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EDITORIAL

Conservatism and Heritage

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ARTICLES

RELIGION AS CONSERVATISM AND ISLAM

Mustafa Aydın

Religion is a system that defines the role of man in the world. But religions also exist within the objective world alongside with men. This mutual co-existence influences the understanding of religion depending on conjectural conditions. The contemporary cultural conditions, for instance, have brought about the spreading of a *sui generis* understanding of religion. Having composed of a reactionist attitude, conservatism correspondingly became a source of conservative versions of religion. While conservatism benefits from the sacred dimension of religion for legitimacy, religion tries to maintain its existence through a kind of reactionism, which cannot be reconciled with the true nature of religion. In Islam, as well as in many religions, however, a conservatist attitude (manner) has arisen. This article, firstly aims to provide a descriptive analysis of conservatism, and then tries to explain the relationship between religion and conservatism in the context of Islamic and Turkish cases.

WHAT DO THE CONSERVATISTS TRY TO CONSERVE?

Nuray Mert

This article examines the relationship between conservatism and religion and tries to deconstruct the supposed identification of religion with conservatism. The conservatists are commonly conceived to be against social change. In fact they rather see social change as a consequence of historical evolution. This is a common point in all different accounts of conservative thought. In this respect, the inclination of Turkish conservatives shows a strong parallelism with the Western one. For instance, critiques of the French Revolution have constructed an obvious source for critiques of the Turkish Revolution. This point makes the relationship between conservatism and religion more clear. In other

words, the religious critiques of the secular aspect of the Turkish revolution have created a context in which there is an easy way to show religion as identical with conservatism but it is well known that both exhibit distinct characteristics from each other. Moreover, different answers to the radical interruption mark the existence of different positions. The modality of existence of religion in today's world indicates how they follow different paths.

CONSERVATISM, CHANGE AND ISLAM

Şevket Kotan

Conservatism reflects an attitude, which aims to preserve whatever has been left by modernism. In that sense, conservatism possesses distinctive characteristics of modernism, and emerged as a modern phenomenon in spite of encompassing various pre-modern features. Contrary to the prevailing assumptions on conservatism that there is "a set of values" that conservatism aims to preserve under any condition and time, conservatism is the position that strives to preserve the present values. As such their position suggests that those present values may be subjected to possible changes in the course of time to protect the values that are reproduced by conservatism. This is neither o coincidence nor a consequence of a theoretical motivation. It is rather because; conservatism is a mood and a style of thought. Therefore, and not incidentally, conservatives are either "well-intentioned people" who are frightened by the degree of changes or pragmatics that are benefiting from status quo. In some degree, these features of conservative thought provide a basis for the assumption that finds proximities between religion and conservatism. However, a careful consideration of this issue reveals that these points of convergences are the main source of the tension between religion and conservatism. In general, and contrary to conservatism, it is true that religions include some values/aspects, which are not and cannot be subjected to change in any time. Nevertheless, apart from these aspects and values, Islam welcomes all changes/transformations concerning historical alterations, unlike conservatism which aims to produce values which are held to be precious, and hence worth preserving a specific and given historical era. Moreover, Islam and conservatism differ from each other in their "essence" and their basic dynamics. So to say, while the basic dynamic of conservatism is "pragma", it is the concept of "goodness" that constitutes the basic dynamic of Islam. In contrast to pragma that is totally a worldly issue, prosperity, although it happens in the present world, is related to the otherworld and does not bring any benefit in the present world. This characteristic can be defined as the fundamental point, from which the differences between Islam and conservatism emanates.

TURKISH CONSERVATISM IN THE PROCESS OF KEMALIST MODERNIZATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Sıtkı Karadeniz

This article aims to illustrate two dimensions of conservatism and their reflections on Turkish Conservatism. It argues that conservatism, as a style of thought, cannot be identified by any particular ideological standpoint; but rather as a position that resists to any kind of transformation and change. As a rationalized traditionalism, conservatizm assumes that without accounting for the traditions or institutions that bridges the past and future any kind of transformation projects are destined to failure. In this article, Peyami Safa and Turkish conservatism are studied as examples of the second type of conservatism. The first type of conservatism is a very common way of thinking which can always be observed anywhere, within any type of ideology; particularly, it is illustrated here by leftist Kemalism because of its ideological concerns and regime favoritism. The priority of such conservatism is to maintain all institutions and practices of Kemalist Revolution alive, even if they do not work seamlessly, and do not fulfill any need, or do not function as once they did. Secondly, conservatism makes itself permanent through its practical pragmatism. This pattern of "permanence through pragmatism" is mainly related to its parallel formation with modernity because modernity requires constant transformation and change. Just on the contrary, conservatism still attempts to conserve the *status quo ante*.

AHMET HAMDİ TANPINAR: THE AESTHETICS OF TURKISH CONSERVATISM

Köksal Alver

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, who is accepted as one of the cornerstones of Turkish literature, is first of all a great novelist and poet. Being a thinker and a man of letters, complement and feed each other in his case. His works, with the exception of some of his essays, display traces of his intellectual world. There are different and plausible reasons that lead to comprehend Tanpınar in the history of thought. Although he attached more importance to being a litterateur and a poet, he never ignored his intellectual identity. A careful consideration and analysis of all of his works would show that A. Hamdi Tanpınar always stands in a "unambiguous position", and takes a certain side, producing his works as well as his line with his intellectual position. This aspect constitutes a plausible reason as to why I chose to identify his position within the context of conservatism, which is one of the phenomenon of history of thought. Moreover, Tanpınar contributed to Turkish thought through his academic career during

his studies at a university as an academician. Overall, both his studies and works of art secure an important position for him within Turkish Conservatism.

AHMET HAMDİ TANPINAR: A UNIQUE FIGURE IN TURKEY'S QUEST FOR WESTERNIZATION

Olgun Gündüz

This article is concerned with the reflections of Westernization on the Turkish novel, in general, and on the novels of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar with specific references to *his Huzur, Mahur Beste* and *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü*, in particular. Although the novels of the Tanzimat era constituted a new literary genre in its form, they still contained traditional elements in their thematic content and personas. Prominent Tanzimat novelists such as Ahmet Mithat Efendi and Namık Kemal did welcome Western technology while preserving the established cultural texture in their novels. The republican novel, on the other hand, seems to serve the purpose of building a nation–state. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar is one of the outstanding novelists of this epoch. A careful analysis of his novels, which problematize the major social and cultural transformations from Tanzimat to Republic, may serve to understand better the Westernization process in Turkey.

TRADITION, LEADERSHIP MYTHS AND FASCISM

Alev Erkilet-Başer

This article examines how leadership was formulated by traditional discourse. In this term, it displays some similarities between the traditional accounts of leadership and fascist or totalitarian's definition of leadership. In the same line, it analyzes the possible handicaps and problems of such a usage and similarities, in terms of Islamic literature. The discussion is made in the context of the question of "what tradition is" in regard to "the role given to leader" within the discourse of tradition and consequences of this account of leadership in a political system. At this point, firstly, problems of comparative method used by traditionalists, especially by Julius Evola, have been considered by referring to Maurice Duverger. Then, the differences between the tradition of northerner heroic myths in terms of "holy war" and "heroic death" and Islamic tradition in terms of jihad and "shehadah" have been pointed out. At the end, the article demonstrates that the definition of heroism of traditionalist discourse and Islamic comprehension of leadership are not compatible with each other, and it is argued that the former is compatible only with the fascist defini-

tion of leadership. Since both of the definitions use social myths for legitimizing themselves.

THE POSSIBILITY OF A "SPECIAL LANGUAGE" AND THE ATTEMPT TO ATTRIBUTE MEANING TO QURAN

Recep Alpyağıl

This article aims to criticize the extreme subjectivist's position in interpreting Quran through Wittgenstenian criticism of the possibility of a special language. It is assumed that in terms of their difficulties, some parallels are found between those who advocate the possibility of a special language and those who behave liberally in attributing meanings to the Quran without feeling any textual constrains that might limit their interpretations. The article argues that neither extreme subjectivism nor objectivism can be advocated. Then, it offers a position, which may shed a light on finding a method beyond subjectivism and objectivism in interpreting the Quran.

REVIEW-CRITICISM

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