

# PEYAMİ SAFA AND TURKISH CONSERVATISM

Ceren Gülser İLİKAN RASİMOĞLU

Istanbul

## Abstract

This article analyzes political debates of the period on the ideas of Westernization, Kemalism and change through the works of Peyami Safa, which is considered as one of the most prominent intellectuals of the Early Republican period. The article summarizes the main characteristics of Turkish conservatism within the idea of *fin de siècle* in Europe. Then, the reflection of these characteristics on the thinking of Peyami Safa is illustrated within several differentiations over time, including the dichotomy of East and West and the place of women in this Westernization debate, which include several hesitations and efforts to find solution to these hesitations. Finally, it is argued that the idea of synthesis and mysticism will end this hesitation.

**Key words:** conservatism, Peyami Safa, westernization, modernization, early republican period

## PEYAMİ SAFA VE TÜRK MUHAFAZAKARLIĞI

### Özet

Bu makale erken cumhuriyet döneminin en önemli aydınlarından biri olarak Kabul edilen Peyami Safa'nın eserleri aracılığıyla Batılılaşma, Kemalizm ve değişim fikirleri üzerinden siyasi tartışmaları konu edinmektedir. Makale, Avrupa'daki *fin de siècle* düşüncesi üzerinden Türk muhafazakarlığının temel niteliklerini özetlemektedir. Bunu ardından, bahsedilen niteliklerin Peyami Safa'nın düşüncesi üzerindeki yansımaları zaman içinde Batılılaşma fikrindeki Doğu-Batı ikiliği ve kadının yeri de dahil olmak üzere çok çeşitli tereddütler ve bu tereddütlere çözüm bulma çabaları ile gösterilmiştir. Nihayetinde, bu tereddüde sentez ve mistisizm düşüncelerinin son verdiği iddia edilmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** muhafazakarlık, Peyami Safa, Batılılaşma, modernleşme, erken cumhuriyet dönemi

## Introduction

This article studies the changing attitudes of Peyami Safa within the atmosphere of conservatism of mainly single party period in Turkey, and his later advocacy for mysticism in the passage of the country to the multi-party period. To present the transformation of his ideas, centered around the question of Westernization in different terms, mainly the novels that exhibited the East-West dichotomy such as *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı* (The Novel of Hesitation), *Fatih- Harbiye*, *Matmazel Noraliya'nın Koltuğu* (The Chair of Mademoiselle Noraliya), and *Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu* (Ninth External Ward); his books composed of reflections on Turkish Westernization like *Büyük Avrupa Anketi* (The Great Survey of Europe) and *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (Reflections on the Turkish Reform); his small articles in *Milliyet* of 1954 and in

*Tercüman* in 1959, both under the title of *Objektif* (Objective); and the journals *Kültür Haftası* (Week of Culture) of 1936 and *Türk Düşüncesi* (Turkish Thought) of 1953-60, both of which were published by Safa himself, are discussed.

This article argues that Peyami Safa is a good example of this conservative modernism with all his tentative attacks on Kemalism in the very name of Kemalism. It aims to show that Safa conforms to the typical characteristics of conservatism; that are traditionalism, a desire to change by itself, a preference of evolution instead of revolution, a disbelief in human reason, the sense of end of civilization, the feeling of hesitation, the role crisis of the intellectual; in short, the Bergsonian ideas that were shared among the conservative intellectuals. The final thesis of the article is that within all this conformity, Safa has changed his beliefs all the time.

The article will first inform about the conservatist atmosphere of the Early Republican period. It will evaluate the connection between conservatism and modernism. Second, the article will introduce the dichotomy of East and West in the thinking of Peyami Safa through *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (Reflections on the Turkish Revolution) and *Büyük Avrupa Anketi* (The Great Survey of Europe). Then, this divergence will be deepened with Safa's understanding of reform through his collected articles. Fourth, the reflection of this dichotomy in his novels will be evaluated by accentuating female characters as symbols of a hesitation in Turkish modernization, which will be followed by the description of Safa's solution to the hesitation, a synthesis between the East and the West. Then, his writings in the journals and newspapers will be analyzed, which finally will be followed by the debates of Marxism and mysticism.

### **Turkish Conservatism**

In order to understand conservatism, one first needs to start that it is a modern way of thinking (Çiğdem, 1997, p. 34), a reaction to the meaning attributed to the political, cultural and economic structures (Bora, 1997, p. 6). As cited in Bora, Mannheim stresses that conservatism is the self-conscious traditionalism and Dahrendorf states that against the 'audacity' of the rationalism of the Enlightenment to change and shape by reason, it appropriates and preserves the 'already existing' and 'natural' state people and the world (Bora, 1997, p. 7). As for the Turkish conservatism, it is born out of responses to the Kemalist modernization (İrem, 1999, p. 141). Since the

Young Turk movement, the positivist ideals, based on progress, have been the basis of the Turkish modernization and became a legacy to the Republic, which its own reaction in the Bergsonian philosophy (Çiğdem, 1997, p. 44).

The appearance of Bergsonism is related mainly to the crash of the positivist-rationalist idea of Westernization through the years of wars. In this sense, this current represents a philosophical reaction to the cult of human mind. It is fed by the idea that the natural sciences are inefficient in the spiritual problems of people. This reaction posed the Kemalist elites an alternative to the positivist understanding against certain problems that they are facing, such as the attitude towards tradition, secularism and religion, nationalism, the conflict of material and soul in terms of the attitude towards science and technique (İrem, 1999, p. 143).

The conservatist intellectuals, in order to prevent the crisis of Europe, start to construct a position which stands opposite to socialism, positivism, humanism and liberalism. They favor a reform that by-itself is actionist and based on will, putting the activation politics based on tradition in the place of those based on reflection since the beginning of the 30s (İrem, 2003, p. 110). The criticism of the conservatist intellectuals comes from the idea that man started to forget all his goals except for the utilitarian goals of the practical mind, based on the technical progresses: Life has mechanized and standardized man. This is parallel to Spengler's historical construction. For him, societies are in a cycle of declines and rebirths and that the present epoch is seeing the extinction of the western civilization (Nacci, 1996, p. 108). Bergsonian terms like the creative urge and *élan vital* make the belief that change is inevitable widespread. This philosophy gives a secure shelter to the nationalists (İrem, 1999, p. 161).

The first half-independent intellectual organization is the *Kadro* (Cadre) movement that appeared in 1932. It also means the first breaking of the sphere of Kemalist intellectuals. The appearance, as a response to the *Kadro*'s attempt to write the ideology of the Kemalist reform, of the journals of Safa and his brother called *Kültür Haftası* (The Week of Culture) and of Baltacıoğlu named *Yeni Adam* (The New Man) shows how the *Kadro* movement created its own reactionary movement (İrem, 1997, p. 60). *Kültür Haftası* is legally owned by İlhami Safa and originally published by Peyami Safa which collects essays, stories and poems of many important figures of the Turkish intellectual life, such as Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, Ahmet Hamdi

Tanpınar, Mustafa Şekip Tunç, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Hilmi Ziya Ülken and Falih Rıfkı Atay. (Demir, 2007, p. 141).

### **Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar (Reflections on the Turkish Revolution)**

The book that Safa wrote in order to evaluate the Turkish reform and Kemalism is *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar*. In the original works of Peyami Safa, he generally uses the word *inkılap* (evolution), and criticizes the word *devrim* (revolution). The primal point of the book is the encounter and clash of the Eastern and Western civilizations. He locates the problem at a period before the New Edict (Safa, 1938, p. 7). He argues that Atatürk finished this conflict in one instance. Nevertheless, it must be noted that this last statement appears only in the preface of the first edition in 1938. He retrieves it in the second edition by affirming that at that era, one had to tolerate some reduction from the freedom of thought (Yıldırım, 2003, p. 13).

Therefore, after the Peace Treaty, all Turkish press passed a radical transformation in favor of the mainstream ideology. During the debates of the abolition of the caliphate, issues like the style and name of the new regime, the supra-parties character of the head of the state were discussed. And during the formation of the Extraordinary Trials (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*), the oppositional press were subject to arrests (Gürkan, 1998, pp. 34-35). Additionally, the 1931 Press Law presented an organization of the press activities that would now be regulated, collected or closed by the political authorities. (Gürkan, 1998, pp. 86-87).

Written in such an atmosphere, the book starts by the discussion of the pre-reform currents: Turkism, Islamism and Westernism: Turkists and Westernists are on the same opinion about the national economy. Turkists and Islamists share the same idea on the internationality of Islam; all three visions are against Europeanization based on imitation and finally, all three are against socialism. The aim to talk about these movements is to illustrate their failure after the First World War.

Then, Safa looks at the roots of the reformist movements in Turkish history, which derived either from nationalism or civilizationalism (*medeniyetçilik*). The reforms that derived out of a desire of becoming Westerner are all the reforms aimed at secularism (closing down of *tekkes*, *zaviyes*, *medreses*, the abolition of the religious law and the establishment of European law, the abolition of the course at schools), the hat

law, the Latin script, the foundation of the conservatory that only thought Western music, the acceptance of the Western calendar, Sunday as a vacation day, and the adoption of Western clothes.

At that point, he starts to discuss the idea of nationalism: there are two understandings of the concept. One is the socialist understanding which sees all national struggles and national developments as a salvation movement from the pressure of imperialism, which he refers to the *Kadro* movement. He criticizes such an understanding for its inability to distinguish between a, for instance, Chinese and a Turk. The second nationalism for Safa is what he calls “*öz milliyetçilik*” (the core nationalism). For this vision, nationalism is a general movement of race, language and history. They accept the essentiality of the nation rather than that of the individuals (Safa, 1938, p. 99).

He defines Europe, the West, both as a continent and an understanding, concentrated around the Mediterranean, and formed of three components: the social discipline of Rome, the intellectual discipline of Greece and the moral discipline of Christianity (Safa, 1938, p. 116). These are not divided into two continents, but two different life styles and metaphysics (Safa, 1936). He defines the East with the Asian culture, by differentiating the Islamic East from the Brahman-Buddhist East whose characteristic was fatalism (Safa, 1938, p. 141). Nevertheless, the Islamic thought saw a division between the rationalism of İbn Sina and the mysticism of Gazali. While the former caused the improvement of the West and prepared for Renaissance, the latter accelerated the fatalist character of the Islamic world.

Safa (1938) explains that influence by the term *çaprazlama tekamül* (cross-evolution): The Christian West has a mystic book but its thought is similar to the Muslim believes. By contrast, the Islamic East has a rationalist book, but its thought is similar to the Christian believes (p. 179). His explanation for this change is the geographical location of Rome, as the center of Christianity. Two other important differences that place the West at a higher level than the East are *sitleşmek* and *riyazileşmek*; that can be read as urbanization and positivization. In this sense, Europeanization can be seen as a transition from mysticism to positivism and from steppe society to urban society.

Still, Safa (1936) is critical of excess scientific thought as he is critical of mysticism: the ideal perception has to evolve from a simple mystic power to newer syntheses (p. 196). Kemalism is born out of two necessities, not dogmas: the National Struggle and the construction of Turkish land and mind. He explains the Turkish Revolution borrowing from the term “*élan vital*” of Bergson and rejects the vision of *Kadro* about the effort to be rescued from being a semi-colony (Safa, 1938, pp. 203-206). The kind of vision of crisis that Safa opposes is summarized by Aydemir (1990) by referring to the classical economic rules: overproduction of commodity, decline in the real incomes and finally the instability of the market (p. 63).

Safa (2003) later explains the idea of anti-communism and anti-liberalism. A state that supports freedom has principally to free capital and labor. It should avoid regulating them. Two enemies appear over against the free economy: Marxist economy and national economy (p. 43). His explanation of the six arrows of the Republican People’s Party is as follows: Turkish nationalism is democratic, not fascist. Turkish Reform is statist but not socialist, not anti-democratic nor anti-liberal, the populism is far away from socialism, reformism means a total evolution, republicanism states the legal and political aspect of its populist attribute. The final arrow, secularism, is anticlerical but not antireligious (Safa, 1938, p. 216).

Indeed, it is possible to speculate that a big portion of the last part of the book, that is the part about Kemalism, should not be considered as the very ideas of Safa but an effort to compromise with RPP. By comparing the first and second editions, the latter in 1959, Ayvazoğlu (2000) shows the disparities caused by this effort of compromise (pp. 122-123). In the first edition, the part is called “*Kemalizm, Hayat ve İdeal*” (Kemalism, Life and Ideal). It is in this section of the book that Safa mentions about the revolutions originating from book and originating from life. We might count on his sincerity about this difference since we know that this dichotomy already exists in the conservatist vision.

Ayvazoğlu (2000) explains that in the second edition the part mentioned is changed as “*İnkılap, Hayat ve İdeal*” (Reform, Life and Ideal) and six paragraphs, including the one containing the sentence in question, are erased. Furthermore, Safa extracted one paragraph from “*Kemalist Türk Milliyetçiliği*” (Kemalist Turkish Nationalism), five paragraphs from the conclusion part. The parts called “*Başlarken*”

(Prologue,) “*Halk Partisi ve Altı Prensibi*” (The Republican Party and Its Six Principles) are fully omitted. Moreover, the title “*Kemalist Türk Milliyetçiliği*” was replaced by “*Türk Milliyetçiliği*” (Turkish Nationalism) (quoted in Ayvazoğlu, 2000, p. 123).

### **Büyük Avrupa Anketi (The Great Survey of Europe)**

As mentioned previously, the dichotomy of East-West constitutes the main problematic of the intellectual works and novels of Peyami Safa (Lee, 1997, p. 49). In his later years, Safa insists on his understanding of East and West based on a cultural vision. He explains the failure of the earlier movements as a misunderstanding of the West. He writes in 1953 still referring to *Kadro* that since Turkey does not have direct relations with the atmosphere of the century’s great intellectual fever, it only observes the Western world as a tourist (Tekin, 2003, pp. 45-46). It must be noted that Safa writes this book after having done his travel to Europe and written the book named *Büyük Avrupa Anketi* (The Great Survey of Europe).

The book starts by the general observations of the author about Europe. The main question is again to understand Europe. In all the pages, the readers feel that the primary aim of the author is to place Turkey among the European countries. As soon as he takes an Italian ship, he meets a woman to whom he asks where Europe begins. The answer he gets, without the knowledge of the woman that he is Turkish, is that Europe starts from Ankara (Safa, 1930, p. 6).

We learn from Yılmaz that Ülken summarizes the changes that are seen in *Türk Düşüncesi* (The Turkish Thought) and *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* in Safa. Safa at first is not against idealism; instead, gives important credit to it. Second, while criticizing Bergson before, he then begins to be in favor of mysticism and religion. Third, while he was criticizing the concept of East before, he then declares peace with it. Before, the Far East was being humiliated but in *Türk Düşüncesi*, he celebrates it. Fourth, while in *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* he argues that the reforms did not owe something to the past, in *Türk Düşüncesi* he says that reform is an evolution and that it is constructed on the accomplishments in the past (Yılmaz, 2003, p. 218).

He stresses the importance to understand the mentality of the West without a simple imitation. West is thought to be an ended entity while it is in fact in a state of

being. This state of being (*oluş*) makes the understanding of the West difficult and misleading. He proposes a synthesis of East and West, to be Westernized without being mechanized, to get rid of the unnecessary mystical constituents; and to preserve the sensibility, the moral values, the commitment to divine principles and the national personality that are proper to the East (Safa, 1976a, p. 255). He defines the essence of the Turkish nation by the self (*benlik*) (Safa, 1976a, p. 262).

Reform for Safa (1976) does not mean hostility against tradition, it cannot be imitated, it can be the work of one person only. Nevertheless, we know that he is glorifying Atatürk saying that he cut off the dualism with the reforms while he is alive. In this book, instead, he argues that the reforms have already started long before him. Also, secularism is not the imperative of the Western civilization as in the example of England. Finally, in Turkey, the beginning date of the national sovereignty is 1908, not 1923, defining the term as the right to vote. In brief, he believes that reform is an evolution (Safa, 1976b, pp. 84-88).

### **The Dichotomy of East -West and the Understanding of Reform in the Novels**

The dichotomy of the East and West is so strongly felt in the novels of Peyami Safa that one can even think of them to be written only for showing the psychological state of the Turkish people who are torn by this dichotomy. The purgatory position between the two worlds causes a state of hesitation and disturbance. The issue of East-West appears in the novels of Peyami Safa in the form of ideology and morality (Lee, 1997, p. 189). Another aspect of his novels is that he writes his own life story. As an intellectual who had the experience of the West at the beginning of the twentieth century and who survived only by writing; he sees the state of being on the margins and the hesitation in him and always put an incarnation of himself in his novels (Safa, 1998, p. 80).

On one hand, there is a desire feeling near to the East. That is seen by the longing for the Eastern place, people and music. The prescription to preserve the national values also exists in the books. Another aspect of the books is to show the look of the Westerners to the East, both the ones who exalt and the ones who lower it through certain personalities. On the other hand, Safa exhibits the Westernized social

life through the central place, which is Beyoğlu, parties, dressing and music, the disapproved taste of foreign vocabulary, the misinterpretation of Westernization and the materialism. Torn between the excessive desires, the end of each novel finds a solution in favor of national benefit. At the end of each novel, the writer gives a speech about the advocacy of the national values against the inner depressions (Gürbilek, 2004, p. 37).

In his novels, there are generally three men, representing one the East, another, the West, and the last one, balancing the two. There exists also a woman who is the label of the hesitation between the two ways of life (Moran, 1983, p. 185). The balancing person is indeed representing the “wise writer” who has a tendency towards the East (Moran, 1983, p. 197). The Eastern man is honest intellectual who has fiscal problems. In contrast, the Western man is debauched. He is strong, skilled but at the same time self-centered, sordid and fake (Moran, 1983, p. 187). The reason for this is that these people are materialist and superficial. In Safa’s *Fatih-Harbiye*, we see this four-people classification clearly. Neriman, the daughter of Faiz Bey, is faltering between Macit the West and Şinasi the East. Ferit, with all his wisdom and balance, is symbolizing the writer. The same faltering is realised specially as well, through *Harbiye*, which is the illness of Westernization and *Fatih*, the origins of the Eastern man.

Beyoğlu appears as the place that gives the weak woman the desire to live in this material world. Neriman meets Macit at Lebon in Beyoğlu, if she has time walks around for hours in that district, does some window shopping (Safa, 1999b, p. 29). Indeed, Neriman has been educated as a “good” Eastern woman. Nevertheless, seeing Westernization only as the new dresses and parties, Neriman falsely humiliates *Fatih*, the lifestyle of Şinasi and his father (Safa, 1999b, p. 56). The cousins and uncle of Neriman affect her in a bad manner. We see the same upset in *Matmazel Noraliya’nın Koltuğu* about the father of Ferid while he is listening his sister Nilüfer. She talks about the last words of their sister who is criticizing their father on his debauchery (Safa, 2002, p. 178).

Safa’s hostility against the French-educated people and French words, that we can come across in an article appeared in 1959 in *Tercüman* in which Safa (1976a) explains that since Galatasaray High School and the French colleges are established in Turkey the example of culture and civilisation is France (p. 288). This is also seen in

*Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu*. Here, he complains about the unnecessary use of French instead of Turkish and again condemns the Tanzimat movement which brought these foreign schools to Turkey (Safa, 1999a, pp. 70-71).

For Peyami Safa, the place of women was qualified by their “natural roles.” Their demand for equality with men was seen as unnatural and evil (Durna, 2009, p. 33). They are weak and superficial beings who can be easily seduced by superficial things. That he places the snob women at the center of his novels can be read as the thinking of the national culture over the female body (Gürbilek, 2004, p. 65). In *Fatih-Harbiye*, Ferit complains about their incapacity to understand the civilization. What attracts women is the physical aspect of the West (Safa, 1999b, p. 94).

For him, the value of woman is in her fertility. Since Tanzimat, intellectuals tried to try the general traditional attitude toward women. Instead, Safa is conservatist in this matter (Moran, 1983, p. 193). This view is explained by the writer in *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı* (The Novel of Hesitation) (through a speech of the writer to Vildan, the “unwise”, “floating” women of this novel: Woman is immortal not because of her intellect, but of her uterus (Safa, 1998, p. 180).

The *fin de siècle* psychology is strongly felt in Safa. For him, the whole world hesitates since everything is in change (Berktaş, 2002, p. 282). In *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı*, the most interesting part is where he explains that the whole epoch is collapsing and in even in whole Europe, people are in hesitation. It is necessary to pass into decision from this state of hesitation. All values including human relations and the concept of family have to be transformed to be able to persist (Safa, 1998, pp. 177-179).

His ideas about this synthesis, his prescription to hesitation, are collected in the book called *Doğu Batı Sentezi* (East-West Synthesis) in which he says that we all belong to both East and West, this synthesis is our destiny and a human can reach to its totality only through his synthesis (Safa, 1976b p. 12). He mainly tells about the differentiation of the trust and mistrust to science. One is shown in the positivism and the other is intuitionism, the “crash of science,” embodied in Bergson (Safa, 1976b, pp. 14-19). This intuitionism leads to a mystic understanding of the world that is different from the scholasticism of the Middle Ages: The man of the twentieth century is in the depression because of deifying himself (Safa, 1976b, p. 58). The ideal Westernized Turkish has to see himself as a part of a higher order of values, other from himself; and

his existence as a means to the realization of a high goal; in short, a total man (Safa, 1976b, p. 62). Another important aspect of Safa (1976b) is his preference for a temperate change. The real intellectual needs to fight against extremes (pp. 109-111).

### **Safa and Periodical Publication**

With the foundation of the Democrat Party (DP), the RPP's rigid attitude over the press had become more moderate. By the change of law in 1946, the authorization to close newspapers was taken from administrative authorities and given to judicial ones. Also, requirements of certificate and payment for issuing a newspaper were abolished. But, the first activity of the DP was to pass laws to limit the press over its ten year's power. Between 1955 and 1960, 867 journalists were imprisoned as a result of 2300 press court cases. Journals supporting the DP like *Zafer*, *Son Havadis*, *Son Posta* benefited from a high level of advertisement and generous supervision of paper, machine and supplies (Koloğlu, 2006, pp. 123-124).

*Türk Düşüncesi* (The Turkish Thought) appeared during that atmosphere as a monthly journal that began to be published by Peyami Safa on December 1, 1953. In the first issue, Safa (1953a) explained his program, which was to save the cultural life of Turkey in its position of turmoil, which he described as "anarchy of thought and values." An evolution that tried to find the correct direction could not find its way because of that anarchy which was thrown to radical left and right through political objections operating over the youth.

In this journal, he is also criticizing the problem of Westernization by some advocates of revolution incapable of differentiating two types of West, one is "done" and the other is "being done." He deepens this idea by the emphasis on the streams of the nineteenth century: positivism and the ideas of Kant and Bergson, which was a reaction to reason. According to Safa (1953b), the dynamism of the West is embedded in this second stream, but Turkish people are kept in the first are in the very name of modernization. As a prescription, he again turns to the idea of synthesis.

It is important to underline that Safa prefers two different languages while addressing his readers. In the journals, he prefers an elevated language, an elaborated choice of topics like humanism, existentialism, Bergson and Kant while in the newspapers he writes in a simple language with mostly examples from simple daily

anecdotes, but still accentuating the same problem of modernization. Safa's choice for two levels of language appears openly in introductory column in *Milliyet*, 1 October 1954. The journal passes into a transformation at that year and Safa is one of the most prominent writers of this new *Milliyet*, who has been presented for months before the transformation. Safa (1954a) underlines that he is to address two kinds of people, the uneducated talking with a peripheral dialect and the mainly rural people talking in a high language with the dialect of İstanbul. From then on, he would be talking in the journal and in the newspaper with the two styles of writing but on similar issues.

The main topics of discussion that Safa (1954i) writes in the journal are the inaccurate understanding of the Turkish reform especially because of the leftists, which he identifies with the word "*devrimbaz*," the false conservatism of the Anatolian people caused by ignorance, the task of an intellectual, the social division of labor, the knowledge of the Turkish language, a national culture, religion, morality and Westernization. For the Anatolian ignorance, he tells small anecdotes and demands a higher level of culture, but no education. Still with small anecdotes, he writes that literacy is not eligible and necessary to the whole population. The social division of labor necessitates different qualities for different people. One should not confuse practical and theoretical professions. He even says that ignorance, like knowledge, is one kind of division of labor.

For instance, he says that after the abolition of the first and second classes in the ships, some pseudo-revolutionists think that a member of the upper class can sit next to another one of a lower class. Yet, people tend to sit on their previous seats because, he says, social classes all have their internal structures and their group sympathies since division of labor gives a sense of lifestyle parallel to their profession (Safa, 1954c). This problem of two languages appears continuously in Safa's columns. He argues that daily newspapers have to be a medium for information transfer and media to spread culture are different than newspapers (Safa, 1954c).

The language, he admits, is deformed and lost its originality with the introduction of Arabic and Persian, but he advocates of a pure Turkish language, the proto-Turkish stream put the language into a more miserable condition. They filled it by non-used ancient Turkish words which were completely stranger to the existing Turkish (Safa, 1954d). Fabricated words entered in the dictionary of Turkish Language

Association and most of these words are obviously inconvenient to the grammar and etymology (Safa, 1959b). Also, in the last years, while it is tried to eliminate Arabic and Persian words, the language is then filled with the French ones (Safa, 1959f).

Safa (1959j) also defends the knowledge of the Ottoman Turkish and he is criticized for this preference by the conclusion that he is proponent of the abrogation of Latin script. As an answer, Safa (1959j) writes that he is not against the Latin script, but both for cultural and practical reason (the knowledge of the national culture and the easiness to write in the Arabic script) he defends the education of the Ottoman Turkish in high schools. To prove that, he gives the example of Turcology Institute that is being formed in Sorbonne, where Arabic script will be lectured (Safa, 1959k). Accordingly, he presents the second volume of the book of Ottoman Turkish written Dr. Muharrem Ergin (Safa, 1959l).

The faith of youth, another characteristic of Safa's writing, is linked to his desire to maintain the national culture despite the activities of the leftists and the essentialists. He says that the cultural sources of the periods of the New Edict, the Constitution and the Republic were all French. At the last years, the Anglo-Saxon impact begun to appear. Safa stresses his worries about creating a pure national culture. The synthesis that he calls all the time needs to be creating without losing the pure essence, the "national soul" (Safa, 1954f). He is accusing unproductive professors for this lack of national sense, which may cause harsh attacks against him by university professors (Safa, 1954h).

That national soul is also directly linked to a set of moral values in the thinking of Safa. Even psychological health is linked to the health of the society. Unfortunately, he says, doctors of mental health are not equipped with the tools of economy, politics or morality (Safa, 1959a). It is necessary to understand the spiritualist vision of resignation and spiritual joy instead of benefit and pleasure (Safa, 1959c). That is also needed to be separated from superstitious believes of the fanatics. But, some individual cases of this divergence should also not be presented as a general attitude of the conservatists (Safa, 1959e). Methodical analyses have to be done on moral values to give a precise picture of the Turkish people (Safa, 1959f).

This discussion of moral values also turns into a high political debate in the last years of the DP. In 1959, Safa is writing more on the attacks against conservatists and

religionists than on critics against communists. Although still dealing with the left, he is also discussing the regime of Democrat Party and the ideology of the RPP. In 29 March 1959, still with a great campaign of publicity, he begins to write in *Tercüman* by affirming that the third phase of the Republic, that is the period of Bayar and Menderes, which came after the period of Atatürk with a single party, a lack of free press and free elections and the period of İnönü with an oscillation between a totalitarian state and democracy, tries to adopt democracy (Safa, 1959d). He also deals with the idea of religious reactionism, which appears in the language of the leftists all the time according to Safa (1959i). He says that freedom came to Turkey only after 1950, and the 23 years of single party regime cannot be considered as real democracy (Safa, 1959m).

### **Mysticism of Safa**

While Safa is attributing positivist values to the Western world, he now begins to construct the idea of new West over mystic reflections that are reactionary to the domination of reason (Özkandaş, 2011, p. 78). “*Mistisizm*” (Mysticism) is the last book of Peyami Safa. He died before seeing his book published (Göze, 1987, p. 65). The book starts with the explanation of the word itself. The general definition is the belief in the possibility of the combination between human soul and the essence of being (Safa, 2003, p. 169). The aim is the union with the One (*Bir*). He states that it was born in Far East. The state of ecstasy is felt from inside and it is impossible to be perceived by mind (Safa, 2003, p. 173).

The mysticism of Safa is an effort to a totalizing the ecstatic experience by trying to show several examples from different cultures, in a tradition embracing people like Platon of Freud rather than Islamic mysticism (Berktay, 2002, p. 283). Nevertheless, especially since the 1950s, he emphasizes the need to believe in God and that the crisis that occurred in the interwar period is resulting from the lack of creed (Safa, 1976a, p. 40). That at the end of his life, his turn to the mysticism from the critic of it in 1938 in *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* by putting positivism in front of it, is interesting. His writings in the 30s glorify the positivist ideas; however, we see that the Safa of the 50s forget about the *riyazileşme* principle and he finds the answer of the problem of his era (and most probably his own problems) in the mysticism.

The book *Matmazel Noraliya'nın Koltuğu* is written in order to show such as mystic experience. The hero Ferid is under the influence of his father, who is mentioned before in order to show the “desperate” situation of a person who encounters with the West and loses himself. Like his father, Ferid has a hedonist and nihilist life. While studying medicine, he changes his mind and starts to study philosophy. He is suffering from depression. This time, Safa clearly shows the way out of this depression: a mystical philosophy (Safa, 2002, p. 270). While Ferid, who has to follow the way of Noraliya with whom he shares the same experiment of unease, and the philosophy teacher Aziz, the incarnation of the writer in this novel, are discussing after the experience of Ferid of the armchair of Noraliya; Aziz explains Ferid the situation of any person, through Noraliya, who feels him (her) self trapped between the two worlds (Safa, 2002, pp. 279-281).

Again for mysticism, the cause of the backwardness of Turkish revolution is cited as: precipitance, mimicking, ignorance of moral values, lack of synthesis of Western mathematics and Eastern mysticism, and finally lack of social pressure and rivalry due to low level of population density (Safa, 1957). The debate of secularism between İnönü and Menderes is an application route for Safa on his morality thesis. He defends religious schools, accuses seculars of being pseudo-revolutionists, and defends Menderes on his critic on İnönü about the introduction of religion into politics (Safa, 1960a). He finally writes a critical column on the closing of the small mosque in İstanbul University by arguing that chapels existed in European universities (Safa, 1960b).

### **Conclusion**

Since the Young Turk movement, the positivist ideals, fed by the idea of progress, formed the backbone of the Turkish modernization, which is transferred to the Republic with its own reaction, which is the Bergsonian philosophy. As a modern idea that emerged from a reaction to the progressive world view of the Enlightenment, conservatism has constituted an alternative path to Kemalist modernization of the official party of the early republican era of Turkey. After the theses of *Kadro* movement that esteemed historical materialist theses, the theoretical framework of the Turkish conservatism has been pictured by Tunç, Safa, Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Ülken. Not

much democratic than Kadro; they were favoring an anti-liberal (even the liberalism of Ađaođlu was problematical), anti-communist, traditionalist, nationalist way of thinking. They were emphasizing the concepts of custom, person and consciousness.

The thesis of this article was that Peyami Safa is an important example of the conservative intellectual milieu of the Early Republican Era despite his hesitations and inconsistencies. The main characteristic that united him with the conservative environment was his critique of Kemalism while locating himself among the Kemalists, his refusal of human mind for a human soul and human mind, nationalism that gives emphasis to culture and the characteristics of the Turkish nation, a preference of evolution, the sense of end of civilization, the feeling of hesitation. All these ideas were rooted from the Bergsonian ideas. The last thesis of the paper was that Safa has been constantly in a state of change.

Indeed, he oscillates between a revised idea of late-development and orientalism. He believes that Turkey needed to follow the example of the West, which makes him orientalist and supporter of late-development view; yet, he also believes in the idea of the end of the century of Europe; which directs him to a selective imitation of the continent. However, it is possible to argue that he is, indeed, not decisive on this selectiveness.

Ultimately, within the conservatist movement, Peyami Safa is standing on a central place. He is a typical representative of this conservatist modernism that appears as a reaction to the official Kemalist modernism, the adoption of cultural pessimism that encircles the West, the Bergsonian intuitionism and spiritualism, the mistrust to human mind, the anti-liberal, anti-communist and anti-democratic attitude, which also is adopted by the right streams of later generations.

## **References**

### **Books of Peyami Safa**

- Safa, P. (1930). *Büyük Avrupa anketi*. İstanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi.  
Safa, P. (1938). *Türk inkılabına bakışlar*. İstanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi.  
Safa, P. (1976a). *20. asır, Avrupa ve biz*. İstanbul: Ötüken.  
Safa, P. (1976b). *Dođu-batı sentezi*. İstanbul: Yađmur Yayınları.  
Safa, P. (1990). *Sosyalizm, marksizm, komünizm*. İstanbul: Ötüken.

- Safa, P. (1998). *Bir tereddüdün romanı*. İstanbul: Ötüken.
- Safa, P. (1999a). *Dokuzuncu hariciye koğuşu*. İstanbul: Ötüken.
- Safa, P. (1999b). *Fatih- Harbiye*. İstanbul: Ötüken.
- Safa, P. (2002). *Matmazel Noraliya'nın koltuğu*. İstanbul: Ötüken.
- Safa, P. (2003). *Nasyonalizm, sosyalizm, mistisizm*. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları.

### **Newspaper Articles of Peyami Safa**

- Safa, P. (1936, 29 January). Şark-Garp münakaşasına bir bakış. *Kültür Haftası*, pp.51-53.
- Safa, P. (1953a, 1 December). Program. *Türk Düşüncesi*.
- Safa, P. (1953b, 1 December). Türk düşüncesi ve Batı medeniyeti. *Türk Düşüncesi*, pp. 4-9.
- Safa, P. (1957, 1 January). Gericiliğimizin sebepleri. *Türk Düşüncesi*, pp. 14-18.
- Safa, P. (1954a, 1 October). Helva ve halva. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954b, 3 October). Devrim bülbülleri. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954c, 6 October). Vapurlarda birinci ve ikinci mevki farkı. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954d, 9 October). Türkçeye karşı duyulan merhamet. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954e, 10 October). Bizdeki komünistlerin en tehlikelileri. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954f, 17 October). Biraz daha Türk olalım. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954g, 18 October). Kızıl propagandaya karşı propaganda lazım. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954h, 2 November). Kültür hayatımızda adam kıtlığı. *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1954i, 7 November). Okuyup yazma lazım mı? *Milliyet*.
- Safa, P. (1959a, 2 April). Ruh sağlığı. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959b, 3 April). Dil münakaşaları. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959c, 4 April). Manevi değerler meselesi. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959d, 5 April). Geçirdiğimiz rejim buhranı. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959e, 14 April). Münferit vak'alar mı kitle hareketi mi? *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959f, 29 April). 12 yaşındaki kız çocuğu ve kasap çırağı. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959g, 4 May). Yabancı kelimeler ve devlet. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959h, 17 May). Milli varlığımızın nöbetçisi gençlik. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959i, 19 May). İlmî manasıyla irtica ve irtica dedikodusu. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959j, 9 July). Arap ve Latin harfleri. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959k, 4 August). Sorbonne Üniversitesi'nde muhtariyet ve Arap harfleri. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1959l, 12 August). Osmanlıca üzerine değerli bir eser. *Tercüman*.

- Safa, P. (1959m, 30 October). Cumhuriyetimizin iki türlü izahı. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1960a, 14 January). İnönü'nün bir iddiası üzerine. *Tercüman*.
- Safa, P. (1960b, 24 February). Nihayet kapattılar! *Tercüman*.

### **Secondary Sources**

- Ağaoğlu, A. (1972). *Üç medeniyet*. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi.
- Aydemir, Ş. S. (1990). *İnkılap ve kadro*. İstanbul: Remzi Yayınevi.
- Ayvazoğlu, B. (2000). Doğu-Batı açmazında Peyami Safa. *Doğu Batı* 3 (11), 107-131.
- Berktaş, F. (2002). Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce 3: Modernleşme ve vaticılık. In T. Bora & Murat Gültekingil (Eds.), *Doğu ile Batı'nın Birleştiği Yer: Kadın İmgesinin Kurgulanışı* (s. 275-285) içinde. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları,
- Bora, T. (1997). Muhafazakarlığın değişimi ve Türk muhafazakarlığında bazı yol izleri. *Toplum ve Bilim* 74, 6-30.
- Çiğdem, A. (1997). Muhafazakarlık üzerine. *Toplum ve Bilim* 74, 32-51.
- Demir, F. (2007). *Kültür Haftası ve Ağaç* dergileri üzerine bir inceleme. MA Thesis, Gazi University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara, Turkey.
- Durna, T. (2009). *Kemalist modernleşme ve seçkincilik, Peyami Safa ve Falih Rıfkı Atay'da halkın inşası*. Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları.
- Göze, E. (1987). *Peyami Safa*. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.
- Gürbilek, N. (2004). *Kör ayna, kayıp Şark: Edebiyat ve endişe*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.
- Gürkan, N. (1998). *Türkiye'de eemokrasiye geçişte Basın (1945-1950)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- İrem, N. (1997). Kemalist modernizm ve Türk gelenekçi-muhafazakarlığın kökenleri. *Toplum ve Bilim* 74, 52-99.
- İrem, N. (1999). Muhafazakar modernlik, diğer Batı ve Türkiye'de Bergsonculuk. *Toplum ve Bilim* 82, 141-179.
- İrem, N. (2003). *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce, 5: Muhafazakarlık*. In T. Bora & M. Gültekingil (Eds.), *Bir değişim siyaseti olarak Türkiye'de cumhuriyetçi muhafazakarlık: Temel kavramlar üzerine değerlendirmeler* (pp. 105-117). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

- Koç, İ. C. (2006). *Tek parti döneminde basın iktidar ilişkileri (1929-1938)*. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi.
- Koloğlu, O. (2006). *Osmanlı'dan 21. yüzyıla basın tarihi*. İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları.
- Lee, N. A (1997). *Peyami Safa'nun eserlerinde Doğu-Batı meselesi*. İstanbul: Ötüken.
- Moran, B. (1983). *Türk romanına eleştirel bir bakış: Ahmet Mithat'tan A. H. Tanpınar'a*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Nacci, M. (1996). The intellectual revolt against liberal democracy, 1870-1945. In Z. Sternhell (Eds.), *Jerusalem, the present as nightmare: Cultural pessimism among European intellectuals in the period between the two world wars* (pp. 105-128). Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Öğün, S. S. (1997). Türk muhafazakarlığının kültür kökenleri ve Peyami Safa'nın muhafazakar yanılığı. *Toplum ve Bilim* 74, 102-152.
- Özkandaş, Y. (2011). *Peyami Safa'nın düşünceleri ekseninde Türk modernleşmesinin İncelenmesi*. MA Thesis, Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara, Turkey.
- Tekin, M. (2003). *Peyami Safa ile söyleşiler*. Çizgi Kitabevi.
- Yıldırım, S. (2003). Muhafazakarlık, Türk muhafazakarlığı ve Peyami Safa üzerine. *Journal of Historical Studies* 1, 9-18.
- Yılmaz, M. (2003). *Türk Düşüncesi* dergisi. In T. Bora & M. Gültekingil (Eds.), *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce, 5: Muhafazakarlık* (pp. 216-233). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları,