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Identities (Re)Constructed in Exile: Hybridity and Displacement in Louis de
Bernières’s *Birds Without Wings* (2004) and Jeffrey Eugenides’s *Middlesex*
(2002)

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Declaration: This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores two twenty-first-century novels which deal with the effects of population exchange and diaspora on ethnic identity, and in particular Greekness. Louis de Bernières's *Birds Without Wings* (2004) and Jeffrey Eugenides's *Middlesex* (2002) represent the ways in which ethnic identities are formed, reformed, and transformed beyond the binaries created by borders and cultural politics. The wars, population exchange, diaspora, and the American Melting Pot theory are among the external influences for the hybrid identities that result from migration and exile, while love, intermarriage, incestuous relationship, and sexual orientation are among the internal influences. Although the novels differ regarding the reasons for migration, voluntary or involuntary, the characters in each novel exemplify varieties of hybridized identities. In analysing the complexity of ethnic identity and culture, this study aims to show how cultures interact through people and how each individual has the potential to create new forms of identity by affirming, blending, or resisting the expectations imposed on him/her. Through cultural interaction the characters expose the ambiguities and contradictions of the dominant culture. This intervention or, in Homi Bhabha's terms, cultural translation occurs in the fringes of the dominant culture and opens a third space. It is a space where neither the dominant nor the minority culture may have a claim to coherence. The dissertation focuses on the ways in which the motifs of journeying and home, as well as physical spaces develop the themes of hybridity, belonging, and cultural incoherence. It also examines the postmodern narrative techniques used by the authors in order to exemplify the themes of identity construction and transformation. The characters' persistent search for a home but also their constant negotiation of Greekness in the midst of Ottoman, European, and American discourses lead to self-division but also survival. Eventually their constant mobility helps them withstand the Western cultural politics that impose conformity or compromise, and the characters are shown to survive by existing everywhere at once as a body with many parts.

Keywords: Identity, hybridity, ethnic identity, third space, contact zone, population exchange, home, alienation, diaspora, diaspora compromise, melting pot theory, defamiliarization.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture incorporates the behaviours, traditions, ethics, beliefs, and intellectual progress of a particular society. It is affected by the people and the communities that are shaped according to politics and economy as well as external factors that may disrupt the development of a culture or may cooperate in the process of cultural development. Culture is never sterile or indicative of one national or ethnic group. Instead, the inevitable interaction between cultures may result in new more inclusive cultures or new cultural products and this reciprocal activity determines the degree of correlation between cultures. Literature is one of the cultural products which may require a similar process in its creation and development. Thus, literary texts may result from this cultural interaction and may explore the relations between different kinds of cultures and the identities that result from such coexistence of cultures. In other words, literature is often preoccupied with the close affinity between cultures, ethnic identities, societies, and nations. This dissertation explores two twenty-first-century novels which deal with multicultural societies and with the effects of population exchange and diaspora on ethnic identity, and in particular Greekness. Louis de Bernières's *Birds Without Wings* (2004) and Jeffrey Eugenides *Middlesex* (2002) represent the ways in which ethnic identities are formed, reformed, and transformed beyond the binaries created by borders and cultural politics.

Louis de Bernières's novel *Birds Without Wings* is a relevant literary text in terms of its representation of socio-cultural, historical, and political affiliations between various groups and cultures. To begin with, the novel concerns a situation which is related to the colonial experience. The Ottoman Empire's expansionist agenda led the empire to include diverse cultures in its borders. To exemplify, the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire encompassed ethnic groups and cultures such as Greek, Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Crimean, Georgian, Assyrian, Armenian, Arabic, Kurdish, Jewish, Persian apart from its dominant Turkish and Islamic culture. These groups, some provided with privileges or prerogatives, had an influence on both the multicultural empire and the contemporary Turkish country. In that sense, the Ottoman Empire was a land where plurality existed despite each emperor's differing view on cultural politics and on whether multiculturalism should be encouraged, or assimilation implemented. Nevertheless, the colonising culture and the colonised cultures influenced

each other in a way that enabled imitation and creation of new forms of cultural representations which is also depicted in *Birds Without Wings*.

In this context, Louis de Bernières explores the possibilities of cultural interactions through his novel. In other words, it is possible to say that his work provides an apposite context for exploring Homi Bhabha's perception of hybridization as it showcases cultural and political struggles in the history of the late Ottoman Empire. Although the novel may strike its readers as a romance at first, love is not the only scope of de Bernières's novel. Hence, romance is one of the multiple contexts of the novel in which the development of cultures and creation of hybridized identities can be considered. The relation between cultures is demonstrated as a means of social transformation that could be named "cultural translation" in Bhabha's terms. According to Bhabha, the notion of cultural translation stands for the activities between cultures, as he describes in his interview entitled "The Third Space" (1990): "I'd like to introduce the notion of 'cultural translation' to suggest that all forms of culture are in some way related to each other, because culture is a signifying or symbolic activity" (210). Thus, de Bernières's exploration of love, language, social context, history, politics, physical and metaphorical home may be related to the way in which culture is exposed to translation, most specifically between the Greek and Turkish culture.

In this context, cultural translation and hybridity in *Kayaköy* result in different identities and representations. For example, the Greek and Turkish people create new ways of communication through jokes and metaphors to show affection towards each other, words that were once used with an intention of assimilating and alienating the "other." Their colonial experience hybridizes their attitude and perception for each other in a way that it combines both cultures and creates identities which may fit in a different cultural framework than the one imposed by the empire or the upcoming nation state. In the eyes of the colonial powers and the colonised nations which undermined the colonial experience, these new forms and identities appear not only as hybrid but also as ambivalent. Thus, the imperial powers and the nation-states ask from the colonised to forget both the cultural difference and hybridization as they wish to reduce ambivalence. Forgetting this process becomes an obligation which Bhabha names totalization: "To be obliged to forget—in the construction of the national present – is not a question of historical memory; it is the construction of a discourse on society that *performs* the problematic totalization of the national will" (*Nation* 311). In the

novel, the characters are constantly expected to forget their historical memories, identities, and cultures by the dominant powers.

Moreover, this process of imposed forgetting creates another ambiguity for the displaced communities. The uncanny complicates the colonial identities' process of appropriation. According to David Huddart, the uncanny is one of the ambivalent elements of exile and colonial discourse: "The idea of the uncanny itself is ambivalent and is used in many contexts throughout Bhabha's work. All the hesitations, uncertainties, and ambivalences with which colonial authority and its figures are imbued are characterized in terms of the uncanny" (54). In *Birds Without Wings*, the uncanny is experienced by the forced exiles and the remaining residents of the village. Both the Greek and the Turkish people experience the uncanny after the population exchange. For the Greek Orthodox people, Greece, although it is the country of their origin, creates uncanny feelings.

The ambivalent use and translation of language creates further enigmas. As language is an important mechanism for cultural translation, it may also alienate people in the process of identifying the "self" and the "other." For Bhabha, cultural difference can be a result of cultural translation as he explains: "Cultural difference emerges from the borderline moment of translation that Benjamin describes as the 'foreignness' of languages. Translation represents only an extreme instance of the figurative fate of writing that repeatedly generates a movement of equivalence between representation and reference, but never gets beyond the equivocation of the sign" (*Nation* 314). In that sense, it is possible to say that the migrant/minority populations subvert the dominant imperial discourses by opening them up to exposure. By inserting their own cultural attributes, they expose the ambiguities and contradictions of the dominant culture. This intervention is cultural translation which occurs in the fringes of the dominant culture and opens the third space. It is a space where neither the dominant nor the minority culture may have a claim to be coherent.

Thus, the "foreignness" of language is something beyond the experience of migrants, as things in their culture and the new culture that they are introduced to may remain untranslatable. The population exchange creates such moments in *Birds Without Wings*. Each character must translate the content of his/her culture, and often they must translate their own identity through other means of identification. The moment of forced population exchange is such a borderline moment not only for the people who do not want to volunteer in this process but also for the people who may accept it.

In that sense, some characters undergo an ongoing metamorphosis. This evolution shows how identities are fluid and cannot be stable. Emine Yeşim Bedlek explains that the arising nationalism aimed to suppress such fluid identities: “Contemporary Turkish and Greek understanding of the Lausanne Convention and the population exchanges is based on nationalism. Modern Greeks and Turks believe that through the population exchanges, they ethnically cleansed their territories of the ‘Other’” (3). Thus, the population exchange served as a means to reduce differences or variations and to create homogenised societies. Moreover, in these homogenised societies nationalism aimed to point out the analogies between people in terms of their language, religion, customs, etc., to transfer the fluid identities and the “otherness” into identifiable qualities. In other words, nation states in the twentieth century used both alienation and identification in order to assert cultural politics. Thus, to understand the discourse of culture in *Birds Without Wings* it is necessary to take the historical background, the cultural politics, and the anatomy of social identity into account.

The population exchange that is explored in de Bernières *Birds without Wings* is only one example which can be related to ethnic nationalism, in the context of twentieth-century colonization and migration. Different social politics led countries and their communities to experience other forms of (self)exile and migration. The developed and developing countries, colonies, and industries in the twentieth century are considered the cause of both voluntary and involuntary migrations. Diaspora results from the migration or dispersal of ethnic groups away from their country of origin, in their attempt to establish their lives in different countries all over the world. The variety of people with distinct backgrounds affects the structure of the country they live in and creates new transnational identities both on a communal and an individual level. The United States is one of the countries which hosts diasporas from the entire world. The purpose of people migrating to the U.S varies depending on their social, economic, and political status in their home country. Greek diaspora in America is a large group of people who migrated from mainland Greece, the Ottoman Empire, and from other locations. In the case of the Greek diaspora, it is possible to say that migration to United States was mainly due to political and economic reasons. Thus, despite their Greek identity, distinct cultural features and reasons of migration, diaspora created new cultural forms for the Greek Americans. Jeffrey Eugenides’s novel *Middlesex* is a literary text which explores the cultural identity and the Americanisation of the Greek diaspora in terms of hybridized identity and gender.

To begin with, Eugenides narrates the history of the Stephanides family through the experiences of a third-generation family member, Cal Stephanides, who describes his sexual orientation as an identity that is interconnected to his grandparents' early life in Bithynios, a fictional village claimed to be in Bursa, and in the United States. Cal's exploration of his identity unravels the ways in which the ethnic identity of his grandparents and the way his grandparents (re)construct their identities forms a connection between his family, culture, and the diaspora. In that sense, the novel contributes to the discussion of hybridity, transnationalism, and multiculturalism. Eugenides's use of characters, locations, cultural politics, and traditions develops the influence of migration on the communities and individuals which undergo hybridization. The character development in the novel highlights these constantly evolving identities. The circumstances of Americanisation are among the instances of cultural change that contribute to the evolution of characters such as Lefty, Desdemona, Sourmelina, Milton, Tessie, Chapter Eleven, and Cal. From the first generation to the third generation, the members of the Stephanides family renew their identity according to the demands of their environment. The melting pot context plays an important role in the process of shaping their life and behaviours. The Stephanides family adheres to such theories by trying to adjust in accordance with Henry Ford's melting pot theory which requires of them to give up some Greek cultural aspects.

Although the melting pot theory implicitly suggests the welcoming of each culture and allowing diversity, Eugenides's example indicates that in reality Greek Americans are not fully encouraged to embrace and maintain their culture of origin. Instead, as *Middlesex* shows, in order to integrate they need to eliminate aspects of their Greek identity such as their language and aspects of their everyday lives. In Stacy Warner Madder's point of view, the immigrants who became part of the American melting pot had to discard their ethnic identities. Vicky Johnson Gatzouras maintains that the melting pot theory creates doubleness in American society especially for the second-generation immigrants: "Being raised in a hybrid environment and in a society significantly influenced by the ideology of the melting pot, it is a common phenomenon that individuals of the second generation are torn between two ways of life" (71). These two ways affect the identity construction of immigrants. The first and second-generation immigrants are exposed to different phases of the melting pot process which leads to the elimination of the doubleness, as such double identities would not be received with respect.

In that sense, Lefty's experience working in Henry Ford's company and the experience of Milton and their third-generation members, including Cal and Chapter Eleven, have some differences. Gatzouras comments on Lefty's process of Americanisation as a significant phase of the melting pot: "In spite of Lefty's eagerness to become an American, and his willingness to embrace America as his country, the story shows that all immigrant groups were not equally welcome to participate in the making of the American melting-pot" (194). Thus, to receive the respect of the society the first-generation Greeks had to make the American culture and its tenets as the dominant aspect of their identities. Such a defamiliarization from one's roots creates an ambivalence for the second and third generation, and Eugenides employs the ambivalence to show how the social identity of Milton and his children is gradually constructed. In Gatzouras's words, "If *Middlesex* features Greece as the 'true home' (363) of the immigrant generation, the text also shows how the American-born generation is not likely to put 'Greekness' at the center of their social identities" (194).

In that sense, by providing an insight into how the generations form their identity the novel highlights the ambiguity of notions such as home and identity. The ambivalence in the identity of immigrants occurs due to the expectations of the American society which obliges the diaspora communities to compromise some of their features. According to Amos D. Bivan et al., diaspora compromise is the result of cultural hybridity that points to the inability of putting one's ethnic identity at the centre: "The Diaspora Compromise is the aftermath of the cultural hybridity suffered by both the Victim and Contemporary Diasporas, that is, the consequence of the state of ambivalence also experienced by them" (34). Bivan et al. further argue that the ambivalence and the need to compromise may create double displacement from one's motherland and country of destination (31). In *Middlesex* there are various instances of diaspora compromise and it coincides with Lefty Stephanides's experience in Henry Ford's company in which the "English-Language Melting Pot" requires of him to compromise his language and habits to function in both society and his job.

The first chapter of this dissertation explores how de Bernières's novel presents culture and politics in the multicultural spaces of Asia Minor. It studies one of the most significant elements of culture, language, in terms of hybridity as well as the physical spaces which function as spatial manifestations of the third space in *Birds Without Wings*. The novel itself as a postmodern narrative is relevant to the discussion of hybridity as it showcases how the polyphonic stories are interwoven. In the last part of

the chapter, I will show how these locations and their history disappear in the borders of contemporary times.

The second chapter deals with diaspora and the results of the melting pot on identity forming in the United States through an exploration of Eugenides's novel. This chapter aims to demonstrate how the author connects cultural hybridity and diaspora compromise in *Middlesex* through the journeys, customs, and relationships of the novel's characters. Moreover, creating home and identity is explored throughout the locations and thresholds which Eugenides offers as his characters struggle to evolve.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction: The Socio-Historical Background of the Population Exchange and its Results for Kayaköy

The twentieth century is marked by various catastrophic events that concerned world history and politics. The destiny of empires had already been at stake after the revolts for independence starting in the nineteenth century. The collapse of empires such as the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empire affected not only the structure of states but also their citizens. The Ottoman Empire is one of the empires whose population includes several ethnicities, and it was in turmoil after the revolutionary movements regarding the independence of each ethnic group. Most of the ethnic groups gained independence as some rebellions had positive outcomes for the groups of Greeks, Serbians, Albanians, Bulgarians, and Arabs. However, they also brought negative consequences because of the attitude of the Ottoman Empire and other nations towards the uprisings. Having a population including social groups of people with diverse backgrounds such as Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Jews, and Assyrians, the Ottoman Empire was a multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious society. Thus, the constantly changing demographics in the late Ottoman Empire caused even more trauma while aiming to minimise conflicts. The Greeks of Asia Minor were among the groups that were severely affected by the conflicts during the Greek war of independence, the first world war, and the population exchange in 1923.

Asia Minor is a region in which Greek people were one of the most populous groups. The people in Asia Minor were divided into two groups according to their religious ethnicity as Orthodox Christians of Asia Minor and Muslims of Asia Minor. According to Bedlek, in her definition of the multicultural structure of the empire, these groups were the largest groups in Asia Minor: “The Ottoman Empire was a pluralistic society within which various ethnic and religious groups lived, worked and worshipped together. The largest group was the Muslim Turks, and the second largest group was the Orthodox Christians, the remnant population of the defeated Byzantine Empire who were more privileged compared to other millets” (14). Therefore, Greeks played one of the two major parts in the socio-cultural and socio-economic life of the Ottoman Empire. In that sense, in terms of religious, cultural, and economic rights in trade Greeks were among the most privileged subjects. Hence, Bedlek claims that the Greek

language continued to flourish without obstacles: “Greek was partly the official language of the Empire in which some declarations were written” (14). In other words, apart from common interaction in their daily life Greek people were able to pursue their legal rights in jurisdiction through the use of the Greek language.

However, despite their privileges there were various obstacles that affected the Greeks’ social life in Asia Minor in a negative way. The Ottoman Empire was affected by the rise of nationalism just as other European empires were. Although the Empire tried to protect its prosperity as a cosmopolitan state, its plans were not feasible. It is possible to say that to avoid any dismembering of ethnic minorities they applied three principles such as Ottomanization, Islamization, and Turkism. The first two plans failed due to ethnic and religious nationalism, and only the latter would be successful in creating the modern Turkish nation with a less diversified population. Regarding the Greek population, the war of Greek independence was proof that the Ottomanization project could not work for the Greeks living in Greece, and since there were already ethnic and religious differences between the new nation and the Ottoman Empire, a reconciliation was not possible at the time. On the other hand, the Greeks of Asia Minor were still bound to the Ottoman Empire, and for some groups it was quite difficult to define to which cluster of Asia Minor communities Greeks belonged. Thus, the cultural hybridity in and among the Asia Minor societies was one of the central issues which affected the outcome of the population exchange which took place in 1923.

The rise of nationalism led to the extermination of several minority groups in multicultural societies, and the gradual cultural extermination started by means of the exchange. In that sense, the population exchange aimed to reduce the cultural and ethnic diversity and to form a society which would be easier for the rulers to control. Each country would have its citizens sharing a mutual ethnic, religious, and cultural identity and speaking the language of their newly formed nations. It was therefore decided that a population exchange between Greece and Turkey would provide independence for a part of the latter’s population as well as reducing the national diversity. However, there were various groups which did not comply with these rules as there were some exceptions in cases where the cultural hybridity created a unified identity among the Greeks and Turks. For instance, the intermarriage between Greek and Turkish people was part of their tradition during these times. Especially in cities such as Aivali, Smyrni, Constantinople, and Bursa these practices were more common among the communities named Karamanlis. The daily life in those cities was an amalgamation of various

traditions. Therefore, the displacement of such group of people would create further social and political issues.

In that sense, the aim to homogenise the nations as Greek and Turkish could result in alienation. People who were forced to emigrate to the countries they belonged to ethnically faced problems not only on their way to their promised homeland but also in the midst the new society they encountered. Many Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were the target of bandits and criminals. The voyage to Greece has been described by Orthodox Christians of Asia Minor as dangerous and inhumane due to the overcrowded ships and trains in which people experienced another trauma of the death and the burial of their loved ones in bad conditions. Yet, the ones who finally reached their country would face the difficulty of assimilation due to the differences in language, religious practices, and customs. According to Bedlek the numbers are uncertain: “It is not possible to ascertain the total number of people who were affected by the population exchanges. We know that the population of the displaced Christians was greater than that of the displaced Muslims of Greece, and roughly 1.5 million people, both Christians and Muslims, experienced the trauma of leaving their motherland” (36). The refugees also experienced problems with accommodation and financial support as both Greece and Turkey were underdeveloped due to their financial loss at wars.

The population exchange between the ethnic minorities had an impact on Greek, Turkish, and English literature as the memoirs of the refugees were transmuted into prose fictions. Louis de Bernières’s *Birds Without Wings* provides the historical context of the life of Kayaköy residents. Located in the Aegean region, Kayaköy is a village in which Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and many other minority groups lived in peace up until the wars and conflicts of the twentieth century. The destiny of Kayaköy residents was shaped by political interests, and its inhabitants hesitated to leave their homes despite all social and economic outcomes of the war. The Greeks wants to stay in their homes regardless of the poverty and abuse, while the Turks longed to retain their Greek neighbours instead of welcoming Cretan Turks with whom they did not have much in common. Regarding Kayaköy’s former residents, both the historical facts and the novel do not allow the readers to think in binaries of race and culture. Thus, it is significant to consider the sociohistorical background of the population exchange to show the reason behind the hybridity of such groups that cannot be classified in a specific ethnotaxonomy. Therefore, in the novel a broad range of social experiences

such as love, neighbourhood, religion, trade, education affects this issue of ambivalent social identities.

1.2 Love as the Union of People

The relationship between men and women can change the shape of a society. Throughout history there are various examples of love stories which show how love can lead to companionship and peace as well as enmity and hatred. From the very beginning of *Birds Without Wings* de Bernières relates the story of the villages to the love story of Philothei and Ibrahim. Although it appears to be a childish infatuation their love results in calamity for the entire village of Eskibahçe (a fictional village around Kayaköy). Apart from the love of Ibrahim and Philothei there are several examples that show different levels of union within a multicultural society. In that sense, it is significant to consider the role of love interests between Greeks, Turks, and other ethnic minorities to show the extent of people's proximity and how the population exchange may affect them severely.

To begin with, the love story of Ibrahim and Philothei is from the start presented as having the potential for the future disasters. The novel starts with Iskander the Potter's description of Philothei's birth and the way it was received by the villagers. Considered immediately as one of the most beautiful babies of the village, Philothei creates an immense feeling of fear in the villagers. Iskander the Potter claims that Philothei's beauty is given to bring hardship and misfortune: "Philothei was the great beauty of the town, and in her short lifetime this caused her more difficulties than it brought compensations. It has sometimes occurred to me that God only bestows extreme beauty upon those to whom He wishes to bring misfortune" (de Bernières 7). During her birth, the women perform both Christian and Muslim rituals by reading verses from the Bible and the Quran. Upon the potter's claim that the prettiness of the baby will bring trouble, Philothei's father, Charitos, says "nazar değmesin", an expression to avoid bad luck, and he wants Iskander to take a rag and tie it on the red pine to wish Philothei's beauty will not bring any misfortune. However, it creates similar feelings for Abdulhamid Hodja, the Imam, who visits the newborn baby and he prays for their good. In that sense, the common feelings that are born out of Philothei's beauty show how the villagers live harmoniously, with Christian and Muslim customs complementing each other despite their religious differences.

Philothei's close friend Drosoula, also of Greek ethnicity, is another person who agrees that Philothei had a mysterious and terrifying beauty. Drosoula believes that her friend intoxicated her with her appearance as she did to many others. Philothei's eyes have an enchanting power according to Drosoula's descriptions: "Philothei had very dark eyes. You couldn't even see the pupils because the iris was so dark a brown as to be black, and consequently no one ever really knew what Philothei was feeling. Normally you glean more from someone's eyes than you do from their speech, but I could read nothing at all from hers" (de Bernières 22). In that sense, Drosoula has to rely on Philothei's words and speech rather than her facial expressions and attitude. Yet, they build an intimate friendship as they always spend their time together. When Drosoula loses her best friend after the population exchange, she loses almost everything she has: "Sometimes I still miss the best friend of my youth, and I think of all the other things that have been lost. I lost my family, my town, my language and my earth" (de Bernières 24). For Drosoula, the love she has for her friend is the love she has for her past ethnic and religious identity, and when she leaves Philothei behind to go to Cephalonia, Drosoula loses the connection with her community.

This loss firstly transforms into a hatred towards Ibrahim as Drosoula blames him for her friend's death. Indeed, deep down she knows the reason behind her reaction; Drosoula is frustrated with the conditions which made them enemies with Ibrahim. In other words, Drosoula detests the political issues which lead to the death or alienation of many and which resulted in her isolation. As she notes, "To forget the bad things is good. That is obvious, but sometimes one should also forget the things that were wonderful and beautiful, because if you remember them, then you have to endure the sadness of knowing that they have gone." (de Bernières 24). Apart from the friendship of Drosoula and Philothei there are several instances that bind people to each other. In particular, the friendship between Karatavuk and Mehmetçik as well as the one between Polyxeni and Ayşe Hanım denote the union between the Greeks and the Turks.

Commencing from their childhood, Karatavuk and Mehmetçik's relationship constitutes one of the strongest in de Bernières's novel. Originally named as Abdul and Nico respectively, Karatavuk and Mehmeçik grow up together playing games with their terracotta birds made by Iskander the Potter and their nicknames derive from the birds which they imitate in sound. Moreover, the way these boys symbolise birds has another meaning for Iskander the Potter that delineates the overall chain of events that happen to the residents of Telmessos. In Iskander the Potter's words, birds have common

features with humans which he summarises as: “Man is a bird without wings... and a bird is a man without sorrows” (de Bernières 48). This bird motif repeatedly used during the novel, shows how people, unlike birds, do not have the authority to settle or migrate wherever they wish. For example, during the war Karatavuk and Mehmetçik cannot choose their positions as soldiers who wish to be comrades.

Due to his religious ethnicity Mehmetçik is not allowed to join the army with Karatavuk although he wants to volunteer by replying to the sergeant, “I am an Ottoman” (de Bernières 293). However, due to his Greek ethnicity, he cannot convince the authorities that he is an Ottoman, and the two companions are divided due to religious nationalism. Describing their condition Mehmetçik says: “I think we’ll be divided,” said Mehmetçik sadly. ‘Suddenly it matters that I am a Christian, where it mattered only a little before’” (296). Karatavuk comforts his friend as he relies on their devotion and he reminds how one is significant for the other: “‘We won’t be divided,’ replied Karatavuk firmly. ‘We have always been friends. We have always been together. You have taught me to read and write’” (296). Therefore, their connection exists on an intellectual as well as a metaphysical level. Belonging to different but closely related religious groups Mehmetçik and Karatavuk receive different educations based on their religion; Karatavuk receives a Muslim education according to which he is obliged to learn the verses from the Quran and the life of Prophets, whereas Mehmetçik receives a more comprehensive education with a curriculum that includes not only religious doctrines but also learning how to read and write in Greek, history, and mathematics. Karatavuk’s letters further initiate the hybrid features of the villagers’ language along with the experiences of other characters.

1.3 Hybridity of Language

The Orthodox Christians and the Turkish Muslims through hybridity produce ambivalence in the Greek and the Ottoman culture and language. In *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha describes hybridity as an ambivalence that creates a new space as the colonized groups refuse applying the traditions that are imposed by the colonising power: “Hybridity is the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life; it is an instance of iteration, in minority discourse, of the time of the arbitrary sign — 'the minus in the origin' — through which all forms of cultural meaning are open to translation because their enunciation resists

totalization” (314). Language is likely to be hybridized through the combination of languages, dialects, and accents as it may also happen with other elements of culture. The language that the characters of de Bernières’s novel speak is a paradigm of hybrid language, as in Telmessos people speak differently than in Greece or in various regions of the Ottoman Empire. The villagers compose a language that appears to be a mixture of Greek and Turkish, and by doing so they invent their own language. This language enables people to communicate without having any problems in private and public spheres of daily life. Thus, their language opens a space of communication and appropriation which is also a means of subversion as it exposes the contradictions and inadequacies of the dominant discourse.

The everyday life in de Bernières’s novel illustrates the way the Greeks and the Turks constantly identify with one another in their contact zones. The familial relationships, neighbourhood, friendships, and love create a hybrid community in Eskibahçe so that the people’s differences do not generate irreconcilable binaries or separations within the society. In the context of socio-cultural interactions, language becomes another means of hybridity in which the cultural differences lose their effect. However, the use of language by Eskibahçe residents is not a discriminatory practice even though their language contains assumptions or general stereotypes made by external communities. Therefore, for such people Eskibahçe is a “contact zone,” rather than a space that expresses xenophobic feelings; it is a place which generates linguistic encounters. According to Mary Louise Pratt “contact zone” refers to spaces in which cultures interact with each other. She emphasizes her ideas by defining the terms through linguistics: “...the term contact language refers to an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongue” (8). Language represents the fluidity and the flexibility of the villagers’ identity. In this sense, through language it is possible to decipher the extent of cultural hybridity in *Birds Without Wings* for each character.

Moreover, the differences in the language of religious services do not affect their life conditions. The religious services for Orthodox Christians include a basic level of Greek whereas for Muslims they include some level of Arabic. However, both Father Kristoforos and Abdulhamit Hodja can understand each other despite the differences. In fact, they use these differences in a way to joke when they converse or greet each other. For example, they exchange words that have similar meanings in their own language: “Abdulhamid touched his right hand to his chest, to his lips, and to his forehead, saying, ‘Ah, İmansız Efendi, iyi akşamlar.’ The priest smiled, returned the

flowery gesture, and replied, ‘And good evening to you, Apistos Efendi’ (de Bernières 37). Although the words “imansız” and “apistos” are pejorative words to describe infidel people, the priest and the hodja use these words to express their friendship by making jokes. Tuğçe Özsoy claims that the jokes are evidence of the hybridity of their language “In Bhabbhan point of view, the jokes in everyday language are the place where we can find the ambivalent features of hybridity” (162). Jokes help to create this ambivalent space which generates incoherence in both cultures, challenging their insularity. In that sense, neither their religious difference nor their different language can have negative connotations for each other. Thus, language, through jokes, creates a liberatory space for people instead of dominating them.

Furthermore, for some people the difference of religious and linguistic discourse serves to create even stronger bonds. In the case of Karatavuk and Mehmetçik, their friendship also acquires another level as Karatavuk is so impressed by how Mehmetçik learns Greek in school that he persuades Mehmetçik to teach him the Greek alphabet. So they participate in each other’s intellectual development and thus contribute to the hybridity of cultures and languages. Both children, having a limited proficiency in Greek and in Arabic, believe that the difference in languages does not connote discrimination: “Maybe,” pondered Karatavuk, ‘Greek and Arabic are actually the same language, and that’s how God understands us, like sometimes I’m Abdul and sometimes I’m Karatavuk, and sometimes you’re Nico and sometimes you’re Mehmetçik, but it’s two names and there’s only one me and there’s only one you, so it might be all one language that’s called Greek sometimes and Arabic sometimes’” (de Bernières 90). In that sense, language is the third space which exemplifies the ambiguity resulting from cultural translation. Here the two boys show that they each have two names, and this coexistence of names goes against the attempts of the Ottomans and the Greeks to impose one name or the other.

According to Catherine MacMillan, the villagers’ traditional language and religion represents their hybridity: “Indeed, the two predominant groups of villagers, the Muslim Turks and the Greek Orthodox Christians, can be described as hybrids in Bhabha’s terms in that they are ‘neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in between’” (8). This in-betweenness of the villagers dissatisfies only a few people like Daskalos Leonidas. His discomfort about the mixedness of culture explains Leonidas’s motivations to become a teacher. As he is described by the Smyrnian merchant Georgio P. Theodorou: “He defied his father firmly, [sic.] and went to

Eskibahçe to try and educate the Greeks back into being Greeks. He wanted to knock the Turkishness out of them. He wanted them to speak Greek instead of Turkish, [sic.] and learn about the classical past” (de Bernières 261). Consequently, Leonidas elaborates on his discontent when he responds to Karatavuk’s letter that he had deciphered for Iskander the Potter: “I have not had to read such stuff before, let alone write it, and it is indeed difficult to locate myself within a discourse whose rules and grammar are unknown, since they have never hitherto been laid down by scholars (355). Therefore, the confession of Daskalos Leonidas stresses both his personal feelings and his acknowledgment that such a hybrid language was constituted by people themselves instead of linguists.

In that sense, Leonidas’s observation is significant to consider in terms of the hybridity of the language. A language constituted by people demonstrates the way in which people understand transcultural affiliations and the way they convey meaning through their translation of language as well as of culture. To this extent, such an in-between language creates anxiety for Daskalos Leonidas, as his ideal involves the adhering to an institutionalised language which is pure and linguistically organised. Thus, Leonidas wants to remind Greeks of their origins and their pure language because he cannot locate himself within this discourse that he considers as a degrading act towards Greek culture. However, Daskalos Leonidas’s rigid ideals deny the function of language as a hybridized metaphorical space.

For Leyla Hanım, language is a means of performance and isolation. Having been abducted from Ithaca, Leyla Hanım’s native language is Greek. She has been a victim of slavery many times and she must adopt the identity of a Circassian woman to appeal to Rustem Bey. Therefore, Leyla Hanım uses language to camouflage her identity. Nevertheless, her encounter with Rustem Bey creates opportunities for her to speak her mother tongue in Eskibahçe, which is most probably one of the reasons why she accepts his offer. However, her expectations become disappointment when she finds that people do not speak Greek in Eskibahçe. She wonders: “Doesn’t anybody speak Greek?”... ‘What a shame’ said Leyla Hanım. ‘I’d been looking forward to speaking Greek’” (de Bernières 215). Having no one to speak Greek to, Leyla Hanım hires Philothei and Drosoula as her servants and companions to ease her desire for connection. The girls who are Greek are introduced to some Greek words through Leyla Hanım’s instructions on beauty and love. Leyla Hanım defines the reason of Philothei’s feelings for Ibrahim as *αγάπη* (love) and she implores her to call Ibrahim *αγάπη μου*

(my love). Moreover, Leyla Hanım suggests to Philothei to express her feelings to him as *σ'αγαπώ* (I love you), and when Philothei wants to learn about the language she explains: “This is the language of your forefathers that the Christians in this place have gradually forgotten” (524). In this sense, Leyla Hanım’s definition of Greek first appears as a reminder of Philothei’s and other Greek Orthodox’s ethnic origin.

However, such words and definitions confuse Philothei as Leyla Hanım creates in the former an uncanny feeling of defamiliarization when she defines Philothei’s infatuation. Therefore, Philothei asks for words which would exist in her own tongue so that she may translate the words of Leyla Hanım, and she receives such an answer: “...but Greek is the best language for love” (de Bernières 524). In that sense, despite performing various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Leyla Hanım believes Greek to be the main language in which she manifests her love and desire. Although she avoids using Greek words to Rustem Bey, Leyla Hanım unconsciously whispers Greek words during their intercourse and in her sleep. Leyla Hanım is a polyglot person but she also avoids speaking Italian when their village is occupied by the Italians due to her fear that people may assume that she is not Circassian. Like Leyla Hanım, Rustem Bey is a polyglot due to his knowledge of French which enables him to communicate with the Italian sergeants.

French as the lingua franca of the time becomes a new figurative space of civilized activities since French was defined as the language of civilization. The French language imposed a Europeanized version of civilization on the Ottomans which rendered all Eastern cultures barbaric or uncivilized. The French infiltration is, in a way, colonialism. In the relationship between Rustem Bey and the Italian sergeant, Rustem wants to appear civilized in the eyes of the European, denying his own heritage to a certain extent: “*Mais oui, je parle français,*” he said, adding snobbishly, “*tout le monde parle français.*”... “*C’est la langue universelle de la civilisation, n’est-ce pas ?*” said Rustem Bey drily...” (de Bernières 445). Previously, French is defined in a similar way by Karatavuk’s lieutenant at Gallipoli as the Ottoman officers speak French with the German officers instead of Turkish or German. Because of the cultural and political power of France, French remained one of the main ways of contact for purposes of trade, politics, and colonialism. Therefore, the last periods of the Ottoman Empire were marked by the influence of French and other Romance languages. Before French colonialism, the Ottoman Empire used a hybridized Turkish which was constituted by Arabic letters and various Arabic and Persian components. This created difficulties of

communication within the empire as well as outside the empire's territories. Thus, the romanization of the alphabet resulted from the Western infiltration as well as from a need to enhance the Turkish culture through the new, Europeanized ways of writing and speaking. Karatavuk describes the Latin alphabet as a consolation: "I can write knowing that I will be understood" (617). However, Greek letters remain a means of coding secrets for Karatavuk and the hybridized communities in islands such as Rhodes.

1.4 Physical Spaces

Locations have an important role in terms of the mapping and shaping the cultures. The features and the customs of a place may determine the possibilities of cultural interaction. In some cases, these micro areas serve to create a physical third space which enables cultural hybridization. In *Birds Without Wings* it is possible to find such spaces, as the novel depicts various spatial examples which generate and reinforce transcultural activities. Moreover, the locations in the novel accommodate not only people but also a historical time period in which several incidents take place. In that sense, through physical spaces de Bernières emphasizes the historical, geopolitical, and sociocultural aspects of locations. The locations appear as liminal spaces, which, as Bhabha argues, reinscribe cultural intervention beyond time and space. There are private and public spaces in the novel which encourage the thriving of new cultural forms. The physical qualities of these spaces determine the vivacity or the passivity of the society. Thus, physical spaces both encompass and transmit history and culture.

To begin with, locations preserve the historical framework of a culture through edifices and artefacts. As a microcosm, Eskibahçe inherits the mysticism of ancient Greek culture. Georgio P. Theodorou is one of the characters that highlights the antiquity of the village: "On my right, below the road, was a great pool full of ancient ruins, a temple I suppose that had about it an aura of femininity" (de Bernières 264). Moreover, Theodorou increases the effect of the village's antiquity by making comparisons between the village and the amphitheatre: "The town itself rose up[sic.] to the left-hand side, occupying a concave hillside that was like a vast amphitheatre. In it our ancestors could have built the biggest theatre in the world, had the idea occurred to them because down at the bottom was the meydan, which might have been a natural stage" (264-265). The physical setup of the village recalls ancient cities which were surrounded by an aura of supernatural elements and tragic events. Furthermore, the village hosts various

temples dedicated to Olympian Gods: “At the further end of the Elysian pine wood, there lie the ruins of a temple that once was sacred to Leto, Artemis, and Apollo” (198). In this context, the village represents the idea of the world as a stage and the meydan appears as the kernel of this stage. The ruins and the amphitheatre have a significant function for the hybrid Greek and Ottoman space. They may represent the Greek culture in ruins, having been replaced by the hybrid third space.

Apart from its ancient sites, the overall appearance of the houses and the tombs also recall antiquity. The design of the town resembles the architecture of ancient times due to its inclusion of upper rooms, lower rooms, storages as well as cisterns: “In truth, the town seemed to have been marvellously designed by some ancient genius whose name has been lost, and there was probably no other place like it in all of Lydia, Caria, or Lycia” (de Bernières 29-30). Yet, beyond the houses of the town there are sepulchres in which faces from the Lycian times are carved into their surface. These Lycian tombs add more mystery to the aura of the town: “It was in this wasteland between the town and the ocean...” (31). The Dog is one of the characters who reminds the inhabitants of the ancient and mystic side of the town as he lives in the Lycian tombs and strolls around the scripts, carvings, and sarcophaguses. The tombs resemble the shape of ancient temples which appeal to him: “The Dog found these two spacious tombs to be both airy and well aspected... and sat down on the step between the porticos of the temple tomb” (37). The tomb is a significant contact zone which connects the ancient culture and present culture.

The symbols and the inscriptions on the edifice also connect life and death: “On the pediment above was inscribed in the as yet undeciphered Lycian script ‘Philiste, daughter of Demetrius, built this for Moschus, whom she loved’. Underneath were written details of the fine violation, and at the apex was carved in bas-relief a pair of open hands the Lycian symbol for unnatural, violent and ultimately death” (de Bernières 37). These Lycian inscriptions are written in a complex, hybrid language, and people claim it is about a treasure: “It was true that the Lycian inscriptions were said to speak of the whereabouts of hidden treasure, but only half of the alphabet was Greek, and the other letters had fallen out of use so long ago that not even Abdulhamid Hodja had any idea what their sounds were” (44). In that sense, the inscriptions on the tombs point to a hybrid language in which various languages and alphabets have been used. Thus, the very physical elements of the town connect their ancient presence with hybridization as the inscriptions challenge not only the Turkish culture but also the

Greek culture. The Lycian tombs become the contact zone where the ancient culture, the ongoing process of hybridization, life, and death come together. It is possible to say that the Orthodox Greek cemeteries and the Muslim cemeteries have similar influence on the inhabitants. Polyxeni, Lydia the Barren, Ayse, and Nermin pay frequent visits to cemeteries and pray for the salvation of their dead ancestors side by side.

Likewise, the churches are among the instances of physical spaces that constitute hybrid zones. In Eskibahçe, there are two main churches such as the Church of St. Nicholas and the lower church dedicated to St. Minas. The Church of St. Nicholas has the icon of Virgin Mary Panagia which is highly respected by the residents of the town, including the Muslims. Most of the time the Muslims solicit favours from their Orthodox friends by making them pray and kiss the Panagia to solve their problems. Yet, during the days of Holy Thursday, the day of St. Theodoros, or the Resurrection Day, Muslims join the rituals of Christians which Philothei describes when her lover, Ibrahim, does the errands for the church: “And this is how I saw him on Holy Thursday, when some of the Muslims joined us and sent yeast, salt, eggs, and bread to the church, because Jesus Son of Mary and Mary herself are also theirs as well as ours” (de Bernières 251). Moreover, this practice is also confirmed by the experience of Georgio P. Theodorou: “...and it wasn’t uncommon for Turks to go into churches and light candles...Apparently, they particularly enjoyed the service on Resurrection Day” (265). In addition, the rites of Christians create ambivalence through their performance which combines the Christian and Muslim way of worshipping: “In this church, strange to report, and much to my astonishment, some of the Christians lit their candles and placed them in the sandbox as you might expect, but then knelt down and prayed whilst making Muslim prostrations” (266).

The meydan is a place in which even the most personal issues of an individual’s life are represented. From the daily gossip of the villagers to political issues, a range of subjects is discussed in the meydan amongst the men. The meydan appears as a place that fulfils the urges of people such as aggression, curiosity, and amusement. Upon Tamara’s adulterous act, Rustem Bey drags his wife into the meydan exposing their private discussions and conflicts to the public. The public almost transforms into a mob of inhuman, monstrous creatures as they start doing violent acts such as insulting, throwing stones, and kicking Tamara Hanım. In a way, for Rustem Bey the meydan becomes the court where he seeks justice for being cheated by his wife. Therefore, the meydan represents a hybrid zone which eliminates the boundary between private and

public. This place not only challenges the standards of culture but also the borderline between domestic and social life.

Additionally, the meydan is a location in which a mutual reaction or aggression is displayed to certain behaviours or people; when the drunk Constantinos beats Levon the Armenian without having any valid reason, moved by the violence of Constantinos, the public becomes the audience and encourages Constantinos. In this occasion, the audience creates the effect of a chorus; men and women do not hesitate to add more conflict to the scene: “Kick him, kick him!” cried the women, like an intoxicated chorus of maenads” (de Bernières 161). In that sense, the meydan represents a hybrid stage where various norms are challenged all at once. Thus, Theodorou’s depiction of the village as an amphitheatre and the meydan as the stage serves to characterize the daily life of Eskibahçe. The town as a physical space becomes a mimetic location that is transhistorical in terms of connecting the dramatic sense of past and present through effects of stage and chorus. Yet, the chorus, made up of the town’s people, connotes the dramatic power of the chorus to alter things, subverting the existing perspective, invoking different emotions, introducing insignificant elements to the central issues. In other words, the chorus and the community have similar influence on the culture.

According to Edith Hall, the chorus is related to the physical space: “In the majority of the plays, the chorus ‘belongs’ to the space where the action occurs: they are inhabitants of the town where the tragic family resides” (30). Thus, such theatrical elements in *Birds Without Wings* show the connection between the hybridity of physical spaces and the communities. Although the meydan points to togetherness, in the case of Tamara and Levon the Armenian the place becomes an arena in which some people receive unkind reactions from the public even if these reactions are not permanent and subject to remorse. In that sense, the meydan shows that people’s behaviours are not stable. Eleni Haviara-Kehaidou scrutinizes the Bhabhan idea that cultures cannot be unitary all the time: “...the relationships between people belonging to different cultural spaces, and particularly between colonized and colonizers, are interdependent. For that reason, their cultural identities are neither unified nor fixed” (35). Kehadiou further connects this instability of cultures to the splits and ambivalences in cultures: “The aforementioned split between the two opposing views of culture, which is initiated by Bhabha as a “Third Space” is a liberatory moment of hybridity that challenges the authority of cultural unity” (35). Therefore, as it is seen through the actions of the villagers, hybridity is not simply a mixedness in the culture. It is rather an ambivalent

process during which the senses of identity, community, and culture are challenged constantly.

As a physical cultural space, the meydan shows another ambivalence between the Greeks and Turks. For example, their view on welcoming the Italian soldiers differ due to differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic sects. The Turkish people welcome the Italians in the meydan, accommodating them in their khans, playing backgammon with the soldiers in the meydan, while the Orthodox Christians have a different attitude due to Father Kristoforos's ideas on the Catholic church. Indeed, the priest attacks Sergeant Oliva as he crosses himself in the village church and he demands from his followers to ignore the Italians by defending his request with reference to the split in their faith: "They split away from the true Church" (de Bernières 463). Following these reactions from the Orthodox people, the Italian soldiers move to other locations: "The backgammon players moved their venue first to the courtyard of the khan, and then when Kristoforos found them, back to the meydan, and then down to the amphitheatre, and then to the Letoun" (465). Rustem Bey, as a modernising man, is delighted by the presence of Lieutenant Granitola and their affiliation is described as such: "For Rustem Bey, the Italian occupation was probably the golden age of his life, because for the first time he had a friend in the town who assumed equality with him" (456). This sense of equality arises because of Rustem Bey's interest in westernization and the influence of Western culture throughout his travels to Smyrna and Constantinople.

The geographical leaps emphasize the novel's focus on ambivalent spaces. Although the main concern of the novel seems to be the trauma of population exchange in Eskibahçe, the village is only one of the geographical spaces in which the action unfolds. Apart from Eskibahçe, there are various locations such as Istanbul, Smyrni, Gallipoli, Athens, Cephalonia, and several Greek islands which play an important role in the narrative. Each location contributes to the narrative in a different way: some appear as more complex versions of Eskibahçe while others as thresholds that change the course of war or initiate people's transformation of their identity. Istanbul and Smyrni create even more cosmopolitan environments that nurture the mystery of hybridized oriental and western life. Also, Smyrni is related to greater disasters and traumas like Gallipoli. Although, Smyrni is highly reputed as a city of amusement, the military invasions and the fire in the city have literal and metaphorical effects on both the novel and the following events. Besides these cities, Gallipoli is a multicultural

space largely made up of soldiers who come from various nations: the Ottomans along with the Germans against “the Franks”; the novel uses “Franks” as an umbrella term for describing the allies such as the British, Australian, New Zealand, and French military services. Apart from the Franks, during the war Karatavuk also encounters people of different origins such as Gurkhas, who are colonised by the new world powers. Despite the fierceness of the war, the intervals and the burials are significant for the soldiers: while each group buries their dead, they help soldiers of other nations and they exchange food or cigarettes. Moreover, throughout their communication at the intervals they play games including football and they name each other: the “Franks” name the Muslim soldiers as Abdul whereas the Muslims name the “Frank” soldiers as Tom. Thus, inevitably, the battle fronts also appear as a contact zone in which war and conflict lose their dominance over people.

Smyrni is one of the significant physical places of the novel, as the city itself is the center of trade and business, allowing cultural variety and interactions among the Levants. As it had an important position in the sea trade, it was one of the cities in which economic purposes connected the continents. As a tradesman belonging to the societies of Smyrni, Georgio P. Theodorou is one of the characters who provides a detailed insight into the city’s function: “Smyrna was the ideal place for a port, halfway to Africa, halfway to Europe, and, apart from that, it was a delightful city altogether, before it was burned down, a real cosmopolis” (de Bernières 257). For Rustem Bey, Smyrni becomes a threshold for the modernization and transformation of his identity before he goes to Constantinople: “From Smyrna he was going to continue by train to Constantinople, and he was determined that when he arrived, he would not be garbed like a provincial lord...He would arrive in the capital dressed as a thoroughly modern gentleman...” (130). In other words, Smyrna is the place where the people could adapt to new trends of trade and fashion.

Moreover, on his way back to Eskibahçe Rustem Bey visits Smyrni again to shop for fabrics and cosmetics for Leyla Hanım. For Rustem Bey, apart from being a shopping centre Smyrni is also the centre of amusement and vivacity: “He has to admit himself that Smyrna is also a city that is much more amusing than his own little town. Its Levantine exuberance always raises his morale” (de Bernières 195). The way that the city welcomes ships from places such as Buenos Aires or Liverpool as well as the way that people dress in Smyrni create a romantic and authentic aura in his spirit. Yet, Rustem Bey sees Smyrni as life itself as the city has an ongoing motion: “Smyrna, he

thinks, is a place where one might have an ambition to live. He cannot conceive of anyone becoming lonely or bored in Smyrna” (195). On the other hand, for people like Iskander the Potter the city is labyrinthine as he struggles to find his orientation in the city: “I had some trouble in Smyrna because it’s such a big place, and there are so many people, and I was quite lost, and people kept giving me instructions and directions that I couldn’t follow, and half the time people spoke in languages I couldn’t even recognise...” (142). In that sense, Smyrni appears as a broader version of Eskibahçe, containing more communities due to its capacity to maintain business, trade, and fashion industry in one city. Thus, while Eskibahçe is a welcoming setting, enabling peaceful coexistence, Smyrni makes people from diverse backgrounds feel alienated, confused, and lost.

1.5 Home and Alienation: Mental and Physical Borders

The sense of home and homelessness is an important factor throughout *Birds Without Wings*. Home is affected by the duality of cultural hybridity as it involves dislocation and relocation. Most people in Eskibahçe adapt themselves to the culture of the village and they create a sense of community feeling, home and belonging for their village. Moreover, the village becomes a place in which even the outsiders, passers-by, and the new settlers like Leyla Hanım feel a sense of belonging to some extent. There are several causes that create such an affinity between them and there are several instances in which the villagers welcome the outsiders. However, the novel takes its characters to a point where each one experiences a sense of homelessness resulting from the population exchange. This ambivalence occurs because of the new socio-political decisions and the deportation which results in the loss of the majority of the village’s population. The population exchange results in physical and mental borders which bring alienation and a loss of the sense of belonging. The devastating experiences after the wars and the exchange challenge the people’s sense of their position in their previous location as well as their expectations about their future homes in the place of their ethnic origins. Therefore, the new sense of exclusion from the space considered home and the alienation create more ambivalence in their daily life.

To begin with, the bird imagery in the novel develops the themes of freedom, limitation, and liminality. Iskander the Potter argues that humans are limited while birds cannot be controlled in terms of traveling, migrating, and choosing their homes: “Man

is a bird without wings', Iskander told them, 'and a bird is a man without sorrows' (de Bernières 48). In other words, Iskander implies that humans are emotional beings and since they cannot easily locate themselves wherever they feel like home, they are affected psychologically. Yet, a similar and even more explicit comparison is expressed by Karatavuk in the prologue: "For birds with wings nothing changes; they fly where they will, and they know nothing about borders and their quarrels are very small. But we are always confined to the earth...Because we cannot fly, we are condemned to do things that do not agree with us. Because we have no wings we are pushed into struggles and abominations that we did not seek" (621). With his words, Karatavuk summarises the overall struggles of his family and neighbours. People lose their home, friends, and neighbours due to physical and mental borders that are established by the sociocultural politics of the twentieth century. According to Özsoy, the title of the novel and this imagery increase the effect of this in-between situation that human beings are trapped in: "The title of the book "Birds Without Wings" clearly reflects the idea of unhomeliness of Bhabha's concept of in-between situation" (160). This in-between situation may lead to ambivalences or to alienation.

The unhomeliness of the characters may derive from their hybrid identity. Explaining Bhabha's position, Huddart explains: "They therefore have a hybrid identity, something marked by an uncanny ability to be at home anywhere, an ability that always might become the burden of having no home whatsoever" (53). The unhomeliness of characters such as Drosoula and Leyla Hanım consists in a feeling of having no home at all or to being able to find a home in various places. Leyla Hanım was initially abducted from Ithaca and she changes locations frequently including Sicily, Cyprus, Constantinople, and Eskibahçe. Although Leyla Hanım, as a Greek from Greece, seeks opportunities to speak her mother language or to find "Greekness" in the villagers' habits and spirit, she does not have many difficulties in adapting to the culture of the village. Upon her arrival at Eskibahçe, Leyla Hanım embraces the village: "Leyla sees the houses, painted gaily in pinks and blues, she sees the white minarets of the mosque and the golden dome of the Church of St. Nicholas, she hears the cries of the vendors and artisans, and she feels happy. She is back where she belongs, amid the softness of civilisation" (de Bernières 199). Despite her inability to practice her native language, she still feels a sense of belonging in Eskibahçe's inclusive culture.

Leyla Hanım's decision to leave Eskibahçe during the population exchange results from her relationship with Rustem Bey which is like a sibling relationship and

from her desire to live bearing her real identity in the place she was born. In other words, Leyla Hanım longs for Ithaca regardless of how she feels in Eskibahçe: “I must tell you that I am not after all a Muslim either, and my name is Ioanna, and I am a Greek. I am from a little place called Ithaca, and ever since I left it, I have been longing with all my heart to return” (de Bernières 546). In a way, Ithaca becomes the metaphorical home, the source of her deepest desires which finds a way to be manifested through Ioanna’s dreams: “I am going to find Ithaca, which has occupied my dreams for so many years, and which has been fastened to my heart like an invisible rope, and is now drawing me back, even against my will. May you also find your Ithaca if you have one” (547). Apart from being a physical space, Ithaca transforms into a personal space which can be anything or anywhere. Repressing this need for the place of origin may result in the uncanny experience of alienation. However, for Huddart, this alienation is what may lead an individual to find his/her identity: “Alienation would usually be thought of as a problem, but if it is something that is part of all experience and is even something that might inspire us to re-evaluate our identities, then we can understand it as an opportunity” (56). Thus, Leyla Hanım sees the population exchange as an opportunity to find her home and recover her identity which would become an unbearable and unrealizable desire otherwise.

Leyla Hanım is the only character who participates voluntarily in the exchange. However, there are other characters who experience such ambivalent feelings of homeliness and unhomeliness. For instance, Daskalos Leonidas is not content with migrating to Greece as he believes Greece is the place where he has been living all the time. In that sense, for most of the characters their ethnic origin does not define their home and the news about population exchange startles them. Drosoula and her family are among the people who migrate to Greece. Due to her husband, Gerasimos, they set sail to Cephalonia much earlier and safer than many others as Gerasimos is a good sailor and knows the Drapanitikos family whom he has been told are his relatives in Greece. Therefore, together they decide to go to Cephalonia as Gerasimos believes his relatives would embrace them and they would feel a sense of belonging there.

On their way to Cephalonia, instead of other dangers, Drosoula and Gerasimos experience hostility and alienation in some of the islands they visit. According to Drosoula, “We walked all the way down to the Monastery of Pantaleimon so that we could make homage to the saint and ask for help on the next part of our voyage. We did this on every island, but sometimes the monks were hostile and called us filthy Turks.

You should expect better of monks, in my opinion” (de Bernières 568). Nevertheless, Gerasimos and Drosoula feel grateful to find a home when they finally reach Cephalonia: “He said to me, ‘We are home at last’” (570). Afterwards, they experience varying reactions from the communities they try to join. Some people help them and give them jobs while others do not accept them as Greeks and insult them: “The thoughtless ones call you a filthy Turk, and spit at you, and tell you to go to the devil, and say ‘Piss off back to Turkey’” (567). Because of their differences in language, behaviour, and culture as well as because of their hybridized identities, Drosoula and Gerasimos appear as foreigners to the local Greeks.

Subsequently, Gerasimos’s family has a similar attitude. The fact that a family member settled in Asia Minor and his grandchildren return to Cephalonia cannot change their perception: “the Drapanitikos family thought we were just dirty Turks. They knew that someone called Gerasimos had been a sailor and had disappeared, but apparently, he had been a black sheep anyway. They’d never heard of us and didn’t want to have anything to do with us” (de Bernières 571). Thus, familial ties cannot connect Gerasimos and Drosoula to the Drapanitikos family. Nevertheless, Gerasimos’s aptitude as a sailor makes him a respectable man in the eyes of some. Their journey from Turkey to Cephalonia proves his abilities and people give him the nickname “Odysseus.” According to Drosoula, Gerasimos’s ability is the reason why they are eventually accepted in the community: “I think that’s why we are so easily accepted, even though we spoke Turkish to each other, and Gerasimos liked to wear a turban when he was out at sea, instead of a hat” (571). One way or another they find a way to locate themselves within their new home and the Greek culture of Cephalonia, even though their language and clothes hark back to the old home. Although Drosoula still dreams in Turkish, she thinks that Cephalonia makes her feel like home when she admits: “Home isn’t the only place you come from after all” (557). In other words, after some period she adapts to her environment and the things that were once unhomely become homely for Drosoula.

On the other hand, back in Eskibahçe the remaining society cannot easily adapt to new circumstances. Unlike Drosoula and Gerasimos, the Eskibahçe villagers undergo a process of upheaval which lasts longer and results in the demolition of the town. With the arrival of Cretan Turks, neither the newcomers nor the Eskibahçe inhabitants can feel at home anymore. Among these characters, Iskander the Potter and Karatavuk are notable for their delay in getting accustomed to Cretan Turks and

accepting the loss of their neighbours. The narration of Iskander the Potter provides a detailed insight into the conditions in Eskibahçe; he believes that life was merrier with the Christians present. Özsoy argues that such longings are related to unhomeliness which is inevitably experienced by those who have remained: “Although as a Muslim, he was not the one who was supposed to migrate, the Christians were the ones who were supposed to migrate, he finds himself in unhomeliness conditions even in his own homeland” (161). After the Greeks leave, the entire atmosphere of the town changes; on the one hand the older residents miss their past and they witness the decaying of the village as most of the structures and ruins are destroyed while on the other hand the Cretan Turks long for Crete and have trouble locating their identities within the space of Eskibahçe. In trying to create sterile ethnic and religious communities, the population exchange resulted in alienation and mental borders which divide rather than unite the community.

1.6 The Novel as a Hybrid Narrative Space

Birds Without Wings constitutes a hybrid space in various ways. As discussed previously, de Bernières’s narrative creates many physical and figurative in-between spaces. The sociocultural implications of the novel’s themes are also highlighted through the use of complex narrative techniques. The structure of the novel contains such techniques that make it appear as polyphonic as the cultural contents. The author avoids narrating the events from one point of view; instead, he provides distinct perspectives for similar subject matters. Therefore, the novel itself, as a hybrid narrative space, allows several points of view to meet and sometimes contradict each other within a narrative third space. The narrative hybridity is achieved through its nonlinear temporal and spatial unfolding as well as the varying narrators which enhance the multiperspectival narration of the story.

In the first place, de Bernières provides a variety of temporal points. The novel starts with a prologue by Iskander the potter who describes the reason behind Ibrahim’s madness, the life with the Christians, and the birth of Philothei. Iskander’s resentment for the loss of Eskibahçe’s vivacity makes clear that the novel starts in medias res. The following chapters of the novel go deeper into the past of the villagers, as the way of life before the population exchange appears to be the prominent concern of the narration. Moreover, de Bernières’s narrative leaps backward and forward create a

sense of synchronous time zones. To clarify, the novel deals with the life in Eskibahçe, Mustafa Kemal's military career, and the monarchy in Greece as events that change the history but also the private lives of his characters. Thus, the unconventional use of time creates an incoherent time frame and a synchronicity which support the themes of hybridity.

Subsequently, through adopting a narrative point of view that constantly alternates, de Bernières makes the novel a hybridized narrative space which supports and develops its temporal, spatial, ideological, and psychological themes. The novel is crowded in terms of characters many of whom have the chance to narrate not only their own stories but also the stories of their families, friends, neighbours, or even their rivals. Both the Greek and the Turkish people narrate the cycle of events. For instance, the love story of Ibrahim and Philothei is told not only by themselves but also by various characters including Drosoula, Iskander the Potter, Karatavuk, and Mehmetçik. In that sense, the intensity of the love between Philothei and Ibrahim is acknowledged by the entire village but also appropriated and retold. Drosoula is one of the significant narrators of the novel as she takes the narration from the third person to first person, and as a result the novel alternates between distance and intimacy. Drosoula narrates her friendship with Philothei and her friend's infatuation with Ibrahim as well as her own experience of immigration. As Evla Yürükler argues, Drosoula connects most of the issues in the novel: "Drosoula who becomes a prominent figure by narrating her being dislocated mentioning about its emotional, social, cultural and religious effects also brings to minds the concepts of hybridity and diaspora" (54). Drosoula's narration of the population exchange and the experience of her own family as both "immigrants" and "outsiders" provides another perspective in the novel. In that sense, Drosoula is a narrator that introduces the outcomes of displacement.

Although the novel commences as a story that is based on love, the number of narrators and the shifts between events change the insight into people's trauma. The variety of narrators creates a postmodernist incoherence and inability to reach a one truth about trauma. The many points of view emphasize subjectivity and the failure of totalizing narratives when it comes to traumatic events and love. Hybridity also demonstrates the failure of totalizing discourses, as the narrative techniques introduce an effect of multiplicity. In that sense, de Bernières's preference for alternating narrators represents the polyphony of stories which counteract the official discourses of history. The population exchange and the First World War are events that are usually

described in a coherent way in historical sources. But de Bernières's characters and narrators show how minor details about their own personal and subjective history are significant to look at as they may disrupt grand narratives of history and politics. In the case of Eskibahçe, the narrators are among the characters who are directly and severely affected by the political issues. Like Drosoula, Georgiou P. Theodorou represents the displacement suffered within the communities; he is one of the narrators that tries to be objective when he describes the life in Telmessos and Smyrni as well as in his comments about the politics and politicians. But on the brink of death, Theodorou curses the inhumane conditions that made people suffer and thus challenges the dominant versions of history.

Melis Kutlu and Tatiana Golban argue that as a narrator Theodorou represents the existential level of futile circumstances of war and deportation: "Louis de Bernières reveals the first-hand experience of dying of G.P. Theodorou, by allowing the reader to assume the privileged position of an eyewitness to the character's confrontation with nothingness" (24). In other words, Theodorou's portrayal of humanity's degeneration epitomizes the conditions of the communities of the entire novel including the Smyrni society, and the smaller societies like Eskibahçe. Therefore, Theodorou's narrative constitutes an example of a frame which interconnects other stories within his own and comments on the cycle of events. Throughout the novel, de Bernières frequently uses narrators who create frame stories, and Theodorou is one of the cases of such a narration. In the 85th chapter his lens reveals the politics of his era by condemning monarchs, politicians, generals, commander, regiments to show the irrationality of their actions and to emphasise the kind of catastrophes that result from each action. The use of stream of consciousness increases the effect of his words as he sinks into despair like many other victims of the novel. Özsoy believes that such embedded narratives reflect the hybridity: "It shows that in history telling, there are no absolute beginnings or endings. Thus; [sic.] the feature of abyssal narrativity reflects the hybridity of each person's history" (160). In this context, the plurality of narrators creates a third space as the novel allows new ways of explaining history to emerge within each narrative. As Bhabha writes, "This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" ("Third" 211).

Furthermore, de Bernières also introduces epistolical narration through some of his narrators such as Philothei, Karatavuk, Daskalos Leonidas, and Leyla Hanım. The

narrations in the form of letters create intimacy and further polyphony: Philothei's letter recording her emotions; Karatavuk's letter relating the war experience; Daskalos Leonidas's letter connecting national and linguistic concerns along with insights into the history of his language; Leyla Hanım's letter revealing, for the very first time, her background of being kidnapped from her homeland which was a common colonial practice in such times.

Moreover, the narration expands the boundaries of literary genre, often transforming the novel into historical fiction. Apart from the insights from the villager's point of view, de Bernières provides narrators who report the historical events from a political perspective. For instance, de Bernières gives space to non-fictional characters to develop, such as Mustafa Kemal, Eleftherios Venizelos, Stefanos Metaxas, Colonel Ismet, the Greek royal family, Kazım Karabekir, and many other Greek and Turkish generals and politicians. In the chapters in which these personages appear, de Bernières achieves a fictional treatment of real events, mixing objective facts with imaginary embellishment. The military and political decisions are also discussed independently of their influence on the public. The history of cultural hybridity fades as the history of politics becomes the centre of the course of events. This contrast between the microhistories of individuals and the history of politics and power serves to undermine the latter, highlighting the effect that it has on those who are forgotten by history. The population exchange gradually leads the communities to vanish from the forefront of the narration. Once located in people's memory, the past is gradually forgotten. Similarly, the physical space is demolished and Eskibahçe becomes a ghost town metamorphosing into a gothic symbol.

1.7 Conclusion

This gradual evanescence starts with the characters' identity, then shifts to the physical space, and then finally to the overall cultural history of the town. The very first moment when the population exchange is announced to the town's inhabitants, their identities as Ottomans are erased by the politicians and the officers: "No from now on you are Greeks, not Ottomans. And we are not Ottomans anymore either, we are Turks" (de Bernières 528). New ways of identification depending on religious ethnicity render identity and history fluid and malleable: "...and the committee said, 'There is no such thing as Ottoman anymore. If you are a Muslim, you are a Turk. If you are Christian

and you are not Armenian, and you are from round here, you're Greek'" (542). As time passes those who are deported to Greece and those who remain get used to their new identities and Ottoman loses its meaning as a word: "The word 'Ottoman' would fall into disuse and disrepute" (607). In other words, for both Greeks and Turks the overall Ottoman history and culture loses its reality and essence.

After the new inhabitants are sent to the village, the churches are destroyed by the religious people. Even the most functional buildings remain unrestored as, for example, the pump house built by Theodorou: "Down at the entrance to the polis, the great pump house built in 1919 as an act of philanthropy by the garrulous merchant of Smyrna, Georgio P. Theodorou, broke down and fell into disuse, because there was no one left who knew how to repair it" (de Bernières 608). History disappears through the losses, deaths, political conflicts, and the deterioration or destruction of physical spaces. Places such as the church of St. Nicholas, the church of St. Minas, the ancient Lycian tombs are either smashed or defaced by the new religious groups. Following these radical acts, the past remains as part of some villagers' and Drosoula's memory. Finally, the narration moves forward in time, presenting the contemporary situation of Eskibahçe as an abandoned town. Furthermore, globalization leads Fethiye and Kayaköy to become tourist attractions that appeal to people only as international summer tourist destinations rather than open-air museums of cultural interest.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction: The Historical Background of Greek Diaspora

Diaspora is a notion that defines a certain group of people, of immigrants, living outside of their native country. Etymologically speaking, the word diaspora derives from the Greek language and it is a compound word constituted of the prefix *διά* and the verb *σπείρω* which signifies the verb of scattering or spreading. The compound as ‘diaspora’ emphasises the groups of people scattered and dispersed around various countries of the world. Among the diaspora communities, Greek diasporas are one of the groups whose history of migration or exile dates to antiquity. The early examples of Greek diaspora in ancient Greece existed mainly because of trade. Economic reasons led to the construction of trade routes and Greek cities outside of Ancient Greece. This dispersion helped the Greek language and culture flourish outside its mainland and made Ancient Greek the lingua franca of the ancient period. Moreover, during and after the middle ages Greeks lived around geographical areas such as the Mediterranean, North Africa, etc. During the reign of the Ottoman Empire around Asia Minor and the Black Sea regions, Pontic Greeks migrated to countries such as Russia and Georgia while other Greek populations of Asia Minor dispersed to various European Countries. Despite the Greek War of Independence and other wars, the diaspora continued and reached overseas countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

For Dimitris Tziovas the Greek diaspora can be divided into three main categories: “Though some trace the origins of the Greek diaspora to ancient Greek colonies, it should be seen as a more modern phenomenon and its history can be divided into three broad phases. The first coincides with the period of Ottoman rule (mid-fifteenth century to the emergence of the Greek state in 1830); the second extends from the mid nineteenth century until the beginning of World War II; and the third covers the period from the 1940s to the 1970s” (1). The second phase includes the group of people who migrated in order to minimise the effects of war and/or financial crisis due to ongoing wars. Such reasons play a role in people’s decision to migrate and try to adapt themselves to the conditions of the host countries. According to Elizabeth Mavroudi, the definitions of diaspora signify either boundaries and roots or

homogenising boundaries through movements of migration and fluid identities (468). In this context, diaspora is considered a process that serves to redefine geographical movements, culture, and identity. Mavroudi also adds that in the context of diaspora the notion of home becomes ambivalent: “Within postmodern discussions of diaspora, notions of home have also been seen as contested and relational in order to capture the sense of ambivalence that those in diaspora often feel in relation to home and belonging” (472). Due to diaspora the second generation immigrants, as in the case of those in Eugenides’s novel, are subject to the ambivalence of the current home and the cultural characteristics of past and present homes.

In his article “On Being Greek in America: Identities,” Dan Georgakas claims that these immigrants faced difficulties while shaping their identities in the United States: “...the Greeks of the massive migration between 1880-1924 were treated with suspicion and hostility” (48). The reception of Greek diasporas in America depended on the cultural politics and the demands of the American society. As a result, such reactions along with the mainstream culture led to the hybridization of the Greek diasporas.

2.2 The Passage to the United States: Bithynios/Bursa, Smyrna, and Athens

Jeffrey Eugenides creates parallels between the experiences of the Greek diasporas in the United States and those of his grandparents who are from Asia Minor. In that sense, the novel reflects to a large extent the real-life experiences of Greek migrants despite its complicated use of fictional and non-fictional elements. The locations play an important role in the identity construction of the diasporic communities. Eugenides introduces several locations, some real and some imaginary. The departure points and the thresholds contribute to the hybrid narration of *Middlesex* in various ways. Starting from their place of birth, Bithynios, Lefty and Desdemona travel through several cities until they finally reach Detroit. It is significant to consider the influence of the cities they have been in, as they encounter many cities, and they create different stories about themselves in each place.

To begin with, Lefty and Desdemona are born in Bithynios which is a fictional village claimed to be in the Bursa province. The novel depicts Bithynios as a place mostly inhabited by Asia Minor Greeks and Turks. The narrator, Cal Stephanides, depicts the community of the village around the years of war as a group of people

finding refuge under the “Megale Idea”: “After years of living apart up on the mountain, the people of Bithynios, my grandmother’s village, had emerged into the safety of Megale Idea—the Big Idea, the dream of Greater Greece” (Eugenides 21). Similar to Daskalos Leonidas in *Birds Without Wings*, the inhabitants of Bithynios acquire their social and ethnic identity from a vision of pure Greekness. Moreover, Bithynios is described as a small village in terms of its geographical area as well as its population. Indeed, the opportunities in Bithynios seem fewer compared to those of the city centre of Bursa: “There were no shops in Bythynios, no post office or bank, only a church and one taverna. For shopping you had to go into Bursa, walking first and taking the horse-drawn streetcar” (28). The small capacity and size of Bithynios is significant in terms of its distance from the bustle of such cities as Bursa and Smyrna. Thus, Bithynios appears as an insulated village, uninfluenced by modernizing means of circulation, the post, and the monetary flow.

The population of the village include mostly Greeks despite the decrease of their number due to war and conflicts: “Bithynios had never been a big village, but in 1922 it was smaller than ever. People had begun leaving in 1913... They had continued to leave during the Balkan Wars” (Eugenides 28). Thus, afterwards marriage within the Greek communities becomes problematic as there are not enough women and men to marry which makes intermarrying within family members an appealing option. The narrator explains the conditions in Bithynios after the migrations: “In 1922 there were barely a hundred people living in the village. Fewer than half of those were women. Of forty-seven women, twenty-one were old ladies. Another twenty were middle-aged wives. Three were young mothers, each with a daughter in diapers. One was his sister. That left two marriageable girls” (28). As the remaining women were not sufficient to meet Lefty’s ideals, he inclines towards his sister Desdemona. Although it appears as a decision made because of the decrease of the Greek population in the village, Lefty and Desdemona have long been desiring each other. Desdemona tries to make the two women in the village appealing, while Lefty seeks women that resemble his sister during his trips to Bursa up until the two confess their repressed emotions and intentions. However, it is also possible to see their intermarriage as a symbol of insularity and as an attempt of the Bithynios residents to retain their ethnic and familial origins.

In contrast to Bithynios, Bursa is a populous city and centre of the fabric trade. Lefty pays frequent visits to Bursa for several purposes. He claims trade to be his main

purpose for going to Bursa; Lefty maintains that around Kapalicarsi and Koza Han he sells the silk Desdemona produces. However, upon Desdemona's insistent questions Lefty admits his purpose of seeing women in Bursa. Indeed, when he reaches Bursa the first thing he does is to sell the silk cocoons but he is not interested in trade as his father was: "Lefty's father had loved market season at the Koza Han, but the mercantile impulse hadn't been passed down to his son" (Eugenides 30). Lefty goes to Koza Han to fulfil his duty to continue the family tradition and represent his sister as women were not allowed in the bazaar. In fact, his "real business in town" is to visit the church in Bursa which has hybrid features: "Lefty, setting his derby at a rakish angle, walks down the sloping streets of Bursa...until he reaches another street where he enters a church. More precisely: a former mosque, with minaret torn down and Koranic inscriptions plastered over to provide a fresh canvas for the Christian saints that are, even now, being painted on the interior" (31). Lefty prays in the church to get rid of his sexual interest for his sister and then finds himself among the Greek soldiers and prostitutes smoking hookah and hashish. In a way, Lefty's incestual feelings are contradicted by the hybridity and diversity of Bursa. Such hybrid elements, and the church itself, showcase the impossibility of pure national characteristics in Asia Minor, a theme which is also explored throughout *Birds Without Wings*.

The city represents trade and social amusements for the people in general. The bazaars become the centre of finance and trade and places such as coffeehouses or brothels become the locations where people socialise and entertain themselves. Moreover, the sacred places such as churches represent the variety of life on a religious level. Thus, such places in Bursa become contact zones of communication and interaction through the wider opportunities they provide for the people coming from small villages, many from different ethnic backgrounds. These vivid pictures of the city life in Bursa become an escape for Lefty's desires for his sister which he cannot repress even when he visits the brothel. Lefty can only come back to reality through the reminders of the girl he spends his night with: "By the way, I'm Irini. We don't have a Desdemona here" (Eugenides 32). In other words, by occupying himself with other activities in Bursa, Lefty aims to forget his desire for Desdemona or replace her with other women. However, when they find out that their feelings are reciprocal, they can no longer escape from each other; instead, Lefty and Desdemona decide to flee Bithynios although intermarriage was a common practice among the villagers: "And let's not forget where they were dancing, in Bithynios, that mountain village where

cousins sometimes married third cousins, and everyone was somehow related...” (39). Despite these facts, the siblings run away from Bithynios due to their fears of the public reaction and the explosions that happen close to the village.

Consequently, Smyrna becomes one of the significant thresholds through which Lefty and Desdemona escape from the results of political conflicts as well as the reactions for their incestuous relationship. The former is a common reason to leave Bithynios for the entire villagers. As Cal narrates, “Over a single week, the hundred or so remaining citizens of Bithynios packed their belongings and set out for mainland Greece, most en route to America. (A diaspora which should have prevented my existence but didn’t)” (Eugenides 43). Thus, migration becomes inevitable for everyone, as the invasion of Greek troops and the fear of further complications between Greek and Turkish militaries lead the inhabitants of Bithynios to be exiled from their lands. In the case of Lefty and Desdemona, they are further exiled from their roots as they create inner exile, almost a diaspora within a diaspora, by starting to create new identities in Smyrna. Eugenides depicts Smyrna as a city that represents all countries in the world through its cultural and social structure. In terms of its political situation, Smyrna is depicted as a city in which, apart from the Ottoman Empire and Greece, all the European countries have a different political interest. Lefty considers Smyrna as a safe threshold before sailing to America: “And when we get to Smyrna, we’ll get a boat to Athens... and from Athens we’ll get a boat to America” (49). In Smyrna, they come across all the modern facilities and entertainments of the city; the bars, the clubs, and the casinos despite approaching problems.

One of the most significant connections between Smyrna and its effect on people is shown through its existence in rebetika songs and poems. The narrator cites an excerpt from *The Waste Land* (1922) by T.S. Eliot:

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole. (Eugenides 50)

The narrator believes that the stanza of the poem contains all the necessary information about Smyrna:

The merchant is rich, and so was Smyrna. His proposal was seductive, and so was Smyrna, the most cosmopolitan city in the Near East. Among its reputed founders were, first, the Amazons (which goes nicely with my theme), and second, Tantalus himself. Homer was born there, and Aristotle Onassis. In Smyrna, East and West, opera and politakia, violin and zourna, piano and daouli blended as tastefully as did the rose petals and honey in the local pastries. (50)

The narrator further explains the hybridized culture of Smyrna through the languages that are spoken in the city and its daily life: “And how everyone in the city could speak French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, English, and Dutch?” (54). The hybridity of Smyrna’s culture was also substantiated through elements such as camel caravans, trade, people wearing masks on festivals; so, this hybridized environment helps Lefty and Desdemona to open up their identities for further construction. Thus, as a threshold, Smyrna offers them anonymity, transitoriness, and flexibility.

In conclusion, the city represents a variety of different cultures and their features. In Bhabhan terms, Smyrna becomes the third space which enables other representations and positions to emerge by displacing any kind of authorities (“Third” 211). Thus, the city is ever evolving and forming ambivalent cultural elements, while generating hybrid identities. The narrator confesses his/her purpose of giving such examples to epitomize what Smyrna stands for: “I want to mention these things because they all happened in that city that was no place exactly, that was part of no country because it was all countries...” (Eugenides 54). This process of representing the city and its cultures as “all countries” in a continuous process of becoming challenges fixity and purity. In terms of the society and individuals, Smyrna allows people to recreate, transform, and reproduce culture and identities. In the case of Lefty and Desdemona, such an environment is very conducive to their transformation as it provides them with the possibility of creating diverse identities for themselves. In other words, the city fulfils their desire to negotiate with their past through creating different versions of reality and fictions of their identities, which may be seen as conforming to an individual’s inclination towards creating new forms, always becoming: ““The people’ always exist as a multiple form of identification, waiting to be created and constructed” (Bhabha, “Third” 220). As a result, Smyrna represents both the declining image of some Asia Minor cities such as Bithynios and the way in which the process of identity construction may result in infinite forms.

2.3 “A Fiction Created in the Life board”: Defamiliarizing Identity, Language, and Culture

Lefty and Desdemona start to detach themselves from their family and cultural roots as they travel to Smyrna. From then on, their fears and expectations related to their fitting in the American society determine how they construct new versions of themselves. This process involves changes in their approach towards language and culture. Furthermore, apart from their own approach towards identity, the sociocultural context plays an important role in the way they create Greek American identities. There are internal and external factors that cause them to create stories and characters. The internal factors mostly concern the history of the couple as sister and brother growing up in Asia Minor and emigrating to the United States by transforming their kinship into that of cousins, strangers, and finally a married couple. On the other hand, the external factors include political interests, privileges bestowed on people belonging to certain nationalities, and finally acceptance or not into a new society where they have to blend their cultural identity with aspects of American culture, which according to the melting pot theory results in Americanization. On the whole, identity (re)construction becomes a complicated process for the individuals in *Middlesex* who experience defamiliarization through voluntary and involuntary forgetting, diaspora compromise, and refamiliarizing with Greek culture due to their double displacement from both cultures.

To begin with, the first instance of identity creation starts in Smyrna when Lefty and Desdemona escape from their past. The siblings introduce themselves as husband and wife. Apart from repressing their familial affinity and incestuous relationship, Lefty studies the French language to convince the officers that they are French people born in Paris. Moreover, Lefty claims that Dr. Philobosian, an Armenian doctor in Smyrna, is their cousin as he wants to save him from the conflicts in Smyrna. Thus, the socio-political environment in Asia Minor leads them to escape by creating French identities as the only way out. Furthermore, as the Greek government encourages them to leave Greece, they declare false information in order to acquire identity and travel documents. This urge to create fictional identities becomes inevitable and materializes during their voyage to the U.S. in the ship named *Giulia* which enables them to prove they are strangers according to their falsified documents. According to Sezen Ismail, the voyage is an opportunity for their further identity constructions: “This trip, stands as a metaphor for journeying through a middle space towards new homes, circumstances, and identities. As for the brother and sister, this voyage is of crucial importance for the

forthcoming phases in their life and consequently, the life of the main character” (176). In other words, the *Giulia* becomes for Lefty and Desdemona the in-between space in which new ways of identification start their presence.

Consequently, they undergo a process of defamiliarization by pretending they do not know each other at all. According to Cal, their transatlantic travel made it easy to transform their familiarity into estrangement: “Traveling made it easier. Sailing across the ocean among half a thousand perfect strangers conveyed an anonymity in which my grandparents could re-create themselves. The driving spirit on the *Giulia* was self-transformation” (Eugenides 68). Trying to know each other for the first time, they erase their past memories voluntarily. After a while it becomes quite natural even to themselves as during their first nights Lefty has no trouble to continue the anonymity: “For months Lefty had slept with whores who resembled Desdemona, but now he found it easier to pretend that she was a stranger” (70). This estrangement continues as the narration goes into detail when describing their transformation as a married couple: “Their honeymoon proceeded in reverse. Instead of getting to know each other, becoming familiar with likes and dislikes, ticklish spots, pet peeves, Desdemona and Lefty try to defamiliarize themselves with each other” (72). They unlearn themselves by introducing excerpts from the Homeric epics into their personal stories. In Cal’s words their identities become fiction: “. . .the whole thing a fiction created in the lifeboat where my grandparents made up their lives” (72). Thus, before their identities are hybridized by other cultures, they hybridize their identities by fictions.

However, their creation of a Greek American identity is a more complicated and uneasy process compared to their marital history. Just as Lefty had to study French to pass the threshold of Smyrna, he also has to speak English to cross the final threshold to America, a condition which, however, Desdemona criticizes negatively as an unwelcoming act on the part of the Americans: “They should let us speak Greek if they’re so accepting” (Eugenides 75). Moreover, the architecture of New York startles them: “It wasn’t the right shape for a city—no domes, no minarets—and it took them a minute to process the tall geometric forms” (76). Indeed, the physical appearance of American cities creates an unhomely feeling for them as it is uncanny due to familiar structures that are borrowed from the Greek culture, especially for the architecture of Grand Trunk Station, and then transformed into modern buildings: “Its base was a mammoth marble neoclassical museum, complete with Corinthian pillars and carved entablature. From this temple rose a thirteen-story office building. Lefty, who’d had

been observing all the ways Greece had been handed down to America, arrived now at where the transmission stopped. In other words: the future” (82). To put it differently, the urban structures in the United States blend classical with modern architecture to provide expediency which becomes the difference between Asia Minor cities and American cities. Despite the familiarity evoked by the architecture they still struggle to locate themselves within the American society due to ambivalence and inconsistent cultural policies that require detachment from their cultural roots.

To clarify, the American society especially the melting pot context requires of them to erase their Greek past. In other words, the Greek diasporas were expected to be Americanized to be embraced by the society. According to Maddern, such a process requires the elimination of one’s native culture: “This meant requiring immigrants to break off with all ties they might still have had with their home countries” (2). Therefore, instead of promising an environment where various cultures could flourish together, the America of the melting pot asks for a compromise. In that sense, Eugenides’s depiction of Henry Ford’s English Melting Pot highlights the practices which made immigrants forget their language and lifestyle. Lefty represents one of the many instances that makes the reader question the openness of the melting pot theory for the cultures of migrants. People find it hard to establish their home as they wish even though the cities are surrounded by the slogans that say: “Make This Your Home” (Eugenides 81). The narrator describes the categorization of workers based on their languages in an epic narrative tone: “Then it appeared against the rising sun, Apollo’s own chariot, only electrified. Inside, men stood in groups arranged by language...Soon the jovial mood dissipated, and the languages fell silent” (94). In this context, Eugenides stresses the commodification of people and their language, as they become products which have little to no significance in the society unless they obey the cultural politics set by American policy as well as the powerful companies.

This people’s loss of their cultural heritage, the silencing of their language, and the mechanization of their functions are further explored through the migrant experience of Lefty and his colleagues in Henry Ford’s factory. Lefty himself identifies the silence of the workers with the smoke emitted from the factory as a result of melting and combusting heavy metals: “...and Lefty understood that men’s silence was a recognition of this shadow, of its inevitable approach each morning” (Eugenides 94). The diasporas are expected to compromise their language due to the cultural limbo in which they exist and their consciousness of alienation. Lefty describes the workers’

desire and rush to speak until their shift starts, knowing that “beyond those doors language wasn’t allowed” (94). According to Bivan et al., the diaspora compromise commences through these phases of consciousness: “The Diaspora compromise always starts where and when one comes to the realization that they cannot change their state of being as Black or Coloured as Victim or Contemporary Diaspora” (35). Instead of creating a multicultural environment in which people could continue living according to their culture and traditions the melting pot aims to minimise the differences rather than welcoming diversities. Debra Shostak assumes that American cultural politics requires of the diasporas to erase their past identity: “He is expected, that is, to cast aside his language, practices, and identity in favor of an anonymous function in the American economy—not to melt together but to melt away” (395). In a way, Desdemona’s first reaction towards the regulations for migrants based on the rule that they must speak English is due to her understanding that her own culture will be gradually forgotten.

Moreover, the melting pot cultural politics not only transforms people’s identity or culture, but it also replaces the basic, everyday life routines. For instance, the Ford Sociological Department sends officers to their workers’ houses to inspect how people maintain economic and hygienic standards in their household. Originally belonging to one of the significant civilizations of the world, Lefty denounces the inspectors for giving basic instructions about how to perform routines such as cleaning and brushing one’s teeth. For Ismail, these instructions are insulting towards Lefty and the strength of his cultural roots: “...it is also obvious that the purpose of the inspection is to find fault, so that they can prove their system right. As such, this is yet again a commentary on the perpetual practice of systemic categorization and the subsequent discrimination it carries out” (Eugenides 180). Lefty and Zizmo express their disapproval of the prejudices towards Eastern Europeans and Eastern civilizations and of the subsequent Anglo-conformity, as Americans like the inspectors define these “others” as uncivilized. Instead, Lefty repeats that “The Greeks built the Parthenon, and the Egyptians built the pyramids back when the Anglo-Saxons were still dressing in animal skins” (101). Zizmo continues to oppose American ideals, when, for example, he establishes a sect in which he claims himself to be a prophet, as well as the racist attitude against African Americans. Nevertheless, most of the diasporas succumb to the melting pot one way or another: Lefty adapts to American society rapidly, just as his cousin Sourmelina, who is another instance of people of her generation erasing all the

Greekness from their identity. Thus, the novel shows how the melting pot starts to function from the first-generation diasporas in a complicated way as people like Lefty and Sourmelina are open to changes. Lefty's interest in Greek culture is confined to his reading of the classics and his trying to translate them into English.

Consequently, his attitude towards Americanization affects the further generations. As Lefty embraces the American culture as the dominant part of his identity and defamiliarizes himself from the Greek ethnic identity, his children also lose connection with their ethnic identities. In other words, the Stephanides family is exposed to a gradual acculturation as Gatzouras indicates: "If Middlesex features Greece as the 'true home' [Eugenides 363] of the immigrant generation, the text also shows how the American-born generation is not likely to put 'Greekness' at the center of their social identities" (194). In the case of their children, the assimilation starts with their names; their Greek names fall out of use and they prefer Americanized versions or nicknames. Lefty himself is one of the first-generation to use an American nickname as he prefers Lefty instead of Eleutherios. In the following generations it becomes more frequent as Miltiades transforms into Milton and his sister Zoe into Zo while Theodora becomes Tessie, and the narrator's name switches from Calliope to Callie and/or Cal. Their children and grandchildren abandon their Greek culture to a larger extent by compromising their Greekness. In their discussions of America's support of Turkey in the Cyprus dispute, Milton disagrees with his Greek circle to the extent that he curses his friends and his ethnic background: "To hell with the Greeks" (363). Previous to this debate, he also condemns baptism and other Orthodox beliefs which shows he also compromises his religious identity.

Moreover, the third-generation members of the family are even more removed from Greekness. Despite the Greek elements in their surroundings Chapter Eleven and Cal are quite unfamiliar with the Greek culture. For instance, they do not speak Greek as they are inclined to speak English due to their daily habits. For Tessie and Milton, Greek remains a language for aggression and secret discussions. Although Milton studies Greek for a while, he abandons his interest in gaining literacy in Greek. Thus, it is inevitable for Chapter Eleven and Cal to ignore their ethnic language. Furthermore, apart from their lack of interest in the language they also show a general indifference towards their ethnic background, family profession, cuisine, etc. For the most part, Chapter Eleven appears the least interested in the Greek culture compared to Cal, and he is not interested in their family business either. Besides, he lacks the characteristics

of his ancestors who have succeeded in their professions: “Environment has already made its imprint on him. He has the tyrannical, self-absorbed look of American children...” (Eugenides 226). In Ismail’s words Chapter Eleven, as a third-generation immigrant, reveals the complex processes of acculturation: “The Greek immigrant family experiences a three-phase acculturation that occurs to immigrant families. Each generation identifies with different nationalities and cultures” (182). Thus, varieties of identities are created as a result of every individual’s different inclinations and needs.

In contrast to the experiences of most second and third generation diasporas, there are also characters who form distinct relations with the American culture. In the case of characters such as Jimmy Zizmo, Desdemona, and Cal, it is not feasible to identify them with acculturation or assimilation entirely. Their features maintain an ambiguity that influences their cultural identity. On various occasions, Desdemona refuses to alter her cultural identity as in the instance which she disowns the American fashion for women: “I don’t want to look like an *Amerikanidha*” (Eugenides 82). Although she is content with erasing her past personal identity, she does not approve giving up her cultural identity. According to Francisco Collado-Rodriguez, Jimmy Zizmo considers the idealization of American culture and the “American Dream” as a futile effort which does not bring real prosperity apart from financial profits (79). In Cal’s case, his indifference towards his ethnic culture fades through the exploration of her sexual orientation. For Gatzouras, the characters of *Middlesex* show how they blend their identities in the dynamic process of assimilation and or reinvention: “Middlesex makes up a good occasion to bring together theories of ethnicity which view assimilation as inevitable and those that conceptualize ethnicity as a dynamic and emotional component of identity that continues to be re-claimed and re-invented” (193). Thus, every individual or generation internalizes the Melting Pot principles on different levels. Some fully accept the Americanization process while others protect their cultural identity and heritage.

2.4 Living in Halves: Past, Present, Traditions, and Hybrid Emotions

Middlesex portrays the various ways in which personal and cultural identity is formed and transformed. The starting point of the narrator’s personal history takes the narration into his family’s background and highlights how the fictionalized or assimilated identities find their way in the third-generation diasporas genetically if not traditionally

or culturally. In other words, Cal's own identity includes the fragments of his grandparents' defamiliarized past, culture, and identity as well as their genes. His process of refamiliarizing Greekness and the relationship between his grandparents both contribute to his hybrid emotions. Therefore, Cal's struggle to negotiate his gender identity and ethnic identity is relevant to the ambivalent means of identity formation in the contexts of immigration and diaspora. The multiplicity of narrative types and voices, as in the case of de Bernières's *Birds Without Wings*, which is obvious throughout the characters' journey, helps convey the complexity of diasporic Greek American identities and homes. Besides, many of the characters voluntarily or involuntarily remember their ethnic culture through customs and habits which create a sense of in-betweenness or of living in halves.

In the first place, some Greek traditions and practices are still performed in Greek American communities. The survival of some traditions depends on the communal togetherness; the occasional gatherings are one of the factors that connect people with Greek culture. To exemplify, the funerals and the baptism ceremonies are among the occasions that encourage Greek Americans to reacquaint themselves with their religious identity. In a way, church as a physical space becomes a contact zone where Greek and American cultures are blended via people. Like the meydan in *Birds Without Wings*, the church in *Middlesex* becomes a space of cultural interaction and ambivalence. Although there are characters like Milton who constantly mock rituals such as baptism, there are reasons for him to participate in church gatherings; he tolerates the baptism of his children in order help preserve the lineage of his family circle; and he also attends funerals in order to fulfil his familial or emotional duty to his parents. Therefore, the church as a liminal yet communal space functions to revitalize people's bond. Moreover, apart from the church gatherings it is also common for some characters to meet in their own houses. In such meetings they discuss the economy, politics, and a variety of topics that may relate to Greece. In the case of Milton, these gatherings reveal his Americanization as he utters his disagreements explicitly. Thus, he keeps reminding others of the American ideals throughout the discussions that are held in his house.

On the other hand, for Jimmy Zizmo home is not the place where he repeats the American expectations. Instead, home is a place in which he reconnects with his own culture and has his autonomy. As he reminds Lefty, "This is not America... This is my house. We don't live like the *Amerikanidhes* in here" (Eugenides 99-100). Similar to

Zizmo's experience, there are some occasions for other characters to reconnect with their ethnic homes. Desdemona finds ways of reconnecting with her homeland, when despite her community's expectations, she covers her hair like Philothei in *Birds Without Wings*. Therefore, she does not resist Islamic practices which remind her of Bithynios: "Having grown up in a country ruled by others, she found it all familiar. The fezzes, the prayer rugs, the crescent moons: it was a little like going home" (149). In Bivan's words, such characters are the example of straddling both worlds, experiencing the challenge of fully identifying themselves with their exilic location and home (31). Hence, in reclaiming their home and their homeland customs, they reveal their hybrid subjectivities. As Jelena Ciglanić suggests, their choice to identify with a certain version of Greek American identity is illusory: "They both settle for a hybridized ethnic identity that is influenced by circumstances and the non-assimilative features of Greek ethnics in that they never become completely white" (46). Thus, they end up living in halves, performing both cultures' customs voluntarily and involuntarily.

Furthermore, aging and death are important factors leading characters to reminisce about their past and their original home. Although Lefty has little intellectual interest in the study of his culture through the classics, the actual reconnection happens through his aging and death. In a way, Lefty's life goes backwards through the revival of language and memory, as, for example, when he tends to speak Greek and Desdemona becomes his sister again. After he dies, death and silkworms (through the mulberry tree) become the leitmotif conveying Desdemona's wish to relocate herself within her past identity. Death transforms into a form of emigration as Eugenides suggests through Desdemona: "As far as Desdemona was concerned, death was only another kind of emigration. Instead of sailing from Turkey to America, this time she would be traveling from earth to heaven, where Lefty had already gotten his citizenship and had a place waiting" (Eugenides 275). Thus, Desdemona considers death as a means of reconciliation and reunification with her roots. It is also possible to say that the characters do not fully attach themselves to a location; instead, their sense of belonging is fluid just as their identities. This fluidity further enhances the idea of being "everywhere at once" which Eugenides develops through characters such as Lefty, Desdemona, and Cal; actually, this phrase becomes Milton's motto during his investments for real estate and entrepreneurship (275). The mobile hot-dog stand becomes a symbol of his own mobility and adaptability.

The text's reluctance to fix the identity of the characters to a single location or culture is also seen in the case of Milton's enterprise, Hercules Hot Dog. Milton develops his business by mirroring his father's way of blending Greek and American entertainments in the Zebra Room and combining his son's way of cooking hot dogs. In a way, through his business Milton blends the Greek and the American ways of living; instead of establishing a restaurant that serves souvlaki or a traditional Greek cuisine, Milton creates a restaurant of American fast-food with a Greek name. According to Aristi Trendel, Milton's business is an instance of *laissez-faire* individualism, a perspective of capitalism which also conforms to his real estate principles, as he avoids accommodating both his house and his trade within the area of Greektown (4). Milton's Americanized financial management does not depend on Greece, but he still makes use of his ethnic origin for profit. Although he is willing to adjust his perception according to American ideals, there are still some gaps or blind zones which even their third-generation children may experience, and which make them feel alienated from their present home. Gatzouras argues that there are some parts of the diasporas which are not entirely assimilable beyond generations; in the novel Cal recognizes that he is not as American as he thinks when he attends the school of Baker & Inglis (195). Thus, apart from the peculiarities he recognizes in his sexual identity there are also things that puzzle Cal regarding his ethnic identity.

Indeed, his sexual identity is intertwined with his ethnic identity as well as his grandparents' past. Cal's identity results from the experience of diaspora and from his grandparents' incestuous marriage. Shostak asserts that the circumstances of migration produce hybrid monsters: "migration produces not healthy metamorphosis but a monster, cast out from its 'natural state'; and the monstrous—the hybrid, bred within alien circumstances—is representable only as the grotesque" (393). To put it differently, Cal's hermaphrodite identity parallels Desdemona's nightmares of the Minotaur; a creature living in halves. As Selma Rajević supports, such elements serve to juxtapose various possibilities: "The novel blends myth and reality, facts and fiction, science and imagination, as well as intersexuality and immigration, and then personal and social, seamlessly juxtaposing both the American and Greek past and present" (175). In that sense, Cal represents the struggle of halving and unifying sexual and cultural identities.

In summary, Cal's own experience as an immigrant in Berlin, his inclinations towards the Turkish people and his desire to visit Greektown in the U.S. upon his return

show the fragmentariness of identity. As he confesses: “We’re all made up of many parts, other halves. Not just me” (Eugenides 440). It is also possible to say that his own experience demonstrates how neither the Americanization nor his grandparents’ defamiliarization can fully erase cultural memory: “Once again, in Berlin, a Stephanides lives among the Turks. I feel comfortable here in Schöneberg...Despite family history, I feel drawn to Turkey. I’d like to work in the embassy in Istanbul” (440). Therefore, along with the past, cultural identity is in constant transformation in diasporic or exilic identities which will find their expression in hybrid gender or other forms of becoming.

CONCLUSION

In this study, two novels are analysed in terms of the effects of population exchange and diaspora. Both *Birds Without Wings* and *Middlesex* represent the ways in which cultures are formed, reformed, and transformed beyond the binaries created by borders and cultural politics. The novels make clear that mobility between but also within nations and ethnic groups creates ambivalence that may cause difficulties in the development of migrant identities. In this respect, the novels represent the plurality and unfixedness of identity and culture. Although the novels may differ regarding the form of the migration, voluntary or involuntary, the characters in each novel exemplify varieties of hybridized identities. Furthermore, the novels distinguish hybridity from mixedness; the migrant identities are more than the combination of two cultures as the new identities that emerge exist in the interstitial spaces of liminality. These identities are far from being stock characters; they are beyond any definition, and they are even unpredictable at times. It is also possible to say that the characters' inclination towards both their home culture and the culture of the place they migrate to changes all the time due to reasons such as alienation, oppression, racism, diaspora compromise, and the desire for a sense of belonging. Home is another ambivalent element for the characters of the two novels under this study. The historical circumstances and events lead them to experience a continuous cycle of creating home through processes of dislocation and relocation on both geographical and psychological levels. Such a search creates persistent exilic feelings, so much so that mobility becomes a necessity for them to survive. In other words, migration becomes an unbroken chain whether it is through deportation, travelling, or death. Due to these conditions, as both the novels and Bivan et al. (33) suggest, despite the Western cultural politics that impose conformity or compromise, the characters are shown to survive by existing everywhere at once as a body with many parts.

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Περίληψη

Η διατριβή διερευνά δύο μυθιστορήματα του 21ου αιώνα που ασχολούνται με τις επιπτώσεις της ανταλλαγής πληθυσμών και της διασποράς στην εθνική ταυτότητα, και ιδίως την ελληνικότητα. Το *Birds Without Wings* (2004) του Louis de Bernières και το *Middlesex* (2002) του Jeffrey Eugenides αναπαριστούν τους τρόπους με τους οποίους οι εθνικές ταυτότητες σχηματίζονται, μετασχηματίζονται και μεταμορφώνονται πέρα από τα δυαδικά συστήματα που δημιουργούνται από την πολιτική των συνόρων και τις πολιτισμικές πολιτικές. Οι πόλεμοι, η ανταλλαγή πληθυσμών, η διασπορά και η θεωρία του «Melting Pot», του Αμερικανικού «χωνευτηρίου», αποτελούν εξωτερικές επιδράσεις για τις υβριδικές ταυτότητες που προκύπτουν από τη μετανάστευση και την εξορία, ενώ η αγάπη, ο γάμος, η αιμομιξία και ο σεξουαλικός προσανατολισμός είναι μεταξύ των εσωτερικών επιρροών. Αν και τα μυθιστορήματα διαφέρουν ως προς τους λόγους της μετανάστευσης, εθελοντικής ή ακούσιας, οι χαρακτήρες σε κάθε μυθιστόρημα αποτελούν παραδείγματα υβριδικών ταυτοτήτων. Αναλύοντας την πολυπλοκότητα της εθνικής ταυτότητας και του πολιτισμού, αυτή η μελέτη στοχεύει να δείξει πως οι πολιτισμοί αλληλεπιδρούν μέσω των ανθρώπων και πως κάθε άτομο έχει τη δυνατότητα να δημιουργήσει νέες μορφές ταυτότητας επιβεβαιώνοντας, συνδυάζοντας ή απορρίπτοντας τις προσδοκίες που του επιβάλλονται. Μέσω της πολιτιστικής αλληλεπίδρασης, οι χαρακτήρες κάνουν εμφανείς τις ασάφειες και τις αντιφάσεις του κυρίαρχου πολιτισμού. Αυτή η παρέμβαση ή, σύμφωνα με τον Homi Bhabha, η «πολιτισμική μετάφραση» πραγματοποιείται στα περιθώρια του κυρίαρχου πολιτισμού και ανοίγει έναν «τρίτο χώρο». Είναι ένας χώρος όπου ούτε ο κυρίαρχος ούτε ο μειονοτικός πολιτισμός μπορεί να κατέχει συνοχή. Η διατριβή επικεντρώνεται στους τρόπους με τους οποίους τα μοτίβα του ταξιδιού και του σπιτιού, καθώς και οι φυσικοί ή οι αρχιτεκτονικοί χώροι καλλιεργούν τα θέματα της υβριδικότητας, της αίσθησης του ανήκειν και της πολιτιστικής πολυπλοκότητας. Εξετάζει επίσης τις μεταμοντέρνες αφηγηματικές τεχνικές που χρησιμοποιούν οι συγγραφείς προκειμένου να τονίσουν τα θέματα της εθνικής ταυτότητας. Η επίμονη αναζήτηση των χαρακτήρων για έναν χώρο που να αποκαλούν σπίτι τους, αλλά και η συνεχής διαπραγμάτευση της ελληνικότητάς τους εν μέσω οθωμανικών, ευρωπαϊκών και αμερικανικών λόγων και ιδεολογιών οδηγούν σε διαίρεση της ταυτότητάς τους αλλά και επιβίωση. Τελικά η συνεχής κινητικότητα τους βοηθάει να αντέξουν τη δυτική πολιτισμική πολιτική που

επιβάλλει συμμόρφωση ή συμβιβασμό, και οι χαρακτήρες φαίνεται να επιβιώνουν μέσω της ύπαρξης παντού ταυτόχρονα ως ένα σώμα με πολλά μέλη.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ταυτότητα, υβριδικότητα, εθνική ταυτότητα, « τρίτος χώρος », ζώνη επαφής, ανταλλαγή πληθυσμού, σπίτι, πατρίδα, αποξένωση, διασπορά, συμβιβασμός, Αμερικανικό « χωνευτήριο ».