

# An Effective Means for Representing the *Unity of Opposites*: The Development of Ideology Concerning Folk Music in Turkey in the Context of Nationalism and Ethnic Identity

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“Everything is what it is, and not another thing”  
*Joseph Butler (1692–1752)*

In this article, my goal is to identify the role and the impact of ideological interventions which – from the perspective of Ottoman music history – led to a break and a transformation of the tradition. I will focus on the concept of Turkish folk music, the ideology which has been embodied by this concept on a discursive level and the continuity of this ideology in Turkey. In this context, I will dwell on the necessity to reconsider the conditions behind “the scientific paradigm” that the contemporary Turkish music academic world follows. For this purpose, my questions will include: How and why issues such as folk/people (*balk*), language, history, folklore, music, and especially folk music in Turkey are rendered as elements of Turkification? How can folk music be deemed as national, pure, intact, and essential? What does “folk” (*balk*) mean when it is thought to symbolize a “national essence” and who constitutes it? Is this folk a homogeneous or commingled community? Why is music, being interpreted as a representation of ethnic or cultural elements which lead to the emergence of the folk, considered as a threat to nationalistic discourses such as “political integrity” or “unity and solidarity?” There is a habit of reducing the field of music in Turkey to a “repertoire of memoirs” (or “sacred narrative”) that revolve around Ziya Gökalp and Atatürk. Does this habit function as a concealing agent when it comes to understanding and questioning the ideological background of the issue? In this context, to what extent do the dominance and decisiveness of the ideology affect the perception, approach and use of Turkish music? Based on these and similar questions, in this article I aim to discuss national and ethnic identity aspects of Turkish folk music from historical, social and ideological perspectives. Within the frame of orientalism and nationalism that make up my conceptual base, I will try to analyse the connections of the “founding ideology” of the Republic. I estimate the analysis of this ideology will make a contribution to understanding experiences in the field of Turkish music in its Republican period from an historical perspective. Thus concepts like folk (*balk*), nation (*millet*), folk music (*balk müziği*), national music (*milli müzik*), development,

evolution, advancement, Turkish folk music (*Türk halk müziği*), and Turkish music (*Türk müziği*) will constitute the basic elements of my discourse analysis.

### *The Music of “The Turk” and “The Folk”: Turkish Folk Music*

Turkish folk music, as a concept and in terms of its employment, is a basic element in the history of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the creation of a new Turkish identity and the foundation of a new, national (*milli*) Turkish state, namely the Turkish Republic. The first discussions and works in this field were started by Turkist circles during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The folk (*halk*) concept and associated issues which had played an active role in the early years of Turkism, were seen as a basic method in terms of imagining and creating a nation. However, studying the Turkish folk music concept academically, we should also deal with premises such as romanticism, patriotism and a propensity towards a folk culture as well as with concepts and subjects relevant to contemporary musicology and ethno-musicology. These include, for example: orientalism; nationalism; nation-building, national spirit, national essence, national music, revivalism, invention of tradition, national culture, traditional culture, identity and affiliation. All of these concepts are essentially connected to the notions of ideology and hegemony. From an ideological perspective, we need to analyse how the concept of folk music is perceived, interpreted and for what purpose it is used as an ideological tool rather than to ask what in fact folk music is.

Before we deal with Turkish nationalism, we need to take a look at romanticism which constitutes one of the roots of nationalism. Isaiah Berlin developed a historical method to analyse romanticism in his book *The Roots of Romanticism* (2004). Berlin (2004), takes history to be “dominant models.” According to Berlin, these models describe developments as transformations of consciousness. The models can be explained by collective consciousness, opinions, outlooks and deeds, rather than by pure perspectives on ethics, politics or aesthetics; they begin as liberators and end in some sort of despotism (2004:21). Actually, Berlin’s concept of the “dominant models” shows striking parallels with Thomas Kuhn’s notion of “paradigm” and Michel Foucault’s “episteme”. From this point of view, romanticism, as an intellectual movement, caused a gigantic and radical transformation in Western consciousness after which nothing was the same (Berlin 2004). The romantic movement, especially from the point of view of nationalism, constitutes an important moment of origin because of its interest in the concepts of “folk” and “popular culture.”

## Halka Doğru (“Towards The Folk”): Populism, Nationalism and Founding Turkism in Turkey

One of the basic features of nationalisms is their interpretations of the concept of “folk” or “people” (*balk*). The folk is the “essence/spirit” of a nation; it forms the nation. In nationalist ideology there is, therefore, a basic orientation which can be interpreted as “towards the folk”. *Halka Doğru*, a magazine which started its publication life during the period when Turkish nationalism began to emerge, can be cited as a typical example of such a trend, as can be seen in its title. But who is the *balk* (folk, people) (Bearman, 2000)? In one of his articles in *Halka Doğru*, one of the founders of the ideology of Turkism, Yusuf Akçura clearly explains what “folk” meant to him and his peers: “By folk, we mean farmers in rural areas who own small or no lands at all, and in the cities shopkeepers, day-labourers, workmen” (Üstel 1997:112). However, Turkism was a movement of intellectuals and the elite. Hence what we see here is an intellectual group who do not belong to the folk, but who are trying to assign themselves missions like “building the folk up,” “teaching the folk who they really are,” “convincing the folk that they act in the name of them,” “representing the folk,” and “making a decision in the name of the folk.” There is a clear hierarchy in the relationship between the elite and the folk. One of the statements that communicates the elitist aspect of this Turkist movement is contained in Hamdullah Suphi’s (one of the most important leaders of this movement) declaration on admissions to the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*):

The Turkish Hearths are missionary establishments. Once you accept the admission of a labourer, the next day the Turkish Hearths turns into a socialist club. [...] Because Turkish Hearths is an organization which promotes specific ideals so far, it can only accept the admissions of those who would be instilled with their intentions. Turkish Hearths have missions for the villager, the labourer and the soldier. But the Turkish Hearths cannot share their works with them. This establishment cannot indiscriminately affiliate people from the streets. The Centre is not uninterested in the farmer or the labourer. On the contrary, it always assumed itself as being in service for them. [...] But we enrol as members only persons who are able to serve to our purposes. (Üstel 1997:155-156)

Of all the ideologies that developed before the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, such as Islamism, Ottomanism and Turkism, Turkism certainly gained exceptional power. The most basic characteristic of Turkism is that it is an entirely Occidental movement. The concepts of Turk, Turkishness and Turkism had, at this point and time, only began to be influential in relatively small communities. However, after the foundation of several associations, these concepts were heatedly discussed. Turkishness is an outcome of the process of building an identity and ideology. It is remarkable that most people who pioneered this process were politicians, Orientalists or Turkologists with Russian and Hungarian origins. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fictional connection between Turkishness and the *Turan* concept argued for the political necessity to build a Turkish identity based on Central Asian

origins. Thus, in the early period of this movement, the Turkist groups in the Ottoman Empire obviously did not have a concrete definition or perception regarding what was meant by “Turkish.” As a matter of fact, the regulations of the “Turkish Association” (*Türk Derneği*) in 1908 state that the goal of the association is to learn and to teach the old works, history, languages, and social status of all peoples (*kavim*) which are known as Turk (Üstel 1997:22). As these typical and vague statements show, the issue of Turkishness as an idea imported from the outside into the Ottoman Empire, and overlapping with the political developments and objectives of that time, is manifested in accordance with the *zeitgeist*. It is remarkable that – especially in the many groups and movements that developed in the Ottoman state during the short period following the Second Constitution (1908) – there was an intensive impetus for Turkist, Turanist and pan-Turkist politics and intentions. Ideologically speaking there was a progression and an operational “organic” link between movements, parties or societies like *Genç Kalemler* (“Young Pens”), *İttihat ve Terakki* (“Committee of Union and Progress”), *Türk Derneği* (“Turkish Association”), *Türk Yurdu* (“Turkish Homeland”) and their antecedents, such as the “Young Ottomans” and “Young Turks”<sup>1</sup>. As a matter of fact, it is no coincidence that most of the people who gathered around *Halka Doğru* consisted of the ideologues and intellectuals of the Turkist movement who are also on the editorial board of the *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland) magazine.

According to François Georgeon (1999:108-109):

As a matter of fact, *Halka Doğru* was a derivation of *Türk Yurdu*. Most of the authors in *Halka Doğru* were also on the editorial board of *Türk Yurdu*: Halide Edip, Ahmed Ağaoğlu, Celal Sahir, Hüseyinzade Ali, Akil Muhtar, Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, Ziya Gökalp, Mehmed Emin, etc. As seen, the pioneers of the nationalist movement were also the pioneers of populism in Turkey. ‘To aggrandize a nation is to aggrandize the folk!’ This formula expresses both the idea which sheds light on the movement, and the organic link between Turkish nationalism and populism that has existed from its beginnings.

This is an important point. As we retrace this founding ideology on a discursive level, we can see it has been in existence as a basic and unchanging paradigm, and is still influential in Turkey today. However, here we find another intriguing point. Turkist ideology seems in practice to have always been connected with the concept of “the unity of opposites.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mardin 1962; Zürcher 1992, 2003; Ahmad 1993; Hanioğlu 1995; Shaw and Shaw 1997; Lewis 2001; Berkes 2008; Tunaya 2010.

<sup>2</sup> In the history of philosophy, the principle of “the unity of opposites” which has been associated with Heraclitus (BCE 540-480) is based upon an understanding that everything in nature has an opposite and the existence itself is an outcome of this opposition (Rifat 2004). The expression can be summarized by such aphorisms and quotations: “what opposes unite”; “the way up and the way down are one and the same”; “that which is in opposition is in concert, and from things that differ comes the most beautiful harmony”; “things which are put together are both whole and not whole, brought together and taken

This basic formation represents completely opposing political positions, and caused Turkey to have a double-personality, not only politically but in every other field as well. It is remarkable that this formation has been shaped according to the paradigm that all is “one and the same”. This typical trait enabled populism and nationalism to melt together, as evident in the example of *Halka Doğru*. Furthermore, it was influential in the emergence of a peasantist movement within the Turkish Hearths, and again in the transformation of the Turkish Hearths into *Halkevleri* (community centres, literally “People’s Houses”). During the latter process, in terms of political appearance and discourse, the concept of “folk” (*halk*) became a notion that also included democratic tendencies, while “nation” (*millet*) became a term representing conservative and nationalist ideology. However, from the point of the basic founding ideology, the way was Heraclitus’s “one and the same” (Rifat, 2004).

### *Turkist Ideology and Constitutive Myths of Turkish Folk Music*

Turkist ideology created a number of constitutive myths about Turkish folk music. All of these myths were connected with the notion of Turk, which the Turkist ideology intended to construct. For example, as a reflection of the “Turkish History Thesis”, pentatonicism was claimed to have been the “origin” of Turkish folk music. None of those making such claims had any direct information about how the music in the territories they had named as “Turan” actually might have been performed. They did not go into the field, instead creating phantoms as “armchair musicologists”, simply in order to destroy Ottoman identity and to help invent a new Turkish identity. Advocates for this 1930s discourse included Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1936), Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal (1936) and Feruh Arsunar (1937). The Anatolian *bağlama* was fastened to the Central Asian *kopuz* by Fuad Köprülü, a prominent academic and one of the most important Turkist ideologues. No one went into the field to observe the shape and characteristic of the *kopuz*, no one become interested in the question whether a *kopuz* actually existed in “Turan” or not. They just claimed that it did. At the same time they suggested that there was no connection between Ottoman music and folk music in terms of *makam* and *usûl*. In the end, Ottoman music was seen as already damaged as a mixture of Arabic, Persian, Byzantine and Greek musics. Foreign experts were also included in this process. For example, Paul Hindemith issued a “scientific” report that within the music history of the world can be judged as an exemplary case of writing for ideological purposes, a report in which he spoke openly of Ottoman mu-

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apart, in harmony and out of harmony; one thing arises from all things, and all things arise from one thing”; “*cold* warms up, *warm* cools off, *moist* parches, and *dry* dampens”. I use this principle to show how political parties and their policies stay in harmony with each other in terms of folk music and Turkish identity and their dependency on a founding ideology.

sic as Arabic music. Besides this, and based on some polyphonic examples, he underlined that folk music can be taken as a foundation for Turkish school of compositions, thus stressing their difference from Ottoman music. A. Adnan Saygun, having been influenced by the analysis and classification methods of Béla Bartók with whom he had collected folk songs, preferred to use Greek tetrachords and modes in his naming of the scales employed in Anatolian folk music.

In his book *Türk Halk Musikisi Usûlleri* (*Usûls of Turkish Music*, 1962), based on the belief that the metro-rhythmic structure of Turkish folk music is unrelated to the *usûls* of Ottoman music – thus serving the idea of a basic difference of folk music – Muzaffer Sarsözen invented and classified measures that he claimed to be particular to folk music.<sup>3</sup> Official and administrative representatives of folk music as well as prestigious teachers, such as Nida Tüfekçi and Yücel Paşmakçı, adopted his approach, and transformed it into a system covering every field, from performance to education.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, these circles started to use the term *ayak* as a folk music counterpart for Turkish music *makams*. H. Saadeddin Arel and Suphi Ezgi adopted an approach which ignored historicism regarding issues such as division of the octave, naming of notes, classification and definition of *makam* and *usûl*, and thus invented a so-called modern theory. They included scarcely any analysis or comparison related to folk music.<sup>5</sup> The worse thing is that the circle around Arel almost prevented any public access to sources related to the history of music, although many of these sources were located in their libraries. Instead they ensured that the ideology that they were associated with dominated musical theory, performance and education. All of these works were based on a belief in the necessity of handling and arranging Turkish music according to European model and thus to attach it to the European system. During this period an Orientalist outlook and

<sup>3</sup> During symposium discussions, one of the leading researchers of Turkish folk music, Mr. Süleyman Şenel, explained that the measures I criticized here and that are still used in education and performance, were not invented by Muzaffer Sarsözen, but taken by Sarsözen from the Bulgarian musicologist Stoyan Dzhudzhev (1902-1998). This explanation of Sarsözen's definition and classification of folk music measures, which until today have been known, used and taught as a basic source, raise new questions. Since Muzaffer Sarsözen did not give references in his book, showing the measures as his own inventions, his approach would – if Süleyman Şenel is right – be called plagiarism. It is noteworthy that although Şenel knew about this significant fact, he never explained it on scientific grounds nor did he issue any supporting publication. It is desirable that Şenel would explain the sources for this hypothesis concerning a sensible issue of Turkish music and in particular folk music. Here I write as a footnote that he should perceive that this is a sensible course of action and that he should do what it is required for such responsibility.

<sup>4</sup> The way these circles follow the definitions of measures is open to subjective interpretation, and is based on many faulty examples (Öztürk 2006b, 2007). Nevertheless they are still in use in folk music education in Turkey and are seen as one of the basic topics of folk music.

<sup>5</sup> The modern theories of Arel and Ezgi lack basic analyses and comparisons. This new theory which has been created by western and positivist mentality, is patchwork-like. Basic concepts are taken and adapted, mainly from the West, namely from Safî al-Dîn, Cantemir, Nâsir Dede. This system is very common in Turkish music education and performances although it bears dozens of shortcomings.

evolutionary ethos were the dominant paradigms in Turkish music circles. Turkism, as a basic ideology, became at the same time a means for the introduction of a discourse of Western superiority, and it played – and still plays – a dominant role in establishing this “hegemony” in the field of music.

One of the most interesting applications and indicators of Turkist ideology in the field of folk music in Turkey is the period before and after the gathering of folk music collections. Its first examples can be found among the works of institutions like the “Turkish Association” (*Türk Derneği*) and “Turkish Hearths” (*Türk Ocağı*) active in the pre-Republic period, and in the collections of folk songs started by the *Dar’ül Elhân* and the “Municipal Conservatorium Istanbul” (*Istanbul Belediye Konservatuari*). It was in particular during in the years 1936-1952 that the “State Conservatorium Ankara” (*Ankara Devlet Konservatuari*) organized folk music collections and founded a serious folk music archive. It is interesting that no scientific studies have been conducted so far, although the archive is still located in the Conservatory of Hacettepe University. When we look at the goals, expectations and even the fuss concerning Turkist ideology put forward during the beginning of the folk music collecting activities, it is strange that the outcome of dozens of collections has never been subject to any academic evaluation. This is an obvious “anomaly”. The fact that these studies still have not been conducted, in spite of a supposed democratic atmosphere and academic culture, has to be seen as a major problem for an archive of this magnitude. Potential research projects on folk music conducted with the help of today’s technologies will present significant information and evaluations hitherto unavailable. As someone who has been performing research and analyses in this field – and as I have emphasized in various publications – research on folk music will provide important analytical materials for Ottoman music and the writing of its history, the theme under discussion here. For instance I presented many existent examples of *makam* and *terkîb* which were thought to have been forgotten, identifying them among “alive” Anatolian folk melodies or within the traditional repertoire.<sup>6</sup> Many studies on folk music – on issues such as *usûl*, musical genres, musical instruments, scales, performing music, transference of music, composing etc. – will possibly add information regarding Ottoman music and the differentiation between the two different performance styles. While many new opportunities for scientific studies exist today, among them contemporary computer and sound technologies, the reasons for these not to be used should always be taken into consideration. To find a reasonable excuse for not tending towards such studies seems in fact impossible while there are universities, conservatories, institutions in Turkey. When it comes to music archives, this issue is entirely left to oblivion, almost under a thick cover.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Öztürk 2006c, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b.

<sup>7</sup> In this context, I propose that a recommendation should be prepared with the opportunity of this symposium that international experts and researchers should be able to access this matchless archive and it should be open to every type of academic research.



As we try to interpret these points as an indicator, it is obvious that the discourses that were put forth with purely political interests always presented new issues to a nonsensical degree and were made use of for given ideological interests during particular periods of time. The issue of pentatonicism is a phantom. As the dozens of academic or hundreds of musicians who work on folk music in Turkey openly express, pentatonicism is not one of the basic or main themes or materials of Anatolian local musics. On the contrary, nearly all Anatolian musics are based on *makams* and *usûls* which can be interpreted as indicators for “deformed” Ottoman music. The claim that *kopuz* is a precedent of *bağlama* does not have any scientific basis, but is entirely ideological. The prevalence of long-necked string instruments in this area in the depths of Anatolian cultural history has been – and still is – the subject of many international publications. However, there are no similarities between *bağlama* and the instrument known as *kopuz* or *komus* among Turkic peoples. Historical sources like Dede Korkut and Evliya Çelebi have always depicted *komuz* as a member of the *ud* family. Also the contemporary instrument known as *cobza* in regions like Hungary and Romania belongs to the *ud* family. As a result, the identity of *kopuz* and *bağlama* shows that the ideology of the establishment left its mark on certain mindsets.

The “School for Music Theachers” (*Musiki Muallim Mektebi*, 1924), “Istanbul Municipal Conservatory” (*Istanbul Belediye Konservatuvarı*, 1925), *Gazi Terbiye* (1928), the “Ankara Conservatory” (1936), “Izmir Conservatory” (1954) and the “State Conservatory for Turkish Music” (*Türk Musikisi Devlet Konservatuvarı*, 1975) were considered as important milestones in terms of the institutionalization of musical life. Thus in Turkey, one single type of education based on Western lines, but two types of conservatories were established: conservatories for Western music and those for Turkish music respectively. Moreover, even Turkish music conservatories, for their basic programs, were equipped with a structure and functions that imitated Western musical conservatories and adopted the latter as role models. A remarkable number of the programs were based on Western musical education. In fact, Western ideology founded a hegemonic and hierarchical model and this model was appropriated politically by everyone. Here we see a superior-subordinate relationship and the West is definitely assumes the superior role. In all conservatories and musical education departments which were built after those mentioned here, the same structure was taken as a role model and applied. This discrimination has been in existence until today. It is obvious that the central position of the West, its hegemony, hence its Orientalist perspective, play decisive role in the perception of Turkish music.<sup>8</sup> In both folk music and Turkish music, the

<sup>8</sup> According to Edward Said (1999), Orientalism is a way of thinking based upon an ontological and epistemological discrimination which is made by Europe between the concepts of East and the West. Onur Kula (2010) speaks of Orientalism as a situation of the West dominating the East. To understand what orientalism really means, the archaeological method intended for deconstructing the concepts of “discourse,” “knowledge,” and “regimes



perspective has always been a product of an approach that places the West at the centre and perceives music through the West. The effect of the Ottomans' efforts to promote modernization based on Turkist ideology is the adjustment of music according to Occidentalist models. It is as if a "Music Regulation Institute" was almost established.<sup>9</sup> Paul Hindemith penned a report in 1936 with the intention to make Turkish musical life thrive. As a typical example, his words in this report are very intriguing:

Although it is sad to leave the Arabic influenced music with its grand tradition and charming genuineness in favour of form with a more productive future; for a musician who does not follow only historical interests and who believes in the obligation to turn to polyphonic music, once he/she adopts the right tuning system, he has nothing but to search the folk music which will form a strong basis for his/her works. Turkish composer will find what he/she seeks in the old rural musical styles of his/her country. (Hindemith, 1983:99)

### *Unity of Opposites: "Turkish Hearths" (Türk Ocakları), "People's Houses" (Halkevleri) and Folk Music*

The "six arrows" of the "Republican People's Party" (RPP) is basically exactly on what the Turkist movement presented as its principles: republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, statism and reformism. The first four articles of these tenets are the basic foundations of Turkist ideology. In terms of its basic ideologies Turkism is completely Occidentalist. Hamdullah Suphi stated that the *Türk Yurdu* magazine is the indoctrination tool for those who "adopt the Western civilization

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of truth" of Foucault has a great importance. Thus Said stated: "My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said, 1978:3). According to Said, "because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" (Said 1978:3) The European culture created its power, identity and ultimately itself by positioning itself in front of the East (Said, 1999). Said examines the power relationships by means of Gramsci's models of "hegemony" and "consent". According to this, "in any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far" (Said, 1978:7). "The cultural hegemony of Europe is based upon the thought that it is superior to people and cultures which are not from Europe" (Kula, 2010:4). In fact the idea of Orientalism is an outcome of a Eurocentric ideology and ethnocentrism peculiar to Europe. This discourse is based on the acceptance that Europeanness is superior to all when Europe is compared with other cultures and civilizations. Hence hegemony gives birth to a civilizational hierarchy. Europe is naturally at the top of such a hierarchy.

<sup>9</sup> An allusion to Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel *Time Regulation Institute*, 1962.

and see the transmission of this culture to Turkish culture as a solution and want to make Turkish nation a member of the Western nations” (Üstel, 1997:157):

The music that the Turkish Hearths will publish and circulate is hundred times more suitable to express the characters of Turkish nation than our old music. Apparently the music which is played with various instruments like *saz*, *def*, *kudüm*s cannot express all excitements that Turkish people feel in their hearts. As it is impossible to compose marches in our old music, our old musical instruments do not have the strength and the timbre which a military melody would require. Prospective Turkish music will evolve into the Western music which we know as universal and grand. We do not mean that old music should be excluded from the Turkish Hearths. But the music that the Turkish Hearths will provide will be European music. Genuine Turkish music is not in our past, but in our future. We will find a way to reach the Turkish music we’ve been yearning for with Western instruments and with Western rules (Üstel 1997:223-225).<sup>10</sup>

These populist and peasantist concepts and movements arose from the Turkish Hearths. The Russian *Narodniks* movement, populism and peasantism of the Balkans had a great effect on the origins of populism. Thus, magazines like *Türk Yurdu* and *Halka Doğru* became the most effective publications of these movements (Çınar, 2007). Halide Edip, who chaired the “Peasantist Society” (*Köycüler Cemiyeti*) and defended the populism movement, emphasizes that the movement should be not only intellectual but should also be active, and the best examples for this were to be found in the United States. According to Halide Edip, populism in America is an example of how the people can be educated and prosperity and social works performed (Üstel, 1997). Dr Reşit Galip, who was one of the most effective politicians and bureaucrats of the Republican period, took responsibility for the actual leadership of the movement at the time. The idea of transforming the Turkish Hearths into *Halkevleri* (People’s Houses) and merging them with the RPP was first expressed in 1925. However, this was realized only in 1931 when the Turkish Hearths were replaced by the *Halkevleri*. In this process, it is remarkable that the assignment of Dr Reşit Galip for the presidency of the *Halkevleri* provided a paradigmatic continuity.

The *Halkevleri* began to take action with two important missions. One of them is the social reform mission which stretches out to the “Young Turk Revolution”, like the “Turkish Hearths” and “*Köycüler Cemiyeti*” (Peasantist Society). The second one is to launch and carry out the artistic and cultural activities that would actualize the project of Westernization. The most important dilemma of this second mission is that it has to reconcile the efforts to introduce and promote Western cultural forms with the dependency upon regional folk music collections in order to create a national cultural repertoire. In this context, the activities of the *Halkevleri* towards a cultural reform can be seen as a project in which the “culture” (*bars*) and the “civilization” (*medeniyet*) concepts of Ziya Gökalp are brought to life (Öztürkmen, 1998:1).

<sup>10</sup> It is known that the same discourse is expressed by H. S. Arel (1948:4) many years later, with these words: “I’m captivated not by today’s appearance of Turkish music, but the vision of its future.”

The principles effective in the founding of the *Halkevleri* includes the reflections of this basic ideology: instilling the revolution, deleting traces of the past, creating an integrated mass, vitalization, secularism, education, indoctrination, giving and honouring reliability etc. (Yeşilkaya 1999). Tanıl Bora states that the other image of Turkish nationalism and national identity is that of an old civilization in which a religious worldview is common, namely the Ottoman Empire (Bora 1998). According to Yeşilkaya (1999:73), “In the *Halkevleri*, the traces of the past and especially of the Ottoman Empire are attempted to be removed.” Because they reflect the discourse of Turkist ideology, it is necessary to cite Ceyhun Atuf Kansu’s words: “While in one room of the *Halkevleri* you can hear folk songs, in another room you will hear Mozart but you will not hear *gazel* in any room at all” (Yeşilkaya 1999:73).

“It is stated in the regulations that violin, *ud*, *cümbüş*, *kanun* and *ney* cannot be employed in folk songs which were freed from the captivity of *fasıl* and *saz* music” (Yeşilkaya 1999:87). In the instructions that the RPP proposed for the *Halkevleri*, there are statements which express the “civilization plus nation” formula of Ziya Gökalp, emphasizing international music and folk songs will be the basis (Yeşilkaya 1999).

In the regulations of 1940, it was stated that the “Main task of the musical activities in the *Halkevleri* is to arrange folk songs, which have been living in the depths of the national spirit as a treasure trove, with the western techniques; to collect them with loyalty and care for prospective composers; to introduce polyphonic music to the tastes of the people while a new kind of Turkish music is emerging; for that purpose, make people listen to Western music taking advantage of many opportunities” (Yeşilkaya, 1999).

In fact, the music called *Türk Sanat Müziği* (Turkish art music) at the time, which was introduced as a new form during the Republic period, has at least been as effective as folk music on the destruction or the transformation of the Ottoman identity. Since the term “Ottoman music” as a characterization does not have sufficient supporters from even academic circles of today, it is seen as ideologically defective. One of the biggest successes of Turkist ideology is that it indoctrinated into the collective consciousness that Turk and Turkishness has always existed, thereby constituting a “nation” throughout history. Hence, the term “Turkish art music” (*Türk Sanat Müziği*) has been adopted more than “Ottoman music” (*Osmanlı Müziği*) and is preferred in academic usage. The issue has lost its historical context on many levels.

### *Folk Music as Representation of the Nation (millet) and Ethnic Identity*

Folk music has a significant representative quality from the viewpoint of nationalism and ethnic identity. Around the world folk music has other meanings than just being a musical genre. As Nettl emphasized (1973:6): “The idea that folk music is closely associated with a people, a nation, or a culture and its characteristics

has long been widely accepted. In some languages, the words for ‘folk music’ and ‘national music’ are the same. This popular notion is, of course, quite opposed to that which deems music a ‘universal language.’” According to Nettl (1973), the idea of folk music reflecting the inner characteristics of a national culture is the origin of the concept that associates nations with musical styles. This concept causes folk music to be seen as a political issue from a nationalist perspective and is sometimes used as an effective tool for aggressive and racist politics. The most typical examples of this issue can be seen in the various traditional music applications deployed in National Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union during the 1950s. Such examples are testament to the necessity to research and understand the importance that folk music has in terms of politics and culture.

Folk music can be symbolic of countries, nations, ethnical units, society or communities, just as much as language, national anthems, flags, homelands, uniforms, and maps. Its representation of identity is the main factor in its employment as an ideological tool.<sup>11</sup>

A nation before anything else is a political formation and unity. Anthony Smith (2002:22) states that the concept of nation is formed or built by myths and memories. Moreover, according to Smith, these are *sine qua non* of a nation. Memory is one of the basic factors of identity formation. Nations provide a repertoire of memories for the individuals. Myths as constitutive and sanctifying narratives, help to construct common goals. Building up a nation as a political formation entails the political project we used to call nationalism. Nationalistic discourse has a constitutive, shaping and idealizing frame. It does not come into life all by itself but by founders and masterminds of a certain political project and its implementers, namely a certain ideological group or community. In this context, the emergence of nationalism without a group that has a political project, is impossible. Even though it may be developed, it is not impossible to promote, actualize, perpetuate and adopt it without a certain organization. So concerning the concept of nationalism and the qualifying of any cultural element as national, the standpoints of the circles which direct this political project is the issue; their

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<sup>11</sup> Ideologies are imaginations and designs of different worlds and societies (Mardin 1982). As a design, an ideology needs new tools in order to exist and promote itself. For example, national states and national identity are completely ideological concepts and depend on tools that represent the unity of the “nation” concept. Language, homeland, religion, culture, history are the prominent ones. In his book *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) that he collaborated with Terence Ranger, the historian Eric Hobsbawm analysed these unifying tools in a comprehensive manner. In this context, among other tools related to cultural traditions, we can see that also folk music and folk dances are effectively used. In fact the notions of nation (*millet*), citizen (*vatandaş*) and people (*halk*) which are used in similar meanings in Turkish, can also be used interchangeably as identical key concepts in terms of nationalism. Turkish people (*Türk halkı*), means the same thing as Turkish nation (*Türk milleti*) or Turkish citizens (*Türk vatandaşları*). In this context, people and nation have almost the same content and they both symbolize the same “imagined community” (Anderson 1993).

perceptions, the symbolizations of the respective cultural element, and their interpretation of it in accordance with their intentions and interests. This last issue entails an ideological structure, realization of a world of meanings and with a more general expression, establishing a political hermeneutic. Smith (2002:23) talks about ethnicity as a phenomenon which depends on the perspective of the beholder, changes according time and context, and which is slippery, variable, misleading, and completely situational. The mission of the nationalists encompasses thus to make nations – which had existed since unknown time – their existence aware; to awake them from their long and deep sleep and to enable them to take their places among the other nations (Smith, 2002). The perception that has become common in our day in terms of nationalism, is concentrated upon the comprehensiveness and multi-dimensionality features of nationalism. “Nationalism is first a concept that shapes our consciousness and helps us make sense of this world; in other words, a perception and interpretation that determine our collective identities, everyday conversations, and directs our attitudes and behaviours” (Özkırımlı, 2008:15).<sup>12</sup>

The first tools that Turkism developed during the period of nation-building was the simplification and purism of the Turkish language. Thus simplification efforts in the linguistic area and purist approach comprise one of the most important elements of the establishment phase of Turkist ideology. The magazine “Turkish Association” (*Türk Derneği*) put a perceptible emphasis on Turkish language. A magazine writer, Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu states “the language is the prerequisite of creating a nation and a fluent language shelters and protects a nation as much as a neat military army” (Üstel, 1997: 29). Smith argues that a language is a form of cultural nationalism that yields political results concerning the fundamentals of nationalism.

These politics towards the field of linguistics started to include folk songs in a short period of time. An example for the process of compiling folk songs, among the eleven points activity proposal that the “Turkish Association” recommended for its headquarters, there is even a recommendation for keeping special notebooks to write down “the old local songs that Turkish people sang in the villages, proverbs and stories” (Üstel, 1997: 24). While the unity of Ottoman elements are frequently mentioned in the manifesto of the “Turkish Association”, a Turkist policy is favoured in the cultural area and especially the language issues. H.S. Arel, who has an important position in the “modernization” of Turkish music and took part on the discussion on a “national music” by “turkifying” some Ottoman expres-

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<sup>12</sup> The roots of nationalist school of thought can be traced back to Herder and Fichte in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (for some writers, even to Kant and Rousseau). However, the issue became a subject to social sciences only by the works of Carleton Hayes and Hans Kohn in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Özkırımlı, 2008). Scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson made great contributions and provided new expansions for academic research on nationalism.

sions, obviously was highly influenced by this linguistic nationalism. He reflects this in his work *Türk Musikisi Kimindir?* (To Whom Does Turkish Music Belong?) which was originally published as a series of magazine articles:

However, after I realized some books written by foreign writers attribute some *makams* to the Arab and the Persian for they are named in Arabic or Persian, I felt sorry as we cannot save these genuinely Turkish inventions. Since that day, I decided to name everything in Turkish. Our national responsibility is to shelter our country under Turkishness, against people who took it upon themselves not to leave an artistic bit that is attributed to us. (Arel 1988:2)

### *Turkish Folk Music between Dissociation and Unity*

From the point of view of Turkism, the constitutive ideology of the Republic, the issue of folk music has been seen as the cement of the new Turkish identity and nation which was supposed to be purged of Ottoman identity, and hence as national essence. But although its roots extend back further in the past, with the understanding of Turkish-Islam synthesis which is almost a revised version of the constitutive ideology as it began to be evident in the 1970s and to become an official opinion in the 12 September 1980 coup d'état, folk music in Turkey has become involved in micro-nationalisms and deployed to represent various ethnic identities.

The cultural and musical variety which had been labelled as “regional” (*yöre* and *bölge*) during the “radio years”, gained a character associated directly with ethnic identities in the period following the 1980 coup d'état. In this new situation, folk music that could function as a mean for integration in terms of nationalism and ethnical identity, now became an obvious discriminator for the “others”. In this new era, the concept of “one” Turkish folk music and its “regional” characteristics was replaced with an understanding which is centred around the ethnic identities as in expressions including Kurdish, Alevite, Laz, Roman, Gypsy, Abdal, Arabic, Azeri, Yezidi, Assyrian, Pomak, Bosnian, Tatar, Armenian, Circassian, Abkhazian, Jewish and Rûm musics etc.<sup>13</sup> In this process, the issue which were most criticized and analysed in terms of official ideology, is the practice of the TRT to change language and expressions of the lyrics of folk songs. In the official repertoire of TRT the Alevite expression “*şab*” (a word used for Ali as well as for Persian leaders) for example was changed to “*dost*” (close friend) or “*can*” (beloved, soul), and songs with Kurdish or Laz lyrics were completely translated into Turkish. In the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état, the transformative concept that dominated the economic and political scene was also the original cause for the transformations in the cultural and ideological arena. In a process that has con-

<sup>13</sup> At this point, it will be enough to skim over the folk and traditional music albums published by *Kalan Müzik*, to understand the mentioned transformational and evolutionary line.

tinued to this day, Turkey has adopted developments that emerged in the name of democratization and feels a need to question its constitutive ideology. In this process, folk music has become perceived as one of the cultural symbols which does not represent the “national essence” anymore but rather “ethnic identity” and “local culture”. For example, in the 1970s, when I grew up as a performer of traditional music, me and almost everyone around me believed that there was “one” Turkish folk music. But today, to put it in the words of Ziya Gökalp, it is clear that a plurality of musics, an *ittibat-ı anasır müzikleri*<sup>14</sup> exists.

Nationalist ideology, inherently with its features and discourses that create its antithesis, make use of folk music as an effective tool in accordance with its own intentions and interests. In this context, it orients communities and masses in terms of cultural, individual and political identities. While in this ideological frame folk music is perceived as an indicator of diversity in terms of cultural and individual identity, politically it becomes an issue of freedom, independence, justice, demand and representation. After all the point that we reach is this: folk music is as slippery and unstable as the issue of ethnicity is, and it gains the characteristics that people want to see or show in it.

Aside from the fact that this context has led to the use of folk music in Turkey for ideological goals, its decisiveness regarding informative, scientific, inquiring and educational functions in the academic field if seen from a paradigmatic perspective creates a certain continuity and validity. Parallel to Foucault’s approach to intellectual history, in Turkish musical “academia” there is a hegemony that reflects “opinions rather than of knowledge, of errors rather than of truth, of types of mentality rather than of forms of thought” (Foucault 1999: 175). From the perspective of historicism, it is obvious that future research on folk music in Turkey will provide important materials concerning the nationalistic period. In this regard, the example of Turkey is a case in point to understand instrumentalism in all its detail.

Turkish music communities still did not leave aside the cultural evolutionist approach which was a common paradigm during the early phases of ethnomusicology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a framework called “comparative musicology.” The idea of evolution is still seen as a basic paradigm by circles interested in Turkish music.<sup>15</sup> The understanding of evolution assumes history to be a continuity and is based on the principle of a unidirectional process of evolution and progress. This understanding lacks a dimension of historical relativity and pluralism. It is obvious that in Ottoman music such an out-

<sup>14</sup> *Ittibad-i anasır* was a political concept of the late Abdülhamit II and Second Constitution period, emphasizing ethnicity instead of religious plurality.

<sup>15</sup> One of the most striking examples – among many others – for the validity of this attitude in academic circles is the book titled *From Past to Presence, from Presence to Future (Geçmişten Günümüze, Günümüzden Geleceğe)* by Ali Uçan, one of the most prominent scholars for contemporary Turkish music education. The book can also be featured as a college textbook. The first chapter of the book is titled “Cultural Evolution and Turkish Music” (*Kültürel Evrim ve Türk Müziği*).



look creates an insufficient, shallow and prejudiced framework. Writing the history of Ottoman music is an issue that concerns completely those elements which made up Ottoman culture. Therefore the nation-states which are an outcome of the process of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire are directly related to this history.

### *Conclusion*

In fact, folk music is what it is. It has its place within culture, life and together with men. Approaching folk music in terms of nationalism, national spirit, national essence etc. and associating it with these concepts is the outcome of the ideological approach in general, specifically that of nationalism. In this context, folk music is an ideological tool used for the construction of an identity of national or subnational ethnic entities. Especially in the case of Turkey, the interest in folk music obviously lies in the issue of identity and the construction of associated policies. From the perspective of Ottoman music history, the issue of Turkish folk music was introduced as a key concept in a period when this history was ideologically debated. A similar determination is valid also for the term “*Türk sanat müziği*” (Turkish art music). However, there is an transformation from an understanding that Turkish folk music represents a nation via a folk music that represents specific ethnicities. Hence, from a historical point of view, the content of the concept of Turkish folk music has changed. It has lost its meaning peculiar to the founding ideology and it is on its way to move into history in this new direction.

When we approach the field of Ottoman music history from the point of view of folk music research, we can introduce some important issues. Before anything else, the field of musical historiography is not a scientific branch which can only be worked on, simply relying on historical documents and knowledge. On the contrary, collections of, and material from, oral culture and folk/traditional music can provide significant information for such a history. As we can be excited by the plethora of material available in Turkey, it is also baffling to see the apathy, the indifference, the inefficacy and impractability caused by a systematically perpetuated ideological domination which has been sustained to this day.

Folk music can make many contributions to the historical arena. Several researches have proved that we can discover many *makams*, *şu'bes*, *âvâzes* and *terkîbes* which were explained in Ottoman sources by analytical studies and comparisons on folk music repertoire. The same situation is also valid for *usûl* researches. For example, comparisons of rhythms for *balay* and *oyun havası* that are still actively performed in Anatolia using historical data can provide important contributions, particularly regarding the study and analysis of Ottoman *mehter* music. For this reason it can be claimed that folk music repertoire and practice will make great contributions to academic studies on musical historiography.

The issue of folk music is an international research field for various reasons. Basically, it is obvious that Anatolia is in a central position within a wider region which was dominated by great empires. Therefore this historicity and interculturality provides an important and leading position for Turkey in regards to regionally designed research projects on folk music. It is my aspiration that international academic research projects on folk music should be developed that could be beneficial to all countries and cultures in the region and that they might contribute to the transformation of our perspectives and understanding, thus shaking the very roots of our contemporary consciousness in terms of a musical and historical symbiosis.

