn ve Felsefe ve Felsefe Sânihaları*.<sup>186</sup> This translated part of Büchner's *Nature and Science* is important to comprehend Abdullah Cevdet's understanding of philosophy and science.

The translation Abdullah Cevdet made from Büchner and included in his *Fünûn ve Felsefe* carries the title of "Bilimler ve Felsefe" [Sciences and Philosophy] and discusses the nature of the relation between science and philosophy. First of all, one needs to say that the text, no matter how short it is, covers important arguments of materialist attitude. Starting from the idea that all existents have a material quality it is argued, for example, that human thought also is essentially material. According to Abdullah Cevdet's interpretation, the "materialist philosophy"<sup>187</sup> itself puts forward this result by depending on scientific data.

This evaluation is remarkable to understand the kind of scientific and philosophical approach seized upon by Abdullah Cevdet as a result of the impacts he received from Büchner. For, getting inspired by Büchner, Abdullah Cevdet draws a frame for a philosophy of science or a philosophical science. There are a number of interrelated questions that determine this frame. For example, can it be said that philosophy is no longer functional after the scientific developments? Or, given that the conditions requiring the existence of philosophy are disappeared, can it be argued that we do not

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Büchner, *Mâdde ve Kuvvet*, translated by Ahmet Nebil and Baha Tevfik, simplified from Ottoman Turkish by Ali Utku and Kemal Kahramanoğlu (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2012).

<sup>186</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *Fünun ve Felsefe ve Felsefe Sânihaları* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i İçtihad, 1328 [1912]). For the translated part of Büchner's *Nature and Science* see pp. 7-19. This book has been simplified from Ottoman Turkish and published by a number of academicians who makes valuable contributions, in recent years, to the studies on philosophical understanding of Ottoman intelligentsia. See Abdullah Cevdet, *Fünûn ve Felsefe ve Felsefe Sânihâları/Bilimler ve Felsefe ve Felsefe Değınileri*, Simplified from Ottoman Turkish by Ali Utku and Nevzat H. Yanık (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2009). There are two more books, published by the same academicians, that is related with the figures and the period subjected to this study, including: Rıza Tevfik, *Dârulfünun Felsefe Ders Notları*, simplified from Ottoman Turkish by Ali Utku and Erdoğan Erbay (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2009) and Ziya Gökalp, *Felsefe Dersleri*, simplified from Ottoman Turkish by Ali Utku and Erdoğan Erbay (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2006).

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

need philosophy anymore? The answer Abdullah Cevdet seems to give to such questions is a quite clear “no”. Need for philosophy can neither be satisfied nor destroyed. Rather, philosophy needs to be regarded as the unique guide in making sure the continuance and sustainability of scientific activities. Science makes determinations. But philosophy ensures that some general laws are deduced from scientific determinations. Without these laws, it would not be possible to make sense of the results, acquired by science, in a certain unity. This is why philosophy, in its truest sense, is related with issues such as the origin of human being, the manner of his emergence and his relation with organic realm. And this relation can only be explained by depending on the results reached by sciences like geology, physiology, anthropology, paleontology, zoology, ethnology, archeology, anatomy, psychology, history of evolution, philology, history and sociology etc. Therefore, “philosophy must accept a general law as a guide for itself through which it can base phenomena –in a way to find a logical relation between them- upon exact judgments of positive sciences.”<sup>188</sup>

It is obvious that this approach plans to re-design the relation between philosophy and science so as to constitute a “unity”. The same attitude stands out in a text Abdullah Cevdet translated with reference to Herbert Spencer<sup>189</sup> and, again, published in his *Fünûn ve Felsefe*. The most conspicuous point within this text is the idea that the unity observed both between science and philosophy and in the universe creates in human mind a desire to see the same circumstance runs in the area of thinking as well. And, consequentially, it argues that only one single science can be possible.<sup>190</sup> This unity must be created between seemingly independent scientific branches. Moreover, a separate connection between the sole science -to be deduced from this unity- and philosophy is necessary. Therefore, philosophy must directly depend on science.<sup>191</sup> Considered from this perspective, it seems to be possible to

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 24-29.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25. Abdullah Cevdet’s insistence on the issue of “unity” carries the effect of Ernst Haeckel as well. A quotation from Haeckel, in *Fünun ve Felsefe*, emphasizes the “unity of all natural events” and touches on the materialistic understanding. See, *ibid*, p. 60.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

argue that the materialistic world view Abdullah Cevdet adopted grows out of this understanding of unity.

It has been pointed out in the previous pages that Darwin's theory of evolution has an important place in the development of the understanding of biological materialism. Abdullah Cevdet also brings this effect forward. According to him, philosophy discovers the law of evolution in all sciences, whether they are interrelated or not. And it accepts this general rule, that is to say the law of evolution, as a guide for itself in its struggle for explaining things. Accordingly, philosophy never forgets that it must search for the law of evolution in all material and spiritual events.<sup>192</sup>

There is no doubt that Abdullah Cevdet had a clear purpose in making translations from Büchner, like he had similar purposes in his translations from other Western thinkers. This purpose is to get Ottoman society accept the materialistic attitude by means of supporting it with scientific data. Thus, the propagandist approach that is used in all Young Turk periodicals is true of *İçtihat* as well. The beliefs and thinking style of the idealized society are desired to be shaped by understandings popularized in periodicals. This is why *İçtihat* frequently used Islamic references while giving place to utter materialistic ideas.

As it is pointed out earlier, a partial translation of Ludwig Büchner's *Force and Matter* has been published in the journal of *İçtihat*. The translation carries the title of "Tefekkür" and argues that whatever we talk about its existence, including the mind itself, can be reduced to matter. In his gloss to Büchner's claims to this effect Abdullah Cevdet uses following statements:

Extension (tahayyüz) is taking up of an object in space. This character cannot be separated from what it belongs to. It is not matter, but material. Thought also is a character of the same material substance. It also cannot be separated from what it belongs to. It is not matter, but material. Thought and extension can be understood just as two characters of the one and the same substance.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>193</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Tefekkür," p. 814. Abdullah Cevdet translates the texts from western thinkers rather within a free language. The same can be said of this passage as well. For the relation Büchner

In the same article thought has been defined as “one of the several forms of movement”.<sup>194</sup> And this definition seems to correspond to the approach of materialism which attributes the universe, the matter, to movement in respect of its mode of existence.

Another source from which Abdullah Cevdet derived his materialist attitude is Felix Isnard. While Abdullah Cevdet was a young student of medicine he reads, possibly upon the recommendation of İbrahim Temo, Isnard’s *Spiritualism and Materialism* and it plays an important role in his transition from a view that can be regarded highly religious to a materialist thinking.<sup>195</sup> Şerif Mardin characterizes Isnard as “a French vulgarisateur”.<sup>196</sup> Isnard’s mentioned work represents the philosophy of materialism with a simple language and accepts the necessity of ethical values for social development. But it argues that this duty needs to be attributed to scientific materialism instead of religion.<sup>197</sup> According to Isnard, religion and ethics are independent of each other. Religion cannot be seen as the basis of ethics. Religions may have been beneficial in old days but since they do not depend on any positive and natural basis they will disappear in the future so long as human beings receive education. In other words, religions will give way to a strong and real ethics depending on principles suitable to govern humanity on their own. Scientific materialism is future’s philosophy. For, it is only a materialistic philosophy that can ensure recognition of the principles of a strong and real ethics. This philosophy is a candidate for replacing all doctrines which do not depend on experimental science

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assumes to exist between thought and matter see, for example, his *Force and Matter*, chapter XIII, titled “Thought.”

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Karl Süsseim, “Abd Allah Djewdet”, *The Encyclopedia of Islam: A Dictionary of the Geography, Ethnography and Biography of Muhammadan Peoples*. Edited by E. J. Brill. Vol. 9. Luzac&Co: (1913-1938): 55-60. See also Şerif Mardin, *ibid*, p. 228. Süsseim’s article on Abdullah Cevdet is highly remarkable. For some further biographical and intellectual details about Abdullah Cevdet see also Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1999), pp. 246-256.

<sup>196</sup> Şerif Mardin, *ibid*.

<sup>197</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981), p. 12.

and reason.<sup>198</sup> Isnard's ideas can be seen as one of the factors leading Abdullah Cevdet's essentially religious world view to evolve into materialism.<sup>199</sup>

Gustave Le Bon also created an enormous impact on Abdullah Cevdet and strengthened his biological materialist approach. Abdullah Cevdet translated many works of Le Bon, who can also be regarded as social theorist, and published via *İçtihat* Kütüphanesi.<sup>200</sup> Le Bon's impact on Abdullah Cevdet can be traced in different issues of the journal of *İçtihat*. In an article titled "Doktor Gustave Le Bon",<sup>201</sup> for example, Le Bon's argument that there is a relation between human beings skulls and their abilities of thinking is narrated very excitedly. Abdullah Cevdet interprets Le Bon's argument to the effect that so long as scientific developments appear in a society the number of large-skulled people will increase therein. Thinking conversely, the thinking ability of people with small size of skulls will decrease. As a result, it is possible to infer that Abdullah Cevdet constructs a direct connection between matter and the ability of thinking. Because, to say that there is a relation between biological structure and the ability of thinking is to explain this ability on a biological, and consequentially material, basis. In other words, thinking is shaped in accordance to matter. And this is a typical expression of a materialistic approach assuming that the whole reality is a reflection, movement and transformation of matter.

The basic reason of Abdullah Cevdet's heading towards materialism is the belief that the Ottoman society lags behind because of negative effect of religion. Religion

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<sup>198</sup> Narrated from Felix Isnard by M. Şükrü Hanioglu: *ibid*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>199</sup> Şerif Mardin, *ibid*.

<sup>200</sup> Those translations include: *Ruhu'l-Akvam* (İstanbul: *İçtihat* Matbaası, 1913) which is originally published as *Les Lois Pshychologiques de l'Evolution des Peuples*; *Asrımızın Nusûs-u Felsefîyesi* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i *İçtihat*, 1913); originally published as *Les Aphorismes du Temps Présent. Avrupa Harbinden Alınan Psikolociyâi Dersler* (İstanbul: Kanaat Matbaası, 1918). The latter was originally published by Gustave Le Bon as *Enseignements Psychologiques de Guerre Européenne*. Le Bon's works of *Hier et Demain* and *Les Incertitudes de l'Heure Présente* are translated and published by Abdullah Cevdet as *Düin ve Yarın: Nusûs-i Rûhiye ve İçtimâiye* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i *İçtihat*, 1921) and *Ameli Ruhîyat* (İstanbul: Orhaniye Matbaası, 1931) respectively. Except the translations of the books by Gustave Le Bon himself, Abdullah Cevdet translated also a book on Le Bon as *Bir Zekâ-i Feyyaz* (1925) which is originally written by Baron Motono as *L'Oeuvre de Gustave Le Bon* in 1914.

<sup>201</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Doktor Gustave Le Bon," *İçtihat* 1, no. 8 (July 1905), p. 118.

causes Ottoman society to move not forward but backward. In this respect, Abdullah Cevdet's expectation from science and philosophy, in their materialistic senses, is to evolve a "degenerated" (mütereddî) society into a "progressed" (müterakkî) position. He thinks that the religious obstacles hindering Ottoman society's progress can be removed by biological materialism and even tries to show that "biological materialism will replace religion"<sup>202</sup> which is a similar assertion of Isnard's.

If we run shortly through issues handled by now we can infer that science and philosophy have been used as transformative tools within Young Turks' ideal of enlightenment. First of all, it is seen that their mentality is shaped by the education they received in modern higher education institutions. As a result of this educational background they adopted the latest and most popular scientific and philosophical approaches and used them as effective tools for their purposes.

We would like to touch upon a point that can be seen as a complementary part for the discussions we made above pages and then to pass on to the next chapter.

Young Turks seized upon science and philosophy, as they are developed in the West, without any doubt or reservation. This attitude is a result of the vital crisis they encountered and is dependent on a psychological basis in a great part. And this is why they did not use one of the most fundamental methods of philosophy, which is "doubt". Far from directing critics towards science, it would not be an exaggerated assumption that they did not drop even a slightest hint. One can say that Hüseyin Cahit constitutes the only exception within this regard. But one also needs to put some reservations for this assertion. He asks whether the distance covered within scientific area can cause any negativity in human life or not.<sup>203</sup> It would be useful, of course, to remark that this question is put forward within the context of aesthetics. Is science annihilating beauty? Is the natural mode of existence creating aesthetical

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<sup>202</sup> Aydın Topaloğlu, "Klasik Materyalizmin Mahiyeti ve Son Dönem Osmanlı Düşünürleri Arasında Yayılışı," *Felsefe Dünyası*, no. 45 (2007), p. 119.

<sup>203</sup> For further discussions see Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -15- Sanat ve Şiirin İstikbâli [2]," *Servet-i Fünun* 16, no. 395 (24 September 1314/6 October 1898), pp. 75-78 and "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -16- Sanatın ve Şiirin İstikbâli [3]," *Servet-i Fünun* 16, no. 396 (1 October 1314/5 November 1898), pp. 91-93.

emotions in human soul is spoiled due to the scientific developments? Can science be regarded as harmful in this respect? Although they are limited to the aesthetical area it is important for us to see that Hüseyin Cahit asks such questions. However, he concludes with a negative decision. According to him, science does not spoil the beauty or aesthetical emotion. Rather, it ensures their development and strengthens them. Even the most terrifying war machines do so. This answer removes from agenda the only exceptional interrogative view directed towards science. Skeptical and incredulous looks, which constitute the backbone of philosophy, have lost their functions in the face of science. In Hüseyin Cahit's approach, the idea that philosophy and science must complement each other has given way to the idea that philosophy must be liable to scientific reality. It is accepted, in Young Turks' understanding, that the function of science is to discover the exact and absolute truth and that human being must be subject to it.

## CHAPTER 4

### PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN YOUNG TURKS' UNDERSTANDING

As it is pointed out in the second chapter, the scientific and philosophical approach adopted by Young Turks facilitated their detachment from traditional thinking patterns. The material sense attributed to the truth enabled them to use science and philosophy just as tools in this detachment. The most obvious sign that Young Turks developed a new philosophical language as a result can be seen in discussions they made particularly in the area of philosophy of religion. They put forward some direct and indirect arguments within this regard. And these arguments showed how different their way of explaining certain religious concepts than traditional understanding.

When we examine the topics dealt with by philosophy of religion we see that God's existence stands at the top of the list. Does God exist? If so, would it be possible to know his existence? What can be said about God's nature and attributes? What kind of a relation is there between God and universe? Questions like these constitute the backbone of philosophy of religion. Thus, they are tackled with in Young Turks periodicals on different occasions.

One can say, as a beginning, that Young Turks have not dealt with the existence of God as a separate matter of discussion. In other words, we do not have any observation in Young Turks' periodicals indicating that they opened a discussion on the existence of God and that they put forward for or against his existence and defended them in a systematical way -as it is not the case in classical discussions of philosophy of religion. However, we witness the existence of the clues of some personal attitudes within this regard.

We are of the opinion that Young Turks' approach of conciliatory modernism plays an important role in not dealing with the existence of God as a separate matter of discussion. Because, if their ideas within the context of the "immortality of soul" – which is also going to be dealt with in this chapter- be taken into consideration, it would seem possible to argue that the great majority of Young Turks have a negative attitude with regard to God's existence. However, they used a more moderate language to ensure that their project of modernity do not come across a reaction from society. Another aspect that needs to be pointed out about their approach of conciliatory modernism is that untraditional ideas they adopted within the context of philosophy of religion have sometimes been supported by Islamic references. This circumstance will be dealt with in the following pages as the occasions arise.

#### **4.1 Approaches to the Existence of God**

One can say that there are some important results to which Young Turks arrived within the context of God's existence. These results will be dealt with in the order of the philosophical and scientific approaches discussed in the previous chapter. The first result will be *agnosticism* and *deism*. And these two approaches can be seen as the natural results of the acceptance of positivism. The second result shall be called as *pantheism*. And it carries most obvious effect of evolutionism. The third and the last result within the context of God's existence will be *atheism*. Although has not been put forward openly, it also has a place in some Young Turks' philosophical agenda. And it is the result of materialistic thought.

##### **4.1.1 Agnosticism and Deism**

Depending on the observations we made about Young Turks' periodicals we can say that the most suitable approach fitting into the positivist character of their mentality is either agnosticism or deism. Agnosticism, in philosophy of religion, represents an approach claiming that it is not possible to know whether God exists or not. It is also possible to widen this definition a bit more by adding, for example, that agnosticism depends on the idea that God's nature cannot be comprehended by our faculties *even if he exists*. According to an agnostic, the term of God points to an existent beyond

the limits of human comprehension. In other words, an existent transcending our epistemological domain cannot be regarded as a subject of knowledge. Since it is not possible for us to have an experience about him we cannot make a judgment about his existence or nature. Agnostic attitudes put forward “silence” as a choice when it comes to the existence of God. Therefore, the most positive utterance an agnostic can make seems to be that “God may exist but his nature cannot be known.”<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, according to agnosticism, arguments within the context of a divine existence are far from being persuasive. Let us take ontological or cosmological arguments as examples. The philosophers who support these arguments are pretending them to be proofs for the existence of God. However, a similar legitimacy can rationally be attributed to arguments insisting on contradictory result. Why we should not regard an argument inferred from the “problem of evil”, for example, as a legitimate argument against God’s existence? In other words, it is possible to generate arguments both for and against the ideas regarding to existence of God. Human mind can legitimately stay away from both of the options rather than being exhausted by oscillating between them, like “Buridan’s ass”. Therefore, thinks an agnostic, ignoring the interpretations about God’s existence will be the truest option, unless they are exact and persuasive.

As a matter of fact, it is also possible to say that this approach is corresponding to deism. Deism, in its classical meaning, is an approach cutting the relation between God and the universe. Although it is a questionable circumstance, God’s existence is within possibility. If we set aside the questions trying to answer whether God has created the universe out of nothing as a result of his own will or whether he confined himself with giving a shape or a movement to the pre-existing matter, the relation between God and universe has come to an end following the acts of creation or formation. God, deists seem to assume, has created the universe, or has injected such an unshakeable system in matter which he shaped or moved, that it continues its existence on its own without him. That means that the universe has a perfect order which is in no need of a divine intervention.

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<sup>204</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, “Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii,” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 12 (22 Sha‘bān 1332/3 July 1330/16 July 1914), p. 373.

Now, keeping in mind the positivistic analyses with regard to the source and limits of the knowledge, it will not be difficult to estimate that these analyses bring some theological difficulties within themselves. The great majority of Young Turks are of the opinion that facts constitute the unique source of knowledge. Therefore, it is not possible for them to say that we have knowledge about things which could not factually be subjected to experience. Factual reality, the universe in other words, maintains its existence within an order. And this order continues within certain natural laws which make the positivistic science possible. Natural laws do not arise, as it is adopted in theological or metaphysical theories, from an intervention of an existence transcending the universe. Rather they are the results of nature. This point needs to be interpreted together with the “law of three stages” of Auguste Comte which we discussed in previous chapter. In the positive stage, which is also the latest stage, human mind no longer explains the order he observes in nature with reference to a divine existence governing it without being involved in it. It rather explains nature by depending on nature itself. Accordingly, “a fact can be explained by another fact only”.<sup>205</sup> This approach can be characterized as *phenomenism*. The noumenal realm, including God himself, does not have an explanatory function with regard to phenomenal realm. For, it is in need of an explanation itself already. Moreover, since positivism believes that it has no possibility of bringing an explanation towards noumenal realm either, it sets it aside. The eye of science does not see anything further than what is sensible. And the world of science is world of facts and events.<sup>206</sup> We are of the opinion that the positivistic attitude towards noumenal realm does not need to be interpreted as a “rejection” of it, but rather as “taking it out” of the domain of knowledge by “labeling” it as “unknowable” because of the impossibility of having an information about it. When we translate this situation into a theological language we come across to a result stating that even if there is an absolute being or power created the world, his beginning and end cannot be thought of and, therefore, his truth cannot be comprehended by human mind.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Şevketî, “Din Felsefesinden.” *İçtihat* 4, no. 62 (18 April 1329/1 May 1913), p. 1356.

<sup>206</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Tasnif-i Ulûm: Bazı Mukaddemât-ı Felsefiye [1],” p. 373.

<sup>207</sup> Ş. Tarık, “Bir Muvahhid ile Mülhid Arasında,” *İslam Mecmuası* 5, no. 60 (30 Shawwâl 1336/8 August 1334/8 August 1918), p. 1151.

It is possible to argue that the link between God and universe is thought, in traditional understanding, in the form of a multi dimensional relation which includes material and spiritual parts. The material dimension is directly connected with the act of creation. Accordingly, God has brought the universe into existence from nothing. Moreover, God has not stood aside following the creation, as he is conceived to have done in deism. Every change and transformation taking place in the universe is a reflection of God's will. In material dimension, it is assumed both that God's existence can be known and that his attributes can be talked about on a rational basis. It differs both from agnostic and deistic attitudes within this regard. As to the spiritual dimension: it represents an observable qualitative difference, although it includes the material dimension as well. In this dimension, God is conceived to be intervening into the universe with reference to the deeds of human being. He sometimes punishes them by earthquakes or similar natural disasters for example. God's intervention can also be happening within the direction of human's demands. Human beings' prays are being heard by God and responded in different ways. For, God is a "person" who is creating as well as "hearing", "knowing", "raging" and "relenting". God's personality is possible only together with such characters. Deism, despite the fact that it accepts the possibility of God's existence, destructs the belief in God's personality because it removes the characters that can be said to enable God to enter into an effective relation with universe. May be it is more suitable from the deistic view to regard God as an "energy" causing the universe to exist, rather than a "person". There is no doubt that "hearing" creates an effect in the person who hears. Otherwise, it would not be possible for hearing to become consummated in its real sense. Similarly, "knowing" requires putting what is known forward and realizing this or that behavior accordingly. One can come across to some exceptional examples relating to this situation when it is evaluated on the part of human. You may be hearing but you are not obliged to give a reaction. You may know but you do not need to show what you know. However, in traditional understanding, God cannot be conceived of as limiting himself with certain conditions or as not putting forward his knowledge into actions. This is why God is characterized in monotheistic religions, for example, as a person who both "hears" and "responds to prays". The spiritual dimension has neither a sense nor a function in deism. Therefore, no actual difference following the prayers for God can be said to happen. For, to believe that

prayers can create some actual differences is to believe that an observable breach in the function of natural laws can occur. But, as M. Nermi once puts it, “natural laws cannot be changed by human beings’ prayers or entreaties”.<sup>208</sup>

It is obvious that this approach reduces the prayers to absurdity. And, therefore, it will not be surprising to see that it shows the “miracle”, which is another extension of classical thought of God, as a superstition. In the monotheistic understanding of religion miracle is regarded as a sign of God’s direct intervention into the universe. It is also accepted as constituting one of the proofs for the existence of God and a breach in the natural laws.

Viewed from the positivistic perspective, it is possible to observe some events in the nature that can be regarded by human beings as “deterioration”. But the positivistic science presents us the factual explanations of the events of this kind. Thence, what seems to us as “mystical” drifts apart from the sense it has in theological period, which is to say that there is no place for the belief of miracle in scientific understanding.<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, the belief of miracle is a belief based on suspicious and disputable data narrated by others. The belief of miracle lies out of the domain of senses and the reason which processes the data they gather. Therefore, accepting such an idea is contrary to positivistic science.<sup>210</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Pantheism**

The most obvious effect of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s philosophical and scientific approaches on Young Turks can be said to appear as an attempt to dissociate the understanding of being from the idea of holy. And it finds its reflection in too many differences in the key concepts, the concept of God being in the first place, of the classical philosophy of religion.

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<sup>208</sup> M. Nermi, “Ölüm ve Hayat: Mısır ve Berberlerin Dinleri -3- Eski Mısır,” *Genç Kalemler* 4, no. 26 (24 August 1328/6 September 1912), p. 76.

<sup>209</sup> Doktor Sadrettin Kasım, “Earnest Heackel’den: Havarik-i Hayat-1,” p. 17.

<sup>210</sup> A detailed discussion about the criticisms against the idea of miracle can be found in Bedii Nuri, “Tahavvülât-ı Fikriyye,” pp. 1153, 1155.

As far as we see in the Young Turk periodicals, the being is no longer standing in the face of us to reveal holiness. Nor do we need to analyze it to discover God's will lying behind. These were rather old beliefs Young Turks tried to remove by the help of modern scientific and philosophical understandings. Of course there are some exceptions among them. But the natural results of the philosophical approaches they seized upon can be seen immediately in innumerable articles. In these articles being is characterized as a concept to be examined because of the vitality it presents for the human being to maintain his existence and seen as a total of mere factual reality. There is no place for a contemplation which stands behind the factual and which cannot be subjected to epistemological mechanisms by some means or other. In this respect, to characterize events taking place in the universe as manifestations of a divine will or to apply for a divine power whenever there is a need for an explanation is a useless and fallacious struggle.<sup>211</sup>

As a result of the endeavors to re-examine the notion of being independently from the idea of holy, some key concepts –which can be gathered under a general term of being- are re-interpreted within the direction of new understanding of philosophy and science and some important results in terms of the philosophy of religion are emerged. The aforesaid concepts are *human being*, *nature* and *God* respectively.

Human being is a being among other beings in the universe. He came out in consequence of certain conditions and will maintain its existence under specified conditions. There is not a difference between human being and other creatures in terms of existing and dying out.<sup>212</sup> Viewed from this perspective, it is possible to say that human being is accepted as a “natural result” in Young Turks' understanding. To put it in a clearer way, human being is a “production” of nature. Since being a production shall mean to appear in compliance with natural laws, there can be no

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<sup>211</sup> Şevkefî, *ibid*, pp. 1357,1358.

<sup>212</sup> For interpretations making the existence of human being ordinary see Ahmet Rasim, “İnsan-ı İbtidai: Ensaf-i Beşeriyyenin Alâim-i Mütéhacciresi,” *Şura-yı Ümmet* 9, no. 214 (18 March 1326/31 March 1910), p. 4 and J. Weber, “Asırların Panoraması: Tarih-i Kâinata Bir Nazar,” translated by Abdullah Cevdet, *İçtihat* 4, no. 51 (24 January 1328/6 February 1913), pp. 1171-73.

purpose transcending naturality. It is not possible to talk about a divine plan to which human being's appearance or his annihilation is a subject. For example, the air has not been created billion years ago so that it ensures human's breathing. On the contrary, life is emerged where air exists. The conditions which prepared human being's appearance should be interpreted in this way. If there were another gas instead of oxygen, for example, the development of life might follow another direction but the same intimate relation between life and that gas would still exist. The same applies to other conditions of life, like water, sun etc. as well. If there was no sun then human eye would not develop; if there was no sound then human ear would not develop; if there was no movement then human organs would not develop.<sup>213</sup>

This approach is far from traditional understanding which sees universe as a proof of the existence of God. God's attribute of creation is replaced with nature's character of productivity. In our opinion, this change of the understanding about nature is a virtual expression of a pantheistic thought. As a matter of fact, pantheistic approach can be seen as the natural result of the idea of evolution. Theories of evolution are nothing but a story of production of human being, like other factual realities, by nature. It is apparent that the new meaning attributed to human being is totally distinct from the one he has in traditional comprehension. For, in traditional understanding human is not any being among others. He has been created by a divine will in accordance with certain purposes. Besides, his creation has been taken place "in the best of moulds". Evolutionist approaches also, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution, explain human being's existence to the accompaniment of a purpose. Nature motivates human being so that he reaches to a specific purpose. This purpose consists of "survival". But it is in and for human being himself. It has not been determined by another being. This is why there can be no purpose transcending human being as well. Therefore, Darwin's theory of evolution can be said to exclude the term of a creator God. *The place of God, who is conceived of as a "person" in traditional thinking, captured by nature which produces certain results by the help of laws it is liable to.* In other words, nature is being deified. Thus, Ahmet Şuayip

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<sup>213</sup> Ethem Necdet, "Fatalizm: Tenkîd-i Felsefî," p. 1721.

argues that Lamarck was a “semi-pantheist”.<sup>214</sup> It seems that Şuayip also tried to point to the fact that the productive character of nature is replaced God’s creative attribute. The productive ability of nature, which re-designs existing things, subrogates the will of a transcendental being that creates everything *ex nihilo*. Hence, a contingency and a subsequent evolvment, rather than a divine will, shall be needed to be talked about with regard to human existence which is going mean that the divine will is left out.<sup>215</sup> As for the traditional approach, human being is not a result of a contingency.

Detraction of human being’s existence from sanctity pulls down the belief that he needs to continue his life by pursuing certain holy rules. Of course, the same circumstance will be applied to society as well. Just as human being is produced by nature within specific rules, society also needs to be thought of as a fact produced by nature within the same conditions. And this will result in serious conflicts with tradition. For, it rasps the effect of religion both at personal and social levels. And it is obvious that the sense included in this conflict will not be a positive one for traditional thinking and living styles.

Pantheism sometimes comes up as a logical result of the scientific and philosophical understandings Young Turks adopted. The approach we noted above can be seen such a logical result. However, one can also witness that pantheism is put forward as an informed choice in Young Turks. Accordingly, God is not a being which exists independently from universe. He is not staying outside and not taking care of it. He is an immanent being. An informed pantheist approach to this effect is found in Abdullah Cevdet’s thoughts. Particularly his work of *Fünûn ve Felsefe* includes too many pantheistic interpretations.

It would be useful to note a point before passing on Abdullah Cevdet’s pantheistic interpretations. As it is touched upon in the previous chapter, Abdullah Cevdet has an

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<sup>214</sup> See Ahmet Şuayip, “Fransa İhtilal-i Kebiri,” p. 536.

<sup>215</sup> Rıza Tevfik, for example, points that the theory of evolution brings the idea of “creation” into question. See Rıza Tevfik, “Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler,” p. 2227. And for another argument claiming that human being is the result of chance and evolution see Ethem Necdet, *ibid*, p. 1720.

understanding of monist science. In his opinion, basic function of science is to put forward the unity in universe.

He derived this idea of unity that led him to materialistic results, to a large extent, from Ernst Haeckel. Abdullah Cevdet starts from Haeckel's principle about the "unity of all natural events", and constructs the same unity between God and universe. Thus, according to Abdullah Cevdet "God is not an individual; he is the totality of individuals and beings."<sup>216</sup> One observes that the same characterization is made by him with regard to the nature itself. In Abdullah Cevdet's thinking, the nature "is neither the core nor the shell. It is also everything."<sup>217</sup>

Strictly speaking, the idea of the unity of being (*vahdet-i vücûd*) is not an unknown idea for traditional Islamic thought. Arguments to this effect can frequently be come across within Sufi interpretations in particular. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that Abdullah Cevdet expresses some pantheistic ideas in his work of *Fünûn ve Felsefe* with reference to some Islamic thinkers. However, depending on the idea that it injures God's "personality" pantheism gets serious reactions and this should not be kept away from attentions.

Abdullah Cevdet sometimes grounds his modernist ideas on Islamic sources. This attitude can be characterized as typical Young Turk approach with regard to their activities of modernization. What makes him different in his attitude is that he interprets many of the Islamic concepts in a wide way. He uses this method both in translating the verses and hadiths he refers to and in interpreting certain Islamic concepts. For example, Islam calls itself as a religion of "tawhîd" (unity). *Tawhîd* means to believe that there is only one God. And the people who believe in God's oneness are called "muwahhid".

Abdullah Cevdet interprets being "muwahhid" as believing in oneness of existence. According to him, rejecting the idea of the unity of being is "shirk". And "shirk"

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<sup>216</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *Fünûn ve Felsefe*, p. 49.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

means to believe also in the existence of some other deities except from God. To put it in Abdullah Cevdet's own language:

The essential substance of becoming and space, the endless universe, is one. But there are thousands of ways for their appearance. This creed is called as "muwahhidiyyat" in religious language. And the term of "muwahhid" finds its meaning according to the insight and reason of each believer. Everybody gives a name to the fundamental substance of the universe. Some persons scream by saying that:

I did not know that hidden and apparent is always you,  
That what has always been hidden in languages and souls is you,  
I was requesting a sign for the universe from you,  
Then I learnt that the universe is you.

And some devotees of unity wonder at the conflict creating shirk, by murmuring the tune stating that "the things that have been given different names are one, but the names are over abundant."<sup>218</sup>

It is not the unique example of the Islamic defense of an idea arising from materialistic understanding of science. Another interesting example of this approach is that Abdullah Cevdet comprehends the idea of "heredity", found both in Lamarck's and Darwin's theories of evolution, as a characteristic transferred from God to creatures. The basic foundation of Abdullah Cevdet's argument to this effect is a hadith qudsi. It is said, in this hadith, that: "I am the sultan whom people worship. I produce and bring the generations into the realm of existence just as they are prepared by their ancestors."<sup>219</sup>

Abdullah Cevdet's interpretations with regard to this hadith are very interesting. According to him, it is an expression of the transference of the being by means of heredity on which medical sciences insist. Abdullah Cevdet calls this circumstance as "existential heredity" (*veraset-i vucûdiyye*). *Existential heredity* is not related with a person's inheritance like assets and possessions that remain outside of his own body. It means a direct transference of bodily characters. Therefore, a statement to the effect that Abdullah Cevdet refers to a material unity between God and nature

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

would not be illegitimate. This is one of the clearest expressions of pantheism. What makes this approach interesting is that a pantheistic interpretation inferred from a materialistic understanding of science is based on Islamic terminology.<sup>220</sup>

Abdullah Cevdet does not bring his pantheistic approach to the agenda solely with Islamic references. He appeals to Western thinkers' ideas also in this context. Another thinker who can be said to have an impact on pantheistic evolution of his thought is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 –1832). There is a long quotation from Goethe in *Fünûn ve Felsefe* where one can see no serious difference between some of the qualities he attributes to nature and the qualities attributed by Islam to God. It is said in this passage that:

It is everything. It bestows upon itself and punishes itself. It suffices for its own happiness and pain. It is severe and merciful; nice and terrific; helpless and omnipotent. It always includes everything. There is neither past nor present for it; only now is eternal for it. It is good. I thank to and praise for all of its actions. It is Wise and Benign. ... It is "unity". Still, it is not completed; it can do whatever it does forever. It shows its being to everyone in a special manner; it buries itself under thousands of names and is always the same. It brought me into the world and will take me out. I trust it. It can use me however it wants; it never nurses a grievance to its own production. I did not say anything about it. Whatever is said, right or wrong, expressed by it. All of the defects and virtues belong to it.<sup>221</sup>

#### **4.1.3 Atheism**

It is obvious that the final decision, to which materialism leads about the existence of God, whether in its vulgar or dialectical or biological sense, is atheism. For, it argues that the unique reality in the universe is matter. Matter is eternal. The universe consists of the transformation matter undergoing in an endless period of time and the movements taking place in it. This circumstance means that the universe came out as an actualization of the potentialities in matter. In other words, there is not a divine existence who can be said to create the universe from his own will out of nothing. Just as the universe has no creator, the idea that there are some wills to intervene it

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, s. 58.

afterwards also is nonsensical. Therefore, the term of God being in the first place, all religious terms are produced by human beings. There is not an outer reality to which these terms correspond.

The impact of biological materialism on Young Turks' mentality has been examined in the second chapter. Of course, this impact did not remain on a purely rhetorical level. The education they received led a notable part of them to seize upon biological materialism as a *weltanschauung*. Hence, it is inevitable for them to maintain a negative attitude when it comes to the concepts of classical philosophy of religion. There are a number of examples of this remarkable circumstance in their publications. However, one needs to point that atheism has not clearly been put forward as a philosophical choice in Young Turks' periodicals. It seems to be because of the fact that they were trying to avoid possible reactions from society against their agenda consisting of socio-cultural and political transformations. For, religion has been a highly sensitive issue in traditional Ottoman society. Therefore, one can say that the moderate language preferred by Young Turks, with regard to religious concepts, reflects an understandable situation.

However, instead of saying openly that "God does not exist" they used rather an indirect language. The interpretations made by Mustafa Nermi, for example, are of this kind. He makes serious inferences with regard to the truth of religion and religious concepts by depending on anthropological data. His articles full of ideas to this effect are going to be examined in the following pages within the discussions about the immortality of the soul. According to him, all of the claims of monotheistic religions are exact copies of human beliefs prevailed in previous eras. Human societies derived the principles of the systems of beliefs from their own daily lives. In other words, religious beliefs are nothing but a version of the daily opinions expressed within a more sophisticated language. Viewed from this perspective, there can be no truth of the claims of the monotheistic religions.

Ethem Necdet's characterization of the idea of "creation" as nonsensical also grounds on such a logical basis. He does not regard the universe as a unity effectuated within a certain heavenly plan. According to him, being comes out in the

course of the time as a result of a coincidence. And we attribute the order we observe as a factual reality to a transcendental will. However, it is a consequence of our habits. If we come across with a different order under different conditions we would still attribute a similar meaning to it as well. Therefore, we should support our observations just by some observable results. Otherwise, interpretations that we make about the things transcending the domain of our reason and knowledge would lead us to make nonsensical assumptions. And beliefs included in monotheistic religions may quite reasonably be argued to be depending on assumptions of this kind.

A similar approach can also be found in Suphi Ethem's thoughts. In his opinion, all arguments of the monotheistic religions, like the creation of the world in six days, are totally baseless. As a typical materialist, he thinks that it is not God but the matter itself which is lying at the ground of the changes we observe in the universe. Moreover, arguments of monotheistic religions are being refuted one after the other by positivistic sciences.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, matter needs to be explained just by matter itself. And we are of the opinion that these ideas may be taken as typical signs of atheistic approach.

One can say, as a result, that atheism constitutes one of the attitudes maintained by some Young Turk figures with regard to the issue of God's existence. But they could not express this approach openly due to different political and cultural reasons and concerns.<sup>223</sup>

#### **4.2 Immortality of the Soul and the Life after Death**

One another topic discussed within the context of philosophy of religion in Young Turks' periodicals is the issue of belief in the immortality of the soul and the life after death.

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<sup>222</sup> Suphi Ethem, *Darwinizm*, pp. 61-65. See also Anonymous, "Yirminci Asır Gözlüğü: İnsan, Fikir, His," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 5 (15 October 1327/28 October 1911), pp. 30-31.

<sup>223</sup> Nebzade Ahmet Hamdi openly writes out these concerns which are common among Young Turks. See Nebzade Ahmet Hamdi, "Sanatta Güzellik, İlimde Hakikat," p. 25.

The desire of being immortal is, of course, one of the existential desires of human beings. Human being wants to live as long as possible. He would, in fact, like to live forever. But death imposes itself as an irresistible truth. The severity of this truth causes a deep anxiety in each human being. Death is interpreted as being unable to take the advantages of life or as becoming distanced from beloved ones. Moreover, the process after death is thoroughly dark. Consequently, human being usually becomes terrified in the face of death and yearns for an endless life. When convinced that an actual immortality is impossible, he attributes different meanings to immortality in order for satisfying his yearning. The continuance of generation, for example, becomes a type of immortality. In this approach, which can be characterized as *biological immortality*, people believe that their existence will be maintained by their own generation. This belief, that satisfies their desire of immortality, may have a positive contribution in terms of ensuring the continuance of the species.

On the other hand, human being believes also that he becomes immortal if his name is not forgotten. And he uses every means possible to warrant this circumstance. He undertakes charitable works, for example, and establishes foundations to get his name remembered by people for ever. And this second approach can be regarded as *social immortality*.

When viewed from the perspective of monotheistic religions, it is possible to say that the issue of immortality is examined in a quite different way than its biological and sociological senses. Islam, Christianity and Judaism adopt the idea of immortality as a *metaphysical* notion. These religions do not determine immortality just as a pure subject of desire, but as a religious teaching as well. In Islamic thought, for example, the belief in the life after death has been specified as a pillar of faith, which means that a person who does not believe in it cannot be regarded as Muslim.

According to monotheistic religions, death is not the end of the existence of human being but is the first step taken towards the new life. Death is a contingent withdrawal of the soul from the body. Human being will be resurrected by God when the time comes. Resurrection is the coming together of the soul and body once again

and means that human beings will maintain a life similar to the one they had in this world. The difference between the first and second lives is that the previous is limited while the later is going to be endless.

The idea of *metaphysical immortality*, which attained a place for itself in monotheistic religious belief, is an ethical principle also. Human being, who is going to be resurrected by God, is to be subjected to a divine interrogation in accordance with his deeds in this world. God will reward those people who maintained a good life in their first life and will punish evil people.

#### **4.2.1 Young Turks and the Idea of Immortality**

The articles including discussions about the quality of soul and immortality in Young Turks' periodicals are generally full of ideas quoted from Western thinkers who can be characterized as evolutionist or materialist. Since materialism cannot exhibit a positive attitude when it comes to the issues of the autonomous existence of soul or the belief in immortality, it will be inevitable to bring to the agenda some philosophical results remarkable with regard to our current topic.

As far as we could observe in Young Turks' periodicals we examined, the idea of immortality has been removed from its metaphysical dimension and handled on a material ground. This circumstance must be seen as consistent for the most part. For, as we have previously pointed out on several occasions, approaches determined Young Turks' world view have been positivism, evolutionism and materialism. It is obvious that each of these three approaches is substantially having an understanding of factual reality. Yet, each of them is regarding metaphysics as incomprehensible, ungroundable and unacceptable for the human mind.

In order to be able to talk about immortality one needs, first of all, to examine the qualities of the soul. The soul is accepted as a self-subsisting element in traditional thinking. It is a transparent, imperceptible and indivisible substance. It is soul which

governs the organs. However, it is totally different from them qualitatively.<sup>224</sup> In traditional understanding it is believed that the soul has been created by God to bestow vitality for human being,<sup>225</sup> and to reflect the perpetual dimension of existence. Since it presents big qualitative difference from ordinary facts, it is not possible to see and have positive experience about it.

And the meaning given to soul in Young Turks' periodicals has entirely been changed. It does not have a metaphysical quality anymore as it is adopted in traditional understanding. The quality of soul can only be explained in a connection with body in general and with brain in particular. Of course, the biggest foundation will be the data of science in this matter. Therefore, there is not a definition of soul, in Young Turks' understanding, that cannot be included in the type of explanation of science. The soul is re-defined, with the impact of developments in the area of experimental psychology in particular, as the totality of the inner events like pleasure, pain, happiness, grief, hope, fear, anger, love, hate, desire, imagination, thinking etc. In other words, if we pose the question of "what is soul?" the answer we most possibly get from periodicals will be that it is the "totality of the events and the functions in the mind".<sup>226</sup> Now, given that the existence of the soul is the totality of the abovementioned contingent circumstances, their annihilation shall also indicate the non-existence of soul. Such reconsideration will naturally remove us from the ideas that the soul is self-subsistent and immortal.

The explanation of the soul in terms of natural events brings within itself the adoption that death must be accepted as a natural fact. In Young Turk periodicals, particularly in the articles both translated from Charles Letourneau and written under his impact, the belief of immortality is characterized as a consequence of having

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<sup>224</sup> Charles Letourneau, "Milletlerin Ruhiyetleri: Birinci Kitap-Hayvanlarda Ruh Tekâmülü-Vicdan," p. 181.

<sup>225</sup> There are some verses in Qur'an indicating that body and soul are two different elements while the creation of human being is talked about. It is said, for example, that "[y]our Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him my soul, then fall down to him in prostration." (15:28-29)

<sup>226</sup> Anonymous, "Ruh Nedir? -1-," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 August 1327/12 September 1911), p. 8. For similar interpretations with regard to the nature of the soul see Charles Letourneau, *ibid.*

difficulties in accepting death as a natural event. According to Letourneau, the devastation of personality and the certainty of death is something incomprehensible for the people whose mentality is still in the most primitive level. There is not even a notion of “natural death” in this childhood era of humanity. In this period, death generally understood as the continuation of sleep wherein the soul leaves the body and lives in an imperceptible position for a long time.<sup>227</sup>

Removal of the soul from metaphysical area and inclusion of it into the physical realm reinforced the belief that there are scientific ways and methodologies to handle and examine it. The quality of the soul in traditional understanding includes also the assumption that it can by no means be subjected to experience. But the developments in scientific area especially those realized in physiology and psychology showed that the soul can be explained by observation and experiment, the most basic scientific methods. Thus, it is also possible to see in Young Turks’ periodicals the existence of a belief that the term of soul acquired a quality which can be examined through experimental psychology.<sup>228</sup> Application of observation and experiment as scientific methods into the area of psychology also is a revolutionary approach for Young Turks. For, it shall mean that the traditional understanding of soul has been run upside down. It is even possible to say that this revolution has given birth to results similar to the revolutions we observe in natural sciences since Galileo and Bacon.<sup>229</sup> Of course, leaving aside the ideas and prepossessions derived from external sources like religion is inevitable for having strong information about the true character of the soul.<sup>230</sup> It seems to be an emphasis made on the objectivity which is one of the cardinal qualities Young Turks thought to exist in scientific knowledge.

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<sup>227</sup> Charles Letourneau, “Umumiyet İtibariyle Din,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (30 September 1327/13 October 1911), p. 27.

<sup>228</sup> See, for example, D. A. Mensi, “İlmî Tetkikler: Psikoloji Tetkikatının Takip Ettiği Yol,” p. 14. For another argument claiming that an experimental examination of the soul is possible together with scientific developments and that the only and the scientific way of understanding its nature is experiment, see Dr. Julius A. Wenchel, “Wundt’un Felsefesi: Psikoloji ve Ahlak Dâir,” p. 12.

<sup>229</sup> Julius A. Wenchel, *ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>230</sup> D. A. Mensi, *ibid*, p. 13.

The common approach we come across in Young Turks' periodicals in respect of the quality of soul has generally been expressed within passages from Western thinkers. Writings of Letourneau –who is a materialist thinker- about the source of religions and development of religious beliefs, for example, appear in various periodicals like *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* and *Genç Kalemler*. Just as this new understanding has been quoted from Western thinkers, its natural implications have also been expressed within the language of those thinkers.

It is not difficult to foresee that the assumption which regards the soul as a reflection and function of the matter is going to turn into an argument to be used against the idea of life after death. Thus, we witness that the belief in life after death has been characterized, as a natural consequence of these opinions, to be a baseless and fictitious idea.<sup>231</sup> Accordingly, the life after death is a content of a belief which prevailed since the oldest periods of humanity and came out totally as a result of some natural motives. People who never succeeded to accept the reality of death developed a belief in which soul goes, following its abdication of the body, to mountains, jungles or islands summoning it and feels some desires similar to the ones it desired when the body was alive.<sup>232</sup> This belief constitutes the primitive form of belief in life after death and takes a more sophisticated shape in a step latter. In the next stage people start to imagine that the souls are coming together in an unseen location and that the life, they maintain there, is an imitation of the real life. The belief of life after death gained an important quality since this second stage and it is decorated by beauties taken from earthly life. It is such a perfect place that includes

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<sup>231</sup> There are also some remarkable arguments in Young Turks' periodicals stating that the belief in life after death is baseless. For such interpretations, see Charles Letourneau, "Umumiyet İtibariyle Din," pp. 26-30; Charles Letourneau, "Umumiyet İtibariyle Dinler -2- İlâhlar," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), pp. 28-31; Charles Létourneau, "Milletlerin Ruhiyetleri: Birinci Kitap-Hayvanlarda Ruh Tekâmülü-Vicdan," pp. 180-183; M. Nermi, "Felsefe: Ölüm ve Hayat – Muhtelif Irklarda Ölüm ve Ölümden Sonra Hayat Fikrinin Tenemmüv ve Tekâmülü Hakkında İçtimai Tetkikler/Mukaddime," *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 21 (16 May 1328/29 May 1912), pp. 220-224; M. Nermi, "Felsefe: Ölüm ve Hayat – Ölümden Sonra Hayat Fikrinin Tekâmülü Hakkında İçtimai Tetkikler," *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 23 (19 June 1328/2 July 1912), pp. 270-279; M. Nermi, "Ölüm ve Hayat: Mısır Ve Berberlerin Dinleri -3- Eski Mısır," pp. 72-80; M. Nermi, "Ölüm ve Hayat: Mısır ve Berberlerin Dinleri -3- Eski Mısır," *Genç Kalemler* 4, no. 27 (2 October 1328/15 October 1912), pp. 95-100.

<sup>232</sup> Charles Letourneau, "Umumiyet İtibariyle Din," p. 27.

all the things people search for but fail to find in this miserable world.<sup>233</sup> It is even possible to move one step further and characterize the belief in life after death as an animated expression of the impossible ideas that could not be acquired in this world.<sup>234</sup>

The most perfect form of the belief of life after death manifests itself as an ethical sovereignty. Adhering himself to the future with a great hope human being obliged, in the face of injustices taking place on earth, to conceive an “after life” in which he believes that an absolute justice exists. This life, where everybody will be interrogated in accordance with his own deeds, increases the attachment of human being to living as well as it strengthens the belief of life after death through the ethical dimension it has.<sup>235</sup>

According to this new approach, which finds its reflection in Young Turks’ periodicals, the ideas that human beings adopted with regard to soul and life after death are generated from their own lives. For example, the primitive mentality distinguishes souls into two groups by characterizing them as good and bad souls. While good souls are thought to be existents dwelling in more decent locations, the bad souls are regarded to be living in dirty places.<sup>236</sup> It is apparent that people attribute qualities they do not like in their daily lives to bad souls, and qualities they like to good souls. A similar situation can be said to be valid for the concepts of heaven and hell also that come to the agenda within the context of belief in life after death. This is why the heaven thought by people living in hot climates, for example, is cool and the heaven thought by people living in cold climates is hot.<sup>237</sup> Viewed from this perspective, one can say that an exact opposite situation is prevailing in the

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>234</sup> M. Nermi, “Felsefe: Ölüm ve Hayat-Ölümden Sonra Hayat Fikrinin Tekâmülü Hakkında İçtimai Tetkikler,” p. 274.

<sup>235</sup> Charles Létourneau, *ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>236</sup> M. Nermi, *ibid*, p. 273.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*, p. 274.

hell. In other words, a hell thought by people living in a hot location is hot, and the hell thought by people living in a cold location is cold.

#### **4.2.2 The Real Sense of Immortality in Young Turks' Approach**

The disinterested attitude maintained by Young Turks towards metaphysics and their critics against the assumptions to this effect caused them to question the idea of immortality in respect of its metaphysical dimension. As it is pointed out above, the ideas that have been put forward within the language of Western thinkers constitute expressions of Young Turks' reactions against the tradition qualified by them as the totality of obsolete opinions and beliefs. Therefore, involvement of articles –the great majority of which are translations- regarding the life after death in Young Turks' publications is highly meaningful.

One can also observe in periodicals that there are some indications with regard to adoption of biological immortality by Young Turks, though the metaphysical sense of it is rejected by them. And this adoption arises from their approach prioritizing not individual but society. Young Turks, like Ziya Gökalp, who has been deeply affected by the meaning attributed to society particularly by Emile Durkheim, dignify the existence of individual to the extent that he contributes to the existence of society. An individual consciousness is a null concept, in their opinion, unless it contributes to the construction of social consciousness. As it is pointed above, the new philosophical framework adopted by Young Turks characterizes the soul as a totality of the cognitive functions taking place in brain. It can be said that the social consciousness, as described by them, reminds the social soul, while the individual consciousness reminds the individual soul. And yet the society becomes a totality of individual consciousnesses. When it is interpreted in terms of the immortality of soul, this circumstance will mean that individual souls exist in social consciousness as a platform wherein they preserve their existences.

As a matter of fact, the issue is related with the nature of “subject”. Traditionally speaking, talking about resurrection means that the individual subject starts to a new life. The life after death is a life individual will maintain with his personality he had

in this world. The ethical basis, on which the belief of life after death grounds, necessitates the existence of a subject who can say “I”. For, he has realized his deeds in the world as a subject having this consciousness. And God’s interrogation of the subject on these actions requires that the subject himself is responsible for such actions and, therefore, that he has a separate personality which can be charged. Metaphysical immortality will have no sense unless there is a subject to be interrogated. This circumstance is valid for monotheistic religions, at least.

Is there a self-subsisting subject in Young Turks’ understanding? Is it possible to talk about an individual soul as a “substance” in terms of its classical definition? These questions are in need of answers to comprehend the kind of ideas Young Turks have with regard to immortality.

One can say that the intellectually productive Young Turk figures have a negative opinion about the existence of individual subjects. This is a valid observation for the periodicals as far as we examined. There is not an individual soul. We need to talk rather about society which is the total soul. The most remarkable interpretation to this effect is to be found in one of Ziya Gökalp’s articles published in *Yeni Mecmua*.

According to Ziya Gökalp, two types of subjects can be discerned. One of them is individual subject. He calls it “individual consciousness.” And the second type is social subject which he calls “social consciousness”.<sup>238</sup> Social consciousness has the ability of determining the perspective of individual consciousness. When the individual consciousness looks into the universe he may think that it is personally observing. However, his view has been determined by society. It is individual consciousness which looks, but it is society’s eye that sees. In other words, since the observations of the individual about universe take part as an element in social consciousness it is the latter which constitutes the real subject.<sup>239</sup>

Ziya Gökalp grounds the difference between individual and social consciousnesses on the distinction he makes between the terms of “individuality” (ferdiyet) and

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<sup>238</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Eski Türkçülük, Yeni Türkçülük,” p. 303.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, p. 304.

“personality” (şahsiyet). We are ostensibly trying to maintain our own individuality when we eat, drink and feel the desire of reproduction etc. However, what we are actually doing is serving unconsciously to the continuance of our species. In a similar way, we are ostensibly being subject to our individual tendencies when we are pursuing religious, ethical, political or aesthetical values etc. But what we are actually doing is serving unconsciously to the unity and progress of our society. Individuality and personality, in Ziya Gökalp’s opinion, are two different organizations of the same soul existed within two different systems. The center of the system of individuality is the intellect of species taking part in individuals. And the center of personality is the “conscience” (vicdan).<sup>240</sup>

We are of the opinion that the difference made between individuality and personality can be seen as a difference between the soul and body. In other words, individuality refers to body while the personality refers to the soul. Individual consciousnesses can maintain their specific existences if and to the extent that they are detached from social mass which exists only within the form of a common quality. This detachment does not have a sense of opposition to society. It rather refers to a separate material existence which enables us to talk about the individual. All consciousnesses are obliged to interlace within the deepness of society and to collaborate by means of it. But, if their individualities are to have a meaning, another factor will be needed. This factor will intervene into and partition off the said common quality. In other words, there is a need for an “individuating” factor. The factor that performs this role is the body.<sup>241</sup>

The assumption that the quality of being subject in its real sense belongs to personality rather than the individuality can be interpreted in such a way that Ziya Gökalp has an understanding of a transcendental subject. And it seems that there is an inspiration from Kantian idealism at this point. For, Kantian idealism sees the reality as a product of a sphere which includes both the subject and object rather than as a product of any ability of a single subject. And this sphere also is a subject.

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<sup>240</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Ferdiyet ve Şahsiyet,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 1 (12 July 1917), p. 3.

<sup>241</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Şahsî Ahlâk,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 8 (30 August 1917), p. 144.

However, it is no more a subject, but a transcendental subject. And the transcendental subject is neither mine nor yours nor his; it is a common sphere of existence for all of our subjects.<sup>242</sup> The equivalent of this sphere in Ziya Gökalp's theory is social consciousness. If, he seems to think, we are going to talk about consciousness we can do so by concentrating not on an individual consciousness. We need to take into consideration the consciousness of the individuals constituting the society in general which is also the total consciousness.<sup>243</sup>

This approach can be referred to in a struggle to answer the questions like "how to define soul and body?" or "what kind of qualities soul has?", and it causes us to think that soul represents the total while the body represents individual. It obviously is away from traditional conceptions of soul and body. For, in traditional understanding, both of the soul and body have different existences and belong to individual. Reducing the soul to body or melting the individual soul in social one as an upper category is an unfamiliar approach for the traditional thinking. There is not a difference for traditional understanding between approaches that regards the soul as the totality of cognitive functions happening in brain and that attributes it to society as an element. Because the later also defines the soul with reference to a social personality but not to an individual one. Thus, according to Ziya Gökalp, elements which constitute the notion of soul are totality of ideas and emotions originating from society. To put it in his own words, the soul is "emotions and ideas that manifests the society in us."<sup>244</sup>

Change that the understanding of individual soul is undergone does not take place only in Ziya Gökalp's thought. This shift of meaning is a reflection of the organic society and expressed as such by many Young Turk writers on several occasions.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, *Felsefeye Giriş* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1997), p. 50.

<sup>243</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *ibid*, p. 144.

<sup>244</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *ibid*, p. 145.

<sup>245</sup> For interpretations about the place individual consciousness has in the face of social consciousness, see: Tekin Alp, "İçtimai Siyaset-3," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 30 (31 January 1918), p. 61; Tekin Alp, "Tesanütçülük: Yeni İstikamet," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 37 (28 March 1918), pp. 205-207; Tekin Alp, "Tesanütçülük," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 43 (9 May 1918), pp. 335-337; Suphi Ethem, "Yenilik," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (30 September 1327/13 October 1911), p. 9; Ziya Gökalp, "İçtimai

As a matter of fact, it is possible to find the roots of this semantic change on the Young Turk notion of “union”. The new Ottoman reality Young Turks tried to construct is a society clamped together around certain ideals. The sole meaning individual existence has is measured according to the contribution it makes for the social consciousness which is the total existence. Individual turns out to be a pathologic event so long as he does not give the priority to society and pursues his self-interests.<sup>246</sup> What is accepted by society as normal is the individuality only which behaves in a way not to injure social conscience. Given that this is the general framework of Young Turks’ understanding of unity, interpretations in the direction of melting individual soul in the social soul and of regarding soul as the totality of ideas and emotions that emanate from society become quite natural results.

If the soul is a totality of the ideas and emotions that appear within the flow of social life then it will be possible to accept the idea that the soul is immortal. For, there will not be an existence death of which can be dragged in this case. Considered from this perspective, an idea of immortality can be said to take a part in Young Turks’ thinking. However, it is not the immortality of individual but of society. Moreover, it is not a metaphysical immortality. It can be reconciled with the biological and sociological immortality, pointed out earlier, to a certain degree. If we are to make an evaluation about the interrogation to which the individual is assumed to be a subject, all we can say is that it will not take place within the terms of a life after death as it is argued throughout the belief of metaphysical immortality. To put it clearly, this interrogation can only be made within this material world by taking into consideration the contributions individual made for the continuance of the species.

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Mezhepler ve İçtimaiyat,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 26 (3 January 1917), pp. 501-503; Hüseyin Cahit, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -6- On Dokuzuncu Asrın Temayülât-ı Ruhîyesi: Dekadanizm-Sembolizm,” p. 198; Abdullah Cevdet, “Hürriyet-i İrtica Yok,” *İçtihat* 3, no. 47 (15 May 1328/28 May 1912), pp. 1098-1100; Rıza Tevfik, “Hürriyet: İngiliz Hakîm-i Meşhuru John Stuart Mill Hürriyeti Nasıl Anlıyor?,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 5 (1 May 1325/14 May 1909), p. 20; Ziya Gökalp, “Dinin İçtimai Hizmetleri,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 36 (14 Dhū al-Qa’da 1333/10 September 1331/23 September 1915), pp. 772-776; Daru’l-Hikmeti’l-İslamiye, “Daru’l-Hikmeti’l-İslamiye Beyannâmesi,” *İslam Mecmuası* 5, no. 63 (24 Muḥarram 1337/30 October 1335/30 October 1918), p. 1176; M. Nermi, “Ertuğrul’a Mektuplarım -2- Aile-Vatan-İnsaniyet,” p. 64; M. Nermi, “Alfred Fouillée ve Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlak,” p. 20.

<sup>246</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 9 (16 December 1327/29 December 1911), p. 7; Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 12 (1 February 1327/14 February 1912), p. 1.

Individual perceives the immortality not as a case he can experience himself but as a case which can be experienced by survivors as long as they maintain their existence. This perception will determine, of course, his attitude towards death to the extent that even the fear of death, which generally terrifies human being, loses its effect when the immortality of society is conceived of. It is because the individual self, melted within the society, thinks about the ideals of the *total* and does not hesitate to ignore his own death to keep those ideals alive. The shadow of death cannot stand against a society which is unified spiritually and “since there is not an individual, there is not death either in it.”<sup>247</sup> Death means that everything is over for individual. But the species of individual maintains its existence by reproducing just like fruitlets.<sup>248</sup> And this is the greatest proof of biological immortality.

### 4.3 Predestination

The discussions around the term of *predestination* (*qadar*) seem to constitute another topic of philosophy of religion handled by Young Turks in their periodicals.

The term of predestination has a religious content since it points to the belief that everything has been determined previously by God. And this definition reminds the idea that God intervenes in every events happening within universe including human life. It may be seen easy to imagine or even adopt the change actively caused by God’s power when it comes to the creation of the universe. However, inserting human life into the area of God’s intervention brings with it some difficulties.

When we look into the history of Islamic thought we see that the discussions around the term of predestination are concentrating primarily on three points: 1- Plan of the creation of the universe, 2- Events we experience involuntarily, and 3- Predestination of volitional actions of human being.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Şemseddin Günaltay, “Ölmek Yok Olmak Mıdır?,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 18 (13 Şafar 1333/18 December 1330/31 December 1914), p. 492; Ali Haydar, “Ahlak Hakkında,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), p. 10.

<sup>248</sup> M. Nermi, “Felsefe: Ölüm ve Hayat: Muhtelif Irklarda Ölüm ve Ölümden Sonra Hayat Fikrinin Tenemmüv ve Tekâmülü Hakkında İçtimai Tetkikler-Mukaddime.” p. 274.

<sup>249</sup> Muhit Mert, *Kelam Tarihinin Problemleri* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2008), p. 25.

One can say that there is a general consensus, among theists at least, about the plan of the creation of the universe. Accordingly, God has created the universe out of nothing and established certain rules and laws in it. The existence of the creatures as a whole persists pursuant to these rules and laws. Human being also is subjected to these natural laws as a part of the universe just like the enormous galaxies, planets or stars. It is possible to characterize God's discretion in this sense as the physical rules. Quran names the rules of this kind as "sunnatullah" [established way of God].<sup>250</sup> As we constitute a part of the universe and since we are subject to strict physical laws the events we experience involuntarily can also be justified in this way.

The issue discussed broadly most by Islamic thinkers about the problem of predestination seems to be the question of whether the volitional actions of human beings are predetermined by God or not. Parties adopted three different approaches in this respect. Since these approaches have a relation with our current topic we want to touch upon the most basic arguments of these parties briefly.

One of the parties argues that human beings are totally free in their volitional actions. God does not intervene in the realization of these actions under no circumstances. Traditionally speaking, human being wills and creates his own actions by himself. God neither intervenes in nor predetermines the actions. He has information about human deeds just after they are realized. This approach constitutes the position adopted by the sect named as "Qadariyya" in the history of Islamic thought. On the other hand, there are some movements that say the exact opposite of this. According to this second approach, human actions are not within the limits of human will. In other words, deeds realized by a human being can never be seen as the reflections of his own free will. Human being is like a leaf in front of the wind. He is blown about by his destiny just as a leaf is blown about by the wind. Human beings' actions are nothing but an actualization of the issues predetermined by God. This is the position of the Islamic sect named as "Jabriyya".

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<sup>250</sup> The concept of "sunnatullah" appears in Qur'an in different verses. See, for example, 17:77, 33:62, 40:85, 48:23.

Several criticisms can be directed against the position both Qadariyya and Jabriyya has with regard to the issue of predestination. For example, can a God having information about human deeds just after they are realized be regarded as God who is conceived of in traditional understanding of Islam? Can the exclusion of God from the flow of events be reconciled with the belief that he is an omnipotent existent? God, as characterized in Quran, is a being who has information about all events taking place in the universe to the extent that even a leaf cannot fall on the ground without his knowledge.<sup>251</sup> On the other hand, an assumption that human actions are predetermined by God in their entirety will naturally make both human freedom and responsibility matters of discussion. Human beings must not be held responsible for their own deeds if they have no freedom in actualizing them. This is what justice requires. However, Islamic belief says that human beings are responsible for all of their actions. Moreover, it is argued by Islam that as a result of this responsibility they are going to be interrogated, rewarded or punished by God. Of course, punishing a person who is neither free nor responsible cannot be reconciled with God's justice.

Such reservations caused the appearance of a third position with regard to the issue of predestination. This position is a production of an understanding called Ahl al-Sunnah. Traditionally, Ahl al-Sunnah tries to find a middle course in the issue of predestination like it does in almost all of other disputed matters. According to it, human beings' actions can be regarded as pure results of neither human volition nor a divine discretion. Human being wants to realize an action and God gives permission for it. To put it within an Islamic terminology, human being demands and God creates. Thus, volitional actions occur as a co-production of humane and divine wills.

One can also observe that the discussions about the issue of predestination, to which we briefly touched upon above, have been moved away from religious area and handled on a political ground. For example, the argument of predestination has been

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<sup>251</sup> Qur'an, 6:59. The exact text of the verse reads that: "[A]nd with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry thing but that it is in a clear record."

applied, in the Umayyad period, both to legitimize the political sovereignty and get the political mistakes acceptable.<sup>252</sup> This circumstance constitutes one of the proofs showing the shift of discussions to a political ground.

Predestination, as handled in Young Turks' periodicals, is a subject of political criticism to a large extent. As a matter of fact, the philosophical change in the understanding of predestination can be said to have an effect in turning the issue into a political criticism. Accordingly, Ottoman society started to expect everything from Sultan instead of expecting everything from God or leaving everything to his will. In other words, the Sultan has been deified.<sup>253</sup> However, it is also possible to come across with some articles in which the issue is analyzed in creedal terms. In an anonymous article published in the newspaper of *Şura-yı Ümmet*, for example, it is argued that although the Ottoman society seems as if it is affiliated with the sect of Ahl al-Sunnah it in fact follows the position of Jabriyya. According to the writer, Ottoman society believes –as it is adopted by the members of the sect of Jabriyya– that the power of predestination leaves no place for a personal will, choice or autonomy on humane behaviors. This means that there can be no free will of human beings.<sup>254</sup> And it is inevitable for such an understanding of predestination to bring within itself a social and intellectual collapse. Thusly, in his examination about the political and cultural crisis Islamic world, and Ottoman society in particular, experiences Abdullah Cevdet also refers to the false understanding of predestination as one of the causes creating the current crisis.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Muhit Mert, *ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>253</sup> Critics to this effect are generally found in the newspaper of *Meşveret*. That the issue of predetermination has been made a matter of discussion in *Meşveret*, which is also the first Young Turk periodical, can be seen as a sign showing the extent of importance Young Turks attributed to it. For the compliants appear in *Meşveret* with regard to the belief of predetermination see, for example: Ahmet Rıza, “Mukaddime,” *Meşveret*, 1, no. 1 (1 December 1107/13 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1313/1 December 1895), p. 1; Ahmet Rıza, “İhtilal,” *Meşveret* 3, no. 29 (21 Sha‘bān 1315/14 January 1898/15 January 1898), p. 3; Nazım, “İstibdad Hizmetete Mani Olur Mu?,” p. 1.

<sup>254</sup> Anonymous, “Makale-i Mahsusa: Kader,” *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 3 (9 May 1902), p. 2.

<sup>255</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair,” *İctihat* 3, no. 26 (1 July 1327/14 July 1911), p. 763. According to Abdullah Cevdet, other reasons that have a share in the collapse of Islamic world are the oppression applied by Muslim rulers, blindness of religious scholars, and the illegitimate approach adopted with regard to the covering of women.

In Abdullah Cevdet's opinion, it is possible to talk about predestination. However, the real meaning of predestination does not include the belief that events happening actually are predetermined. If we are to talk about something predestined we need to search for it not in the action or event but in the quality which cannot be separated from things which constitute the locality of that act or event. It is because of this quality, for example, that each matter having the quality of being burnable is being burned wherever and whenever the conditions of burning exist collectively. This is predestined for those matters. The quality of burning of fire can be explained in terms of predestination. And the same applies both for poison and death as well. For, the quality of poisoning is predestined for poisonous matters just as death is a predestination of a person who touches upon poison.<sup>256</sup>

It is apparent that Abdullah Cevdet evaluates predestination as a term which is directly related with physical realm. Hence, he characterizes it as the totality of "laws of nature" or "unchangeable laws". The concepts corresponding to these usages in Quran and in the discipline of Kalam are "sunnatullah" and "âdatullah" respectively. According to him, the verse stating that "you will not find in the established way of Allah any change"<sup>257</sup> is a clear expression of a terrifying philosophy of nature as well as an explanation about the eternal law of permanence of things and events.<sup>258</sup> Although the term of predestination, in Abdullah Cevdet's opinion, partly refers to a creedal issue, it nevertheless has a political character also because of its acquisition of a quality concerning life. To reduce the effect of distortion created by the traditional sense of the term of predestination on Ottoman society's mind to a minimum degree one needs to change its perspective of life. Achievement in this endeavor requires a comprehension about Islam in its real sense. The traditional understanding of predestination is contrary to Islam. And it paralyzes the earthly life just as it causes deterioration in Muslim's creedal lives. To put it in Abdullah Cevdet's own words:

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<sup>256</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *ibid*, p. 765. For a similar approach related to the negative results caused by the belief in predestination, see Mustafa Asım, "Memleketin Halâsı Neye Mütevakkıftır?," *İçtihat* 4, no. 74 (1 August 1329/14 August 1913), p. 1641.

<sup>257</sup> Qur'an, 33:62.

<sup>258</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *ibid*.

Not the burning of “Çırağan” palace is what predestined, but the burning of the houses and perishment of incautious, unguarded and imprudent nations is. Growth of a seed planted in a droughty and sunless place is not predestined. What constitutes the predestination is the productivity of a seed planted in a field which carries the whole necessary agricultural conditions. We, unwary Muslims, find a quick consolation when we lose a country: we either characterize it as “a twist of fate!” or say that “it was not meant to be!” This consolation is sluggish just as it leads to infidelity.<sup>259</sup>

There are some other arguments stating that the predestination, reduced by Abdullah Cevdet physical conditions, is not effectual in physical realm as well. The most remarkable example of the arguments to this effect can be found in Ethem Necdet’s article titled “Fatalizm: Tenkid-i Felsefi.”

According to Ethem Necdet, the belief of predestination is a reflection of the primitive thought. For, primitive human beings were deriving their opinions about the nature from their own lives. What constitute manifestation of the thought and emotions of human being are the activities he carries out himself. Humane activities are generally pre-determined by human being himself within a set of plans and programs. Starting from this fact, primitive people made a habit of explaining natural events also in the same way. Consequently, they thought that the natural events are taking place in accordance with a certain program predestined by a greater power or “total reason”.<sup>260</sup> However, the belief of predestination is actually nothing but a sophistry.<sup>261</sup>

It is not difficult to forecast that Ethem Necdet, who does not accept the existence of a predestination prevailing even within the physical realm, rejects the idea that the volitional acts of human beings are predestined by a divine will. As a matter of fact, taking into consideration of the negative attitude Young Turks adopted against the concept of metaphysics in periodicals, one needs to characterize his approach as legitimate. For, periodicals are full of articles reflecting positivistic understanding of

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<sup>259</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *ibid*, pp. 765-766.

<sup>260</sup> Ethem Necdet, “Fatalizm: Tenkid-i Felsefi,” p. 1720.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1722.

science and philosophy. Contrary to metaphysics which is called as “negative science” by Rıza Tefvik,<sup>262</sup> for example, positivistic science tries to find out the real causes of events. Accordingly, explanation of events must only be searched for within other events. Metaphysical or theological approaches use the concept of divine will as a tool in explaining events. Therefore, they are non-scientific. The belief in the discretionary power of divine will blunts human beings’ ability of thinking scientifically. Explaining all of the events within the terms of a divine will causes overlooking even the simplest natural laws that exist in their flow.<sup>263</sup>

It would be useful to note an important point relating to the negative attitude of Young Turks on the issue of predestination. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, positivism contains within itself a deterministic understanding as well. And the term of determinism refers to an idea of pre-discretion. All of the events taking place within the universe are occurring under the effect of natural laws. These laws are unchangeable in quality, which means that the occurrence of events is predestined by established laws of nature. It can be seen as a reasonable explanation as such. Thusly one may argue that reasoning about the relationship of causes and effects would ensure appearance of the possibility of changing results. Information about the causes can be said to carry such a possibility within itself. Therefore, determinism may not be taken as referring to inalterability. Now, it seems true that information about the cause may get it a subject to change and ensure us to have an effect on it. However, when we look into the universe as a whole, it is still disputable that laws of nature can be identified in full; that all causes can be specified by depending on this identification and that human being can have an accumulation of knowledge or power to change results. Therefore, acceptance of determinism as a principle seems to be the expression of an idea that one faces with an inalterable reality. When the criticisms Young Turks direct against the belief of predestination taken into consideration, the fact that they honor the idea of determinism is highly remarkable situation. Moreover, there are also some writers in Young Turk periodicals who argue that determinism prevails not just within the physical realm

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<sup>262</sup> Rıza Tefvik, “Muhasebe-i *İçtihat*: Canlı mı Cansız mı?,” p. 2.

<sup>263</sup> Suphi Ethem, “İslamların Ulûm-u Tabî’iyyeye Hizmetleri,” *Genç Kalemler* 4, no. 26 (24 August 1328/6 September 1912), pp. 70,71.

but even amidst the volitional acts of human being as well. Volitional behaviors of human beings are not different from natural events. Just like natural events, they are also depending on certain causes. And yet they constitute the cause of different behaviors. Volitional acts, which are functioning both as causes and effects, take up a small place among the long sequence or the complex network that is formed by general events occurring in the universe. Even the behaviors and movements that seemed to us as the most volitional ones are a result of infinite –big or small, distant or close- causes. Considered from this angle, volitional acts are as predetermined as the movement of a planet or fall of an object.<sup>264</sup>

This interesting approach can only be explained within the terms of an unconditional belief in science and a critical attitude towards religion. The ability of science in explaining natural events brings human being in an extremely strategic power. Human being gets a power over against nature by knowing. Sciences show us the existence and requisition of things. And they also prepare and present us the tools of domination over them.<sup>265</sup> But the metaphysical and theological explanations are far from such a quality. Having knowledge about the existence of a divine will is condemned to remain as an abstract envisagement. As a result of its definition, it is impossible for human being to have a transformative effect on divine will. For this reason, one needs to adopt the term of determinism as a scientific notion and reject the religious concept of predestination or re-examine it under the light of scientific data. Young Turks' view of predestination essentially grounds on this idea.

#### **4.4 Relationship between Religion and Science**

One of the questions that need to be answered, regarding to Young Turks' thought of philosophy of religion, is related with the kind of relationship they assume to exist between religion and science. Actually this question can also be formulated as the relationship between revelation and reason or more generally belief and philosophy.

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<sup>264</sup> Sati, "Mebâhis-i Ruhiye-4: İhtiyar," *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 10 (1 October 1325/14 October 1909), p. 154.

<sup>265</sup> Bedii Nuri, "Hikmet-i İctimâiye -1: Tarih-i Hudûs ve Neş'eti," p. 89.

We need to say as a beginning that there are several approaches different from each other, in Young Turks' periodicals, subjecting the relation of science and religion. These approaches can be examined within three distinct groups. The first approach gives priority to science and excludes religion. The second approach argues that religion and science are factors supporting each other. And the third one characterizes the struggle of creating conciliation between religion and science as meaningless by grounding this argument on the idea that they belong to two indifferent areas. On the other hand, one does not observe in periodicals an attitude giving priority to religion and excluding science. This situation is interesting enough, because an attitude most possibly accepted by tradition is what the missing approach argues. According to a traditional theistic attitude of philosophy of religion, the factors imposed by religion must constitute the starting and ending point of all intellectual activities. That an approach to this effect could not be observed even in *Islam Mecmuası*, which can be characterized as the most conservative among Young Turks' periodicals, is a sign showing the extent of their detachment from traditional thinking.

As a matter of fact, the first of these approaches is quite understandable. Since, as far as it is examined within the second chapter, the positivist, evolutionist and materialist understandings of science are irreconcilable with the traditional understanding of Islam adopted by Ottoman society. To be able to talk about conciliation one needs to revise the understanding either of science or of religion. And the solution such a revision can supply is an issue worthy of disputation separately.

According to those who adopt this approach, the cause of the exclusion of the religious belief by scientific thought must be searched for in the methodology followed. Science and philosophy, so far as they are developed in the West, have undergone a big transformation throughout centuries. Proving indisputable, that is to say divine commands or messages, by a disputable tool, which is reason, constitute the essence of scholastic thought. Reducing the whole data, acquired in this manner, to a divine will is the principal quality of the way of knowing which can be said to be

driven from religious belief.<sup>266</sup> And the scientific methodology we need to apply in all possible domains of knowledge rather requires us to present a material, positive and examinable reference point or a foundation for our comparisons, inferences and reasoning.<sup>267</sup> According to the proponents of religious belief, the truth can only be found to the accompaniment of commands and guidance of prophets. However, scientific understanding refutes, in its endeavor of examination of truth, all external factors that have an effect on the thought of human being. Together with the methodological change, which results in the refusal of any reference point or foundation except reason and experience, things that transcend the limits of experience and reason or that are contrary to them are totally rejected –including every mystical or metaphysical thoughts. Thus, the methodological transformation showed its biggest effect in the form of detracting the scientific understanding and philosophy from divine messages. And it makes religious belief unable to cling against scientific thought.<sup>268</sup>

The confrontation between religious belief and scientific thought does not depend, of course, solely on a pure methodological basis. As far as we observe in Young Turks' periodicals, this confrontation has been handled as an essential issue. In other words, the characteristics make religion and science exist –which are also immanent to them- create some important differences.

First of all religion depends on emotion rather than reason. Human beings drift apart from scientific thought, and consequently acquire a religious point of view, so far as they do not prefer to explain things by reason itself. In this respect, religion takes the form of “a dream of childhood”<sup>269</sup> in terms of philosophy and scientific thought. On the other hand, the source of all religions is not an omniscient divine existent, but the

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<sup>266</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, “Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti,” p. 212.

<sup>267</sup> Charles Létourneau, “Milletlerin Ruhîyetleri: Birinci Kitap/Hayvanlarda Ruh Tekâmülü/Vicdan”, p. 182.

<sup>268</sup> Bedii Nuri, “Tehavvûlat-ı Fikriye”, pp. 1154, 1156; Rıza Tevfik, “Muhasebe-i *İçtihat*: Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler”, p. 2223.

<sup>269</sup> Charles Létourneau, “Umumiyet İtibariyle Dinler -2- İlahlar”, pp. 28, 30.

ignorance and fear of human beings they experience in the face of nature.<sup>270</sup> One of the principal duties of science is to remove the corona that is spinned around religion by superstitions.<sup>271</sup> A person, who examines the nature by a scientific eye, learns that he comes from nature; that he maintains its existence in accordance with natural laws and that he will return to nature as required by those laws. According to Abdullah Cevdet, for example, it is difficult to understand that a big group of people are still adhering to religious belief contrarily to the data acquired by science.<sup>272</sup>

The most obvious expressions of the essential difference between science and religion, which are the synonyms of reason and revelation respectively in traditional language, can be found in Abdullah Cevdet's writings. For example, a statement –he quotes from Ernst Haeckel- saying that “science ends wherever faith begins”<sup>273</sup> is an apparent sign of the difference he assumes to exist between religion and science. It can reasonably be argued that his purpose in recounting this statement is to evaluate religion as a pure belief and science as an impenitent questioning. Thusly, according to Abdullah Cevdet, what science and philosophy need before anything else is a mentality “which does not believe easily”. This is why the thoughts passing through the mind of a philosopher, while he examines the complex issues, must present an investigative quality like “I do not know, I'm in suspicion and I hope”. This is also an ethical duty for a philosopher.<sup>274</sup> Despite the fact that religion expects an absolute obedience from its adherents, science rather expects human being to have an opposite attitude. There is only one purpose for science, which is to acquire knowledge concerning the reality. For a scientific investigation, no asylum can be more holy than the asylum of truth. People must review everything down to the last detail. Science is obliged to overcome all obstacles, including religion, which possibly prevents its investigations. Otherwise, it may not be possible to talk about science.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *Fünun ve Felsefe ve Felsefe Sânihaları*, p. 100.

<sup>271</sup> Charles Létourneau, “Umumiyet İtibariyle Din”, p. 27.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. *ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>273</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*, p. 65.

A similar difference that exists between religion and science will of course be observed between philosophy and science as well. For, in Abdullah Cevdet's opinion, philosophy must depend on the scientific data itself. In this respect, the ways of examination and explanation of the facts followed by philosophical thought - that takes a scientific form in Abdullah Cevdet's thinking- and religion are completely different. He puts this idea forward within the language of Emile Boutmy, stating that "philosophy is a heatless light, while religion is a lightless heat."<sup>276</sup>

On the other hand, since science and philosophy are the products of human reason they differ from religion within the terms of source they have. Religion explains facts by appealing to a supernatural source while reason searches for the source of the truth in things themselves. Abdullah Cevdet grounds this kind of difference between religion and reason by referring to Abu'l-'Alâ al-Ma'arrî's words: "Human beings are bifurcated into two groups. Some of them have reason but not religion, while some others have religion but not reason."<sup>277</sup> Similarly, the statement he quotes from Goethe says that "those who have science and arts have religion also; let those who do not have these two felicities have religion."<sup>278</sup> And this statement also refers to the essential difference Abdullah Cevdet assumes to exist between religion and science.

Another remarkable interpretation with regard to the relationship between religion and science can be found in Ragıp Hulusi's articles<sup>279</sup> published in *İslam Mecmuası*.

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<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>279</sup> Ragıp Hulusi made important publications within Young Turk periodicals. His translations, with respect to positivistic understanding, in the journal of *Tabiat* are highly remarkable. Although we could not acquire detailed information -except the articles published by him in Young Turks' periodicals- about Ragıp Hulusi's intellectual career, he can be said to have adopted a positivistic approach. His series, comprising of 7 articles published in *İslam Mecmuası*, with regard to the discussions about philosophy of religion are particularly of a great importance. These articles include: Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (28 Rabî al-Âkhir 1332/13 March 1330/26 March 1914), pp. 108-110; "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii-2," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 5 (13 Jumâdâ al-Ûlâ 1332/27 March 1330/9 April 1914), pp. 150-154; "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (27 Jumâdâ al-Ûlâ 1323/10 April 1330/23 April 1914), pp. 182-185; "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 7 (1 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1332/24 April 1330/7 May 1914), 211-

In one of these articles Ragıp Hulusi compares the earth to a clock by giving reference to al-Ghazali's work of *al-Iqtisâd fi'l-i'tiqâd*. According to him, religion says that this world has been established by God. Therefore, every movement or stop in it is a result of creator's discretion and providence. Given that it has been setup eternally by creator, it will work eternally either. Philosophy, on the other hand, accepts God as the first mover and says that this clock has been set up by him. But, considered from a philosophical point of view, results arise in the direction of world's own principles and rules. And the scientific thought, which starts from a purely natural and experimental point of view, is of the opinion that world is came into existence by itself and maintains its existence on its own.<sup>280</sup> Obviously, the argument assumed by Ragıp Hulusi to be posed by scientific thought depends on a postulate relating to the quality of knowledge. He attributes this postulate to the mathematical character of science. According to him, "knowing means to know the thing subjected to knowledge in a mathematical or experimental way."<sup>281</sup> In this approach, which mathematized knowledge and pioneered by Copernic, Galileo, Kepler and Newton, mystical aspect of existence, its unseen qualities, hidden sides and powers -the metaphysical characters in short- of things are no more investigated. What this new approach tries to do is to collect measurable things within the limits of knowledge and define or demonstrate them in an exact and positive way. Science needs to content itself with not the question of "why" but of "how" by explaining it mathematically.<sup>282</sup> Metaphysics, and consequentially religious belief, cannot produce knowledge in its scientific sense. Since they are not dependent on a mathematical basis thoughts about God also cannot be seen as scientific. Considered from this perspective, the statements of "God does exist" or "God is the cause of universe" are

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214; "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 8 (25 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1332/8 May 1330/21 May 1914), pp. 239-241; "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii," *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 12 (22 Sha'bān 1332/3 July 1330/16 July 1914), pp. 371-376; "Din Felsefesi: Din ile İlim – Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti-7," *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 13 (7 Ramađān 1332/17 July 1330/30 July 1914), pp. 404-407.

<sup>280</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," p. 212.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, p. 213.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

nothing but ideas or judgments expressing an absolute faith.<sup>283</sup> Religious belief adopts this judgment as an unchangeable truth. However, science may put forward arguments contradicting not just about the existence of God but about many issues included in religious belief and may also support these arguments by factual data it acquires. It is because of this, for example, that scientific data about the emergence of the world may not be overlapping with the information about the history of creation we received through revelation.<sup>284</sup>

As a matter of fact, leaving religious belief off the agenda by starting from scientific thought can also be seen as the sign of a suspicion with regard to the truth of religion. One can find important clues of such an approach within Young Turks' periodicals. According to Abdullah Cevdet, for example, theology is full of suppositions, illusions and contradictions from beginning to end. Theological arguments result from the ignorance about natural causes. There lies at the core of this ignorance belief in a God who has attributes collection and reconciliation of which is impossible. The only way out of this ignorance that makes humanity unhappy is to give up superstitions.<sup>285</sup> And this can only be realized through reason and science.

M. Nermi's articles, published in the journal of *Genç Kalemler*, are highly remarkable within the context of objections against the truth of religions, particularly of monotheistic religions. Especially his characterization of monotheistic religions as "superstitious religions which have no relationship with heaven"<sup>286</sup> can be seen as a protestation against the truth of those religions. He deduces some destructive results

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<sup>283</sup> Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii," p. 372. For similar interpretations with regard to the quake that mathematized scientific method creates on religious belief, see: Âsaf Nef'î, "Mücadele-i Hayatiye ve Tekâmül-i Cem'iyât," pp. 455-480.

<sup>284</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Adi Fakat Pek Büyük Endişeler," p. 2224; Âsaf Nef'î, "Demokrasi ve Sosyalizm," p. 163.

<sup>285</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Rahip Jean Meslier," *İçtihat* 5, no. 127 (30 January 1330/12 February 1915), p. 471. For an atheistic approach neglecting the existence of God himself whom Abdullah Cevdet conceived as an existent having irreconcilable attributes, see Charles Létourneau, "Umumiyet İtibariyle Din," p. 26. And for another interpretation which regards monotheistic religions as "fictitious heavenly creeds", see Rıza Nüzhet, "Hıristiyanlık: Mazisi ve Âtîsi," p. 21.

<sup>286</sup> M. Nermi, "Ölüm ve Hayat: Mısır ve Berberlerin Dinleri -3- Eski Mısır," p. 96.

concerning the truth of religion by depending on the following prayer argued by him to be read in the funeral rites of ancient Egyptian religion:

Thanks and praises are to you O great God, the owner of the truth! ... O great Lord! Can I confess to you the truth? I am trembling, with a pure truth, before you. Please cover my misdeeds and sins with your forgiveness. I did not betray. I did not lie. I did not kill a man. I did not cut the remuneration of workers back. I did not goof off. I did not defraud somebody. I did not leave hungry. I did not make cry. I did not attempt to deceive anybody. I did not take things that belong to the statues of God. I never appealed to the method of interest. I did not keep in touch with bad women. I did not startle gazelles. I did not turn the flow of rivers. I am innocent, innocent, innocent ...<sup>287</sup>

M. Nermi argues, depending on these phrases, that all worships, rituals and prayers established in monotheistic religions are essentially taken from ancient religions.<sup>288</sup>

Although one comes across with such harsh –even destructive- objections against the truth of religion, the more common approach within Young Turks’ periodicals has been reconciliation of religion and science instead of rejecting religion categorically. This approach can also be understood as subjugation of religion to science and brings within itself some strange circumstances. If we take into consideration the general attitude of Young Turks, who felt an unconditional loyalty to scientific thought, representation of these two domains as reconcilable is strange to a certain degree. However, it is more preferable to say that this search of reconciliation does not arise from a positive quality attributed to religion. In other words, it does not come to the fore as a result of a recognition adopting that religion incorporates possibly true arguments. For, as it is pointed out on several occasions, Young Turks’ modernism presents a reconciliatory character. This is why Abdullah Cevdet, for example, seems to be renouncing from his severe criticisms against religion<sup>289</sup> and attempting to reconcile religion and science by using a more moderate language. Interestingly enough, he argues that “religion and science are twins”. Uncoupling them shall mean

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> There are in Abdullah Cevdet’s work of *Fünun ve Felsefe* passages full of sever criticisms, against religion, quoted from different Western thinkers. For the most remarkable of these critics see *Fünun ve Felsefe*, pp. 80, 81, 82, 99, 100 and 139.

to kill them both. “Science finds prosperity as long as it is religious; and religion turns into a parterre conformably with the deepness and durability of its scientific essence.”<sup>290</sup>

On the other hand, he is of the opinion that the correspondence between religion and science is also supported by several verses and hadiths. Abdullah Cevdet argues that scientific activities are commanded by God and his Messenger and refers to different verses and hadiths in order to reinforce his argument. Starting from this point, for example, he redefines science as “discovering the laws to which God’s attributes are subject.”<sup>291</sup> It is obvious that the relationship established between the term of God, which is one of the central concepts of religion, and the vitality of science necessitates the characterization of science and religion as factors not excluding but including each other. Abdullah Cevdet uses the same religious references about the synthesis he struggled to create between science and religion within the terms of relationship he assumes to exist between religion and philosophy as well. For example, he quotes a paragraph in *Fünun ve Felsefe* stating that “philosophy is a commander and sciences are its soldiers. There is no chance of success for an army without commander; a nation whose youth wasted philosophy is in a great loss”<sup>292</sup> and argues that this is a hadith.<sup>293</sup>

The weirdest aspect of the relationship established between religion and science by Abdullah Cevdet is the reproduction of materialistic arguments within religious concepts. The attempt, for example, to legitimize the basic argument of materialism, that the “matter is eternal”, with reference to a religious source constitutes the most remarkable example of this situation. He translates Lavoisier’s famous argument that “*rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée*” as “nothing can be created and nothing can be

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<sup>290</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *ibid*, p. 69.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47. This statement, which is argued to be a hadith, can also be found in Abdullah Cevdet, “Felsefe-Edebiyat,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 72. (Undated), p. 1577.

<sup>293</sup> Abdullah Cevdet generally translates the statements within rather a free language. And it makes difficult for the researchers to follow the exact quotations. Thus, we could not find a data showing that the word which is quoted in the previous footnote is a hadith.

annihilated” and argues that this teaching is adopted by Islam as well. According to him, Mawlana Jalal ad-Din al-Rumi has put forward this idea by depending on Quran itself long before Lavoisier.<sup>294</sup> Materialistic approach, in Abdullah Cevdet’s opinion, is implicit within basic Islamic creeds. The teaching of immortality of the soul, or the belief in the existence of heaven and hell, for example, totally depend on a materialistic logic:

One of the perpetual accusations of the Church (that is of the religious community) against science is that science is “materialistic”. However, I would like to present to the attentions that the conception and the way of thinking of the Church with regard to life after death has always been and still is purely “materialistic”. The material body will be resurrected and live in a heaven which is also material.<sup>295</sup>

The third argument regarding the relationship between religion and science is that the attempts to reconcile them are meaningless. The most remarkable expressions of this approach can be found in Şevketî’s article titled “Din Felsefesinden”.

It is argued in this article that religion and science attempt to answer the questions emanated from human mind in order for comprehending the world and to make what is unknown a subject to knowledge. However, there is a difference between religious and scientific approaches about the foundation on which can the unknown be grounded to make it knowable. The basic purpose of science is to show the cause of an event within other events that are sensible as it is. Science examines, for this purpose, as many events as possible and tries to put forward the close relationship between them. In other words, science targets to “interpret nature by depending on nature itself.”<sup>296</sup> On the other hand, religion also tries to make what is unknown knowable. But it does so by taking the unknown back to the known. The thing that is referred to as “known” is God’s will. Religion wants to learn the subject to which divine will is concerned and observes the transfiguration of this will in events. It does

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<sup>294</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Dilmesti-i Mevlana,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 86 (26 December 1329/8 January 1914), p. 1901.

<sup>295</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, *Fünun ve Felsefe*, p. 65.

<sup>296</sup> Şevketî, “Din Felsefesinden,” p. 1356.

not try, in this endeavor, to find out the internal connections of the events but argues that events are manifestations of the same power.<sup>297</sup> Religion and science are totally different areas regarding to the basis they use to specify what is knowable and the foundation on which can the unknown be grounded to become knowable.<sup>298</sup>

Şevketî's approach, as described above, constitutes an example of the form in which irreconcilable difference between religion and science came up from a scientific angle. There are also some writes, in Young Turks' periodicals, supported the argument that religion and science are completely different areas by examining the issue from a religious perspective. These figures can be regarded rather as conservatives. According to Şerafeddin Yaltkaya, for example, religion and science are related to two different domains. Religion subjects spiritual area while the scientific thought subjects the material realm. Therefore, "the desire of reconciling religion with science is an illusion that will come across with difficulties in every point."<sup>299</sup> He argues that it is the only result which can most possibly be deduced from Quran and hadiths concerning the relation of the two. Although some verses seem to be corresponding to some scientific data, this correspondence does not constitute the purpose of God in sending those verses.<sup>300</sup>

The facts that Şerafeddin Yaltkaya examines religion and science as two co-excluding areas and finds the reconciliation of religion with science as a meaningless endeavor essentially are struggles to protect religious belief. The article in which he puts forward these ideas appears in *İslam Mecmuası*. *İslam Mecmuası* has been published with the superscription of "a life with religion and a religion with life". As a typical Young Turk periodical it has an exceptional attitude in terms of its evaluation of religion. It cannot be said that it has adopted a traditional understanding of Islam nonetheless. In this journal, Islamic issues are handled by taking the

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid, p. 1357.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid, p. 1358.

<sup>299</sup> Şerafeddin Yaltkaya, "Din Akli Değil Mâkuldür," *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 28 (13 Rajab 1333/14 May 1331/27 May 1915), p. 653.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid, p. 652.

conditions of the time into consideration and within a new perspective. Articles published by Ziya Gökalp<sup>301</sup> in particular are totally serving this purpose. Considered from this angle, one can say that *İslam Mecmuası* pursued the goal of creating a conception of Islam which corresponds to the conditions of the day and gets in touch with life as far as possible.

We would like to complete this chapter by referring to the approach of İsmail Hakkı within this regard.

It has been mentioned in the previous chapter that scientific understanding caused a crisis, both with its existence and nonexistence, for traditional Ottoman world of thought. The nonexistence of science constituted the cause for crisis, in the sense that it ensured the continuance of irrational status quo. Its existence, on the other hand, showed itself in the fact of juddering of the prevailing frame of mind. Developments within scientific area result in collapse of established thoughts and patterns of belief and, therefore, a successive crisis which have social dimension arise. Just as it is possible to observe it within the area of religion, it can also be seen within ethical realm –which is going to be examined in the next chapter. Thus, İsmail Hakkı evaluates the scientific developments and their reflections in the social consciousness as “crisis of religion”.<sup>302</sup> This crisis can be seen as the natural result of adopting the modern scientific and philosophical approaches like positivism, evolutionism and materialism and pumping them into society through periodicals. According to İsmail Hakkı, however, the reason is the mutual infringement of religion and science on the area of other. Some parts of the curriculums, followed in schools, overstepped the

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<sup>301</sup> See, for example: Ziya Gökalp, “Fıkıh ve İctimaiyat,” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 2 (30 Rabı̄ al-Awwal 1332/13 February 1329/26 February 1914), pp. 40-44; Ziya Gökalp, “İctimai Usûl-i Fıkıh,” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 3 (14 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1332/27 February 1329/12 March 1914), pp. 84-87; Ziya Gökalp, “Hüsün ve Kubuh [İctimai Usul-i Fıkıh Meselesi Münasebetiyle],” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 8 (25 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1332/8 May 1330/21 May 1914), pp. 228-230; Ziya Gökalp, “Örf Nedir? [İctimai Usul-i Fıkıh Meselesi Münasebetiyle],” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 10 (24 Rajab 1332/5 June 1330/18 June 1914), pp. 290-295; Ziya Gökalp, “Dinin İctimai Hizmetleri,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 34 (15 Shawwāl 1333/13 August 1331/26 August 1915), pp. 740-743; Ziya Gökalp, “Diyânet ve Kaza,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 35 (29 Shawwāl 1333/27 August 1331/9 September 1915), pp. 756-760; Ziya Gökalp, “Dinin İctimai Hizmetleri,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 36 (14 Dhū al-Qa‘da 1333/10 September 1331/23 September 1915), pp. 772-776.

<sup>302</sup> İsmail Hakkı, “Felsefe: Dinî ve İctimai İctihat.” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 32 (14 February 1918), pp. 107-108.

area of positive and natural truths, accessed to the areas like social and ethical emotions and, consequently, destructed social ideals for the sake of scientific truths. Religious sciences, on the other hand, overstepped the area of sanctity, accessed to positive area and, consequentially, rejected science and nature for the sake of religious creeds and ideals.<sup>303</sup> The only way out of this crisis is repatriation of religion and science to their home fields. One needs to make a division of labor between science and religion. That is to say, exclusion of all external and positive issues from the area of religion and recantation from measuring all internal and spiritual issues by the material and natural scales of science is necessary.<sup>304</sup> As a matter of fact, the idea of division of labor is a frequently discussed issue among Young Turks' periodicals on several occasions. Şevketî, Ragıp Hulusi, Şemseddin Günaltay and Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi, for example, have argued for the necessity of such a division of labor.<sup>305</sup>

To what extent a religion restricted purely to spiritual realm corresponds to the traditional sense of religion is to stay as a matter of discussion. For, the broad authority that religion is given in traditional understanding is not restricted with just spiritual area. It intervenes also in the daily life of human beings by some means or other. That such a detachment from traditional conception is evident even in the *İslam Mecmuası*, which can be found as conservative in comparison to other Young Turk periodicals, is a sign that a new era has been started for the Turkish history of thought in respect to philosophy of religion.

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<sup>303</sup> İsmail Hakkı, *ibid*, p. 107.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.

<sup>305</sup> Cf. Şevketî, "Din Felsefesinden," p. 1358; Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin İlmî Marifete Karşı Hususiyeti," p. 184; Ragıp Hulusi, "Din Felsefesi: Dinin Manevi Hayatta Mevkii," p. 109; Şemseddin Günaltay, "Ölmek Yok Olmak Mıdır?," p. 194; Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi, "Sanatta Güzellik İlimde Hakikat," p. 25.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ETHICS, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY IN YOUNG TURKS' UNDERSTANDING**

In the second and third chapters, how far the Young Turks got away from the traditional ways of thinking were touched upon within the context of their understanding of science and religion. In this chapter we will discuss the kind of conclusions could be drawn within the context of Young Turks' ideas of modernization by looking at the discussions on ethics in their periodicals.

First, it is useful to point out that the ideas, put forward by Young Turks on religion and science, are largely criticism oriented. The traditional mentality is regarded as the reason of all evil and backwardness. As it will be seen in the forthcoming discussions the ideas voiced by the Young Turks within the scope of ethics are largely the product of a criticism. In this regard, it can be said that the philosophy of ethics adopted by Young Turks is a follow-up of their critical understanding of religion and science they employed. However, an important aspect is conspicuous in Young Turks' discussions on ethics which is never found in the previous ones. This is an effort for constituting a new ethical thinking framework with criticism. It was found convenient to discuss the new philosophical language of ethics within this study as it shows that criticism was replaced by an idea of "construction" although by some reasons or other it has been left incomplete.

We will examine the following discussions on the philosophy of ethics under two titles roughly. In the first phase, what the Young Turks criticized when the problem of ethics came up will be tackled. It is necessary to know "what" the Young Turks criticized in terms of grasping the quality of new ethical framework that they wanted to construct. Presenting the reasons for this will ease to find an answer for the question of "what do they want to do?" which will be discussed in the following

section. Besides, the ideas that will be reached within the scope of this question will make it possible to conduct further discussions and present substantive results for the study.

The second discussion that we are planning to realize will focus on the questions of “what did they want to do?” and “what could they do?” This will largely be realized by concentrating on the ethical projections of the idea of “New Life” which is a Young Turks motto. Young Turks are after an entirely new life. In this sense, exploring the essential characters of the ethical framework, that is aimed to be built independent of the traditional way of thinking, corresponding to new life seems to be an important issue. The legitimacy of ideas that are propounded without having the aim of “reform” and put forward just for criticism can be made a matter of questioning. By all means, Young Turks did not criticize just for the sake of criticizing. There are some legitimate grounds for those criticisms. Then, as it is mentioned in the second chapter, Young Turks are products of a crisis. So, it can easily be seen that the ideas put forward under the impact of an agonizing crisis are for bringing a “reform” in the face of the crisis rather than an intellectual phantasm.

### **5.1 Reflections of Anti-Metaphysical Attitude in the Ethical Realm**

One of the most obvious reflections of the positivist Young Turk approach investigated in the second chapter appears within the scope of ethical realm. It is a pure anti-metaphysical attitude. It was not possible for Young Turks, who interpreted events and phenomena from a positivist standpoint, to pick up their ideas on ethics from any other source. In this regard, it could be seen as a coherent situation for them the fact that their scientific understanding showed up itself also in the field of ethics.

There seems to be two reasons for this situation that is characterized as the projection of anti-metaphysical attitude in the ethical area. First, the ethics is not seen as a scope that can be constituted in line with “apriori” principles. For this reason, as it will be pointed out below, all thinkers, Kant being in the first place, that base the ethics on an apriori principle become the target of Young Turks. The apriori ethical principal is replaced with experience which is aposteriori principle of ethics. More clearly, to

the Young Turks the ethics should be based directly on experience. Second, what metaphysics brings to mind are traditional ethical forms when it comes to ethics. Hence, it is possible to mention that it is both a political and an epistemological attitude the fact that Young Turk intelligentsia does not use the terms ethics and metaphysics together.

Among the Young Turks figures who defend an anti-metaphysical approach are Ahmet Şuayip, Bedî Nuri, M. Zekeriya [Sertel], Rıza Tevfik, Ziya Gökalp, İsmail Hakkı, and Necmettin Sadık.<sup>306</sup>

In these writers' works the most mentioned and the most criticized thinker is undoubtedly Kant. The criticism aimed at Kant in fact presents an explanation for why the Young Turks object to ethical metaphysics or the theorization attempts of ethics based on an apriori principle. It is said in an article published in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, for example, that "Kant's ethical theories could not be put into practice. For, they do not emanate from any nation or any society's social conscience but remain as the private opinion of a person."<sup>307</sup> The basic agent regarding the criticism of Kant's theory of ethics is that it is perceived as a theory "belonging to heavens"<sup>308</sup> by exceeding the field of experience. As it excludes what is human, it does not deserve to be attributed a value.

As a matter of fact these statements indicate to what extent or why the Young Turks distance themselves from the speculative way of thinking. For the Young Turks ideas

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<sup>306</sup> See, for example: Bedii Nuri, "Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye," *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 23(11) (1 November 1326/14 November 1910), pp. 1024-1033; Bedii Nuri, "Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye," *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 25(13) (January 1326/February 1911), pp. 1308-1327; Ahmet Şuayip, "Devlet ve Cemiyet," ss. 54-71; Necmettin Sadık, "Emile Durkheim," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 26 (3 January 1917), pp. 509-512; Rıza Tevfik, "Kuvvetler ve Kıymetler Felsefesi," *İçtihat* 5, no. 102 (17 April 1330/30 April 1914); 25-29; Rıza Tevfik, "Ahlakın Nüfusa Tesiri" s. 235; "Hükümet ve Hürriyet Hakkında Spencer'in Felsefesi," *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 18(6) – 21(9) (June-September 1326/June-September 1910), pp. 742-757; Ziya Gökalp, "Ahlak Buhranı," pp. 122-124; İsmail Hakkı, "Ahlak Mücâhedeleri -2," *Yeni Mecmua* 3, no. 64 (10 October 1918), pp. 223-224; M. Zekeriya Sertel, "Ahlak, Fazilet Ve Namusun Manası," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, 1. Sene, 15. Sayı: 15 Mart [1328] Cuma [28 Mart 1912], ss. 13-20.

<sup>307</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, "Yeni Hayat," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 9, p. 9.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. M. Nermi, "Alfred Fouillée'nin Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlakı," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 14 (1 March 1328/14 March 1912), p. 12.

that can be put into practice are favorable. You can make up volumes of theories on ethics or any other field but as long as these theories do not turn into the living samples of the social conscience, in other words as long as they are not adopted by the “social conscience”, they will not bear any meaning. Based on such an approach it is possible to ask if Kant propounded his theory of ethics to be adopted and put into practice by a social conscience or not. If the question is put into a more generalized form, it can be discussed whether a thinker sees prerequisite the practicability of an idea before constructing it. If the practicability were at the core, it would probably be necessary to toss a remarkable corpus of the philosophy out.<sup>309</sup>

Repudiating the experience, according to Young Turks, would entail a series of illogical ideas. As M. Zekeriya Sertel puts it:

I think to claim that “ethics is such” would be insolence. Many geniuses, like Tolstoy and Kant etc., put forward a number of ethical rules. But unfortunately neither they nor their grandchildren had the chance of exercising these ethical rules. For these rules were rather poems and dreams. They have never been put forward by taking into consideration the needs and fundamentals of a society. Those geniuses were ascribing absolute and *metaphysical* character to good and evil. And this is where many of the moralists were mistaken. They were saying that “good” is good because it is good. However, confirming such a claim would be accepting that a man who lives alone on a non-residential island is subject to a set of ethical rules and that he needs to prohibit himself of doing certain behaviors. Although nobody dared to such an experience yet it is childish to imagine that this would be so.<sup>310</sup>

To Bedîî Nuri, the only way to construct a coherent system of ethics is “to make the ethics a positive science by purging it from metaphysical thoughts and

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<sup>309</sup> Thus there are some figures, even on the side of philosophy though, who argue that this exactly is what needed to be done. David Hume, for example, is one of them. According to him, “if we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask; *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: For it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.” See David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 114. But as Brian Davies observes, “[r]eaders of Hume might reasonably suggest that, on his own admission, his *Enquiry* should have been burned. For it hardly meets his requirements for a book to escape the flames.” See Brian Davies, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 235.

<sup>310</sup> M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Ahlak, Fazilet ve Namusun Manası,” pp. 16-17.

assumptions.”<sup>311</sup> It was mentioned before that this resistance against metaphysics of ethics stems from a positivist approach. Here, it is relevant to remind the value positivism attributes particularly to the objectivity of knowledge. The positive science seeks a set of objective data. But, metaphysics is made of some totally subjective speculations that contradict objectivity. The clearest statements of the positivist attitude against the ethical metaphysics are seen in an article by Rıza Tevfik. Talking about specialization in sciences, Rıza tevfik claims that the method for explaining events and phenomena can be determined only by taking into consideration the field that those events and phenomena belong to. “As the social events arise from the relations among people, they are just made of experimental and objective events. In this respect, it is not related to metaphysics.”<sup>312</sup> This being the case, the theories that tackle ethics which is a part of the social space should have its starting point from the social life. This can be interpreted as that philosophy should also pay attention to what is social. The result that will be reached upon this questioning is the fact that philosophy is needed to be re-constructed as a “social philosophy.” Thus, Ziya Gökalp, who says that the philosophy of the time is rather a “general ethics”,<sup>313</sup> can be regarded as putting forward a similar argument. In the following discussions Ziya Gökalp’s remarks on the necessity of linking philosophy with what is social and analyses in that vein will be addressed.

Rıza Tevfik bases his idea, that ethics should be excluded from the metaphysical sphere, on an ontological analysis done in his own way. To him, there are such ideas and sensations in the life of society that are certain to have no existence per se in reality. Many ideas like sensation of nationality, competition etc! These manifestations have no numenal substancehood or “ontological” existence; therefore, they have no relation with metaphysics!<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Bedii Nuri, “Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye,” p. 1309.

<sup>312</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Muhasebe-i *İçtihat*: Kuvvetler ve Kıymetler Felsefesi”, p. 26.

<sup>313</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Tevfik Sedat], “Bugünkü Felsefe,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 2 (27 April 1327/10 May 1911), p. 32.

<sup>314</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *ibid.*

Considering Rıza Tevfik's articles particularly on the philosophy of values these seems to be important statements. They can be defined as problematical as they evaluate the existence on an absolutely phenomenal ground, as if having an ontological existence is applicable only in terms of absolutely phenomenal beings. Does ontology really start out from such a claim? Cannot we talk about the idiosyncratic "ontology" of ideas or values? Alfred Fouillée, who was the most cited thinker of philosophy of values of the period and a source of inspiration for some leading Young Turks, claims that it is possible. His arguments to this effect will be discussed within the latter sections. Young Turks figures influenced by Alfred Fouillée, Ziya Gökalp in the first place, say that ideas and values also have idiosyncratic existences. Rıza Tevfik is probably aware of these discussions. However, confining the being to the things that are included in the factual category indicates the strong impact of positivist and even materialist approaches on him. Considering the analyses he makes particularly in his article titled "Hükümet ve Hürriyet Hakkında Spencer'in Felsefesi", it can be alleged that he was heavily inspired by Spencer while building the philosophy and ethics based on a social ground. So, without indicating the source, he mentions that the ethics should be based on social experiences in the following lines by Spencer:

Human transactions' acquiescence of ethical quality starts with the separability of accepted and legitimate circumstances and states from forbidden and illegitimate ones. And this separation is only possible with the social life, which is to say with an actual understanding of individuals that they are obliged to live in a community. Henceforth, they have an idea about the kinds of behaviors that they are entitled to and of transactions they are prohibited from doing against their fellows.<sup>315</sup>

Rıza Tevfik here tackles good and evil only within the context of social life. Things that we call "good" or "evil" are qualities on which we can have knowledge only after we start to live within a society. It is wrong to perceive these things independent of concrete events, existing by themselves as abstract facts. "Good" is not good as it is good per se, but it is good as long as it contributes to social life by any means. The things that we are supposed to do for the other, the things that we are allowed to do for them are good; in the contrary case they are evil.

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<sup>315</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Hükümet ve Hürriyet Hakkında Spencer'in Felsefesi," pp. 748,749.

Since the thing we call “good” comes up with the social life and the things that we are allowed to do “the other” are good, in this case cannot we identify “good” with what Kant calls as “duty”? Cannot we regard the order of “you should treat well to your fellow” as an unconditional duty? Since, it can be seen as an order –which is also similar to Kant’s ethical principle- emanating from social consciousness. Rıza Tevfik leaves this question unanswered. But, Necmettin Sadık in his article “Emile Durkheim”, again inspired by Durkheim, says that this is not possible. For, the idea of duty constitutes not the concept of ethics as a whole but only a part of it. It is not possible to obey an action just because it is ordered to us. We cannot neglect the content of the relevant action. In other words, the ordered action should be related to our personal sensibility. The relevant action should be “worthy of desiring”, which means, for Necmettin Sadık, that when it comes to ethics, the fact that actions are desirable is as important as the fact that they constitute at least a duty.<sup>316</sup> Undoubtedly, this approach also is a drawback concerning the metaphysical dimension of Kantian ethics. Likewise, in Kant’s philosophy of ethics what is good “is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes or because of its competence to achieve some intended end; it is good only because ... it is good in itself.”<sup>317</sup> The three ways of action that Kant determined based on the concept of duty constitute a problem in terms of Necmettin Sadık’s thoughts found their expressions above. Then, to Kant it is possible to talk about three kinds of action. These are; actions which are inconsistent with the duty; actions which really conform to duty, but to which men have no direct inclination, performing them because they are impelled thereto by some other inclination; and, actions that are done for the sake of duty.<sup>318</sup> Considering Kant’s classification, it can be said that the actions that are worthy of desiring most probably overlap with the second group of actions. To put it more clearly, the overlapping of actions that are worthy of desire with the duty can only be accidental; they are not realized by means of the concept of duty directly. It is even

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<sup>316</sup> Necmettin Sadık, “Emile Durkheim,” p. 511.

<sup>317</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Lewis White Beck (Library of Liberal Arts, 1989), p. 10.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

within possibility for them to fall within the first group which includes actions that contradict with the concept of duty. It is also possible to criticize Necmettin Sadık's views by asking, for example, if ethical laws always have a content composed of "worthy of desiring" elements? Cannot we say that certain actions we call ethical lay an extra burden and responsibility on individual and make them feel uncomfortable? Philanthropy may be worthy of desiring in itself; it is like that when seen from a theoretical point of view. Yet, helping someone may not always be the result of desiring. Sometimes it is the result of necessity. All these points are remarkable in terms of explaining why Kant is a focus of criticism by the Young Turks. For, Kant does not define "good" by taking into consideration something external. In this case, considering the importance and priority the Young Turks attribute to social need and "national perpetuity", which will be discussed in the following chapters, good is inevitably defined as something that is useful for the national perpetuity.

Another criticism aimed at Kantian ethics is the fact that it repudiates the experience. İsmail Hakkı, who evaluates this circumstance as something found in all rationalist theories of ethics, says that "rational ethics cannot constitute a new ethical life regardless of its philosophical value. It is something beyond the competence of theoretical reason. Ethical area is the area of experience and not metaphysics."<sup>319</sup> This general understanding in which the ethics is derived from the realm of experience, in fact, also has an epistemological base. For, the experience is finalized with the firsthand knowledge in the related field. Basing something that we can know on something that does not fall within the domain of knowledge will bring about an epistemological skew. For this reason, ethics as something that is in the sphere of knowledge can only be based by means of experience. Otherwise, it would be necessary to send it to "an unknown country" for no reason. The clearest statements of this classical approach of the positivist epistemology can be found in Ziya Gökalp's article "Ahlak Buhranı". He says:

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<sup>319</sup> İsmail Hakkı, "Ahlak Mücâhedeleri -2," p. 223. For the similar arguments that ethics must be depended on experience, see: Kazım Nami, "Yeni Ahlak-1"; Kazım Nami "Yeni Ahlak-2," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 3 (15 September 1327/28 September 1911), p. 13; Ali Haydar, "Ahlak Hakkında-1," *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 4 (30 September 1327/13 October 1911), p. 2.

Basing ethics on a reality that is in-cognizable rather than cognizable, as Agnostics do, is making the situation suspicious and mystical –contrarily to positivistic sciences. For this reason, neither Kant’s totally agnostic ethics nor Auguste Comte’s and Spencer’s positivist ethics with agnostic tendencies can satisfy the souls that are nurtured with positive sciences. This age is the age of positivism. But, this positivism is not like Comte’s and Spencer’s positivism which can be reconciled with agnosticism. *The real positivism has to see that the entire corpuses that are known are cognizable and things that are unknown cannot even be conceived.*<sup>320</sup>

These lines are principal remarks regarding the positivist approach and are reminiscent of William James’s “radical empiricist” approach. While talking about radical empiricism, which he defines as his *Weltanschauung*,<sup>321</sup> William James gives a definition stating that “to be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced.”<sup>322</sup> It may be possible to say that Ziya Gökalp was influenced by William James given that his name passes in some articles by Gökalp. Hence, the things that Gökalp defines as “cognizable” are things that can be experienced. In this case, those that are “in-cognizable” remain outside of the realm of knowledge and experience.

At this point, again the use of concept of experience in the Young Turks periodicals and some other issues related to this will be touched on. As it is stated in the second chapter, Young Turks attribute an important role for observation and experience as scientific methods. This emphasis on experience, although it is regarded old fashioned in terms of the scientific understanding of the time, points out a lively reservoir in which “social conscience” accumulates its lively instances. Considered from this perspective, the experience is the experience of the other. The other is not the individual that breathes the same physical or cultural air with us; it is the social consciousness that reflects the results, reached by all of the individuals in terms of their material lives, as an ethical system. This issue will be evaluated below within the framework of “the ethical necessity of union.” But, to put it shortly for now, in

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<sup>320</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Ahlâk Buhranı,” p. 124 [emphasis added].

<sup>321</sup> William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), p. 41.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

the ethical understanding of Young Turks the other as an individual does not exist; the individual only exists as long as he participates in the social consciousness which is in the position of “the essential other.” Therefore, X or Z as individuals cannot constitute the essence of any ethical principle. Talking about ethicality of the individual is possible only if he participates in the whole by getting purified from individual qualities.

Now, it is obvious that I, as an individual, cannot experience by myself every event that can be regarded “ethical”. It is an inevitable result of one of the basic characteristics of my physical existence, which is *finitude*. However, it should be pointed out that this will not render it impossible the fact that I can evaluate the events that I have not experienced as “ethical” or “nonethical.” It is possible to find many examples from daily life for this. Based on this, cannot one argue that the qualities of “ethical” or “non-ethical”, which are attributed to events by social consciousness “later on”, turn into metaphysical elements that exist by depending on the other’s experience? Hence, as an individual I have not actually experienced any condition. Besides, there is such a situation: we cannot deal with the ethics independent of values. The distinction between values and phenomena is something that is accepted by all philosophies of ethics. The value is something that we attribute to the phenomena not existing in it previously. Because of the aspect charged and added up later on, the meaning of any event or phenomenon from the viewpoint of the individual would totally change. In other words, experience will have a metaphysical dimension as soon as it starts to become a social one. In this case, the new meaning of the experience can be evaluated as “being caught up by a new form of metaphysics while escaping other.”

Some additional points supporting the above argument that “the experience” has gained a metaphysical dimension can be found in the analysis related to the concept of “organic” within Young Turk periodicals. For example, in his article “Ahlakın Nüfusa Tesiri” Rıza Tevfik claims that the fundamental aspect of ethics is that it is “organic.” “What makes this definition interesting for us is the fact that it starts out from a necessary, one sided connection made between individual and social experiences. What is meant by organic is the passivity of individual against the social

consciousness rather than the cooperation amongst people. While determining ethical events, rather than relying on our own experiences we accept the qualities like “good”, “evil”, “beautiful”, “ugly” as they are used by the society. To Rıza tevfik, “each individual behaves according to his genetic inheritance and his natural faculties”.<sup>323</sup> He calls such traits as “deeply rooted faculties” (“malakāt-ı rāsikha”). For him, these are innate (wahhbī). It is even possible to evaluate these as involuntary (qasrī). Rıza Tevfik uses the term involuntary (qasrī) instead of unconscious. A faculty first appears on the conscious level. The fact that the consciousness accompanies a faculty indicates that our brain perceives our first action through perception centers and a consciousness related to it is formed. The mentioned behavior or skill becomes unconscious deeds thanks to repetitions. In other words, the individual repeats a certain behavior so much that he does not realize it as a consequence of informed choice but as an unconscious element by himself. At this stage, the brain can no more be aware of such events.<sup>324</sup> In this way, the behaviors or abilities that are acquiring a habitual quality can both be regarded as secondary qualities and named as “organic.”

This approach means, of course, that the individual participates in the construction of social consciousness not as an active element but as a passive one. I, as an individual, get involved in the social consciousness that has dominance on me involuntarily. My involvement is involuntary because I know how I am expected to behave and I behave accordingly. The social consciousness as a readymade fuses me in itself. My participation in the social consciousness is passive in that sense. On the other hand, I have an active role in transferring the social consciousness to individuals that will be articulated to the structure. Notwithstanding that, it is hard to say that this last role is literally “active”, because I have been receiving and transferring the thing I transferred as readymade. To remember what all these analyses take us: I only transfer the experience that is fictionalized *de facto*. Since with my participation the meaning of experience is not subject to change, I start out from an “apriori” ethical principal as in the acceptance of a metaphysical principle and I obey that order of society: “you must do it in that way!”

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<sup>323</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Ahlakın Nüfusa Tesiri,” p 235.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

Rıza Tevfik is not the only writer mentioning the idea logical consequences of which are being discussed presently. In fact, this is a reflection of the general Young Turk acceptance related the individual and we come across this in the writings of many Young Turk figures. For example, when Ziya Gökalp claims that when we act, we do it “without knowing” to provide continuance of the species<sup>325</sup> he seems to be wanting to say that acts are in fact encoded by the species and society beforehand. Our behaviors are encoded by the society and are transferred to the individual by means of biological, psychological or sociological vessels.

It is possible to find similar ideas, claiming that the experience making ethics possible emerges out of the social ground as a superior consciousness, in the articles of Ahmet Besim and Bedii Nuri as well. To Bedî Nuri, for example, ethics “arises and occurs in the form of mutual manifestations of motives and qualities that are carried out involuntarily.”<sup>326</sup> In other words, we repeat our actions so much that these go beyond the sphere of will and they start to appear automatically just like animal instincts. After this stage, “doing good or bad things becomes a natural motive or a faculty. Once ethics arrives at this degree, ethical behaviors start to emerge from human being unconsciously and instinctively.”<sup>327</sup>

In the context of what has been said last, it is necessary to highlight one point. We do not name everything what we call good or evil by seeing or doing. As it is mentioned above, one of our fundamental characteristics is that we are finite and this situation makes possible for us only to experience to a certain degree. Since the society is not subject to such a finitude its capacity of experience is much larger than ours. Therefore, we cannot learn what is good or what is evil by seeing or doing personally. We see good what the society finds good or regard bad what is regarded as evil by it. To put it more clearly, we only repeat a lived experience, because the society encodes us in that way. It is possible to characterize this as “the inheritance

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<sup>325</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Ferdiyet ve Şahsiyet,” p. 2.

<sup>326</sup> Bedii Nuri, “Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye,” *U.İ.İ.M.* 3, no. 23(11) (1 November 1326/14 November 1910), p. 1026.

<sup>327</sup> Ahmet Besim, “Temayülât-ı Ahlâkiye ve Örf,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3. No. 25 (30 Jumādā al-Ülā 1333/2 April 133/15 April 1915), p. 607.

of ethics.” The ethical inheritance may be posited on a practical ground in terms of social consciousness.

Nevertheless, this situation does not prevent that the question remains at theoretical level from the point of individual. In this case, the question of what is good or what is evil cannot be something that can be answered directly. This can only be answered through imitation, by means of discharging the responsibility imposed by the society or behaving how the society wants. Here, there is a response towards the social demand, but this “answer” does not require reasoning or reflection.

## **5.2. The Ethical Relativism or the Collapse of Belief in Absolute and Ethical Tremor**

Another point to be discussed about the ethical understanding of Young Turks could be drawn from the fact that they adopted relativism. Their resistance to efforts of basing ethics on metaphysics stems from their objection about the conception of “absolute truth.” The evolutionary approach they employed led to their refusal to accept any truth unquestioningly. Considering the implicit postulation of the evolutionary thinking about the constant development in the universe, it becomes possible to provide a basis for the Young Turks’ objections on the absolute truth. However, it is also possible to criticize those ideas and they will be evaluated in the following chapters.

The impact of evolutionist thought on Young Turks’ ideology has been deep. Their use of the concept of “progress” and their reference to the concept of “evolvment” indicate their interest and engagement in a progressive understanding of history. The point that is wanted to be emphasized here requires keeping in mind the intimate relation ethics has with society in Young Turks’ understanding. For, ethical principles are destined to progress and evolve constantly like the social consciousness from which they emerge. Young Turks strongly resist to metaphysical theories of ethics as they rely on an apriori principle and believe that they cannot provide a possibility of progress or evolvment. In their opinions, being is a continuous move towards progress. Believing in the existence of an absolute

principle means to abolish the possibility of doing such a move. Hence, asserting absolute and so called objective ethical criteria that are claimed to be valid every time and everywhere, for every individual and society, contradicts with the idea of evolution and results in a static ethical life. The natural outcome of this, to Young Turks, is a social rottenness whose roots can be found in the traditional understanding of ethics. An objective, absolute understanding of ethics will make the life static. On the other hand, a subjective ethics based on the expectations and desires of social consciousness will be more dynamic and mobile. Every society has the skill to determine which applications will be useful under which conditions in terms of itself. Since at the heart of such a questioning there will be the society itself, it will be possible to follow the constant progress, revise the ethics depending on the case and deal with the stagnation.

It is also possible to find another supporting point for our case, that Young Turks' anti-metaphysical attitude remained under the influence of evolutionist approach, in the meaning attributed to the concept of "milieu" by them. As far as one can observe within the periodicals analyzed, the Young Turks believe that the ethics should be systematized in such a way that it can meet the demands of "milieu." As it was shown in the third chapter, the concept of "adjustment to milieu" is picked from both Darwinian and Lamarckian understandings of evolution and transferred to the social sphere by Young Turks. It should be noted here that we are not talking about the reduction of ethics to physical conditions (physical milieu). Certainly, at times some connections may be made between actions that are called ethical and physical conditions of a society. However, characterization of "the milieu" as a mental environment to which ethics is expected to correspond seems to be more proper when the meaning attributed to that concept in Young Turks' periodicals kept in mind. Because considering the assumptions that ethics should respond "the contemporary needs", it can be claimed that the milieu is largely transferred to a mental dimension. Similarly, one observes in periodicals that an understanding of ethics, which can also be adopted by the national consciousness, is dealt with. Here, the milieu is interpreted as an external mental reality with which the system of ethics must come to terms.

Below, we will study how Young Turk figures established a direct connection between ethics and milieu. Before doing this, a brief examination of some points regarding the mentioned issue would be useful.

The fact that Young Turks have a progressive understanding of history with the influence of positivist and evolutionist approaches and the ethical consequences they reach may seem coherent in itself. For, the showing up of influenced sources in the products is something by nature. However, without getting involved in the discussion whether the history constantly flows towards the good, it is possible to ask whether the milieu has always a desirable character. This question would have some ethical dimensions. An external look into the Young Turks' criticisms against the concept of the absolute ethics will notice that there is the possibility of reaching some conspicuous points. The most probable answer of Young Turks' would be that "the milieu will always flow towards the good. Given that the milieu, whether material or mental, is within the universe and given that the universe constantly flows towards the good, which is a brighter future, so, in this case it is quite possible that the milieu will follow the same direction." But, in fact the situation may not be hopeful this much. There is a certain order in the universe without doubt. Probably due to this order that our knowledge allows us to predict the future and adopt a hopeful attitude. Yet, even the slightest observation may indicate that the things do not always change like we desire. The mind by all means corresponds to the milieu. But, the corresponded thing is not always the one that is desired. Regarding the ethics as something that depends on the milieu and forming an ethical framework that fits the milieu may result in reaching wrong culminations. For example, if someone living in a cultural environment where murder is prohibited suddenly finds himself in an island where people eat human flesh can adapt himself to the milieu by forgetting the apriori principle of "you should not kill!?" Even if he adapts himself can he define this behavior as ethical? Even if he claims that his behavior is ethical can we come through such a conclusion?

While talking about the claims by Young Turks about experience, it was pointed out that this actually contains a metaphysical discourse within itself. A similar observation may also be made on the Young Turk opposition about the absolute

ethics. The objection to concept of absolute truth depends on the unchangeable principle (in this case it is also absolute and a principle which can also be claimed to be metaphysical), that is the idea of “continuous progression.” Considering the assumption that the history continuously moves towards the good and the assumption which is used as a base it, which is the universal law of evolution, it seems to be possible to reach such a conclusion. We can summarize this as a move from anti-absolutism to absoluteness of progress.

Another reason of ethical relativism is, as stated in the second chapter, the positivism theorized by Auguste Comte. As Rasim Haşmet puts it, in the positivist epistemology “there are no unchanging truths.” Instead, there are the assumptions that are possible to be analyzed and controlled, the temporary truths based on obtained knowledge, causes and laws that serve to know the relations among effects.”<sup>328</sup> This assumption, voiced at various occasions by several Young Turk figures as well, is important as it shows that Young Turks were in fact following their ideas in such a way that they could be put into a logical framework.

Rıza Tevfik is the main figure mentioning the objections against the idea of absolute truth and struggling to keep the ethics away from the realm of metaphysics in the periodicals. There are mainly three reasons why he opposed to the absolute ethics. According to this, it is not possible to adopt an absolute ethics as. For, due to the necessities of life both in individual and in society, characters and ethics are subject to a continuous change. In other words, the impossibility of absolute ethics is prompted by the very phenomenon of change.<sup>329</sup> In this approach, the traces of the principle “explaining the nature by nature itself,”<sup>330</sup> that is influential among the Young Turks circles, is perceived. Since man is a part of the nature, he should be tackled within the scope of natural phenomena. All of the humane things are subject to the natural order. So is the ethics. Hence, if we are going to talk about the ethics;

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<sup>328</sup> Rasim Haşmet, “Felsefe Karşısında Fen,” p. 13.

<sup>329</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Cemaat ve Efrada Mütenakız Şimeler,” *İçtihat* 4, no. 95 (27 February 1329/12 March 1914), 2123.

<sup>330</sup> Şevketî, “Din Felsefesinden,” p. 1356.

we need to find the natural sources of it. The related foundations cannot be revealed with respect to a speculative ethical law at a theoretical level. Those are directly the results of the daily life. For this reason, ethics can only be practical. And this can be explained to the accompaniment of social life only. As an absolute truth cannot exist, there cannot be an absolute ethics either. This can be seen the first reason that led Rıza Tevfik to a relativistic understanding of ethics. He seems to think that the second reason which causes relativism is “concern of preserving one’s own life.”<sup>331</sup> The most important thing that we will struggle to protect in terms of our existence is our own being. We should consider trying every way to protect this being and when it is necessary “seeing everything that damages the rival not only justifiable but also something praiseworthy”.<sup>332</sup> In this case, tying us to an absolute truth would be a mistake equal to shackling. One can refer to “the circumstances in the milieu and the neighboring relationships”<sup>333</sup> as the third reason of ethical relativism in Rıza Tevfik’s approach. It should be mentioned that Rıza Tevfik’s approach, which can be regarded as Darwinist, is not limited to these. His words having the essential importance in terms of ethical relativism are as follows:

If there are various damages to get Ottomans and Turkish nation fall necessarily in this lower ethical level we would naturally fall in that level. For, our national life is the most desirable thing. It even outweighs our ethics. Then national ethics exists with nation and it gets better as it deteriorates! But if our nation dies it can never return to life. Due to this necessity we would even consciously fall in that level to protect the self. And we believe in an ethical principle accordingly.<sup>334</sup>

As it is understood from these statements, Rıza Tevfik interprets the thing that is called “good” or “bad” totally in terms of the national entity. According to this point of view, which is heavily Darwinist, everything that protects the national being is ethical. Even the evil acts committed to protect the national being can be regarded as “good”, hence “ethical.” That is, by all means, a clear expression of ethical

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<sup>331</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *ibid*, p. 2124.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2125.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2126.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid*.

relativism. On the other hand, a behavior can be regarded as “bad” but, in time it will bear the potential to turn to be “good.” In this case, defining something as “good” or “bad” entirely will not conform to the truth, at least when it comes to the “national survival”. Rıza Tevfik would probably not evaluate it as an “amoral” action but not as “immoral”. The concepts of “amoral” and “immoral” are commented from an article<sup>335</sup> which is taking part in the journal of *İçtihat*. And these concepts are exact correspondences of Rıza Tevfik’s envisagement. In this article, the distinction between the concepts of immorality and amorality is made and some results, deserving a mention in terms of our discussions, are revealed. According to the writer, an action that seems “evil” as it damages someone else is a temporary (muvaqqad) evil. In this respect, it cannot be regarded as “immoral.” At most, it can be seen as amorality. Just like a child trying to grab his brother’s feeding bottle while his is full. This would cause, in essence, not the negation of ethics but to omitting it in actions, which is a temporary situation. This has the chance to be reformed. As the individual formed by the social consciousness, he reflects the ethics in his actions; hence his actions become “ethical.” But, immorality is a permanent condition. As the interests of individual are in the foreground, it is always a “pathological” incident in terms of the social ethics. It is a threat to the social being.<sup>336</sup> That means when an action “seems to be evil” it is not necessarily “immoral.” An absolute criterion may argue such a thing. But, considering the subjective circumstances, a different result can be reached, because “the ethics is not something fixed and constant, it is subject to change every day.”<sup>337</sup> The possibility of change on the judgment about the action comes to fore as an element reinforcing the possibility of relativism.

Similar ideas within the scope of ethical relativism are inferred by some Young Turks writers assuming that they do not stand to reason. This is a highly remarkable situation. M. Zekeriya Setel, for example, believes that the ethical rules arise from the social needs but not the reason and logic. To him, there is something wrong in

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<sup>335</sup> R. S., “Türklerde Kıskançlık: Maraz-ı İçtimai,” *İçtihat* 5, no. 123 (4 December 1330/17 December 1914), pp. 407-408.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid*, p. 407.

<sup>337</sup> Nebizade Ahmet Hamdi, “Sanatta Güzellik, İlimde Hakikat,” p. 24.

efforts of the people attempting to determine what actions are good and what actions are evil as those people classify the doers of those actions as having good or bad characters. But, there is something these people forget, which is that an absolute good or an absolute evil action can never be imagined.<sup>338</sup>

The relativistic thought of M. Zekeriya becomes clearer at one step ahead. What aim will we take into consideration when we need to decide which actions are good or evil? Based on which criteria actions will be classified as good or evil? It is observed that many conflicts are experienced about this issue. For example, from an individualistic point of view the definition of good is different; from a social point of view the definition becomes different. For this reason, without attempting to search for an unchanging essence, we should accept the fact that “the ethical rules do not have absolute essence like everything.”<sup>339</sup> The fact that we do not have the chance of getting rid of this relativism can be understood by means of any reasoning about any action. For example;

Some moralists claim that “helping to the fellow” is the greatest ethical virtue and in all the books they write they suggest this behavior to humanity. It has even been accepted as an ethical rule by the Christians and turned into a religious command. But, the nature proves that helping your fellow means preventing the most important factor for the progress of humanity, which is the natural selection<sup>340</sup>

It is possible to bring some criticism to M. Zekeriya Sertel’s evolutionist ethical understanding. For example, if the principle of “help your fellow” contradicts with principle of “the natural selection”, does it make a sense to preserve the principle of “Thou shall not kill” as an ethical principle? So, is not murder removal of the rival? Should we call the murders as the executors of the natural selection law? Or should we define the treatment of disease as something immoral as the sick people are weak ones? Does not this contradict with the natural selection law as treatment prolongs the life and hence the weakness? Then, is treatment something immoral?

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<sup>338</sup> M. Zekeriya, “Ahlak, Fazilet ve Namusun Manası,” p. 13.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

We see that Ziya Gökalp also agrees with the idea that the ethics is not based on the reason. His motive is a bit more specific. This is directly related with the definition of reason and its function. Gökalp believes that the conscience is a different faculty than the reason. To him, the main cause of this difference is that although the reason is common to all people the conscience has different structures in different societies. “It is said that there is only one way for reason; but for consciences there are a lot of different ways. Therefore, something regarded good by some societies may be regarded as evil by some other.<sup>341</sup> This means that the reason cannot be source of values, but can only be concerned with quantity; and conscience, on the contrary, cannot be concerned with quantitative issues but can only be interested in “values”. Since the reason is concerned with quantitative things, it does not deal with values and quality. The quality is determined by individual consciousness while the values can only be determined by the social conscience.<sup>342</sup> Gökalp also divides reason into two parts as “the abstract” and “personified” reasons. To Gökalp, “personified reason” is such a composition that it contains also the consciousness and the conscience apart from the abstract reason.<sup>343</sup> It is possible to say that the argument assuming ethics to exist with the conscience not the reason will lead us to an ethical relativism. For, the values are classified into some categories like religious, ethical, legal, economic, and aesthetic. None of those values emerge from the nature of matter or the characteristic of the individual; all emerge from the belief of the society and live in its conscience. As the communities are divided into sections and types, there are different values for different types.<sup>344</sup> For this reason, the ethical principles cannot be evaluated as “the absolute truths.” They can only be regarded as temporary and evolutionary principles. To Gökalp, producing “absolute value judgments” should be an action that the new understanding of ethics avoids.<sup>345</sup> Those ideas of

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<sup>341</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Hüsün ve Kubuh [İçtimai Usul-i Fıkıh Meselesi Münasebetiyle],” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 8 (25 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1332/8 May 1330/21 May 1914), p. 230.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, p. 230.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Kıymet Hükümleri,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 17 (28 Muḥarram 1333/4 December 1330/16 December 1914), p. 471.

<sup>345</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Demirtaş], “Yeni Hayat ve Yeni Kıymetler,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 8 (10 August 1327/23 August 1911), p. 140.

Gökalp can be amongst the ones mentioned under the influence of evolutionist and positivist approach. At least in terms of the idea that the ethics has an “evolutionary” dimension it is possible to do this.

One can find a similar relationship made between social consciousness and ethics in İsmail Hakkı’s articles as well. İsmail Hakkı uses some statements that can be interpreted as ethical relativism while, on the other hand, he also states that the ethics is influenced by the conditions in a society. In this respect, for each society there is a different tradition of ethics. In other words, each community is the creator of its own ethics and each ethics is an ethics according to the society from which it arises. For this reason, it is possible to talk about primitive, high, weak, strong, religious and national ethics.<sup>346</sup> Undoubtedly, this means that there are many subjective ethics not a single and absolute one. To İsmail Hakkı, an Austrian believing that it is an ethical duty to take revenge of his murdered relative; an Indian widowed believing that it is an ethical action to die following the death of his husband; the ancient Gol people believing that it is an inevitable ethical necessity to give an end to their lives following the death of their king; or a Spartan condemned not because he stole but because he was caught while stealing are the clearest examples of such a subjective ethical understanding.<sup>347</sup> As a result of a similar questioning, it can be claimed that the slavery can also be evaluated as an ethical element. The ideas expressed in an article published by Ali Haydar, for example, is the clearest reflection of this thought:

Major task of human beings is to acquire sciences and fine arts. Acquiring science is the biggest virtue. But the talents of people in respect to learning science are not equal. One needs to bring those who have a talent in acquiring these virtues off from coarse occupations and get the works in need of muscle force done by plebs. Viewed from this perspective slavery can be regarded as an ethical exercise. For by means of slavery many persons can be employed in a manner complying with their power and abilities and with their natural status.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> İsmail Hakkı, “Ahlak Mücadeleleri -2,” p 223.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Ali Haydar, “Ahlak Hakkında,” pp. 7-8.

To tell the truth, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın gets involved in discussions about the ethical relativism from a more essential point. For, there are, in his ideas about this issue, some points which make us think that “there is no good or evil.” It seems that like M. Zekeriya Sertel, also Hüseyin Cahit’s understanding of ethics is influenced by the evolutionist approach. In the chapter concerning the philosophy of aesthetics, Hüseyin Cahit Yaçın’s ideas will be thoroughly discussed. His chief source of inspiration is Hyppolite Taine (1828-1893). Considering Taine’s positivist ideas and his Darwinist tendencies, it is not hard to imagine how this impact was reflected in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s understanding of ethics. Within the scope of the articles he wrote on the philosophy of aesthetics, in particular, it is seen that Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın is a strong defender of the positivist understanding. His ideas on the issues of arts and aesthetics are full of positivist and evolutionist approaches.

First of all, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın establishes a necessary connection between “the milieu” and the ethical realm. He seems to think that just as every climate produces different products and every climate has different social institutions, it is necessary to explain the systems of ethics in every climate with different ways.<sup>349</sup> Hence, when we come up with some actions that are not found in our society, the thing we should do is not define those things as “good” or “evil.” On the contrary, one needs to “examine the reason of the occurrence of these behaviors in this way, have a good grasp of them and deduce some lessons from this grasp if possible. *In such a situation, the concepts of good or evil are no more in force.*”<sup>350</sup>

Now, the statements above contain traces from almost all the discussions made in this chapter. First, they contain a clear idea of ethical relativism. Second, they represent an evolutionist approach as they connect the milieu and the ethics. Third, as they are relativistic, they also refuse the notion of absolute ethics. Again within this scope, as they refute the concepts of “good per se” and “evil per se”, they reflect an anti-metaphysical attitude. Beyond all of these, the most conspicuous point is that when the external conditions are cleared, to put it more clearly, when the physical,

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<sup>349</sup> Hüseyin Cahit, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -7- Bir Eser-i Edebîdnin Kıymeti Havi Olduğu Vesâik-i Beşeriyenin Mikdarı ile Mukayese Olunur,” p. 214.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid [emphasis added.]

geographical, economic, religious, cultural, political etc. reasons which determine the shaping of what is “good” or “evil” in a society are taken off, nothing is left behind. What we call good or evil, in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s view, is the overall of these factors. What we call good, probably, is what is beneficial to us; what we call evil is what damages us. The ideas above can also be seen as the reflection of a pragmatist ethical understanding. The statement at the end of the article indicates that the value of a law increases as long as the people belonging to that given society have tendency to obey it. However, this tendency of obeying takes place on condition that this law corresponds to the needs and tendencies of individuals. In other words, the respect of a nation for a law or principle depends on the fact that this law corresponds to the needs of people and creates a positive contribution. If this happens the ethical principle becomes meaningful, otherwise it fails.

We finalize our discussion related to relativism by turning back to the relationship established by the Young Turks between ethics and milieu. As a matter of fact, the importance attributed to the milieu is a different expression for the fact that the ethics is relative. The thing we call ethical reflects the manner in which society is influenced by the circumstances and conditions. The current ethical order Young Turks often complain about, to them, stems from a skewed mental relationship. It is for this reason that, for example, in the Ottoman society when there was turbulent times and disasters, the times when people needed the unity more, the ethical corruption show up in the form of “black-marketeering.” The physical and economic atmosphere that the war created, in which the selfishness becomes strong, is a testimony for the society in resisting to the hardships. In Rıza Tevfik’s words, “it is the state of war that affects most the ethically vital balance of a nation.”<sup>351</sup> When we look at the Young Turks periodicals, we observe heavy criticism aimed at black-marketeering due to the First World War. The common aspect of this criticism is the emphasis on the ethical collapse and the impact of milieu on ethics.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Hürriyet: İngiliz Hakîm-İ Meşhuru John Stuart Mill Hürriyeti Nasıl Anlıyor?”, *U.İ.İ.M.* 2, no. 5 (1 May 1325/14 May 1909), s. 26.

<sup>352</sup> For other articles emphasizing on the necessity of the relationship between milieu and ethics, see for example: Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat Hakkında Vaki Olan Tenkide Cevap,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 3 (15 September 1327/28 September 1911), p. 4; M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Ahlak ve Ahlakîyet,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 16 (30 March 1328/12 April 1912), p. 28; M. Zekeriya, “Ahlak, Fazilet Ve Namusun Manası,” pp. 18-19; Ahmet Besim, “Temayülât-ı Ahlâkiye ve Örf,”

It seems that the question asked while tackling the progressive understanding of history was answered. To put it more clearly, the things do not always move towards the good. Periodic circumstances at times cause unexpected, undesirable results. If the evolution always took us to good as the Young Turks imagined, there would not be criticism regarding the black-marketeering. If the basic function of ethics were “to adapt the man in the milieu in which he lives”<sup>353</sup> there would be no point in criticizing the black-marketeering. Then, it would be possible to describe this situation as “the adaption to milieu.”

### 5.3 The Attitude towards the Schools of Ethics

In the following pages, the ideas regarding the schools of ethics published in the Young Turks periodicals will be discussed. Within this scope, the most mentioned schools are hedonism and ascetic (zuhdī) ethics. In fact, the schools of ethics discussed in these publications are not limited to these schools. As far as it is seen, although there are not many, it is possible to find discussions on some other schools like utilitarianism, energismus, which is a version of utilitarianism, and eudaemonism.<sup>354</sup> Nevertheless, the discussions or criticisms Young Turks employ regarding the ethics are related these two schools of ethics (hedonism and asceticism).

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, knowing what the Young Turks criticized will be helpful in understanding where they want to reach. And the question of where they want to reach is a crucial point in understanding the general aspects of system of ethics envisaged by Young Turks. For this reason, it is useful to

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*İslam Mecmuası* 3. No. 25 (30 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1333/2 April 133/15 April 1915), pp. 606-608; Âsaf Nef'î, “Mücadele-i Hayatiye ve Tekâmül-i Cem'iyât,” p. 460; Bedii Nuri, “Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye,” p. 1309.

<sup>353</sup> Bedii Nuri, “Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye,” p. 1025.

<sup>354</sup> Ali Haydar's articles present a detailed examination of the ethical schools. See, Ali Haydar, “Ahlak Hakkında-2,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 5 (15 October 1327/28 October 1911), pp. 1-7 and “Ahlak Hakkında,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 6 (1 November 1327/14 November 1911), pp. 6-10.

examine what kind of an attitude is employed, by them, in discussing the schools of ethics.

The discussions involved so far are helpful in finding the point that the Young Turks identify the actions overlapping the social interests with the ethics. The actions overlapping with the expectations of the society are seen as “normal” the ones that do not overlap are seen as “abnormal” or “pathological.”<sup>355</sup> Undoubtedly, like in all fields, the issue of ethics giving priority to the social interests will bring about some negative results for individuals. It is inevitable for such an approach to regard the sacrifice of individual to society as an ethical endeavor by prioritizing “the whole”. In this respect, it is important to investigate this situation in terms of the idea of *union* employed by the Young Turks.

Seen from this point of view, it is not surprising that the individualism is regarded as something immoral and a harsh criticism is aimed at hedonism within this respect by Young Turks’ periodicals. Many Young Turk figures believe that hedonism, which aims to reach the individual pleasures, is immoral. However, there is one point to pay attention. The related criticisms are not directly aimed at the concept of “pleasure.” In fact this circumstance can be interpreted as an indication of the fact that “pleasure” is a legitimate element in the point of views of Young Turks. For, the pleasure is not seen as something immoral; it is criticized only in terms of the purpose it is directed. In essence, it is clear that the character of “evil in itself” is not attributed to anything by the Young Turks; on the contrary, it is criticized in one way or another. The results, reached within this study, about objection to metaphysics and relativistic approaches reveal this. Even if the pleasure is not something bad in itself, the feeling of satisfaction that the pleasure will bring should be perceived by too much people, even by the whole society if possible.

On the other hand, some interesting approaches are observed, within periodicals examined, about the quality of pleasure. There are spiritual and material pleasures

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<sup>355</sup> This division, which is inspired by Durkheim, can be found in several articles in Young Turks’ periodicals. See, for example, Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 9 (16 December 1327/29 December 1911), p. 6.

and the spiritual ones are preferable. The material pleasures are the individual's object of desire while the spiritual ones are the society's object of desire. This subject, tackled by Gökcalp in detail, will be discussed in following pages.

There is one more point to refer before starting the discussions: the ethical school, which is called "the ascetic ethics", is also at the center of important criticisms. As a matter of fact, it seems to be more proper to name this kind of ethics as "religious ethics". Even though those criticizing this ethical thought do not use the term "religious ethics" it is clear that the sources of this understanding can be found in religious approaches. Why this is so will be clarified as the discussion becomes more intense.

### **5.3.1 The Attitude towards Hedonism**

The most specific form of criticism aimed at hedonism comes up in Ziya Gökcalp's article of "Ferdiyet ve Şahsiyet." It is possible to summarize Ziya Gökcalp's ideas on hedonism briefly in that way: Above all the pleasure should be seen as the expression of a principle rooted in the human nature. For this reason, the pleasure cannot be refused at principle level, but on the condition that its legitimacy has an ethical ground. The way of reaching this ethical ground is to accept that the pleasure can be discussed within different categories. Then, is it possible to separate the pleasure into different categories as a rooted quality in the human nature? To Gökcalp, it is possible to do this. Moreover, the legitimacy of pleasure can be brought into question only on condition that such a separation is done. It means that the legitimacy of hedonism according to which the main purpose of human life is "to attain to pleasure and to refrain from pain as much as possible" corresponds to the truth if and only if "different types of pleasure and pain are distinguished".<sup>356</sup> Let us say that we tried to prove that there are different types of pleasure and pain. What kind of pleasures and pains are we supposed to ascertain? In that case, seems to think Gökcalp, we would realize that there are two different types of pleasures and pains which are "material"

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<sup>356</sup> Ziya Gökcalp, "Ferdiyet ve Şahsiyet," p. 2.

(or bodily) pleasures or pains and “spiritual” ones.<sup>357</sup> But is it not already certain that there are both bodily and spiritual pleasures and pains? Is it not, for example, the case that some pleasures come through bodily behaviors like eating, drinking, reproducing etc. while spiritual ones do so by helping a poor or remorse etc? Gökalp does not think otherwise. But his case can be made clearer if we proceed a step further. To him, separating the pleasures as “material” and “spiritual” is, in fact, necessary in terms of determining the subjective styles of being. The existence of a material or spiritual pleasure by itself will not mean anything. Here, the question to be answered is why some pleasures are spiritual while some others are material. This is like that, because they are the objects of two different types of being: “individuality” and “personality.” The existence of material pleasures becomes meaningful only if it constitutes a touching point between the individuality and the type that individual belongs to. On the other hand, the spiritual pleasures constitute the fundamental part of personality due to the fact that they are a social source of inspiration. For example, when we eat, drink, desire sex, in fact, we do the necessity that is encoded in us as a member of “the human species.” While following religious, ethical, political, aesthetic ideals we unconsciously meet the expectation of the society which is collective spirit. While our individual side runs after material pleasures, our personal side seeks spiritual ones. In this respect, we should see the pleasures that our individuality seeks to attain as individual pleasures, and the ones to which our personality seeks to attain as “personal pleasures.”<sup>358</sup> While the individual pleasures have some material consequences, the personal pleasures will only have consequences of their own kind. It is clear that the pain we feel when we see some sacred values collapse is different from the pain felt due to hunger. And it is because of this that the pleasures we get from eating and from helping the poor are different. Gökalp, starting out from the qualitative differences, claims that personal pleasures and individual pleasures cannot be reduced to each other.<sup>359</sup> The reason why hedonism is a matter of criticism for Gökalp stems from the question of whether such a reduction is possible or not. To Gökalp, the hedonists are mistaken as they claim

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

that the spiritual pleasures can be reduced to material pleasures.<sup>360</sup> Here, it should be pointed out that the matter is an individualistic hedonism. We had interpreted Gökalp's distinction of individuality and personality in the third chapter as a distinction between body and mind. What distinguishes the individuality from the society, which can be defined as a collective spirit, is his body as a material reality. The personality, as it is totally made of ideals, is connected to the material through the body of individual indirectly. Considering the difference between individuality and personality, it seems to be possible to say that in fact Gökalp's purpose is to develop an ethical argument preserving the social balance. "Since it is not possible to imagine a personality without individuality, the personalists never ignore the individuality. The individuality is the ground on which the building of personality is constructed. But, as there are many individualities without personalities, the individualists may ignore the personality"<sup>361</sup> It is clear that what makes Gökalp anxious is the fact that this possibility becomes true. Once the individual desires become more important than the social ideals, it will not be possible to talk about the *union* and *wholeness* of society. The personal desires serve also for "the order and progress"<sup>362</sup> of society. In this respect, constructing the ethics on the principle of personal desire is a major threat in terms of social existence. As it will be touched upon later on, this leads to the sacrifice of individual to the society, and is a situation which can also be observed within the political philosophy of Young Turks.

Considering Gökalp's approach, outlines of which are discussed here, it is necessary to investigate one point in particular. Gökalp's argument that we fulfill both individual and personal desires "unconsciously" should be emphasized. The fact that this is true can be interpreted as a sign that we face an *ethical determinism*. For, if the material pleasures we use to satisfy our desires are necessary for reproduction and while we satisfy these desires in fact we struggle for continuing our lineage "unconsciously" then, here there is a deterministic situation. In this case, it is necessary to talk about determinism appearing as volitional. On the other hand, if we

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

contribute to the continuation of our lineage unconsciously by means of things we do to get pleasure or we avoid doing (depending on the material and spiritual natures of those things), in this case, we happen to do what is necessary and avoid doing what should not be done. By doing so, we engage in an ethical action. Is not doing something unconsciously, without knowing it, obeying existing things –but that we cannot bring them to the “full conscious” level? Otherwise it would be hard to explain this situation. If the contrary situation were true; making up principles, actions and ideals to insure the survival of our species and obeying these would be a totally conscious activity. However, Gökalp talks about a contribution done unconsciously. This and similar subjects will take us to “the ethical necessity of union.” To put it more clearly, we are already subject to historical, cultural and philosophical determinism in terms of actualizing the union.

The ideas of other Young Turks figures were also largely in line with the fact that the ethics should be evaluated as an element emerging with the social life. The things protecting the being of society and exalting it are ethical principles. But, a much more important principle comes up here. While doing these ethical actions we are not conscious, we do them in an encoded way. Whether the base of our understanding of ethics is made of material or spiritual pleasures and pains, we seek reproduction in the first, and continuation of our society in the latter. But, it seems that the society is quite conscious in encoding us. It is even possible to claim that the individual realize a “conveyance of consciousness” when it comes to ethics. The behaviors seeming “unconscious” in terms of the individual are quite conscious when looked from the point of view of the society. Of course this consciousness appears as “upper-consciousness” which is described as “conscience” by Gökalp.<sup>363</sup> The individual consciousness is not far from individuals so as to turn them into automats. Undoubtedly, the individual has a “consciousness.” But, this consciousness is under the shadow of the conscience. The mechanism determining what we should do or avoid doing seems to be “the social conscience.”

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

Another point to be discussed in Gökalp's ideas on hedonism takes place in one of his article written under the pen name of Celal Sakıp.<sup>364</sup> In this article, Gökalp uses the two concepts, borrowed from the religious literature, in a more secular form. The concepts are "fisq" and "shirk". To him, hedonism, which is a chief reason of egoism, makes people to commit the crimes of "social fisq" and "social shirk".<sup>365</sup> To mention it briefly, according to the Islamic jurisprudence, "fisq" means committing an act despite knowing that it is evil (sin) and getting away from obeying Allah.<sup>366</sup> And "shirk" means opposition to the fundamental creed of "tawhīd" (unity of God). In other words, it means engaging in words and actions that are contradictory to the belief that there is only one God. It is not likely that a positivist writer like Gökalp adopted these concepts as it is used in the Islamic literature. Also, in his works published in *İslam Mecmuası* on the Islamic jurisprudence he tackles the re-evaluation of the Islamic law with a modern perspective.<sup>367</sup> Therefore, instead of thinking that he used these concepts just as taken from the traditional discipline, the Islamic jurisprudence, it is more logical to think that he realized a semantic transformation on them. For example, based on this, we can say that concepts of "the social fisq" and "the social shirk" are in line with the idea of "deification of the society", a theme which is also discussed within third chapter. To put it more clearly, hedonism would mean the emphasis on the individual instead of the society (hence God) as it prioritizes the individual pleasures and neglects the social needs. If the individual does not do his responsibilities even if he has the consciousness and does the things he should not do, he becomes "fāsiq." On the other hand, this individual, to put it with Ziya Gökalp's terms, would be a "mushrik" (polytheist) as he sees the material and spiritual pleasures equal. In this case, he would bring the directives of

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<sup>364</sup> Ziyat Gökalp [Celal Sakıp], "Eser ve Zat: Rıza Tevfik'in Felsefesi," *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 15 (1 February 1327/14 February 1912), pp. 60-71.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

<sup>366</sup> Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, *Alfabetik İslam Hukuku ve Fıkıh İstılahları Kâmusu* (İstanbul: Eser Neşriyat, 1997), p. 460. One needs also point to the fact that some writers –who are specialized within the area of Islamic jurisprudence- arguing that *fişq* is the most important issue after infidelity (kufr). For an argument to this effect see Bassam Mohammad Sihyawnī, *Al-Fisq wa Ahkāmuhū fī al-fiqh al-Islāmī* (Dimaşq: Dār an-Nawādir, 2010), pp. 10-11. It is most probably because that conscious commitment of certain acts, which are forbidden by God, leads the person to overlook the limits set by God himself.

<sup>367</sup> For the detailed identification of Ziya Gökalp,'s articles within this regard see 293<sup>rd</sup> footnote.

social conscience and desires of individual consciousness to the same level which means to commit “shirk.”

Another Young Turk figure criticizing hedonism from an ethical standpoint is Rıza Tevfik. Although his view on hedonism is critical, it is the product of a different approach. Rıza Tevfik engages in the discussion from a point that can be called as “family ethics.” He seems to be regarding hedonism as a result of “social degeneration.” In this respect, it is the memory of regime of Abdülhamit. Before the Young Turks took over, the status quo consciously left people ignorant. The ignorance caused people to turn upon in their selves. And depending on this a type of man keeping his individual interests appeared. The individual interests are based on individual profit and individual pleasure. The quest of individual pleasure, to Rıza Tevfik, is found in following words:

The life is too short. You will not come to this world of pleasure again. In this short life, we should get as much pleasure as we can. The self is more important than everything. The struggle for life makes life unbearable. The trouble of having children and family is not something logical. Instead of having a family and responsibilities it brings, living like parasite and not leaving any trace is the most logical way.<sup>368</sup>

Conceiving this as a harmful approach to the society, Rıza Tevfik believes that the first thing should be done is to bring precautions that will destroy the social degeneration. The first point to emphasize, then, is to struggle for implementing a mentality that can be defined as “family ethics.” The thing that is ethical for a society is the thing that enables the population increase; the unethical is the one that makes the population less.<sup>369</sup> In this view, marriage is an ethical necessity in terms of its role in increasing the population. The more a person seeks individual pleasures the more becomes distinct to the idea of making a family. For this reason, he does not contribute to the population increase.

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<sup>368</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Ahlakın Nüfusa Tesiri,” p. 242.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid, p. 237.

The criticism made by Rıza Tevfik on hedonism can also be interpreted as a support for utilitarianism. To him, there is no good or evil in itself; but there are actions that are necessary for the perpetuity of the nation or serving to its destruction.<sup>370</sup> That means we should be distinct ourselves from the metaphysical meanings that good or evil bear and turn directly to the society. Whatever serves to the perpetuity of the nation is good; whatever damages this is evil. The clearer expression of this utilitarianist approach is: “The base of ethical actions in social matters is the common interest of the society.”<sup>371</sup> In this case, the behaviors that serve to common interests are good and the ones that do not serve are evil.

Another Young Turk figure criticizing hedonism as it leads people to seek their own desires is Ali Haydar. To him, the thing lying behind hedonism is egoism. Egoism is very harmful for the state and the society, because an egoist person demands from the government the protection of only his own property and life. The ideal of that person is to live a comfortable life and he does not want to get involved in the struggle for life to make to society progressed. He never does his responsibilities for the state and nation when it is necessary.<sup>372</sup> It does not seem possible for Ali Haydar to discuss hedonism as a legitimate ethical approach. As he talks about “struggle for life” for serving the progress of society, his approach seems to be a reflection of the Darwinist and positivist point of view. Another conspicuous point is that duties and responsibilities of an individual for the society become ethical.

Above, the criticism on “hedonism” or the principle “pleasure” was discussed. Those in fact directly deal with the element of “pleasure” as an ethical principle. What makes this important for us is the association of hedonism with individualism and its evaluation in terms of damages for the society. But, the fact that there is criticism against hedonism directly as an ethical school was a subject that needed to be pointed out. This criticism is by all means constitutes a minor part of ideas expressed by the Young Turks in the periodicals about what to do when it comes to talk about the

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid, p. 247.

<sup>372</sup> Ali Haydar, “Ahlak Hakkında-2,” p. 7.

ethics. Below, in the section wherein the themes of “sacrificing the individual to the society” and “the ethical necessity of union” will be focused on, this subject shall be discussed more thoroughly. For this reason, by putting aside the discussion on hedonism, “the ascetic ethics” criticized by the Young Turks in the periodicals is going to be discussed.

### **5.3.2 The Attitude towards Ascetic Understanding of Ethics**

The concept of “zuhd” (ascetism), which is Arabic in origin, literally means “relinquishing something”, or “retreating.”<sup>373</sup> In the Islamic terminology it can be defined as “the control of the self (nefs) for gaining God’s consent.”

The concept of “zuhdī/ascetic ethics” is used by Ziya Gökalp. The reason why discuss asceticism or ascetic ethics is that it can help us to answer the question of how a connection is established between ethics and religion in the Young Turks thought. Considering the lexical and terminological meanings attributed to the concept it can be said that it refers to a religious understanding of ethics. The ethical meaning and importance of asceticism is generally emphasized by people belonging to schools of tasawwuf. Nevertheless, as it will be discussed later, Ziya Gökalp does not interpret the ascetic ethics just as an attitude belonging to the Sufism. His expressions in defining the ascetic ethics entirely correspond to a religious framework. For this reason, it seems possible to use “the ascetic ethics” and religious ethics synonymously considering Ziya Gökalp’s ideas.

Considering the Young Turks publications it can be claimed that two approaches come to the fore regarding the ascetic ethics. One of them objects to the idea that an ethics based on religion is possible. But it is useful to point out that this objection is “conditional.” It is conditional, as a criticism indicating that there is no essential connection between ethics and religion, and not put forward as a reservation against the legitimacy of religion. Religion is a legitimate social phenomenon to most of the Young Turks. In this respect, the legitimacy of its existence is not made a subject of

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<sup>373</sup> Serdar Mutçalı, *Al-Mu’jam Al-‘Arabī Al-Hadīth/Arapça-Türkçe Sözlük* (İstanbul: Dağarcık Yayınevi, 1995), p. 363.

discussion. Of course there is some exceptional Young Turk figures employed a more rigid approach and argued that religion, monotheistic religions in particular, have no truth at all.<sup>374</sup> But, the mainstream Young Turks preferred to adopt a reconciliatory approach when it comes to religion as it was mentioned in the first chapter. Their reconciliatory approach reveals itself as a silence about the “truth” of religion. It seems difficult to receive a positive answer, from most of them, with regard to the question of whether the religion emerged as a result of a connection with a divine being as monotheistic religions argue. This hesitant state of mind reveals itself in the form of silence. Interestingly, the Young Turks are not silent about the function of religion contrary to their attitude about its truth. Even it is possible to mention that the legitimacy attributed to religion stem from this “function.” Considering the famous three states of Auguste Comte, the periods left behind by the humanity (theological and metaphysical periods) cannot have a determining role in the positivist period. Religion is legitimate mostly because of its social role and function in terms of providing social order and regulation. When it is out of this sphere its legitimacy will surely be disappeared.

Another matter should be pointed out in terms of the followers of the first approach. These people aim to fit the ethical principles adopted in the Islamic thought to the modern circumstances by reevaluating them within the framework of popular scientific concepts of the day. Hence, certain traditional concepts found in the Young Turks’ writings should be evaluated as only “borrowed” concepts.

The second approach concerning the ascetic understanding, although it critical again, supports the idea that there can be a touching point between religion and ethics. One needs to add that there are only few proponents of this approach. İsmail Hakkı, for example, mentions this with statements that are no very clear. The clearest statements in this direction are found in Besim Atalay’s articles published in *İslam Mecmuası* which is probably the only periodical that can be defined, in the narrow sense of the word, as “conservative” compared to the other Young Turks periodicals. Although he seems to have conservative tendencies, Besim Atalay brings very harsh

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<sup>374</sup> It has been pointed within the discussions about philosophy of religion, for example, that M. Nermi does not attribute any truth to monotheistic religions.

criticism to the traditional (religious) understanding of ethics. His criticism is aimed at both the society itself dealing with the ethical crisis and the Islamic thinkers who are thought to be the reason of this crisis. Some other points related to the ethics in his criticisms will be discussed in the following parts.

The first of the two approaches mentioned above is found in Ziya Gökalp's article named "Ahlak Buhranı."<sup>375</sup> To Ziya Gökalp, the ascetic ethics is a phenomenon found in both primitive and developed (monotheistic) religious systems. Both kinds of religions are, in essence, composed of certain sets of "prohibitions" and "liberties." These prohibitions and liberties emerge from the responsibility felt for the holiness believed to regulate the order in the universe. The prohibitions are for preventing the violation of this holiness while the liberties are for implementing it.<sup>376</sup> The attention paid by the primitive religions for these commands and prohibitions become harsher in monotheistic religions. The monotheistic religions struggle more for keeping people's attentions alive for the divinity in this world based on which their treatment in the other world will be determined.<sup>377</sup> In this sense, it can be said that religion has a positive role. This case, in fact, overlaps with the idea mentioned about the function of religion above. Therefore, these statements by Gökalp are positive aspects of religion in his ideology. But, considering the ideas mentioned in the following parts of the article, it can be claimed that he sees the ascetic ethics something that should remain as a historical phenomenon. To him, with the increase in the social cooperation, the ascetic ethics will be confined to the interest of a minor group.<sup>378</sup> The reason of ethical state defined as "crisis" by Gökalp is this turmoil experienced in the area of ethics. However, to Gökalp, the solution does not lie in the revival of the ascetic ethics. On the contrary, such a situation would deepen the crisis. To put it within his expressions:

In a period when a nation undergoes a spiritual reformation, no matter how hard the need for ethics is, the revival of the old ethics that is residual is as

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<sup>375</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "Ahlâk Buhranı," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 7 (23 August 1917), pp. 122-124.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

just dangerous. The more you impose a dead ethics, the stronger immorality and individualism emerging against this as a social response becomes. The rules and ceremonies, family and government styles that do not live in consciences, making people live ethical duties and ideals by force, bring about the opposite of desired results. So, the responsible for the current ethical crisis are the thinkers that do not struggle for promoting the new ethics in the first place and in the second place are the conservative forces struggling to impose the old ethics by force.<sup>379</sup>

Undoubtedly, these points indicate that the ascetic ethics is dead irreversibly. Now, to Gökalp, we should do what the Europeans did once. We should construct “social holiness” instead of the corrupted religious one.<sup>380</sup> The social sacred should both correspond to the realities of the age and bear a national quality on the other hand. These are the most conspicuous aspects of the new ethics desired to be constructed.

Another remarkable point concerning Gökalp’s approach is that he is the representative of classical Young Turks attitude purifying the being from the idea of holiness. The positivism, evolutionism and materialism tackled in the second chapter had purified the being from the divine. Hence, we witness the purification of ethics from it. As a result, what Gökalp defined as “social holiness” is questionable in the point how really “divine” it is. Here, the regulator of society is the subject matter rather than the regulator of the universe. What is forbidden are the things threatening the existence of society, and what is permissible is the things reinforcing, protecting, and supporting its existence.

The second approach within the scope of the ascetic ethics are found in Besim Atalay’s *İslam Mecmuası* articles as stated above.<sup>381</sup> He also complains of the

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid, p. 123.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Besim Atalay’s first article, within the series examining ethical matters, is published in the 10th issue of *İslam Mecmuası*. He signed his articles as “Ahmet Besim” until the 29th issue of the said journal. The full identities of his articles within the context of ethics are as follows: Ahmet Besim, “Ahlak ve Din,” *İslam Mecmuası* 1, no. 10 ( 24 Rajab 1332/5 June 1330/18 June 1914), pp. 315-318; Ahmet Besim, “Ahlak ve Din: Ahlakın Ehemmiyeti,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no.13 (7 Ramađan 1332/17 July 1330/30 July 1914), pp. 389-392; Ahmet Besim, “Din ve Ahlak -3- Nazar-ı İslam’da Ahlak,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 15 (30 Zilhijja 1332/6 November 1330/19 November 1914), pp. 445-448; Ahmet Besim, “Nazar-ı İslam’da Ahlak,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 20 (12 Rabī’ al-Awwal 1333/15 January 1330/28 January 1915), pp. 526-527; Ahmet Besim, “Din ve Ahlak -4- Hakikat-i Ahlak,” *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 22 (10 Rabī’ al-Ākhir 1333/12 February 1330/25 February 1915), pp. 554-557;

existence of an ethical crisis like many Young Turks figures. He believes that the best indicator of the crisis is the fact that Muslims adopt egoism as a principle. However, the life styles of Muslims are only the result of this ethical crisis. The reason of crisis is the Islamic scholars and traditional disciplines like jurisprudence and kalām theorized by them. The Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and kalām disciplines constructed by them have had some negative impacts on the Muslims. With Besim Atalay’s words, fiqh “turned Muslims praying machines” and kalām “made them very materialist and theoretical on the belief.”<sup>382</sup> As a result, Muslims directed their attention only to formal elements and forgot the spiritual dimensions. He explains the essential mistake of Islamic scholars within his following statements:

The Islamic scholars deducing legal verdicts from the verses and hadiths and filling volumes of writings also needed to deduce moral lessons from these sacred and inspirational sources. A Muslim memorizing even the rules of ablution did not need to learn the rules of religious ethics from the life of prophet.<sup>383</sup>

The indifference of Islamic scholars to the field of ethics led to the adoption individualism as a principle by Muslims. Considering the logical connection made by many Young Turks figures between individualism and hedonism, it is possible to say that the Muslim image mentioned by Besim Atalay gains a hedonistic characteristic. To him, a Muslim feels guilty when he wipes his nose with his right hand while performing ablutions, but the same Muslim does not feel guilty while taking bribery and abusing orphan’s goods.<sup>384</sup> It is possible to define this as “a hedonism whose

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Ahmet Besim, “Temayülât-ı Ahlâkiye ve Örf,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3. No. 25 (30 Jumādā al-Ülā 1333/2 April 133/15 April 1915), pp. 606-608; Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak-7: Nazar-ı İslam’da Ahlak,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 29 (27 Rajab 1333/28 May 1331/10 June 1915), pp. 664-667; Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak: ‘İbâdât-ı İslâmiye ve Ahlâk,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 32 (16 Ramađân 1333/16 July 1331/28 July 1915), pp. 715-717; Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak: ‘İbâdât-ı İslâmiye ve Ahlâk,” *İslam Mecmuası* 3, no. 33. (30 Ramađân 1333/30 July 1331/11 August 1915), pp. 734-736; Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak: İbâdât-ı İslamiye ve Ahlak – Namaz,” *İslam Mecmuası* 4, no. 39 (10 Muḥarram 1334/6 November 1331/18 November 1915), pp. 835-837; Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak -11- İbâdât-ı İslamiye ve Ahlak,” *İslam Mecmuası* 4, no. 40 (25 Muḥarram 1334/19 November 1331/3 December 1915), pp. 839-842; Besim Atalay, “Din-Ahlak: Ma’nâ-yı Ahlâk,” *İslam Mecmuası* 5, no. 51 (15 Rabî’ al-Âkhir 1335/26 January 1332/8 February 1917), pp. 1025-26; Besim Atalay, “Ahlak Değişir Mi?” *İslam Mecmuası* 5, no. 52 (7 Jumādā al-Ülā 1335/1 March 1333/1 March 1917), pp. 1040-42.

<sup>382</sup> Ahmet Besim, ““Ahlak ve Din,” p. 317.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

source is in religion”, because Muslims seek only the things that satisfy their own interests and passions. Besides, these interests and passions are derived directly from the religion. By praying they believe they can reach the rewards promoted by God and get the pleasures of paradise by exhibiting some sets of bodily behaviors. Seen from the other side, the fact that they do these bodily actions is the direct charm of pleasures they want to get. This is a situation the origins of which can be found in the religious belief.

Within the context of Besim Atalay’s ideas, a second subject can be pointed out. To this, the divinity attributed to the society by the Young Turks is found in Besim Atalay’s ideas as well. For example, he interprets the hadith “the bad character is an unforgiving sin” in such a way that this hadith and many others indicate us that the shortcomings in praying are pardonable, because these are sins against God and God likes to forgive. But, the evil in ethics (character) is an evil both against God and the society. In this sense there is great evil in it for the society. That’s why it is not possible to forgive this.<sup>385</sup>

#### **5.4 Sacrificing the Individual to the Society or the Ethical Necessity of *Union***

It seems possible, after all these discussions, to draw a conclusion like this: The fact that the ideas of the Young Turks within the context of the ethical issues are largely focused on individual hedonism and ascetic ethics in fact indicate where they want to reach. Leaving aside individualism supports the idea of union while leaving aside the ascetic ethics supports secularization and *progress*. That means that the *union* which is a political concept and the *progress* which is a scientific concept turns into ethical principles in the Young Turks’ ideology. This situation is remarkable both in terms of indicating the complexity of Young Turks’ ideology and deriving certain coherence in terms of philosophical spheres.

The vitality of mentioned ethical principles largely lies in the question of what kind of relationship is envisaged between individual and society. Their criticism for

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<sup>385</sup> Besim Atalay, “Din ve Ahlak-7: Nazar-ı İslam’da Ahlak,” pp. 1-2.

hedonism provides a clue related to their views on the individual. By means of these clues, it is possible to discuss the relationship between individual and society on an ethical ground. Below, the ethical grounds of sacrifice of individual to the society and the ethical necessity of the *union* in this respect will be discussed. Hence, it will be seen that the Young Turks' understanding of ethics is "deterministic" in a sense.

One of the essential issues to point out at the level reached by now is the fact that the Young Turks' ethical philosophy is deterministic. It has been touched upon, in the third chapter, that the scientific method they employed made them deterministic. The deterministic approach in terms of the philosophy of ethics that we think they adopt has both epistemological and ontological dimensions. Our knowledge about the objects has to overlap with the qualities existing objectively and independent of us. Our knowledge can only be knowledge as much as it overlaps those objective qualities; otherwise we cannot talk about the knowledge. If we transfer this to field of ethics, it is seen that the ethics, which is rather discussed on a practical ground, has an epistemological dimension in one sense. It can be reasonably claimed that the ethical action should correspond to the knowledge concerning the mentioned action. The question of "how I should behave" in fact, even if implicitly, can be interpreted as the equivalent of the question of "with what my behavior should correspond?" In this regard, it will be required to talk about an epistemological dimension also in ethics. The second question above will be answered with "the social consciousness" by the Young Turks regarding the discussions made till now. On the other hand, to be able to talk about this knowledge on ethics, it will also be necessary to talk about a subject that will have the mentioned knowledge. Then, is that subject something given? In other words, is the question above asked directly by the individual subject? Looking at from the point of Young Turks, we should give a negative answer to this, because the subject exists only by means of touching and arising out of the social conscience that is defined as the collective consciousness. Only the subject that agrees with it can claim to exist. Existence is emerging directly from that consciousness and also the maintenance of this existence would only be possible as a result of agreeing with that consciousness. In this case, we will unavoidably find ourselves in a deterministic approach, because both our being and knowledge independent of us are determined by the society as a source of external objectivity.

What I can know and what I can do are answered by the society beforehand rather than me. What I should do as an individual is to adapt them directly and apply. One can object to this assumption by arguing, for example, that we see someone out of the framework drawn by the collective consciousness. In other words, we see there are individuals ignoring the directives of mentioned consciousness “you should do this” and “you should stay away from that.” How should we explain these? It can be answered by saying that they are deemed “null and void.” One of the most conspicuous aspects of ethical determinism found in the Young Turks’ ideology is this, and the subject should be discussed within the framework of questions like how the individual is discussed, what kind of relationship is imagined between society and individual (in terms of ethics). This circumstance, determined as one sided relation between individual and society, and more importantly conceptualized in terms of a necessary “creating” and “existing”, will be characterized as “the ethical necessity of union.”

The main reason of the claim that the unity must be seen as an ethical necessity, in Young Turks’ system of thought, is the existential meaning ethics has in the point of “creating” and “existing.” The ethics is an existential problem both in terms of individual and society. Although the existential quality of ethics may seem to be born from different grounds, they unite at the same point. In consideration of Young Turks, the ethics is a necessary condition of the social being. We see this not as a sociological event that is a necessary condition for the emergence of society but as a necessity showing an ontological event. The society as a collective consciousness needs ethical codes and value judgments to be able remain in the sphere of being. In other words, if there is no ethics, we cannot talk about the society. On the other hand, the individual has to adopt a necessary altruism. To talk about the possibility of individual being is only up to behaving in accordance with ethical codes or value judgments. The individual is indebted to society not in terms of its physical aspects but perhaps in terms of consciousness it owes its being to the society. Realizing this requires a voluntary contact with “the other.” The other is not the other as an individual, but it is the social consciousness which is “the wholly other.” The relationship experienced with the wholly other collective consciousness has the bindingness of the ethical duty for a source of divinity. In spite of its unconscious

character, this bindingness requiring a voluntary submission is, in essence, the clearest expression of necessity. The ethical relation experienced with the other is the manifestation a divinity. The contact made among individual consciousnesses through the ethics generates the social holiness. From this point of view, it seems possible to express the meaning that the ethical necessity of union has in terms of social being in that way: the ethical necessity of union gets the “wholly other” to become “holy other”. It can be claimed that Ziya Gökalp’s expression of “the social holiness” is also emerged from such a belief in necessity. It arises out of an ethical necessity, because the altruism that individual consciousness shows to collective consciousness is not arbitrary but it is totally oppressive. The individual may exist only if contacts with the other without expecting something in return and by “consociating.” The main reason of the claim that the individual not having social codes are deemed null and void in terms of the collective consciousness is, in fact, this. *The individual exists as long as he becomes ethical.* In this respect, it is even possible to say that the ethics plays the role of “first philosophy” in terms of Young Turks’ ideology.

It was discussed in the second chapter that Young Turks used the concepts of *union* and *order* synonymously and for example they defined the supporters of the Ottoman CUP as “the supporters of order and progress.” In fact, as it corresponds to the principle of “ordre” by Auguste Comte “intizām”(order) may be seen a more appropriate concept in terms of their discussions on ethics. The function attributed to ethics in terms of establishing the social order is the establishment of the social harmony. However, beyond being only a sociological phenomenon, the social harmony seems to adopt an existential quality. The making of relationships among the consciousnesses and the possibility of contacting the collective consciousness lies in this harmony. The most reasonable way of expressing such a harmony depends on interpreting it similar to the relationship among monads in the thought of Leibniz. Ziya Gökalp while talking about the existence of individual consciousnesses and their relationships among themselves uses a language reminiscent of the terminology of Leibniz. His articles “Şahsi Ahlak” and “Bugünkü Felsefe” clearly reveal the influence of Leibniz. In these articles Gökalp defines Leibniz’s concept of monad as “personality” within his own conceptual framework. It is seen that he uses

personality to refer to “conscience” at times and to “consciousness” at others. To Gökalp, it is Leibniz who grasped the meaning of personality best among philosophers. “Leibniz’s concept of “monad” is above all a personal and autonomous being.”<sup>386</sup> Leibniz really describes the substances he calls monads similarly while talking about them in his work *Monadology*.<sup>387</sup> Yet, Leibniz mentions the autonomy of these monads with an absolutely descriptive purpose. In Leibniz’s thought, the monads are not substances that are independent of themselves entirely. They separate from each other with some specific qualities (like to be open to perceive). But, ultimately, they are in touch with the others internally so as to project a unified universe. In other words, monads “constitute the unity in plurality.” Gökalp also agrees on a similar idea of union. But, he imagined the universe observed by personalities in a more ethical way. To put it more clearly, in Gökalp’s understanding, each of personalities observes the collective consciousness from different points of views. “As the universe is a system of visions, every conscience is succinctly the reflection of collective consciousness. Nevertheless, each of these consciences expresses the collective conscience from its own point of view.”<sup>388</sup> This will not mean that each conscience is satisfied with expressing the collective conscience from its own point of view and in its own way. Each conscience experiences the collective conscience by fitting it to the ethical framework built previously by the collective conscience. Idiosyncrasy must be confined to the way that framework is experienced. Otherwise, the individual experience that will reach different and incoherent results would not constitute “the unity in plurality” but a pile of discrepancies.

Gökalp believes that the “autonomous” personalities still reach a vision of complete universe; more precisely they have to reach this. Although he does not question in detail how they reach this complete vision of universe, considering the discussions made in the previous pages, one may think that some reasonable deductions can be presented about the kind of the vision Gökalp had. According to this, the

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<sup>386</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Şahsî Ahlak,” p. 144.

<sup>387</sup> See G W. Leibniz, *Monadology in Monadology: An Edition for Students*, translated and edited by Nicholas Rescher (University of Pittsburg Press, 1991) 313 pp.

<sup>388</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *ibid.*

personalities, consciences or consciousnesses independent of each other are shaped by the collective consciousness beforehand. The collective consciousness is the most perfect consciousness. The perfection shows at the same time its skill and competence of shaping. This power seeming natural in terms of the quality of collective consciousness constitutes a deterministic quality in terms of individual consciousnesses. This approach corresponds to God described in Leibniz's *Monadology* and *Theodicy*. Leibniz talks about a harmony pre-established by God while tackling the questions of how the relationship between body and mind is possible and how the monads reach the projection of a common universe.<sup>389</sup> If such a regulator did not exist, it would not be possible to constitute a harmony among the monads "having no windows opening to outside", in other words closed to external impacts completely. Considering the holiness attributed to it by Young Turks, the society will come up as the most developed form of the idea of personality. It will bring together the consciousnesses watching the universe with different eyes on a common ground. The collective consciousness has the ability to form a determinant making individual consciousnesses reach a coherent understanding of ethics. That is a part of its perfection. Looking at from this perspective, it is possible to say that the phenomenon of "eternal harmony" attributed to God by Leibniz is attributed to society in Young Turks' ideology. How else can it be interpreted the fact that the individual adopts ethical codes constituted by the society "unconsciously" and turns them into actions again unconsciously?

Seeing another way of the discussion of ethics on a social ground as a legitimate and reasonable effort is the possibility of "evolvment" put forward for individual being. The ethics in terms of engaging in a relationship with the other is emancipating the individual from a closed being and taking to a real being. That means the ethics is a way of emancipation from solipsism which is a highly remarkable point. In fact, it is also possible to evaluate the criticism aimed at hedonism within this scope. As a hedonist consciousness realizes an action of thought solely within itself, it excludes contacting with the other and helping people. A consciousness following such a path

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<sup>389</sup> See G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, translated by E. M. Huggard and edited with an Introduction by Austin Farrer, (Electronic book, 2005), pp. 245-246.

will become a pathological incidence from the point of view of the society and will be deemed to be null by it. The main reason why the Young Turks constantly criticizes the individual point of view is this.

This existential and necessary connection established between the personal being of the individual and ethics may seem to be deductive from one point. In other words, the ideas mentioned in the previous pages may be regarded as the logical extension of views published in the periodicals. However, considering together with some ideas that the being of individual, as an individual, does not have any sense in terms of ethics it will be possible to say that the mentioned deductions are not groundless. According to Young Turks, the value of any ethical rule depends on the fact that the individual is forced to sacrifice his individuality to his personality when it is necessary.<sup>390</sup> While sacrificing his individuality to his personality he will start from this point: only a community, a mass of people can serve to the progress of civilization. The individuals do not have value and importance in their views. I am, as an individual in the lineages of active generations, a modest circle. Me and the individuals sacrificing their individuality to their personality will be replaced with new generations equipped with new forces. I may perish but the society never does. It constantly runs towards progress and evolution. Not my happiness as an individual but the happiness and progress of the common should be desired.<sup>391</sup> Then, there is no harm in giving my being to the collective being and this is an inevitable duty for me.

This matter defined as the ethical necessity of union, is a natural result of the passivity of individual consciousness against the collective consciousness. This result is quite natural, because even the “will” that can be seen as the chief aspect of personality, is produced by the collective consciousness. Ziya Gökalp’s statements below clearly indicate this:

No matter how rich and strong the individual conscience is, it can create neither an ideal nor a value. Egoism comes out because the individual spirit is not transparent to the social ideals. It is for this reason that people having an

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<sup>390</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *ibid*, p. 143.

<sup>391</sup> Ali Haydar, “Ahlak Hakkında,” p. 10.

individual life materially and spiritually get away from the social and civilized spirit. In their spirits, you cannot find the value of any ideal, or idealism of any value. *The ideals appear in the form of “will” in individuals by emerging from the social conscience.*<sup>392</sup>

On the other hand, one needs also to point that when the unity becomes an inevitable ethical principle, it is clear that all the actions which are vehicles for the realization of it will be naturally ethical actions. A similar point can be found in terms of progress. The union, from the perspective of society, constitutes the form of ethics while the progress constitutes the spirit. While the unity leads to emergence a state of consciousness that enables the ethics, the progress actually needs the realization that state of consciousness. For this reason, Ali Haydar’s words “every action serving to the progress of society is ethical”<sup>393</sup> are agreed upon by almost all Young Turks. Similarly, to Kazım Nami, the progress achieved by the Ottoman society to that day is the result of collective work, that is to say the result of their union. By continuing this union and opening new “doors of progress” to the new generations becomes necessary ethical duties for the individuals.<sup>394</sup> The ethics is the lively expression of the cooperation among individuals and generations. If there is no obedience in a society, it is not possible to talk about the existence of ethics there.<sup>395</sup> For this reason, the way of overcoming the ethical crisis experienced in the social life is to create a homogeneous and unified society. This is remarkable as it shows that “the solidarism”, which is defended by Young Turks as political issue, is grounded on an ethical basis.

That the ethics takes individual consciousness to the sphere of being means that it opens it to the being as a possibility. The operation of “opening” has a vital function like emancipating the individual consciousness from the solipsist approach as it was pointed out above. On the other hand, it is also possible to talk about a second aspect of it. According to this, the ethics takes us to the external and above our temperament. So, when we show a commitment to any category we understand that

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<sup>392</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Celal Sakıp], “Eser ve Zat: Rıza Tevfik’in Felsefesi,” pp. 69-70. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>393</sup> Ali Haydar, *ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>394</sup> Kazım Nami, “Yeni Ahlak-3,” p. 22.

<sup>395</sup> İsmail Hakkı, “Ahlak Mücahedeleri-2,” p. 223.

we are in the field of ethics.<sup>396</sup> Going beyond our temperament means realizing actions that are not expected to be done under normal circumstances and sometimes that are contradictory to them. For example, our creation inspires us to protect ourselves. Protecting the self is not always being brave. Sometimes, being brave may mean ignoring the inspiration of creation, in other words, endangering our selves. The ethics wants us to be brave. When the ethics and creation come across, the pressure of ethics directs us to bravery which is not found in our creation. It is possible to locate many more examples. Ultimately, it will be necessary to judge that the ethics is a force contradictory to the nature of individual.<sup>397</sup> It is for this reason that the source of ethics or the aim of ethical rules cannot be the individual. Both the source and aim of the ethics is the society.<sup>398</sup> It is again for this reason that becoming blind from the personal desire is the most evil and unethical thing in this world.<sup>399</sup> Our actions become ethical the more we want the good of the other and the more they make closer us to this good. And the good needs to be seen as consociation with other.

## **5.5 The Philosophy of Values and Ethics or the Possibility of New Ethics and New Values**

Till now, we discussed what the Young Turks criticized for which reason when it comes to the ethics. The points we reached were presented and we discussed outlines of what kind of vision they had. The part discussed below aims to argue the basic claims of “the constructive language” used by the Young Turks. As it will be seen later, the mentioned sphere is the field of philosophy of values. The Young Turks believe that the Ottoman society can overcome the multi-dimensional crisis it undergoes by means of constructing a new understanding of values.

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<sup>396</sup> Necmettin Sadık, “Emile Durkheim,” p. 511.

<sup>397</sup> İsmail Hakkı, *ibid*, p. 224.

<sup>398</sup> M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Ahlak ve İlim,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 17 (15 April 1328/28 April 1912), p. 6. See also M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Ahlak, Fazilet ve Namusun Manası”, p. 14.

<sup>399</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, “İlk Söz,” *Tabiat* 1, no. 1 (10 July 1337/23 July 1911), p. 3.

Undoubtedly, there is a strong connection between values and ethics. The thing called value is something that is not found in the matter itself. The value is not something that is a quality found in the phenomenon itself as a rigid reality but is a reflection of the need of classification for the human mind. While we think on the objects, we need to categorize in different ways. For example, we qualify them as good or bad, beautiful or ugly. But, it is not the objects themselves that we attribute ethical and aesthetical value. We qualify them depending on how they correspond to our expectations. In this respect, the value becomes “an excess” considering the very existence of the phenomenon.<sup>400</sup> This excess, not belonging to the essential nature and charged on the objects later, is a complementary element of ethics that we come across in the thought of Young Turks.

In Young Turks’ understanding, the consciousness becomes “ethical” as it adopts the values imposed on it by the upper-consciousness. The realization of such an adoption requires, before anything else, participation to the collective consciousness. To achieve this, it is needed to constitute a “national” identity in consciousness. Ziya Gökalp claims that this can only be possible by means of a “conceptual” thought.<sup>401</sup> That means, by emancipating from feelings and passions, doing the actions within the framework drawn by the collective consciousness. Considering the emphasis of “nationality” often found in the periodicals, it is seen that the thing wanted to be constructed through values is a new identity. For example, Kazım Nami states that what is meant with the new ethics is “to give the ethics a national character.”<sup>402</sup> In fact, that is stressed almost all of the periodicals analyzed within the scope of our study. In this respect, the value is a necessary element in terms of constructing of “the new and national life” idealized by the Young Turks.

The meaning attributed to the values in Young Turks’ thought is constructed on the concept of “newness.” One of the allegations coherently supported by them is the

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<sup>400</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Hüsün ve Kubuh [İçtimai Usul-i Fıkıh Meselesi Münasebetiyle],” p. 229.

<sup>401</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Şahsî Ahlak,” p. 143.

<sup>402</sup> Kazım Nami, “Yeni Ahlak-1,” p. 21.

necessity of constructing “the new life.” In this respect, newness becomes an ethical source of reference in the Young Turks’ views.

Concerning the structure of values the basic approach of the Young Turks’ ideology can be summarized like this: the value is objective in terms of the individual, it is subjective in terms of the society. It is objective in terms of the individual as it is under the influence of the society as a source of mental objectivity that the individual should follow in his actions. As it was stated in the previous discussions, the framework constituted by the individual regarding the value judgments of the society appears in the form “will.” In this respect, the individual does not determine the basis of his behavior by means of reasoning on it. Being encoded by the society irrevocably and unquestionably he adopts the value judgments as “no other way than this” forms. On the other hand, it is possible to claim that the values are subjective in terms of the society. As far as we see in the previous discussions, Young Turks believe that the values should be constituted differently for every society. This explains the reason why the ethics gains a “national” character.

Another point supporting that Young Turks have as subjective understanding of ethics can be deduced from the answer of question of to what they base the ethics. They attribute the source of value not to the reason but to the conscience. The conscience is an appreciative means. While the reason deals with the quantity of objects and events, the values emerge from the quality. In this respect, it is not possible for a reason used to reach a quantitative point to produce some qualitative and arbitrary judgments.<sup>403</sup> Like in all fields, also in the field of ethics it is necessary to lie on the national conscience. “The new life” ideal’s central position in the Young Turks’ thought is very meaningful in this respect. They aim to construct a new ethical framework in line with the new life. The old and broken-down value judgments cannot determine the framework of the new life. For this reason, to find some new value judgments and doing research and investigations is necessary. As they object to the idea of absolute, they refuse to accept anything directly. The values to be produced for themselves will undergo a second assessment and the values that

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<sup>403</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Hüsün ve Kubuh,” p. 229.

meet needs and are in line with the national consciousness will be accepted.<sup>404</sup> What is interesting is that although a general framework is drawn about what these values can be, a mental exercise explaining the content of this framework specifically does not exist. This seems to be stemming from the fact that they set out without plan or program as stated briefly in the second chapter. In fact, being without a plan is a legitimate situation for them. For example, like Ziya Gökalp Ali Canip claims that the activities for creating value judgments cannot be realized as part of a general program.<sup>405</sup> In this respect, the efforts of “producing values” are legitimate according to them. But, it is necessary to state that there are also some Young Turk figures who do not regard being without a program as legitimate. For example, Suphi Ethem thinks that it is largely due to setting out without a program that the new scientific understanding does not gain popularity among the layers of society.<sup>406</sup> However, the main reason of failure in constructing new values is due to the fact that there is no opportunity of applying such a plan rather than setting out without a plan. As a complementary part of ethics, there is no point in doing any plan and program in the field of values. Even the application of “producing” values becomes impossible. But, Young Turks claim that it is possible to produce values. For example, Rıza Tevfik acknowledges the emergence of religion as a new value and its spread among people as an indication of such an opportunity. This opportunity contains the answer of what the intellectuals should do in the face of a crisis in terms of the Young Turks. What should be done is to make up some ideals and vitalize them.<sup>407</sup> This is one of the clearest indications of their Jacobin approach.

It is clear that the efforts of Young Turks in the field of philosophy of values in fact are an extension of their elitist worldview. For example, Ziya Gökalp states that the realization of political revolution does not mean the full realization of the Young

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<sup>404</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat Hakkında Vaki Olan Tenkide Cevap,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 3 (15 September 1327/28 September 1911), p. 4.

<sup>405</sup> Ali Canip [Yekta Bahir], “Millî Edebiyat Meselesi-1,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 6 (19 June 1327/2 July 1911), p. 202 and Ziya Gökalp [Demirtaş], “Yeni Hayat ve Yeni Kıymetler,” p. 139. See also Ziya Gökalp, “Türkçülük Nedir?,” p. 483.

<sup>406</sup> Suphi Ethem, “Antropoloji Dersleri,” *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 14 (13 January 1327/26 January 1912), p. 31.

<sup>407</sup> Rıza Tevfik, “Kuvvetler ve Kıymetler Felsefesi,” pp. 25-29.

Turks' ideology. To him, the Young Turks face heavier responsibilities following the political revolution which is actualization of the social revolution.<sup>408</sup> Ziya Gökalp clearly explains the basic qualities of the idea of "the new life" based on the revolution:

New life means new economics, new family, new aesthetics, new philosophy, new ethics, new law and new politics. Changing old life is possible only with an effort to create a new life within domains of economics, family, aesthetics, philosophy, ethics, law and politics. And you know that the explanatory factors of the nature of a life are the values it supports. The old life had its own economical values just as it had specific familial, aesthetical, philosophical, ethical, legal and political ones. Disapproving the old life means derecognizing and discrediting those values. Any afford aspiring to create a new life must search for real values belonging to each of these domains and dignify them. Those who accept new life as purpose are the youngsters who search for such real values. For the new life to be intelligible these real values must be known.<sup>409</sup>

Depending on that the values are subjective in terms of the individual and objective in terms of the society, it is possible to claim a second point. In Young Turks' thought the values can be categorized as "right" and "wrong." As we can claim that our knowledge on phenomena can be right or wrong also we can claim the same thing for the value judgments. Our phenomenal knowledge is also a judgment and we can test its rightness by turning to the phenomenon itself as an external source of objectivity independent of man himself. There is a source like that by which we can review the rightness of the value judgments. This is "the social conscience."<sup>410</sup> Further, there is no difference between the reality of social conscience as a source of objectivity and factual reality.<sup>411</sup> The value judgments that are right emerge out of the national conscience or they act in accordance with the national conscience. In other words, correspondence with the reality is a necessity for the value judgments. Now, the detection of the right indicates that something else will be qualified as

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<sup>408</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "Türkçülük Nedir?," p. 138.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "Kıymet Hükümleri," p. 470.

<sup>411</sup> S., "Mantığın Tarifi (Sultani ve İdadiler İçin Felsefe Dersleri)," *İslam Mecmuası* 2, no. 20 (12 Rabi' al-Awwal 1333/15 January 1330/28 January 1915), p. 524.

wrong. So, the judgments that do not have an overlapping between collective consciousness and national conscience should be defined as “wrong.” In this sense, the values also adopt a cleansing role, because the ethics and values become a part of efforts for purifying the national culture from all the foreign elements. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the social conscience is determined as an external being. This is an indication that Young Turks continued their logical coherency in terms of their adoption of the positivist thought. For, as long as there is not an existence and the being of that existence is not confirmed positively it will not be possible to base the ethics on social conscience. They think that it is possible to do because the society and social conscience or the collective consciousness is also an external existence.

This attempt of constituting a new ethical framework is important in terms of indicating the deviation from the critical approach, which generally appeared as indictment, employed by the Young Turks. We face an effort of constructing rather than a complaint in the field of ethics and this is a positive thing in itself. However, this also contains an important problem, because they evaluate the ethics as something “producible.” So, is the ethics something producible?

Considering the connection made by the Young Turks between ethics and experience, it is not possible to say this, because they criticized Kant and similar thinkers on a similar ground. They criticized Kant as he did not base his understanding of ethics to the experience. Every understanding of ethics based on an a priori principle instead of experience, to them, becomes metaphysics and the ethics cannot be connected to the metaphysics. So, can the fact that the ethics is something “producible” be reconciled with the idea that it should be based on experience? Producing may be connected to the experience in a sense. But it should not be forgotten that producing corresponds to a general framework aimed at the adoption of all society not a simple phenomenon envisaged for the meeting individual needs. In this respect, it seems hard to say that ethics is something producible. Ethics becomes institutionalized in time. Institutionalizing it from the very beginning and shaping the society accordingly can only be a Jacobean expression. In fact, “Jacobinism” can be used to define the Young Turks and it is the expression of the

role they cast for themselves in the field of ethics like many other fields related to the social philosophy. They tried to correspond with the scientific and philosophical point of view of the time and take into consideration an argument assuming that society can transform only through some interventions. It can be said that the idea that the ethics is producible emerges out of this. It will not be an exaggerated idea to say that the institutional changes realized by the Young Turks did not come up as a result of social consciousness' history or by itself. In almost all revolutions, first we see a narrow environment and then a comprehensive institutionalization. The efforts of transformation backed by the institutional support ultimately struggle to spread the new ideas among people. It may not be possible to criticize this effort in terms of the target wanted to be reached but it seems inevitable to say that a process contradicting the nature of objects take place. If the ethics, to the Young Turks, is the product of social conscience it is not possible to turn that conscience into automate and get a valuable product at each touch. What we call ethics is something that can be derived from the social life. In other words, the ethics can be derived but it cannot be produced. In spite of this, they claim that new values should be produced and this is quite possible. The values that can be accepted by the national conscience will be found and a system of ethics composed of these will be constituted. It is not possible to realize this within a program. At least in terms of the "social revolution" they want to realize it impossible to do within a certain time. Probably the greatest impediment they do not realize is the way of perceiving the time, as stated briefly in the second chapter. They perceive the time as a phenomenon that can be squeezable. With a mental leap they forget the process and directly pass to the conclusion. Thinking seems to be perceived directly as something that can provide the realization of that thing. Of course society exists with changes and transformations. Also the ethics is subject to this change as an indispensable element of the social life. But, the determining role of time should be taken into consideration. The effort of the Young Turks to construct a national ethics by means of new values is flawed as it ignores the most fundamental element of change, the time.

They believe that somehow a new understanding of values can be produced. This probability, to them, is inevitable in terms of the point to which philosophy arrived. Philosophy becomes a philosophy of ethics and values. The fundamental function of

philosophy as a philosophy of ethics and values is only “appreciation and constitution.”<sup>412</sup> In an article in *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, we come across a mental gymnastics regarding how to specify the special qualities of appreciation and constitution practices. In this article, the questions below are asked to the readers:

- A) What kind of principles can be introduced instead of the current ethical codes?
- B) To what extent these principles can be influential on the social communities?
- C) Do you agree with Kant’s and similar thinkers’ ideas on ethics?
- D) To what principles can be based on the new ethical rules and how can these prevent the poverty of society?<sup>413</sup>

Undoubtedly, these are the clearest expressions of the “constructive language” stated above and mentioned upon a presupposition that the ethics is reproducible. The fact that they are asked by the editorial board of *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* makes them more important and worthy of examining. The editorial boards are in a sense spokesmen of the ideas of Young Turks’ ideology. In the following pages we will investigate an article by Mustafa Nermi in which these questions are dealt with. So, it should be pointed out that it is hard to say that the questions above were answered by readers thoroughly. As far as we can find M. Nermi’s article is the only answer to these questions. But, it is clear that this is not an original answer. The article is rather an interpretation on the “force-idea” theory by Alfred Fouillée who captured attention of the Western philosophy circles. Nevertheless, the ideas voiced in the article deserve to be tackled in terms of summarizing the expectations of Young Turks from the values and philosophy of ethics.

The construction of a new and national ethics, in fact, means the foundation of a nation from the very beginning. To Bedii Nuri, what is expected from the ethics is to create “a developed, entrepreneur and progressive nation”<sup>414</sup> from a nation under the influence of old and corrupted ideas. Further, the mentioned nation should behave

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<sup>412</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Tevfik Sedat], “Bugünkü Felsefe,” p. 31.

<sup>413</sup> Tahrir Heyeti, “Yeni Hayat,” *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* 1, no. 8 (1 December 1327/14 December 1911), p. 6.

<sup>414</sup> Bedii Nuri, “Mebâhis-i Ahlâkiye,” p. 1033.

within a unity and while acting should consider this unity. This, as a presupposition of the ethics brings about the necessity of “unity of nation.” If the unity of nation is not seen in the society, the intellectuals and thinkers should take the initiative to create this. As Rıza Tevfik says, “a group of intelligent people by constituting a set of ideals can bring a unity of nation to the community.”<sup>415</sup> These statements can be seen as the clearest expressions of the Young Turks about how they connect the ethics, specifically, the science, generally, philosophy and social transformation. Ethics, in its broadest sense, is the totality on which the actions should be based. In this respect, it can be seen as a natural conclusion that “a transformation” accompanies the ethics. But, what makes the issue problematic in the example of the Young Turks is the manner of interpreting the connection between the social transformation and the ethics. It can be discussed whether an essence constructing the ethics, a philosophical and scientific society, creating a new nation and a framework corresponding to the contemporary and national needs exists. Similarly, it can also be discussed whether the social transformation constitutes a new ethics, philosophy or scientific understanding or by means of invented ethical, philosophical or scientific frameworks the society will be transformed. But in Young Turks’ system of thought the point expected to be adopted as a presupposition is the necessity of realizing the transformation and change institutionally. In this respect, the ethics becomes one of the most effective tools of modernization in Young Turks’ views. To create “a developed, entrepreneur and progressive nation” as Bedii Nuri says, first, it should have “a national character”,<sup>416</sup> in other words, it should correspond to the needs of Turkish society and be in line with its qualities.

The newness means the clearance of the residues of previous period in the field of ethics like in all fields. What is meant by residue is by all means are the values added to the phenomena and events and not in a necessary connection with events and phenomena essentially. All the value judgments of the previous period are wanted to be annihilated by the Young Turks. Trying to protect these, for example, to M. Zekeriya Sertel, is an indication of ethical conservatism. When the history of the

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<sup>415</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *ibid*, s. 27.

<sup>416</sup> Kazım Nami, “Yeni Ahlak-2,” p. 15.

nations is observed, it is seen that conservatism and new ideas always conflict; and the victorious is always the new idea. The same situation is also for the ethics. The ethical rules we inherited from previous periods prevent our steps forward. Hence, also in the field of ethics the newness is needed.<sup>417</sup> Ziya Gökalp has a similar idea. To Gökalp, the new ethics means “the living ethics.”

In a time when a nation undergoes a spiritual revolution, no matter how hard the need for ethics is, it is dangerous to bring back a residual understanding of ethics. The more a dead ethics is imposed on people, the stronger immoral and individualistic movements become...the immoralist movements take their power from the force and domination of a dead ethics. The responsible of today’s ethical crisis is first the thinkers who do not struggle to promote the new ethics and second the conservative forces struggling to continue the old ethics.<sup>418</sup>

It is clear that Gökalp sees the current ethical structure as the source of the crisis. Every struggle to protect the current situation deepens the crisis instead of solving it. Yet, in the Young Turks’ thought the ethics is projected as a means to deepen the modernization not the crisis. In this respect, the expectation towards the fact that “the new” ethical framework has a “living” quality is remarkable. This is not an expectation only in the field of ethics but it is also valid for example for the religion. In fact, that the ethics or religion has to have a “living” quality is important, because it depends on the presupposition that the system struggled to be constructed should base on a legitimate ground. While the legitimacy requires the qualities like “newness” and “nationality”, on the other hand, it needs a more essential quality: “to be within the scope of possibility.”<sup>419</sup> If the related legitimacy elements are not considered, in other words, if the value judgments struggled to be produced are not investigated whether “they are possible or not,” there will be the danger of falling into “a fictitious” realm. The possible values by turning into ideals serve to the creation of a new nation.<sup>420</sup> The fictions, as they do not have the chance to be ideals,

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<sup>417</sup> M. Zekeriya Sertel, “Tarih Muzırdır,” pp. 15-17.

<sup>418</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Ahlak Buhranı,” p. 123.

<sup>419</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>420</sup> For the difference between “fiction” and “ideal” see, for example: Ziya Gökalp [Tevfik Sedat], “Bugünkü Felsefe,” p. 31.

instead of constructing the nation, they will destroy it. The values adopted by the old life created the current social crisis as they did not correspond to the reality.

### **5.6 Philosophy as a Mechanism of Value-Production**

The most remarkable statements about the acceptance by the Young Turks, that philosophy is now a philosophy of values and ethics, can be found in Ziya Gökalp's article "Bugünkü Felsefe." The article, alongside with Ziya Gökalp's articles "Muhyiddin-i Arabî", "Yeni Hayat ve Yeni Kıymetler", M. Nermi's articles "Alfred Fouillée ve Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlak" and "Alfred Fouillée'nin Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlakı" contains the concise expression of the Young Turks' understanding of ethics.

Ziya Gökalp, in his article "Bugünkü Felsefe," separates the adventure of philosophy to that day into three parts. In the first phase philosophy is the mother and gendarmerie of all sciences. This phase continued from the beginning of philosophy to the emergence of positive sciences based on observation and experiment. In this period, philosophy deals with "visible" beings. Sciences, as they become more specialized, monopolized the observation of visible beings and distanced philosophy from that sphere. The reason why beings are defined as "visible" is that the sciences analyze these beings with observation and experiment methods. For this reason, Gökalp defines observation and experiment as "two careful eyes of science."<sup>421</sup>

In the second phase, philosophy is rather seen as "metaphysics." Since science, as Gökalp puts it, excludes the metaphysics from its scope of examination "by following the advice of a great reformist", there is no relationship between philosophy and science. However, for the aim of "not reaching wrong results"<sup>422</sup> philosophy, even if "esoterically", continued to use observation and experiment as methods. The change philosophy exhibits in this second phase against the first phase emerges in the form of being it tackles. Philosophy leaves "seen beings" to science and determines "seeing being" as the scope of investigation for itself. While doing

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<sup>421</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Tevfik Sedat], *ibid*, p. 30.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid*.

this, it particularly examined on issue deeply and reached a very important result. This issue is about how the consciousness is possible. Sciences have deeply analyzed the visible part of human being; they have revealed all the physiological and biological qualities of them. “Consciousness” is not among the analyzed “visible” qualities. This being about who we have detailed data has also a consciousness. Science cannot explain this. This duty belongs to philosophy. Philosophy, calling this as conscience or consciousness, accepts it as the first evolution, the first manifestation and reaches that point: “what exist in reality are not visible, thinkable, and understandable things, on the contrary are the selves that can see and understand.”<sup>423</sup> It is possible to summarize the basic principle of philosophy of this phase within a Schopenhauerian language by saying that “the world is my representation.”<sup>424</sup>

“Seeing” beings are sometimes defined as “appeared” beings in this article by Gökalp. What he means by “appeared being” is the being that has consciousness and appears to other consciousnesses in the form material. For this reason, “appeared being” becomes a different category than “seen being.” On the other hand, this distinction seems to be *monadologic*. To Ziya Gökalp, “all beings are made of consciousness that is more or less dark or bright and existing at different levels of evolution. Consciousness sees the consciousness in the form of material. But, it appears in the form of consciousness to itself.”<sup>425</sup>

Philosophy deals with quantity in the first phase as it deals with “visible” beings. And in the second phase it deals with “seeing” (or “appeared”) beings as it is about quality. In other words, the borderline between the first and second phases is determined by the type of being dealt with. In the first phase it is inevitable that philosophy manifests a materialist quality, because it limits itself with “seen” beings. In the second phase, it is rather spiritualist, because in this phase, it is limited with

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid

<sup>425</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

“seeing” and “appeared” beings. In the first phase, while the subjects philosophy deals with are “objective”, in the second phase, as it deals directly with the consciousness itself, it manifests a subjective quality. As the objects and events consist of quantity, in the first phase, philosophy could not pass on the quantity; hence, it failed to explain the quality. As the qualities are subjective elements of sensations, in the second phase philosophy examines the qualities. In the first phase, it puts forward material determinism, natural selection and evolution; in the second phase, as stated above, it discovers spiritual determinism, spiritual selection and spiritual evolution as a result of observation and experience method used in order not to contradict with the conclusions of science. It indicates that like quantities qualities can be factors in determinism, selection and evolution.<sup>426</sup> In fact, as it was pointed out before, the separation of “ideal” and “fiction” may be derived from a spiritual selection. To put it more clearly, the values that consciousness produces meets the criteria for selection as long as it corresponds to the reality and hence turn to ideals. The ones that do not correspond to realities remain as fictions as they cannot meet the mentioned criteria, and hence they cannot pass to the actual truth phase.

At each phase of its adventure philosophy comes across a new form of being while leaving behind a form of being. It left “seen” beings to the science, “seeing” or “appeared” beings to the metaphysics and discovered a form or sphere of being that has never been explored. Gökalp defines this type of being as “desired being,”<sup>427</sup> which is value. The fact that it is desirable, in a sense, stems from that it has the quality of being shapeable in a desired form. In other words, the values have a character “neither like quantity which does not increase or diminish nor like quality which is closed to change. They gain the desired perfection and are subject to discretion.”<sup>428</sup> This should be thought within the framework of criticism mentioned by Young Turks against the absolute understanding of ethics. In other words, while they oppose the absolute ethics, in fact, they believe that the values should have flexibility like this.

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<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

Gökalp is of the opinion that the “desired being” is as true with regard to the existence it has within consciousness as the factual reality of the first phase. The value may not have an external existence but its existence in the consciousness results in “its existence” in the real sense. The value is not made of a static existence. It is an operative force. This force will surely be influential in an external being. With the impact of Alfred Fouillée’s ideas on values, Ziya Gökalp defines them as “thought-forces.”<sup>429</sup> These thought-forces at first reveal themselves in the form of a mental quality. Then, they become a spiritual character and finally an external truth.<sup>430</sup> That means there needs to be a possibility for any value to become truth. That there is not such a possibility, which entails the existence of value to be impossible, will lead it to remain as fiction. For avoiding fictions and producing values corresponding to truth, philosophy should not contradict science and follow a path that is harmonious with it. Philosophy following such a path will reveal that “man is not just capable of seeing but also of appearing.”<sup>431</sup> Evaluated from this perspective, it can be claimed that the values that make possible the third phase in the adventure of philosophy gives it a “creative” quality. Quantity and quality respectively showing the qualities of “seen” and “seeing” beings, as Gökalp claims, are unchangeable that means they can only be descriptive things. On the contrary, if the values have a flexible quality; if they can gain the desired quality and transform them when desired that will mean that they will make philosophy gain “a creative” quality. This is exactly what Young Turks expected from philosophy. It should not content itself with a pure description but should also make changing and transforming possible. In this respect, the philosophy that becomes of values should be seen as the way of transforming the society from “inside.” Philosophy that follows a realistic methodology by depending on pure scientific data or adopts a complete idealist approach is a descriptive philosophy. Describing the position of human mind against reality or the fixed relation between mind and reality is repeating the truth. But, the values orient philosophy towards a more creative path.

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

This creative identity the values give to philosophy stems from the force they have in themselves. Then, what is the source of this force? As the idea is possible within a conceptual framework, its source is reason. But, the value emerges from conscience not reason. For an idea to have “force”, in other words, to reach the level of an actual truth, is only possible thanks to its correspondence to a value. That means an idea can only become a value having force if it is accepted by the conscience. This is the reflection of passivity of the individual consciousness against the collective consciousness.

Interestingly, Ziya Gökalp thinks that the mission of “producing values” that philosophy employs at this last phase is also adopted by the Sufi schools. This is an interesting situation, because a central theme like the philosophy of values is based on tasawwuf as a traditional discipline. Ziya Gökalp seems to think that Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas correspondence to the “thought-force” theory reflects the parallelism between the modern and Islamic thoughts.

Ziya Gökalp argues, in reference to Ibn ‘Arabī, that this intellectual sequence is adopted by Sufi tradition and that it consists of three steps. At the bottom, there is “the world of images” (‘ālem-i mithāl). The world of images, in essence, is a place where the perceptible world is regarded to have no real existence. Accordingly, “the existence consists of imagination” (innama’l-kawnu hayālun).<sup>432</sup>

At the second phase, there is “the world of spirits” (‘ālam al-arwāh). To Gökalp, when the Sufis discover that the objects, which appears to exist in the world of sense, are enlivened in fact by special sensations of consciousness, they explain this exploration by saying that “the color of water is the color of its holder” (lawnu’l māi lawn-u ināihī).<sup>433</sup> The existence at this phase should be made meaningful directly by referring to feelings.

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<sup>432</sup> Ziya Gökalp [Tevfik Sedat], “Muhyiddin-i Arabī,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 4 (26 May 1327/8 June 1911), p. 61.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

At the third phase, there is the world of “fixed entities” (a‘yān-i thābita) This phase bears a special meaning in terms of containing the sufist interpretation of “thought-force” quality that Gökalp attributes to values. To Gökalp, at this phase, “the existing perfections” are not favored and the “ought to be perfections” are tried to be built. These “ought to be perfections” that exist in the objects inherently and in a hidden form are called *a‘yān-i thābita*.<sup>434</sup> The thing that Ziya Gökalp defines as the “ought to be perfections” are in fact “values.” The values can only be manifested through a will. This will is the social consciousness which is a collective consciousness.

Ziya Gökalp thinks that these phases, which he names “maqām”, in fact correspond to the development phases of the Western history of thought. Berkeley, for example, was in fact interpreting the Sufi motto of “innama’l-kawnu hayālun” while he was claiming that the objects we see are made of our sensations and affections of our consciousness.<sup>435</sup> Kant, who says that our sensations are not made of objective appearances and that these appearances are enlivened by subjective forms, does nothing but interpreting Sufi understanding that “lawnu’l māi lawn-u ināihī.” When philosophers like Alfred Fouillée, Guyau, Nietzsche, and William James declare the truth that ideals are “thought-forces” and that hope, will and belief may bring a high and clean happiness by constructing new values they were in fact interpreting the Sufi approach that “mā hakama’l-qazāu ala’l-ashyā-i illā bihā” (the jurisdiction can rule over objects only by means of objects).<sup>436</sup> In other words, if the objects are made of ideas, the element that can be influential on it can only be another idea.

The assumption that the values are “thought-forces” is a theme particularly analyzed by some Young Turks figures. For example, M. Nermi’s article “Alfred Fouillée ve Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlāk”<sup>437</sup> is one of them. M. Nermi wrote the article to answer the questions in the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası* that is referred to in previous pages.

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> M. Nermi, “Alfred Fouillée ve Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlak,” p. 19.

M. Nermi thinks that the qualities of new ethics should be deducted from the connection of ethics with consciousness. To him, being conscious means to get directly involved in ethics. However, considering the general points of the article, it is possible to say that he does not posit the consciousness, in terms of being purely a consciousness, into the center of ethics. While talking about the ethicality of consciousness he considers the general. In other words, the ethicality of consciousness will only be possible if one meets on a common ground with “others.” Consciousness may seem as a thought-force mechanism working independently for every individual at the first phase. But that does not mean that the thought-forces have *apriori* independence and that they pick their own reasonability from themselves. There are certain conditions for realizing thought-forces. For example, they should have a “possible” content, which is also emphasized by Ziya Gökalp. That the consciousness cannot give spirit to the ethics without contacting the other stems from that “the individuality” is “an impossible” quality. Considering that in the thought of Young Turks the individual is sacrificed to the society, it can be said that this is a legitimate inference. The individuality is not a possible thought-force, but is a fiction. That it is a fiction means there is no possibility of realization for it. The individual can only be an ethical element with the *total*. The consciousness that is out of the total and that has not contacted with the social conscience will have to collapse in itself under the pressure of “fictions” in the form of thought-forces. In this respect, contacting the other is inevitable in terms of ethics. For, “even in our “most conscious” times we are regulated by “the ideas of others”, the psychological rapports of the collective.<sup>438</sup> In this case, thinking means that I produce some kinds of values that will be adopted by the society, which are thought-forces.

The most remarkable issue in M. Nermi’s article is the meaning attributed to Descartes’s proposition of “*cogito ergo sum*.” The proposition is reformulated so that it can stress the existence of social consciousness: “*cogito ergo sumus*”<sup>439</sup> (I think therefore we are). According to this new meaning, which is a formulation by Fouillée, the existence of consciousness requires knowledge about the existence of

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

the other. The proposition of “*cogito ergo sum*” is the summary of the idea, in Descartes’ understanding, that the fundamental element on which the being can be based is the ability of thinking. Consciousness is the only source that will enable us to leave behind any kind of suspicion when it comes to the presence of being, and construct the world over again. And the second formulation (“*cogito ergo sumus*”) Nermi mentions by an inspiration from Fouillée interprets the presence of individual consciousness in terms of social consciousness. I think therefore we are. Thinking is functional in terms of indicating presence of the individual consciousness but it should be thought with an important dimension: social presence. One can define it as social consciousness or “the social conscience” as Ziya Gökalp prefers to use.

Descartes’ proposition of “I think therefore I am” seems to point out grounding in terms of an individual existence. However, “thinking” means to be defined by the ideas of others, the spiritual relations of the collective. In this respect, thinking gains an ethical dimension. By thinking we define the objects and take into consideration the view of others, as good or evil. Without the determinative role of collective, more precisely, without its participation having a determinative quality, we cannot realize such a definition alone. For this reason, the individual thought becomes “ethical” only with the society. It will be possible to reconcile this idea with the transcendental subject.

“*Cogito ergo- sumus*” (I think therefore we are). There cannot be an individual consciousness independent of collective consciousness. The connection should be made with the consciousness of the other. Otherwise, it will be confined to a mental isolation that does not bring about an ethical result. “*Cogito.*” That is all. But, the ethics cannot be explained with only “idea.” It should be actualized. The ethics is the transformation of force into action. For this reason, any idea that does not contain the skill or possibility of turning into action will not be ethical. The ethics contains both idea and force (the potential of being realized *de facto*). On the other hand, this can be interpreted in such a way that the idea points out the individual consciousness, the force points out the creative side of transcendental consciousness. Although the individual consciousness is necessary in terms of having idea, it is not enough alone

in terms of ethics. The constitution of ethics can only be possible by considering the consciousness of others or “the transcendental consciousness.”

The ethics is a subject related to the consciousness in essence. An ethicality which is independent of thought cannot be envisaged. In this respect, it is not enough to conduct analyses only related to the society. It is also necessary to consider what kind of a connection has the community with the consciousness. This subject was touched upon before within the scope of the idea of “transcendental subject” which is thought to be derived from Kant by Gökalp. We are also facing a similar transcendental subject in the field of ethics. The practice of thinking by the thinking subject is an absolutely individual incident. In other words, the individual consciousness enabling us to talk about the presence of individual, when thought independent of transcendental subject, will have to remain as a skill of thinking closed within itself. The only way to open this closed system is to connect to the transcendental subject. An individual’s competence of thinking develops as far as he contacts with and participates in the transcendental subject, which is completely different from other individuals having the ability of thinking although it is a totality of them. The maturation of thought should be understood as its becoming ethical. For, all the behaviors of individual are the forces composed of ideas and feelings that can be seen as the tools of thinking. They are also the forces having the potential of being actualized. Actualization of a potential and the transformation of force into action can only be possible with a leap corresponding to the point of view of the *total*. In fact, it is possible to see this situation as necessary. The ethicality of consciousness can only be possible with the social consciousness. The consciousness is destined to be ethical. This destiny takes place within the social life, in a level in which the inter-conscious-communication is at its peak. One can also see it as the development of consciousness. The growth of the consciousness is made of interpretation of this development. When we look at the history of humanity, we never come across with a period in which the consciousness is isolated from the external world and existing only as the competence of thinking. Consciousness becomes consciousness only if it contact with life and actualizes the ideas and feelings existing in it in the form of force. In this respect, the consciousness is destined to ethics. Primitive people thought that this destiny comprises also all the

non living things and for this reason they practiced animism. But the history of development indicates that the destiny should be evaluated with the other consciousnesses. For this reason, talking about the ethics is talking about the collective that goes beyond the individual consciousness.

It was mentioned in the previous sections that the ethics “opens” the individual consciousness to the external world. The element encouraging the individual consciousness to contact the other by opening to external world is a pure “altruism.” The altruism as a motive existing in the consciousness presents clues to the ethicality of consciousness”, that is to say to its communality.<sup>440</sup> In other words, the ethicality of individual is only possible through its essential altruism. So, the center of ethics is not the individual, it is orientation towards the other and the practice of prioritization of it.

It is possible to say that the value comes into existence with the idea appearing in the consciousness. But, this existence is short and not an existence in the full sense of the word, because to make it an actual truth, there is a route that it should follow. According to this, it can be said that in terms of presence of values there is such a scheme in the consciousness: 1– Value, 2– The force of realization 3– Actual Truth.<sup>441</sup> This scheme answers the question of “what exists in the value?” To put it more clearly, in order to define something as “value” it should contain the potential of realization. In other words, it should be possible. If possible, this will mean that this value has the force of realization. A value having the force of realization will ultimately turn into a truth, because it is adopted by the collective. In this case, the mentioned three principles should be envisaged as principles tightly connected to each other not as different entities.

The scheme consisting of value, force of realization and actual truth is used in another article by M. Nermi within a very critical context. To him, “the thought-force ethics infers the conditions of action and cognizance from the consciousness. So,

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<sup>440</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

reason, consciousness, and experience constitute a unity.”<sup>442</sup> It seems that M. Nermi here projects the reason as individual, consciousness as society and experience as ethical action. What creates the idea is reason. The consciousness makes that idea possible. The experience enables that idea to become truth/reality/action. This can be interpreted as parallelism among reason, consciousness and experience and value, force of realization and actual truth respectively.

Ultimately, M. Nermi believes that the ethics can only have power by means of values. For, to him ethics takes its greatest power from understanding, appreciated values and importance. This is probably the expression of “value construction” role attributed to philosophy by Ziya Gökalp. Philosophy will construct its force over masses from the values it produces through ethics.

### **5.7 The Institutional Dimension within the Constitution of New Ethics: Professional Ethics**

The discussions tackled so far are important as they indicate that Young Turks used philosophical notions as vehicles in struggling to achieve “the reform.” The fact that they use philosophical concepts in this direction does not damage the philosophical quality of the mentioned concepts. Since they seek some solutions for the crisis the fact that they attribute an instrumental role to philosophy is understandable. However, it is very important for us to observe that the efforts of modernizations are based on a philosophical ground.

It is necessary to indicate that the modernization efforts of the Young Turks are not solely constructed with abstract concepts. That means they put forward much more concrete ideas in the field of ethics. Their most concrete idea within this scope is to constitute a “professional ethics.” Professional ethics is thought as a treatment of the degeneration caused by war condition in the society.

The war is really a serious event leading the shattering of social order. It is inevitable that various social crisis come up as a result of war. The most crucial of those crises

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<sup>442</sup> M. Nermi, “Alfred Fouillée’nin Kuvvet-Fikirci Ahlakı,” p. 12.

is probably the ethical crisis. Considering that the most important motive of wars is “domination”, it will be inevitable even to annihilate the right “to live” which is the most fundamental right. Murder can ethically be seen as the most cardinal crime. In an environment where the war leads a serious ethical corruption, it is inevitable to observe that become widespread. The emphasis Young Turks placed on the professional ethics emerges from this situation. They believe that the ethical degeneration affected the Ottoman society after the Balkan Wars and the First World War appears in the form of “black-marketeering.” Ziya Gökalp, for example, is of this opinion. He seems to think that if the professional and personal ethics were established strongly in Ottoman society before the war, neither the black-marketeering would take such a pathological form nor the moneys earned illegitimately would be spent in an immoral way.<sup>443</sup> The professional ethics, in this respect, is seen as an element that can respond to the Young Turks’ quests.

This meaning attributed to the professional ethics by Ziya Gökalp should largely be seen as the expression of making the individual gain personality. When the individual adopts the professional codes of ethics, he will feel himself belonging to a society and struggle to live within the framework of rules and laws of that society. This is not an arbitrary but a coercible situation. Hence, the personality will not be damaged for the sake of individual ambitions, and will not be distanced to ethical rules. The individual attributing holiness to his personality never forsakes his personal honor for personal pleasures and passions. The personalists see their personalities as divine. For this reason, they stay away from illegal treasures obtained from immoral actions. Yet, the individualists see this ethical sensitivity of personalists as “ethical delusion” and stay away from this principle as much as possible.<sup>444</sup> When the individual becomes a part of an institutional structure, he will learn how to behave and know that he will face institutional sanctions. So, the work ethics will function as an aversive element on the individual.

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<sup>443</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Şahsî Ahlak,” p. 143.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

In fact, the duty that Ziya Gökalp attributes to the professional ethics corresponds to the expectations of the Young Turks from *new* ethics. As it is indicated above, the new ethics is also expected to have a “national” quality. It is possible to say that the professional ethics bears a national character in Ottoman context. For example, both guilds and *ahi*-communities created a professional ethics. The guilds functioned as an ethical authority on members. When a person becomes affiliated with a guild, he is deemed to have adopted the ethical codes made up by the guild.

This approach is not only supported by Ziya Gökalp. Necmettin Sadık and Rıza Tevfik also, for example, have a similar approach. According to Necmettin Sadık:

The first way to exalt the ethics in the country is the constitution of professions and professional corporations. Tenancy, authorship, journalisms, and commerce also must be professions like teaching. Then, an individual belonging to a profession -if it is constituted in the form of a constant and certain corporation- cannot abandon the ethics of that profession. In the country, alongside with the general ethics, specific forms of ethics are also needed. If the trade were a regular class of profession in our country, during the war we would not come up with black-marketeering and other ugly and shameful acts.<sup>445</sup>

The reason why Necmettin Sadık mentions such an idea is quite important in terms of the context we try to indicate. He wrote that article following an argument about the ethics in the Parliament. In the Parliamentary session this argument takes place when the members of Parliament deliver their disturbance about the spread of casinos. Cavit Bey, a devout unionist, responds this complaint of members of parliament by saying “raise the ethics of the country.” At the following week, the *Darülfünûn* publishes a declaration about the ethical principles to be complied by teaching professionals.<sup>446</sup> This declaration, to Necmettin Sadık, should be taken as example by people from other professions about Cavit Bey’s point stated in the Parliament. This is the way to be followed for spreading the professional ethics in Ottoman society.

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<sup>445</sup> Necmettin Sadık, “Umumi Ahlak, Mesleki Ahlak,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 25 (27 December 1917), p. 497.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid*, p. 496.

It is clear that Necmettin Sadık sees the *newness* he studies in terms of ethics as a part of modernization by the hand of the state. In other words, the professional ethics as a branch of ethics is seen as a means to transform the society. The professional ethics should be evaluated as a sign of a renewal as it will be applied in the hands of official institutions. Both in the practices of ahi corporations and in the guilds the professional ethics have an informal quality. The Young Turks think that the professional ethics should directly be practiced by the institutions managed by the state. Necmettin Sadık may be seen as the unionist figure voicing this claim in clearest way.

It should be indicated that the ethical degeneration is not seen, by the Young Turks, as the result created only by war. Also before the war there is complaint about many practices indicating that the ethical crisis exists. For example, bribery existed as a common sickness even before war. For this reason, Rıza Tevfik believes that bribery, which is common among civil servants, stems from the lack of the institutional structure that creates pressure on them.<sup>447</sup>

The professional ethics may be seen as a reflection of the Young Turks' efforts to realize the modernization by the hands of the state. As the ethics become more institutionalized, it creates certain sanctions by itself. This is, in fact, is a reflection of their views on modernization in general. The established thought and behavior types may be transformed as a result of institutional pressures. In this respect, the professional ethics constitutes one of the most useful ways to present the society a new ethical framework.

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<sup>447</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Mesail-i İctimaiyemize Dair Bazı Mülâhazât," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 140(116) (29 January 1909), s. 6.

## CHAPTER 6

### PHILOSOPHY OF ARTS AND AESTHETICS IN YOUNG TURKS' UNDERSTANDING

#### 6.1 The General Framework of the Meaning Young Turks Attributed to Arts and Aesthetics

One comes across with serious discussions taking place within Young Turk periodicals on philosophy of aesthetics and arts. There are two important points to which we would like to draw attention before going into the details of their discussions on aesthetical issues. The first point is related with the general profile of Young Turk intelligentsia. If not all, a great deal of Young Turk figures constituted by persons who involved in artistic endeavors independently of their political activities. Ziya Gökalp, who took charge in the administrative level of the CUP, for example, is a poet as well as a theoretician of social sciences. Hüseyin Cahit, who acted as the spokesman of the CUP in the newspaper of *Tanin*, was also a literary critic. Ali Canip whose writings about aesthetics we read in in the journals of *Genç Kalemler* and *Yeni Mecmua* is a poet. Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, who is appointed by CUP as the executive assistant of Sultan Reşat following the announcement of Constitutionalism was among important personalities of Turkish literature. Similarly, Ömer Seyfettin, whose short stories and tails are published particularly in *Yeni Mecmua*, is a respected personality with regard to Turkish literature. It is possible to add many other people in this list. All these names present data supporting the claim mentioned above.

Another reason of the fact that discussions about philosophy of aesthetics and arts are given wide coverage within Young Turks' periodicals is that these areas seemingly supplied an appropriate philosophical ground for the paradigmatic transformation attempted by unionist figures. We desire to clarify the basic element, supporting this

argument, by referring particularly to the place Renaissance occupies within the history of Western philosophy.

As has been touched upon in the first chapter, one of the most commonly used concepts within Young Turks' literature is "teceddüd." This concept has been used by Young Turks as the synonym of the concept of "Renaissance." Hence in the journal published by the *Istilahât-ı İlmiye Encümeni*, the concept of "Renaissance" has been translated as "teceddüd."<sup>448</sup> There is no doubt that there are very different Turkish words that can be used for the said concept. That the concept is translated as "teceddüd", despite the existence of other equivalents, essentially refers to an important point with regard to the mentality of Young Turks. Accordingly, one can say that the philosophical breakage to which Renaissance corresponds within the Western history of thought is attempted by Young Turks through the concept of "teceddüd."

The philosophical understanding that prevailed during Middle Ages, in which the ancient Greek thought is reformulated within a Christian form, underwent to a radical change by the emergence of Renaissance. It is possible to summarize the basic characteristics of Renaissance, which have a certain connection with the discussions we plan to make, as follows:

Renaissance is started as a movement of art before anything else. The changes and conversions in the areas of architecture, sculpture and painting, started in Italy and later spread to other countries of continental Europe, constitute one the basic dynamics of the thinking of Renaissance.<sup>449</sup> Artists, who previously fixed their eyes on the heaven as a result of the inspiration they received from Christianity, turned their attention once again to the concrete reality and the truth that they conceived to be hidden in it, together with the idea of Renaissance. The use of experiment and observation as scientific methods were not an independent circumstance from it. As

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<sup>448</sup> Ed. Nurcan Yazıcı, *Sanâyi'-i Nefîse Istilâhâtı Mecmuası* (İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2012), p. 222.

<sup>449</sup> For the effect which is created by activities within the area of arts see Karl Vorlander, *Felsefe Tarihi*, translated by Mehmet İzzet and Orhan Saadeddin (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2008), pp. 316-317.

it is going to be emphasized within the following pages, arts and aesthetics are attempts of handling and making sense of the universe and the being as a whole, as well as of putting forward concrete productions. It is even possible to characterize them as the instruments of acquiring truth. When considered from this perspective, the transformative effect of arts on thinking stays in front of us as an issue to be noted.

On the other hand, it is observed that the thought of Renaissance gives a great importance to the examination of the written works produced during ancient Greek and Roman periods. Viewed from this perspective, one can argue that Renaissance is developed within a philological method. The most concrete fruit of these philological endeavors has been the movement of “humanism.” It can be said that the philosophical character of Renaissance became more apparent together with humanism. Renaissance philosophy, which dwells on humanism, is antagonistic and foreign to the philosophical framework dominant in the Middle Ages.<sup>450</sup> For, the Middle Ages were products of a God-centered philosophical thinking from the very beginning to the end. In this period, the most important duty determined for human reason is to interpret the Bible and to make the universe understandable within the framework of these interpretations. However, Renaissance and humanism refer to an endeavor which takes the human being at the center and tries to construct the meaning to be attributed to life by starting from human being himself. In this respect, Renaissance points to a philosophical breakage in terms of the history of Western thought. Together with Renaissance, which is an important milestone on the way to modern thinking, a more worldly and profane mentality is started to be formed. It is possible to draw a similarity between the critical attitude Young Turks maintain against the traditional thinking dominated by religion and this character of Renaissance. This similarity makes it understandable why Young Turks conceived their struggles as the dream of creating a Renaissance.

One other important side of Renaissance is its extension which can be interpreted as the “return to the essence.” To put it more clearly, Renaissance can be defined as the

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<sup>450</sup> Cf. Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Tarihi: Thales'ten Baudrillard'a* (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2009), pp. 378-79.

process in which the West rediscovered its own basic sources. Thus, several ancient philosophical approaches re-appeared following the thought of Renaissance. Aristotelianism, Platonism, Atomism, Stoicism, and Skepticism,<sup>451</sup> are some of these movements. One can observe that a similar “return to the essence” approach is valid for the area of religion as well. It is claimed, in this regard, that a remarkable part of the Renaissance period thinkers like Niccolo Machiavelli were not Christians but rather first age pagans and feeling admiration to ancient paganism.<sup>452</sup> It can be said that the main reason of the appearance of paganism, which is accepted as the purest form of religion, together with Renaissance, and its becoming popular has been this. It is also possible to find a similar attitude towards religion, reminding that of Renaissance, in some articles published in *Yeni Mecmua*. Articles by Ziya Gökalp, for example, within the context of old Turkish religious beliefs are highly meaningful, for, they show this similarity. A clearer expression of the same approach can be found in an article written by Şerafettin Yalçınkaya. According to Yalçınkaya, “all the entities of Arabs, belonging to their pre-Islamic period have been transferred into Islamic period while Turkish people buried their ancient entities to the ground with their own hands.”<sup>453</sup>

Another important aspect of Renaissance has been the differentiation within the language of scientific and philosophical production. Which is to say that together with Renaissance the national languages are started to be used in place of Latin, the prevailing language throughout the Middle Ages. This circumstance can also be said to have an important reflection on Young Turks’ mentality in the similar vein. Ziya Gökalp, for example, sees Turkism that is adopted by the great majority of unionists as a form of “return to the essence” and says, that:

A fruitful vitalism will grow out of Turkism of the day. But this vitalism will not be limited only to literature but will cover all of the social organizations. Return to the spoken language, for example, is “vitalism in language.” Return

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<sup>451</sup> For a detailed description of these movements see Macit Gökberk, *Felsefe Tarihi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1985), pp. 188-200.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid*, p. 192.

<sup>453</sup> Şerafettin Yalçınkaya, “Türk Medeniyet Tarihi: Türklerin Melekeleri,” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 47 (6 June 1918), p. 406.

to folk meter is “vitalism in meter.” Return to folk music is “vitalism in music.” And return to folk stories, to old Turkish legends is “vitalism in literature.”<sup>454</sup>

If all of the Young Turk periodicals we examined are taken into consideration, Ziya Gökalp’s approach to this effect can be said to be adopted by almost all writers who interested particularly in literature. Endeavors of cleansing Turkish from Arabic and Persian words are essentially reflections of the struggle referred to as “return to the essence” above. However, it is difficult to characterize that as a reflection of a project carried out consistently.

If we direct our attentions to Renaissance once again: the above mentioned qualities put forward themselves as a philosophical breakage within the history of Western thought. In this respect, Renaissance is the first step of modern understanding and represents the re-birth of the West, in its philosophical and religious sense, from its own ashes. It is observed that the philosophical extensions of the thought of Renaissance found an important reciprocation in Young Turks’ mentality.

## **6.2 The Basic Debates with regard to the Philosophies of Aesthetics and Arts in Young Turk Periodicals**

Human being is a value-producing existent. The domain of experience widens as long as living area of human beings widens. The expanded experience deepens in due course and means actually that human being mobilized an indirect process of questioning with regard to his own existence. This is why it is possible to talk about a wide range of values encompassing the whole areas of life. However, it can be said that human thought as a mechanism of value production differentiates some of the areas, wherein it feels more at home, from others essentially. Religious values, for example, are of this kind. Similarly, values that are produced within political and ethical areas are also evaluated to fall within this scope. Sometimes one may witness that ethical value is seen as an element included within human beings’ daily routines and, therefore, that it is conceived of as something purely practical and different from its essence making ethics possible. However, this circumstance does not change the

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<sup>454</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Maârif ve Hars,” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 52 (13 July 1918), p. 503.

reality that ethical values are transcending the phenomenal realm. Ethics can be characterized as human being's act to get his own existence acquired a meaning. On the other hand, one of the most important reflections of human being's value producing struggle can be observed within aesthetical area. It seems that aesthetics differs from other value areas in the sense that it does not have a fictional relation with the conditions bringing it out. It is possible, for example, to establish a link between ethics and utility. For, a correspondence between ethical behaviors and humanly expectations is necessary at some points. And this is why stealing or other unethical behaviors may cause that I sustain a loss difficult to recover at personal level. And again, this is why I may bring to the agenda a demand, for others as well as for me, requiring the adoption of an approach knitted with ethical behaviors. I may expect myself and other people, for example, to remain distant from robbery, lying, killing etc. The same circumstance is valid regarding both all unethical behaviors and demanded ethical virtues. The facts that I adopt an ethical system corresponding to my expectations or that I attempt to develop a new ethical systematic, like philosophers of ethics do, stem from this reason. But the factor leading us to produce aesthetical values is not as practical as it is in ethical mechanism. In other words, aesthetical values are not as much penetrating into daily life as ethical values. This point may seem as a weakness for aesthetics at start, however, it transfigures aesthetics into philosophy in the truest sense of the word. For, as it is pointed out within previous chapters on several occasions, philosophy is a nonreciprocal process of questioning. And the philosophies of aesthetics and arts are reflections of such a non-reciprocity. Of course some practical elements can be said to be instituted following this questioning. In other words, what we refer here is not an argument stating that aesthetics does not touch upon daily life under no condition. It is rather a reference to conditions under which any object or any circumstance is entitled for the quality of being aesthetics. So, in which way can this relation be put forward? In other words, what is it that reveals aesthetics or philosophy of arts as a fact which is argued above to have no essential relation with human being's daily life? Such questions are among the basic ones that shall be tried to be answered from the point of view of Young Turks within this chapter. We can say for the point we are currently now, briefly, that the entitlement of an object to an aesthetical quality, in other words qualification of it as an "aesthetical object" is possible only if it fulfills

an aesthetical subject's need for aesthetical pleasure. It is apparent that the relationship between aesthetical subject and object overflows the ordinary subject-object relationship. Therefore, the realization of a thinking style which is established on such a relationship requires a special interest, expectation, and experience with regard to the area overflowing the limits of ordinary knowledge.

### 6.3 Problems of Aesthetics

Aesthetics and art are philosophical disciplines taking "beauty" as subject. Although they seem to concentrate on a common concept, a difference is observed between them. According to this, aesthetic is defined as "the philosophical discipline which engages with the analysis of the concepts and solution of the problems that appear when we contemplate aesthetical objects."<sup>455</sup> The objects supposed to be examined by aesthetics are the objects found in the nature. This is the point where aesthetics differs from philosophy of arts. The issues that aesthetics deals with seem to be aesthetic subject, aesthetic object, aesthetic pleasure, aesthetic attitude, aesthetic experimentation, aesthetic judgment, and aesthetic distance etc. And the philosophy of arts is defined as the discipline of philosophy dealing with the beauty that is found in the works of arts made by human beings.<sup>456</sup> Considered from this perspective, the philosophy of arts can be said to examine questions regarding to the source, nature, and sense and of arts as well as the relationship between validity and work of arts and their classifications.

Despite the existence of such a general concession that philosophy of arts and aesthetics must be discerned at the theoretical level, we observe that these two branches of philosophy have not been differentiated in Young Turks' periodicals. Therefore, it is possible to say that the characterizations of arts and aesthetics have been used synonymously in the articles, published in periodicals, which are examining the concept of "beauty" and other concepts related to it. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, for example gives an open signal that he does not adopt such a difference. Thus, when arranging the matters within the framework of the philosophy of

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<sup>455</sup> Ahmet Arslan, *Felsefeye Giriş* (Ankara: Adres Yayınları, 2010), p. 237.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid, p. 238

aesthetics he goes out of the differentiation mentioned above and arranges the subjects that fall within the areas of both arts and aesthetics as the problems of the philosophy of aesthetics. According to him, subjects of the philosophy of aesthetics are differ into five big groups: “feelings and thoughts about beauty, the beauty in nature, the beauty in arts, nature of the arts, and the purpose of the arts.”<sup>457</sup>

That a difference between aesthetics and arts is not emphasized in Young Turk periodicals, within the context of philosophical meaning and duty attributed to them, can be considered as natural. For, as far as one can observe, art is mostly considered as the imitation of nature in Young Turks’ mentality. Viewed from their perspective, the philosophy of arts may take the handiwork of an artist as a “produced work” by an aesthetical subject, this work of art cannot be considered but as an imitation of the qualities that currently exist within nature. For any man made product to get aesthetic value or to gain the quality of an artistic object, appropriate reflection of the equivalent quality found in nature is a must. This approach is apparent particularly in the articles of Ali Canip and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın.

We will try to handle the ideas expressed by Young Turks regarding the philosophies of arts and aesthetics within the framework of the issues to which we referred as the subjects of the philosophy of aesthetics above. One must immediately remark that there are not detailed analyses, within periodicals, subjecting all of those headings. While some headings had been the subject of more than one article, others have been dealt with more superficially. However, it seems possible to argue that there is a certain consistency and unity among these ideas. The first titles to be dealt with are the aesthetic object, aesthetic subject, aesthetic pleasure, aesthetic value and aesthetic judgment.

### **6.3.1 Aesthetic Subject**

We acquired, whether in the third or fourth chapters, some important hints about Young Turks’ understanding of subject. And we saw, particularly during the

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<sup>457</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi,’ His.” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 371 (9 April 1314/21 April 1898), p. 103.

discussions about ethics, that there is a mechanism producing value independently of the individual subject. As it can be remembered, this mechanism was society as the upper consciousness. Some of the Young Turk figures named this mechanism as “conscience.” Conscience melts all the individual consciousnesses within itself and gives, as the upper consciousness, orders related to ethical quality of all types of actions. These orders were so besieging that even individual subjects’ existence takes place in accordance with the loyalty shown to them. In other words, the existence of the subject is seen as an ethical event. The continuation of this ethical presence is only possible in terms of the behaviors to be realized. When behaviors contradicting the values, which emanate from upper consciousness, are realized the moral presence of the individual subject takes the form of a pathological case and the individual is declared null and void.

As far as we observe, a similar situation is valid for aesthetic subject as well. There is, in the Young Turks periodicals we examined, an important which can be characterized as the equivalent of the concept of aesthetic subject. It is “aesthetic conscience” (bedî’î vicdan). The “aesthetic conscience”, which can be seen at the beginning as an individual subject, must be accepted as an “upper aesthetical authority” when the comprehensive meaning of the conscience attributed to it by Young Turks kept in mind. Of course, this reminds that Young Turks conceived aesthetic as a reflection of national conscience. For, according to Young Turks, national conscience ultimately constitutes an aesthetic universe which is also determining our aesthetic perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, for any fact to gain an aesthetic quality, it has to be compatible to that aesthetic universe. And it means that the aesthetic value is revealed to us by national conscience as the “upper aesthetic consciousness.” In this case, one can characterize the national conscience as the “nature” which is also including aesthetic conscience. As a result, “imitation”, which is to be called art, will be an imitation of the national conscience; in other words, a production giving vitality to values being revealed by national conscience. In the following pages we will try to examine the “national” meaning, attributed to aesthetics in Young Turks’ periodicals, in a more detailed manner. We will content ourselves, for now, with glancing over the qualities of the mechanism intended by the conception of “aesthetic conscience.”

It is possible to find the most conspicuous interpretations leading us to conclude that there is a similarity between aesthetical and ethical consciences in one of Ali Canip's articles. He says, within this regard, that:

Just as there is a "moral conscience" separating the concepts of virtue and disgrace from each other and exposing them under the label they deserve, there is also an "aesthetical conscience" separating good from bad and labeling the first as appreciated and later as degraded. This [conscience] concerns itself with the preservation of "values" and [as a result of it] we may, involuntarily, cheer someone's work of art whom we never met in person or we do not like, but hate writing of a close friend of ours'.<sup>458</sup>

Here we believe are two points that should be mentioned. The first one is that Ali Canip's revival of the concept of "involuntary" reminds, in essence, the discussions about the concept of "organic" that we examined within fifth chapter. As it is pointed within the context of those discussions, values are imposed upon us by the upper consciousness. And we embrace these values as a result of many repetitions. After a while, values settle down in us unconsciously and all of our assessments begin to occur under the influence of this unconscious circumstance. There is a similar situation here as well. We are essentially enamored by certain aesthetic judgments when we characterize a fact or an event as good, bad, beautiful, or ugly. The mechanism creating these judgments is aesthetic conscience which is also functioning as the "aesthetic police."<sup>459</sup>

Secondly, for the values to be protected they must be constructed before anything else. Values cannot be seen as self-reproducing elements, of course. They are being created by a certain mechanism for a number of specific purposes. The basic purpose of aesthetic conscience's creation of values, Young Turks seem to think, is to help to continuance of vitality of upper consciousness. That means that individual consciousness gains an aesthetic nature as far as it adopts these previously created values. This is why beauty evolves out of the judgment that is made not by the artist

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<sup>458</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'îyât Bahisleri: Lâ-Bedî'î Hisler," *Yeni Mecmua*, 2, no. 50 (27 June 1918), p. 467 [paranthesis added].

<sup>459</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'îyyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bedî'î Hayatta Mevkii," p. 506.

but by the subject who subjects that work of art to an aesthetical experience.<sup>460</sup> On this basis, it seems possible to say that the individual subject does not form an aesthetic conscience but constitutes a catalyzer in ensuring the possibility of aesthetics.

One can find the clearest expressions of the fact that Young Turks did not completely leave the aesthetics into the sovereignty of individual subject in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's articles. He is of the opinion that the evolvement of an artist, on his way to become aesthetic subject, requires three interrelated elements.<sup>461</sup> First of all, the relationship between a work of art created by an artist and other works of arts produced by the same person must be taken into consideration. This seems like a condition laid down to ensure prediction about aesthetical creativity by means of the compliance to be observed between works of art. Secondly, the relation that an artist's works have with other artists' works must also be shown. For, as it is reasonably pointed out by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "these works of art, and even the artist himself, do not live alone; they are surrounded by a number of artists living in the same country and the products of their genius."<sup>462</sup> Thirdly, the nationality of the artist, who tries to give an aesthetic quality to his work of art, and its aesthetic value judgments, should also be considered.

For, an artist follows the ideas and customs of his nation. Today, only the sounds of artists can be heard, among the works of art; but there is a hoarse murmuring under these sounds with all its vibrations reaching up to us. This murmuring is the tool of opinion of the people who once became single-voiced with artists. The actual greatness of artists arises from the perfection of harmony between people and themselves. Therefore, in order to understand a work of art, an artist, and the artists of the same aesthetic understanding, the general circumstance of the ideas and ethics prevailed in their period must be known in the healthiest way.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'î Haz -1- Tahayyür," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 18 (8 November 1917), p. 354.

<sup>461</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*

These intertwined circles, described by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, essentially point to interrelated dimensions of aesthetic conscience. There is no doubt that aesthetic conscience is not a single-dimensional structure. It rather is being fed through different channels supporting each other. Depending on Huseyin Cahit Yalçın's argument, it seems possible to qualify these channels as "producing" and "consuming" aesthetic subjects respectively. Producing aesthetic subject is the artist. And the consuming subject makes judgments, by way of aesthetic values inspired to him by upper aesthetical consciousness, about the work created by artist. In fact, it is also possible to qualify these two aesthetic subjects as different faces of the same function. Of course, in his creation the artist is inspired by the aesthetic universe surrounding him. Otherwise, the potential work would be disguised in "unaesthetic"<sup>464</sup> character as argued by Ali Canip. On the other hand, the observing or reading conscience can make a correct diagnosis, which means that his aesthetic attitude would be legitimate, only if he is kneaded with the same aesthetic values.

The third, and the largest, circle surrounding the aesthetic subject is strongly emphasized in the Young Turks' periodicals. Mehmet Vâhid Bey, for example, whose various articles related to philosophy of art and aesthetic can be seen in the periodicals, emphasizes the connection between producing and consuming aesthetic subjects. According to him, the only thing needed in terms of an artist is the people "hearing" and "feeling" in the same way as he is doing.<sup>465</sup> It is mandatory for the existence of national conscience as the upper aesthetical consciousness. One can say that the opposite circumstance also is mandatory. Put it more explicitly, just as an artist needs people who feel like him, a nation also needs artists who feel like it. The later receives the mutual principle from national conscience and gives back to it. Moreover, the art also forms an aesthetic unity between the subjects by means of aesthetic pleasures.<sup>466</sup> Therefore, there is such a unifying aspect of aesthetic and art. Unifying function of aesthetic depends on that the individuals of a nation develop a

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<sup>464</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'iyât Bahisleri: Lâ-Bedî'î Hisler," p. 467.

<sup>465</sup> Vahid, "Sînâ'at-i Nakş ve Te'bîd-i Mefâhir," *Yeni Mecmua: Çanakkale Nüsha-i Fevkaladesi*, (5 March 1331/18 March 1915), p. 45.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

public conscience or join to a pre-existing one. Considered from the perspective of art, this union can only be weaved by aesthetic conscience. For, aesthetic conscience is *the eye* of aesthetic subject, as Mehmet Vahid Bey puts it. Aesthetic subject “does not see the nature just as it is seen by ordinary people. Because, aesthetic excitement helps aesthetic subject to discover the internal truth under the appearance.”<sup>467</sup> This eye, engraved closely on artist’s heart, penetrates deeply into the chest of nature. It is this ability of seeing that makes individual to acquire the quality of aesthetic subject. As we are going to point in our examination of the relationship between arts and nature, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın also makes interpretations resembling this. According to him, one of the basic characteristics of aesthetic subject is to reveal the essential nature of the things. Aesthetic subject must have certain attributes, the most important of which is the ability of seeing mentioned above, to fulfill such a task.

### 6.3.2 Aesthetic Object

Aesthetic object is any object offering us a cross section from the nature. This may be both a natural object and any piece of art. Aesthetic object must be inspired by nature even if it is a work of art (that is, an artificial product) in the idea of The Young Turks. In this regard, one needs to remark that a mimetic object is being talked about. As it is going to be touched upon during our discussions about the essential link between art and imitation of nature, Young Turks regard the art as imitation of the nature, to a large extent.

The framework above is incomplete, although it is essentially true. Because, first of all, any object needs to have “beauty” to achieve an aesthetic quality. Considered from this perspective, the questions of “what is beauty?” or “what is good?” that take part among the fundamental questions of philosophy of art and aesthetics, are essentially different formulations of the question of “what is aesthetic object?”. Therefore, that the aesthetic object means the beautiful object. One needs to point out that not the beauty as a value but the beauty as a factual reality is being mentioned here. In this regard, the aesthetic object can be defined in such a way that it is “the

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<sup>467</sup> Vahid, “Nefis Sanatlar: Sınâ’atte Hakikatperestlik – Rodin ,” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 33 (21 February 1918), p. 131.

object which constitutes the subject of aesthetics, and towards which we face for finding an aesthetical pleasure in.”<sup>468</sup>

According to one of the most remarkable answers, in Young Turks’ periodicals, given to the question of “what is beauty?”, the distinctive nature of beauty is to have an original character. Character is a qualification which comes up with all the dimensions of any nature view. The aforementioned truth, in fact, has double qualifications in terms of both having an apparent dimension and inner dimension that is revealed by the previous one.<sup>469</sup> Aestheticization of an object essentially depends on unifying these two seemingly distinct truths and reflecting them as a single truth.

The main function of art or aesthetics is to reveal this character. In other words, this function is constituted by the discovery of aesthetical dimension that the object has and transmission of it to the consuming aesthetic subject as the truth. Thusly, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın determines the mission of art as uncovering “essential nature”.<sup>470</sup> A work of art becomes an aesthetical object as far as it shows the success of bringing the essential nature in object to the forefront.<sup>471</sup> Aesthetical and artistic “genius” makes the aesthetic aspects of natural objects more conspicuous.<sup>472</sup> Considered from this perspective, it can be said that art represents a creativity which does not exist even within nature itself.

No doubt, this creativity is composed of featuring some aspects that are remained hidden due to certain effects in nature. The universe embodies any kind of the aesthetic possibility in its own eternity. Thanks to his innate aesthetic talent the artist

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<sup>468</sup> Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefeye Giriş* (İstanbul: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, 2010), p. 174.

<sup>469</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, “Rodin ve Sanat,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 24 (20 December 1917), p. 465.

<sup>470</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gâyesi, Aksâmı,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 380 (11 June 1314/23 June 1898), p. 250.

<sup>471</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -9- Gâye-i Hayâlî = Idéal,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 382 (25 June 1314/7 July 1898), p. 283.

<sup>472</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -12- Dehâ,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 387 (30 July 1314/11 August 1898), p. 365.

reveals the actual truth as a fact. This can be both the discovery of a hidden truth, or the extraordinary aesthetical reflection of a view that an object represents inaesthetically in everyday life.

The artist's creativity (or genius) will come with the question asking whether beauty is a subject of production or of a discovery. It would be useful to answer connectedly with the question asking whether beauty is subjective or objective. Similarly, the question of whether there is an absolute beauty in this context would be appropriate to be addressed.

One of the issues on which almost all periodicals we analyzed seem to agree is that the beauty is subjective. Of course, subjectivity is only effective in terms of aesthetic subject we defined as "consuming" above. Otherwise, when it comes to productive aesthetic subject, objectivity should be talked over. And this is inevitable, because, a claim that an aesthetic object has a subjective character also against the artist who created it cannot be regarded as reasonable and legitimate. The artist reflects an objective truth in subjective form. As Vahid Mehmet Bey rightly pointed out, since it reflects the light emanating from the artist's soul,<sup>473</sup> aesthetic object's presentation of a subjective character is inevitable.

The most obvious indicator of the fact that fully reflected objects, in other words, objects carrying no signs from the creative genius of the artist, cannot gain aesthetic capacity is the analogy of "photograph" revived in the periodicals on a several occasions. Photograph, which is the direct reflection of the natural and non-subjective states of objects, was not accepted as a real work of art in Young Turks' understanding of aesthetic.<sup>474</sup> It is true that art is an imitation of nature, but this is not a complete imitation. It must also carry some tracks from the artist's creative imagination. Photograph "freezes the time also just as it freezes the space."<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Vahid, "Sinâ'tat," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 29 (24 January 1918), p. 51.

<sup>474</sup> For interpretations to this effect see, for example, Ali Canip, "Sanat ve Mahiyeti," *Genç Kalemler* 1, no. 13(5) (Undated), p. 145; Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, "Rodin ve Sanat," p. 465 and Hüseyin Cahit, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gayesi, Aksami", p. 250.

<sup>475</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, *ibid*, p. 466.

Whereas, a true aesthetic object is a work suitable not for getting frozen in terms of time and space but re-generated in a new form of life. An objective truth can only be expressed in a subjective manner. The subjective becomes truth as long as it converges to the objective. This is the reason why the photograph, as expressing the objective objectively, is not an art in the eyes of Young Turks. For, it kills the feeling of vitality and just “freezes” what is *visible*. However, the art is made only by *seen*.

Another remarkable comment we encountered in periodicals considers the problem as a matter of methodology. This argument is brought about by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and after discussing ideas of philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Saint Augustine, and Baumgartner about beauty and aesthetics, he says that methodology previously used by these philosophers was wrong.<sup>476</sup> He seems to think that they were firstly putting forward a definition of beauty and then saying that objects in compliance with this definition are entitled to the quality of being aesthetic. However, what should be done is to examine the history of art and clarify the problems related to aesthetic and beauty with the general rules acquired in the result of these examinations.<sup>477</sup> That the issue of determining and describing the aesthetic object is handled as a methodological problem is highly meaningful because of its positivistic extensions. For, aesthetic is “the science of beauty”, according to Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın.<sup>478</sup> Aesthetic, as a science, should dwell upon the factual reality. The methodology to be followed by it should evolve out of a factual basis. And this approach must be accepted as a projection of positivist approach that we tried to discuss in the third chapter. It seems possible to infer a similar projection from the claim that beauty is subjective. Because, as we discussed in the third chapter, Young Turks think that scientific knowledge is relative. The most open statements of this approach, which deserves being entitled as realistic because of emphasis it makes on the factual reality, take place in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s critics against Plato related to the issue of beauty. His critics to Plato can be grouped

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<sup>476</sup> Detailed information with regard to the said criticisms can be found in Hüseyin Cahit, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi’, His”, pp. 103-106.

<sup>477</sup> Hüseyin Cahit, *ibid*, p. 106.

<sup>478</sup> Hüseyin Cahit, *ibid*, p. 105.

roughly under two titles. Firstly, Plato takes beauty as an absolute quality which is valid for every time and every place. However, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın thinks that history of art shows that this is not the case. There is not an absolute beauty. Beauty varies in accordance with the time and environment. To put it more clearly, beauty is “relative.” Secondly, Plato talks about an abstract beauty. Whereas, according to Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, beauty is not something can be abstracted from the things. The thing what we call beauty is common qualities in things. These qualities cannot be alienated from them. When the secondary qualities are removed from the things, nothing remains. To put it within his own words:

A rose constitutes a union (hey’et-i mecmû’a) together with its various qualities. By giving a name to this unity we say, for example, that it is a beautiful table, a beautiful sculpture, and a beautiful poem. However, what remains if we remove whiteness, hardness, space, and materiality from a marble sculpture that we call beautiful? Can a sculpture be imagined without these? So, the presence of the sculpture is possible just with the combination of these qualities. If we take one of these qualities, whiteness for instance, and say that it be neither a sculpture, nor a paper, cotton, or sugar etc. We cannot imagine such a possibility. In order to feel whiteness it must be related to something. And, since it is a common quality, beauty cannot be imagined without being referred to something. This is why the claim that there is an absolute beauty cannot be valid.<sup>479</sup>

### 6.3.3 Aesthetic Pleasure

Aesthetic pleasure can be identified as a sense of admiration resulting from the experience aesthetic subject acquires through his contact with the aesthetic object. In this respect, aesthetic pleasure makes an object a technical issue by taking it away from simplicity. This is a technical issue since the question of what gives pleasure and what needs to be named as an aesthetic pleasure is particularly being handled by philosophers of aesthetics.

It is clear that not all the objects give us pleasure. More importantly, every object that gives us pleasure does not have to be of an aesthetic quality. Aesthetic pleasure is not only a pleasure. In other words, pleasure cannot constitute the theme of the aesthetic

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<sup>479</sup> Hüseyin Cahit, *ibid*, p. 103.

by its being pleasure. Its characterization as aesthetic is possible only provided that it arises from an aesthetic object. The border between a rough pleasure and a more refined pleasure may sometimes be overlooked. One of the missions of aesthetic, seen as “the science of beauty” by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, is to differentiate the aesthetical and ordinary pleasures from each other. As far as we see, some extremely technical discussions were held about this matter in Young Turks’ periodicals. There is a serial of articles by Ali Canip<sup>480</sup> published in *Yeni Mecmua* which is particularly remarkable because of the analyses, regarding to the aesthetic pleasure, it includes. The discussions what we are going to do related to the aesthetic pleasure in this section will largely depend on a review of these articles.

The legitimacy of the arguments about aesthetic pleasure presupposes that the relationship between aesthetic object and aesthetic subject is grounded on a true basis. As result of his investigation about this basis, Ali Canip reaches to the conclusion that aesthetic subject, which is aesthetic conscience, has three states related to aesthetic pleasure. Accordingly, aesthetic conscience reveals its aesthetic relationship with the aesthetic object in three forms: admiration (*tahayyür*), sympathy (*tecâzüb*) and vitality (*hayatiyet*).

Ali Canip defines the *admiration* as “the feeling into which soul falls when it becomes fascinated under the effect beautiful”<sup>481</sup> or “the feeling of superiority based on a value judgment.”<sup>482</sup> But Ali Canip appears to give these definitions under a certain reservation. *Admiration* is not only felt in front of the things we may call beauty. Things that we call ugly, under normal conditions, also may cause the appearance of this feeling in us:

The beauty introduces itself to us with its success and victory. And the ugly arouses a feeling of “disdain” or “blame.”... If something like a dirty,

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<sup>480</sup> The mentioned series includes the following articles by Ali Canip: “Bedî’î Haz -1- Tahayyür”; “Bedî’î Haz -2- Tecâzüb,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 19 (15 November 1917), pp. 367-368; “Bedî’î Haz -3- Hayatiyet Hissi,” *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 21 (29 November 1917), pp. 406-408; “Bedî’iyyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bedî’î Hayatta Mevkii” and “Bedî’iyyât Bahisleri: Lâ-Bedî’î Hisler.”

<sup>481</sup> Ali Canip, “Bedî’î Haz -1- Tahayyür,” p. 353.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*

execrable, and unhealthy face that we could never appreciate is reflected by a master painter's brush, we become ecstatic in the face of it. What we appreciate here is not the described thing but the describer himself. Macbeth displays a bad conscience; but it is a masterpiece. Makber, on the other hand, narrates a misfortune; but it is an aesthetical work. Fikret's "Cenab'a Cevab" tells about the humanity's mud; but it is good.<sup>483</sup>

These claims take us to the conclusion that there should be a discrimination made between beauty in art and beauty in nature. Considered along with the idea that beauty is subjective, the beauty in art may be said to be arising from "intuitional outlook"<sup>484</sup> or "artistic genius"<sup>485</sup> of the artist. This qualification of the artist puts even the ugliest thing into a beautiful form. We swarm with aesthetical feelings in the face of objects that could not give us an aesthetical pleasure in normal times, and become exposed to the bombardment of aesthetical pleasures.

Ali Canip defines "sympathy", which constitutes the second form of aesthetic pleasure in his thought, as "manifestation of happiness or grief, repulsion or compassion of a work of art in readers"<sup>486</sup> or "a pleasure which is invited by another's pleasure or the pain which is invited by the pain of others."<sup>487</sup>

The manifestation of happiness, grief, repulsion, or compassion in readers contemplating that work of art initially seems to point at an objective source of inspiration. For, it means that we are standing in the face of a tangible data which arouses in us feelings to this effect. But a closer look shows that its main function may be said to activate the mechanism of subjective evaluation in us. The feelings that impacted us arouse a mobilizer feeling on our own souls. For this reason, Ali Canip does not regard sympathy as an objective instrument of evaluation in terms of aesthetic. In other words, aesthetic subject acquires aesthetic pleasure just after processing, within his own mechanism of assessment, the effects he receives.

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid, p. 354.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'î Haz -2- Tecâzüb," p. 367.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

Subjective channels are entirely active in this regard. Therefore, sympathy cannot constitute on its own an objective criterion of evaluation.

Ali Canip calls the third form of pleasure as *vitality*. According to him, *vitality* may be defined as “diffusion taking place on our mental activities”<sup>488</sup> or “generic luminance reaching up to all of our organs.”<sup>489</sup>

We have the right of requesting from any aesthetic work of art which we read, listen or watch to give us a feeling of vitality. This is one of the most legitimate forms of aesthetic attitude at the same time. Our aesthetic attitude happens to follow a quite reasonable direction while we do not attribute an aesthetic value to the things which we loathe while listening or we feel never read after reading. No doubt, the effects arouse by any aesthetic experience in our conscience or the luminance, as Ali Canip describes them, do not occur at the same level. That is why our aesthetic conscience is not exposed to an effect when we subject the work of arts of average aesthetic intelligences into our aesthetic experience after great aesthetic works produced by great aesthetic geniuses.

One can observe that the position feeling of vitality occupies within the aesthetic life is given place in the articles written by authors besides Ali Canip. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, for example, emphasizes this point almost in all of his articles about philosophy of aesthetics.<sup>490</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuad also has a similar approach. The following expressions of him, inspired from Auguste Rodin, are noteworthy in this regard:

There can be no arts without life. When a sculptor wants to attribute sublimity, grief or a passion on his work of art, first of all he must vitalize the beings he produces. Otherwise, he may never create influence on us. What does sublimity and grief of a motionless object, a marble block for example, mean? The movement in arts is the transition from one state to another. A

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<sup>488</sup> Ali Canip, “Bedî’î Haz -3- Hayatîyet Hissi,” p. 406.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid, p. 407.

<sup>490</sup> See, for example, Hüseyin Cahit, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -15- Sanat ve Şiirin İstikbali-2,” pp. 74-75.

painter or a sculptor should mobilize the characters he creates and show them in a living manner.<sup>491</sup>

The sense of vitality, beyond being an element of the aesthetic pleasure, creates a fluctuation in the aesthetic conscience of human beings. In this regard, it represents a luminous victory of aesthetic conscience and intelligence.<sup>492</sup> In other words, it enables the aesthetic subject to reach the aesthetic consciousness.

As a matter of fact, the feeling of vitality can even be said to form the main aesthetic value in Young Turks' understanding of aesthetic. For, as we mentioned in previous chapters, the main goal of Young Turks is to build a new life. And the new life is substantially possible with the creation of new values. Therefore, the feeling of vitality, as an aesthetic value, will play a role that the new life they imagine is possible.

According to Ali Canip, *admiration*, *sympathy* and *vitality*, which are the basic elements of aesthetic pleasure, may appear in the fields like ethical or religious areas having no aesthetic character.<sup>493</sup> Therefore, these are not sufficient criteria of aesthetical pleasure, although they are essential components of it. One of the prominent signs proving this argument is that aesthetic pleasure does not arise only from delighting stuff. To put it more clearly, the "zest", in its familiar sense, is not our unique expectation from an aesthetic object. All scenes of the "tragedies" inspire us sense of remorse and mercy.<sup>494</sup> Therefore, aesthetic cannot be defined as a delighting element alone. When this point is taken into consideration, aesthetic pleasure may be defined as the influence created in our conscience by the unraveling of the *essential nature*. To be able to determine this influence with a sharp aesthetic conscience, one must be both producing and consuming aesthetic subject in the sense of being an art critic. Ali Canip seems to be the opinion that if one wants to grasp the true meaning of aesthetic pleasure he must examine the three elements of pleasure

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<sup>491</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, "Rodin ve Sanat," p. 465.

<sup>492</sup> Anonymous, "Sanat Âlemi: Auguste Rodin," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 23 (13 December 1917), p. 445.

<sup>493</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'îyyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bedî'î Hayatta Mevkii," p. 505.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid*, p. 506.

(which are admiration, sympathy, and vitality) as well as the conditions required for being art critic. In this regard, the studies about art criticism are mandatory in terms of putting the sufficient criteria of aesthetic pleasure.

Ali Canip makes two things obligatory for a person who wants to attempt to an activity of aesthetic or artistic critic. The first one is that he needs to be captive of a sensation.<sup>495</sup> He cannot be characterized as a critic of art if the contact with aesthetical object, which constitutes the aesthetical experience in this case, does not create a fluctuation within his aesthetical conscience. The second is that he must “have a grasp of the conditions that art has in itself.”<sup>496</sup> As we understand from an article of Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, the requirements that Ali Canip asserted were in fact brought up by Eugene Veron (182-1889).<sup>497</sup> Essentially, these requirements give some tips about the qualification of aesthetic object. An experience gained by anyone in the face of any aesthetic object cannot be said to acquire aesthetic qualification just because of being an experience. There are certain circumstances necessary for an aesthetic experience. Either you brought that aesthetic object into life because you are an artist; or, you should carry out specific conditions even if you are an audience. This means that art cannot be comprehended by everyone and, therefore, that the ability of making aesthetic judgments about work of arts does not fall within the limits of everybody’s power. To put it more clearly, aesthetic experience is an aristocratic experience. Thus, according to Ali Canip, “the art lived aristocrat and noble up to now and it will live in that way from now on.”<sup>498</sup> This aristocratic understanding of arts is also compatible with general Jacobean approaches of Young Turks.

Issues pointed out so far reveal that not all pleasures are aesthetic. We are attacked by various feelings when we get in touch with an aesthetic object, whether it is a

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -1- Şive, Zevk,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 370 (2 April 1314/14 April 1898), p. 88.

<sup>498</sup> Ali Canip, “Sanat ve Edebiyat: Millî Lisan ve Millî Edebiyat,” *Genç Kalemler* 2, no. 3 (6 May 1327/19 May 1911), p. 52.

painting, sculpture, poem, or novel. Having these feelings do not require that we are in an aesthetic experience. We are experiencing something, of course. But, it is a bit difficult to understand if it is an aesthetic experience or not. For, it is always possible for some external elements to intervene. However, it is not impossible to distinguish between real aesthetic pleasures and these foreign elements named “accessory feelings”<sup>499</sup> by Ali Canip. We may possibly be attacked by the feelings like remorse, sorrow, grief, and happiness etc., which may be felt in front of a dramatic view appearing in any novel, and we would feel against the same view when it appears on a television program. However, aesthetic experience can be experienced only within the scope of an aesthetic object. It is “unique” in this regard. Being unique does not mean that it may not be experienced in another place or time and by another person. But it has a special status which distinguishes it from ordinary experiences. For this reason, the first condition that must be fulfilled is the separation of these two things from one another. And Ali Canip carries out a conceptual analysis to which one can apply for realizing that separation.

The definition Ali Canip made for aesthetic and non-aesthetic objects and incidents is very convenient in terms of our topic. He says, that:

Just as we name the things that appreciated by aesthetic conscience as “aesthetic” (“bedî’î”), we may call things that it rejects as “inaesthetic” (“gayrî bedî’î”), and the common feelings to which we can give none of these qualities as “anaesthetic” (“lâ-bedî’î”). Those who are not informed of the nature of aesthetic feelings admire work of arts only due to anaesthetic feelings. Take theatres, for instance, the people only cheer a “generosity” or “heroism.”<sup>500</sup>

On the other hand, there are three reasons which cause us to experience a state of sensation in the face of an aesthetic object. These are “personal attitude” (*şahsî vaziyet*), “affective contagion” (*derûnî sirâyeyet*), and “conception of life” (*hayatın telakkîsi*) respectively. These are the “anaesthetic” reactions against the aesthetic object. They are confused with aesthetic feelings for the most of the time.

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<sup>499</sup> Ali Canip, “Bedî’iyyât Bahisleri: Lâ-Bedî’î Hisler,” p. 467.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

Moral entity, which we call personality, is not a simple entity. Our character, habituations, moral ideals, religious thoughts, and scientific knowledge etc. constitute our complex presence. When we come face to face with an aesthetical object our personality, which is the sum total of all these, reacts. We maintain an attitude unique to us. *Personal attitude* is such a feeling that constitutes the result of the correlation between our character, habituations, ethical ideals, religious thoughts and scientific knowledge. The reasons for these feelings which go with aesthetic activity are so complicated that even the art critics have difficulties while separating them from real aesthetic feelings.<sup>501</sup> *Affective contagion* is states of mind transmitting to us from aesthetic objects. They are objective feelings. They are feelings spreading to us, although they belong to others. We maintain a personal attitude against a piece of art, like a poem, in accordance with our age and religious beliefs for example. That means that these kinds of feelings are really subjective. Whereas the feelings mentioned in the *affective contagion* are the others' belongings. They become ours only through spread.<sup>502</sup> As to *conception of life*, in fact it has a tight relationship with *personal attitude* and *affective contagion*. Moreover, it can be said that this is a reflection of them.<sup>503</sup> According to our philosophy of life, we like or hate a work of art. There is not a mandatory correlation between this philosophy and the work of art we read. Finally, since our philosophy influences our view, it is necessary to say that the feelings, which we are attacked, rise from it.

We would like to pass on to the next title by completing this section with a remarkable claim about aesthetic pleasure by Mehmet Vahid Bey. According to him, aesthetic pleasure does not only give gratification to aesthetic subject. It helps him to develop intellectually and mentally either.<sup>504</sup> This means that the pleasure is not only an element of consumption but it has a vital importance also in terms of construction of aesthetic conscience.

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ali Canip, *ibid*, p. 468.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Vahid, "Sinâ't-i Nakş ve Te'bîd-i Mefâhir," p. 45.

### 6.3.4 Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value is the judgment about any object which is subjected to an aesthetic experience. This judgment defines whether the object in question is beautiful or ugly. But there is an important point that needs to be noted. In everyday life there are things that we call beautiful or ugly and these may not preserve the same quality in terms of aesthetic. If we need to express in a clearer way, the fact that we name an object as 'beautiful' does not entail that it is a *given* beauty. If it was so, there would be no difference between aesthetic experience of the creative aesthetic subject and ordinary experiences. The pointed situation is that experience of aesthetic situation is related with the deepness of the aesthetic experience. Aesthetic subject can entitle the object as beautiful or ugly as soon as he grasps its truth. For this reason, any incident or object we can define as ugly under normal circumstances may be portrayed through a work of art in an extraordinary aesthetic manner.

The meaning that Young Turks attached to aesthetic value should be addressed in connection with the function of aesthetics. They make an effort for generating a *national* quality in aesthetical field as just as they tried to do in the ethical field. A national aesthetic is one of the founding elements of the new life. National aesthetic should arise from the values which supports this nationality before anything else. And the most important characteristic of aesthetic value is the *vitality*. National aesthetic is composed of a chain of values which is compatible with the new life and placing the idea of life to the conscience of people. It means that national aesthetic values the things fertilizing the life. This is the first thing we can say about the issue of aesthetic value. The thing that conveys us to this idea is the article titled "Millî ve Siyasî Şarkılar"<sup>505</sup> Is the thing giving us pleasure which is aesthetically valuable? Is the pleasure enough to define aesthetic value? Ali Canip's criticism shows that this is not so. Some things, which have aesthetic value, may arouse sadness and grief in us. The concept of pleasure alone cannot cover the aesthetic value we meet in tragedies,

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<sup>505</sup> Anonymous, "Makâlât-ı Mahsûsa: Millî ve Siyasî Şarkılar," *Şura-yı Ümmet* 1, no. 18 (15 December 1902), p. 3.

for example. Ali Canip's comments in this direction may possibly be examined under the heading aesthetic value.

Aesthetic value is created by aesthetic subject, which means that it is subjective. Therefore, there is no aesthetic value in the things but it subsequently is installed by the evaluating subject. Again, because of this subjectivity there is no absolute beauty and an absolute aesthetic value.

### **6.3.5 Aesthetic Judgment**

Aesthetic judgment, in addition to its other characteristics, has a quality which plants in the subject a consciousness about being aesthetic conscience, and arouses this feeling in it. Therefore, the pleasure from any work of art of the author, for instance, and the judgment of "... is beautiful" based upon this, upskills the person to interpret his relationship with the aesthetical object substantially. The artist has this ability by nature and, therefore, his relationship with aesthetic object has a more "intuitional" quality. But the art critic, for example, will gain this ability in time as a consuming subject. Therefore, any circumstance presenting him the opportunity of explaining reasonably and legitimately the situations in which he gets in touch with the aesthetic object helps him to deepen his aesthetical experience. Thus, Ali Canip's following expressions, for example, seem discussible in this direction:

Almost all of our aesthetic judgments are criterions, whether positive or negative, belongs to our personality's victory: we are putting forward our authority by saying that "I liked this and did not like that." Is not that an enough pleasure in-itself?<sup>506</sup>

One of the questions that came up most often in discussions of aesthetics is related with the possibility of common aesthetic judgments. We can say, depending on the discussions continued up to now, that the Young Turk figures are in a general agreement with regard to the impossibility of the creation of mutual aesthetical judgments. It is hard to say this, at least, in terms of the artist who generates the aesthetic object. Ali Canip and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın imply that art critics may

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<sup>506</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'î Haz -2- Tecâzüb," p. 367.

produce objective aesthetic judgments in case that the conditions laid down by them are fulfilled. But it is difficult to take it as truth. It must be accepted that criticism is largely subjective. But, this subjective quality does not entail the critic to attribute an arbitrary value to aesthetic object or to expel it from aesthetical realm by trivializing it. The critic should follow an objective method. He should have long observations and experiences in order to reach to aesthetic judgments by means of the objective method. Additionally, the critic should follow a path from *hearth to brain, from sensitivity to mind*. The aesthetic judgment is the final point to which the route arrives. We observe, in front of an aesthetic object, that our sensitivities are mobilized. But, our aesthetic judgments cannot be based on these sensitivities alone. The mind also needs to step in. Observation and experiment, the essential elements of positivist method, should play a very important role at this point. Considered from this perspective, Ali Canip's reference to Auguste Comte is not irrelevant.<sup>507</sup> One must give a scientific quality to his aesthetic judgments. Any judgment deporting scientific qualities does not have a place in positivist understanding.

On the other hand, there is one more point in the common (or objective) context of aesthetic judgments that needs to be pointed out. Principally speaking, the critic should review a work of art objectively. But, to what extent is easy or possible it to review a product of a subjective point of view. Because, the things we may define as objective will most probably be defined as "subjective" by the producing aesthetic subject. In this regard, the critic will also be influenced by subjectivity and examine the work of art and criticize accordingly. Also, we should ask if the art can be objective in a perfect manner. If the art is seen as a reflection or a result of nature, of course it cannot be objective. For, to be objective would imply the creation of the same nature for the second time. However, position of the artist against the nature, Young Turks seem to assume, consists of being subjected to it. The artist becomes liable to nature and reflects it in the way he sees, feels, and comprehends. He repeats it. In this regard, the art is a repetition. Still, in this regard, if the art is objective, not his feelings and thoughts but the original situation of the natural element which he tries to reflect shall be at the forefront. The more he depicts it closely the more he

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<sup>507</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'iyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bedî'î Hayatta Mevkii," p. 506.

becomes objective and realist. This is a possible consideration for the plastic arts. But is it possible for literature? How objective can poetry be? The creativity in the plastic arts is directly proportional to the ability of reflecting the nature. The more you re-create the nature the more you create a realist work of art. But, it seems that the same condition cannot be valid for literature. Realism in poetry will probably play a role to kill the creative essence of it. The poetry is a shining point among written branches of arts to display the most profound understanding about the being. Anyhow, imprisoning it to the constricted provisions of factual reality and realistifying it for the sake of objectivity would mean to strangle it. Therefore, the more subjective the poetry is the more it becomes deep and extensive.

#### 6.4 Arts as Imitation

In the Young Turk periodicals we examined the most remarkable comments in terms of the character of the art are met in the articles about the relationship between arts and nature. In almost all articles, taking part in the periodicals, about the philosophy of arts and aesthetics the relationship between art and nature is mentioned in various forms. These approaches basically qualify the art as an imitation of the nature.<sup>508</sup> But yet, we should point out that this claim is restrictedly accepted by them. In Young Turks' consideration, nature is a point of origin in terms of the art. But, the thing the art tries to fulfill is not depicting the nature *as it is*. On the contrary, the imitation should be performed on what the artist as a creative subject likes to feature.

There is no doubt that the aforementioned restriction has some rationales. First of all, a perfect imitation is impossible. Even the photography, which looks like a perfect imitation, may be said to have some defects and deficiencies in itself. For example, as it has been pointed out before, the photograph stills both time and place. In other

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<sup>508</sup> See, for example; Ali Canip, "Sanat ve Mahiyeti"; Nazmi Ziya, " "Sanâyi'-i Nefîse: Resim," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 8 (30 August 1917), pp. 149-152; Anonymous, "Sanat Âlemi: Auguste Rodin"; K.öprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, "Rodin ve Sanat"; Vahid, "Sınâ'at"; Vahid, "Nefis Sanatlar: Sınâ'atte Hakikatperestlik (Rodin)"; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gayesi, Aksami"; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -9- Gaye-i Hayal = İdéal"; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -9 [2]- Gaye-i Hayalî = İdéal"; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -10- Gaye-i Hayalî 2: Sanatın Ahlak ile Münasebeti"; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -10 [2]- Gaye-i Hayalî [2]: Sanatın Ahlak İle Münasebeti", Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -12- Deha", Hüseyin Cahit, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -12 [2] – Deha."

words, it freezes a living fact. However, while the art imitates the nature, it should bring certain vitality into aesthetic objects which it produces as well. Work of art as real aesthetic object does not still the time; it reflects and probably recreates the time on its own part. One can even say that “the artist can imitate the nature in a more accurate and a genius way than photography. Therefore, he is more loyal to the nature than a photograph.”<sup>509</sup> Otherwise, he will not be able to cause any impact on consuming aesthetic objects.

We may say that these impressions which mentioned in various articles about the photography give a reflection of the subjective interpretations taking part in Young Turks’ understanding of aesthetics. For, it seems that an objective reality can solely be expressed in a subjective way, in their conception. The subjective becomes a reality as it gets closer to the objective. It is not an art to depict the objective in yet an objective way. One needs to concentrate on what is *seen* rather than what is *appearing*. To tell the truth, the traces of an extreme subjectivity are also seen in some articles. While Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat defines the art, for example, says that the artist represents the universe in terms of his own imagination and, thusly, puts his own dreams forward. According to him, this means that not the nature is displayed but the artist’s own soul.<sup>510</sup> But despite all this, it is helpful to remind that one does not fully move away from the factual reality. The artist tries to establish a balance between the objective and the subjective. In this way, the factual reality can be interpreted. Interpretation is even sometimes mandatory, but this should not be regarded as *distortion*.

The other reason for the aforementioned impossibility is that the aesthetic object itself excludes a perfect imitation –in terms of its distinguishing quality. Because the aesthetic object tries to reflect a condition which is currently or corporeally non-existent. The reason for this is that the nature which the artist sees and the nature which an ordinary person sees are totally different from one another. For, the nature has an interior sight besides its external sight. It is however can be seen just by an

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<sup>509</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, “Rodin ve Sanat,” p. 466.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid, p. 468.

aesthetic subject. The artist's look distinguishes the internal realities lying under the external sight. An ordinary man cannot create a work of art with the imitation of the nature. Since, "he looks without seeing".<sup>511</sup> Also this should be added that if the nature as a rough factual reality had actually represented the feelings from the artist's aesthetic conscience, the occupation which is called art would not have been a current issue in the human history.

Another example, supporting the conviction that the art is not a complete imitation, can be found in an article by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. According to him, it is possible to find a lot of strong evidences on that the aim of art is not composed of a complete imitation. For instance, some arts e.g. sculpture does not completely and accurately reflect the nature. Ordinary statues are colorless; and they do not have pupils either.<sup>512</sup> That means some of the points of a thing are required to be carefully and completely imitated, not all the parts of it.

The restriction taken into consideration about the relationship between art and nature brought some changes in the descriptions of the art as well. For example, Ali Canip describes the art as follows: "The art is to imitate the nature by pointing out an essential character and fusing this together with a distinguished personality."<sup>513</sup> Similarly, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, (inspired by Hippolyte Taine) defines the art as "the imitation of the relationship between the parts of an object and their interrelations."<sup>514</sup> It is also beneficial to say that this imitation does not present a complete quality here. Because, as will be pointed out below, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın tells that these proportions may be changed in case of need.

Essentially, both Ali Canip's and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's definitions of art remind a very important matter which is frequently mentioned in terms of the philosophy of

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<sup>511</sup> Anonymous, "Sanat Âlemi: Auguste Rodin," p. 445.

<sup>512</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gayesi, Aksamı," p. 250.

<sup>513</sup> Ali Canip, "Sanat ve Mahiyeti," p. 145.

<sup>514</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *ibid*, p. 251.

arts and aesthetics in Young Turk periodicals. All Young Turk figures who published articles on aesthetical issues are of opinion that the thing may be expected from an object is to bring “essential nature” (tabat-ı esasiye) out. This means that while the nature is being imitated, not the whole but the character, which attracts aesthetic eye of the artist to itself, should be regenerated in a more visible way. This is the reason why we pointed above that Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın did not mean a complete imitation.

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın describes “essential nature” in the following way: “essential nature is such a quality that all other, or a large part of, qualities are generated from it in the terms of constant connections.”<sup>515</sup> The emphasis by another writer on the “essential nature” that describes it as a “cordial and internal reality of the things”<sup>516</sup> can also be seen as the sign of a realistic approach. For, if the definition Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın makes is considered, the essential nature which all qualities emerge from it, because of some immobile connections, composes a connection point that plays a touchstone role in terms of every secondary qualities. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s following example describing his intention about essential nature is noteworthy:

Being a big carnivore is the essential nature of a lion. All material and spiritual qualities of the lion derive from this essential nature as if from a single source. ... First of all in terms of the body: teeth are like scissors, jaws are built to crush and smash. It needs big muscles to control two awesome grippers, and suitable holes on the temples for these muscles to be settled. The lion’s claws are amazing. It is very swift, it walks on the tips of his feet, and it violently jumps as if triggered by a winding spring. Since nights are so good to hunt, it can see through the darkness. The spiritual features of the lion are compatible with all these: it has a natural tendency to cruelty, it needs fresh meat and it hates the other foods. Besides, it has a strong nervous system and because of this during attack or defense it musters its forces and shows in that short time. Despite all these, it is lazy in the leisure time. All these qualities arise from its being a carnivore. Consequently, carnivorousness is the lion’s essential nature.<sup>517</sup>

It is this attempt to reveal the essential nature that motivated Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın to change his definition of art. Accordingly, masters of art like Michaelangelo and

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid, p. 250.

<sup>516</sup> Anonymous, “Sanat Âlemi: Auguste Rodin,” p. 446.

<sup>517</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *ibid*, pp. 250-51.

Rubenis had mostly changed the ratio between parts. If one examines their paintings, he may see the essential nature (therefore an essential thought that they produced about the object) and real ratio between the parts is changed in order to make them rather visible.<sup>518</sup> So, how do we know what composes the essential nature? Indeed there are some parts related to one another, having different proportional connections, in things. Which one of the parts or proportions does represent “essential nature”? In this context, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın seems to supervise two things. The first one is that the shown nature is important and essential. Secondly, to present that this essential nature is more dominant than the others.<sup>519</sup> As long as it provides two conditions, the work of art gains a right to use the quality of aesthetic object.

An extraordinary aesthetic ability is needed to bring an essential nature out. Such ability can only be a production of a genius. It is because of the central role it has in the creation of the aesthetic object that Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın devoted his two articles particularly for an analysis of the concept of genius.<sup>520</sup> According to him, genius of the artist functions as the bridge between work of art and nature.<sup>521</sup> The most important function of genius is the ability to fill a gap in the nature.<sup>522</sup> This ability is noteworthy in terms of showing the amplitude of creativity of genius. The authority of defining essential nature is assigned to the artist because the nature has no power to do this. Although this essential character exists in it, the nature cannot properly display its effect as a result of some obstacles. The artist eliminates the factors which hide essential character, selects the things which make it visible, and corrects the things which change it. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın interprets this circumstance in such a

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -9- Gaye-i Hayal = Idéal,” p. 283.

<sup>520</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -12- Dehâ,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 387 (30 July 1314/11 August 1898), p. 365 and “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -12- Dehâ [2],” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 388 (6 August 1314/18 August 1898), pp. 379-381.

<sup>521</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi’, His,” p. 105 and “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -12 [2] – Deha,” p. 365.

<sup>522</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’ e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gayesi, Aksamı,” p. 251.

way that an artist is able to display the things more accurately than the nature itself.<sup>523</sup>

This ability of the artist has an influence on factual reality. As a producing aesthetic subject, the genius changes its reflection while bringing essential nature out. But, this is not a distortion. For, the changed reality does not lose anything from its reality. On the contrary, it is placed on a more solid ground. Because, one foot is on the factual reality while the other is on ideal. As Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat states, “the artist, even if he changes the nature, meanwhile he is not aware of what he does. At that time, the feeling, which influences his seeing ability, displays the nature in the way he imitates.”<sup>524</sup> Considered from this perspective, change of the factual reality may even be defined as that the things are forced to go back to their own identity. Because, secondary qualities, which were changed to define the essential nature, are being changed for the sake of essential qualities to which they are bounded. In other words, essential nature is not being loaded onto things externally, but is derived from the things themselves.

This last point is important, because, it is actually a reflection of a general approach which we have seen in Young Turks’ periodicals. The general approach that we are talking about is a conciliatory perspective. When it comes to the art, conciliation between factual reality and ideal may be seen as the conciliation between reason and heart. Abdullah Cevdet’s expressions in this context are important. He says that “philosophy is the heart of human beings while the art is their heart. Brain in a body without a heart, and the heart in a body without a brain can only exist in the state of death.”<sup>525</sup> Similarly, Ali Canip compares reason and sense in his article “Feylesof ile Şair”<sup>526</sup> and emphasizes that both of them are important means to reach to the reality. A comparison between mind’s ability of understanding and heart’s ability of sense is

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<sup>523</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -9- Gaye-i Hayal = Idéal,” p. 283.

<sup>524</sup> Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat, *ibid.*

<sup>525</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Felsefe-Edebiyat,” p. 1579.

<sup>526</sup> Ali Canip, “Feylesof ile Şair,” *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 16 (16 February 1327/29 February 1912), pp. 93-94.

so striking in terms of bringing out the extent of mind's philosophical power. Additionally, there is an interpretation made by Rıza Tevfik, in reference to Francis Bacon, which is exceptionally important in terms of pointing out the connection between reason and art. According to Rıza Tevfik, human knowledge is divided into three big bodies. Each of the three big bodies refers to three big forces of reason. These are "memory", "consideration" (understanding) and "imagination" respectively. History is a product of memory. Philosophy is born from the powers of judgment and comprehension of reason. And the poetry corresponds to imagination. The events are handled in history and philosophy as they are. There is a complete reflection in poetry. Things and events are always handled in an imaginary way.<sup>527</sup> The connection constructed between imagination, which is also a faculty of reason, and poetry can be read as the connection between arts (therefore, poetry) and reason. This can also be qualified as an emphasis on a strong connection between objective and subjective realities. In this regard, we may say that Young Turks had one's cake and ate it. On one hand, they tried not to put factual reality away from sight because of their strong positivist tendencies; on the other hand, they made an intellectual change, more precisely, an interpretation on the factual reality to fulfill their ideal thoughts. They saw that the factual reality does not present an adequate place to fulfill the thing which they want to reach and consequentially they attempted to this act of transformation.

## 6.5 Arts and Ethics

One of the issues held in the context of the philosophy of arts and aesthetics quests if there is a connection between art and ethics. The fact that human being is a value producing entity brings about the idea that there is a connection between arts and ethics. In this regard, expecting that the produced values support each other can be regarded as a legitimate attitude. Thus, although the things which people call good or beautiful belong to different fields, to ethics and aesthetic respectively, they seem to be pointing to the same theme.

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<sup>527</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Tasnif-i Ulûm: Bazı Mukaddemât-ı Felsefiye," p. 503.

Of course, to understand if such a connection can be constructed or not, one needs first to put forward their similarities and dissimilarities in terms of their structures. In this context, there are a number of points to which we can refer by reminding some of the discussions we have made so far.

We have pointed on several occasions that the human being is a value producing entity. The Young Turks used philosophy as a mechanism to reinforce this value generation quality. The production of ethical and aesthetical values, in particular, sums up their expectation from philosophy. Now one needs to remind that ethical and aesthetical value judgments are the products of the same subject. The mechanism which produces them is one and same despite their appearance on different areas. In this regard, it seems possible to define ethical and aesthetical values as two reflections of the same conscience. Ethical values are born from ethical dimension of the conscience while the aesthetical ones are born from aesthetical faculty of it. We want to note this reality that they arose from a mutual source, as the first similarity between the two types of value.

Another proof that ethical and aesthetical values resemble each other in terms of structure can be deduced from ideal meaning which is based on their real resource. In other words, the question asking if ethical and aesthetical values are objective or subjective has a guiding function. One should give an answer to this question that Young Turks evaluated these values as subjective in the last instance. However, it is mandatory to take into account the reasoning maintained by them during the way to subjectivity.

In Young Turk's understanding, ethical values arise from an objective resource. This resource is national conscience. While we are making a judgment on which actions are good the objective basis that we will consider are the exceptions emanating from national conscience. Moreover, the social conscience, as the upper ethical consciousness, is an objective resource for the people liable to it. This is the objective side of the matter related to ethical values. But we know that the value is not an issue related to the factual reality. Goodness or righteousness are not qualities in things themselves. These qualities are loaded by us, as a result of an inspiration

from national conscience, afterwards. Therefore we make subjective judgments when it comes to things.

On the other hand, we may say about aesthetic values that the nature exists as an objective reality. But we try to idealize this reality. Idealization means to produce values corresponding to expectations of the upper aesthetic conscience. Attempts to explore the essential nature, for example, are expressions of this circumstance. To do this, producing aesthetic subject should change the nature as an objective resource. But this is not defacement. For, production of aesthetic value is not entirely a fictive process. One of the feet of the producing subject is on reality while the other is on ideal. Therefore, one can say that ethical and aesthetical values are arising from a mutual ground with respect to fusioning the objective and subjective truths.

It is difficult to say that the relationship between ethics and aesthetics is examined in a widespread manner. However, it is possible to talk about two articles at least that can be said to support the aforementioned arguments. These are written by Hüseyin Cahit and Mehmet Vahid Bey. Both writers clearly suggest that beyond the structural similarities of ethical and aesthetical values, there are functional similarities as well.

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, starting from the idea that beautiful is also beneficial, claims that the essential nature of human being is to be beneficial for the society in which he lives.<sup>528</sup> There is only one force ensuring human being to be beneficial to the society: “love”. Because, he seems to think, “loving means caring about somebody else’s happiness, working and making sacrifices for somebody else’s benefits.”<sup>529</sup> It is obvious that the essential character of a human being is pointing out an ethical case. Moreover, mentioned character should also be considered while designating the values of the esthetic objects. To put it in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın’s own words:

There cannot be more beneficial nature than this. Thus, we happen to determine a criterion of value for the works of arts, in accordance with the

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<sup>528</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-İ Bedâyi’e Dair -10- Gâye-i Hayâlî: Sanatın Ahlâk İle Münâsebeti,” *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 385 (16 July 1314/28 July 1898), p. 331.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

values we find in natures, as well. If we are presented two works of arts that include two different essential natures, produced within equal ability and power, we look into these essential natures to understand which one is more valuable. We say that the one closest to the benefaction is more valuable than the other.<sup>530</sup>

If one pays attention, he can claim that aesthetic value plays the role of combining aesthetic object and esthetic subject in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's approach. This is because, "loving" is the character of the aesthetic subject while "being close to benefit" is the character of the aesthetic object. As a result of the combination of these elements, an aesthetic value at the highest level arises.

Mehmet Vahid Bey, just like Hüseyin Cahit, is of the opinion that ethics and aesthetics require each other. According to him, art is beneficial for society. For, it purifies ethics. It softens the hardness of the nature of human being by means of getting him contemplate himself."<sup>531</sup> This is why a real artist's ethical level is higher than the public. It is possible to come across, in the jails or in the court rooms, with people from any kind of profession except artists.<sup>532</sup>

The most remarkable expressions of Mehmet Vahid Bey's opinion about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics take place within following statements:

Enyo, one of the members of the old city of Troy's monarchs, finds herself wafted to the shores of Africa. She secretly reaches to Carthage and gets inside a temple which is common to Junun. She sees there a number of paintings describing the siege of Troy. When she sees these paintings, her concerns become replaced by a relief. The light of hope reborns in her heart and says to her companion: "We can be relieved! Of course one can come across, in such a place, with compassionate hearths showing mercy to survivors."<sup>533</sup>

When considered in terms of the relationship mentioned above, one can say that it is elitism which constitutes one of the elements constructing the relationship between

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<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Vahid, "Sınâ'at-i Nakş ve Te'bîd-i Mefâhir," p. 46.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

aesthetics and society.

The relationship of art and morality is, at the same time, a projection of the relationship of aesthetic and society. Uncovering the essential nature, which has an important place in Young Turks' understanding of aesthetics, is not something that can be done by everyone. It requires a great accumulation of knowledge and, more importantly, an innate talent which is "genius". This point actually constitutes one of the basic foundations of "elitism" which we observe that taking an important place within Young Turks' mentality. Young Turks have awareness about the values, on the one hand. In other words, they conceived the values to be instruments of change and transformation. They believe, on the other hand, that producing these values is a duty attributed to them. This belief caused them to look down on society. In fact, it is possible to say that aesthetics is the most reasonable and legitimate area which can be expected to give birth to an elitist approach.

## **6.6 National Art**

The relationship between aesthetics and ethics seems to prepare enough ground for a theme which we tried to revive on several occasions since the beginning of this chapter. According to this, Young Turks' philosophy of arts and aesthetics is for a nationalistic purpose. To put it more clearly, they see aesthetic and arts as elements strengthening the national soul. It is this understanding that all of those discussions about aesthetics lead us. Actually this conclusion is consistent with the idea that we keep emphasizing since the very beginning of our study. Young Turks see scientific and philosophical understandings as tools, not as intellectual activities in themselves. This circumstance is valid for arts and aesthetics as well. As it will be mentioned below, art is responsible to remove the dust all around the national soul which is brought by the other cultures. Hence, the original national soul, which still survives somewhere deep, will come to the light once again. It is just those subjects and objects, serving this purpose, that entitle to use the quality of aesthetic.

In this section, articles presenting the national mission attributed to arts, within Young Turks' periodicals, in the most obvious way will be examined. But, before

doing this, one needs to touch upon a point that possibly clarifies why Young Turks expressed the emphasize on “nationality” importunately. We are going to make a quotation from Ali Canip, for this purpose:

Leon Cahun says that Turks have never been able to live an original civilization. They moved Chinese culture to Iran and Iranian culture to China. They have a role in the history of civilization in this respect; but they could not create a civilization unique to themselves. They lived an economical life by means of extorting others’ properties. And they took, in their intellectual life, other nations’ philosophies, literatures, laws, ethics etc. After taking these, they did not even represent them. They carried them like a fake ornament; they neither adapted their minds to these institutions nor adapted these institutions to their minds.<sup>534</sup>

Ali Canip’s reference to Léon Cahun [1841-1900] is not circumstantial. Young Turks are of the opinion that this is a common belief about Turks in the West. They tried to put forward the contra-arguments within Western intellectuals’ language. Henry Glück’s article named “Türk Sanatı”,<sup>535</sup> which is published in *Yeni Mecmua*, seems to be an example of such an effort. But interestingly enough, it is also possible to say that there is also an acceptance, in Young Turk periodicals, that this common belief of the West is arising from a legitimate ground. The intense effects of Arabic and Persian languages on Turkish constitute the clearest evidence in this respect for Young Turks.<sup>536</sup> To annihilate this common belief in the West, the language that is one of the founding elements of Turkness (the other one is religion) should be purified from foreign concepts and words. In this respect, the movement of “turning to the essence” in language can be characterized as an interesting combination of nationalist and aesthetic points of view. This mixture of language, Young Turks assume, might be seen as thinking in Turkish but expressing in Persian or Arabic. However, if one looks more closely, it will be seen that the mixture causes in both

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<sup>534</sup> Ali Canip [Yekta Bahir], “Sanat ve Edebiyat: İbtidâiyyet-Originalite,” *Genç Kalemler* 3, no. 14 (13 January 1327/26 January 1912), p. 36.

<sup>535</sup> Hanry Glück, “Türk Sanatı,” translated by Ahmet Cemal, *Yeni Mecmua* 3, no. 59 (29 August 1918), pp. 134-136.

<sup>536</sup> For criticisms against Arabic and Persian words or concepts in Turkish, see for example: Hüseyin Cahit, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -1- Şive, Zevk,” p. 88; Ziya Gökalp, “Para ve Tesanüt,” *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 41 (25 April 1918), p. 282; Ziya Gökalp, “Hars ve Medeniyet,” *Yeni Mecmua* 3, no. 60 (5 September 1918), p. 142 and Ali Canip, “Sanat ve Mahiyeti: Millî Lisan, Millî Edebiyat,” p. 52.

thinking and expressing like an Arab or Iranian. Art is eventually revelation of the truth and the way of revealing dominates the truth itself. Turkness's insight on truth can only be expressed within a language of reflection unique to itself. Otherwise one will have say that the truth has been distorted.

The most authentic explanation of *turning back to essence* can be found in Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's analyses about essential nature. As one may remember, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın defines the purpose of art as exposing the "essential nature" which exists rarely in objects. He makes interpretations leading readers to conclude that this circumstance, designated by him as an aesthetical duty, is an attempt to discover the national essence. According to him, every nation is influenced by various changes and transformations as a result of long periods. However, it always keeps the original yeast, which calls it into being, somewhere deep. In other words, with the continuation of this nature it always preserves a spiritual feature and a visage unique to itself. This sphere constitutes the most essential nature.<sup>537</sup> The image of Turk that is described by Western intellectuals, like Cahun, is inspired by surpluses massed on this very essential sphere as a result of different historical and cultural conditions. However, one must look deeper and see the essential nature of Turkness. Considered from this perspective, *seeing* the essential nature that exists somewhere in deep means living an aesthetic experiment.

Things we name as aesthetical are directly inspired from national soul and establish a close intimacy with it. It is clear that this will require us to define almost all aesthetical concepts, including esthetic object and subject, peculiarly in a more nationalistic way. As a matter of fact, Ziya Gökalp presents a striking interpretation within this context. He explains this circumstance as "patriotic aesthetics". Patriotic aesthetics could be realized in two ways: either in respect of the object or in respect of the subject. To put it in his own word:

An art's being patriotic in respect of subject means that it is in conformity with national pleasure. If a poet, a painter, an architect, or a musician does not

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<sup>537</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -9- Gaye-İ Hayalî = Idéal [2]," *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 383 (2 July 1314/14 July 1898), p. 294.

have an understanding of national pleasure, citizens will not rejoice in his works. For, these works are not owned by the country with respect to pleasure. An art's being patriotic in respect of object means that it selects its themes from beauties of the country. The greatest artists are the creators who make, through their works of arts, citizens love the country more. However, neither subject nor the object, in our literature and art, was national so far. For, we were observing in our artists the pleasures either of Arabs or Iranians, or of the French and Britons, instead of national pleasure. And the subjects were mostly belonging to foreign milieus. Even the grammar of our language and the meter of our poetry also were directly taken from Arabs and Iranians. In this case, today's movement of national literature will give birth to an *aesthetic patriotism* as well!<sup>538</sup>

We should define aesthetic value also in accordance with this. Every work of art that vitalizes the national soul has an aesthetical value. For, it is a sign of the devotion of the person who discovers it. It is a reflection of not an arbitrary but a purposive product. Similarly, aesthetic attitude also will receive its own share from it. There is no doubt that the sense of patriotism comes with a sense of "vigilance". Every measure, taken as a precaution, acquires an aesthetical quality if the country and the nation are in danger, just as every step taken to protect them is assumed to be ethical. The subject who tries to take these precautions will always be vigilant. And it will be possible, in our opinion, to characterize the attitude of the aesthetic subject who is in alert as the "aesthetical vigilance". On the other hand, it is also the reason why an abstract beauty cannot exist. Beauty can only find its reflection on the national soul. Therefore, the beauty will have to be emanated from such a source. Finally, it is possible to say that, art is as necessary to explore and awake the national soul as it is to glorify it.<sup>539</sup> Non-national arts cannot meet this demand.

Another point to be noted with regard to art's national character is the function it realizes as a *unifying* element. When the role given by Young Turks to the concept of *union* is taken into consideration its additional *aesthetic sense* becomes quite remarkable. Art is the reflection of "collective feelings". An art's lacking contact

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<sup>538</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "İktisadi Vatanperverlik," *Yeni Mecmua* 2, no. 43 (9 May 1918), p. 322 [emphasis added].

<sup>539</sup> Nazmi Ziya, "Medeni İhtiyaçlar: Sanatın Kıymeti," *Yeni Mecmua* 1, no. 10 (1 September 1917), pp. 194-195; [Anonymous], "Erbâb-ı Kalemin Vazifesi," p. 4 and Rıza Tevfik, "Nüfus Meselesi ve Ehemmiyet-i Siyasiye ve İctimaiyesi," p. 51.

with national soul results in forgetting the national feelings and, therefore, it loses its unifying identity.<sup>540</sup> It can be said, by expanding Nazmi Ziya's argument to this effect, that art is not only a reflection of collective feelings but it is the creator of them as well. Hence, the aesthetical dimension of union, the ethical dimension of which has been examined within the previous chapter, is also happened to come to the light. For, being national means to be arising from collective conscience of the individuals of a nation, or their participation in a mutual conscience. Considered from the point of view of arts, this union can only be weaved around aesthetic conscience.

### 6.7 Aesthetics, Arts and Milieu

Young Turks' understanding of aesthetics and arts is a reflection of the effects of the scientific and philosophical understandings their time, that we examined within the third chapter. Arguments stating that aesthetics is a science and that it needs to follow a positivistic methodology show the clear impact of positivism on Young Turks' mentality.<sup>541</sup> Actually, it is consistent when looked from Young Turks systematics of understanding, as they come up with the same ideas about philosophies of religion and ethics. A similar situation is also valid for materialist approach. Although there is no article directly emphasizing on materialist view of aesthetics, it still is possible to reach to some data in this direction. Salih Fuat and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, for example, are seeing material reality as a big coarse mass and think that the aesthetical value it has can only be given by a subject having aesthetical attitude. According to them, the universe is eternal. It has no purpose like manifesting a beauty lying behind it. And the matter is indifferent to its own results.<sup>542</sup> Such ideas can be said to be reflecting the materialist understanding. One also needs to remind

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<sup>540</sup> Nazmi Ziya, *ibid*, p. 195. See also: Vahid, "Sınâ'at-i Nakş ve Te'bîd-i Mefâhir," p. 45.

<sup>541</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi', His," p. 105; "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -8- Sanat: Menşei, Mevzuu, Gayesi, Aksamı," p. 249; "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -15- Sanat ve Şiirin İstikbali-2," p. 78 and "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -16- Sanatın ve Şiirin İstikbali-3," p. 93.

<sup>542</sup> See Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -13- Şiir," *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 389 (13 August 1314/25 August 1898), p. 396. See also: Salih Fuat, "Temaşaya Dair," *İctihat* 5, no. 126 (15 January 1330/28 January 1915), p. 462.

that realism, which is one of the most common concepts of that time, makes this connection stronger. Considered from this angle, many Young Turk figures, like Salih Fuat and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, can be classified both as *realists* and *materialists*. They are realist in the sense that they accept that the being exists independently from human consciousness. And they are also materialist because they conceive the matter, as a big coarse mass, to be the essence of the being of all things.

Evolutionism can be said to have a greater impact on Young Turks' understanding of philosophy of aesthetics compared to the effect of positivism and materialism in this regard. This impact is observed in articles written by several Young Turk figures, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın being in the first place. The impact of evolutionist understanding arises from the fact that they regarded the art as the imitation of the nature. Just as the aesthetic object can be taken back to the originals in nature, their appearance also can be explained in a resembling way to the development of the natural objects. To be able to do this, one shall need, before anything else, to clarify the kind of relationship existing between the art and the milieu.

According to Ali Canip, for example, art is a product of a certain period and a society. To understand how a work of art is formed, towards which ideals it moves, and the kind of the ways it follows in this continuous movement one must carefully examine the "milieu" that contains that work of art in itself.<sup>543</sup> On the other hand, he seems to be pointing to a similar circumstance while telling us that the language, as a tool of reflection, is subjected to the process of *natural selection*.<sup>544</sup> Ali Canip's arguments may be seen as if they are referring to the "social milieu" alone. But, as we are going to mention below, within the discussions about Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's assumptions about the relation of arts and milieu, the material sense of the milieu also must be taken into consideration for a complete analysis of the said relationship.

Salih Fuat also believes, just like Ali Canip, the connections between both the aesthetic object and subject and the corporeal and incorporeal milieu must be taken into consideration. According to him, aesthetic object cannot exist, like any other

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<sup>543</sup> Ali Canip, "Bedî'iyât Bahisleri: Hazzın Bedî'î Hayatta Mevkii," p. 507.

<sup>544</sup> Ali Canip, "Sanat ve Edebiyat: Millî Lisan ve Millî Edebiyat," p. 47.

existent, without the milieu surrounding it. Therefore, it is compulsory to examine this milieu. For, the existence of arts is prepared in accordance with the needs of that milieu. Art arises, from that milieu, as a result of some sequential developments taking place within it. But it always carries the traces of its origin. Therefore, one must search for the scientific laws for a branch of art or an aesthetic object not within the idea of abstract beauty but within sensed material things themselves.<sup>545</sup>

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın realizes the most interesting combination of Darwin's theory of evolution and the philosophy of aesthetics. Approximately 10 out of 18 articles published by him in the journal of *Servet-i Fünun* include interpretations about this relationship. It is worth to remind that he is under the effect of French philosopher Hippolyte Taine in almost all of his ideas with regard to the philosophy of arts, including the relationship between aesthetic and milieu. Taine's work of *The Philosophy of Arts*<sup>546</sup> constitutes Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's main source of inspiration.

First of all, it should be stated that Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın does not regard the works of art as deriving only from the creative character of aesthetic subject. He refers that this idea has been commonly accepted in previous times and criticizes this approach. According to him, there are certain scientific laws prevailing in the appearance and survival of the physical objects and one must accept that the same laws apply to the case of aesthetic objects as well. Moreover, it is these laws that ensure the existence of aesthetic and art which are the science of beauty and the philosophical knowledge about aesthetical objects respectively.<sup>547</sup> Then, the specification of the nature of these rules or laws is compulsory before anything else.

As far as we could observe, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın collects these laws under three titles. Firstly, the works of arts, like physical objects, are products of a certain milieu. As he puts it;

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<sup>545</sup> Salih Fuat, *ibid*, p. 461.

<sup>546</sup> Hippolyte Taine, *The Philosophy of Arts*, Translated by John Durand (New York: Holt and Williams, 1873).

<sup>547</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi', His," p. 106. See also: Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -5- Edebiyat-ı Cedide, Menşe' ve Esasları," p. 183.

Just as there is a temperature level causing the appearance of this or that species of plant; there is also a spiritual temperature level. And the latter results in the appearance of this or that work of art. For example, to understand the appearance of corn, gruel and the orange or pine trees, one must examine the material temperature level. Similarly, if one wants to understand the appearance of realistic painting or classical literature, he must examine the spiritual temperature level, that is to say the general condition of ideas and ethics.<sup>548</sup>

This means that the products of human thoughts must be examined like natural products.<sup>549</sup> However, it is important to see that a reference has been given to the fact that the spiritual temperature level, just like physical conditions, is also open to change. For, any argument stating that it is an invariable factor would bring certain difficulties within itself. For example, if the social conscience, which is described as the spiritual milieu, does not change, then the artist would have to adapt himself in accordance with this unchangeable source of reality and, consequentially, restrict himself into a circle of pure imitation. But, as we learned from the discussions we referred to in previous sections, the artist is responsible not only for imitation but also for conversion. He is not the unique agent of change within social conscience. But he still has the power of ensuring this change together with other factors.

Secondly, although the information about the spiritual temperature level is a necessary condition for acquiring deepness within aesthetical issues, it is not the sufficient condition per se. Just as, seems to think Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, increase of foreign plants in a physical environment inhibits the growth of plants which are native to that area; foreign works of arts also inhibit the development of national ones. To put it in a clearer way, Darwin's rules of "natural selection" and "struggle for life" are valid also for the aesthetical objects.<sup>550</sup> Growth of some anomalous

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<sup>548</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi', His," p. 106.

<sup>549</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -3- Mahsûlât-ı Fikriyye-i Beşeriyye, Mahsûlât-ı Tabiiyye," p. 117; "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -2- Hikmet-i Bedâyi', His," p. 107; "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -7- Bir Eser-i Edebînin Kıymeti Havi Olduğu Vesâik-i Beşeriyyenin Mikdârı İle Mukâyese Olunur", p. 214; "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -12- Dehâ [2]," *Servet-i Fünun* 15, no. 388 (6 August 1314/18 August 1898), p. 380.

<sup>550</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -3- Mahsûlât-ı Fikriyye-i Beşeriyye, Mahsûlât-ı Tabiiyye," p. 118. See also. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Hikmet-i Bedâyi'e Dair -14- Sanatın ve Şiirin İstikbâli-1," *Servet-i Fünun* 16, no. 394 (17 September 1314/29 September 1898), p. 55.

species of plants can be observed in some places from time to time. This occupier plants spread quickly and prohibit the growth of native species of plants. Similarly, thinks Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, a given spiritual milieu can be attacked by foreign elements. What should be done in this case is to comb out these foreign factors of invasion. This approach is consistent with the idea which we characterized earlier as *return to the essence*. The fact that Turkish is attacked by foreign language, for example, is an obstacle for the development of Turkish language as an artistic language. One must, then, remove the foreign factors, which are Arabic and Persian words in this case, from the native language.

Thirdly, and lastly, the circumstance that one might possibly come across in the case of shrinking of the unused organs is valid for the works of arts as well.<sup>551</sup> If a spiritual temperature level cannot produce aesthetic works through its own creative power, this creativity will have to be die after a while. And then, next generations living in that spiritual milieu start to adopt the products of other milieus as if they are their own products. This is why the arts and aesthetics are factors absence of which cannot even be conceived for the existence and survival of a nation.

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<sup>551</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Hikmet-i Bedâyi’e Dair -3- Mahsûlât-ı Fikriyye-i Beşeriyye, Mahsûlât-ı Tabiiyye,” p. 119.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS

We followed, within this study, the hints regarding the kind of meaning and role attributed to philosophy by Young Turks in the periodicals they published individually or institutionally. The Committee of Union and Progress, as a political organization established by Young Turks, is constructed rather by pragmatic motives and appears as an important historical example within the development of modern philosophical understanding among Turkish intelligentsia. As the examinations about their discussions on scientific, religious, ethical and aesthetical issues progressed, we saw that Young Turks conceived philosophy as an instrument. And the instrumentalization to which philosophy is subjected can clearly be observed beginning from the foundation of the CUP until 1918 when it is abdicated.

That Young Turks' attitude towards philosophy limited to instrumentalization on a great part has different reasons. First of all, none of the Young Turk figures chewed over philosophical issues as a philosopher *by profession*. The first motives that led Young Turks to establish the Ottoman CUP are not resulted from purely philosophical questions or concerns. They were practical issues, although in the course of the time they took a scientific and philosophical form. Moreover, they had no educational backgrounds in philosophy. They rather studied within the area of natural science. Therefore, the interest they showed in philosophical matters remained in a connection with daily and practical discussions. They developed an eclectic thought as a result of the state of anxiety pertaining to a mind in crisis. As a matter of fact, this circumstance is not exclusive to Young Turks' mentality. It must be seen also as a result of the unfamiliarity traditional Ottoman thought felt in the face of modern philosophical way of thinking. Since Young Turks are the products of a climate of thinking, they constitute a sign of the conditions putting them forward.

Except this ostensible circumstance, one can revive some other interrelated reasons also causing Young Turks to instrumentalize philosophy. The type of Young Turks' coming across with modern philosophical and scientific understanding affected their attitude towards these two factors. In other words, Young Turk figures, who headed for philosophy starting from certain practical needs, instrumentalized philosophy in accordance with their own needs and followed a pragmatic method. It can be noted as one of the reasons that critical point of view of philosophy and science could not be traced within Young Turks' periodicals. Since they defined the problem by looking into the results, they preferred to deduce the solution directly from that result either.

Of course, this is not an arbitrary circumstance. An instrumentalized philosophy has an important role at the plane contemplated by Young Turks. Two points, at least, can be touched upon within this regard. First, Young Turks are results of a period of crisis. Political, economic, social and cultural crises experienced by Ottoman society found their reflections within the world of thought of the Empire's intelligentsia. Young Turks depended, in terms of their search for solution, on historical and current experiences of the West. Solution of Empire's problems is stipulated to an exact imitation of the historical process witnessed by the West. The role attributed to science and philosophy is to make guidance in the pursuit of this process.

One must, in fact, remark that this attests to a problematic situation regarding the process of development of the philosophical thinking. It is problematic because it overlooks the temporal dimension of the process in particular. Considered from this perspective, the most conspicuous reflection of the crisis can be said to appear in the form of deterioration within Young Turks' perception of time. Philosophical and scientific thinking are not something that can be developed without any dedicated struggles or just by an insight into certain theories. They are also in need of time, in the sense that they require an important cultural accumulation. There is a historical and cultural ground behind them. An attempt to explain science and philosophy in terms of productions, without giving any reference to this ground, revives a methodological skew.

The essential reason of instrumentalizing philosophy, to which we particularly need to attract the attentions for the purposes of this study, can be determined as nationalist attitude lying somewhere deep in Young Turks' mentality. Philosophy and science, which are regarded as instruments of rescuing Empire and keeping elements from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together at the start, took upon themselves the role of creating a new nationality. As a matter of fact, the overlapping, in terms of time, that takes place between adoption of modern scientific and philosophical understandings and emergence of Turkish nationalism is remarkable. Although Turkist approach can be taken back to the dates in which the newspaper of *Meşveret* is published, it is defended much more systematically in articles written after 1911. What is remarkable for the purposes of our study is that the role of strengthening nationalist approach is attributed to philosophy. Philosophy shall revive national consciousness by means of new values it is expected to create within the areas of science, religion, ethics, and aesthetics etc. This makes Young Turks' instrumentalization of philosophy more meaningful.

When considered from this perspective, the most suitable characterization that can be used about Young Turks' philosophical understanding is "social philosophy". It is both critical and constructivist. They attempted to create a new social consciousness, in the areas directly interlinked with social life, through modern philosophical and scientific understandings and concepts. Young Turks' scientific, religious, ethical and aesthetical discussions that we examined within his study are largely putting forward such a result. Almost all of the concepts derived from these areas are reconstructed in a way to refer to nation as an upper-consciousness.

The concept of "conscience" seems to constitute the backbone of the social philosophy established by Young Turks. As a matter of fact consciousness is a sign of one of the typical Young Turk approach, which is reconciliation. Areas that seem irreconcilable at the start become reconciled interestingly by Young Turks. One needs to say that these attempts of reconciliation create an image that they are realized compulsorily. Abdullah Cevdet's efforts to reconcile religious belief and scientific understanding, for example, do not seem to be reasonable endeavors when

the general framework of his philosophical attitude taken into consideration. For, reconciliation of a materialistic understanding of science with religious belief can only be regarded as a perverse approach.

The meaning attributed by Young Turks to the concept of conscience is highly remarkable. It is even possible to argue that their social philosophy is strengthened by a philosophy about conscience. As far as we observed through the examinations on periodicals, Young Turks can be said to conceive “conscience” as the final *judgmental* authority or the upper ability of evaluation which includes both rational and emotional dimensions. And this seems to be an extension of their struggle of reconciling. Since positivistic, materialistic, and evolutionistic approaches created an enormous impact on their mentality, they could not turn their back to factual reality. Mind, they seem to think, can make a reasoning just on factual realities. The result to which their anti-metaphysical attitude leads us is referring to such a rational limitedness. However, their efforts of modernization can also be said to ground on an emotional basis in addition to rationality. Multi-dimensional crisis experienced by them deepened this emotional dimension. Therefore, they included emotion into their philosophical analyses about crisis. In other words, since they could not explain the crisis by reason alone they had to open a place for emotion as well. And this exactly is where the conscience appears. Young Turks seem to attribute conscience a role which removes the contradiction between bare facts and emotions.

There are some other examples showing the reconciliatory character of Young Turks’ philosophical understanding. One can observe, for example, that their acceptances about the source of knowledge are partly strengthened by idealist approaches. It is also possible to come across with the traces of two different conceptions of truth which are realistic and idealistic. Moreover, they take part not in different writers’ articles but in the different articles of the same writer. Ziya Gökalp, for example, gives such an impression. He is a loyal follower of the positivistic understanding which is widely accepted among Young Turks. Within this regard, he frequently mentions that philosophy must not remain uninterested in scientific data about factual reality. It can reasonably be characterized as a realistic approach to the source of knowledge. However, when the establishing role he attributes to

consciousness taken into consideration he is a typical idealist. Nonetheless, he revives both of his realistic and idealistic attitudes remarkably. As a matter of fact this circumstance can also be seen as an attempt of reconciliation similar to the one they tried around the concept of conscience. They seem to think that the removal of the gap between current factual reality, that west is developed while the Ottoman Empire is remained backward, for example, and the reality which is idealized by them is only possible after a reconciliation of this kind. One can deduce its hints particularly from their arguments about philosophy of aesthetics.

What makes the circumstance interesting here is that Young Turks never considered speculative thinking as an option in their struggle to overcome the crisis. Speculative dimension seems to be one of the most conspicuous aspects of philosophy, within the teachings of system owner philosophers at least. However, Young Turks have quite consciously stayed away from speculative interpretations and restrained themselves within the framework of factual reality which can be called as *phenomenism*. Just as they did not make publications including speculative thoughts as a result of their anti-metaphysical attitude; it is difficult also to trace such an approach within translated articles that one comes across frequently in periodicals.

If we turn back to the argument that philosophy strengthened Young Turks' nationalist approach by means of the concept of conscience, we can see that conscience refers to an upper judgmental mechanism besides being an individual mechanism of evaluation. Assessing this within the context of different meanings Young Turks attributed to subject would, in fact, be more suitable for the purposes of our study. When all of the examined periodicals are taken into consideration, one can say that Young Turks seem to distinguish three types of subject. These are *establishing*, *producing*, and *consuming* subjects.

*Establishing subject* is "national conscience" to which a constant reference has been given within ethical and aesthetical contexts. All of the values that can be said to exist within those areas need to be taken back to the national conscience. Therefore, the establishing subject at the same time becomes a function determining the source and limits of thinking. *Producing subject* is a subject which has a grasp of the

general framework set by *establishing subject*. This second kind of subject adopts a critical point of view and tries to transform the *consuming subject*, staying one level below, accordingly. To put it more clearly, the producing subject is Young Turks themselves. And the *consuming subject* is the individual who is expected to be liable to the conception of truth that is systematized by *producing subject* within a certain conceptual framework emanated from the *establishing subject*. It is obvious that the individual is obliged to maintain a life which is in accordance with the content created by upper mechanisms of evaluation. The idealized concept of *union* makes this kind of unconditional subordination necessary.

Of course, these definitions imply that the establishing subject is different from the producing and consuming subjects and that it exists on its own by staying as an external source of objectivity, as Ziya Gökalp puts it. Thus, their demands for “turning to essence” also, which is touched upon in the fifth chapter, brings it to the mind. However, this circumstance does not have a character away from suspicion. For, despite that fact that Young Turks talk about national conscience as a self-subsisting subject, the language they used reminds that it is also an “ideal” which is open to production. It is possible to attribute the language they used to dynamism of the conscience, or its openness to development, as the upper judgmental mechanism just as it can be seen as a circumstance referring to an idealized peculiarity. The examinations we carried out on Young Turks’ periodicals lead us to the conclusion that the latter preponderates more. One can talk about a national consciousness, at best, which is not completed its evolution yet. And that connotes a predicament in terms of Young Turks’ understanding of national conscience. For, it can be made a matter of discussion to what extent can a mechanism, the formation of which is not completed yet, be determinative with regards to subjects staying at lower levels. Moreover, this mechanism, which can also be characterized as “conscience in the making”, seems to be constructed by producing subject himself. And the producing subject, in this case, is the political mind that acts as the source of *unionist* idea(s). In fact, the most important foundation showing that this is a reasonable and legitimate interpretation can be deduced from Jacobean attitude of Young Turks. It is because of the central role they undertook themselves within this construction activities that Young Turks are of the opinion that the truth can only be searched

within the framework idealized by them. In other words, they are elitists. Thus, the methodology they followed during the period starting from the foundation of the Ottoman CUP till 1918 wherein Young Turks' power came to an end represents an elitist character thoroughly. This can ultimately be regarded as the result of the contemplation of philosophy within an institutional dimension.

What makes this circumstance important in terms of our study is the way it is connected with philosophy. Philosophy is in the position of supporting this activity of construction by means of "new values" it will produce within scientific, ethical, religious and aesthetical areas. Of course, one needs to question the truth of the understanding adopting the value as something producible within a certain program. However, it would be useful to record that the meaning attributed to "newness" by Young Turks can only be possible together with the production of new philosophical values. This constitutes also an explanation of why Young Turks' mentality stayed away from traditional way of thinking.

Another reason of their detachment from tradition is that traditional language and belief do not present a ground supporting nationalist discourse construction of which is tried by Young Turks. Hence, it can be observed that one of the most frequent criticisms directed by some of the opposing factions that can be characterized as Islamist against Young Turks' mentality concentrates on the fact that it is nationalist. To them, Islam cannot be reconciled with a nationalist understanding. On the other hand, there are signs that Young Turks regarded the object of these criticisms a kind of weakness on their part. As a matter of fact, publication of *İslam Mecmuası* seems to be referring to rule out the criticisms to this effect.

Considered from this perspective, modernity represents a paradigm shift within Young Turks' mentality similar to the one experienced by the West. In fact, our study presented the opportunity of touching on several remarkable cases concerning the relation between embracement of modern scientific and philosophical concepts and detachment from tradition. One of the most conspicuous examples of this circumstance is observed during the discussions we made on fourth chapter. The ideas Young Turks arrived in terms of the discussions about the existence and nature

of God, for example, by depending on modern scientific arguments are incompatible with traditional understanding of God. As it is handled within the chapter on philosophy of religion, three modern philosophical understandings, which are positivism, evolutionism and materialism, caused Young Turks to adopt three different positions with regard to mentioned issues. The first group led by positivistic understanding to adopt agnosticism and deism. The second group preferred to appropriate pantheism as a result of evolutionistic ideas. And the third group seems to accept atheism as the only legitimate conclusion of materialistic approach. Hence, one can observe that each of these approaches is expressed in different ways within Young Turks' periodicals. It is apparent that none of them is compatible with traditional, that is to say *theistic*, understanding of God. For, theism is different from pantheism because it talks about a "person". Theism also argues that the creation of the universe refers to the existence of God and that his attributes can be *known* by depending on both the information received from him and the reasoning carried out about universe. And it is a different result, in this respect, from the one at which agnosticism and deism arrives. And, lastly, since theism depends on the idea that there *is* a divine existence, it defers from materialism as well. Some other remarkable examples of a similar detachment can be seen in discussions carried out on ethical issues.

Young Turks' attitude towards modern philosophical understanding is also affected by their desire of imitation of the events occurred in the history of Western thought. They targeted to actualize the developments that left deep traces on modern philosophical movements, like Renaissance and French Revolution, in exactly the same way in Ottoman society. However, one needs to point that this desire remained just as an imitation. For, there is no convenient historical, social, cultural and philosophical ground for Young Turks to create these events. Moreover, there are some circumstances rendering this desire of imitation to banality and even meaninglessness. For example, one can argue that the idea of Renaissance gives birth to an idea attaching priority to individual. Young Turks, on the other hand, followed an exactly opposite attitude because of their ideals emphasizing *union*. There is not individual, in their understanding, but society. There are no individual rights and freedoms, but the existence and survival of the *total*.

Young Turks pretended to select the modern reasoning as a new methodology for their philosophical struggles. But this methodology, once again, seems to be away from reflecting a modern reasoning, since it is used rather in a scholastic way. Just as scholasticism used the reason in its endeavor of grounding what is *given*, that is to say the divine orders, Young Turks also used another given thing, which is science in their case, in the opposite way. And the most conspicuous proof of this argument can be found in the lack of doubt with regard to scientific developments in their understanding. An understanding of instrumentalization of philosophy preponderates within both scholasticism and Young Turk mentality. Therefore, it may not be difficult to suggest that the scientific and philosophical methodology followed by Young Turks is a re-produced form of the old thinking style against which they used a severe language.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU**

**ENSTİTÜ**

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü
- Enformatik Enstitüsü
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

**YAZARIN**

Soyadı : Taştan  
Adı : Fatih  
Bölümü : Felsefe

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : Philosophical Movements İn Ottoman Intellectual Life at the Beginning of the 20th Century and Their Impact on Young Turks' Thought.

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınmaz.

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**

**APPENDIX B**  
**CURRICULUM VITAE**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname, Name: Taştan, Fatih  
Nationality: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth: 1 January 1976 , Ağrı  
Marital Status: Single  
Phone: +90 505 573 56 47  
email: e135866@metu.edu.tr

**EDUCATION**

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Year of Graduation</b>
MS	Erciyes University Theology	2002
BS	Erciyes University Theology	1999
High School	Tutak İmam Hatip Lisesi, Ağrı	1994

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
2011-Present	Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University	Lecturer
2011	Turkish National Agency	Expert
2004-2011	Ministry of National Education	Teacher

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Advanced English, Intermediate Arabic, Beginner in Persian

**PUBLICATIONS**

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## APPENDIX C

### TURKISH SUMMARY

İnsanlığın felsefe ile imtihanı üzerinde düşünülecek olursa birbiriyle bağlantılı birkaç noktayı ayırt etmek mümkün gözükmektedir. Birincisi felsefe, klişe bir ifade olmakla birlikte, genellikle bilgelik sevgisi olarak tanımlanır. İnsan düşünme yetisini keşfettiği anda gerçek anlamıyla var olmaya başlar. Bu varlığın anlamı ise evrende gözlemediği mevcudat ile kendi arasındaki farkları kavramasına dayanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla felsefe bireysel bilincin kendisini açma etkinliği olarak görülebilir. Hariç ile olan temas insandaki merak güdüsünü harekete geçirir ve birbiri ardına çeşitli muhakemeler üretilmesini sağlar. Bu düşünceler belirli bir sistematığe doğru yol alır. Bu felsefenin bir diğer özsel niteliğine işaret etmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, felsefe (özellikle sistem sahibi düşünürler bir tarafa bırakılacak olursa) kümülatif bir nitelik arz etmektedir. Öte yandan, felsefenin kesintisiz bir devrimci ruhu bünyesinde taşıdığına işaret etmek gerekmektedir. Zira bilinç, düşünmenin özgün yapısı itibarıyla sürekli hareket halindedir. Bu nedenledir ki felsefe durmak bilmez bir süreç olarak görülür. Karl Jaspers'in "felsefe yolda olmaktır" sözünü bu doğrultuda yorumlamak mümkün gözükmektedir.

Felsefe bireysel bir temele dayanmakla birlikte, hiç şüphesiz, yarattığı etki itibarıyla bireysel alanı aşan bir mahiyet kesp etmeye başlar. Nitekim onun kümülatif niteliği de bunu gerektirmektedir. Başka bilinçlerin aynı eşya hakkındaki farklı tasavvurları felsefeye yaratıcı bir güç kazandırmaktadır. Farklı bilinç durumları daha önce görülemeyen noktaları yakalamayı mümkün kılar. Böylece eşyanın bütün potansiyel halleri içerisinde hakikate en uygun biçimin seçilmesi, insan açısından, imkân dâhiline girer.

Şüphesiz felsefenin bireysel temele dayalı bir entelektüel faaliyet olması onun en can alıcı niteliğini teşkil etmektedir. Bu nedenledir ki hakikate giden yol birden fazla;

dolayısıyla hakikat hakkındaki konsepsiyonlar türlü türlüdür. Hakikatin tek bir kavramsal çerçeveye hapsedilemiyor olması felsefenin üretkenliğini destekleyen bir husustur. Ne zaman ki felsefî çerçeve sabit kılınır ve o çerçevede düşünme teşvik edilirse felsefe oradan göçmüş demektir. İnsanlık tarihinde bunun çeşitli örneklerine rastlamak mümkündür. Örneğin orta çağ dönemindeki hâkim düşünce anlayışını temsil eden skolastisizm bunun en dikkat çekici örneğidir.

Skolastisizmin düşünce tarihindeki en önemli yansıması felsefenin sahip olduğu asî ruhu boğmaya yeltenmesidir. Felsefe itaat etmeye uzak, sürekli hareket halinde ve entelektüel yaratıcılığı had safhadaki bir ruhta ancak doyuma ulaşabilir. Sürekli sorgulayan ve hiçbir şekilde tatmin olmayan mütereddit bir ruh haline dayanmadığı sürece hiçbir düşüncenin gerçek anlamıyla felsefe olamayacağını söylemek mümkün gözükmemektedir. Hiç şüphesiz skolastik düşüncenin felsefeye yönelik bu dondurucu ya da yok edici işlevi onun kurumsal çerçevesinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Peki, her kurumsal bakış felsefî düşüncenin özünü tahrip etme sonucunu zorunlu olarak doğurur mu? Esasen bizi böyle bir çalışmayı gerçekleştirmeye iten temel sorulardan birisi budur. Böyle bir soruyu sormamızın nedeni ise, yukarıda skolastik düşünceye atfettiğimiz felsefeyi boğma cürmünün kurumsal bir zeminden doğduğu varsayımdır.

Kimi tarihi vakıalar bunun her zaman geçerli bir durum olmadığı fikrini akla getirmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, felsefî düşüncenin kurumsallaşmanın veya belirli kurumlar vasıtasıyla oluşturulmasının onu öldürmek bir tarafa, tam aksine, onu bizzat canlı tuttuğunu ima eden durumlardan bahsedilmektedir. Çalışmamıza konu edindiğimiz Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti, aslına bakılırsa, tam da böyle bir iddiayı desteklediği düşünülecek tarihsel bir örneğe referans vermektedir.

Bir varsayım olarak şu kadarını söyleyebiliriz ki, kurumsallaşma felsefî düşüncüyü zorunlu olarak ortadan kaldırmıyor ise de bu durumu en kuvvetli ihtimal olarak gündemde tutmaktadır. Zira kurumsallaşan ve yerleşen her düşünce muhafazakarlaşmaya, kendi içine kapanmaya ve yaratıcı enerjisini yitirmeye başlar.

Bu açıdan bakıldığında, hangi türden olursa olsun kurumsal şemanın felsefeyi aslı doğasından uzaklaştıracağını iddia etmek mümkündür.

Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyetinin ve onu var eden Jön Türk zihniyetinin temel iddiası, felsefî düşüncenin mevcut olabilmesi için onun belirli bir yapı tarafından desteklenmesi ve güçlendirilmesi gerektiği yönündedir. Böylece felsefe bir dünya görüşü olarak güçlenecek ve insanın karşılaştığı her türlü soruyu (başta siyasi ve kültürel sorular olmak üzere) cevaplayacaktır. Fakat çalışmamız kapsamında çeşitli vesilelerle gündeme getirildiği üzere, bu iddia felsefenin verili bir kavramsal çerçevede dâhilinde yürüyen bir süreç olarak görüldüğünü akla getirmektedir. Bu durumun, en azından başlangıç itibarıyla, felsefenin doğası ile ilgili olarak problemleri bir yaklaşıma işaret ediyor gözüktüğünü belirtmekte fayda vardır. Acaba felsefeden beklenen kabul görmüş kavramları kullanarak çözümler yapmak mıdır örneğin? Buna olumsuz bir cevap verilmesi muhtemeldir. En azından felsefenin yukarıda işaret ettiğimiz asi ruhu açısından bunun gerçekleştirilmesi zor gözükmektedir. Yapılsa bile bunun skolastik bir düşünceden öteye gidemeyeceği açıktır.

Felsefe öz itibarıyla bireysel bir arayışın ürünüdür. Elbette her “ürün” gibi o da kendisi ile temasta bulunan şeyler üzerinde şu veya bu etkide bulunacaktır. Bizi böyle bir çalışmayı gerçekleştirmeye yönlendiren temel nedenlerden bir diğeri, Türk düşünce ve siyaset tarihinde önemli bir yere sahip olan bir Jön Türk yapılanması olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyetinin felsefeye yönelik bakışının irdelenmesidir.

Çalışmamızın ana temasını makul bir şekilde ortaya koyabilmek bakımından kurumsallık veya kurumsallaşma kavramının ne olduğunu biraz daha açmak uygun olacaktır. Kurumsallaşma veya kurumsallık ile kastedilen şey felsefenin kendine has rotasında oluşturduğu birikimden ziyade, bu birikimin bir bütün olarak alınıp, politik bir takım amaçlar doğrultusunda bir araç olarak kullanılabilmesi varsayımına gönderme yapılmaktadır.

Jön Türk zihniyeti ve onun doğal uzantısı konumunda bulunan Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti, siyasal iktidarı fiilen ele geçirmiş bir yapılanma olması hasebiyle,

Türk düşünce tarihi açısından son derece ilginç bir örnek arz etmektedir. Söz konusu zihniyete mensup ve büyük çoğunluğu kelimenin gerçek anlamıyla “ittihatçı” olan bu figürler yoğun bilimsel ve felsefi kavramlarla örülü siyasi bir gündemi, yine bilimsel ve felsefi söylemlerle süslenmiş bir yöntem dahilinde hayata geçirmeye çalışmışlardır. Onların yaratmaya çalıştığı şeyi bilimin ve felsefenin kanlı canlı bir abidesi olarak görmek mümkündür. Jön Türklerin kurumsal bir tutum halini alan bireysel alt yapıları, onları *yeni bir felsefi dil* inşa etmenin zorunluluğuna ikna etmiştir. Modernite, Jön Türkler nazarında felsefi paradigmalara örülü bir kıyameti andırmaktadır. Böyle bir kıyamet ortamından ancak onunla örtüşen ya da onunla aynı felsefi ve bilimsel zemini paylaşan bir dille kurtulmak mümkündür.

Hiç şüphesiz buraya kadar söylenenler doğrudan tarihsel verilere temas etmediği için retorik olarak görülme riskini barındırmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Cemiyet’in kuruluş ve iktidar dönemleri açısından bakıldığında yukarıda çizmeye çalıştığımız felsefi çerçevenin doğrudan kurumlar vasıtasıyla gerçekleştirilmeye çalışıldığını görüyoruz. Bu durumun en somut örneği, çalışmamıza konu teşkil eden süreli yayınlardır. Modern felsefi ve bilimsel düşünce, Jön Türkler tarafından süreli yayınlar vasıtasıyla alabildiğine propaganda konusu edilmiştir. Hiç şüphesiz bu, felsefi düşüncenin özgünlüğüne ve ağırlığına karşı işlenmiş bir cürüm olarak da görülebilir. En nihayet felsefe kabul görme ya da indoktrinasyon arzusu ile yola çıkmaz. Aksine, her türlü yerleşik düşünceyi kendisine konu edinir ve herhangi bir sınıra tabi olmaksızın onlar üzerinde dönüştürücü bir iz bırakır.

Tüm bu çekincelere rağmen, Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti’nin Türk düşünce tarihinde önemli bir merhale teşkil ettiğini söylemek mümkündür. Sürecin aslı doğasına aykırı olmakla birlikte kalıcı izler bıraktığını kabul etmek gerekmektedir. Çalışmamız, söz konusu izlerin bilim, din, ahlak ve estetik alanlarındaki yansımalarını konu edinmektedir.

Felsefe ile kurumsallık arasındaki bağlantının ilginç bir durumu gündeme getirdiği söylenebilir. Batının felsefi ve bilimsel serüveni göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, iddia olunabilir ki, felsefi düşünce özgün bir kurumsallığı beraberinde getirmiştir. Bunu düşünme ile sonuç arasındaki bir ilişki olarak okumak da mümkündür. Daha

açık bir deyişle, batıda önce felsefî bir zemin oluşmuş sonrasında ise bu zemin doğal bir şekilde kendine özgü bir takım kurumlar inşa etmiştir. Sanayi İnkılabı, Rönesans, Reformasyon ya da Fransız İhtilali bu durumun en çarpıcı örnekleridir. Bu tarihsel kırılmalar durduk yerde ortaya çıkmış değildir. Bunları doğuran çok ciddi bir felsefî birikim vardır. Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti yukarıda sayılan tarihi tecrübeleri Osmanlı düşünce hayatında da gerçekleştirmeye yönelik çabanın somutlaşmış hali olarak görülebilir. Süreli yayınlarda bunun çok bariz örnekleri ile karşılaşmak mümkündür. Örneğin *Şura-yı Ümmet* gazetesinde yayınlanan “İki İnkılâp” başlıklı bir makale Jön Türklerin iktidara gelmesini temsil eden II. Meşrutiyet’i Fransız İhtilali ile kıyaslamakta ve her ikisini de insanlık tarihi açısından önemli devrimler olarak değerlendirmektedir. Meşrutiyet aydınlanmacı bir Türk devrimidir ve buna öncülük eden Jön Türkler ise Fransız devrimini yaratan felsefî aklın Osmanlıdaki izdüşümleridir.

Benzer şekilde *İslam Mecmuası*’nda Musa Kazım Efendi tarafından yayınlanan “İslam ve Terakkî” başlıklı makaleler zinciri de yine Fransız İhtilali ile Jön Türk zihniyeti arasında kurulan ilişki bakımından dikkat çekicidir. Musa Kazım Efendi, bu makalelerde Fransız ihtilalinin temel kavramları olan “özgürlük”, “kardeşlik” ve “eşitlik”nin İslam tarafından da benimsenen kavramlar olduğunu dile getirmektedir. Söz konusu makaleler tipik bir Jön Türk yaklaşımı olan uzlaştırmacı anlayışın yansımaları olmaları bakımından dikkat çekicidirler. Hiç şüphesiz Musa Kazım Efendi’nin bu uzlaştırma çabasının temelinde, Jön Türkler tarafından benimsenen bilimsel ve felsefî anlayışların İslam’ın özüne aykırı olmadığı gösterilmesi kaygısı yatmaktadır. Çalışmamız boyunca buna benzer çeşitli uzlaştırma girişimlerine de temas etme fırsatı bulduk.

Tüm bunlara karşın, işaret etmek gerekir ki Jön Türkler bilimin ve felsefenin Batı düşünce dünyasındaki serüvenini tersinden okumuş gözükmektedirler. Başka bir deyişle, onlar, ilk önce belirli kurumlar ihdas etmişlerdir. Sonrasında ise bu kurumlar maharetiyle bir felsefî dil ve düşünenin gelişmesini temin etmeye çalışmışlardır. Çalışmamızda gözettiğimiz amaçlar bakımından bu durum dil ile düşünce arasındaki ilişkiyi yeniden tanımlama/dizayn etme çabası olarak gördük. Esasen, işaret ettiğimiz hususu şu şekilde problematize etmek mümkün gözükmektedir: Dil mi düşünceye

önceldir yoksa bunun tam tersi mi geçerlidir? Eşyanın *Tabiatı* gereği düşüncenin dile öncel olması beklenir. Zira önce düşünürüz. Belirli bir içerik inşa ederiz. Sonra bu içeriği belirli kavramlarla eşleştiririz. Dil ancak bu eşleştirmeden sonra mümkün olabilir. Fakat Jön Türk fikriyatı bu sürecin tam tersini takip etmiş gözükmektedir. Daha açık bir ifadeyle, onlar ilk önce bir dilin inşa edilebileceğini, sonrasında bu dille uyumlu bir düşünme biçiminin geliştirilebileceğini düşünüyor gözükmektedirler. Bunun çok çeşitli örnekleri vardır ve bu örnekler yukarıda kurumsallıkla felsefi düşünce arasında kurmaya çalıştığımız bağlantı açısından da önemli ipuçları sağlamaktadır. Örneğin, *İctihat* gazetesinin 54, 55 ve 57. sayılarında “İstilah İstimzacı” başlıklı bir makale yayınlanmıştır. Söz konusu makalelerde on tane Fransızca bilimsel ve felsefi kavram seçilmiş (*Concret, Abstrait, Objectif, Subjectif, Induction, Déduction, Type-Sous-Type, Conscient, Inconscient, Constataion*) ve bunlara Türkçe karşılıklar bulunması konusunda okuyuculara çağrıda bulunulmuştur. Makaleyi yayınlayanların amacı hiç şüphesiz çeşitli kavramlara Türkçe karşılık bulmakla sınırlı değildir. Yapılmaya çalışılan şey kavramdan fikre gitmek olarak da görülebilir. Kavramdan fikre gitmek belki bir öğrenme ya da düşünme biçimi olabilir; fakat *düşüncenin spontanlığı* açısından bakıldığında bunun son derece zorlu bir süreç olacağı da ortadadır.

Felsefe ile kurumsallık arasında oluşturulmaya çalışılan bağlantının bir diğer müşahhas göstergesi, Jön Türk iktidarı tarafından büyük bir özenle hayata geçirilen İslahat-ı İlmiye Encümeninin çalışmalarıdır. 1913 yılında kurulan bu Encümenin amacı yabancı bilimsel ve felsefi terimlere Türkçe karşılık bulmaktır. Encümenin çalışmaları 3 eser ile neticelenmiştir. Söz konusu eserler sırasıyla bilimsel, felsefi ve sanatsal kavramlar için öngörülen Türkçe karşılıklardan oluşan sözlüklerdir. Bununla birlikte, öyle gözükmektedir ki söz konusu encümen kendisinden beklenen şeyleri bütünüyle gerçekleştirme fırsatı bulamamıştır. Bunu kısmen savaş şartlarına ve Encümeni kuran İttihatçı iradenin iktidardan uzaklaşmasına bağlamak mümkündür. Batılı bilimsel ve felsefi kavramların kurumlar vasıtasıyla “ithal” edilmesi, gerek üçüncü gerekse beşinci bölümlerde üzerinde durulduğu üzere, Jön Türklerin taklit fikrini pekiştirmiştir. Onların bu ithalci eğilimlerini ne şekilde meşrulaştırdıklarının ilginç örneklerini çalışmamız boyunca çeşitli vesilelerle ele alma imkânı bulduk.

Bilim, felsefe ve sanat açısından yaratılmaya çalışılan dilin bir benzerinin de yine kurumsal bir zemine dayalı olarak din alanında gerçekleştirilmeye çalışıldığına şahit olmaktayız. *İslam Mecmuası*'nın 63. sayısında kuruluş beyannamesini okuduğumuz Dâru'l-Hikmeti'l-İslâmiyye esasen modern felsefi dilin inşasının dini alandaki izdüşümü olarak görülebilir. Jön Türk iktidarının sonlarında, 1918 yılında ihdas edilen bu kurum da kendisinden beklenen faaliyetleri gerçekleştirecek yeterli zamanı bulamamıştır.

Hemen işaret etmek gerekir ki çalışmamız yukarıda kısaca işaret edilen kurumların faaliyetlerinin irdelenmesi amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiş değildir. Temel hedefimiz bu kurumları hayata geçiren Jön Türk zihniyetinin şekillenmesinde rolü olan bilimsel ve felsefi yaklaşımları ortaya koymaktır. Elinizdeki çalışma doğrudan Jön Türk süreli yayınlarında yer alan düşünsel çerçeveyi bilim, din, ahlak ve sanat felsefeleri açısından irdelemek amacındadır. Bununla birlikte, Jön Türklerin bu düşünsel çerçeveye dayalı olarak inşa ettikleri siyasi iktidarın da göz önünde bulundurulması kaçınılmazdır. Bu nedenle, çalışmamızın ikinci bölümü bir Jön Türk yapılanması olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti'nin tarihi arka planı hakkında bir incelemeye ayrılmıştır. Hiç şüphesiz bu çalışmayı okuması muhtemel olan herkesin Jön Türkler ve Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti hakkında ayrıntılı bir tarihsel bilgiye sahip olduğu düşünülemez. Bu bakımdan, söz konusu zihniyet ve yapılanmanın ortaya çıkış ve gelişimi hakkında, ayrıntılı olmamakla birlikte, tarihsel bir çerçeve çizmek zorunlu olmuştur.

Kendi dönemlerinde hâkim olan felsefi yaklaşımların Jön Türk düşünce sistematiğini derinden etkilediğine şahit olunmaktadır. Jön Türk süreli yayınları bu etkilerin gayet açık ifadeleri ile doludur. Bu nedenle, çalışmamızın üçüncü bölümünü, o dönem için yaygın bir şekilde kabul gören bilimsel ve felsefi yaklaşımların Jön Türk süreli yayınlarındaki yansımalarına tahsis ettik. Bu kapsamda süreli yayınlarda üç farklı bilimsel ve felsefi yaklaşımın kararlı bir şekilde savunulduğunu gözlemleme fırsatı bulduk: *pozitivizm, evrimcilik ve materyalizm*.

Dördüncü bölümde, Jön Türklerin benimsediği felsefi ve bilimsel yaklaşımların din felsefesi özelinde yarattığı sonuçları ele aldı. Bu bölüm Jön Türk fikriyatında

gözlenen farklılığın en açık felsefî yansımalarını barındırmaktadır. Gerek Tanrı'nın mevcudiyeti gerekse öldükten sonraki hayat, mucize, kader ve din-bilim ilişkisi gibi klasik din felsefesi tartışmaları ile ilgili köklü paradigma değişikliğinin somut yansımalarını bu bölümde gerçekleştirilen tartışmalar kapsamında açık bir şekilde gözlemlemek mümkündür.

Beşinci bölüm Jön Türklerin bilimsel ve felsefî kanaatleri ile ahlak arasında kurdukları bağlantıları ele almaktadır. Esas olarak Jön Türk fikriyatında bir ahlak felsefesinin imkânını tartıştığımız bu bölüm de fikrî kırılmanın dikkat çekici örneklerini sunmaktadır. Ahlakı sıradanlıktan kurtarma ve hatta onu “ilk felsefe” konumuna yükseltme çabalarının gözlemlendiği tartışmalar çalışmamızın amaçları bakımından da önemle üzerinde durulması gereken bir husustur. Ahlak alanı, yeni bir dil inşa etme amacının *yeni bir bilinç inşa etmeyi* de kapsayacak şekilde genişlediğinin işaretlerini vermektedir. Bu durum, felsefî dilin inşası neticesinde varılmak istenen nokta arasındaki bağlantıyı göstermesi bakımından önem arz etmektedir.

Son bölüm, Jön Türklerin estetik ve sanat felsefesi kapsamında yaptıkları tartışmaları ele almaktadır. Bu bölümde Jön Türklerin kullandığı estetik terminoloji ile ele aldıkları başlıca estetik problemler irdelenmektedir. Estetik tartışmalarını çalışmamız açısından önemli kılan hususların başında Jön Türklerin “öze dönüş” ya da “aslî doğanın keşfi” olarak gördükleri sanatın kendi düşünce sistematiği açısından yerine getirdiği kurucu işlev gelmektedir. Estetiğin problemleri doğrudan estetiğe ait bir terminoloji dahilinde ele alınmakla birlikte, karşılamakla yükümlü kılındığı şey çok daha geniş bir çerçeveye yayılmaktadır. Onların öze dönüş ile Rönesans fikrini özdeşleştirdiklerini ve kurmaya çalıştıkları “yeni hayat”ın bir Türk Rönesans’ı yaratmaya matuf çaba olarak görülebileceğine işaret etmek yerinde olur. Bu bakımdan Jön Türk süreli yayınlarında yer alan ve büyük oranda birbiriyle tutarlılık arz eden estetik felsefesine dair yazıların irdelenmesi amaçlarımız açısından faydalı olmuştur.

Çalışmamız boyunca göz önünde bulundurduğumuz sorulardan bir kısmını şu şekilde ifade etmek mümkündür: Felsefe sadece bir kavram analizi midir? Soyut bir

düşünme olarak sadece düşünce alanında kalmaya mahkum bir disiplin midir? Yoksa onun yeni bir hayat inşa etme noktasında herhangi bir etkisi var mıdır? Görebildiğimiz kadarıyla Jön Türkler bunun böyle olmadığı kanaatindedirler.

Jön Türk süreli yayınları üzerinde yaptığımız inceleme neticesinde ulaştığımız sonuçları özet olarak gündeme getirmeden önce incelediğimiz süreli yayınlar hakkında kısaca bilgi vermek uygun olacaktır.

Çalışmamız kapsamında toplam 10 süreli yayının incelemesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunlar *Meşveret*, *Şura-yı Ümmet*, *İçtihat*, *Ulûm-u İktisadiye ve İçtimaiye Mecmuası*, *Muhit-i Mesai*, *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, *Genç Kalemler*, *Yeni Mecmua*, *İslam Mecmuası* ve *Tabiat*'tir. Ayrıca bir Jön Türk yayını olmamakla birlikte pek çok Jön Türk figürünün yazılarının yer aldığı *Servet-i Fünûn* adlı dergi de incelenmiştir. *Servet-i Fünûn*'da özellikle Hüseyin Cahit tarafından estetik felsefesi kapsamında kaleme alınan makaleler oldukça dikkat çekicidir.

Önemli bir husus olarak şuna işaret edilebilir ki, başta bilim olmak üzere, din, ahlak ve sanat alanındaki tartışmalar Jön Türklerin bilimi ve felsefeyi birer araç olarak tasavvur ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu araçsallık Jön Türk mentalitesinin doğduğu andan, iktidardan uzaklaştığı 1918 yılına kadar canlı bir şekilde gözlenebilmektedir.

Felsefeye yönelik tutumun araçsallaştırmayla sınırlı kalmasının çeşitli nedenleri vardır şüphesiz. Öncelikle, felsefî meseleler üzerinde kafa yoran Jön Türk figürlerinden hiç biri modern ya da klasik anlamıyla felsefe eğitimi almış değildir. Onlar daha ziyade doğa bilimler alanında öğrenim görmüşlerdir. Bu nedenle, felsefî konulara gösterdikleri ilgi yalnızca gündelik tartışmalarla bağlantılı kalmıştır. Öte yandan, kriz içerisindeki bir zihne has kaygı durumuyla eklektik bir düşünme biçimi geliştirmişlerdir. Esasen bu durum doğrudan Jön Türklerden değil, Osmanlı düşünce ikliminin modern felsefî düşünceye yabancı olmasının bir sonucu olarak da görülebilir. Netice itibarıyla Jön Türkler bir düşünce ikliminin ürünüdürler ve ürün kendisini ortaya koyan şartların bir nişanesidir.

Jön Türklerin felsefeyi araçsallaştırmasının görünürdeki bu nedeninin dışında birbiriyle bağlantılı farklı nedenlerden de bahsedilebilir. Öncelikle Jön Türklerin modern felsefe ve bilim ile karşılaşma biçimleri onların bu iki hususa yönelik tavırlarında da etkili olmuştur. Daha açık bir deyişle; pragmatik ihtiyaçlardan hareketle bilime ve felsefeye yönelen Jön Türk figürleri, bilimi ve felsefeyi kendi ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda araçsallaştırmış ve pragmatik bir yöntem takip etmişlerdir. Esasen bilimin ve felsefenin eleştirel bakış açısının süreli yayınlarda gözlenemiyor olmasının nedenlerinden birinin de bu olduğu söylenebilir. Zira sonuca bakarak problemi tarif etmişler, dolayısıyla da problemin çözümünü doğrudan o sonuçtan çıkarmayı tercih etmişlerdir.

Hiç şüphesiz bu arızı bir durum değildir. Jön Türklerin felsefeyi araçsallaştırmasının, onların kurguladığı ideal düzlemde önemli bir rolü vardır. Bu rol bakımından en az iki noktaya temas edilebilir.

Birincisi Jön Türkler bir kriz döneminin ürünüdürler. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun tecrübe ettiği siyasi, ekonomik, toplumsal ve kültürel kriz imparatorluk entelektüellerinin fikir dünyasında, doğal olarak, bir yansıma bulmuştur. Jön Türkleri krize karşı giriştikleri çözüm faaliyetlerinde Batının tarihsel ve mevcut tecrübelerine dayanmışlardır. İmparatorluğun karşılaştığı sorunların çözümü Batının tecrübe ettiği tarihsel sürecin aynen takip edilmesine bağlanmıştır. Bilim ve felsefeye atfedilen rol bu sürecin takibinde rehberlik yapmaktır.

Esasen bunun felsefi düşüncenin gelişim süreci açısından problemleri bir duruma delalet ettiğini belirtmek gerekir. Problemlidir, zira sürecin bilhassa zamansal boyutunu göz ardı etmektedir. Krizin en büyük yansıması, bu açıdan, Jön Türklerin zaman algısındaki bir bozulma olarak tezahür etmiştir denilebilir. Bilimsel düşünce durduk yerde, salt belirli teorilere vukufu geliştirilebilecek bir şey değildir. O aynı zamanda önemli bir kültürel birikimi gerektirmesi anlamında zamana ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bilimsel ve felsefi düşüncenin arkasında tarihsel ve kültürel önemli bir dayanak bulunmaktadır. Bu olmaksızın bilimin sadece ürünler üzerinden açıklanmaya çalışılması metodolojik bir çarpıklığı gündeme getirmektedir.

Felsefenin araçsallaştırılmasının çalışmamız bakımından dikkat çekilmesi gereken asıl amacı, Jön Türk zihniyetinin daha derinlerinde bir yerde bulunan milliyetçilik olarak belirlenebilir. Başlangıçta İmparatorluğu kurtarmak ve farklı etnik ve dini unsurları bir arada tutmanın araçları olarak görülen bilime ve felsefeye sonraki dönemde yeni bir millet yaratma görevi yüklenmiştir. Esasen modern bilimsel ve felsefi düşüncelerin benimsenmesi ile Türk milliyetçiliğinin ortaya çıkışı arasındaki zamansal örtüşme dikkat çekicidir. Her ne kadar Jön Türk mentalitesine içkin olan Türkçü anlayış *Meşveret*'in yayınlandığı döneme kadar geri götürülebilirse de, 1911'den sonra yayınlanmış olan yazılarda çok daha sistematik bir şekilde savunulmaya başlanmıştır. Çalışmamız açısından dikkat çekici olan, felsefeye milliyetçi anlayışı tahkim etme görevinin yüklenmiş olmasıdır. Felsefe bilim, ahlak, din ve sanat alanında üreteceği yeni değerler vasıtasıyla millî bilinci canlandıracaktır. Bu, onların felsefeyi araçsallaştırmalarını daha anlamlı hale getirmektedir.

Bu açıdan bakıldığında, Jön Türk felsefe anlayışına en uygun karşılık “eleştirel sosyal felsefe” olmaktadır. Onlar toplumsal hayatı doğrudan ilgilendiren alanlarda, modern bilimsel ve felsefi düşünce ve kavramlar vasıtasıyla yeni bir toplumsal bilinç yaratmaya yeltenmişlerdir. Çalışmamız kapsamında ele aldığımız bilim, din, ahlak ve estetik tartışmaları esasen büyük oranda böyle bir sonucu ortaya koymaktadır. Söz konusu alanlara giren hemen bütün kavramlar, bir üst bilinç olarak millete işaret edecek şekilde yeniden kurgulanmıştır.

Yerleştirmeye çalıştıkları sosyal felsefe büyük oranda *vicdan* kavramı etrafında şekillenmektedir. Vicdan, tipik bir Jön Türk yaklaşımı olan uzlaştırıcı yaklaşımın da bir göstergesidir aslında. Jön Türkler başlangıçta birbiriyle uzlaştırılmaz gibi gözüken alanları ilginç bir şekilde uzlaştırılabilir bir hale sokmaktadırlar. Bununla birlikte, itiraf etmek gerekir ki söz konusu uzlaştırma çalışmaları çoğu zaman zecrî bir şekilde gerçekleştirildiği izlenimini uyandırmaktadır. Örneğin Abdullah Cevdet'in din ile bilimi uzlaştırmaya matuf gözüken tutumu, onun genel felsefi yaklaşımı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda çok da makul gözükmemektedir. Zira materyalist bir anlayışla dini bir anlayışın uzlaştırılması, her ne kadar teorik düzeyde mümkün gibi gözükse de, fiili olarak çarpık bir yaklaşım olarak nitelendirilmeyi hak etmektedir.

Esasen Jön Türklerin vicdan kavramına atfettikleri anlam fevkalade dikkat çekicidir. O kadar ki bir eleştirel sosyal felsefe olarak nitelendirdiğimiz tutumlarının bir *vicdan felsefesi* ile güçlendirildiği söylenebilir. Süreli yayınlar üzerinde yaptığımız incelemelerde görebildiğimiz kadarıyla Jön Türkler “vicdan”ı hem aklı hem de duyguyu kapsayan bir üst değerlendirme yetisi olarak tasavvur etmektedirler. Bu esasen onların “uzlaştırma” çabalarının da bir sonucu gibi gözükmektedir. Zira pozitivist, materyalist ve evrimci anlayış Jön Türk zihniyeti üzerinde çok ciddi bir etki bıraktığı için olgusal gerçekliğe sınırlarını dönememişlerdir. Akıl, onlara göre, yalnızca olgusal gerçeklik üzerinde bir muhakemede bulunabilir. Metafiziki dışlayan yaklaşımlarının bizi ulaştıracağı sonuç böyle bir rasyonel sınırlılığa işaret etmektedir. Fakat diğer yandan modernleşme çabalarının rasyonelliğin yanı sıra duygusal bir zemine dayandığını söylemek de mümkün gözükmektedir. Tecrübe ettikleri çok boyutlu kriz onlardaki bu duygusal yönü kamçılamıştır. Dolayısıyla, kriz hakkındaki tahlillerine duygusallığı da dâhil etmişlerdir. Başka bir deyişle, krizi tek başına akılla izah edemedikleri için duyguya da bir yer ayırmışlardır. İşte vicdan tam da böyle bir noktada karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Önemle vurgulamak gerekir ki Jön Türkler vicdanı olgu ile duygu arasında tecrübe edilen bu çelişkiyi giderme rolünü yüklemiş gözükmektedirler.

Jön Türklerin felsefi anlayışlarını belirleyen bu uzlaştırıcı niteliğin tek örneği vicdan kapsamında gündeme gelmiş değildir. Örneğin bilginin kaynağı ile ilgili kabullerinin yer yer idealist yaklaşımlarla tahkim edildiğine şahit olunmaktadır. Süreli yayınlarda hem reel hem de ideal olmak üzere iki türlü hakikat konsepsiyonunun izlerine rastlamak mümkündür. Üstelik bu durum farklı yazarların makalelerinde değil aynı yazarın farklı makalelerinde gündeme getirilebilmektedir. Örneğin Ziya Gökalp böyle bir imaj çizmektedir. O Jön Türkler arasında yaygın bir kabul gören pozitivist düşüncenin sadık bir takipçisidir. Bu bakımdan, felsefenin bilimin olgusal gerçeklik hakkındaki verilerine bigâne kalmaması gerektiğini sık sık dile getirmektedir. Bunu pekâlâ realist bir tutum olarak nitelendirmek mümkündür. Bununla birlikte, bilince atfettiği kurucu rol göz önünde bulundurulduğunda o tipik bir idealisttir. Buna rağmen, hem realist tutumunu hem de idealist tutumunu dikkat çekici bir şekilde gündeme getirmektedir. Esasen bu da vicdan kavramı etrafında gerçekleştirdiklerine

benzer bir uzlaştırma girişimi olarak görülebilir ve dolayısıyla anlaşılır bulunabilir. Zira mevcut olgusal gerçeklik (örneğin Batının ilerlemişliği, Osmanlının geri kalmışlığı vb.) ile idealleştirdikleri gerçeklik arasında gözlemedikleri uçurumu ancak böyle bir uzlaştırma neticesinde giderebileceklerini düşünmüş gözükmektedirler. Bunun ipuçlarını özellikle estetik felsefesi kapsamındaki iddialarından çıkarsamak mümkündür.

İlginç olan, söz konusu krizi aşmak üzere spekülâtif düşünceyi bir seçenek olarak göz önünde bulundurmamış olmalarıdır. Spekülâtif boyut felsefenin (en azından sistem sahibi filozoflarda gördüğümüz kadarıyla) belirgin niteliklerinden biridir. Buna karşın Jön Türkler, gayet bilinçli bir şekilde bu tür yorumlardan uzak durmuşlar ve kendilerini “fenomenizm” olarak nitelendirilebilecek olgusal bir çerçeveye hapsedmişlerdir. Muhtemelen metafiziğe yönelik katı tutumları dolayısıyla spekülâtif olarak nitelendirilebilecek eserleri bizzat kaleme almadıkları gibi; süreli yayınlarda çokça karşılaştığımız çeviri makaleler arasında da buna benzer bir yaklaşımın izlerini görmek hayli zordur.

Felsefenin vicdan kavramı vasıtasıyla milliyetçi yaklaşımı tahkim ettiği iddiamıza geri dönecek olursak: Vicdan bireysel bir değerlendirme mekanizması olmanın ötesinde, bireyin de dâhil olduğu bir üst değerlendirme mekanizmasına işaret etmektedir. Esasen bunu Jön Türklerin özneye atfettikleri birbirinden farklı anlamlar kapsamında değerlendirmek çalışmamızın amaçları bakımından daha uygun bulunmuştur. Şu kadarı söylenebilir ki, Jön Türkler birbirinden farklı üç tür özne ayırt etmiş gözükmektedirler. Bunları *kurucu*, *üretici* ve *tüketici* özneler olarak isimlendirmeyi tercih ettik.

*Kurucu özne* gerek din gerek ahlak gerekse estetik açısından kendisine mütemadiyen gönderme yapılan “millî vicdan”dır. Söz konusu alanlarda mevcudiyetinden bahsedilebilecek bütün değerlerin millî vicdana geri götürülebilmesi gerekmektedir. Dolayısıyla *kurucu özne* aynı zamanda düşünmenin kaynağı ve sınırlarını da belirleyen bir işleve sahip gözükmektedir. *Üretici özne*, *kurucu öznenin* çizdiği genel çerçeveye vakıf olan, ona dayanarak eleştirel bir bakış açısına ulaşan ve toplumu bu bakış açısıyla dönüştürmeye çalışan öznedir. Daha açık bir deyişle, Jön Türklerin

bizzat kendileridir. *Tüketici özne* ise *kurucu özne* tarafından genel çerçevesi belirlenmiş ve *üretici özne* tarafından belirli bir kavramsal çerçeve dâhilinde sistematize edilmiş hakikat konsepsiyonuna tabi olması gereken bireydir. Hemen işaret etmek gerekir ki buradaki “birey” kavramı ideal bir tipe işaret etmektedir ve otonom bir niteliğe sahip değildir. Üst değerlendirme yetisi olarak milli vicdana mugayir düşünce ve eylemlere açık bir mahiyete sahip olan birey, *kurucu* ve *üretici özneler* açısından patolojik bir vakıa halini almakta ve yok hükmünde sayılmaktadır. Açıktır ki birey, yalnızca üst değerlendirme mekanizmaları tarafından oluşturulan içeriğe uygun bir yaşam sürdürmekle mükelleftir. İdealleştirilen *ittihat* kavramı böylesi bir koşulsuz itaati zorunlu kılmaktadır.

Hiç şüphesiz bu tanımlamalar, *kurucu öznenin üretici ve tüketici öznenin* farklı, kendi başına, Ziya Gökalp’in deyimiyle “harici bir objektivite kaynağı” olarak mevcut olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Nitekim Jön Türklerin beşinci bölümde “öze-dönüş” olarak yorumladığımız talepleri de bunu akla getirmektedir. Fakat bu durum şüpheden uzak bir mahiyete sahip değildir. Zira Jön Türklerin kendi başına mevcut bir özne olarak millî vicdandan bahsetmelerine karşın, kullandıkları dil aslında onun da üretilmeye açık bir “ideal” olduğu fikrini akla getirmektedir. Bunu üst değerlendirme yeteneği olarak vicdanın devingenliğine, başka bir deyişle gelişime açık oluşuna bağlamak mümkün olduğu gibi idealleştirilmiş bir hususiyete işaret eden bir durum olarak görmek de mümkündür. Jön Türk süreli yayınları üzerinde yaptığımız incelemeler bizleri bunlardan ikincisinin daha ağırlıklı olduğu kanaatine ulaştırmaktadır. En iyi ihtimalle tekâmülünü henüz tamamlamamış bir millî vicdandan bahsetmek gerekmektedir. Bu ise Jön Türk düşüncesi açısından bir çıkmaza delalet etmektedir. Zira kendisi henüz oluşum aşamasındaki bir mekanizmanın, daha alt düzeyde belirlenen özneler açısından ne derece belirleyici olabileceği tartışma konusu edilebilir. Üstelik “inşa aşamasındaki vicdan” olarak nitelendirebileceğimiz bu mekanizma bizzat *üretici özne* tarafından inşa ediliyor gözükmektedir. *Üretici özne* ise İttihatçı fikirlere kaynak teşkil eden siyasal akıldır. Esasen bunun makul ve meşru bir yorum olduğu yönündeki en önemli dayanağı Jön Türklerin tepeden inmeci yaklaşımından çıkarsamak mümkündür. Jön Türkler, bizzat kendi uhdelere aldıkları bu inşa faaliyetindeki merkezi rolleri dolayısıyla hakikatin ancak kendi idealleştirdikleri çerçeve dâhilinde aranabileceği kanaatindedirler. Başka

bir deyişle onlar kelimenin gerçek anlamıyla elitisttirler. Nitekim Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti'nin kurulduğu tarihten, Jön Türk iktidarının sona erdiği 1918'e kadarki dönem boyunca takip ettikleri yöntem bütünüyle elitist bir karaktere sahiptir. En nihayet, bu, felsefenin kurumsal bir boyutta kurgulanmasının sonucu olarak nitelendirilebilir.

Bu durumu çalışmamız açısından önemli kılan husus, felsefe ile bağlantılandırılma biçimidir. Felsefe bilimsel, ahlaki, dini ve estetik alanlarda üreteceği “yeni değerler” vasıtasıyla bu inşa faaliyetini desteklemek durumundadır. Değerin belirli bir program dâhilinde üretilip üretilmeyeceği hiç şüphesiz sorgulanması gereken bir husustur. Bununla birlikte, Jön Türklerin “yenilik” kavramına atfettikleri anlamın ancak yeni felsefi değerlerin üretimiyle mümkün olacağını kayda geçirmekte fayda vardır. Nitekim bu, Jön Türk zihniyetinin geleneksel düşünme biçimine niçin mesafeli durduğunun da bir açıklamasını sunmaktadır.

Gelenekten kopmuş olmalarının bir diğer nedeni de geleneksel dilin/inancın Jön Türklerce inşa edilmeye çalışılan milliyetçi söylemi destekleyen bir zemin sunmamasıdır. Nitekim İslamcı olarak nitelendirilebilecek muhaliflerin Jön Türk zihniyetini en fazla eleştirdiği noktalardan birinin de İttihatçı zihniyetin milliyetçi anlayışa olan bağlılığıdır. Buna göre, İslam milliyetçi bir tutumla bağdaştırılamaz. Öte yandan Jön Türklerin de bunu bir zaaf olarak gördüklerine şahit olunmaktadır. Nitekim *İslam Mecmuası*'nın yayınlanmasının bir noktada bu eleştirileri bertaraf etmeye matuf olduğu söylenebilir.

Bu bakımdan, modernleşme, tıpkı batıda olduğu gibi Jön Türk zihniyetinde de bir paradigma değişimine işaret etmektedir. Esasen çalışmamız modern bilimsel ve felsefi kavramların benimsenmesi ile gelenekten kopuş arasındaki bağlantıya dair çok sayıda dikkat çekici duruma işaret etme fırsatı sunmuştur. Bunun en dikkat çekici örneğini din felsefesi alanında gözlemlemek mümkündür. Özellikle Tanrı'nın mevcudiyeti ve mahiyeti tartışmaları bakımından Jön Türklerin modern bilimsel yaklaşımlardan hareketle ulaştığı sonuçlar geleneksel düşünme biçiminden oldukça uzaktır. Dördüncü bölümde de ele alındığı üzere, Jön Türk figürlerinin bir kısmı pozitivistin etkisiyle agnostisizm ve deizmi; bir kısmı evrim fikrinin etkisiyle

panteizmi; diđer bir kısmı ise materyalizmin ektisiyle ateizmi felsefi bir tutum olarak benimsemiřtir. Nitekim Jön Türk süreli yayınlarında bu üç yaklaşımın da farklı şekillerde ifadelendirildiđini görüyoruz. Bunlardan hiçbirinin geleneksel Tanrı anlayışıyla, yani teizm ile örtüşmediđi ortadadır. Zira teizm bir zattan bahsetmesi itibariyle panteizmden; evrenin yaratılıřının Tanrı'nın mevcudiyetine işaret ettiđini söylemesi ve onun sıfatlarının hem ondan alınan bilgiler hem de evren üzerinde yürütülecek bir muhakeme neticesinde bilinebileceđini iddia etmesi itibariyle agnostisizm ve deizmden; tek bir ilahın "mevcudiyeti" fikrine dayanıyor olması hasebiyle de ateizmden farklıdır. Benzer bir kopuşun diđer ilgi çekici örneklerini ahlak alanındaki tartışmalarda gözlemek de mümkündür.

Jön Türk süreli yayınlarının özellikle üzerinde durulması gereken yönlerinden biri de Batı'da cereyan eden hadiselerle yönelik *öykünme* tavrıdır. Onlar, başta Fransız Devrimi ve Rönesans olmak üzere Batı düşünce tarihinde derin izler bırakmış gelişmelerin birebir Osmanlı toplumunda da gerçekleştirilmesini hedeflemektedirler. Bununla birlikte, bunun yalnızca bir öykünme olarak kaldığına işaret etmek gerekmektedir. Zira söz konusu gelişmeleri yaratacak uygun bir tarihsel, sosyal, kültürel ve felsefi zemin yoktur Jön Türkler açısından. Ayrıca bu öykünmeyi sıradanlařtıran ve bir noktada anlamsızlařtıran kimi durumlar da söz konusudur. Örneđin, Rönesans ile birlikte bireyi önceleyen bir yaklaşım ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna karşın, Jön Türkler, ittihatçılıđa vurgu yapan idealleri nedeniyle bunun tam tersi bir tutuma sahiptirler. Birey yoktur, toplum vardır. Bireysel hak ve özgürlükler yoktur, bütünü mevcudiyeti ve bekası vardır!

Jön Türkler modern bir akıl yürütme biçimini kendilerine metodoloji olarak seçtikleri iddiasındadırlar. Fakat bu metodoloji de yine skolastik bir biçimde kullanıldığı için modern bir düşünceyi yansıtmaktan uzak gözükmektedir. Nasıl ki skolastik düşünce verili bir şeyi, yani Tanrısal buyrukları, temellendirmek bakımından akli kullanmışsa; Jön Türkler de verili bir şeyi, yani bilimi, bunun tam aksi bir yönde kullanmışlardır. Her ikisinde de bir araçsallařtırma anlayışı hâkimdir. Bu bakımdan Jön Türklerin metodolojisini eski düşünme biçiminin bir devamı olarak nitelendirmek güç olmasa gerektir.