


Abstract

This study aims at comparing the two most influential manifestos of the early Republican Period in Turkey, Sedat Hakkı Eldem's Towards A Local Architecture (*Yerli Mimariye Doğru*, 1940) and Orhan Veli Kanık's Foreword to the Strange Anthology (*Garip Antolojisi Önsözü*, 1941). The texts include several common features along with comparable differences exemplifying the cultural shift in Turkey in the late 1930s. The international economic crises in 1929 triggered a process of enclosed economies and nationalist governments around the world followed by a cultural shift from international avant-garde to an intrinsic populism. Especially the countries founded after the First World War, such as the Weimar Republic, the Soviet Union, and Turkey, experienced the process as a very sharp turn. The discrimination in Nazi Germany and the total control of arts in the Soviet Union were the extremes, which Turkey has not undergone, but the change of focus towards folk culture and popular taste accompanied by intolerant Statist restoration was conspicuous. Eldem and Veli's manifestos are based on the principal traits of the transformational role of arts, the search for a social self-identity, and the need for communication with the masses. Whereas their ideological attitude toward society's identity differs, they separately argue that art should be part of the social transformation and modernization. They assert that their respective fields should be suitable for the lifestyle, taste, and the country's conditions. In terms of style, they argue that a regionalist attitude in architecture and the use of daily language in poetry could facilitate the necessary communication with the masses. The manifestos of Eldem and Veli constitute essential and rare theoretical ventures, which have determined the framework of art in popular opinion for a few decades, while their parallelism exemplifies the outlines of the cultural shift in the 1930s.

Keywords: Architecture, nationalism, modernization, poetry, manifesto, Sedat Hakkı Eldem, Orhan Veli Kanık.

Tame Modernism: The Manifestos of Sedad Hakkı Eldem and Orhan Veli Kanık

 Efe Duyan

Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi, Mimarlık Bölümü, İstanbul, Turkey

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Genişletilmiş Öz

Erken Cumhuriyet döneminin en dikkat çekici manifestolarından Sedat Hakkı Eldem'in Yerli Bir Mimariye Doğru makalesiyle Orhan Veli Kanık'ın Garip Antolojisi Önsözü, koşutlukları kadar farklılıklarıyla da 1930'ların sonunda Türkiye'de gözlemlenen kültürel dönüşümün söylemsel odak noktalarını oluştururlar.

1929 uluslararası ekonomik krizi sonrasında dünya çapında içe kapalı ekonomilerin ve milliyetçi eğilimlerin güçlenmesi, kültürel ağırlık noktasının uluslararası ve yenilikçi sanat anlayışından içe dönük ve halka hitap etmeyi amaçlayan bir eksene kaymasına yol açmıştır. Özellikle Weimar Cumhuriyeti, Sovyetler Birliği ve Türkiye gibi Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra devrimci süreçler sonunda kurulan ülkeler bu süreci keskin bir şekilde yaşadılar. Türkiye'nin kültürel coğrafyası, Nazi Almanyası'nın ayrımcı veya Sovyetler Birliği'nin denetimci aşırı uçlarını deneyimlememiş de, devletçilikle restore edilmiş erken Cumhuriyet siyasetinin eşlik ettiği halkçı sanat anlayışı öne çıkmıştır.

Eldem ve Veli'nin manifestoları rejimin geçirdiği restorasyona koşut yeni bir sanat dilinin temellerini atmaya çalışırken odak noktalarına sanatın toplumsal rolünü, toplumsal kimlik arayışını ve biçimsel sadeliği atırlar.

Manifestolar, hızla modernize edilmiş kültür ortamında, sanatın toplumsal dönüşümün parçası olması gerektiğini öne sürerler. Sanatın toplumsal yönelimlerin simgesi ve yeniden üreticisi olması gerektiğini belirtmeler de farklı toplumsal kitleleri hedefleyerek görece farklı ideolojik konumlarını ortaya sererler: Eldem, kendine has özelliklerini vurguladığı millet kavramını gündeme alırken, Veli çıkarları yönetici sınıflarla örtüşmeyen işçi sınıfını odağına alır. Eldem, yabancıların kültürel etkilerini milletin kavrayışına dışsal kalmakla eleştirerek milliliğin bir türevi olarak yerellik kavramına vurgu yaparken; Veli, zamanın edebiyatını üst sınıflara hitap ettiği belirterek geniş kitlelerin beğenisini arar. Yine de, hem Eldem'in milliyetçi-yerelci doğrultusu hem de Veli'nin sınıfsal-halkçı bakışı yeni kültürün toplumsal gereksinimlere denk düşmesini savunarak koşut modernist yaklaşımlara ulaşırlar. İki metin de Erken Cumhuriyet'in Jacoben söylemini benimser ve bir restorasyon gereksinimini imleyerek özneyle kitleler arasındaki uçurumun kapanmasını umarlar. Toplumun geniş yığınlarını, Cumhuriyet'in dönüşüm sürecini onarmak için tetikleyici unsur olarak tanımlarlar. İçe dönük ekonomi politikaları ve müdahaleci devletçilik döneminde, benzerlikleri atıpsal ilişkilerin üstyapıyla ilişkilendirilmesi bağlamında sanatın siyasi rolünü vurgularken, farklılıkları dönemin kültürel dönüşüm yelpazesinin farklı uçlarını temsil eder.

Metinler; ideolojik bir refleks olarak dengeli bir kültürel dönüşümün somut yanıtını kimlik sorunsalında arar. Sedat Eldem'in kimlik anlayışı yekparedir; intizamı sağlamak için farklılıkları saf dışı bırakmayı ön görür. Orhan Veli, daha eleştirel bir yaklaşımı benimsemiştir; şiirin atıpsal düzenlemelere ve merkezi desteğe daha az gereksinimi vardır. Kültürel gündemlerinin tonunu kimliğin özünü bulma çabası belirlerken, sanatın iletişim yeteneği öne çıkarılır. Topluma ulaşamayan bir sanatın toplumun kimliğini araması gereksiz, hatta imkânsızdır. İletişimsellik yalnızca kitlelere sadakati simgelemez, aynı zamanda siyasi düzlemde sanatsal manevra imkanları sunar. Yine de kültürel kimliğin özü olarak sanatın iletişim yeteneği, Eldem'in ve Veli'nin metinlerinde farklı görüntüler ortaya çıkarır. Eldem açısından yalnızca yerel bir mimari kimlik, dönüşümün ideallerini aktaran bir çarka dönüşebilir. Veli içinse, şiiri gündelik hayata eklenmenin yegane yolu sıradan bir dil kullanmaktan geçer. Eldem yabancısı ve uluslararası eğilimlerle yüzleşirken, Veli tarihsel ve biçimci yaklaşımları eleştirir. Yerellik ve sıradanlık, toplumsal kimliğin özüne inme becerisine sahip sanatsal girişimlerin dengeli bir modernleşme sürecini destekleyebilmesinin ön koşullarıdır.

Metinlerin biçim konusundaki önermeleri, bölgeselcilik-sıradanlık ikiliğinin ideolojik matrisi aracılığıyla oluşturulur. Sedat Hakkı, binaların iç-dış birliğine ve Klasik Osmanlı mirasından ödünç aldığı ahenk fikrine odaklanır. Buna koşut olarak Orhan Veli, anlamın çıplak aktarımını ve sanat yapıtının bütünlüğünü yeni tarzın temel taşları olarak görür. Toplumsal dönüşümün temel ideallerinin başarıyla aktarılmasına izin veren, sadelik ve bütünlüğün bu alışımıdır. Sadelik yoluyla, süsleme gelenekleriyle denysellik devre dışı bırakılarak ileti kanalları temizlenir. Bütünlükse, toplumsal dönüşümün rolü vererek bu boşluğu doldurur.

Eldem ve Veli'nin metinlerinin içe dönük kültürel yaklaşımları uluslararası avangardın ve geleneksel sanatların eksikliklerini kapatmaya çalışır. Osmanlı mimarlık ve şiir mirası, yüzyıllar boyunca eski yönetici sınıfların hegemonyasını yeniden ürettikleri için toplumsal değişime eşlik etmeye uygun değildir. Öte yandan erken dönem yenilikçi girişimler; geniş toplumsal kesimler bir yana, aydınlar için bile dışsal kalmaya mahkumdur. Bu bağlamda, Eldem de Veli de Cumhuriyet devrimlerinin restorasyonu için melez bir söylem belirler: Topluma kök salarak ona sanat yoluyla önderlik etmek. Manifestoları, modernist açılımların radikal uçlarını törpüleyerek kültüre içselleştirilmesini ön görür. Ne ütöpik bir geleceğin yepyeni sanatına gözlerini diker, ne de geçmişin denemiş yollarına dönmeyi tavsiye ederler. Temel önermeleri, toplumsal değişime öncülük edecek kadar maceracı ve yerel kalıpları barındıracak kadar uzlaşmacı bir sanat diline ulaşmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimarlık, milliyetçilik, modernleşme, şiir, manifesto, Sedat Hakkı Eldem, Orhan Veli Kanık.



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Introduction

The two crucial texts of Sedat Hakki Eldem's *Towards A Local Architecture (Yerli Mimariye Doğru, 1940)* and Orhan Veli Kanık's *Foreword to the Strange Anthology*¹ (*Garip Antolojisi Önsözü*) have considerable shared features and differences representing the heterogeneous yet predominant cultural shift in Turkey in the late 1930s. The restoration process after the blistering social change of the post-world war period had long term consequences as its cultural scene set the mainstream standards for the rest of the century. An attempt to balance the turbulence of hightailing the traditional past has characterized the central cultural idea of that restoration period. Given the political load of the manifestos, Eldem's and Veli's ventures can be read as replies to the social conditions of the late 1930s as their artistic arguments rest upon their ideological perspectives.

The question is to which extent the main aspects of the texts –the role of the arts, search for social identity, and the question of communication with masses- provide parallelism and divergence, which, taken together, can signify a bouquet of the tendency emerging from the political and economic conditions. For a starter, both texts frame architecture and poetry as political acts loaded with social duties, although Eldem has precisely asked for a nationalistic approach while Veli has inclined toward pointing out the class differences inside the nation. To achieve their goals, they parallelly relied upon the society's own resources, as they mostly deal with the local culture to establish a social self-identity. A flexible regionalism for Eldem and an emphasis on daily life for Veli are the essential elements for art to reach the masses on the common basis of social identity. Their texts also include key stylistic propositions - an emphasis on simplicity and totality- of how arts can fulfill their social responsibilities.

The various layers of the manifestos showcase an introverted attitude in contrast to an internationalist cultural ground of

the rapid modernization in the 1920s as they express a threefold understanding despite their differences: Art's role in the social transformation, a synthesis of modern and local practices to shape a self-identity, and a communicative style. Both texts represent the endeavor to bring the runaway social transformation and a genuine social identity together.

The Cultural Atmosphere of the Decade

The international economic crisis in 1929 opened up a new era of closed economies and triggered nationalist rulerships throughout the world (*Faulkner, 2012, 292*). When its political and cultural waves also hit the Republic of Turkey, a country that has recently severed its ties to the Ottoman Empire in 1923, the Republic has been moving towards a national liberal economy of free-flowing capital accompanied by an international cultural modernization process of international standards (*Boratav, 2005, 39*). From the very beginning, the Republic has speeded up the modernization practices and opened the doors to modern Western culture. The efforts to create a material culture closely identified with the new state through the expansion of infrastructural projects designed to shape the daily lives of the citizenry were to be seen in arts, too (*Kezer, 2015, 13*). Modern arts and architecture have flourished in Turkey in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, just like the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union, which also went through massive reconstruction processes after the First World War (*Weitz, 2007, 91*). However, all was about to change in no small part to the after-effects of the economic collapse in 1929.

As responses to the 1929 crisis, the international tensions, and the militaristic tone have increased and the extreme nationalistic politics in many countries towards the Second World War fortified the introvert inclinations in politics (*Beaud, 2016, 285*). The Kemalist rulership reoriented its leading economic and political course to implement an enclosed and national industrialization by the hands of the state, namely state capitalism -in a not-so-different way to its Jacobin Doppelgängers

¹ All quotations from the two manifestos have been translated into English by the author.

of the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union. State and the rulership in Turkey have also become very active in the economy as an investor, operator, and supervisor as the interventionist economic model of capitalism. Supplemented by tariffs and development plans as in the principle of Statism, which was to be pronounced for the first time in 1932 (*Şener, 2015, 203*), an introvert perspective and enclosed economy have uplifted its cultural counterparts. The international waves of culture, swinging between the regionalism in a populist way and the extreme nationalism, were diffusing into every corner of cultural life in Turkey. The idea of transformation on the front foot and the groundbreaking artistic aspirations have fallen from esteem. The institutions established in the late 1930's such as the Turkish Language Society, Turkish History Society, and Village Institutions highlight an interest in the folk culture, rural population, and national history (*Şener, 2015, 297*). Many artists have been influenced by the process and also influenced it by turning their attention to the historical heritage and more populist approaches. The Newcomers Group (*Yeniler Grubu*) - tended towards the rural reality in painting (*Berk and Özsezgin, 1997, 72*), while the use of Turkish folk music and traditional elements in a western symphonic style characterized the prominent musicians of the Turkish Five group (*Türk Beşlisi*) (*Aracı, 2001, 266*). The first artist generation of the Republic, who studied either abroad or at the new modernized schools, were trying to create, if not to copy, a unique and national version of the contemporary western arts.

The flourishing of modern architecture was primarily “a form of ‘visible politics’ or ‘civilizing mission’ that accompanied official programs of modernization, imposed from above and implemented by the bureaucratic and professional elites of paternalistic nation-states” (*Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997, 136*). Until the mid-1930s, just before the cultural shift, the spotlight in architecture was on rationalist modernism, mostly thanks to the invited foreign and

young Turkish architects. There were only very few other countries where the early modernist architecture was embraced at the bureaucratic level as well as by the professional community even though rationalism was also not short of its critics among Turkish architectural circles. Bruno Taut and Ernst Egli argued for a modernism that did not follow the script written in Western Europe, but that was open to the particular climate, topography, and cultural traditions of the countries in which they built (*Weitz, 2007, 388*). Especially, Ernst Egli, who masterminded the education reform at the Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul in the early 1930s (*Hızlı and Aksel, 2017, 77*), was looking for a balance between universality and locality. His works showcase the two-sided effort to represent the power of the state and the analysis of the local culture (*Frank, 2015*). His reforms paved the way for the energetic and unprejudiced young scholars (*Egli, 2013, 18*), including Sedad Hakkı Eldem, with whom he was going to start the National Architecture Seminars to investigate the vernacular architecture in Turkey with the focus point of national identity.

The shift towards a nationalist and regional perspective can be grounded on certain architectural and practical aspects parallel to the introverted political economy. Batur (*2005, 34*) draws attention to the practical construction issues of modern materials and techniques and the lack of related modern infrastructure, pointing out that the import became no longer feasible due to the tardiness of international trade. Alsaç (*2005, 100*) also points out that the nationalist tendencies found direct correspondence among the architects complaining about the lack of opportunities and trust by the rulership. Beyond a formal description of the period as the so-called Second National Architecture Period, Tekeli (*2005, 25*) classifies various layers of the nationalist-regionalist tendency in the late 1930s and 1940s, such as the technical regionalist argumentation, the nostalgia to the Classical Ottoman past, the populist perspective based on

Anatolian rural scenery, and the political need for monumentalism to consolidate the regime's image. To complement the idea of an amorphous trend, Kortan (2000, 105) points out the inconsistencies of the nationalistic architecture, which are still deeply connected to the modern ideas of architecture. So, the rejection of the cubic in favor of forms inspired by traditional Turkish houses and the resulting search for a national style under the leadership of the prominent architect Sedat Hakkı Eldem was not necessarily a rejection of modernism. Bozdoğan (2001, 270) made a critical analysis of nationalizing the modern by illustrating the political agenda and deconstructing its ideals. Tanyeli's historiographical analysis (*Eldem, Tanju, and Tanyeli, 2008, 18-27*) and Tanju's focus on Eldem's texts (*Eldem, Tanju, and Tanyeli, 2008, 132-141*), provided a non-pejorative view on his creative ventures while highlighting the contradictory arguments in Eldem's view, which were much comprehensive than the formal aspects.

Within the poetry scene, an era of early modern approaches aiming at reforming Ottoman classical poetry was fluctuating amid the struggles of the revitalization of Turkish as the new official language. There was a small territory of modern avant-garde, mostly dominated by the charismatic yet politically radical figure of Nâzım Hikmet (*Özkırımlı, 1983, 582*).

From 1936 on, a young architect and instructor, Sedat Hakkı Eldem - with the support of Ernst Egli- has started to give his lectures on National Architecture at Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul, which earned him a stellar reputation before too long. Orhan Veli Kanık, on the other hand, burst onto the scene by publishing his poems in a free-verse style. Sedat Hakkı was going to publish his ideas in two parts in the sole architectural journal, the *Arkitekt*, while Kanık was going to bring his essays together for the foreword of a state-of-the-art poetry collection of its time along with his colleagues, Rifat and Anday, the *Strange Poetry Anthology*. These two manifestations have not only compromised

the main ideas on architecture and poetry by their creators but also provided the outlines of the mainstream styles of the next two decades and laid out the popular public opinion of the respective fields to such an extent so that they infamously held as the blueprints of official art.

Their texts arguably present parallel traits, which might signify a cultural pattern of social change having its reflections in multiple levels of social life. The common features of the change can be shaped like a "hypothesis for a pattern in meaningful practices" that is specific to a particular historical time-period, as Krause (2009, 1) puts it as non-idealist parallelism invoking Hegel's concept of *Zeitgeist*. The distance of fields themselves can alert us to 'the possibility of a set of cultural phenomena' (*Krause, 3*). A pattern as a directing reflex in cultural creation has to be fed from societal forces if its scope and duration extends farther than a trend. Given the political load of culture in the late 1930s, Eldem and Veli's link can be found in their ideologies as a surface between political life and creative personal practices. The Althusserian formulation of ideology as a semi-autonomous field acting as a two-way bridge between the infrastructure and superstructure explains the mutual influence of an artistic idea and social life. Creative tendencies in the case of Eldem and Veli's texts were also grounded on personal ideological reflexes, which were going to become more widespread in time. Althusser, a keen reader of Marx, who turned Hegel's dialectical history upside down, put a comprehensive theory of ideology together, by analyzing the psychological relationship which exists between subject and state as ideology (*Althusser, 1970, 28*). According to him, ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence legitimizing the power or the right for the power of a social group and can be inscribed in any kind of act, including artistic creativity. Literary critic Terry Eagleton argues in his *Ideology: An Introduction (1991)* that the process of (*rightful or not*) legitimation in arts

would seem to involve different strategies by creating an imaginary relationship in the artwork between the political sphere and the individual. An ideological analysis is thus concerned with the excavation and forensic examination of distinctive systems of ideas and allows the interrogation of the validity of normative arguments in and of themselves by exposing their background ideological assumptions (Maynard, 2017, 309). The possible ideas, not explicitly expressed, can be grounded in several conscious and unconscious motives, such as cognitive dissonance minimization, self-esteem motives, cognitive efficient concerns, comprehensibility motives, and anxiety suppression (Maynard, 315). While shared ideologies can be differentiated from personal ideologies, the networks of ideological thoughts and its ubiquity are worth to note (Norval, 2000, 316) and it is also vital to recognize the inextricable relationship between ideology and discourse as many ideologies are represented socially in discourse (van Dijk, 2003, 175).

Comparing Eldem's and Veli's texts within an ideological context of the late 1930s, a hypothesis can be formulated, which identifies a period-specific ideological inclination. According to Kocka (2003, 40), in the last few decades, comparative tools of history proved themselves to be a solid ground to build, or test, a hypothesis. As historical discursive comparison not only helps to identify common tendencies but also clarifies profiles of single cases. Marc Bloch, one of the prominent scholars of comparative history, has argued that history should explain relationships between various phenomena (Bloch, 1928). As an organized study of seemingly unrelated events, comparative history is indispensable for causal explanations and as William Sewell (1967, 209) once claimed in his article on Bloch's theories that comparison can play the role of an indirect experiment facilitating the "testing of hypotheses".

In that regard, if there is a tendency of cultural introversion grounded in ideological formations in the late 1930s, it

should be visible in more than one single field. Comparing two manifestos, thus, will open up new windows to trace the cultural tendencies of one of the most significant shifts of the Republican period in Turkey. Bozdoğan (2002, p.240) explains that shift in larger ideological terms stating that Turkish architects collectively contributed to the identification of 'national architecture' with the nationalist ideology of a powerful and authoritarian state. She also adds that in the same way that they embraced the 'New Architecture' as an expression of Kemalist revolution as a future-oriented aspiration, after the shift in the 1930s they called for a national architecture capable of representing the Kemalist program of tracing the historical roots of the Turks to construct for it a deep-rooted historical identity in the international environment (Bozdoğan, 241). On the other hand, Talat Sait Halman (1972, 230) notes that the poets - especially Orhan Veli, Melih Cevdet, and Oktay Rifat exemplifying the first thirst for modernization as the spokesman of the public conscience and championing the man-in-the-street as its hero- have functioned as the stewards of the national ethos.

The Need for Change and the Need for Art

Sedad Hakkı Eldem, born in 1908, spent most of his formative years abroad and later granted a research fellowship to travel in Europe with the support of the government for more than one year. Upon his return, he was immediately appointed as a scholar at the Fine Arts Academy. The flamboyant architect also founded an office and some of his early projects are the modern Turkish Pavilion of Budapest International Fair, Termal Hotel in Yalova, and a Princes Island residence design for the president Atatürk himself -all of them of almost pure modernist character. That was about to change around 1936 when he and Ernst Egli have started the famous National Architecture Seminars at the Academy, recalling his early interests toward the Turkish Houses, inspired by his own typological studies of traditional residences for the upper-class. It is no

coincidence that his cultural vision had two far edges. In his comprehensive work with Tanju and Tanyeli on Sedat Hakkı's young days, Edhem Eldem (2008) points out that he is a third-generation member of the most influential family of Ottoman cultural aristocracy, who devoted their interest to the Western culture. Tanyeli also mentions his persona as conflicting, complex, and charming; an unreachable role model, who has positioned himself in the center of the architectural discussions for over fifty years despite remaining an outsider (Tanyeli, 2007, 163).

As a promising young architect, Eldem has appeared in the *Arkitekt* magazine several times in the 1930s, but he only revealed his ideas extensively in an interview in 1939 and an article in 1940, which were in effect going to transform his modernist architectural practice. On the verge of change, a need to declare the change must have been an obvious need. When he published *Toward Local Architecture (Yerli Mimariye Doğru)* in 1940, presenting principles for a new architecture was the obvious goal of his texts. In the same magazine, he also published an interview, *The Question of National Architecture (Milli Mimari Meselesi)*, a few months earlier, which complements the article presenting an insider's vision of architecture. It was the trigger of a new chapter, a period in Turkish architecture disputatiously called as the Second National Period. His interview and his article in the *Arkitekt* magazine can be considered as a rare proclamation of a Turkish architect in an otherwise withdrawn environment when it comes to writing.

The article itself is in the shape of a report, where he tried to frame the necessary steps towards a reconstruction of architecture. Eldem first and foremost tried to remind the government of its duties, which are specifying precise and assertive principles only to be dictated to relevant actors. Namely, the role of the government in founding "the spiritual conditions of a national style" (Eldem, 1940, 69) is imperative and it should be active in giving a new face

to the Turkish architecture or "the ideal shape and direction of the department" (Eldem, 1940, 69). The different opinions should be eliminated and submerged in a national, collective, and monolithic understanding. Eldem has aimed at a cultural restoration steered by the central political rulership and actively supported by the cultural actors. He was arguing that all the principles should have been "determined decisively and orders should be given to the institutions involved" (Eldem, 1940, 70). To achieve this, the government should straighten the situation and enlarge the power of the architects as an ally by "giving the rank to that important department it is worth of" (Eldem, 1940, 69). It is also the government's duty, according to Eldem, to ensure that the architect is supported and respected by the society as a man of science, while legislative details must also be regulated to modernize the profession (Eldem, 1940, 72). The article, including excessive details about the regulations, can easily be considered as a report.

Rhetorically, Eldem uses the first-person plural instead of the first-person singular, which indicates that he feels like a member of a group or even as a representative of the group, although it is more a discursive way of writing than belonging to an actual group. The text gives the feeling of being written for superiors with common interests rather than being a critical assessment of the circumstances. Eldem, seen as one of the most individual and solitary figures in Turkish architecture (Tanyeli, 2007, 164), rhetorically tried to be inclusive within the borders of a common cultural agenda.

His interview, on the other hand, deals with architectural issues understood as an inseparable part of the social transformation. Eldem further emphasizes that it will open up a field of upbringing and education. According to him, the educative architectural style would make it possible for people "to learn how to live in the way the revolution indicates" (Eldem, 1939, 222). Obviously, the prototype of

how a person shall be educated is the one created by the republican revolution.

As he dwells upon the educational character of the buildings, Eldem is well aware that the transformative capacity is not only based on the visual style but also on the building program. Focusing on the functional agenda of a building, he mainly refers to the lifestyle of people claiming that the transformation can only continue by “keeping the contact alive with the people” (*Eldem, 1939, 222*). But he refrains to detail the ideal lifestyle he puts as a goal or the existing conditions he takes as a basis. He is well aware, the more detail he gives, the more immanent it would become to fall into contradictions. It is not clear how to close that gap as educating people and interacting with their lifestyle is an obvious dilemma, which he probably hoped to solve in practice, not in theory. The inclination to draw nearer to the people is a trademark of the era for rapid modernization had its alienating effects, although this game of balance was too difficult to sustain. The makeshift solution, then, is to be true to the ideals of the Republican revolution (*Eldem, 1939, 222*) and head towards an intrinsic regional character. But modernization was still part of the Republican agenda and he needed to tackle the previous internationalism carefully. He notes that architecture does not have to be international, although he admits cubism and concrete construction techniques became unavoidably widespread (*Eldem, 1939, 220*). This may not be overturned, yet some part of the national character can be kept intact. The answer lies, strangely, in foreign examples. According to Eldem, “the nations who preserved their identity in the age of industrialization managed to bring a style of their own not without its unique features.” Eldem mainly has Germany in mind, but Italy, Scandinavia, and Yugoslavia are also on his radar. He defines the German architectural avant-garde as formalistic, but thanks to the new regime, the Nazi regime, they entered into an era of classical traditionalism thanks to the ideals supplied by the political

rulership (*Eldem, 1939, 221*). He is well aware that there is a general tendency towards nationalism instead of internationalism and he approves this path by pointing out that many nations are looking back for styles to express their national character even after having once implemented the modern techniques of construction. This quest for a unique national style can occur in two ways, he argues, either by going back to the tradition or believing in a new ideal - or as a combination of two, and, above all else, the architectural style should not only fit to the traditions and ideals but also be a symbol for them (*Eldem, 1939, 220*). The knockdown comes in the form of an argument that “a nation could be given ideals, if it doesn’t have one” (*Eldem, 1939, 221*). From the position of a subject of social transformation, national identity was what he sought in the historical and regional heritage of Turkey. Never shy of emphasizing his position of being the one who transforms, he vainly tries to pull out his method from the realm of the society he prefers to transform.

Orhan Veli was born in 1914 and educated at the Faculty of Literature of Istanbul University. He worked briefly as a teaching assistant before joining the Turkish postal administration in Ankara (1936–42). Veli has published his early poems in the pioneering literary magazine *Varlık* starting from 1936 and gradually turned away from traditional poetic forms. A fluent speaker of French, he also translated French avant-garde poetry into Turkish. In 1941 he published a volume of poetry, *the Strange Anthology*, in collaboration with two other poets, Oktay Rifat and Melih Cevdet. The book contains the Strange Manifesto as its foreword, a combination of several essays he wrote in the last few years. He revolutionized Turkish poetry and shunned everything old creating a break with everything traditional while conventional meter, rhyme, language style, and outdated themes were discarded. At first, he encountered fierce opposition and even mocked, but by the time of his early death in 1950, his work and reputation were firmly established.

Orhan Veli was an advocate of the 1923 revolutions just like Eldem, and the movement he started with fellow poets, which spread around at breakneck speed, was primarily aiming at being the poetry for the people. However, there was a clear distinction. Veli distinguishes the upper classes from the lower classes and, thus, distances himself from the monolithic idea of the nation as a whole body. According to the poet of everyday life, classical poetry belongs to the bourgeoisie, and before the industrial revolution, it was a slave to religion and feudal classes. Throughout history, poetry has been addressed to prosperous classes, which means that poetry has only been for people who do not need to work for a living. He points out that the qualities of classical poetry make it ideal for higher classes. The working-class people, on the other hand, have lived by a constant daily struggle. According to him, “like everything else, they also deserve poetry, and they deserve a poetics, which directly refers to their taste” (Veli, 200). Poetry is considered by him as a right of the working classes and when writing poetry, their taste should be taken into account. While making a clear difference between classes, his terminology avoids any socialist links. Veli’s perspective embodies a general concern for poor and regular people. Nonetheless, his line of thought is bold, and he is well aware that he cannot communicate with the masses by the old means of literature. Veli was searching for the taste of the masses and intended to make it the dominant force in writing. That quest was the core of his exploits with the persuasion that only new ways could lead to a new taste. Still, his attempts to present poetry to Turkish speaking working classes have been deeply influenced by modern French poetry. Modernists such as Paul Valery and Guillaume Apollinaire as well as the surrealists were the poets Veli not only read thoroughly but also translated into Turkish (Duyan, 2017). But the styles of the poets such as Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, and, especially Philip Soupault -whom he personally met in 1949-

directly correspond to his social criticism. Despite rejecting the monolithic idea of a nation, his conception of arts -just like Eldem’s had a political role of social transformation.

Fitting in: The Regional and the Ordinary

The architecture was an instrument to the Republican transformation and its adaptation was a sine qua non. According to Eldem, without architecture suiting the nation, the restoration of the grand transformation was doomed to fail. Therefore, addressing and representing the taste of the nation was the key to fulfill the objectives set by the Republic.

In his interview, Eldem suggests that the urgent building program has been completed after more than a decade of the declaration of Republic, albeit by foreigners, and now there are enough resources and experience to act differently (Eldem, 1939, 221). According to him, “the seeds for a brand new and national style have already been thrown”, and it was time to draw attention to the inner self. He ignores the question of whether a national architecture is possible or not by claiming that “there must be a national architecture” (Eldem, 1939, 221). He further adds that the revolution needs the power to express itself and a style that is proportional to its grand scheme. Nevertheless, the national style should be appropriate to the people, the workers, and geography. He defines the national architecture as more or less as a regional architecture and emphasizes the importance of the ability to penetrate to life. He defines regionalism as the style given birth by materials and he recognizes the climate as the basis of being regional. In his article, he mentions that the previous “cubist” architecture was artificial as most of the buildings did suit neither their neighborhood and nor their site. Only an architecture, which is appropriate to climate and geography at the same time, can be “good and local” (Eldem, 1940, 70). In addition to this, Eldem points out the importance of using local labor. Eldem argues that the architect has to approach the worker, too, not only the people,

and to design the forms that the worker is capable of realizing (*Eldem, 1939, 222*). Without being embraced by the workers, a style cannot be applied. He puts decisive stylistic arguments forward, such as that the forms should be basic, fundamental, and easy to realize, and proper to the level of the worker. The worker should be able to appreciate the beauty in what he is doing. That is a necessity not only for a clean-cut construction but also because the worker symbolizes the level of the nation in general (*Eldem, 1939, 222*). In one of the rare concrete examples of a regional style, Eldem opposes flat roofs, longitudinal windows, and unsuitable construction techniques as elements of modernist rationalism (*Eldem, 1940, 72*). Nevertheless, he looks beyond the visual elements as he puts forth that, instead of monumentality, the urban single-house scale should be at the forefront of the new national style. This argument was going to lead him to his famous (or infamous) Turkish House Research. Yet, his categorization of the houses, “ranging from the large mansions of wealthy Ottoman families to modest houses in Anatolian villages, under the single name Turkish House, and simultaneously the absorption of all the ethnic and religious groups under one overarching nationality Turkish” (*Bozdoğan and Ercan, 2012, 99*) remind of his monolithic approach of the nation, to which architecture should comply and shape.

Adaptation of art to social life while challenging it is also a concern for Orhan Veli, who mainly bases his theory on communication issues. His evident desire is to reach out to ordinary people. Classical poetry has an unnatural formalism and only because of the habits of readers such formalism appears natural. Mainstream poetry is hugely different from the spoken language, but it is still considered to be normal. Veli defines the new normal of poetry as being able to communicate with people (*Veli, 199*). The movement he started together with fellow poets has been ironically named Strange with the idea that people would find it strange at first only to find out later that it is actually the real

normal. While he condemns mainstream poetry as artificial, it is peculiar that he never mentions the Turkish avant-garde poetry that entered the poetry universe in the early 1930s. Nâzım Hikmet was in prison because of his socialist tendencies, but Veli was well aware of his work and had a certain sympathy towards him. The other avant-garde figures, such as Ercüment Behzat Lav or Asaf Halet Çelebi should have been considered too experimental by him or simply outsiders to argue against. He also prefers to distance himself even from Surrealism while praising its innovativeness (*Veli, 209*). Veli’s main target of criticism, thus, remains as the derivatives of classicism. He explains that rhyming has been invented to help to remember the lines in the ancient ages. According to him, it was solely functional in the beginning and people later attributed beauty to it. All formal elements have functional roots, and they later become synonymous with esthetics. However, the form cannot be the sole source of beauty. To express oneself in basic metrics cannot be considered “as a skill at all”, claims Veli sarcastically (*Veli, 198*). To define an “idiosyncratic character of poetic language” (*Veli, 199*) would be absurd -the language of the poetry can and needs to be one-and-the-same with the daily language. Poetry should use ordinary language to communicate with the people and abandon the formal language to be appropriate to the taste of the masses as an organic part of their culture and needs. Therefore, to fulfill their social responsibility, poetry and architecture should be communicable by being ordinary and regional respectively.

The Style of Simplicity and Totality

Despite his regionalist attitude, Eldem still needed a bridge to link the Turkish nationality to a style. He strongly believes that each country has its own potential national style, which Turkey ought to find (*Eldem, 1939, 71*). The existing pile of buildings exposes the heterogeneous and unnatural side of the foreign indicted style. This artificiality roots in copying because of either lack of culture or lack

of fair examples. Especially in the field of housing, there is extreme disorder and anarchy. They lack a common character, which is the foundation of Eldem's quest for national architecture.

He also confronts ornamentalism as a source of unnecessary luxury and distraction. Extreme splendor, grandiose decoration, complex forms, virtuosity, and luxury are considered as not fitting to the contemporary ideals of the Republic. The national style has to be simple, easily comprehensible, and be of the possession of a deep beauty while containing quality (Eldem, 1939, 221). For him, neither stylistic incoherence is tolerable, nor any kind of arbitrariness born out of ornamentation. On the contrary, national architecture requires a strong center. And he finds his center in history, the classical Ottoman heritage as an example of architectural unity. Eldem nostalgically argues that there was a common mindset and a unified style throughout the empire in that good old times when workers and methods were properly arranged and classified, as until the modernization period, all construction work has been controlled by a single head-architect (Eldem, 1939, 222). He aspires to synthesize the old instruments of the construction field with the new, but not copying its stylistic forms but taking its holistic approach as an example. He applauds the unity in the regulation of the sector and style, which, according to him, has existed (Eldem, 1939, 222). Furthermore, he endorses the trait of the harmony of interior and exterior as he interprets the modern conception of the anti-ornamentalism as an inside-outside totality that he claims to have found in the classical Ottoman architecture (Eldem, 1939, 222). This argument seems to be somewhat anachronistic, but he certainly needs a historical handle to grip to base the national character. Eldem proposes that this integrity can be the main quality of the future national style as a bridge between traditional and modern.

When Veli highlights the necessity of a new style, he makes a similar claim,

too. Although his position towards the historical is more radical than Eldem, he shares his distance to the contemporary scene. He proposes to change the general outline completely and to forget everything taught to them by the old literature to get rid of their grim and depressing effects on our taste as he urges to build a new literary style (Veli, 201). He argues that one should feel either the necessity or unnecessary of something and that the worst position is merely accepting the given conditions: "The builders are the ones who feel the need and destructors are the ones who feel the unnecessary" (Veli, 202). He encourages intellectuals to risk their habits and traditional judgments before attacking at the understanding of artwork in pieces, a poem as the mere sum of its separate lines (Veli, 210). According to him, without a whole transcending its pieces an artwork would belong to the traditional formalism and does not help in terms of communication with the people. To explain his point, Veli uses an architectural metaphor. He explains that "the skeleton exists even if we do not see it. The beauty exists in the totality as even a thousand-word long poem is written for a single beauty" (Veli, 211). Neither the brick nor the plaster is beautiful, but they together constitute a beautiful work of architecture.

Veli also argues against the mixing of different arts as each field of art has its own instruments, poetry should stay as poetry, architecture as architecture -whereas the metaphor remains valid (Veli, 203). Different artistic methods would remain external and lead to formalism, but, according to Veli, the form should arise from the inside or a necessity. As "poetry's real value resides in its meaning" (Veli, 204), the poet cannot afford it to be overlooked. A poem is a literary convention of wholeness and unity. Poetry may contain descriptive imagery, yet this is not its fundamental element. The essence of poetry is based on the characteristics of its manner of expression and the meaning it conveys (Veli, 205). Poetry, after all, is a form of speech that unveils its essence in the way it expresses itself. Nothing

can overshadow the meaning, not even the Surrealist techniques, even though he gives them credit for breaking the ground for free verse and argues against making a technique into a mindset by sublimating it. Veli writes that “art is not only about automatism, it is about struggle and talent. Artists are those who make us believe that what they say is absolutely sincere” (Veli, 208). So, despite their differences in embracing the past, Eldem and Veli seem to have translated the need for communication into a stylistic simplicity paving the way for efficient transmission of the message, while the artwork is kept intact under a unity buttressed by inside-outside cohesion.

Conclusion

In the early modern cultural scene of Republican Turkey, manifestos are not the type of texts one frequently encounters. Eldem’s and Veli’s manifestos are nutshells of artistic theory with an urge to act. They postulate the need for restoration of the Republican modernization and its cultural scene. At the time of a significant political and cultural turn, their theories represented a common inclination of a balanced approach between modernization and local culture, which was going to become a mainstream attitude in the future. Ideologically, they both favored bringing art into the realm of social transformation. Both of them have supported the Republican revolutions and assumed that their work will stabilize the social transformation process.

Nuances tough become visible when Eldem and Veli’s target groups are compared. For Eldem, it is the nation, whose differences from other nations should be appreciated. For Veli, it is the working class in the sense of regular people whose interests do not lie in the same direction as ruling classes. Eldem denounces the foreign influences for being alien to the people; Veli blasts the style appealing to the elite. Eldem adjusts himself to regional characteristics; Veli hunts up the taste of the masses. However, for both of them, the new culture should

be based on the social needs, which leads them to similar modernist approaches -a regionalist-nationalistic version in Eldem’s case and a populist, class-based one in Veli’s case. While both of them incorporated the Jacobin attitude of the early Turkish Republic, neither of them has their eyes on a utopic future of a brand-new art or on the history to restore the old ways. They felt the need of restoration to reduce the gap between the subject of the transformation -a bloc of intellectuals, bureaucrats, and soldiers- and the masses. In their texts, they counted on the people as the key trigger to restore the rapid republican transformation process. Their differences present a range of possible ideological directions of how to connect the infrastructural needs to the superstructure during the time of introverted economics and modern interventionist statism.

The ideological reflex of a balanced transformation of the arts in line with Kemalist revolutions finds its concrete answer in the shape of self-identity. Eldem’s sense of identity is more monolithic, which should eliminate the differences to avoid anarchy. Veli could afford to be more critical as poetry does not need the infrastructure and support architecture might have needed. It is the urge to find the true self that sets the tone of their cultural agenda, which is only meaningful if the arts can communicate. There cannot be any reason to look for the selfhood of the society -be it the monolithic nation or the antagonistic working-class- without referring and touching it. That would prevent arts to fulfil their transformative role by repeating the misstep of omission taken by avant-garde before them. Communicability with the masses not only symbolically guarantees the allegiance to the masses but it also sets up any artistic act to perform on the political level.

Communicability, tough, as the result of the search for a self-identity, has different faces in Eldem and Veli’s texts. For Eldem, only a regional character of style can act

as the cogwheel for transmission of the ideals. For Veli, the ordinary language is the only way to integrate poetry into daily life. Eldem confronts the foreign and internationalist tendencies while Veli repels the historical and formalistic ones. Regionalism and ordinariness are the dual key concepts they hope to utilize to find the self-identity and, thus, to fulfill the ideological expectation that arts need to support a balanced modernization process.

It is not surprising that their stylistic programs are generated through the ideological matrix of introvert self-identity, communicability, and the regionalism-ordinariness tandem. Orhan Veli holds the bare transmission of the meaning and the totality of artwork as the cornerstones of the new style. Parallely, Sedad Hakkı Eldem focuses on the idea of coherence - borrowed from the Ottoman heritage- and the unity between the interior and exterior of buildings. An outside-inside harmony mainly indicates an inductive approach cleared off any prescribed formalism irrelevant to functional needs and corresponds to Veli's clear transmission of meaning without formal decorum or verbiage. It is that amalgam of simplicity and totality, which, in the end, allows the transformative ideals to flow through. Through simplicity, the traditions of formalist ornamentation can be disposed to clear the field for the main message. Totality, then, would esthetically fill the absence of the formal extravaganza by giving the guiding idea of well-balanced social transformation the central role.

Their endeavors as an introvert approach towards the culture aimed at restoring the shortfalls of the international avant-garde and traditional techniques of art. For the restoration of the republican revolutions, the discourse they set is hybrid: Leading the masses through art by rooting in the masses. Their intention is the progress of the republican direction with the condition of integrating it into the local culture in a convincing and not-so-radical way. The Ottoman heritage of architecture and poetry was not a good fit to accompany

the social change at all as they have been reproducing the hegemony of the old ruling classes throughout centuries. The early avant-garde attempts, on the other hand, were too unfamiliar even for the intelligentsia not to mention the masses. The main discursive argument, then, is to find a language adventurous enough to lead the social change and accommodating enough to address the local patterns.

That balanced approach has become the key to unlock the mystery of how to reach out to the crowds without going back to the conventional ways of the classical arts. Eldem and Veli's texts crystallize one of the dominant cultural tendencies of the era, an introverted quest for new self-identity in modern times. Despite their considerable differences, the two prominent manifestos have parallely set the tone of the Republican period of art for nearly two decades -until the late 1950's, when international modernism started to take over the skyline in cities and The Second New implemented the complex, intuitive and vanity into poetry. The two manifestos -not without subtle ideological twists and inner conflicts- found a hybrid middle way between the two far ends of the cultural scene -a cutting-edge progressivism and a historical classicism- to create a crossbreed in the form of tame modernism●

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