

NATIONAL IDENTITY IN TURKEY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

Seth Robertson Wood

1999

APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

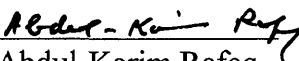
Master of Arts


Author

Approved, December 1999


Abdollah Dashti


Richard Price


Abdul-Karim Rafeq
Department of History

“Howard Roark laughed.”

Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	v
INTRODUCTION	2
1. OTTOMAN REFORMS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTTOMANISM, ISLAMISM, AND TURKISM	4
2. IDEOLOGUES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	16
3. THE YOUNG TURKS—AND THE END	26
4. MUSTAFA KEMAL—AND THE BEGINNING	33
5. THE KEMALIST REFORMS	41
6. RURAL REACTION TO THE KEMALIST REFORMS	50
7. HISTORY AND IDENTITY	58
8. TURKEY TODAY	62
CONCLUSION	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	73

ABSTRACT

In October 1923, Turkish nationalists proclaimed the creation of the Republic of Turkey. This marked a turning point in a long series of events, beginning with the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, and continuing through the present day. As the Ottoman Empire slowly became the Republic of Turkey, three main ideologies—Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkish nationalism—competed for the prime definition, or identity, of the Turkish people. Of these ideologies, nationalism would eventually claim dominance, though the identity struggle is by no means over, and issues of conflicting loyalties trouble much of the Middle East today.

This paper examines some of the identities of the Turkish people and of the nation they created. Significantly, these identities have been neither monolithic nor uncontested: indeed, it is a discussion of the interplay between competing identities that forms the first part of the paper. The second half explores the identity that the Kemalist reforms imposed, legislated, and often enforced, as well as the ramifications of this ideology for the viability of the new nation of Turkey. This new ideology, particularly as it took the forms of modernization and secularism, affected—even prescribed—the corporate identity of Turkey as a nation, as well as, to a certain extent, the individual identity of her citizens. The degree to which this identity has or has not been accepted continues to play an important role in contemporary Turkey (as well as in other states and regions throughout the Middle East).

A prime concern in this paper is the roles that competing identities played in the development of Turkey as a nation-state, and the often clouded relationship between identity and nationalism in Turkey. The conclusion poses questions on the role of values in identity, and discusses the practical significance of further studies on identity, semiotics, and nationalism.

NATIONAL IDENTITY IN TURKEY

INTRODUCTION

This paper will trace the growth of an idea—Turkish nationalism—and show how it and its two major competing ideologies—Islamism and Ottomanism—manifested themselves through the end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Alongside the growth of Turkish nationalism came the growth of a Turkish national consciousness and self-awareness, blooming into a national identity under the Kemalist reforms in the 1920s. The implications of this changing identity, the challenges it faced, and the degree of resolution—if any—in the present will close the paper, along with a short theoretical discussion on identity.

I begin with a sketch of Turkish history, focusing on the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the development of various reform movements, culminating in the constitutional government of the Young Turks in the early twentieth century. Further reforms were cut off by World War I, after which the war hero and nationalist Mustafa Kemal led the nationalist forces through civil war to independence. The long line of ideologies, reforms, and intellectuals that had preceded Kemal played an important role in Turkish nationalism, providing the foundation on which the Kemalists constructed the identity of the new nation. The challenges faced by the Kemalists, the identity they supplied, and that identity's interaction with pre-existing value structures, leads to the idea that perhaps a semiotic understanding of values and identity can inform a sophisticated and useful understanding of nationalism and contemporary world conflicts.

What follows has been gleaned from library research of sources in English, as well as three interviews with people who have had direct experience living and working in contemporary Turkey.

1. OTTOMAN REFORMS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTTOMANISM, ISLAMISM, AND TURKISM

The Ottoman Empire had its origins in the 11th-century nomadic Turkomans who penetrated into Byzantine Anatolia after the battle of Menzikert (1071) in the name of an ever-expanding Islam. After the Sultanate of the Seljuks of Rum became the dominant state in eastern Anatolia in the late 11th century, it was the *ghazis*, or warriors of Islam, who patrolled the borders of the *dar al Islam*, or House of Islam, periodically making raids into the non-Muslim lands across the frontier. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *ghazis* began to cluster into marchland emirates, partially in response to the threat of the Mongols, who forced the Sultanate of the Seljuks of Rum into subjugation in the 13th century. But in 1299, Osman Ghazi, one of the *ghazi* leaders, had the chance to fight and expand his territory into what would become the Ottoman Empire. In 1453 the Ottomans took Constantinople, and by the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had grown to include a vast domain stretching from Eastern Europe to the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and extending along North Africa and for hundreds of miles down each side of the Red Sea.

The Ottoman Empire was not a Turkish one. Turks were certainly one of many groups within the empire, and perhaps even first among equals, but the great size and heterogeneity of languages, religions, ethnic groups, and cultures precluded any serious identification of *Turk* with *Ottoman*. Nevertheless, the “bloodthirsty Turk” lived vividly in the European imagination as a constant threat—twice the Ottomans laid siege to

Vienna—as well as an embodiment of political, religious, ethnic, and moral difference. The Ottomans (as I shall refer to members of the Empire, for now), for Europe, were the ultimate Other.¹ And conversely, to the Ottomans, Europe represented the worst kind of barbarism, lawlessness, and irreligiosity. The two worlds regarded each other with mutual suspicion at best, and outright hatred at worst.

The Central Asian Turks, having been overrun by Islam in the ninth century, had very little—if any—awareness of themselves as a group other than as Muslims; an identity which did not differentiate between them and other Muslims throughout the Empire. Nevertheless, a short-lived movement arose in the early 15th century to revive old (pre-Islamic) Turkish titles, literature, historiography and particularly language, as poets vied with one another to compose purely in Turkish without resorting to the (common, at that time) usage of Persian and Arabic words (Lewis 1979:9). But as the Empire expanded (particularly with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and Syria, Egypt, and Iraq during the sixteenth century), this nascent Turkish awareness was buried under the new demands of Imperial and Islamic identification, and the emphasis on Turkishness dwindled out of existence (ibid.:332).

In fact, of all the peoples of the diverse Ottoman Empire, it was the Turks who went farthest in “sinking their separate identity in[to] the Islamic community” (ibid.:329). Islam was the ultimate binding force for its practitioners, who made up most of the Empire. Significantly, there were Christian and Jewish Ottoman subjects, and these non-Muslim Ottomans would play an important though indirect role in the development of

¹ “An adequate understanding of current global conditions and international relations is impossible without the study of Islam as the West’s cultural Other *par excellence*” (Dashti n.d.: 1; also see Said 1978:1, 70).

Turkish national consciousness. But as Muslims, the majority of the Ottoman peoples enjoyed an affiliation stronger than any other:

Loyalty to a place was known, but it was to a village or quarter, at most to a province, not a country; loyalty to one's kin was ancient and potent, but it was to the family or tribe, not to the nation. The ultimate loyalty, the measure by which a man distinguished between brother and stranger, was religion. For the Muslim, his fellow believer, of whatever country, race, or language, was a brother; his Christian neighbor, his own infidel ancestors, were strangers (Lewis 1979:329).

From its very origins in the seventh century AD, in fact, Islam had been marked by its permeation into all facets of the believer's life. Islam was not merely a religion, or a cosmology. It offered a way of life, a suite of morals and ethics, strictures on behavior, and, most important, a political structure. In all of this, Islam was similar to the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages in Europe: arbiter of law, bestower of economic fortune or hardship, maker of treaties, house of the highest moral standards, everything, in short, that would determine how the lives of its practitioners were to be lived.

Sultan Suleyman II (r.1520-1566) brought the Ottoman Empire to its greatest heights of territorial expansion, artistic expression, and financial success. Unfortunately, the excesses of this Golden Age caught up with the Ottomans shortly, for after Suleyman came *le deluge*. Brought on and continued for a variety of reasons, the ponderous decline of the Ottoman Empire was drawn out and at times almost undetectable, though it would continue inexorably until defeat and occupation by the Allies at the end of World War I, 350 years after Suleyman.

The Ottoman Empire's response to its decline, the slow explosion of scholarship to explain it, the reluctant turning to the West as a source of solutions, the countless reforms and associated opposition movements, all contributed in their own way to the

gradual development of a Turkish national self consciousness, which would not be fully realized until the 1920s (and perhaps not even then, some might argue).

The first sultan to seriously propose and then implement reforms was Selim III, whose reign (1789-1807) coincided with the French Revolution. The Ottomans viewed the events in France with great apprehension: the secularist separation of Church and State was seen as a particularly dangerous doctrine, as was the associated idea of secular reason overtaking religious faith as a means of explanation. Nevertheless, Selim III took the significant step of looking to the West for ideas on how to shore up the softening Empire. He proposed financial, administrative, and military reforms, most if not all modeled after successful institutions of the West. For example, he brought in French military officers to train young Ottoman soldiers in the ways of European armies; and he established permanent and regular diplomatic communications with Europe by setting up embassies in London, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. The general Western-leaning flavor of the reforms did not go unnoticed by conservative elements in the Empire, however, and Selim III was dethroned by a reactionary party in 1807 (Lewis 1979:72).

Selim III's reign had several important results. It was the first serious acknowledgment that something was wrong with the Empire, that something needed repair. It was the first time for the Ottomans to take the somewhat humiliating position of student to European teachers (both literally and figuratively), thus opening the way for an increased exchange of ideas between the Ottoman elite and Europe (Zürcher 1993:24-26). The Ottoman reaction to these reforms was to emphasize (or re-emphasize) Islamic and Ottoman traditional practices and structures, as an alternative to the ways of the barbaric infidels in the West. This new emphasis on Ottoman and Islamic identities paved the way

for the nineteenth-century movements of Ottomanism and Islamism, which are discussed below. Nevertheless, the die had been cast, and the early nineteenth century saw the “gradual formation of a group of reformers with a certain knowledge of the modern world and a conviction that the empire must belong to it or die” (Hourani 1970:43). It was this thread of westward-looking reformers and their successors that would characterize Ottoman reforms for the next century.

Selim III’s cousin, Mahmud II, became Sultan in 1808. By the 1820s he too was instigating reforms, a sure sign that despite opposition, the decline of the Empire and subsequent need for change was only becoming more obvious. Mahmud II continued Selim’s emphasis on the West as a necessary if distasteful model (by now, as Europe led the world in exploration, military might, and economics, it was hard to doubt the efficacy of Western institutions; see Lewis 1996:56; also see Hanioglu 1995:7-10). But Mahmud’s reforms in the military, educational methods and structures, imperial administration, economics, and communications, all were less successful than perhaps he and the other reformers had hoped for:

[Their] task was appallingly difficult. Even when the forces of reaction had been beaten into submission, there was still the problem of finding suitable men to devise and apply the reforms. The Sultan himself, strong-willed and violent, was profoundly ignorant of everything Western. There were still lamentably few of his countrymen who were any better placed....Muslim fanaticism prevented Mahmud from inviting more than a small number of foreigners, and from making much use of those who did come....

...[The reforms were plagued by the] increased cost of a Westernized style of living; the continuing insecurity of tenure and property; the chronic financial disorders of the reformist ministries, and above all, the breakdown, without replacement, of traditional moral standards (Lewis 1979:104).²

² Edward Said’s strongly-worded criticism of Bernard Lewis notwithstanding (Said 1978:315-320), Lewis in this instance appears to be simplifying somewhat what was undoubtedly a more complex issue: Mahmud was faced with strident resistance to the ideas he felt were necessary to the Empire’s very survival; many

Other than a continued exhortation to look Westward for reforms,³ the main contribution of Mahmud's reign was to make such reforms less horrifying to the Ottomans. This was a change only of degree, and a small one at that: many if not most Ottoman citizens, understandably, remained opposed to any suggestions to change their way of life, their laws, their economics, which—after all—had been in place for generations.

Meanwhile, throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a combination of invading European armies and internal minority uprisings made disturbingly clear the weakness of the Empire while at the same time hindering the reformers' attempts to combat that weakness. Emboldened by the eminently viable nationalism of nineteenth-century Europe, as well as by the success of the Greeks, who had gained their own independence from the Ottomans after a revolt in 1821, many sub-Ottoman groups (Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians, Armenians, Arabs, Kurds, and others) began wondering if independence might not be the solution to the twin problems of Ottoman subjugation and the decline of the Empire (see Ahmad 1994:15). These early nationalist movements would eventually boil over into full-fledged wars for independence, though it would take several generations for this to happen. Meanwhile, the inklings of sub-Ottoman nationalisms merely served as another reason to strengthen the Empire through social and economic reforms.

felt that his reforms were implicit if not direct violations of cultural and moral norms by which they had been living their entire lives. Certainly there was more to it than Muslim fanaticism and a strong-willed Sultan.

³ Though not just to the West; Russia's Peter the Great was held as a model of how a determined ruler could combat and overcome the backwardness of a state (Lewis 1979:103).

Mahmud's (and Selim's, for that matter) reforms had been weakened by the sweeping nature of their approach: other than a general desire to preserve the empire and overhaul amorphous institutions and morals, there was little concrete definition of problem or solution. But as the nineteenth century went on, Ottoman reformers began to more specifically outline problems as well as solutions, and the reforms of the Tanzimat period during the mid-nineteenth century were aimed at particular and concrete social and economic issues.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a "new bureaucratic class...[who], though loyal to the sultan and the Ottoman dynasty, possessed a higher sense of loyalty to the state"⁴ which [they] no longer saw as being manifested only in the person of the sultan" (Ahmad 1993:25), initiated a 40-year period of reform—the Tanzimat—which "promised [changes] in conscription, taxation, and justice" (Davison 1990:24). But here too, much like earlier reforms, the Tanzimat changes were flawed by poorly-planned implementation, resulting in overlaps and redundant institutions: just the sort of overweight and outdated bureaucracy the reforms were supposed to remove. Establishing new political, administrative, legal, and educational institutions without abolishing the old ones, the Tanzimat reforms had a hesitant air, which led to "a series of dichotomies in almost every field of life" (Berkes in Gökalp 1959:17).

And overall, the changes did little to slow the decline of the Empire: "if from 1000 to 1255 [1592 to 1839] the Empire had advanced on the road to decline at the pace of a two-horse carriage, from 1255 to 1285 [1839 to 1869] it had rushed with the speed of a railway-train" (Ziya Pasha 1869 quoted in Lewis 1979:172). Nevertheless, many of the

⁴ Significantly, this loyalty to the Ottoman State above all else would be a precursor to the Ottomanism I

ideas proposed by the Tanzimat reformers were to see light again during the Kemalist reforms half a century later. For example, there began a secular trend in education, as non-religious state schools were established (in addition to traditional Islamic and *millet*-based schools); these secular schools were to bring forth many of the nineteenth-century reformers (Zürcher 1993:65-66). But in addition to these foundations for Kemal to build on, there also developed a determined resistance to anything Western, a defensive stance that perhaps would not have been so strong in the absence of Western-style reforms.

The political, social, and economic changes [the reforms] involved seemed to offer some kind of threat to the interest of almost every group in Turkish society; to almost all they appeared as a triumph over Islam of the millennial Christian enemy in the West. For the reforms were basically the forcible imposition, on a Muslim country, of practices and procedures derived from Europe....Military defeat and political humiliation had indeed shaken the torpid and complacent trust of the Turks in their own invincible and immutable superiority, but the ancient contempt for the barbarian infidel, where it yielded, often gave place to rancour rather than emulation....[Furthermore,] the granting of equal status to non-Muslims within the Empire was to many the final insult and outrage (Lewis 1979:127-128).

The granting of equal status to non-Muslims occurred in 1855, as the poll tax for non-Muslims was abolished and Christians were allowed to enter the army and civil service. This period marks the beginnings of an active interest in Ottomanism, which preached unity among all members of the Empire by virtue of their status as Ottoman citizens. This *Ottoman* identity was to override local ethnic-national sentiment as well as religious cleavages within the Empire as well as Islam itself.

The principle of Ottomanism first appeared during the Tanzimat years (1839-1876), as the leaders of the reforms, “who believed that European ideas of constitutional monarchy and equality of all citizens regardless of ethnicity and religion could be

introduced top-down, were idealists aiming at not a Turkish but an Ottoman identity” (Mehmet 1990:115; also see Goçek 1996:124ff.). The principle of Ottomanism would be the first—and ultimately, least effective—of the three ideas that competed for the identity of the citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Constructed as an attempt to bring together the diverse peoples of the Empire under one Ottoman roof, Ottomanism was weakened by the very heterogeneity it was employed to combat: it was the heady sub-Ottoman loyalties of religion, ethnic group, language, and culture that presented identities more compelling and more effective in *getting things done* than the flaccid and shallow notion of Ottomanism. What Ottomanism had in its favor, as opposed to Islamism and Turkish nationalism, was that it was *the* defining principle of the Ottoman Empire. Abandoning Ottomanism would have also meant abandoning the Ottoman Empire, something that no one was willing to do.

The *millet* system played a crucial role in strengthening these sub-Ottoman affiliations. The *millets* had begun as fairly autonomous religious communities within the Empire; the Ottomans were content to let Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Armenians live together in discrete groups as long as they paid their taxes and didn’t make trouble. But this religious tolerance, so appealing to 20th-century liberal notions of freedom, would prove to be a severe mistake for those wishing to hold the Empire together. The trouble was that although they were originally intended as separate religious enclaves, by the nineteenth century, the *millets* were virtually independent ethnic groups. Many of the religious divisions among the Empire’s subject peoples were also ethno-linguistic divisions (Karpát 1982:142); by establishing and maintaining a segregation along these religious lines, the Ottomans were (unwittingly, perhaps) encouraging ethnic divisions,

ethnic autonomy, ethnic *independence*. Such a situation of discrete religious groups, Braude and Lewis (1982) point out, should not be considered to be the result of universal, large-scale, planned tolerance, but rather “a series of *ad hoc* arrangements made over the years, which gave each of the major religious communities a degree of legal autonomy and authority with the acquiescence of the Ottoman state” (ibid.:12-13). Ideally, tolerance was preached by the premises of Islam; a tolerance particularly towards fellow “peoples of the Book,” as the Jews and Christians were termed. But the fact that this tolerance had to be legally and administratively established suggests, to a certain extent, a *de facto* intolerance.

Viewed with hindsight, the development of nationalism from the *millets*⁵ seems unavoidable: these were groups of people living as subjects of a sometimes oppressive autocratic regime, a regime which encouraged and even required them to live and work with others of the same ethnic, religious, political, and linguistic affiliations.⁶ Meanwhile the Empire was crumbling and the independent nations of Europe were not only enjoying terrific successes but offering economic and moral assistance to the *millets*. It is hard to imagine a more favorable environment for nationalism. The sub-Ottoman nationalist movements would play a crucial role in the development of Turkish nationalism, though this would not occur until very late in the 19th century. For now, they just threatened Ottomanism and the solidarity of the Empire (Karpas 1982:163).

⁵ The word *millet* has held many meanings over the years, at once reflecting the changing use of the term, the changing identity of those it applied to, and the flexibility of language to deal with such changes. *Millet* has meant “nation,” “the Islamic religion,” and “religious community,” (Lewis 1979 347, 334-336. Also see Davison 1977:33).

⁶ This was borne out after many of these groups achieved independence during the nineteenth century. Their “group identity, internal cohesion, and socio-political values as a nation were determined by their long experience in the *millet* system” (Karpas 1982:141).

Besides Ottomanism, a second competitor for the identity of the people was Islamism, which called upon its members to join together under the banner of Islam, regardless of ethnic, political, or territorial ties. Sultan Abdulhamid (r.1876-1909) stressed his role as not just Sultan of the Empire, but Caliph, or leader, of all Muslims, wherever they lived. As Muslims were repeatedly humiliated by Christian successes during the nineteenth century, particularly its second half, this doctrine of pan-Islamism became more and more compelling. Abdulhamid favored it because he could use it to gather support from traditional elements against liberal reformers and the twin evils of nationalism and secularism. “The task was to drive out the foreign [Christian] invaders, abolish foreign concessions and immunities, restore the true Islamic faith—and, some added, to reunite all the Muslims in a single state, under its lawful sovereign, the Caliph” (Lewis 1979:342). This official policy of pan-Islamism was seen as more practical, more workable, and more likely to succeed than the idealistic Ottomanism.⁷

The third force in fostering group identity was Turkism; or, more exactly, pan-Turkism which later became local Turkism, or Turkish nationalism. Although it was the last of the three to develop, Turkism would eventually bloom into Turkish nationalism—and nationhood—in the 1920s. But during the middle nineteenth century, Pan-Turkism, or Pan-Turanianism as it was sometimes called, found expression as an interest in Turkish (largely pre-Islamic) antiquity and the ways in which the Turkish race spread across Eurasia. The new science of Turcology became popular, and the group began, somewhat tautologically, to define itself by studying itself: We are that which we study;

⁷ Kemal Karpat (1982:31) links the growth of pan-Islamism in the late nineteenth century to the recent successful unifications of Italy and Germany, based on what the Ottomans considered to be the same sort of “primordial instincts” as those of Islam.

we study to know ourselves better. Eventually this cultural pan-Turkism would take on a political aspect.

These three forces—Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism—are tangled throughout Ottoman (and Turkish) history of the nineteenth and early 20th centuries. And the story of their struggle, debate, and eventual denouement is the story of the becoming of the Turkish nation.

2. IDEOLOGUES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Critics of the Tanzimat reforms included a group that arose in 1867, calling themselves the Young Ottomans and calling for an Ottoman parliament to check the abusive power of the ministers; a power which, they felt, had done nothing to slow the Empire's slow decline. One of the most outspoken of these was Namik Kemal (1840-1888), who favored a sort of Islamic modernism, in which the troubled Empire would take on the *material* aspects of the (clearly successful) Western civilization, while retaining their Islamic spirituality, morality, and traditions. He envisioned an Ottoman parliament and the accompanying Islamic modernism as a middle road between out-and-out modernism and secularism in the face of massive popular opposition on the one hand, and strict adherence to the *sharia* above all else as the means for eternal salvation regardless of the worldly costs, on the other. In fact, he did not see any contradiction between Islamic moral and religious principles, Ottoman political structures, and Western civilization. He favored pan-Islamism as the only real bond for the otherwise diverse peoples of the Ottoman Empire, but largely it was a *cultural* pan-Islamism he had in mind, rather than a political grouping.

It is hard to place Namik Kemal's ideas in Islamism, Ottomanism, or Turkism; though the latter had not really developed as a political rallying point when he was writing in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The difficulty in classifying Kemal lies in the fact that he himself did not distinguish between the Ottoman world and the Islamic

world. For instance, his call for pan-Islamism as the primary identity implies the congruency of the Ottoman Empire as a matter of fact:

Since the Caliphate is here [in the Ottoman Empire], and since...in the suitability of the place and the readiness of the people in nearness to Europe, the present home of civilization, in wealth and in knowledge, this country is the most advanced of all the Muslim lands, this union of which we speak will surely have its centre here....When that happens, the light of knowledge will radiate from this centre to Asia and Africa. Facing the balance of Europe, a new balance of the East will come into being (Kemal 1872, quoted in Lewis 1979:341).

Having established that Western-style reforms were necessary, Kemal tried to reconcile them with Islamic tradition, to find precedents in the Islamic past (Lewis 1979:144), so that his proposed changes on such things as human rights, parliamentary government, and political rights of the citizen (to name a few), were seen not as a capitulation to the Western ideals but rather as a return to an older, more pure form of Islam. He argued that “all that is best in European civilization derived from or could be paralleled in classical Islamic civilization, and the Muslim, in adopting these things, was returning to what was deepest and most authentic in his own tradition” (Lewis 1979:142).

Namik Kemal was not the only ideologue to find the roots of reforms in the Islamic past. Mohammed Abduh, writing in the late nineteenth century, also struggled with the tension between a necessary (he felt) modernity and an equally necessary Islamic tradition. Like Kemal, Abduh’s solution was to maintain Islam as the basis of society, but to reconcile it with modern thought. Islam, he felt, “could be the moral basis of a modern and progressive society (Hourani 1970:140). This wasn’t just an abstract possibility but a concrete necessity if the Muslim world was to remain—or become—a key player: “the Muslim nations could not become strong and prosperous again until they

acquired from Europe the sciences...and they could do this without abandoning Islam” (ibid.:151).

Recall that one of the legacies of the Tanzimat reforms was the redundancy of traditional Ottoman-Islamic and new European-style institutions and, by implication, two competing world views. Abduh intended his work to “convince Muslims with a modern education that they could still be Muslims, and to save them from having to live in two worlds at once, one derived from the principles of Islam and the other from those of European thought” (Hourani 1981:184).

Abduh’s viewpoint, like that of Namik Kemal, indicates that a certain amount of the ideological discussion during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and to some extent, of the twentieth century as well, cannot be definitively placed into Ottomanism, Islamism, or Turkism. After all, these developed at different times, and were each complex enough to contain a wide variety of viewpoints, to the extent that any division is somewhat artificial. In other words, the thinkers of the time rarely if ever pointed out (for example) that they were espousing Islamism instead of Ottomanism. They wrote and taught what they felt was right and possible; today scholars divide their thinking into these three categories (see Zürcher 1993:132). Another important consideration may seem somewhat obvious: we have the benefit of hindsight. We know that Turkism, despite a later start than the other two, eventually bloomed into Turkish nationalism and overrode the other two. But if it had been Ottomanism or Islamism that was the victor, we could just as easily find early signs of each of them in the debates of the nineteenth century.

Abduh and Kemal, along with most of the other ideologues of the nineteenth century, struggled with the friction between tradition and modernity. Some people felt that the problem was with the Ottoman Empire; others felt that Islam itself had to be reformed. Nevertheless, many of the questions were the same. By the early nineteenth century, “[f]inding themselves the target of conquest and colonization, Muslims naturally began to wonder what had gone wrong....Educated Muslims, chagrined by the newfound potency of their European rivals, asked: What are they doing right and what are we doing wrong, or not at all?” (Lewis 1996:56).

Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-1891) is generally considered the first scholar to stress a Turkish group identity within yet actually *separate* from the Ottoman identity. This period saw the beginnings of (intellectual) pan-Turkism, as Vefik Pasha stressed “that Turks and their language were not *merely Ottoman*, but were the westernmost branch of a great and ancient family stretching across Asia to the Pacific” (Lewis 1979:347; emphasis added). In this sentence, although it is caged in academic terms (Vefik Pasha wrote on history and linguistics) we may glimpse some early pride in this Turkishness, as opposed to being “merely Ottoman.” Another pan-Turkist scholar, Suleyman Pasha (d.1892), wrote a general history which stands out as the first work of (modern) Turkish historiography to examine the pre-Islamic Turks (Lewis 1979:347).

This focus on the Turks as an object of study had the effect of further defining that object, and new feelings of Turkish self-awareness began to develop. In addition to scholarly attention, irredentist Turkish movements (particularly in Russia and Central Asia) outside the boundaries of the Empire also began to draw attention to the possibilities of pan-Turkism.

The Ottoman reaction to Balkan separatism, the Tatar revolt against Russian pan-Slavism, the response of Turkish and Tatar intellectuals, the nourishment of Turkish pride by Turcological discovery—all these, at a time of Ottoman defeat and Muslim abasement, combined to encourage the growth of Turkism, of the new political movement based, not on a dynasty, a faith, or a state, but on a people—the Turkish people, in its vast territories extending from Europe to the Pacific (Lewis 1979:348).

But Ottomanism was still a potent force—after all, it had the existing legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire behind it—as was Islamism, which had its own ancient legitimacy. It is too easy to simplify history into discrete ideological periods, with starting and finishing dates and a list of key figures, like toy soldiers, lined up in each. In the Ottoman Empire during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the currents of these three ideologies swirled and blurred across the decades, and it was not until the declaration of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 that Turkism was seen to be victorious, and only a murky victor at that: although Ottomanism has fallen away, Islamism remains a potent force in today's world.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) was one of the most articulate and forceful proponents of renewed Islamism as the solution to the decline of the Muslim world. Nationalism, he admitted, plays an undeniably important role in the world. But the *soul* of the people should remain Islamic throughout the convulsions of revolution and independence. These political upheavals were no threat to Islam, which, al-Afghani maintained, should stand as the primary identity of the people—and only after that would come affiliations of nationalism or patriotism (Lewis 1979:342; Hourani 1970:115ff.). “For Muslims,” al-Afghani felt, “no sort of national solidarity, not even patriotism, can replace the bond created by Islam. Real unity, in a Muslim nation, rests on common religious conviction” (Hourani 1970:119). Two points are important to note here. The

first is that for al-Afghani, the Ottoman Empire was not even an issue, which shows how far its decline had progressed by the mid-nineteenth century: even a generation before, the continued existence of the Empire was a given assumption. The second point is that al-Afghani's was not necessarily a call for pan-Islamism, but rather, a conviction that whatever other identities a group of people held, their strongest bonds should be those of Islam. An Islam which, moreover, needed to be reformed and purified from the taint of secularists and Western-style reformers (Yapp 1987:219).

Sultan Abdulhamid, who came to power in 1876, adopted a form of pan-Islamism during the last years of the nineteenth century. This won him the support of Ottoman Muslims (as well as non-Ottoman Muslims, for that matter) against the numerous liberal opponents of his autocratic rule, emphasizing his role of Caliph and thus leader of *all* Muslims. To defy the Sultan was to defy Islam. Nevertheless, such defiance did occur, largely in the person of "Western-educated, westward-looking younger intellectuals" (Lewis 1979:344), who viewed pan-Islamism as a shallow anachronism that, no matter how morally appealing it might be, simply could not stand against the Christian West.

In 1897, as Abdulhamid was pursuing his pan-Islamic policies and a group known as the Young Turks lived in exile from the Empire, working for the "salvation of the empire and the restoration of the constitution of 1876" (which Abdulhamid had suspended) (Yapp 1987:183), a writer named Mehmed Emin published a book of poetry written in the meter and language of popular vernacular Turkish, rather than the formal Ottoman style. In this volume of "folk" poetry we may distinguish the first instance of *political* pan-Turkism: "I am a Turk, my faith and my race are mighty"; and later, "We are Turks, with this blood and with this name we live" (Emin 1897 quoted in Lewis

1979:343). For the first time, the Turks were portrayed as more than just a past object of study that had existed in the past; they were a vibrant group living in the present and proud of their identity.⁸

This was not to say that Emin advocated “Turk” as his *primary* identity: he was a devout Muslim and Islam remained his first loyalty. But what he had done was introduce, with the new use of the word *Turk*, “a new concept of identity...into the collective self-consciousness of the Turkish-speaking Ottoman Muslims” (Lewis 1979:343). Along with fellow pan-Turkist Yusuf Akçura (discussed below) and others, Emin founded the journal *Turk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland), “which rapidly became the organ of a more systematic and political form of Turkism” (Lewis 1979:350).

Yusuf Akçura (1876-1933) published a pamphlet in 1904 which also outlined pan-Turkism as a separate—and more viable—movement from Ottomanism and Islamism, a movement that could stand successfully against European aggression (Berkes in Gökalp 1959:20). After discussing and then discarding first Ottomanism as an unrealistic pipe dream, and then Islamism as too dispersed to counter Christian (Western) opposition, Akçura called for a “Turkish national policy based on the Turkish race” (Akçura 1928 quoted in Lewis 1979:326-327), not making a distinction between “the dominant Turkish race within the Ottoman Empire” and “the many millions of Turks, in Russia and elsewhere, beyond the Ottoman frontiers” (Lewis 1979:327). (There is no clearer outline of pan-Turkism than this, and because Akçura’s ideas of the Turks had no clear territorial demarcation, it is too early to call this Turkish nationalism.) Akçura’s call for a new identity with its foundation in the *Turkishness* of its members was, compared to

⁸ It is also significant that Emin here proudly adopts the term “Turk,” previously an insult.

Islamism and Ottomanism, “equally grandiose, but perhaps more effective and more modern as well as more useful to the Turks” (Berkes in Gökalp 1959:20).

Akçura and the other pan-Turkists did not go so far as to call for a *national* group with its identity rooted in the Turkishness of its members, though they did loudly and proudly demarcate themselves as a group separate from Muslims or Ottoman citizens.

Some agreed with the pan-Turkists on the efficacy of a Turkish self-consciousness, but remained attached to the traditional Ottoman political structure, maintaining that the Empire “could be saved and eventually reformed by giving it a Turkish national character” (Karpas 1973:110). Others felt that the pan-Turkists had not gone far enough in their calls for Turkish solidarity. Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) played a vital role in shepherding the transition from the pan-Turkism of the late 19th century to the Turkish nationalism of the 1920s. It was not until Mustafa Kemal led the war for independence against first the Greeks and then the occupying Allied powers that Turkish nationalism took on the explicitly territorial tone that would distinguish it from the more general pan-Turkism of earlier years. But Gökalp’s pre-World War I writings served to strengthen the conviction that the Turkish character was capable of forming into a nation. Niyazi Berkes, who translated and edited a volume of Gökalp’s writings, summarized the recurrent theme as

how the Turks should adopt Western civilization, and how this effort should be harmonized with the Turks’ two historic traditions, i.e. their Turkish and Islamic backgrounds; or, in other words, what the Turks as a nation and Islam as their religion would look like under the conditions of contemporary civilization (1959:13).

Gökalp was careful to make clear the distinction between culture and civilization. Culture, he maintained, was linked to the pre-Ottoman and indeed pre-Islamic practices

of Turkish folk culture—art, music, poetry. This Turkish culture, he argued, must be maintained. But the cumbersome, intricate, and ultimately crippling Ottoman *civilization* should be replaced with the more modern and more effective one of the West, including “positive sciences, industrial technology, and social organization [division of labor]” (Gökalp 1959:266). Western *culture*, with its attendant excesses, immoralities, and lack of Islam in general, was to be avoided: “[W]e have to be the disciples of Europe in civilization, but entirely independent of it in culture” (ibid.:250) he wrote in 1917, as World War I was grinding to a close and the curtain seemed certain to fall on what was left of the Ottoman Empire.

Although by this point—the early 20th century—pan-Turkism had yet to fully metamorphize into Turkish nationalism, it was already developing a territorial aspect (thanks largely to war and independence in the provinces), which was only made stronger by ethnic and linguistic identification across the region; a region that was, after all, what was left of the decrepit Empire. Ottomanism, on the other hand, lacked the objective unifier promised by pan-Turkism. Ottomanism had no common linguistic identity on which to draw, no discrete territory, no ethnic homogeneity—nothing besides the increasingly desperate insistence on a common Ottoman state over all other loyalties. Furthermore, this Ottomanist identity, largely a political one, paled in comparison to the more immediately obvious traits of language, fatherland, ethnicity (Hourani 1970:281).

By the early 20th century, then, there was a great deal of argument over what would become of the Empire. Some few suggested a return to old structures and institutions; others argued that sweeping reforms were the only solution; still others felt that slow and moderate change was all that was needed. But the theme that most clearly

stands out—even after the Young Turk revolution of 1908—is a great uncertainty over the nature of what the people were arguing for, or what they were disagreeing over. Either way, and despite the fact that there was by this time a fairly well agreed-upon group of Turkish people, it was disturbingly unclear what the nature of that group was; if they were to be an Islamic nation, an ethnic group within the Ottoman Empire, a group of Turkish-speaking Muslims. The group, so newly-defined itself, had even less definition of their identity, of who the people were supposed to be. “What was the nature of this entity that was to be saved?” was the key question of the first part of the twentieth century (Lewis 1979:233). What little of their identity *was* defined was that part the nineteenth-century Turcologists had studied: folk culture, pre-Islamic art, vernacular forms of poetry. But these were more charming antiquities than rallying points for identity. That identity remained largely unclear until the reforms of Mustafa Kemal in the 1920s.

It is important, even crucial, to point out that identity, once defined, can *change*. As Richard Jenkins (1996) points out, identity is more a process than an object, a continued renegotiation of internal and external identifying forces (who we say we are versus who *you* say we are). I treat identity here as a static object for reasons of simplicity, much in the same way that a complex mathematical formula may be rendered comprehensible by eliminating variables. Treating identity as a *thing* rather than a complicated *process* implies a certain dulling of the analytical knife; but makes it easier, in this limited format, to envision the complex relationships between identity and nationhood, nationalist movements, and the historical events in Turkey.

3. THE YOUNG TURKS—AND THE END⁹

In the early years of the twentieth century, Ottomanism remained strong, even among the Young Turks in exile, as it was linked on the most basic level with the Ottoman Empire. One could not argue for the survival of the Empire without supporting the principle on which it was based: the common identity of all its members as Ottoman subjects or citizens. The exiled Young Turks, once they came to power in the revolution of 1908, made Ottomanism their official policy. But, as I discuss below, events such as the loss of Christian provinces, and rumblings of discontent even among Muslim provinces, made the *de facto* Turkishness of what was left of the Empire even more real while casting a bright light on the unlikeliness of Ottomanism ever to be effective (c.f. Zürcher 1993:134).

At the same time that Gökalp was writing and thinking and arguing about the Turkish national character, the Young Turks were living in exile, safe from the autocratic rule of Sultan Abdulhamid, whom they planned to replace with a more liberal and progressive government, ideally led by the parliament that Abdulhamid had dismissed in 1878 (Lewis 1979:177). In this they were the intellectual heirs of the Young Ottomans, who had arisen as critics of the mid-nineteenth century Tanzimat reforms. Both the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks (the name change itself is significant) held the salvation of the Empire as their driving force. Both groups felt that constitutional

⁹ The best source on the Young Turks is Feroz Ahmad's 1969 *The Young Turks*, and I draw on it heavily here. The fact that Ahmad (among others) has devoted an entire book to the subject underscores the very

government as a check on the power of the Sultan and his ministers was the solution (Ahmad 1969:16).

During the summer of 1908, the secret Committee of Union and Progress revealed itself to the Sultan and the world, demanding a constitutional government. The movement quickly became an armed revolt, and following “the refusal of Anatolian troops to crush the rebellion, the [Imperial] Palace became demoralized and gave up the policy of repression for one of conciliation” (ibid.:13). In July 1908, Abdulhamid gave way and restored the Constitution of 1876, re-establishing Parliament and a constitutional regime. The power of the office of the Sultan had been dealt a severe blow, from which it would not recover.

The Young Turks, as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), were a diverse group, largely held together by their common opposition to the Sultan’s despotic regime. Once in power, without a common opponent, the CUP was continually plagued by factionalism and debate.¹⁰ For example, the stated goal of the CUP, as part and parcel of their drive to save the Empire, was Ottomanism. Neither Ottomanism nor the Empire could exist in any real sense without the other, but as time went on, pan-Turkism seemed to make more and more practical sense as a question of pure survival.

In early April 1909 the Society of Muhammed led a counter-revolution, opposing the Ottomanism and Westernist policies of the CUP and supporting the Seriat, or Islamic law, as the basis for rule and Islam as the basis of union. The secularism of the CUP had alienated traditional elements everywhere: “Islam had played a vital role in Ottoman

basic nature of the simple sketch I present here.

¹⁰ Goçek (1996:135) notes the improvisational nature of the Young Turks, who were most concerned, at first, with deposing Abdulhamid and restoring constitutional government. Ahmad (1969) also comments that the Young Turks “had no guiding principle for future action save an opaque notion of constitutional

society and continued to do so, and used as a weapon against the Committee, it provided the opposition with the largest audience” (ibid.:43). It was not until the army stepped in at the end of April to restore order that the Islamic-based movement was suppressed.

Abdulhamid was deposed and replaced by his brother Mehmed Resad, and though the suppression of the counter-revolution appeared to be a victory for the CUP, the Committee had been weakened when it became clear they were not able to restore order themselves. Another result of the counter-revolution was an increased defensiveness on the part of the CUP, visible as the ruling party became more authoritarian. For example, socialist elements within the Empire had initially cheered the Young Turk revolution and its flag of brotherhood against the oppression of the Sultan. But after the counter-revolution Turkish socialists found themselves facing a CUP that viewed them as threats, and they began to draw together against the increasingly intolerant CUP (Noutsos 1994:84). Also significant is the fact that Islam, at least in this place and this time, had—as a rallying point—become a *reaction* against secularism rather than the unquestioned status quo it once had been.

In fact, pan-Islamism itself was undergoing a slow decline, but the existence of the few remaining non-Turkish Muslim groups in the Empire (largely Arabs) meant that pan-Islamism could not be abandoned altogether. In fact, in response to the threat of Arab revolt in 1913, the Committee relaxed its secular position, permitting Arabic to be used in certain schools and administrative departments, signaling a more subtle shift from the secular Ottomanism that had ushered in the Young Turks, to a more Islamic Ottomanism “prescribed by historical reality” (Ahmad 1969:136). Hanioglu (1995:200ff.) points out

that the Young Turks, especially in the early years before they removed Abdulhamid, consciously promoted Islam in order to appeal to a Muslim audience, though in private many found fault with institutionalized Islam. The ebb and flow of Young Turk support of Islam is indicative of the contested nature of that institution.

The Arabs were not the only non-Turkish group within what was left of the Empire to threaten the principle of Ottomanism. In 1908, soon after the proclamation of a new constitutional government, “Austria seized the opportunity to proclaim the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria declared her independence; Crete announced her union with Greece” (Lewis 1979:214). In 1911, Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire and occupied Tripoli; and in 1912, a secret alliance of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria invaded the Ottoman Balkan territories, “long the centre of gravity of the Ottoman Empire” (Lewis 1979:357). As the rapidly shrinking Empire became more Turkish (ethnically as well as geographically), so too did Ottomanism begin to give way to Turkism (Ahmad 1969:154; also see Davison 1990:25-26). This was not Turkish nationalism—that would come later—but pan-Turkism, which appealed to the expansionist feelings of the Young Turks, and which was easier to reconcile with the pan-Islamism necessary to appease the troubled Arab provinces (Hourani 1970:280-281; 265-266). The dream of a single national Ottomanist identity simply could not compete with the more apparent and discernible identities of language, race, or ethnicity offered by pan-Turkism.

Even so, pan-Turkism, among the Turks living in Turkey, was more popular as a cultural identity than a potential political bond with their brethren in the Soviet Union, Persia, Afghanistan, and China. For these Anatolian Turks, although they held “a greater

awareness of their separate identity of Turks, a new feeling of kinship with their rediscovered ancestors and their remote cousins, a new interest in Turkish language, folklore, and tradition [than they had prior to the pan-Turkist movement],” they were much more cautious when it came to “closer political association” with their irredentist cousins (Lewis 1979:351).

The Committee of Union and Progress pushed their doctrine of modernization uncompromisingly, convinced that it was the only way to save the Empire. One of the ideas implied by modernization was that of equal treatment before the law, and in this we may discern their insistence that political identity take precedence over religious separatism. The CUP “found the idea of a Muslim and Christian, both citizens of the same state, being governed by different laws an anachronism opposed to the most fundamental principles of modernization” (Ahmad 1969:156). This was met with vigorous protest from Muslim Turks, Albanians, Arabs, Slavs, and Armenians alike, though it did lay the foundation for the Kemalist secularism and nationalism of the 1920s.

Meanwhile, Ziya Gökalp was continuing to call for a secular Turkish identity, arguing that religion had no place in the government of a modern state. “The separation between religion and state is a goal sought by all civilized nations,” he wrote in 1913 (Gökalp 1959:102). Such a separation, he was careful to point out, did not mean atheism or irreligiosity, but rather the transformation of Islam from a state (political) institution into a more privatized one of the family and the individual. He

mobilized all his energies to demolish the theocratic conception of nationality....[and to] demonstrate that the average Turk, who at that time used to identify himself as a Muslim member of the Ottoman ‘nation’, was confusing nation with two other sociological entities. One was *ümmet*, an international religious community, and the other was a political

organization comprising in itself several nationalities as well as religious communities (Berkes 1959:24).

By 1914 the Turks were recovering from their territorial losses¹¹ and trying to reconcile the Ottomanism of the Empire with the Islamism required by political realities, while considering the Turkist writings of Gökbalp and others. Nevertheless there was an “atmosphere of hope and optimism,” as “the opposition parties were no more, the Committee had a majority in Parliament, the military was under control, and all sources of internal conflict and friction seem[ed] to have been removed,” thanks to increased control by the CUP (Ahmad 1969:150). But time had run out for the Ottoman Empire. As war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, the Turks were unwilling to remain neutral, feeling (probably correctly) that once conflict raged around them, they would have to choose their allies or face partition by Europe during the course of the war. Moreover, after the recent humiliating defeats in the Balkan wars, neutrality seemed particularly distasteful. After failing to ally with the *Entente* Powers (who felt that the

¹¹ “In terms of territory and population alone, the Turks lost about 424,000 square miles out of a total area of about 1,153,000 square miles, and approximately 5,000,000 souls from a population of about 24 million. These losses, substantial by themselves, were all the more important because Rumelia [the Balkans] was involved. For centuries Rumelia had been the heart of the Empire, its provinces being by far the most advanced and the most productive....Rumelia had given the Empire its multi-national character and its loss

Ottomans would be more a liability than a help), the CUP “turned to Germany and gladly accepted her offer of an alliance” (ibid.:151). With the defeat of Germany four years later, the final nail was hammered into the Ottoman coffin.

had an immediate effect on the ideology of the Young Turks: the centre of gravity began to shift to Anatolia” (Ahmad 1969:152).

4. MUSTAFA KEMAL—AND THE BEGINNING

As a young army officer, Mustafa Kemal had participated in the Young Turk revolution in 1908; as a general in the Ottoman Army, he built a reputation as the “most successful Ottoman field commander” (Davison 1990:26), especially after his victory at Gallipoli (Geliboğ) in 1915, and for this reason was wildly popular after the war. It is difficult to pinpoint, however, the point at which Kemal envisioned a national Turkish state as the solution to the myriad of problems facing the defeated region. He later pointed out that the territorial losses of the Ottoman Empire had rendered obsolete the policy of Ottomanism, while pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism had both failed to materialize into any sort of viable political identity, and that “therefore...the only possibility remaining was the creation of some kind of nation-state, based on the Turkish-speaking Muslim peoples of Anatolia and eastern Thrace” (Macfie 1994:73; also see Kemal 1929 cited in Macfie 1994:103-104).

On 19 May, 1919, Kemal landed at Samsun, in northern Anatolia, with orders to oversee the demobilization of the Ninth Army. The reason for this somewhat distant posting, even for a general of a defeated army, lay in Istanbul, where Kemal had too strongly expressed his opposition to the Allied occupation and the capitulation of the Sultan’s government to the victors. Upon arrival in Samsun, he took leadership of the nascent nationalist movement, (largely composed of small groups such as the Thrace-Pasaeli Defence of Rights Association) which at that point held little definition other than

a general opposition to the *Entente* occupation. He hoped to organize “a national movement capable of uniting the national forces...and securing the formation of a government able and willing to confront the occupation forces...and negotiate a satisfactory peace settlement” (ibid.:66). The nationalists met at Amasya, in north-central Anatolia, where Kemal announced his “intention to convene a general assembly...in order to *scrutinise* the policy pursued by the [Ottoman] government with regard to the peace settlement” (Macfie 1994:67 citing Kemal 1929; emphasis added).

A woman named Halide Edib, a sometime confidant of Mustafa Kemal and a prodigious writer, was well placed to describe the Amasya Protocol, as it came to be called. Citing a book written by one of the participants, she quotes, “The central government is entirely under foreign control. The Turkish nation is resolved to refuse foreign domination and this is proved by the various organizations of defense all over the country. The activities of these groups must be unified” (Edib 1928:42).

Edib also obliquely implies that replacement of the central (Ottoman) government was acceptable to Kemal, should it become necessary:

So far, up to the signing of the Amassia protocol, there seemed no sign of a desire to break away from Istamboul and form a new government in Anatolia; moreover, the Amassia protocol was so worded that it could also be taken as an attempt to unify and organize the national defense against the opposition (ibid.).

In Sivas, in September 1919, after having been stripped of his army commission and declared a traitor and a rebel by the occupied Ottoman government, Kemal convened a national congress of supporters. This congress amended the manifesto they had produced some months earlier, so that Article I read:

The various parts of the Turkish Territory which remained within our frontier when...the armistice concluded between the Entente Powers and

the Turkish Government was signed, are everywhere inhabited by an overwhelming Moslem majority and form a whole; this cannot be separated [and they] would not, for any reason, detach themselves one from another or from the Ottoman Motherland. All the Moslem elements living in those countries are true believers filled with sentiments of mutual respect and feelings of sacrifice (quoted in Macfie 1994:74-75).

Other sections of the manifesto emphasized resistance against Greek or Armenian expansion into the region; and, perhaps most important, a declaration that should the Ottoman government fail to “preserve the integrity of the country,” appropriate measures would be taken to secure the country as a whole (Macfie 1994:74-75). This was only a few months after the Amasya Protocol, in which the Nationalist had struck a more hesitant tone in their willingness to oppose the Ottoman government. The Nationalists were becoming increasingly willing to take any measures necessary to “preserve the country” against threats internal and external.

Meanwhile, emboldened by the weakened state of the region, Greek forces had landed at Izmir (where they had been granted a zone of influence by the *Entente* powers) and begun fighting their way inland. The nationalists rallied support against the Greeks, the Turks’ old enemies, and the nationalist cause became, at least for the moment, a territorial and ethnic fight to expel the Greeks from the ancient Turkish homeland.¹²

This was a key moment in the development of a Turkish identity. As they fought, the Nationalists—by identifying the invading Greeks as enemies—were in fact reinforcing their own status as a group, more sharply outlining themselves and the Turkish people as a whole: if the Greeks were the Other, or not-Turks, those fighting against them *were* Turks. By the same token, the Turks also bolstered their own

¹² Functionally speaking, it did not hurt that the Turks were fighting for their very survival perhaps even before their identity as a group had been established. Although many of these struggles are part of the process of identity formation, this largely became clear *afterwards*. At the time, the main goal of the Turks

nationalist cause by linking it to an ethnic and religious struggle to repel the hated Greeks. The ultimate goal of the Nationalists, of course, was the expulsion of *all* foreign domination, particularly European. In 1919, however, the invading Greeks were not only the more immediate threat, they were also more clearly the enemy than were the European powers which continued to occupy Istanbul and Cilicia. Nevertheless, resistance to infidel domination was to become an early—if short-lived—theme of the nationalists. One of the earliest points Richard Jenkins (1996) makes in his excellent book on identity is that it is *relational*; that the Self needs the Other to define it.¹³ From this follows his argument, one of the themes of his work, that identity is continually negotiated and renegotiated between the “(internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others” (1996:20). We shall see below that this was the case in Turkey; that the internal identity of the people—what *they* felt they were—was continually in a dialectical relationship with the external identity offered by the Kemalists as they attempted to implement reforms designed to prescribe the Turkish identity. In 1919, however, it was the Greeks, defined as the enemy and thus the Other, which enhanced the solidarity of the Nationalists.¹⁴

As Edib’s assessment of the Amassia Protocol shows, Kemal was prepared to break with the official Ottoman government if need be; an action which held all sorts of dangerous implications by virtue of the fact that it would have meant abandoning the

was survival.

¹³ In Evans-Pritchard’s classic ethnography (1969) on the Nuer, a Nilotic people in what is today the Sudan, he notes that there is “always a contradiction in the definition of a political group, for it is a group only in relation to other groups” (147). The relational nature of identity is also expounded by Stuart Hall (1989:345) and Morley and Robins (1996:468).

¹⁴ Jenkins (1996) extensively discusses both individual and group identity. One of the strongest themes of his book is that the two are different in degree, not kind; that they exist along a continuum (see especially 1996:14-15, 39, 132).

authority of the Sultan, the old Ottoman dynasty, and even of Islam as a political force. In fact, this is exactly what happened: as it became increasingly clear that the Islamic government and the Sultan—by way of their capitulation to and cooperation with the Allied occupying forces—stood in the way of Turkish independence, Kemal cannily began shifting away from the “Muslim versus infidel” alignment which had so enflamed the early part of the war against the Greeks. But the Muslim-infidel battle lines were too sharply etched to be forgotten in a few years, and Kemal encountered fierce resistance when he later tried to implement reforms derived from the very same infidels who were occupying the remaining Ottoman territories in 1919.

At first, however, Kemal and the Nationalists sought to work in concert with the Sultan and his government in Istanbul. This uneasy partnership nonetheless resulted in the election of a Nationalist majority to the Ottoman Parliament, which met in Istanbul in January 1920, despite continued resistance. It immediately adopted the Nationalist Pact, which explicitly defined the objectives of the Nationalist movement. The Allies, aggravated by this as well as by the continued military operations of the Nationalist forces, responded by occupying Istanbul in March and sentencing Kemal and his followers to death the following month.

This death sentence took the form of a *fatwa*, or religious decree, issued by the Shaykh al-Islam, leader of the religious hierarchy, and it became the religious duty of any Muslim to kill those against whom the *fatwa* was issued. The very concept of a *fatwa*, as a legal opinion issued by a religious leader, exemplifies the congruence of Islam and politics of the time (similar to the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages). The important implication to be drawn here is that not all Turks favored the Nationalist

agenda at this point (early 1920); certainly the more conservative religious hierarchy sided with the Sultan's occupied government in cooperating with Allied demands. In essence, Kemal's followers were forced to choose between their loyalty to Islamic law and their loyalty to Kemal; to a certain extent, though it is doubtful that they thought of it this way, they were choosing between a strict interpretation of Islam, and a compelling nationalism.

In April 1920, the Nationalists moved to Ankara, in Central Anatolia, and convened a Grand National Assembly in direct challenge to the official Ottoman government in Istanbul, cooperation with whom had yielded the Nationalists nothing. Even so, the Ankara-based Grand National Assembly remained hesitant to adopt any anti-Istanbul decrees, though by January of the following year, Kemal had convinced the assembly that it should act as a representative of the Turkish people, in whom the real sovereignty rested. By now, the goal of Kemal and the Nationalists was clearly nothing other than Turkish independent nationhood, though the form of that nationhood—the identity of the nation—remained almost as unclear as it had since the pan-Turkists began suggesting it twenty years earlier.

Beginning in May 1919, the Army of the Caliphate and other anti-nationalist forces launched an assault on the Nationalists, who were also (meanwhile) continuing to fight the Greeks. This further strengthened the Nationalists' conviction, previously little more than a suspicion, that they were fighting not just to expel the Greeks but for the very existence of what would become the Turkish nation, so instead of weakening the Nationalist movement, this policy only further solidified their position. It is clear that not all Turks supported the Nationalists in their fight for independence, though, particularly

as the secular nature of the movement became clear. A careful examination of voting records even as late as 1924 shows enormous numbers of abstentions (Zilfi 1998). Many members of the Grand National Assembly were unwilling to oppose Kemal. But nor were they “necessarily opposed to the idea of Islam as a social and spiritual cement for their country. A lot of [Kemal’s] supporters were members of the *Ulema* [Islamic scholars]” (ibid.). Furthermore, Turkish nationalism, though it is convenient to discuss as if it were a unitary entity, was actually composed of “a multiplicity of resentments and aspirations.... ‘Nationalism did not displace the old loyalties. Although it grew at their expense, it existed side by side with them’” (Wilson 1993:345, quoting Batatu 1993).

Fragile treaties with Soviet Russia in 1921 and early 1922 (Macfie 1994:117; Yapp 1987:316) bolstered the Nationalist military forces, and a treaty with France in 1921 resulting in the French withdrawal from Cilicia freed the Nationalist forces to concentrate on other regions. Slowly at first and then with increasing speed, they drove the Greeks back towards Izmir and the sea. As the Nationalists made headway against the retreating Greek forces, the *Entente* powers had repeatedly pressed for a diplomatic solution. Kemal, though careful not to discourage these suggestions, remained obstinate: “On no account, it was made clear, would any settlement be accepted which did not secure the complete independence, political, juridical, economic and financial, of the Turkish state” (Kemal 1929 cited in Macfie 1994:124).

Meanwhile, as the Greeks suffered defeat after defeat during the summer and fall of 1922, the way was left open for a Nationalist occupation of Istanbul. Four years after the end of World War I, the Britain was unable to convince her other Allies to help defend the capital against the advancing Nationalists, who demanded a renegotiation of

the harsh terms of the Sevres settlement. Having no other option, in late 1922 Britain and the Allies invited both the Nationalists and the official Ottoman government to talks in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Grand National Assembly recognized the potential weakness of having two Turkish delegations at the talks, and voted to abolish the sultanate—and with it the last of the Ottoman government—on 1 November 1922. In Kemal's words, "the curtain fell on the last act of the overthrow and breakdown of the Ottoman Monarchy" (Kemal 1924, quoted in Macfie 1994:127).

The Lausanne conference concluded in July 1923, and resulted in the only renegotiated peace settlement of all the defeated Axis powers. The Lausanne Treaty recognized and settled Turkish claims to territory along the present-day boundaries in Anatolia and Thrace. On 29 October 1923, the Grand National Assembly amended the Constitution to declare Turkey a republic and Mustafa Kemal its first president.

Ottomanism had died with the Ottoman Empire; pan-Islamism, despite a strong and widespread Islamic identity, had failed to materialize into a viable political entity; and Turkish nationalism, distilled from pan-Turkism and driven by a territorial notion of ethnolinguistic homeland, reigned supreme.

5. THE KEMALIST REFORMS

Although the legal and political creation of the Republic of Turkey was an important turning point, it was in fact only one in a series of difficult successes for Kemal and the Nationalists. It is important to understand the birth of the Turkish state not as the Beginning of Turkey, but rather one of many social, political, legal, and administrative changes that were all linked to Kemal's plan to modernize Turkey, and all of which formed the necessary foundation of the Turkish Republic. The only way for the new country to survive, Kemal and others believed, was to bring it into the twentieth century; and the only way to do so was through a dramatic and possibly painful replacement of Eastern civilization with that of the West, as first outlined by Ziya Gökalp. The ties binding Turkey to backwardness, to disunity, and even to the institutionalized political Islam that had marked every Islamic state since Muhammed, were to be severed so that Turkey could become a modern nation on the European model.

In 1923, Gökalp wrote:

There is only one road to salvation: To advance in order to reach—that is, in order to be equal to—Europeans in the sciences and industry as well as in military and judicial institutions. And there is only one means to achieve this: to adapt ourselves to Western civilization completely!

For example, as of November 1922, the caliph remained as the religious ruler of the state. Before 1922, the sultan had also held the office of the Caliphate, but Kemal abolished the sultanate in November of that year, he retained the institution of the Caliphate by separating it from the sultanate and assigning it the sultan's cousin, Abdul

Meçid. And although Kemal believed that the future of Turkey lay in secularism, he felt that time and circumstances were not yet right for the abolition of the Caliphate. He “realized that if the Sultanate had become an anachronism for Turkey, the Caliphate was even more so for the world of Islam. ‘Following the abolition of the Sultanate,’ he says, ‘I accepted the abolition of the Caliphate, as it was nothing but the same personal sovereignty under another name’” (Berkes 1964:457 quoting Kemal 1927:426). When Turkish independence was proclaimed on 29 October 1923, Kemal felt that it was premature to insist on a secular state, though he remained extremely uncomfortable in his role as president of an Islamic state (Berkes 1964:457). The secular intentions of the Kemalists were clear, though they were not aired openly at first, and long and heated debates took place between them and the Khilafâtists, who supported the Caliphate as Turkey’s link to the past and the Islamic world (ibid.). Kemal agreed, and it “was precisely for that reason that he was determined to break it” (Lewis 1979:263). By early 1924, Kemal railed openly against the Khilafâtists whom, he argued, claimed that “the Caliphate is State and the Caliph the head of the state and, hence, in reality, the Caliph should be the head of the Turkish state” (quoted in Berkes 1954.:459).

Niyazi Berkes (ibid.:460) comments that “[f]ew expected that Mustafa Kemal...would succeed in arousing national feelings to a higher level than that of zeal,” but it is hard to say whether the successful abolition of the Caliphate was caused by excessive secular-national sentiment or religious apathy. What matters is that both of these, apparently, occurred at the same time: on 3 March 1924, the Assembly passed a bill legally abolishing the Caliphate—and setting the tone for many of the reforms to follow. The modernizing ideal of secularism had taken form, in this case, as the abolition

of the Caliphate, but it was to continue to “produce a series of secularizing reforms within legal, educational, and cultural institutions” (ibid.:461).

Secularization was, in the minds of the Kemalists, only the first step towards a viable nation. It was linked to Westernization, which was seen as equally important. Kemal’s project of replacing the cumbersome and outdated Ottoman or Oriental civilization with that of the West implied the importation of the technological, scientific, and industrial products of the successful West. In 1922, even before Turkey had become a republic, Kemal was calling for change:

Ideas full of irrational superstition are morbid. Social life dominated by irrational, useless, and harmful beliefs is doomed to paralysis....Our guide in political, social, and educational life will be [Western] science....Progress is too difficult or even impossible for nations that insist on preserving their traditions and beliefs lacking in rational bases (quoted in Berkes 1964:465-466).

And two years later, in a speech given in late 1924, Kemal asserted:

Changing the rules of life in accordance with the times is an absolute necessity. In an age when inventions and the wonders of science are bringing change after change in the conditions of life, nations cannot maintain their existence by age-old rotten mentalities and by tradition-worshipping....Superstitions and nonsense have to be thrown out of our heads (quoted in ibid.:464).

The most important, and most controversial import of all was secularism. In fact, secularism was often seen as *the* element that had contributed most to the success of the West; by extension, religion was thought to have held back the East and Turkey in particular. Not religion as a general concept, but its saturation of all aspects of Eastern life (Berkes 1964:464, paraphrasing Agaoglu 1928).

With the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Seriat, or Islamic civil law, was no longer the law of the state, though it was not abolished outright. But formulating a

new civil code required more than simply importing one from a European country. The problem was voiced by the Minister of Justice in 1924: “It is not an easy task to frame laws suiting the mores of a people. We are now faced with the question of determining which legal provisions are suitable and agreeable to the social conditions of our country” (quoted in Berkes 1964:468). After two years of debate, the National Assembly passed the new Civil Code, a rough adaptation of the Swiss Civil Code (itself modeled after Germanic legal principles) on 17 February 1926. The preamble to the new Civil Code contained a remarkable outline of the ideas of the Kemalist reformers:

There is no fundamental difference in the needs of nations belonging to the modern family of civilization....We must never forget that the Turkish nation has decided to accept modern civilization and its living principles without any condition or reservation....If there are some points of contemporary civilization that do not seem capable of conforming to Turkish society, this is...because of the medieval organization and the religious codes which abnormally surround it....The Turkish nation, which is moving with determination to seize contemporary civilization and make it its own, is obliged not to make contemporary civilization conform to the Turkish nation, but to adjust its steps to the requirements of contemporary civilization at all costs (quoted in Berkes 1964:471).

It is worth noting the degree of change suggested by the Kemalists: every element of the Turkish nation that did not conform to “contemporary civilization” (Western civilization, the reformers felt) was to be changed so that it did. Very little of the “old” (Ottoman) Turkey was seen as acceptable—though future generations would question this full-scale reliance on the West as model to be followed. It was perhaps the extreme nature of the situation that led to what appears to be such a drastic solution: the reformers, after all, were not suggesting these changes arbitrarily but rather were fighting to save the new nation.

The Civil Code embodied the overall prescriptive nature of the Kemalist reforms: “the aim of the makers of the Code was not to establish and regulate the civil relations of the people according to existing customs and mores, or religious provisions. On the contrary, it was to *shape these relations according to what the makers of the Code believed they should be*” (ibid.; emphasis added). By serving as the replacement for the traditional Seriat, the Code “signified the unmitigated secularization of civil life” by such things as changing the nature of divorce and marriage, prohibiting polygamy, requiring family names (this was adopted in 1934), and, perhaps most importantly, radically improving the situation of women, who were enfranchised in 1931 and given “full political rights and duties in 1934” (ibid.:472-473).

The process of secularization implied more than legal and civil changes. The so-called “Hat Law” of 1925 prohibited the wearing of the fez, which Kemal decried as a backward symbol of ignorance and superstition.¹⁵ He stopped short of outlawing the traditional veil of Islamic women, but strongly discouraged its use. With the fiercely-debated adoption of the Latin script in 1928 came implications of abandoning the sacred Arabic script and—even more offensive to Muslims—translating the Koran into vernacular Turkish. It was soon prohibited to teach the Arabic script in schools other than institutions of higher learning. Kemal focused on education as the best means teaching the new values of the nation to its youngest members. As early as 1921, he addressed a group of teachers: “When I speak of national education I mean an education that will be free from all traditional superstitions as well as from all foreign influences, Eastern or Western, that are incompatible with our national character” (quoted in Berkes 1964:477).

¹⁵ See Lewis 1979:267 for an excellent discussion of the implications of Kemal’s outlawing what was, for

Although the final blow to the concept of an Islamic polity came when the article declaring Islam a state institution was dropped from the Constitution in 1928, this “neither reflected nor produced a clear and positive doctrine of secularism,” which was not made a formal part of the Constitution until nine years later (see below). Despite the lack of an official policy of secularism, however, after 1928 Kemal focused on other issues, believing that

the course of development of the religious consciousness of the people could not and should not be led by the state or by secular personalities. The religious question, then, became a matter of free discussion within the...framework of a secularized state. Its discussion shifted from the theological to the philosophical level (ibid.:496).

Such a shift to a higher level of abstraction signified, at least in the minds of those debating such issues, a major conceptual shift. The role of religion had become less of an immediate issue for many, though it remained, as it does today, a potent force throughout Turkey; particularly in the rural areas, where notions of State and Patriotism, as I discuss below, seem irrelevant.

But Kemalist secularism was not the abolition of Islam, as Gökalp made clear (1959:102; also see Berkes in ibid.:24), but rather, the rejection of the concept of an Islamic state (Berkes 1964:499). Religion remained an important, even crucial element in the lives of the Turkish people. But it should be equated, the Kemalists believed, neither with the Turkish state nor with Turkish culture. Islam had its own personal and privatized sphere of influence, one which had been established for it, and then—through legally-enforced guarantees of thought and expression—protected.¹⁶

many, “the last symbol of Muslim identification.”

¹⁶ “Religion was guaranteed freedom and protection as long and insofar as it was not utilized to promote any social or political ideology having institutional implications” (Berkes 1964:499).

In 1937, the “Six Arrows of Kemalism” were added to the Constitution. These principles were not rigid ideologies, nor were they an outline of changes decided upon by Kemal before they were implemented. More than anything, they were summaries of the intentions of the Kemalist reforms, adopted after the fact as descriptive statements. As they were amended to the Constitution, the six principles were Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Secularism, and Revolutionary-Reformism (Ahmad 1993:63).¹⁷ Together they stood for the majority of the reforms implemented by the Kemalists in the 1920s and early 1930s; reforms that were designed primarily to make Turkey a viable nation by overhauling and rebuilding the peoples’ identity as Turkish, rather than Ottoman, citizens.

It is important to remember that not all of these new ideas originated with Kemal; if he had not been able to build on the work of those who came before, he would have had even a harder time implementing the reforms. For example, Gökalp suggested secularism as a crucial component of any modern nation, decades before Kemal made it law. Many ideas behind the Tanzimat reforms—such as discrete territorialism, populism, civil rather than religious identity—were to reappear as Kemalist reforms (Davison 1990:244ff.). If nothing else, there was an intellectual tradition of reform, though perhaps only a faint one, by the time Turkey became a republic in 1923.

¹⁷ These principles were by no means agreed-upon, nor was there any overall consensus as to what precisely some of them meant in the first place. For instance, statism, “which accepted the necessity of the constructive intervention of the state in the national economy,” (Armajani and Ricks 1986:244), relied on a fairly subjective judgment of how much intervention was necessary and appropriate. Revolutionary-Reformism was also interpreted differently: moderates saw the state itself as reformist in nature, whereas radicals envisioned periodic necessary revolutions (Ahmad 1993:63-64; also see Yapp 1991:161-162).

What Kemal had done was to link values to the new identity.¹⁸ The citizens of the new nation, he was convinced, were to be identified and differentiated from those of the old Ottoman Empire by their *values*: modernity, secularism, positivism, technology, industry. Since the beginnings of Turcology and pan-Turkism in the nineteenth century, and certainly as of the war with the Greeks after World War I, the Turkish people had become increasingly accustomed to thinking of themselves as a group. Yet this group, remained, to a large extent, undefined—without a discrete identity—until the Kemalist reforms provided a suite of values for the Turks to call their own. Serif Mardin (1993) emphasizes Kemal’s role in providing the crucial second half of the equation of “group” and “identity of that group”:¹⁹

What happened was that Mustafa Kemal took up a non-existent, hypothetical entity, the Turkish nation, and breathed life into it. It is the ability to work for something which did not exist as if it existed, and to make it exist, which gives us the true dimensions of the project on which he had set out and which brings out the utopian quality of his thinking. Neither the Turkish nation as the fountainhead of a ‘general will’ nor the Turkish nation as a source of national identity existed at the time he set out on this task (366).

Two caveats need to be made right away. First, obviously, the group had some degree of identity, such as folk culture, vernacular language, a sense of a common

¹⁸ Richard Jenkins (1996) has much to say on the issue of (internally-based) identification versus (externally-based) categorization; or in other words, what a group feels its identity to be versus how an outsider, usually in a position of power, categorizes that group. This raises thorny emic and etic issues (are they who *they* say they are or who *we* say they are?) which I will not delve into here. Suffice it to say that in Turkey’s case, the internal identification was that of the people, and mostly included such values as religion, tradition, and local loyalties. Kemal’s categorization of the people as citizens of the new and modern nation was directly opposed to most of these values. As I point out below, the tension between what the Turkish people feel they are, and what the modernizing elements tell them to be, continues to this day.

¹⁹ Consider the Preamble to the United States Constitution, in which the first three words explicitly serve to differentiate the group in question, and the rest of the text sets out the values of that group: “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.”

history, prior to the reforms. But this was not sufficient to distinguish them as a separate group: they needed more definition of who they were if they were to become a viable, independent nation. Second, even more obviously, it was not as simple as the Kemalists supplying and the people accepting a group of values, like a winning hand in poker, as a viable identity to be shared throughout the group. As I discuss below, Kemal's reforms were resisted vigorously and sometimes successfully. And the Kemalists enforced the reforms with equal vigor, crushing a Kurdish pro-Islamic rebellion in 1925 and executing forty-six of the rebel leaders. It is more accurate to state that the Kemalists *provided* an identity for the Turkish people; something with which the people could say: this is who we are. Whether or not that identity was accepted, and the degree to which it was accepted or rejected, is a question still burning in Turkey today.

The Turkish people perceived the reforms (rightly so) as comprising a threat to their identity. Kemal's program of top-down modernity implied, for many, the imposition of moral and social practices strikingly different from those they had learned as children. And it was those old practices, Kemal felt, that were holding the country back from its rightful place as a scion of the twentieth century.

6. RURAL REACTION TO THE KEMALIST REFORMS

Kemal's Village Law, passed in 1924, was one of his earliest attempts to legislate modernity. "He had conceived of this law as being one of a series of decrees to modernize Turkish society" (Szyliowicz 1966:49). The law prescribed sixty-eight compulsory and optional changes which, when implemented, were to make the villages cleaner, healthier, less backward, more *modern*. The law included such items as: the elimination of standing pools of water (compulsory), a covered toilet for every house (also compulsory), and care for the poor and their families (optional) (ibid.:36-37). As part of a study in political modernization, Szyliowicz examined the village of Erdemli, on the southern Anatolian coast, in 1941 and again in 1957. He found that the Village Law, despite its specificity, "had almost no influence on rural life, its impact being limited to administrative and legal matters" (ibid.:37). This was not due solely to lack of enthusiasm for modernity on the villagers' part, though Szyliowicz felt that that did play a role (ibid.:198). But in addition to this resistance, Szyliowicz points out that after the passing of the Village Law, "no effort was made to collect the taxes or carry out the projects listed therein unless outside pressure was applied and this was seldom forthcoming, for the administration was satisfied with token compliance with the law" (ibid.:38). He concludes that the isolation of many villages—other than Istanbul and a few other large cities, Turkey was outstandingly rural at that time and to some extent, remains so today—combined with halfhearted or nonexistent enforcement of the decrees in the face of a

conservative “peasantry,” was responsible for the diluted success of the reforms, particularly in non-urban areas.

Sixteen years later, in 1957, Szyliowicz found Erdemli to be somewhat less isolated than it had been, but nevertheless still the focus of identity for many of its citizens: “Although most villagers felt a distinct sense of national pride and loyalty [more so than in 1941], they did not yet identify their own future with developments in [the capital at] Ankara....[R]ural public opinion was concerned mainly with local events and conditions” (ibid.:185). The anthropologist Paul Stirling found a very similar emphasis on local identities and issues during his fieldwork in rural areas, as discussed below.

But it would be a mistake to characterize the villagers as permanently frozen in a sort of suspended state of local-centric identity. Szyliowicz found that infrastructural changes such as agricultural assistance and the construction of roads, financed by the national government, strengthened the villagers’ ties with Ankara and the nation as a whole. For example, after World War II, the national road-building program (aided by funds through the Marshall Plan), “gave the country an economic unity it had previously never possessed. No longer were the villagers semi-isolated from the world around them; they were suddenly thrust into contact with the rest of the country” (ibid.:143). Therefore, he concludes (in 1957), as the isolation of the hinterland continues to decrease, the effect of Kemal’s reforms will only increase and spread (ibid.:198). Szyliowicz fails to recognize, however, that national roads do not necessarily imply national identity: the flow of vehicles, though it can do so, does not have to carry with it the flow ideas and values.

Paul Stirling lived in two Turkish villages in 1949-1950 and in 1951. He describes a strong sense of village solidarity, a solidarity which was set in opposition to that of neighboring villages as well as to the larger nation. The creation of the new nation in 1923 disrupted the longstanding village-scale affiliations, “demanding a new loyalty” (Stirling 1965:268). Not only that, but the nation (Stirling found), with its accompanying new legal, political, and economic systems, is in constant tension with the village. Stirling depicts not a village transformed into modernity by the Kemalist reforms, but rather one uncomfortably straddling the widening gulf between tradition and modernity, with all the troubling contradictions and compromises implied by such a tension. Such a characterization may be equally applied to Turkey today.

For example, in his study of the two villages he lived in, Stirling found that the nation of Turkey remains a poor second to the village in terms of loyalty. The villages are almost independent entities, and inter-village conflicts serve only to underscore this independence as well as to strengthen village loyalty.

People belong to their village in a way they belong to no other social group....

None of the geographical or administrative units larger than a village is in any way comparable....[and] the actual units of administration [such as provinces or districts]...have no social relevance outside their administrative functions....

The virtues of the village are an eternal topic of conversation with outsiders....Other villages are savage, mean, dishonourable, lying, lazy, cowardly....

....If any other village attempts to use land lying within the village boundaries, people mobilise rapidly and are quite prepared to fight, with fire-arms if necessary....Not even lineages cross village frontiers, so that the village from the outside presents a solid front of loyalty (ibid.:29-30).

Such a strong, almost fiercely defensive identification with, and loyalty to, one's own village and land is at the cost of a larger national affiliation. Of two demanding

masters, the closer one, the more relevant one, the more *real* one, was the village. But most people do not consciously carry a hierarchy of loyalties in the forefront of their minds, of course. The reality is more frequently a tangle of reasons and memories, some learned, some experienced first-hand, and most of them clothed in terms other than “group affiliation.” For example, Stirling (*ibid.*:70) found that young men were expected to stay in the village and work; and that those who give in to the appeal of the big city and quick cash are less respected than those who stay home, raise a family, and work the land—in short, those who uphold the traditional values of the village:

The trappings of sophistication—suits, watches, and fountain pens—have some appeal, but a scruffy old man who has land and works it well carries much more weight in the village than an elegant young *usta* [skilled worker]. Young men enjoy the liberties of the city and the feel of cash in their pockets, but the older men almost unanimously declare that they would far rather stay at home with their families and farm their land.

The State is seen most often as a burdensome structure that insists on changing things that should not be changed and generally interfering with village issues. The role of village headman, for example, which at one time had been available only to the oldest, wisest, and most experienced man, was now (1950) filled by much younger men for briefer periods of office. The position of headman “was no longer the top of the village but the bottom of the official State hierarchy” and thus much less desirable (*ibid.*:254). The national government, as “maintainer of law and order, legitimate robber (for tax purposes),...arbitrary universal provider,...[and] vote-catcher,” was envisioned by the villagers as a fickle and powerful institution which alternately hindered and aided them (*ibid.*:269).

For example, the villagers considered it shameful for a dispute to be taken to the courts, preferring to settle things locally and traditionally, and “although legal rights

seldom correspond to customary village rights” (ibid.:273), the people rarely complain about this discrepancy. They use the courts when there is no other option, and accept their judgment, albeit grudgingly. The villagers are clearly unhappy over the discrepancy between their systems and those of the state; yet at the same time they accept the “new” rules (twenty-five years old by the time Stirling was there). The villages are dependent on the towns economically (ibid.:266); the national economy provides crucial aid to the villages in times of drought or famine; compulsory national military service encourages identification with the nation. All of this tends to foster “strong links and a growing intimacy with the impersonal large-scale society of the nation and the cities” (ibid.:81). Nevertheless, caught in an uncomfortable tension, the villagers see their future “in terms of the village and not of the nation” (ibid.:82), and disdain Western manners, dress, and lifestyles as European and infidel. “I pointed to two educated Turkish women in Western dress and cosmetics who were passing. ‘They are not Turks,’ [said a village woman], ‘they are foreigners’” (ibid.:289).²⁰

Mahmut Makal, born in 1931 and thus “a son of the Atatürk period of reforms” (Thomas 1954:ix), was raised in a small village in central Anatolia. He attended one of the new Village Institutes, and in 1947, at the age of sixteen, became the “sole village teacher at the school of Nürüz” (ibid.:x). A strong believer in modernity and the values preached by the Kemalists, Makal’s reaction to the villagers is telling. He describes their world as one centered on tradition, hard work, conservative manners, and local (village-scale) ties and affiliations. A higher education was not part of this matrix: “‘Now that you’ve studied,’ they told me, ‘you must go and be Governor of a Province or a District.

²⁰ One hopes that, particularly as an anthropologist, Stirling had some reason to believe the women were educated other than the way they looked.

What future is there for you if you stay with us and waste your time in the village?”

(Makal 1954:31). Istanbul, the big cities, the reforms, were all seen as different, far away, and less down-to-earth than traditional village life. When Makal complains about all the straw dust everywhere, his father retorts, “‘Anyone would think his lordship had been brought up in Istanbul’” (ibid.:34).

The villagers Makal lived among had, without a doubt, reaped some of the rewards of the Kemalist reforms (such as government loans, agricultural assistance, and schools), but vigorously fought others, such as the imposition of the Latin script (decreed in 1928, almost a generation before Makal arrived).²¹ Makal found that religion was the identity most threatened by the Kemalist reforms, and the one to which the villagers remained most loyal:

Unless the written or spoken word has some connection with a religious question, it is of no importance to the villagers. Although they will listen to other matters if they are read out, and say that they are good, or bad, or interesting, they will always add this comment: ‘At bottom, those things don’t really concern us. The age we live in demands them and we listen, of course, but it is the other thing [religion] that really matters (ibid.:104).

Foreigner was equated with infidel, and as an outsider attempting to teach the villagers new and foreign values, Makal was accused of being “in the service of foreigners” (ibid.:105). Recall that the Nationalist movement had begun as one invoking Muslim resistance to the domination of infidel foreigners. The fact that the Nationalists were able to use this, if briefly, as such a successful rallying cry underscores how

²¹ In fact, Makal’s first experience in Nürüz involved a confrontation with the *hatib*, or local religious leader, who refused Makal the use of the mosque to teach students while the new school building was being completed: “‘I’m not going to open the Mosque for you to run a school on infidel lines’ [he told Makal]” (ibid.:1). Paul Stirling, who edited the book, points out that what made Makal’s teaching heretical was the fact that he used and taught the Latin script, rather than the sacred Arabic (ibid.). At the second village Makal taught at, he experienced the same problem, voiced even more explicitly by the *hoja*, or religious teacher (similar to a *hatib*): “‘It’s a sin, you know—hanging up those charts with the children’s alphabet on them and reciting from them is forbidden by the sacred word’” (ibid.:144).

pervasive and longstanding an idea it was—and continued to be in Makal’s time, despite Kemal’s attempts to reverse the equation and bring in Western values.

Despite what seemed to be serious rifts between national-scale identity and a village identity demanded by the sometimes harsh realities of day-to-day living (particularly in a region as climatically severe as that of central Anatolia), Stirling points to a growing connection (in the 1950s) between the rural and urban landscapes, between the values of the village and the economics of the city, between the structures of the state and the customs of the villagers. The consequence of this is an increasing sense of inferiority within the villages, at the expense of their own “pride and independent spirit” (ibid.:292; also see 284). The difficulty is not that the villagers are forced to choose between city life and village life, but rather between the values associated with the state, with Kemal’s reforms, and with city life on the one hand; and their own traditional values on the other. And this was how the Turkish people experienced Kemal’s modernization.

Kemal’s structural, economic, and administrative changes, his moving the capital from Istanbul to Ankara,²² his establishment of a limited democratic system, the Turkish Constitution...all of these are not modernity in themselves, but rather the trappings of that elusive concept. Modernity, at least as it was experienced by the Turkish people during the 1920s and afterward, meant a revolution in values, manifest in ways as diverse as the abolishment of the fez, the teaching of Turkish in the Latin script, the encouragement of women to go veiless, and of men to dress as Westerners. It is hard to say which is more

²² This was one of the first acts of the Grand National Assembly, in October 1923. Istanbul was tied to memories of the Ottomans, of Imperial Islam, of five centuries of decline, of palace intrigues and corrupt bureaucracies and everything the Nationalists wished to leave behind.

noteworthy: Kemal's audacity in proposing such reforms, or his ability to carry them out in the face of such opposition.

7. HISTORY AND IDENTITY

The values behind Kemal's reforms, though fundamental to the new identity he was prescribing, were not that identity's only components. History also plays an important role; especially in Turkey, where the relationship between the people and their past is particularly strong. Debates rage on as to whether history is a sort of corporate memory of the past, or a more utilitarian construction that may or may not be what "really" happened.²³ Perhaps the best middle ground is to state that history *can be* constructed, sometimes with a particular goal in mind:

[H]istorical writings [can be] written for the express purpose of recording the events of the past for the information and guidance of the present and of the future....Those who are in power control to a very large extent the presentation of the past, and seek to make sure that it is presented in such a way as to buttress and legitimize their own authority, and to affirm the rights and merits of the group which they lead (Lewis 1975:53).

Three general bodies of Turkish historiography existed during the first part of the twentieth century, roughly mirroring Ottomanism, pan-Turkism, and folk- or "local" Turkism. Like many fields of scholarship, these were not discrete bodies of thought, nor did the thinkers of the time necessarily divide their work into these three categories. Nevertheless, three versions of Turkey's past competed for attention,²⁴ each with a somewhat different emphasis (ibid.:38-39): the remembered and relatively recent history

²³ Richard Jenkins, for example, claims that "[i]ndividually 'the past' is memory, collectively it is history. Neither, however, are 'real': both are fundamentally constructs and both are important facets of identity" (1996:28).

²⁴ Chatterjee points out that "a primary sign of the nationalist consciousness [in general is] that it will not find its own voice in histories written by foreign rulers and that it will set out to write for itself the account of its own past" (1993:77).

of the Ottoman Empire; Turcologist-inspired history, written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of early Turks in Central Asia; and finally, most recently-learned, the history of pre-Turkish Anatolia (focusing on the Hittites and the roots of Turkish “folk-culture.” See Ziya Gökalp, above).²⁵ The Ottoman history was marked by decay and failure, and in fact represented all that which Kemal hoped to leave behind by way of his reforms. Turcologist histories focusing on the expansive population of Turks across Central Asia was also unacceptable, as the vague pan-Turkist identity it implied had lacked the territorial component that made Turkish Nationalism stand out and eventually break free. That left the pre-Turkish Anatolian past, a history which not only avoided the problems of the other two, but which would actually, Kemal hoped, *increase* the identification of the Turks with their homeland.²⁶ This was a kind of tradition-making, of establishing a link to a past people who, though they were not ethnic Turks, had inhabited the same region, endured the same climate, and contributed to the culture of the modern Turkish people. To this end, Kemal wrote and encouraged a new and glorious history for his people, drawing on the earliest histories of Anatolia, and in which Turkish was the root of European languages and the Turks were the founders and heralds of Middle East civilization.²⁷

James Orr’s discussion (1991) of an annual celebration in Sakin Tepe, a small Thracian town shows the important role that history can play in identity. Although neither

²⁵ Lewis later makes the compelling argument that historians control—or at least affect—not only the words they put on the page, but the very entities those words describe, as histories can focus on, and reify, subjects which previously may only have existed on a map, or in the minds of a few leaders.

²⁶ A clause in Kemal’s 1935 Republican People’s Party Program read: “The fatherland is the sacred country within our present political boundaries, where the Turkish nation lives with its ancient and illustrious history, and with its past glories still living in the depths of the soil” (quoted in Lewis 1979:39).

²⁷ The “Sun Language Theory” was only considered briefly, but is important in that it demonstrates Kemal’s willingness to appropriate history as part of his plan of prescribed identity. See Lewis (1979: 435).

an official national holiday nor a religious or local celebration the event was termed *kurtulus günü*, a “Turkish compound noun associating *gün*—day—with *kurtulus*—independence, salvation, and liberation” (Orr 1991:143). The celebration took the form of a patriotic performance, in which actors portraying Turkish citizens were first seized and imprisoned by Greek soldiers, but were then freed by Turkish soldiers, who captured the Greek fortress and raised over it the Turkish flag (ibid.:144). This drama was enacted annually. Its characters and indeed the setting were not specific: the events portrayed could have happened in a variety of places and times. This very lack of specifics, Orr notes, implies a synecdoche, where “Salvation and freedom” (the Turkish military) triumphs over “Occupation and oppression” (the Greek military). This ritualized performance of the town’s *kurtulus günü* constructed and maintained contemporary national identity through the mobilization of a certain, specific historical consciousness, as well as by invoking the more personal (though correspondingly more vague) memories of war with the Greeks, almost sixty years earlier.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot points out that such dramatic commemorations serve to “mythicize history” (1995:118) and encourage certain aspects of the identity of both the participants and the audience. Celebrations such as this one serve to codify history into a simpler, more easily-learnable sequence of events, rich with morality and frequently presented dramatically—that is, as a dramaturgical performance as well as one filled with emotion and intensity. The simplified, moralized history carries great significance for the actors and audience, for it is directly relevant to them: they are performing for themselves.²⁸ Not only that, but such ritualized affirmations of identity can carry with

²⁸ Describing a Martiniquan play about the life of a local figure, Richard Price (1998:208) points out that “it

them equivalent affirmations of the organizational structure implicit in such “we-ness,” in this case, the Turkish state (Jenkins 1996:144-146). In fact, Jenkins speculates, such ritualized identification may actually be a necessary part of identity; at least of the internal-based, self-identification half of the dialectic: “identity—as a definitively social construct—can never be essential or primordial, so it has to be made to *seem* so” (ibid.:146). Thus the Turks *always* triumph over the Greeks at Sakin Tepe.

In sum, history, whether it is constructed, uncovered, or remembered (Lewis 1979) can inform identity—and vice versa²⁹ And those who would modify that identity³⁰ frequently call upon history as a means to do so. Kemal was careful to nurture the Turkish people’s relationship with the past—but, significantly, the past of his choosing.

was—when performed—*meaningful* history, a version of a people’s own past that they could recognize and identify with.” Also see van der Veer (1990:84).

²⁹ Bernard Lewis (1975:41) also examines the role played by a Persian celebration in forming a national identity for that state.

³⁰ Or even those who would *mobilize* that identity often call upon history. Ronald Reagan’s 1980 presidential campaign slogan was, for example, “It’s morning in America again,” hearkening back to an idealized sunny vision of America, shorn of the ugliness of history. Adolf Hitler emphasized the German’s bellicose Teutonic heritage as an alternative to the passive and ineffectual Christianity that had been foisted on them by non-Aryans.

8. TURKEY TODAY

Turkey's relationship with its past, as with most nations, continues to this day; this past continues to play a powerful role in contemporary Turkish identity—an identity which is in continuous formation and renegotiation. Mary Voigt, an archaeologist who has been working at an Iron Age site in southeastern Turkey, points out that some people—mostly younger students—are incensed to find foreigners studying Turkey's past, a past which they feel should belong only to the Turks (Voigt 1998). Moreover, despite the occasional Islamic fundamentalists (who grant the existence of a pre-Islamic Anatolian past but describe it as trivial and a waste of money to study), she finds that in the rural area in which she works, the study of the past is encouraged more often than not. For example, politicians emphasize the national heritage of such sites, which are often visited by local school groups.

Madeleine Zilfi, a historian of the Ottoman Empire, notes that she has never encountered explicit encouragement or discouragement of a particular line of research in the Turkish archives. Like many if not all modern nations, Turkey has its share of sensitive documents and information which are restricted for a period of time, often fifty or one hundred years. Overall, however, she finds Turkey to be fairly open about at least its Ottoman past (Zilfi 1998)

The Turkish struggle for an appropriate identity is apparent on a larger scale as well.³¹ Describing the debates over Turkey's application to the European Union, Philip Robins (1991:3) points out that "[t]here appears to be some considerable doubt even among Turks of similar socio-economic background as to the exact nature of the country and its people, and how this should manifest itself in the external relations of the state." Caught uncomfortably between East and West, Turkey is in the unenviable middle position of a dichotomous world, and despite claims to serve as the bridge spanning the gap between the two, seems to be in danger of falling into that gap:

[R]ather than understanding both continents and both cultures, and hence having a unique role as interpreter to both, Turkey comprehends neither adequately to fulfill this role. Its relationship with the Arabs, the Persians and the majority of Islamic states is confused and tentative. Its relationship with the West is increasingly marked by suspicion and resentment. Moreover, divisions within Turkey, between Western-educated, urban businessmen and intellectuals, and the rural, personally pious peasants, mirror the divisions between the two continents that it straddles (Philip Robins 1991:14; also see 114-115).

As pointed out above, this characterization is remarkably similar—and for the same reasons—to the tension between two worlds faced by Turkish villagers described by Szyliowicz (1966), Stirling (1965), and Makal (1954). The ambiguity of Turkey's national identity has direct consequences in the international realm, particularly in the membership or denial of membership in international organizations that carry their own inherent identity, such as NATO, the European Union, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the Council of Europe. This ambiguity, often seen as a chameleon-like ability to play whatever role is needed at a particular time, is what is "so unsettling for

³¹ Such a struggle for identity is not confined to Turkey. In fact, one could argue that it is the basis of many conflicts around the world. In his *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*, Frances Deng (1995:14) asserts that a "crisis of identity" lies at the root of the Sudanese conflict: "The source of conflict lies...in the degree to which the interacting identities and their overriding goals are mutually

Europe. Turkey is seen as ‘an in-between place’” (Kevin Robins 1996:65; quoting Sullivan 1991:16). Such a liminal nature, while certainly “unsettling” for those observing it, is even more so for the Turks themselves, who must live it.³² “‘What is Turkey? European? Islamic?’ [asked an *Imam*, or Islamic teacher]. ‘What a pity for the Turkish people that they are born of the Islamic religion: they study like the English; they are sent to jail under old Italian laws; and they are buried according to the rituals of Islam. What a pity! A terrible confusion’” (Kelsey 1996:157).³³

Mehmet Ersoy, a resident in psychiatry studying for a year in the United States, notes the weak and fragmented nature of the idea of Turkey as a unified political entity, and instead invokes his Muslim identity. At the same time, he points out that there *is* a Turkish culture. In times of stress or homesickness, he finds that the Turkish culture (for him, this largely implies certain types of body language, manners, and music) is more comforting and familiar than the more general and diffuse Islamic identity (Ersoy 1997).

Turkey today presents a confusing mix of past and present, of topless beaches and ancient monuments, of rural pastoralism and urban shopping, a dazzling array of clichéd polarities that fill many Turkish guidebooks. “Modern Turkey is struggling to hold itself together,” writes Tim Kelsey (1996:x), a journalist who visited Turkey in 1996. He describes a frustration with the compromise between East and West that has characterized much of the last several decades of Turkish history. “The blend of Turkish and European music and what that symbolized—cultural union with the West, equality with the West—

accommodating or incompatible” (ibid.:1); also see Kelsey 1996:x.

³² Mary Douglas (1966; esp. 41-57) wrote of the human discomfort with things which float between categories or are unclassifiable altogether; Victor Turner (1967:93-111) expanded on Arnold van Gennep’s (1960) conception of the dangerous and threatening nature of liminal states. Also see Kelsey 1996:x.

³³ Islam continues today as a wellspring of identity, particularly around such events as birth and death; Turkey’s legal system is fashioned after a European model, as is the educational system.

does not make sense to most Turks anymore.” (ibid.:59).³⁴ Throughout his travels in Turkey, Kelsey found that some people felt that national identity was something to be nurtured and treasured: “‘It is important that we meet with other peoples. Then we will not lose touch with our Turkishness’”; “‘Whatever city he’s from...he’s a child of our nation and you should not fight each other’” (ibid.:208; 181). On the other hand, Republic Day, commemorating the birth of the nation, is presented (both by Kelsey to his readers as well as by the Turks to themselves, apparently) almost as an afterthought, “when the nation reminds itself of its nationalism” (ibid.:168); and the popular and controversial *arabesk* music, famous for its bitterly sad melodies, “articulated popular despondency. The *arabesk* said that something had gone very wrong indeed with Ataturk’s Republic. That is why the government took it so seriously” (ibid.:48). Kelsey describes a Turkey burning with ambiguity, rife with internal divisions, yet in many ways still clinging to an ideal vision of “Ataturk’s Republic.”

Identity issues are still argued in Turkey today, more than seventy years after Kemal began outlining the identity of the new nation. There is no clear idea of what Turkey is, or indeed of what it means to be Turkish; and identity remains an explicit source of confusion and debate. But, since the majority of those debates take place within the terms, and discourse, and framework, of a modern nation-state, the notion of Turkey-as-nation *has* become accepted. The Turks do not (any longer) argue about whether or not Turkey should become a nation, they argue about the nature of that nation.

But there is one important exception: the Kurds. As an ethnic group living in eastern Turkey and northwestern Iraq, the Kurds had organized what was ostensibly a

³⁴Kelsey did not offer specifics (such as social class or age group, or even urban or rural groups) for the

nationalist revolt (though which was more likely a “religious reaction against the secularizing reforms”) against the Kemalists in 1925. The new Turkish government reacted swiftly and decisively, sentencing the leaders of the revolt to death and executing them the next day (Lewis 1979:266, 410; also see Zürcher 1993:176-180). To this day, the Kurds continue to wage a civil war against Turkey and Iraq, fighting for an independent Kurdistan.³⁵ The great length of this conflict, compounded by atrocities on both sides, unfortunately seems to preclude any pat resolution and calls into question the notion of Turkey as a viable, discrete nation-state.

Regardless of the dénouement of the Kemalist reforms—and there is no reason to believe the story to be over—it is possible to state that Kemal, at a minimum, provided for the Turkish people a new identity that was to define them as Turks. Yet the people resisted this imposition, and continue to do so. Kemal underestimated, perhaps, the tenacity of traditional behavior and the identity to which it contributes. A more precise interpretation would be that he presented the Turks with the *possibility* of the new values, making it possible for those who wished to do so embrace the new identity. Even if that identity has since failed to become completely accepted throughout the nation, it remains

term “most Turks.” We should treat it as a subjective judgment by a visiting journalist, rather than a statement resulting from finely-detailed fieldwork.

³⁵ The immediate future of the movement, at this writing, seems uncertain: Oçalan Bey, the leader of the Kurds, has been captured by Turkey, tried, and sentenced to death. While his appeal is pending, he has

available for those who choose it; and the fact that there remains a nation at all points to at least a certain success of the reforms.

called for peace; a call the Kurdish forces appear, so far, to be following.

CONCLUSION

Turkish nationalism had an explicitly geographical component which differentiated it from the somewhat diffuse and vague pan-Turkism that preceded it and, to a certain extent, competed with it. Turkish nationalism also had an equally explicit ethnic component which distinguished it from the more general Ottomanism (which was based on the idea that a large-scale political loyalty took precedence over all others). Finally, Turkish nationalism had a fairly implicit secular component, which served to demarcate it from Islamism; an Islamism which, furthermore, would already fail the criteria of ethnic and geographic Turkish specificity.

When Turkism bloomed into Turkish nationalism and created the Republic of Turkey in 1923, it was only one in a long series of steps. The formation of the nation was not yet complete, as it lacked a coherent identity. Mustafa Kemal and the other reformers set out to provide this identity as an alternative to the traditional Ottoman one which, they felt, was responsible for holding Turkey back from the modern world. Despite extensive resistance,³⁶ the Kemalist reforms were largely successful, if only by one measure: Turkey remains a country today, albeit one beset by identity issues on the individual and national levels.

³⁶ Kemal sometimes enforced the new values brutally. For example, in 1925 a Tribunal of Independence executed forty-seven people for involvement with a dervish uprising to restore Islamic law. Later that year Kemal dissolved dervish brotherhoods altogether. 1925 also saw the Law for the Maintenance of Order, which essentially gave the government dictatorial powers for four years (Lewis 1979:266; also see 410-412).

The events in Turkey may fruitfully be envisioned as comprising two aspects of nationhood. The first is the group, or those that make up the nation. The second is the *identity* of this group. One cannot exist for long without the other, just as a nation cannot exist for long without an identity; if identity, at its most basic level, is that which distinguishes individuals and groups, then it is only relevant as a relational concept: the Self requires the Other. As the Turkish Nationalist forces fought for independence after the end of World War I, they were defining themselves, in a sense, by means of marking who was an enemy (any who opposed their drive for nationhood, as Kemal made clear in 1921 [Kemal 1929 cited in Macfie 1994:124]).

Years of pan-Turkist rhetoric, of Turcologist research, of an Empire that was shrinking geographically as well as ethnically to the specific territories of the Turks—because of all of these, the Turkish people held a certain self-awareness by the end of World War I, though, significantly, there was no clear understanding as to the nature of their group. What Kemal provided was the necessary second part: the identity of that group, through a series of reforms aimed at tangible manifestations of the more elusive values he felt were hindering the modernization Turkey so desperately needed. The Kemalists focused on changing these values as a means of prescribing the new identity for the people of the new nation. Thus the imposition of modernity was, for the Turkish people, more than anything else a revolution in values. Recall that identity, despite my treatment of it here as largely a static thing, is more of an action, an ongoing process. This introduces a new level of complexity into the examination. For example, can it be said that the individual identity of a Turk born at the end of the 19th century changed as he or she lived through the end of the Ottoman Empire and development of the Turkish

nation? The *group* identity of the Turks was more clearly defined, that much is clear. But the Turkish people had their own individual identities prior to 1923, and continued to have them afterwards as well. What is the relationship between a previously-established individual identity and that individual's place in a group; a group which, furthermore, went from being ill-defined to very sharply defined by the Kemalists? And we might well ask questions of the nature of identity itself. Is it quantifiable? Can a person or group *lose* an identity? Or simply *change* it to something else?

Future scholarship might also elaborate on my implied relationship between values and identity, and between values and the larger culture. The difficulty—for Kemal as well as for students of Turkish history—is that values are intangible, and often difficult to elucidate. Any study of values, particularly when concerned with how those values change, would benefit from a rigorous semiotic analysis. For example, rather than a general decree of secularism, Kemal outlawed the traditional fez, had the Koran translated from the sacred Arabic into vernacular Turkish, and abolished the office of the caliphate. These changes in themselves are not secularism, though they imply it, and a semiotic analysis might, among other things, explore the ways in which the people were aware the larger issues that the changes implied. Going beyond issues specific to the Kemalist reforms, such an approach might well ask: what is the relationship between values such as modernity, secularism, or morality, and the encouragement of these by means of enforceable laws?

Identity theory may be applied to questions of nationhood and nationalism; as I briefly touch on here, national identity not only plays a fundamental role in nationalism, it is a widespread concern in the modern world. What makes a group of people think of

itself as a group? How relevant are theories of individual and group social identity to questions of large-scale group and national identity? The discussion here suggests that nationalism might be neither primordial and essentialist nor utilitarian and constructed. Rather, it might be a political manifestation of an inherently human tendency to form into groups; a drive for collective shared identity that has at times taken the form of the tribe, the kin group, or the kingdom. This particular group (the nation), though characterized by a political aspect, nevertheless shares many aspects of social groups which allow us to apply to it theories of identity originally intended for, and tested on, smaller groups. Developing an understanding of Turkish nationalism on this framework might be generalizable for other situations.

For example, can we apply the two-aspect conception of Turkey's nationhood to other cases? What about areas which are currently struggling for independence, nationhood, or even a discrete identity? Can we tease out any sort of tangible changes that can be made (or avoided, for that matter) to help a group of people develop an independent identity? This applies not just to nations and irredentist groups, but to communities on almost any scale, from ethnic groups to civic organizations to the family.

One thing is clear: between the large number of world regions struggling with identity issues, and the prevalence of nationalistic ideologies, many of them violent, throughout the world, some clear, practice-oriented synthesis of identity, nationalism, and nationhood is needed, if not for the sake of the knowledge itself, than at least to help minimize some of the human suffering that can accompany such struggles. For example, if it is found that many groups struggling for independence do so by establishing a suite of cultural and political values different from that of other groups around them, and

subsequently engage in violent hostilities with those other groups, a resolution to the conflict might be found not in legal or political settlements but in those competing value structures themselves. Lending credence to this scenario are the large number of world conflicts that fail to be resolved by traditional diplomacy and standard peace agreements.

This paper should be seen as a beginning, a preliminary and small-scale exploration of what happens when a group of people becomes a nation-state, how a nation knows *who it is*, whether such an identity is possible or desirable, and the implications of other competing identities. Situated geographically as well as politically between East and West, Turkey continues to experience a troubled confusion of identity. The Kemalist reforms, so vigorously conceived and applied, have been resisted in many areas, particularly as a democratic system makes it easier for alternate viewpoints to flourish than it had been under Kemal's government. Such freedom of identity—no longer are the Turkish people *required* to be Ottoman Muslims, or Kemalist secularists, conservatives or liberals, traditionalists or reformers—such freedom of identity, laced with a certain ambiguity, comes at the expense of stability and certainty.

The pressing question is this: is this freedom, so jealously celebrated by the West, worth its attendant ambiguity, worth the frustrating liminal sensation of living in two worlds but belonging completely to neither (see Philip Robins 1991:114-115) that so troubles modern Turkey? And if the freedom is *not* worth it, what then? Does a pluralistic system preclude any definite sort of stable identity? Or is it possible to maintain a stable group definition while stopping short of an autocratically enforced (or implemented, e.g. ethnic cleansing) identity? This question rises like abattoir smoke from conflicts around the world. Yet it remains unanswered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agaoglu, Ahmed. 1928. *Üç Medeniyet* [Three Civilizations]. Ankara.
- Ahmad, Feroz. 1969. *The Young Turks*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Ahmad, Feroz. 1993. *The making of modern Turkey*. The Making of the Middle East Series. London: Routledge.
- Ahmad, Feroz. 1994. "Some Thoughts on the Role of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Genesis and Development of the Socialist Movement in Turkey (1876-1923)." In Zürcher and Tunçay, eds., 1994. *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1923*.
- Akçura, Yusuf. 1904. *Üç tarz-i Siyaset* [Three Kinds of Policy]. Cairo.
- Akçura, Yusuf. 1928. *Türk Yili*, i.
- Armajani, Yahya and Ricks, Thomas. 1986. *Middle East past and present*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Batatu, Hanna. 1993. "Of the Diveristy of Iraqis, the Incohesiveness of the Society, and their Progress in the Monarchic Period toward a Consolidated Political Structure." In Hourani, et al., eds., 1993. *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*.
- Berkes, Niyazi. 1959. "Introduction" to Gokalp, Ziya. 1959. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gokalp*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Berkes, Niyazi. 1964. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. Montreal: McGill University Press.
- Braude, Benjamin and Lewis, Bernard, eds. 1982. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Holmes & Meier, Ltd.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dashti, Abdollah. n.d. *14th ICAES abstract*. n.p.: n.p.
- Davison, Roderic H. 1977. "Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response." In Haddad, William W. and William Ochsenwald, eds. 1977. *Nationalism in a Non-national State*.

- Davison, Roderic H., ed. 1990. *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Deng, Francis M. 1995. *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and danger: An Analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Edib, Halide. 1928. *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the further memoirs of Halide Edib*. New York: The Century Co.
- Eley, Geoff and Suny, Ronald, eds. 1996. *Becoming National*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Emin, Mehmet. 1897. From *Türk Klas*. Akyüz, Antoloji.
- Ersoy, Mehmet. Interview, 26 November 1997, University of Virginia.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1969 (1940). *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- van Gennep, Arnold. 1960 (1909). *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Gocek, Fatma. 1996. *Rise of Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gökalp, Ziya. 1959. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Writings of Ziya Gökalp*. (Niyazi Berkes, trans., ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Haddad, William W. and William Ochsenwald, eds. 1977. *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolutino of the Ottoman Empire*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 1989. *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference*. *Radical America*. 23,4 (October-December 1989) 9-20.
- Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Hanioglu, M. Sükrü. 1995. *The Young Turks In Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Hourani, Albert. 1970 (1962). *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*. New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs [by] Oxford University Press.
- Hourani, Albert. 1981. *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Hourani, Albert, Khoury, Philip S., and Mary C. Wilson, eds. 1993. *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jenkins, Richard. 1996. *Social Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Karpat, Kemal H. 1982. "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era." In Braude and Lewis, eds., 1982. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*.
- Karpat, Kemal H. 1973. *An Inquiry Into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State. From Social Estates to Classes, From Millets to Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
- Kelsey, Tim. 1996. *Dervish: The Invention of Modern Turkey*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Kemal, Mustafa [Ataturk]. 1924. *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1924*. Leipzig.
- Kemal, Mustafa [Ataturk]. 1927. *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1927*. Leipzig.
- Kemal, Mustafa [Ataturk]. 1929. *A Speech delivered by Ghazi Mustafa Kemal*. Leipzig: Koehler.
- Kemal, Namik. 1872. *İbret*. Istanbul.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1975. *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1979 (1961). *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1996. *Islam and Liberal Democracy: A Historical Overview*. *Journal of Democracy*. 7:2 (1996) 52-63.
- Macfie, A.L. 1994. *Atatürk*. Profiles in Power Series. New York: Longman.
- Makal, Mahmut. 1954. *A Village in Anatolia*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Ltd.

- Mardin, Serif. 1993. "Religion and Secularism in Turkey." In Hourani, Albert, et al., eds., 1993. *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*.
- Mehmet, Ozay. 1990. *Islamic identity and development*. Studies of the Islamic Periphery. London: Routledge.
- Morley, David and Kevin Robins. 1996. *No Place Like Heimat: Images of Home(land) in European Culture*. In Eley and Suny, eds. 1996. *Becoming National*.
- Noutsos, Panagiotis. 1994. "The Role of the Greek Community in the Genesis and Development of the Socialist Movement in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1925." In Zürcher and Tunçay, eds., 1994. *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1923*.
- Orr, James A. 1991. "Nationalism in a Local Setting." *Anthropological Quarterly*. 64: 142-151.
- Pasha, Ziya. 1869. From Sungu, Ihsan. *Tanzimat ve Yeni Osmalilar*.
- Price, Richard. 1998. *The Convict and the Colonel*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Robins, Kevin. 1996. "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe" In Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity*.
- Robins, Philip. 1991. *Turkey and the Middle East*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs / Pinter Publishers.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Stirling, Paul. 1965. *Turkish Village*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Sullivan, Scott. 1991. "The Turks Want In." *Newsweek*. 21 May 1991.
- Szyliowicz, Joseph S. 1966. *Political Change in Rural Turkey*. Erdemli. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Thomas, Lewis V. 1954. "Foreword" to Makal 1954. *A Village in Anatolia*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Wilson, Mary C. "Introduction" to "The Construction of Nationalist Ideologies and Politics to the 1950s" in Hourani et al., eds., 1993. *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*.

van der Veer, Peter. 1994. *Reliigous Nationalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Voigt, Mary. Interview, 21 September 1998, College of William and Mary.

Yapp, M.E. 1987. *The Making of the Modern Near East: 1792-1923*. New York: Longman, Inc.

Yapp, M.E. 1991. *The Near East Since the First World War*. New York: Longman, Inc.

Zilfi, Madeleine. Telephone interview, 13 October 1998.

Zürcher, Erik J. 1993. *Turkey: A Modern History*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Zürcher, Erik Jan and Mete Tunçay, eds. 1994. *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1923*. London: British Academic Press. An Imprint of I.B. Tauris Publishers.

VITA

Seth Robertson Wood

Born in Evanston, Illinois, March 29, 1973. Graduated from Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda, Maryland, June, 1990. B.A., Magna Cum Laude, James Madison University, in 1995, with a major in History and minors in English and Anthropology.

In September, 1997, the author entered the College of William and Mary as an M.A. candidate in the Department of Anthropology.