

Holding Multiple Nationalisms: Perspectives of an Albanian Ottoman

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Abstract

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This project considered the works and life of Shemseddin Sami, an ethnic Albanian Ottoman who advocates for Turkish and Albanian nationalist movements. By looking at the status of ethnic and imperial identity, the role of language of the Ottoman Empire, and the local, regional and global realities of Sami, this project aimed to better understand how an individual could hold seemingly contradictory ideals. This paper aims to understand the positions of Sami, as he understood them, and then provide the rationale for such opinions. This paper used secondary literature to identify flaws in past approaches to nationalist movements, as well trying to show more nuanced approaches in recent academic work. By using primary sources, this paper offers an in-depth approach to the topics at hand by not being stuck in a functionalist paradigm. This study found that the environment of the Ottoman Empire, the transmission of ideas, and language played massively important roles in the mind of Sami and others like him in the period.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Words as tools and symbols shape our realities and the perceptions which people use to understand their daily lives, history, and futures. So how well do we know those who use these symbolic tools to shape our realities? Shemseddin Sami (1850-1904), an ethnic Albanian born Ottoman intellectual, helped plant many of the seeds of Turkish and Albanian nationalist sentiment for the generations during and after his life through his focus on language as a symbolic tool. If Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) is seen today as the father of Turkish Nationalism, then Sami must be seen as the grandfather, but he was also a leading figure for Albanian Nationalism. A man who advocated for two national identities along with pan-Turanian, pan-Turkist, and pan-Islamic ideologies in his mind: How can this be? How can an individual subscribe to so many, at least from a modern point of view, conflicting political ideals?

Sami made his living as a linguist, author, and political spokesman; all these aspects of his life affected the perception of him in academic historiographical memory. Yet, it is Sami's understanding of the role of language as an object and as something that is manifested into a larger paradigm of understanding that provides historians with an understanding of the place of language in the late Ottoman Empire. This is clearly shown by Kushner when he dissects Sami's definition of Ottoman (*Osmanlı*). Kushner states that Sami works within a nationalist framework when discussing Ottomanism and when he uses the word Ottoman it is applied to all Ottoman citizens. Yet, when post Ottoman history, or different aspects of Ottoman culture is a theme, Ottoman was clearly came to mean an Ottoman Turk.¹ Kushner looks to place Sami in a Turkish paradigm that leads to Turkish nationalist sentiments.

¹ David Kushner, *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. (London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 1977), 22

Even the spelling of Sami's name shows how his portrayal entrenches an author to a particular display of him. For example, Starvo Skendi writes "But Sami Frasheri's main political ideas were expressed in his booklet, *Albania: What She Has Been, What She Is, What She Shall be* (1899). He protested against the identification of Albanian Moslems as Turks and Albanian Orthodox Christians as Roums."² Skendi's use of the surname Frasheri shows his Albanian nationalist leaning in his representation of Sami, while scholars on Turkish nationalism would call him Şemseddin Sami.

How Sami is being portrayed by historical literature is important as he lived in a time rife with fluctuating political ideologies, social movements, and in the modernization of the post-Tanzimat world of Ottoman society. By reviewing the literature about, or that make references to Sami, I will show how this person who affected the historiographic understanding of the futures of two nation states, Turkey and Albania, has been portrayed in academic literature. I will then go on to examine Sami's role in the transitional period from Young Ottoman thought to the Young Turk movement. This examination will attempt to move past some of the restrictions that the current frameworks of nationalism and modernity use to place Sami in the context of the history of the Late Ottoman Empire.

Literature Review

Nationalism and modernity are two of the major scholarly approaches to the study of late Ottoman Empire. This paper will use the Anthony Smith's paradigms of nationalism to

² Starvo Skendi, *The Albanian national awakening, 1878-1912*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1967), 167

consolidate and differentiate views of nationalist portrayals.³ I have chosen Smith because of his importance to the study of nationalism as well as his ability to deconstruct different approaches to it. For modernity, the paper will look to Volker H. Schmidt to define modernization and modernity as a phenomenon.⁴ For much of the same reasons I have chosen Smith, I have chosen Volker. Volker also approaches modernity as continually changing phenomenon that is dependent of many circumstances, and in an “era of radical and rapid shifts in mega-paradigms” this is something to be considered.⁵

The approach of this review of secondary literature will consider how the references fit Sami into the frameworks of the historians’ understandings of nationalism and modernization and how this affects their views of him. These references will be broken into three different categories: Nationalism, modernity, and a combination of the first two, due to focus of these categories and the frequency in the literature. I have chosen these because the nature of these topics often intersects, but much of the secondary literature tends to focus on one part of these, or in the case of my third definition, they tend to push the boundaries for each paradigm.

Sami in the Frameworks of Nationalism:

³ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 222-224, The different paradigms as defined by Smith will be defined as they are presented.

⁴ “Modernization, the change that results in modernity, is an interlinked process of structural differentiation, cultural rationalization and personal individuation in the views of these classics. Once set in motion, social change becomes endemic, favoring institutions that are both adaptable to and stimulate further change.” Schmidt, Volker H. "Modernity and Diversity: Reflections on the Controversy between Modernization Theory and Multiple Modernists." *Social Science Information* 49, no. 4 (2010): 513

⁵ Bulent Bilmez, “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.” in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2009), 366.

Some of Sami's greatest legacies and achievements are tied to language and language reform, specifically to the advancement of what would become Modern Turkish and the Albanian Alphabet. Many historians look onto Sami's reformist acts with their respect to language to fit them in their scope of Turkish or Albanian nationalism. David Kushner provides a plethora of examples. Focusing on Sami's work on Turkifying the Ottoman language, Kushner states "The Turkification of the language, usually, but not necessarily, correlated with its simplification, now became an important goal in itself".⁶ Kushner continues to discuss Sami's work to show he was aware of the potential national effects that his language reforms could have, "Shemseddin Sami emphasized the 'racial interests' which were involved in the selection of the literary language".⁷ He goes on to explain that Sami looked to Istanbul based Ottoman Turkish as a vessel to be converted, by other Turkic languages, into a language to be used from Istanbul to Kashgar. This modified Ottoman Turkish language would then function as the literary language of unity among the Turkish nations. Kushner pushes a perennialism viewpoint to show that Turkish nationalism, as projected by Sami, is derived through a fundamental tie to a nation.⁸ Turkish nation is something tied together by a traceable object which binds the people of the nation together. In Kushner's view, it happens to be race and language. Kushner is reluctant to show Sami's ties to Albania, and in doing so overlooks the phenomenon of dual national loyalties, while there are examples of dual national loyalties that appeared after Sami's, Kurdish-

⁶ Kushner. *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. 70

⁷ *Ibid*, 72

⁸ Anthony Smith defines *perennialism* by viewing nations over the long term and attempts to grasp their role as long-term components of historical development. He tends to see modern nations derived from fundamental ethnic ties, rather the process of modernization. For more examples see, Walker Conner, Joshua Fishman, and Donald Horowitz. Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 223-224

Ottoman for Said Nursi (1877-1960) and Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932) and Arab-Ottoman for Sati al-Hursi (1880-1968) just to state a few.⁹

Stavro Skendi comes from the same line of perennialist thinking as Kushner, this time from the Albanian side of nationalism. Skendi infers that Sami saw a future where Albanians and the Ottomans (specifically the Turks) could not coexist, and in light of this Skendi argues that Sami looked to the Albanian people for national autonomy.¹⁰ Skendi differs from Kushner by focusing historical unity to the nationalist cause as demonstrated through Sami. Claiming that Sami saw Albanians as a uniform nation where religion played only a minor role in the separation of tribes and clans.¹¹ Skendi portrays Sami as pushing against the Ottoman tendency to link groups into religious *millets*, and presenting a nation that was perennially linked together by language and culture. Skendi's portrayal of Sami is rather enlightening as he does show a change in socio-political relationship among Albanian intellectual leaders and the normalcy of Ottoman rule, but like Kushner he also overlooks Sami's dual loyalty to the Ottoman Turkish and Albanian causes by focusing his writing on Albania.

Geoffrey Lewis, while looking at the history of Turkish language reform, approaches Sami's works from a slightly different perspective. Lewis, in his selection of Sami's quotes, tends to follow an ethno-symbolic point of view in regards to nationalism.¹² He chooses a quote

⁹ Uzer, Umut. *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 13

¹⁰ Skendi, Stavro. *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 167

¹¹ *Ibid*, 167

¹² Anthony Smith defines Ethno-Symbolism as an aim to show the symbolic legacy of ethnic identities for particular nations, and how to show how modern nationalism and nation rediscover and reinterpret the symbols, myths, memories, values, and traditions. Of their ethno-histories, as they face the problems of modernity. For examples of this look to the works of Anthony D. Smith, John Armstrong, and John Hutchinson

from the *Lisan-i Türki* (The Turkish Language), a periodical that Sami frequently wrote for, and then goes on to explain how Sami, and many of his contemporaries, saw the Turkish language belonging to the people, outside of the elite circles of the court and intellectuals.¹³ The language acted as a symbol that connected the Turkish nation from Europe to China. Lewis quotes Sami, but does not point out that the terms that Sami uses to describe nation (*ümmet* and *akvam*) have strong Islamic connotations. Lewis subtly identifies modernity as the catalyst to Sami's nationalist prerogative as he sees Sami as continually looking to language as a symbol of unity among the Turkic peoples, and as part of a string of thinkers who feel this way starting from the late 1850's.¹⁴

In this consideration, Lewis may be right in arguing Sami's reinterpreting of language as a tradition of the Turkish nation, but during this period is there enough of an intellectual support (let alone popular support) for a "Turkish nation" in the Ottoman Empire? Ottomanism and all subjects being respected as Ottomans was what captured the imagination of the Young Ottomans and a majority of modernist thinkers until after the Young Turk coup. Lewis is not alone in pushing for the connection of Sami to the "Turkish Nation", as Stanford Shaw falls into the same framework. Shaw also pushes for an interpretation of Sami's work that falls in the housing of ethno-symbolism. Shaw claims the wars with Russia pushed an influx of intellectual Turkic refugees into the Ottoman state. This leads to a reconnection with Turkish writers from the Volga area and a renewed sense of unity among the Turkish nation. In this reawakening, Shaw places Sami in the middle of Turkish nationalist language reform that was "... strongly resisted by the state and others who advocated the official Ottomanist policy emphasizing that the empire and its

¹³ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*. Oxford Linguistics. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16-17

¹⁴ Ibid. 16-17

language were, indeed, amalgams of all of its peoples...”¹⁵. Yet, Shaw is unable to truly show a strong connection between those entering the Ottoman Empire and the Turks already in the empire. Thereby delegitimizing the authentic existence of a Turkish nation between those who escaped Russia capture and those in Istanbul. Both Lewis and Shaw place Sami’s work on language into a grander scheme of a budding Turkish nationalism, but fail in connecting him to important socio-intellectual movements (such as Ottomanism) of the time. Shaw and Lewis are retrospectively trying to invent a Turkish nationalism, which may have not been available for Sami and other thinkers.

Umut Uzer, even though he follows the ethno-symbolic paradigm, approaches Sami in his social and historical contexts. Uzer sees a natural progression in the Ottoman intellectual thought from Ottomanism/Islamic idealism to Turkism to Turkish nationalism.¹⁶ Positioning Sami in the re-envisioning of the Turkish past to connect the Western and Eastern Turks in a Turkish nation due to their ties in language, history, and ethnicity,¹⁷ he also places this vision as a response to a changing world and the independence of many of the ethnically tied millets which forced the Turks to look inward to find political stability.¹⁸ Uzer holds a more nuanced view of Sami and, of all of the historians mentioned so far, is the only one out right to talk of Sami’s ability to hold a dual loyalty. Focusing on the intellectual progression of Ottoman thinkers, he makes a compelling argument for Sami’s ability to reach into the past for ancient pre-Islamic Turkish literature in order to create a sacred national past for the Turkish people of

¹⁵ Stanford J. Shaw, and Shaw, Ezel Kural. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 263

¹⁶ Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 8

¹⁷ Ibid, 8

¹⁸ Ibid, 13

“Türkistan”.¹⁹ Though he does touch on the topic of dual loyalties, Uzer never further investigates the possibility of such a phenomenon.

In his work, Somel considers the education policies in the Ottoman Empire as a very difficult political issue. The period from the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876) to the Hamidian era (1876-1908) was a time of much change in the field of education and Somel places Sami in it to show the volatility in the Ottoman Balkans. Somel ties him and his Albanian contemporaries to the locally fostered education they received, mainly through Sufi dervishes and tekkes, and how many of them called on the Sublime Porte to establish a government sanctioned local high school which the Albanians could run.²⁰ Somel privileges this desire to “an ever-increasing demand for administrative autonomy and national Albanian schools by *local* notables.”²¹ An Ottoman policy of letting local groups having control over their own schooling, weakened central control by the Ottoman state, providing many Balkan millets strong autonomy in education and the ability to resist the Sunni Islamic policies of Abdülhamid II’s reign (1876-1909).²² Due to this autonomy, the *millets* were able to form a degree of a national consciousness and resisted the oncoming changes from the political center of Istanbul. Somel’s use of Sami strongly entrenches him in the modernist paradigm of nationalism.²³ Whereas Uzer brings in the complicating nature of Sami’s

¹⁹ Ibid, 20-21

²⁰ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Ottoman Islamic Education in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century." *Islamic Studies* 36, no. 2/3 (1997): 454

²¹ Ibid, 454

²² Ibid, 457-458

²³ Anthony Smith defines the Modernist Paradigm of nationalism as an approach by those who seek to derive both nations and nationalism from the novel processes of modernization, and to show how states, nations, and nationalism, and notably their elites, have mobilized and united populations in novel ways to cope with modern conditions and modern political imperatives. Look at Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner’s work for examples of this.

dual loyalty, Somel does not mention this and seeks to purely align Sami in the form of pro-Albanian nationalism.

Similarly to Somel, Sugarman portrays Sami as looking to nationalism to mobilize the Albanian people through education.²⁴ Writing on the topic of Sami and his brother Naim (1846-1890), who was also important to the Albanian nationalist cause), Sugarman declares that, “Like Sami, Naim published several textbooks to be used in newly opened Albanian-language schools in his homeland, and virtually all his Albanian-language writings seem to have been intended to lead his readers into the nationalist movement.” She bases her framework of nationalism on the work of Ernest Gellner, who could arguably be seen as the cornerstone of the modernist paradigm.²⁵ Specifically, Sugarman ties Sami’s work on the Albanian alphabet and attachment to elite intellectual circles Gellner’s position that elite literatures prior to the national period were often constructed so as to be inaccessible to the common people, and in this lens Sami (along with his brother Naim) created a bridge to the inaccessible elite literary language and connected the vernacular of the masses for a nationalist cause.²⁶ Sugarman brilliantly points to Sami being a participant in the growing print culture of Albania that steered it in the direction of Europe and away from the Near East.²⁷ Yet, her claims of Sami and his brothers “eagerly embracing” Albania’s arrival into European discourses doesn’t hide that fact that Sami saw a reality in which Albania could be independent nation under the Ottoman flag, acting almost as a vassal state.²⁸

²⁴ Jane C Sugarman, "Imagining the Homeland: Poetry, Songs, and the Discourses of Albanian Nationalism." *Ethnomusicology* 43, no. 3 (1999): 419

²⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. New Perspectives on the past (Basil Blackwell Publisher). (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

²⁶ Ibid, 428

²⁷ Ibid, 429

²⁸ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 169

Within his argument, Sami must have imagined a shared cultural bond strong enough between the Albanian people and the Ottoman Empire, that a political and multi-national relationship such as this could work.²⁹

Sami in the Frameworks of Modernity:

Sami is frequently represented as being a part of the modernization process of Turkey. In the eyes of some authors he is seen as being one of the key cogs that moves the Ottoman Empire from a traditional society to a modernized Turkish nation-state. Well known by anyone studying the Middle East, Bernard Lewis tends to subjugate Sami and his work as being part of the modernizing process. Lewis maintains that the theories of Turan in the 1830's, coming from Europe, greatly affected Sami and his contemporaries. Pan-Turanianism a pseudo socio-historical movement that placed Turks (among other ethnic groups) at the source of mankind, can be seen in Sami's writings. Lewis implies that this "western influence" starts a trend in the Turkish nationalist cause, which Sami is a part of.³⁰ Lewis writes "... an Albanian whose career illustrates the ways in which the Balkan peoples, now accessible to Western influences, served as carriers for new ideas... Sami Fraşeri by his lexicographic and encyclopedic work, did much to help the growth of the new feeling of Turkish self-awareness."³¹ Niyazi Berkes fits into this mold as well. He is uncompromising in his drive to show the secularization of the Ottoman Empire. Berkes chooses to paint Sami in a sympathetic light in regards to the West, and for Sami the West was the modernized Great Powers of Europe. He puts Sami in a position always looking

²⁹ Benedict R. Anderson, O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006), 5-6

³⁰ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 341

³¹ *Ibid*, 342

towards modernizing, and more often than not facing in the direction of Europe to follow their lead. Berkes's modernist vision can be detected in the way he places Sami's work as nationalizing language in the same hand as secularization.³² Berkes even brings language into the fold by stating that Sami believed "From the disintegration of the Ottoman language would arise a modern Turkish..."³³

We may point to Benjamin Fortna in calling out many of the old vanguard in Turkish and Ottoman studies for their close associations of change in the Ottoman Empire with modernization.³⁴ Fortna's work on print capitalism specifically in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic is a note-worthy divergence from the earlier views of modernizing and modernization.³⁵ Viewing the events of the Late Ottoman Empire as a series of blips culminating towards secularization, democracy, and modernization, Lewis and Berkes miss the scope of how Sami was not only a modernizer (which he certainly was as he was one to call for modernizing many of the plights he saw in the Ottoman Empire), but a self-proclaimed Albanian Ottoman who saw a reality where one could conceivably hold dual loyalties. Sami can be seen as one of Benedict Anderson's pilgrims who journeyed to the center. In this journey these pilgrims became aware of a shared community and of those in similar positions around the Ottoman Empire.

³² Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. (Montreal, [Quebec]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1964), 320

³³ Ibid, 320

³⁴ Fortna talking about Berkes, Carter Findley, Lewis and Şerif Mardin and their approach to Turkish Nationalism, especially these that fall under the movement of Secularization, Westernization, or Modernization. Fortna, Benjamin C. "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman Secular Schools." *International Journal Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (2000): 373

³⁵ Fortna also shows how the transition from Empire to Republic was not as secular as Turkish secular nationalists may want remember it as. Fortna, Benjamin C. *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic*. Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

However, Sami was still aware of the real and tangible Albanian (even if imagined) community.³⁶

Gawrych directs his work into looking at how Sami's literature and social writing serves to bring modern views, which for Gawrych's interpretation of Sami means Western European, of women into the Ottoman social conscience. Gawrych focuses on Sami's novel *Taaşşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat* (The Romance of Talat and Fitnat), the first modern Turkish novel, as an agent for "... the mobilization of Ottoman society in the face of an industrializing West."³⁷ This modern Turkish novel is described as one that diverges from the old Ottoman literary style following more formally French and English examples of the time. He goes on to strengthen his point by stating "Western examples of widespread female literacy, freedom in the public sphere, and growing intellectual achievements under the ideological concept of equality compelled him...".³⁸ Now, it should be noted that Gawrych's work is not completely beholden to the ideological framework of modernity, but his work still constitutes a block of the literature that sees Sami looking towards the West and towards Sami's idealized view of modernization.

This sort of feeling of modernization can also be seen in the work of Frank Stone and how he approaches Turkish literary views on education. Though his references to Sami are brief, he places him in a string of Turkish writers progressively leaving the traditional modes of writing for a more Eurocentric style (again, more akin to French and English styles of the time). Blurring imaginative storytelling with realistic non-fiction, Sami as someone closing the gap between

³⁶ Specifically look through Chapters 3-6 to fully appreciate the idea of the importance of print-capital and secular state pilgrimage. Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006)

³⁷ George W Gawrych, "Şemseddin Sami, Women, and Social Conscience in the Late Ottoman Empire." *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 1 (2010): 112

³⁸ *Ibid*, 112

traditional Ottoman language literary works and modern European works. Becoming more in tune to the French authors he admired. Stone states, "...this pioneer (Sami), indigenous Turkish novel broke new ground by arousing concern for the plight of women and attracting Istanbul readers."³⁹ Both Gawrych and Stone situate their opinions in a way that show there is a lot of ideological change and reinterpreting going on in the Ottoman Empire, and the topic of Ottoman literature was no different. Yet, both anachronistically saw oncoming modernization of Turkey through the influences of the West, in general, as the greatest source of change and use Sami to justify their position. Drawing on the model established by Lewis and Berkes, this culminating process of modernization leads little room for acknowledgement of other certainties that were alive and well in the context of the Late Ottoman Empire. Such as the fact that there was much continuity among the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in the fields of education, repression of the press, and tendency for one party rule.⁴⁰

Sami in Nuanced Combined Approaches:

So far, what has been seen is two camps of writers who hold that Sami belongs in one of two paradigms, nationalism or modernization. In more recent years we are seeing the development of more nuanced and elaborate understandings of Sami and his legacy. This understanding of Sami and concepts like nationalism, modernization, and even religion, are approached in a way that allows a seemingly contradictory idea such as dual loyalty to be a viable outcome. This can be expressed through the work of Bülent Bilmez and his understanding of Sami in the context of the Late Ottoman Empire.

³⁹ Frank A. Stone, *The Rub of Cultures in Modern Turkey; Literary Views of Education*. Indiana University. Uralic and Altaic Series; v. 123. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1973. 24

⁴⁰ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic*. Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Instead of eluding to Sami holding ties to national movements (Turkish and Albanian) and supra-national movements (Pan-Islam and Ottomanism), Bilmez conceptualizes how a person could align himself to so many ideologies. Ultimately, Bilmez states "... Sami was, first of all, a *modernist*, who regarded as instrumental other (minor) projects pursuing the construction of a modern collective identity within a modern (civilized) society."⁴¹ Yet, he continues to show that he viewed the identity in this context as a fluid object, i.e. anything that would get enough of a collective movement going through ethno-national, religious, or imperial (Ottomanism) means. Bilmez portrays Sami using language as a tool for this mobilization of the new trajectories of identity for the Turks and Albanians. Within the Ottoman imperial discourse, such mobilization was possible as the Empire acknowledged that it was a multi-ethnic state (though the phrase multi-religious may be better suited), and such transition between identities (national "Albanian", and supra-national "Ottoman") was possible. He states, in regards to Turkish language, that "He (Sami) attempted to accomplish this by bestowing on language itself a new role and meaning and by developing a new language (through ethnocentric re-interpretations of old words invention of new ones, linguistic reform, etc.)."⁴² Bilmez sees this contradictory support of multiple nationalisms and ideologies as a product of a "transition period".⁴³ Bilmez points out that at the end of an "era of radical and rapid shift in mega-paradigms (Westernization), overlapping and conflicting identities were normal condition."⁴⁴ This in depth approach to understand what Sami and his work is representative of goes beyond the paradigms of nationalism or modernization and allows for the historian to better grasp a

⁴¹ Bulent Bilmez, in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2009), 364.

⁴² *Ibid*, 365

⁴³ *Ibid*, 366

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 366

period and the people who lived in it, in which identities, empires, and nationalities were in a state of fluctuation.

Bilmez is not alone in holding a more in depth approach to Sami's work, as Isa Blumi creates such a framework, albeit from a different approach. Blumi considers the modernist and nationalist tendencies of Sami (and his Albanian contemporaries) as not coming from the overarching conditions of change due to modernity, but from the social realities that Sami was living in. Blumi writes "While the near-legendary Frasheri brothers harbored complicated allegiances to Islamic, Ottoman, and Albanian culture, they were also products of a social environment that had been confined to a Greek-language school for significant portions of their lives."⁴⁵ Many Albanian thinkers and intellectuals were trained and educated in a hegemonic Greek system that repressed any part of their identity that represented "Albanian".⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Blumi contends that this social reality holds Albanians to their own unique view of their own sub-groups, as southern intellectuals did not see those Albanians in the Malesore⁴⁷ as being a modern civilized group. Blumi claims "Many of these southern Albanian, such as Şemseddin Sami, saw the Malesore through the eyes of Ottoman gentlemen who thought of these "tribesmen" as uncivilized and crude."⁴⁸ In his work, Blumi develops an intriguing approach where within the construction of nationalist sentiments there are local social realities, such as

⁴⁵ Isa Blumi, "The Role of Education in Albanian Identity and Myths," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Schwandner-Sievers, S., & Fischer, Bernd Jürgen, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2002), 58.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 58

⁴⁷ Malesore is an ethnographic region in the Northern Albania consisting of five main mountains and various Albanian tribes

⁴⁸ Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 248

Sami's education, ties to the Ottomans, and southern Albanian intellectual thought, that take precedent to some of the more overarching themes such as modernity, modernization, or nationalism.

Sami on the Crossroads of Scholarship

Sami was a pragmatic figure, whose works and dual loyalties in his time had left an indelible legacy and it is a legacy that does not easily fit a modern notion of national identity. This legacy has been reconstructed by scholars, academics and historians under the light of theories of nationalism and modernization. There are those who feel that Sami's work is inherently tied to the reality of nationalism, either in its Albanian or Turkish iteration, and, depending on the vantage point of the scholar, his connection to either of these is part of a deep rooted human bond. This is represented by those who portray the perennialist paradigm of nationalism, and particularly used Sami's ethnic and linguistic connections as markers of this work. Language is also used by the ethno-symbolist paradigm to show Sami's re-imagining of Turkish and Albanian nationalism to combat the onset of modernization. The last group falls into the modernist paradigm, which views nationalism as a byproduct of the modernization process. It is here in the modernist nationalist paradigm that the depiction of Sami, his works, and his legacy work more fluidly than the other paradigms of nationalism. They correctly paint Sami as an elite intellectual that attempts to mobilize his nation (Albanian or Turkish) using education and language. Sami is an intellectual working in a period where the paradigms of identity are shifting, and in the context of the outer provinces of the Ottoman Empire modernity and nationalism are meeting seemingly at the same time.⁴⁹ Sami is a product of his time and someone who is caught

⁴⁹ Look in Chapter 5 of Zürcher's work as it will show that for many of the Christian minorities, specifically Greeks and Armenians, that were in the provinces close to the capital this

in the height of the Ottoman Empire being absorbed into the world capitalist system, the effects of the industrial revolution in the world (this is tied in part the world capitalist system, but is important enough to stand on its own), and the beginnings of a time were nationalists movements were looking a for a national (if not ethnic) hierarchy in the world.⁵⁰

Lewis and Berkes are some of the largest and most well-known propagators of this belief of modernization, but as seen this approach leaves many stones of the Late Ottoman Empire unturned. This approach still doesn't answer the question of why Sami and others like him could have dual loyalties, let alone the how. Sami seemingly acts as a blip, along with the Young Ottomans and Young Turks, on the historical map leading to the eventual secularization, modernization, and westernization of the Ottoman Empire that will eventually become the Turkish Republic.

The final group of historians discussed are those who developed the most nuanced and elaborate understanding of Sami and how he fits into nationalism and modernization as very large paradigm shifts situated in a multi-ethnic empire, such as in Bilmez, or looking more local issues and motivations while on the backdrop of larger movements in the Empire and the world, such as Blumi. It is in this type of nuanced approach, combined with a healthy awareness and understanding of the modernist nationalist paradigm that the historical normalcies, global paradigm shifts, and local motivations that affected Sami and his contributions to Albanian and

phenomenon was of modernization and national awakening was also happening, if not expedited due to the role of European dignitaries and missionaries. Zürcher, Erik Jan., and Mazal Holocaust Collection. *Turkey: A Modern History*. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993.)

⁵⁰ Firket Adanir, "Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1925" *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions*. Edited by Chirot, Daniel. and Seligman, Martin E. P. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001.

Turkish nationalism, that this project will move forward with been left with. Bilmez and Blumi's nuanced approaches complicate teleological reconstructions of the late Ottoman Empire and help provide new insights. Within these insights arises questions that on the one hand underscores Sami's uniqueness and originality in his works and on the other highlight the complexity of the contexts that give way to his seemingly conflicting responses to nationalism and modernization.

How does religion play into Sami's identity and nationalist sentiments? Many authors pointed out that he had Pan-Islamic yearnings, as he was raised and educated in a Bektashi family and kept ties with Bektashi dervishes throughout his life, yet only a few articles make note, or even use this fact.⁵¹ What are the ideological and political influences on him? Only a limited number of works investigate those who influenced Sami, yet many tell of those influenced by Sami. How important are the ideals of Social Darwinism (or at least national or ethnic hierarchies) to Sami, as it was growing in popularity and use in Europe? Can dual identity only exist in the shifting mega-paradigm of modernization or is this more closely linked to the idea of Ottomanism? How much can the local realities affect the progression towards nationalism and how does this foster a wide movement among a larger nation? Investigation into these questions will lead to a better understanding of (a) Shemseddin Sami; (b) those like him who held dual or multiple identities in the Late Ottoman Empire; (c) the role of language in the shifting realities of the Late Ottoman Empire; and (d) the history of the movement of ideas in the

⁵¹ Bektashism is distinct Sufi sect that sees much popularity in the Ottoman Empire, especially within Anatolia, Albania, and even having a special relationship with the Ottoman military until 1826. Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 237-56.

Selçuk Akşin Somel, Ottoman Islamic Education in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century. *Islamic Studies*, 36(2/3), 439-464. (1997). 74

Late Ottoman Empire. It is necessary to point out to the lack of resources on the work of Sami in English. Throughout this project I draw on primary sources in Ottoman Turkish or transcribed Ottoman Turkish, and attempted to make some of those more readily available within this space.⁵²

Sami: A Short Biography

Before diverging into these questions, I will present a short biography of Sami for better understanding of him and some of the challenges and realities Ottoman thinkers faced in the late Ottoman Empire. Born on the first of June in 1850 in the district of Frasher in Yanya (Modern city of Ioannina, Greece) province connected to Ergiri sancak of Pirmedi county, Sami's family was a land owning Muslim family with Bektashi ties. While living in the district of Frasher, Sami received his earliest education from a local Sufi leader until 1861 where under the supervision of his oldest brother he immigrated to the city of Yanya. Along with his older brother Naim he entered the famous Zosimus gymnasium, graduating in seven years in 1868. As a part of his education, he learned Latin, ancient Greek, modern Greek, Italian, and French; these languages would go on to play an important role later in his life. After graduation, Sami began working in the local press in Yanya, but soon moved to Istanbul in 1871. While living in Istanbul he began translating French books into Turkish as well as writing his own works, including his most famous *Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat* (The Romance of Talat and Fitnat) in 1873.⁵³ After being sent to Tripoli as the editor of a newspaper he returned to Istanbul in 1876

⁵² It is here that I would like to thank all of those who helped me in gaining the language skills over the course of this project, Funda Derin, Uli Schamiloglu, everyone from APTLII, Selim Kuru, Melike Yücel-Koç, Michael Sims, and Ozgur Ozkan. Everyone's help was indispensable in this project and greatly appreciated.

⁵³ Levend, Ağâh Sırrı. *Şemsettin Sami*. Türk Diline Emek Verenler Dizisi; 13. (Ankara: Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1969), 39-40

and opened his own daily newspaper called Sabah. It was during these years in Istanbul that he began to align himself to the new school approach to writing pioneered by Namık Kemal and İbrahim Şinasi.⁵⁴ It is also in 1878, after the Russo-Turkish war, the League of Prizen was formed and headed by many Albanian leaders, including Sami's oldest brother Abdul.⁵⁵ In this period Sami's brother Naim rose to fame for his participation in the Albanian national cause, most notably with his poetry.⁵⁶ Later Sami would become the editor of the *Tercüman-ı Şark* and began writing his pocket dictionary series. He would continue writing various encyclopedias and dictionaries for the next decade as well as contributing to various news outlets.⁵⁷ Yet, in 1899 he was placed under house arrest in Istanbul by Sultan Abdülhamid II until his death in 1904.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Çiğdem Balım, "Sāmī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 April 2017 <http://dx.doi.org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6579>

⁵⁵ Levend, Agâh Sırrı. *Şemsettin Sami*. Türk Diline Emek Verenler Dizisi; 13. (Ankara: Üniversitesi Basimevi, 1969), 46

⁵⁶ Sugarman, Jane C. (1999). Imagining the Homeland: Poetry, Songs, and the Discourses of Albanian Nationalism. *Ethnomusicology: Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology*, 43(3), 419-421.

⁵⁷ Çiğdem Balım, "Sāmī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

⁵⁸ Levend, Agâh Sırrı. *Şemsettin Sami*. 44

Chapter 2: Albanian Nationalism

Many of the old Ottomanist vanguard often attribute the outcome of rapid secularization or modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the collision of mega-paradigms.⁵⁹ Though some of these arguments have held strong until today, it is necessary to consider Sami's historical surroundings and the contemporary understandings of the period to truly comprehend the period. This can be done by looking at language in the Late Ottoman Empire and the role language played in shaping nationalism, identity, and modernity.

By investigating the contexts language played in 19th century Albania and the Ottoman Empire, we will be able to see the mind-set that Sami was working with and how micro to macro connections, ranging from local realities to religious affiliation, played a role in support of his various arguments around the place of language. Within these micro and macro connections, it will be shown how Sami interacts with other competing narratives of language in his time. In turn, language's role in the shifting mega paradigms can be understood more saliently. Moreover, how Sami constructed the status and place of language in a period where Ottoman imperial identity had become a state sponsored social project in the form of Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*), will shed light upon what influences and ideals Sami was subscribing to.

Contextualization of Albanian Language and its Role in Nationalism

Language plays a significant role in the minds of nationalist thinkers of the nineteenth century, because for them it creates the foundations of what can be conceived of a modern

⁵⁹ Authors like Bernard Lewis, Niyazi Berkes, and to a lesser extent Carter Findley all fit this type of narrative. This is just a small sample size of those who used Turkey as a case study in modernization theory.

nation.⁶⁰ Hobsbawm uses Albania as an example of a linguistic proto-national past that was forged by nationalists. As a matter of fact, Albania is a unique case where multiple languages could claim the role of administrative language and the legitimacy of time and authority that they carry. In the north of Albania, dominantly Catholic regions, Latin played an important role for centuries until the eighteenth century. To the center and the south, Ottoman Turkish was the administrative language from the fifteenth century until the transition into the Albanian nation state,⁶¹ and in the south of Albania, Greek was important in the border region of the newly independent Greek kingdom.⁶²

What did nationalist Albanians have in regards to a national language, or rather a vernacular, with a literary history that they could call their own, to justify their claims for nationhood? It goes without saying that after becoming a nation state, most Albanian intellectuals did not desire to retreat into the administrative language of past empires or faiths. When considering the history of the Albanian language, one encounters the fact that much of the history of Albanian language has a hole before the sixteenth century.⁶³ Before the publishing of the first vernacular Albanian text, Gjon Buzuku's *Missal*, in 1555, the written language use in Albania fell into the domain of Catholic leaders and their use of sacred Latin. This is also seen

⁶⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Second ed. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 52 -53

⁶¹ Janet Byron, *Selection among Alternates in Language Standardization: The Case of Albanian*. Contributions to the Sociology of Language [CSL]. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976), 36

⁶² Nathalie Clayer, "The Albanian Students of the Mekteb-i Mülkiye" *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*. edited by Özdalga, Elisabeth. SOAS/Routledge Curzon Studies on the Middle East. (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 292

⁶³ Janet Byron, *Selection among Alternates in Language Standardization: The Case of Albanian*.

with the use of Ottoman Turkish after the conquests of the Ottomans, as well as Greek religious texts used by orthodox priests and leaders.

While the written languages were distinct from the spoken Albanian language, there were also two dialects competing among the Albanians, reflected in the cultural and linguistic divide among the Northern Geg and the Southern Tosk tribes. Most written works were religious; for the GEGs of the North generally this meant Latin and Catholicism, and for the Tosks of the South this meant use of Arabic alphabet and Ottoman Turkish.⁶⁴ It should be noted that there were religiously mixed tribal confederations among the North and South, so for a Geg to be Muslim or a Tosk to be Orthodox or Catholic wouldn't have caused anyone to bat an eye. The divide here seems to be a rural/urban divide, where the GEGs tended to be more rural and the Tosks tended to be more urban. Yet, Albanians never had a written language to call their own. Although, there were works written in the vernacular tongue of Albanian, these were more or less tied to the religious and tribal divide of the Albanian people. This reality is only exasperated by the realization that most Albanians were not taught or trained in their native tongue, but they received language training in Greek in schools that were under the control of the Orthodox church that sought to Hellenize Albanians, and in Ottoman Turkish in the modern state sponsored schools that sought to indoctrinate the values of Ottomanism into Albanian students.⁶⁵

It is at the initial development of a new 'Albanian' script that historians are able to identify the ideas of Ottoman modernists of the late Ottoman Empire. In addition to this, historians can see how ideas are being shared across the empire and what ideas are prevalent in

⁶⁴ Byron shows the importance of the Sufi tradition of poetry in southern Albania in the 17th and 18th centuries. Ibid, 38.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 39.

this period. In 1844 Nuam Vegilharxhit published a pamphlet that promoted Albanian alphabet that he created.⁶⁶ He rejected the notions that Greek, Arabic, or Latin letters were universally acceptable to all Albanians, or truly able to represent the Albanian phonetics. He created an alphabet that used entirely new symbols to express every letter of the Albanian language. It is over 30 years after this that Sami added his own contribution to the matter at hand. He, along with the Albanian Society in Istanbul, developed a hybrid Latin and Greek script alphabet which established the basis for the Albanian alphabet that is in use today.⁶⁷

Sami: An on the Ground Perspective

The slow progression of language becoming a central point in the nationalist movement for many nationalist thinkers across the world is widely recorded and spoken of, and the Albanian case is no different.⁶⁸ Yet, this importance of language leads one to question of how the Albanian language could function as a signifier of the Albanian people if we are to follow the models of nationalism put forth by Anderson and Gellner. They stress the importance of language, especially the vernacular languages, in the creation of national memory that one may imagine a common group backward through time.⁶⁹ As mentioned above, Albanian had been

⁶⁶ Derek R Hall, *Albania and the Albanians*. (New York: New York, NY, USA: Pinter Reference; Distributed in the United States and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1994) 30.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 30.

⁶⁸ I choose to place Albania in the non-European nationalisms that Anderson refers to due to the fact that Albania was the last European stronghold of the Ottoman Empire and due to its national movement just fitting relatively seamlessly into Anderson's explanation. Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. New York: Verso, 2006. 113. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Second ed. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 102

⁶⁹ Benedict R Anderson, O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006), 14-15

written using Greek, Arabic, and Roman script up until the time of Sami, but these uses were often relegated to allegiances to the local, religious, or regional mold.⁷⁰ This leaves for very little unity among the differences in these allegiances, especially taking into account that spelling and alphabets also had particular quirks depending on the dialect of the writer, whether it be Geg or Tosk. This is coupled with the governing fact that the Albanians were divided up into two *milletts* (Muslim and Orthodox) and four vilayets (Yanina, Shkoder, Kosova, and Monastir). The onset of the development of a scientific and philosophical modern function for languages in the Ottoman Empire also adds an interesting dimension into what was an ongoing dialogue of language and its uses in uniting the Albanian nation.

It is in the crossroads of the alphabet that we can see Sami's desire to have an Albanian language for the Albanian people, regardless of their dialect, religious, or educational affiliation. This had been in the modernist Albanian thinker's mind since the work of Nuam Vegilharxhit.⁷¹ Sami's language goals were also very much steeped in the late nineteenth century realities, including the pressures of the seeing the encroachment of the European great powers from the Western Balkans radically altering the place he called his homeland. Albania by 1878 was the last real Ottoman stronghold in the Balkans and the constant antagonization from the newly formed nation-states around them, as well as Imperial powers, was becoming more and more evident.⁷² Sami and other thinkers who were considering the fate of linguistic and ethnic communities under an empire that was constantly being tested in the face of neo-colonial imperial developments looked to language to find a way to unite the Albanian speaking people in

⁷⁰ Frances Trix, "Alphabet Conflict in the Balkans: Albanian and the Congress of Monastir." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 128, no. 1 (1997): 2.

⁷¹ Ibid. 5

⁷² Isa Blumi, "The Role of Education in Albanian Identity and Myths," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Schwandner-Sievers, S., & Fischer, Bernd Jürgen, Bloomington: (Indiana University Press. 2002), 52.

a time of such fluctuation, a period where even Otto von Bismarck doubted the legitimacy of the Albanian nation in the discussions during 1878 Congress of Berlin.⁷³

The Stamboul alphabet that Sami invented for Albanians in 1878, provides an interesting view into his thinking and how he uses language to propagate his nationalist ideals. The alphabet, unlike Vegilharxhit's, consisted of majority of Roman letters, with some Greek and Cyrillic.⁷⁴ These choices were calculated and not made lightly; Sami was looking to the currents within Ottoman intellectual thought in the field of language. Although Albanian nationalism was central to Sami's ideology, his positionality as part of an Ottoman intellectual elite should be taken into consideration with the same importance. Looking to the Ottoman example we see a particular "scriptal environment" that exists in the governance of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁵ Each Ottoman *millet* had a unique script, or as Frances Trix eloquently describes according to "the 1831 Ottoman census, the categories were: Muslims; reaya, made up largely of Orthodox and Catholic Christians; gypsies; Jews; and Armenians. Apart from the gypsies, each of these groups had its own distinctive script."⁷⁶ Muslims, Greeks, Jews, and Armenians all had their unique script, and for Sami and other Albanian Muslims like him who had strong connections to Istanbul the connection to a unique script and to a unique people seemed necessary.⁷⁷

Working and living under the Ottoman sphere of influence, Sami saw a clear need to unite the 'Albanian Nation' against the crumbling borders of the Ottoman Empire, the lack of

⁷³ Frances Trix, "Alphabet Conflict in the Balkans: Albanian and the Congress of Monastir." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 128, no. 1 (1997): 4

⁷⁴ Frances Trix, "The Stamboul Alphabet of Shemseddin Sami Bey: Precursor To Turkish Script Reform." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 2 (1999): 260-61.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 255

⁷⁶ Ibid. 262

⁷⁷ Ibid. 266

support from a Great Power, and the neighbors who coveted Albanian lands.⁷⁸ Much of Sami's thinking can be seen in his influential work "Albania, what was it, what is it, and what will become of it?" published in 1899.

Masterfully analyzed by Frances Trix, in this treatise Sami displays a strong belief in the power of the written Albanian language as a tool to legitimize the Albanian language, and thereby the Albanian nation.⁷⁹ Sami even goes so far to italicize verbs to give his stance added emphasis as well as using the admiration verb mood.⁸⁰ Sami would have knowingly chosen this mood as Albanians would have known that this particular use of language did not exist in the languages of the neighbors around them. The importance of language as a symbol of national unity cannot be understated as the printing Albanian books, pamphlets, and other works using Sami's 'Stamboul Alphabet'. They gave many Albanians the first taste of awareness to a community it shared bonds with outside of its own local connections. These bonds would step beyond the scope of administrative divisions placed by the Ottomans and help to promote communication and education in the Albanian mother tongue. In Sami's 'Stamboul Alphabet' its uniqueness will reveal some of the strongest influences of Sami.

As stated above, Sami attended a Greek Gymnasium after being taught at a local Bektashi tekke as a child, and it is in this Gymnasium, under the auspices of a Greek hegemonic education system, Sami is introduced to the works of Karl Richard Lepsius. Lepsius is a Prussian Egyptologist by trade who also created the Standard Alphabet to help transcribe hieroglyphics. Yet it is the work of Lepsius and French linguists, that Sami modeled his alphabet, the 'Standard

⁷⁸ Frances Trix, "Alphabet Conflict in the Balkans: Albanian and the Congress of Monastir." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 2

⁷⁹ Ibid. 7-8.

⁸⁰ This verb mood emphasizes surprise or information that is known to the speaker and not the listener. Something like "Apparently the light went out!" or "Clearly the light went out."

Alphabet’, as he sees it, as a scientific and modern alphabet.⁸¹ The Standard Alphabet was a system created by Lepsius to give a visual letter for all sounds made in human language. Using a ‘modern’ philosophy of one letter for one sound, Sami was able to create a fully functional Latin based alphabet which also has a second function in signifying the uniqueness of the Albanian nation. Even though he employed some Greek characters, basing the Stamboul alphabet on Latin, Sami kept Albanian away from further encroachment from Greek hegemony in the classroom. This is especially significant because during this time Albanian language had not been taught in a classroom formally save for a small period time in Korçe in 1885.⁸² Having Cyrillic capitals to the Greek letters of his ‘Stamboul Alphabet’ was also a way to rebuke the Greekness of his finished product.⁸³ It is here that one can look at the intersection of the Ottoman cultural model and Sami’s desire for progress in a modern and scientific mode in order to see the influences of the Ottoman Empire and Sami’s modernizing desires making their unmistakable mark on Sami.

This intersection must also be understood within the regional conflicts growing in Sami’s locale. As previously stated, Sami was most certainly an Ottoman gentleman who had much to lose if Albania was to be taken away from the Ottoman domains. The debate of Ottoman schooling gives insight into Sami’s perception of language plays into the nation building and how Sami’s imperial and local realities effected his perception. Elite Ottoman hope prevailing at the time was that Islam, when packaged in a modern education system, would play a transformative role in the lives of the students, and therefore the empire.⁸⁴ This imperial goal is

⁸¹ Frances. Trix, "The Stamboul Alphabet of Shemseddin Sami Bey: Precursor to Turkish Script Reform." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 2 (1999): 258-61.

⁸² Ibid. 263.

⁸³ Ibid. 261.

⁸⁴ Benjamin C. Fortna, “Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman Secular Schools.” *International Journal Middle East Studies*, 32 no3 (2000): 370.

contrasted by the fact that for Albanians and other minority populations in the Ottoman Empire “local politics became central to a number of people historically marginal to imperial life.”⁸⁵ For Sami and other nationalists across the Ottoman Empire, schooling became a source of political currency to rising politics of culture and ethnicity.

A Greek hegemony on schools, especially in the South of Albania, complicates the narrative of an awakening national conscious through education as suggested by Anderson. How is one to become aware of a shared community if one cannot even speak the language of that community in school, arguably the most important aspect of raising national conscious. This lack of schooling is also convoluted by the fact that many regional groups of Albanians pulled to different political resources to better further their position in the region.⁸⁶ As Isa Blumi explains “Independence was not a secret lesson at Albanian-language schools, but one experienced with the realities of both domestic and external shifts.”⁸⁷ However, it is the binding power of language as an indispensable tool of connection and legitimacy in the mind of the nationalist that supersedes other potential bases for nationalism. For Sami was working within a framework of ambiguous identities that allowed him to frame the Albanian people as bonded through a history of shared language.

Ottoman officials were battling the growing contemporary issue within the Ottoman domains, one that I believe may be the most important issue in the history of the Late Ottoman Empire, which was that the lines between a nation based on ethnicity or religious belief where

⁸⁵ Isa Blumi, “The Role of Education in Albanian Identity and Myths,” in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Schwandner-Sievers, S., & Fischer, Bernd Jürgen, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2002), 51.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 55-56

⁸⁷ Ibid. 58

beginning to be blurred.⁸⁸ Was Sami's position of a nation of Albanians regardless of their religious or dialectical differences something that could function in the social and political realities of the time? Sami used language as an object that could be used to project the uniqueness, and thereby, the realness of the nation against the backdrop of the social project of Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*).⁸⁹ We may look to Sami's nationalist plea to find some better insight into his thinking, in it he states

“Albanians speak one of the oldest and most beautiful languages of the world... Albanian is contemporary to Ancient Greek, Latin, Sanskrit (the language of Ancient India, as well as the language of Ancient Persia), Celtic, Ancient German etc. A lot of the languages have not been spoken for thousands of years and have no life outside old books. They are called “dead languages”, while our native Albanian, though just as ancient as them, is alive and spoken nowadays as it used to be in the time of Pelasgians, who were Albanian just like us but disappeared since they forgot their language. The current inhabitants of the country called Albania today however, retained their language very well and kept the old language of legendary Pelasgians spoken to the present.”⁹⁰

It is clear that Sami looks to create a picture of longevity for the Albanian language against languages which generates an aura of stability in the past and of grandiosity in the present. The Albanians outlasted countless peoples, governments, religions, and movements throughout the centuries, and with this living ancient language they would be prepared to continue as such. For Sami, language could break past the issue that the Albanians were mixed religiously, as even in

⁸⁸ Carter V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010), 100

⁸⁹ Bulent Bilmez, “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.” in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 357

⁹⁰ Shemseddin Sami *Shqipëria ç'ka qenë, ç'është e çdo të bëhetë?* Bucharest, 1899. Quoted in Bilmez, Bulent. “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.”

the late Tanzimat religion was the signifier of identity in the of government administration.⁹¹ Still, this leads to the question of how a person justifying the naturalness of an ethnic religiously mixed single language community existing inside a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-language divided empire. Even against the backdrop of Ottomanism it seems that some major mental gymnastics were taking place. I argue that this view is an issue for modern eyes, by this I imply that movement of Ottomanism for many Ottoman thinkers, especially those in minority groups, this was a chance to participate in the central governments and have the benefits of it (protection, employment, and economic) while having the capacity to protect one's local interests.

Models of civic national identity were used by multiethnic states to create a supportive and inclusive version of national identity aiming to unify diverse religious and ethnic groups.⁹² Within this framework, ambiguous identities could be used in a way to classify oneself in the structure of an empire. For Sami and others like him it was not only possible to participate in the Ottoman social project of a collective civic identity and hold an identity below this, it was a way to keep their own local interests in a position to be legitimized by the central government.⁹³ Sami in his own words describes his own attachment to his Ottoman identity as his primary identity

⁹¹ Alexander Veznekov. "Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests. "Ottomanism as Identity Politics" in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 66

⁹² This civic nationalism is still very clearly employed in our times; it is an effective means to get people to legitimize a political power. Grigoriadis, Ioannis N. "Türk or Türkiyeli? The Reform of Turkey's Minority Legislation and the Rediscovery of Ottomanism." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2007): Columbia University Press. 432

⁹³ Though these phenomena are happening over twenty years late in Russia, the Ottoman context and possibly the Austrian Empire serves to hold as examples of this. We can look to the examples of Said Nursi, and Gheorgaki Çaloğlu among others in terms of this "affirmative action" with a civic national identity. Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. The Wilder House Series in Politics, History, and Culture. (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001)

(üst-kimlik) and his ethnic identity as his secondary one (altı-kimlik).⁹⁴ The minority communities of the Ottoman Empire lay, by and large on its edges. From the Balkans to Eastern Anatolia where large communities of Muslims lived, new identities began to be formulated based on a shared ethnic and cultural heritage that rested outside of a framework of religion. This break away from religion as the basis of personal identity opened the doors for what Isa Blumi deems the “possibilities of identity” and the benefits and issues that arise with it.⁹⁵ Thus for when the time called for it an Ottoman citizen who was an Albanian, Muslim, of the Malësore could interchange between being an Ottoman, Albanian, Muslim, or an individual of the Malësore suiting the situation. It is not a coincidence that Sami’s Stamboul alphabet is published near the time of the discussions of congress of Berlin and the treaty of Berlin. For in this moment Sami’s local interests became tied to his civic Ottoman identity.

Thoughts of the Albanian Ottoman

If we are to better understand the perception of identity and the role this identity has in attempting to shape social structure, we should look directly to the source. In 1878, while writing for *Terceman* (The interpreter), Sami responded to a comment made by a particular individual about the loyalty of Albanians to the Ottoman Empire. He writes:

“For the people of our glorious country, nationality and race is not a sacred thing. Alim Efendi should know that as much as the Albanians wish to break away from the Ottoman Empire, this would be a foolish and treacherous event... Alim Efendi, when speaking of the Albanians, praised the Bosnian resistance to Austria. However, with the slanderous stain of *his own desire* to keep Albania united, ... He does not know that Albanians have vowed and willed to defy

⁹⁴ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Türk or Türkiyeli? The Reform of Turkey's Minority Legislation and the Rediscovery of Ottomanism." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2007): Columbia University Press. 433

⁹⁵ Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 245

Serbia and Montenegro to not give up even a single piece of mixed land until one last soldier remains.”⁹⁶

Sami’s use of identity demarcations for groups in his sentence structuring is poignant. Although at times he uses religiously connotated words when writing, such as *aziz* and *Hazret-i*, not once does he mention the use of a religious identity to differentiate between the subjects of the empire. Not only this, he goes on to show the exemplary nature of the Albanians within the framework of Ottomanism as the implied secession would constitute an act of treachery. Sami was working within a framework of Ottomanism, but in doing so he was able to achieve two results. Firstly, by participating in such a socio-political project, it allows the citizens of the empire to use the “possibilities of identities” to achieve new political goals. For Sami and his vision of Albania, this is transcending the religiously tied marker of identity into one of ethnicity. It is important to note that he states that race and nationality is not important to the empire, but that Sami still leaves the notion of grouping around race and nationality open to citizens’ discretion.

Due to Sami’s choice of words, the second result is that the Albanians are able, in theory, to participate in Ottomanism. If the Empire has no interest in race or nationality, then it would not mind the political mobility of such a group if this group has vested interests in remaining in the empire. At no point when discussing this does the role of religion serve as an identity marker, and in place of this nationalities are used. *Bosnalılar* (Bosnian), *Arnavutlar* (Albanian), *Sırbı* (Serbian), and *Karadağ* (Montenegrin) are all used to convey a sense of identity to a participation of a particular political structure.⁹⁷ For Bosnians and Albanians it means participating and

⁹⁶ The author has chosen to italicize for emphasis. Levend, Ağâh Sırrı. *Şemsettin Sami*. Türk Diline Emek Verenler Dizisi; 13. (Ankara: Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1969), 115-116

⁹⁷ Ibid. 116

existing in the Ottomanism and the Ottoman Empire, but for Serbians and Montenegrins, Sami clearly places them outside the bounds of the Ottoman Empire and in a space where they acting as independent agents, separate of a civic national social project.

In an article published in 1878 Sami follows the path of ethnic-based identity (within the context of Ottomanism) that he created by claiming that he holds loyalties to two entities in his personal life. The first to the Ottoman Empire as his general homeland which he calls *vatan-i umumumi*. The second to Albanian as his personal homeland which he calls *vatan-i hususi*.⁹⁸ With the growth of liberal thought in the period, political thinkers of multi-ethnic empires found ways to express their national identity through the molds given to them as well as sifting through the possibilities of the period.⁹⁹

Further in his life Sami's work continues such work on creating a view of a unique Albania and an Albania that can work inside the context of Ottomanism. Just over ten years after publishing in *Terceman* Sami continues this argument in his six-volume encyclopedia, *Kamus al Alum*, some of the basis of Sami's understanding of the Albanian's place in the Ottoman social project is better understood. He writes,

“The Albanians are the inhabitants of the western section of the Balkan Peninsula... In this nation's unrecorded history from quite an old time ago it resided in the Balkan Peninsula, a few times it has shown itself with interactions with ancient Greece and Rome as they lived dispersedly and manifest themselves in a few forms. Due to the nation living in an intermixed

⁹⁸ George W. Gawrych, "Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800–1912." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15, no. 4 (1983): 524

⁹⁹ I choose to use the example of Judson's work because not only is it a strong example of this kind of expansion of identity politics, it shows that this is not just an Ottoman phenomenon. Judson, Pieter M. *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914*. Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 2-5

way among nations, there was no time to form a unity to form a national language. Until recent times they remained in obscurity.”¹⁰⁰

This ambiguous state of the ancient Albanians reflects much of the place of, at least in Sami’s eyes, the modern Albanians. Although the Albanians lived among various empires and social structures they still had their own culture, history, and unique language (as mentioned above) that kept them distinct. Rather than becoming absorbed into other cultures they remain steadfast in their existence, even if much of their history was ‘unrecorded’. The parallels are striking when viewing this statement from the time it was written and published (1889). Uncertainty during the end of the Ottoman Empire was the reality of the time, as the contested border lands of the Empire’s domain were constantly feeling the pressure of the central government, the Great Powers, and newly the birthed nation states of the Balkans. Albanians lived intermixed between the border lands of the Ottoman Empire and the newly formed nation states of the Balkans, and for the most part were still able to keep their cultural hegemony over such contested regions.¹⁰¹ The parallels written in Sami’s entry on Albanians in his encyclopedia, as measured to their status at the time of its publication, gives a sense of continuity and legitimacy in the existence of the Albanian nation. This coupled with his writings on the history of the Albanian language serves to show the ideas of a thinker working to make sense of his place during a time in which the paradigms of identity of politics were undertaking major shifts.

¹⁰⁰ Şemseddin Sâmî. *Kamus-ül Alâm: Tarih Ve Coğrafya Lûgati Ve Tabir-i Esahhiyle Kâffe-yi Esma-yi Hassa-yi Camidir*. (İstanbul; استانبول: Mihran Matbaası (1889), 143

¹⁰¹ Isa Blumi,. "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 238

Chapter 3: Turk or Ottoman?

As discussed in the previous chapter, Sami uses the “possibilities of identity” to fit his Albanian identity in the context of Ottomanism.¹⁰² What comes next is something that is even harder to fit into our modern understandings of identity and nationalism. In much of the Turkish historiography, Sami has been presented as a Turkish nationalist, often choosing to ignore the duality of his nationalist agenda.¹⁰³ By exploring Sami’s thinking during this period, we may better understand some of the intellectual models Ottoman thinkers were following at the time, like concepts of Turk, Ottoman, and “Turkishness”, as well as how far ideological movements like Pan-Turkism had penetrated the minds of the time.

Even though Turkish nationalist writers tend to put Sami on a pedestal due to his contributions to the early Turkish national awakening, it still leaves the question why an ethnic Albanian would participate in attempting to separate the Turkish identity from the Ottoman language.¹⁰⁴ Sami’s work illuminates on the seemingly contradictory idea that an individual can support two nationalisms at the time. By looking at the place of “Turk” and Turkishness before and during this period, in addition to how Sami worked with these concepts in constructing his

¹⁰² Isa. Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 245

¹⁰³ Kushner, Shaw, Lewis, and others all use Sami in a pretty linear understanding of nationalism. Leaving him to support only one, and for the sake of their works it is Turkish nationalism. The same kind of singular direction of nationalist support can be said for the Albanian historiography.

¹⁰⁴ Bulent Bilmez, “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.” in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 342

arguments, we will better understand the seemingly contradictory nature of holding allegiance to multiple nations.

The state of “Turk” in Ottoman Lands

Identities are an object that are constructed over time, and these identities are continually shaped by social and political processes.¹⁰⁵ As we look into the changing landscape of what Turkish identity means, it is important to do as Asli Ergul suggests and avoid the desire to view and mold the past with present ideas, otherwise we will be left with terrible case of self-inflicted chornofetishism.¹⁰⁶ This is an easy trap to fall into due to the fact that the nationalist projects that arose out of the nineteenth century shaped and continue to shape the history and historiography of this period.¹⁰⁷ It should be first and foremost stated that the cosmopolitan social construction of the Ottoman Empire was a synthesis of Islamic tradition, Turkish heritage, and the tradition of Byzantium, including numerous ethnic and religious cultures.¹⁰⁸ In turn, we see that the Ottoman System before the nineteenth century was a social system built off of the patrimony of the Sultan as God’s Shadow on earth. This was a system that was built socially and legally from the synthesis of the traditions previously mentioned above.¹⁰⁹ Within this social system the meaning of Turk itself was one of a social-cultural understanding attached to the social structure of the Anatolian people. The social division of state centrism, not ethnicity, was the nucleus of

¹⁰⁵ Margaret Moore, *The Ethics of Nationalism*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Pg. 15

¹⁰⁶ Asli.F. Ergul, "The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 629

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012), 3

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 329

¹⁰⁹ Nesim Seker. "Identity Formation and the Political Power in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic." *Historia Actual Online* 3, no. 8 (2005): 60

Ottoman identity.¹¹⁰ The distance between the ruling Ottomans, whether in the bureaucracy, courts, or the Sultan's inner court itself, and the ruled people gave this nucleus shape and stability. as the state became much less concerned about the ethnic identity of groups of the population, natural or otherwise, this bolstered the lack of automatic association between particular peoples and "their" state.¹¹¹

The situation that arises in the pre-modern era is that the people most concerned with the future of the state were not a homogenous ethnic group tied to the foundations of the state, but the functionaries tied to the state and the power thereof. Turk in the pre-modern era had a different significance than in our present time, not truly tied to an ethnic group, but more attached to a socio-cultural phenomenon. Throughout this period there is still ambiguity in the meaning of Turk. For example, even Arab subjects of the empire used the word to describe Slav and Albanian Muslims in the Empire.¹¹² This period also sees the use of Turk from a European point of view as a catch all for Muslims within the domains of the Ottoman Sultan.¹¹³ Within the Ottoman social structure anybody could potentially become an Ottoman by meeting three qualifications; first, be a soldier or bureaucrat; second, be a Muslim in good faith; and third, know the Ottoman way of life and customs.¹¹⁴ One could simultaneously be Ottoman and Turkish at the same time. Turkish, much like Albanian, was just one of the possible ethnic

¹¹⁰ Asli F. Ergul, "The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 630

¹¹¹ Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012.) 1

¹¹² Asli F. Ergul, "The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 634

¹¹³ Irony is not lost in the fact that Lewis throughout this book and among other works of his uses "Turks" to identify the Ottomans as a whole. Bernard. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 3-4

¹¹⁴ Ergul, F. Asli. "The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" 633

identities one could belong to while being Ottoman. It is in the transition of the pre-modern era to the modern era where being a Turk and the concept of Turkishness (*Türklük*) takes a nationalist turn. This is the result of various social and political factors (the colliding of paradigms) that the Ottoman Empire was facing during this period.

None of the major multi-ethnic empires survived the early decades of the twentieth century; the Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman empires all succumbed to the growth of subaltern and open nationalisms. What makes the Ottoman case unique was the sheer amount of foreign intervention during this process.¹¹⁵ Before this hyper connectivity to the ideas and political movements of world, the social structure of the Ottoman Empire, although it was most certainly a top down structure, was made up of autonomous bodies headed by religious leaders who were chosen by and under the power of the Sultan. These autonomous bodies took the form of the *millet* where religion, not ethnicity, was the basis. These *millets* were given a certain measure of autonomy vis-à-vis with local representations of the government.¹¹⁶ Along with this physical system of governance, the Ottomans had a simple all-encompassing formulation known as the circle of equity that combined the ethical, political and social values of the Ottoman ruling *askeri* class.¹¹⁷ This system made sure that everyone and everything had its place, and in theory, if this system was maintained, all in the empire would be well. Yet, it is this construction that begins to change with the interventionist and political efforts of the Great Powers. European economic impositions, like the capitulations and the quickly rising status of religious minority groups

¹¹⁵ Benjamin C. Fortna, C. "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012), 1

¹¹⁶ Erik Jan., Zürcher,. *Turkey: A Modern History*. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 12-13

¹¹⁷ Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*. 1st Ed.]. ed. Studies in World Civilization. (New York: Knopf; [distributed by Random House], 1972), 88

through the Tanzimat reforms, saw the politicization and ethnicization of identity in the empire. Such bounds existed previously, the very existence of the *millet* system proves the politicization of identity in some form, but it is in this meeting of paradigms and the pressures exerted onto the Ottomans that we see previous understandings of ethnicity and even minority begin to change.¹¹⁸

From the pre-modern era to the modern, the proliferation of religious difference paralleled and, more often than not, surpassed the politicization of ethnic difference, particularly in the Balkans and Anatolia. However, even among Muslims, the meaning of *millet* begins to change from “religious community” to communities defined by an ethno-social group. Even the Edict of Gülhane is ambiguous as to whether a *millet* is a religious or ethnic marker of identity.¹¹⁹ In 1878 this distinction becomes more clear when Mıdhat Paşa states the goal of the Tanzimat: to see “a fusion of different races” for the achievement of political unity.¹²⁰ In less than forty years, race had taken a much more central role in the way Ottoman politics took shape. It is in this period from the early Tanzimat to the end of World War I that Turk begins to take shape as politically important dimension of Ottoman society. During the post-Tanzimat period the changing relationship between the ruling *askeri* class and the state allowed new relationships with the state to rise.

¹¹⁸ Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012), 2

¹¹⁹ Findley, Carter V. *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010. 65.

¹²⁰ Alexander Vezenkov, “Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests. “Ottomanism as Identity Politics” in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 61-62

With the rise of Ottomanism, identities on the periphery, like ethnicity, tended to come to the fore front. Ottomanism presented identification with the Ottoman Empire at two different levels: the first is a broader identity with the state and dynasty on behalf of all subjects regardless of faith or ethnicity; the second showed a more narrow view where an individual showed a strong bond to Islam and Turkishness on behalf of all Muslims who were Turks.¹²¹ This sentiment is perfectly encapsulated by Ahmet Midhat Efendi who in 1889 stated that he and others like him were the purest of Ottomans for being a Turk and a Muslim, which showed a deeper rooted division in the idea of Ottomanism early in its political life.¹²² No longer was Turk to be used as a derogatory insult aimed at lowering an Ottoman gentlemen to the statues of a wandering nomad or farmer, but something that made one the most authentic of the empire.¹²³

This semblance of racial ordering is indicative of the trends growing around the world in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ahmet Midhat Efendi is among the first Ottoman intellectuals to push forms of Social Darwinism by supporting Lamarckian ideas in the *Dağarcık* journal.¹²⁴ Such beliefs of Social Darwinism are found among different communities in the empire, like in the Armenian claims and appeals to France that their dominant position in the region can be found in their ability control large sections of trade of the

¹²¹ Alexander Vezekov, "Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests. "Ottomanism as Identity Politics" in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 64

¹²² This Midhat is not the Ottoman statesman, but the famous conservative author and intellect. Ibid. 48

¹²³ Asli. F. Ergul, "The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 634

¹²⁴ Sami was known to have a correspondence with Midhat Efendi, as they were leading writers with much influence over the two of the most important newspapers in the period. Sibel Demirer, "Anthropology as a Nation-building Rhetoric: The Shaping of Turkish Anthropology (from 1850s to 1940s)." *Dialectical Anthropology* 35, no. 1 (2011): 113-114.

Ottoman Empire.¹²⁵ Such altering of the importance of identity by way of pseudo-scientific and biological anthropological means allowed for Ottoman thinkers to expand on the importance of the Turk and the Turkishness (*Türklük*) that comes with imagining new paths of identity formation. Yet, even in the Late Ottoman Empire there is still ambiguity in the various forms of identity, and the possibilities of identity are still a factor when considering the place of Turk and Turkishness (*Türklük*).

Sami, a Turkish Perspective

As discussed above, the ambiguous state of Turkishness (*Türklük*) holds semblance from a socio-cultural understanding of the people of Anatolia to the newly formed opinions of ethnicity under the guise of racial hierarchy, but how was this identity viewed and justified in the empire? Ottoman ruling structures viewed nationalism as the formation of a nation based on a territorial unit, not a particular ethnicity. It is also important to note that the Ottoman government was reluctant to put forward a Turkish centric view of the empire for fear of stoking internal nationalist movements.¹²⁶ The loss of land due to recent flare ups of Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian nationalism were still very fresh in the minds in any subject of the empire, and the effects that these nationalist break offs had are difficult to understate. Sami gives historians a unique view into how an individual who may not be ethnically Turkish as we know now, was able to create outlets for a civic based socio-cultural understanding of Turkishness (*Türklük*) and still fit within his identity of being an Albanian Nationalist as well as an Ottoman subject.

¹²⁵ Firket Adanir, "Armenian Deportations and Massacres in 1925" *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions*. Edited by Chirot, Daniel and Seligman, Martin E. P. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), 77-78.

¹²⁶ Carter V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010) 13, 29, 92

Starting in the reign of Abdülhamid II, there was growing concern among Ottoman elite that it was only the Turks who were striving to keep the empire together, and this led to a sense of isolation in the empire. Yet, this isolation also led to a sense of uniqueness.¹²⁷ These sensations began to be bolstered by the forerunners of Turkish nationalism, Turkic and Muslim intellectual individuals who came from the Balkans, Russia (Trans-Caucasus or the Caucasus), and Central Asia.¹²⁸ Many of these intellectuals were fleeing from international pressure of Imperial expansion of the Russian Pan-Slavic movement into their respective homes. Such global defining trends played an important role in the local realities of individuals as well as making individuals more aware and sensitive to the earlier problems of identity and political loyalty.¹²⁹ This politicizing of differences is also seen in the centers of the Ottoman Empire with foreign intervention and missionary work playing a key role in opening such discourses.¹³⁰ The uncertain realities facing the Ottoman Empire from external and internal change helped to foster the facilitation of Turks as a socio-cultural national identity in the guise of an ethnicity. By rediscovering the Turkish past of the Ottomans, Sami, and other Ottoman intellectuals, allowed fellow nationalists to “realize the true spirit and destiny of the nation”, fashioning their own ideals of community, history, and destiny.¹³¹

¹²⁷ David Kushner, *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. (London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 1977), 5.

¹²⁸ Tamer Balci, "Osmanlı Balkan Mirası ve Türk Milli Kimliğinin Oluşmu." *Osmanlı Mirası Arastirmalari Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (2014): 60

¹²⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turks: Children of the Boderlands?" Edited by Karpas, Kemal H., and Zens, Robert W. *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes*. Publications of the Center of Turkish Studies; No. 2. (Madison [Wis.]: Center of Turkish Studies, University of Wisconsin, 2003), 1-13

¹³⁰ Carter V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010), 141-144.

¹³¹ Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15

To first understand the place of Turk (*Türk*) in Sami's thinking, we should look towards how he understood the term Ottoman. Sami states that the Ottomans (*Osmanlılar*) are one of the divisions of the "great Turkish nation", one that inhabits Anatolia and Rumelia. He also includes the point that since the adoption of equality and the sharing of rights (the Tanzimat) the meaning of Ottoman was extended, so that Ottoman applied to all Ottoman citizens belonging to other races.¹³² Within this working definition, Sami uses Ottoman to describe the race of a people, a Turkish people, showing a distinction from older viewpoints.

There is a shift in the general pre-modern view of the social make-up of the Ottoman Empire, from the ambiguous nature of the ethnicity of the Ottoman ruling elite towards a more ethnocentric structure around the concept of Ottoman. The Ottoman government attempted to make the definition of Ottoman more inclusive through the social engineering project of Ottomanism.¹³³ David Kushner looks to address this point in his seminal work on Turkish nationalism, but he falls short when he contradicts Sami's viewpoint in the use of Ottoman in the framework of Ottomanism.¹³⁴ This growth of Ottomanism by Sami's own classification, shows that there is inherently an ethnic tie to this socially engineered political movement. In this paradigm of thinking, Sami, unlike Mıdâht Efendi, is able to separate an aspect of Ottomanism (the profound tie to Islam) from the designed social product. By doing this, Sami looks to ignore the Islamic identity of the empire into a more inclusive imperial identity group.¹³⁵ One could be Bulgarian, Greek, or Arab but to participate in the project of Ottomanism this individual was

¹³² Sâmi Şemseddin. *Kamus-ül Alâm: Tarih Ve Coğrafya Lûgati Ve Tabir-i Esahhiyle Kâffe-yi Esmâ-yi Hassa-yi Camidir*. (İstanbul; استانبول: Mihran Matbaası; 1889), 3129

¹³³ David Kushner, *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. (London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 1977), 22

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 2014), 38-39

conceding that they were participating in an Imperial identity project that existed because of the partly Turkish nature of this imperial identity, not its Islamic identity. The uniqueness of the Ottomans as Turks puts them in position to create and allow such a project to exist.¹³⁶ Yet, his understanding allows for ambiguity in the presentation of ethnicity or race by those participating in the Ottomanism project because the nature of ethnicity and race is still a matter that is subject to the “possibilities of identity”.¹³⁷ In this new understanding, before the Tanzimat, the Ottomans were viewed by Sami as Turks, but after the proclamation of the Tanzimat we can see that Sami’s acceptance of who is an Ottoman expands. Nationalists in this period have the distinct advantage of having ambiguity in the meaning the nation, whether it stands for an ethnic or cultural iteration.¹³⁸ After all, this is still an ethnic Muslim Albanian man who is advocating both Albanian and Turkish exceptionalism and the nationalist causes thereof.

The layman Turk of the Ottoman Empire, for the most part, still considered his Religious, Muslim, identity as his primary form of identification.¹³⁹ Yet, for the ideologically inclined modernist, like Shemseddin Sami, we can see why attaching himself to a Turkish identity was important for him in response to changes in local, regional, and even national molds. Sami’s support of this Turk-centric interpretation of the empire’s structure coincides with the rising

¹³⁶ Ahmet Midhat elaborates the Turkist position that basis of Ottomanism can be found in early example of the history of the Ottoman Empire. Showing that such benevolence was attached to the definitively Turkish Ottomans. Kushner, D. (1977). *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 38-39.

¹³⁷ Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malsore, 1878-1912" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 237-256.

¹³⁸ Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012), 5-6.

¹³⁹ Umut Uzer, *An intellectual history of Turkish nationalism: Between Turkish ethnicity and Islamic identity*. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.2016), 23-24

place of Turks and Turkishness amongst intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire. This rise takes place during and after the Ottoman-Russian war in 1877-78, where the impact of a political nationalist imperial program (Pan-Slavism) sent shockwaves throughout the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁰ Around a third of the empire had been taken, separated, or occupied which shifted the demographics of the empire in dramatic fashion. The impact of Russia rises with the growth of Christian nationalist separatism in the empire and the unspoken acknowledgment of Muslims as the superior citizen.¹⁴¹ Such an impact increased the importance of the Turkish speaking population, regardless of their ethnic or religious identity.¹⁴² Sami was most certainly attached to the Ottoman system of governance and social structure, and had much to lose if the encroachment of the Great Powers or separatist national movements took the last vestiges of the Ottoman Empire's most productive region of Rumelia. This must also be taken alongside the fact that many Muslims in the borderlands and peripheries in the Balkans began to solidify their identities as "Turkish Muslims" in response to Christian separatist movements. In this vein, Anatolia was quickly becoming the "last stand for the Turks".¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Frederick F. Anscombe, "On the Road Back from Berlin" *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*. Edited by M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett. Utah Series in Middle East Studies. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), 536, 539.

¹⁴¹ Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Ottoman Empire and After: From a State of "nations" to "nation-states"." In *State-Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, (Taylor and Francis, 2012), 9.

¹⁴² Kemal H. Karpat, "Ottoman Borderland: Definition and Typology" Edited by Karpat, Kemal H., and Zens, Robert W. *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes*. Publications of the Center of Turkish Studies; No. 2. (Madison [Wis.]: Center of Turkish Studies, University of Wisconsin, 2003), 6.

¹⁴³ Erik Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turks: Children of the Boderlands?" Edited by Karpat, Kemal H., and Zens, Robert W. *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes*. Publications of the Center of Turkish Studies; No. 2.) Madison [Wis.]: Center of Turkish Studies, University of Wisconsin, 2003), 1-13.

Language would act as Sami's vital connection to the Turkish nation and such inclinations to this connection can be seen in his published work. Sami was still working in the particular "scriptal environment" of the Ottoman Empire where each language belonged to a single nation. This is why the acknowledgement of Turkish as the national language of the Ottomans by the Ottoman Empire's ruling elite in the constitution in 1876 is filled with ideological and practical implications.¹⁴⁴ This can be seen in Sami's influential and impactful article written in *Sabah* (Morning) named *Lisan-i Türki (Osmani)* (Ottoman the Turkish language). Published in 1881, this marks only five years after the introduction of the constitution and the explicit status of the Turkish language in the empire. The name of the article itself should garner some significant attention, as Sami clearly states that the language of the Ottomans is Turkish. In the article Sami states that although the name Ottoman is the famous name of the Ottoman family of the Sultanate, that the base who speak with the language of the Ottomans is of the Turkish race and even the name of the language spoken by them is the Turkish language.¹⁴⁵ What is interesting here is that he explicitly includes himself throughout the article by using first person plural in possession and in verb conjugation. It should also be pointed out that Sami uses the phrase *ümmet* to denote nation/people, while in other instances he uses *kavim* for race/people. Such usage should raise the eyebrow of any researcher as Sami was critical in the use of different words to describe to the concept of nation such as *millet*, which he felt was purely a religious concept.¹⁴⁶ This contentious debate of what words should be used and the concepts they

¹⁴⁴ Kayılı Kurtuluş, *Türk Düşünce Dünyasının Bunalımı: Görüntüdeki Dinamizimin Gölgelediği Tıkanıklık*. (İstanbul İletişim, 2000), 91.

¹⁴⁵ Şemsettin Sami. "Lisan-i Turki (Osmani)", *Hafta*, Birinci Cilt Adet, 12, 10 Zilhicce 1298 (1881) 177.

¹⁴⁶ David Kushner, *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. (London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 1977), 24

conveyed helps to show that uniformity in Ottoman discussions of race, nationality, and even the state of the nation were still being fostered and given a baseline for what was acceptable/unacceptable in such discussions. Sami in this context was just one part of an ideological debate on identity and the direction of the Ottoman Empire.

Continuing in the *Sabah* article, Sami places himself deeper into fulfilling the needs of his “scriptural environment”. He imagines a future where the Turkish language would be regarded as (*addolunmak*) perfect, rich, and broad, and because of this, together with the formal pronunciation of Eastern Turkish language, that Western Turkish would come to be the preferred language of the Turkish dialects. Again, he uses first person plural possession when he speaks of “Our Western Turkish Language,” which helps to include himself into such a Turkish identity.¹⁴⁷ Towards the end of the article we are met with hints of a political dimension of Sami’s thinking, where he states that the unification of the Turks, East and West.¹⁴⁸ Through this a great Turkish nation would arise, but he doesn’t elaborate much more into what would happen in such unification. What it does not fail in showing, is that Sami sees the Turks and the Turkish nation not being controlled by the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire.

Another interesting way to better understand the thinking of Sami is by giving attention to an article that was written in 1898 in one of the most influential papers of the period *Tercuman-ı Hakikat* (Interpreter of Truth). The article is named *Lisan ve Edebiyatımız* (Our Language and our Literature), and within it historians are again greeted to the use of first person

¹⁴⁷ Şemsettin Sami. “Lisan-i Turki (Osmani)”, *Hafta*, Birinci Cilt Adet, 12, 10 Zilhicce 1298 (1881) 180.

¹⁴⁸ Bulent Bilmez, “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.” in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 354

plural in to Sami's relationship towards the Turkish language.¹⁴⁹ While describing the base of Ottoman Turkish on the composition of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish he is quick to voice his opinion in how he feels that such a language constructed this way is an overly complicated language.¹⁵⁰ He quickly pivots to state his position on the matter, claiming that its actually not like this at all. In fact, that a few languages do make up a single category, but the Turkish language belongs to the Turanian language family.¹⁵¹ According to Sami, language has a connection and kinship for those who speak it, it is an unrepeatable bond of the uniqueness of a community group. Sami's use of concept Turan and Turanian people's is thought-provoking as Sami generally steers away from the mainstream use of theories on Turan and Turanian peoples. He tended to follow the works and writings of Leo Cohen, a prominent Turcologist during Sami's lifetime, who equated the Turanian people as a mix of Japanese, Finn, Mongol, and Turkic peoples who have shaped history by being world conquerors.¹⁵² In this frame of thought though, Sami deemphasizes the linkage between Turks and Europeans, a trend not very popular among secular thinkers, and extremely unpopular by religious circles who were upset at the thought of being connected to the Mongols who they despised for the destruction of Baghdad and attacks on Turkic tribes.¹⁵³

Within Sami's work we can see some appearance of a racial ordering or hierarchy when mentioning the Turks. For example, he constantly mentions how the Turkish language, when

¹⁴⁹ Sami throughout the article writes *Lisanımız* (our language), hopefully the title didn't spoil the contents for interested scholars.

¹⁵⁰ "Üç lisanadan mürekkebe bir lisan!" Şemsettin, Sami. "Lisan ve Edebiyatımız" *Tercüman-ı Hakikat ve Musavver Servet-i Fünün*, Kırkambar ve Alem Matbaaları, İstanbul 1898. 90-91.

¹⁵¹ "...lisan el sine-i Turaniye zümresine mensup Türk lisanıdır." Ibid.

¹⁵² Umut Uzer, *An intellectual history of Turkish nationalism: Between Turkish ethnicity and Islamic identity*. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.2016), 19

¹⁵³ Ibid. 19-20

freed from the clunky yoke of Arabic and Persian grammar and obscure words, would become the most perfect and most beautiful iteration of Turkish.¹⁵⁴ Yet, to say that Sami is completely behold to purifying Turkish nationalist tendency would be incorrect, as he even admits that the addition of Arabic and Persian words in “pronunciation and style” could only be considered as “aspects of progress”.¹⁵⁵ This is a different position from the *Saf Türkçeciler* or the *Tasfiyeciler* (the Purists) that arose only after the death of Sami and in the embryonic state of the Turkish Republic.¹⁵⁶ Sami’s Ottoman Turkish dictionary, the *Kamus-ı Turki*, shows how Sami looked to standardize the Turkish alphabet in Arabic script, spelling orthography, and create a general popular intelligibility among writers and readers.¹⁵⁷ Such goals resembled his work with the Albanian alphabet, the only differences between the two being that Turkish still had a rich literary history, and Arabic script’s symbolic attachment to Islam made a possible script change unimaginable because of the sheer proportion of Turkish speaking people being Muslims. However, it should be noted that such propositions in the late Ottoman Empire for a script change in Turkish language was not unheard of.¹⁵⁸

Once we include the presence of the “scriptal environment” of the Ottoman Empire, the growing importance of Turkish speakers in the empire, the ambiguous state of on the place of

¹⁵⁴ The introduction of the dictionary speaks to this on many occasions. Paşa Yavuzarslan, *Kamus-i Türkî*. 1. Baskı. ed. Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları; 1001. (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2010)

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ This group was composed of ethno-cultural nationalists that sought to purify all non-Turkish elements from the language; grammar, words, and phrases as a whole. Aytürk, İlker. "The First Episode of Language Reform in Republican Turkey: The Language Council from 1926 to 1931." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18.3 (2008): 277

¹⁵⁷ Ahmet Ersoy and Gorny, Maciej and Kechriotis, Vangelis. *Modernism: Representations of National Culture*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), <https://muse.jhu.edu/> . 35-37

¹⁵⁸ Many Young Turk leaders were proponents of alphabet reform changes. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 188

identity and the lexicon of identity, as well as the importance of that Sami personally places on language, it is easier to see how Sami can connect himself to a “Turkish” identity. Given the molds of identity in the late Ottoman period, Sami can move to assert his connection to Turkishness (*Türklük*) as he saw an inherent Turkish tie to the Ottomans, their language, and the imperial social project derived of its name. As stated before, Sami was an elite, modernist-thinking intellectual and one inherently invested to the Ottoman social structure which attached him to many of the preconceived notions, willingly or unwillingly, to the state and the institutions there of. Sami looked to move away from some of these preconceived notions of Ottoman Turkishness, unlike those such as Mıdhat Efendi, by distancing the Islamic character of the imperial identity and placing it on a trajectory toward a more Turkish-centric based character.

The base of this Turkish-centric character belongs to the binding power of language and its ability to connect large swaths of people regardless of their faith, social class, and most importantly the lack of ethnicity. Inspired by the growing trend of classifying and creating racial hierarchies in the world, and powered by the growing interest and research in the world for the history, language, and status of the “Turks”, Sami was given the tools to create an outlet for his own “possibilities of identity” in the context of the late Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁹ Sami, and others like him, helped to create the outlets for the new foundation of Turkish identity. These outlets increased the amount of possibilities for the “plasticity” of identities in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁰ As an elite, Sami looked to actualize a civilized nation and saw that identities were instruments

¹⁵⁹ Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 18-20; Kushner, David. *The rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876-1908*. (London; Totowa, N.J.: Cass. 1977), 27-33.

¹⁶⁰ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

for achieving such goal.¹⁶¹ By moving away from the Ottoman and Islamic character of Turkish identity, Sami tried to create national Turkish collective identity by conferring a new role to the “Turkish” language of the empire.

¹⁶¹ Bulent Bilmez, “Shemseddin Sami Frasheri (1850-1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities.” in *We, the people: Politics of national peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*. edited by Mishkova, D. 341-366 (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press. 2009), 364.

Conclusion: The Collision of Continuity, Change, and Ambiguity

The late Ottoman Empire is often portrayed as a time of dynamic change, and it most certainly was. Yet, most shifts in the empire were attached to an aspect of past continuity and given new meaning, viewpoints, or a new role in late Ottoman Empire and even in the early Turkish Republic. Sami, as I have shown, represents a transition from the Islam-centrally inclined Young Ottomans towards the beginnings of the Turk-centric Young Turk thought and movement. Being educated in both traditional Muslim education and in “modern” education shows the duality of his time and place in history. He is not alone in such a didactic education. Those raised in the 1850’s and beyond in the empire experienced a unique view on the Empire, the World, and even of the self and how to find value in those fields. Different expressions of this view aroused in different political thoughts and movements. Ranging from the conservatism of Midhat Efendi to a more liberal understanding in the beliefs of Sami himself.

It is important to point out that not only were the Ottomans facing change in their lands, but the world was encountering the products of change.¹⁶² Expressions of one’s attachment toward different social groups, and in the case of Sami, towards newly imagined social groups, show how these changes took place in the Ottoman Empire. In his expressions of such attachment, Sami is not creating new terms or new groups, but rather, partially using the frameworks given to him in the social standards of the Ottoman Empire. Frameworks like the “scriptal environment”, the role of language, the millet system, or the Turkish ethnicity of the

¹⁶² Chapter 4 of this work shows how from the 1870’s on nationalism is transforming, and with it the world. E.J. Hobsbawm. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Second ed. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Chapters 5 and 6 of this work as well. Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006)

Ottoman ruling house, were all continuations of the past. However, due to the effects of local, regional, national, and even world phenomenon, these frameworks in Sami's hands were given new direction. In this collision of change and continuity, new outlets for identity (and the finding value in oneself in this identity) were beginning to be formed. This was the direction for Sami, the direction of national identity.

If we are to continue towards looking at the history of the Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic we would see that in 1912 Albania would become an independent country, the Ottoman Empire would be defeated in WWI, and eventual supremacy of the Turkish nationalist movement and the rise of Atatürk in the formation of the Turkish Republic. In some shape or form Sami's ultimate desires of having an Albanian and Turkish nation did come to fruition, albeit not within the Ottoman Empire. The transformative power of language that Sami saw as the key in justifying his rational in Albanian and Turkish nationalism in his lifetime, would go on to serve as parts of the main bases of identity in the future counties. Maybe, Sami was not so far in thought from Atatürk, who in 1933 on the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Republic says, "*Ne mutlu "Türküm!" diyene*", (What joy to the one who says "I am a Turk!").¹⁶³

¹⁶³ "Speech Delivered by Atatürk on the Tenth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic," columbia.edu, last modified May 7, 1997, <http://www.columbia.edu/~sss31/Turkiye/ata/onuncuyil.html>

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