

## 57. Divided Selves in Exile: Third Space in Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings*<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Set in the early 20th century, Louis de Bernières' novel *Birds Without Wings* focuses on the divided identities negatively influenced by wars, exile, and migration in southwestern Anatolia just before the decline of the Ottoman Empire and foundation of Republican Turkey. Based on the decision of population exchange, a great number of non-Muslim people were deported to a foreign land (Greece), away from the newly defined borders of the new Turkish Republic. In his novel *Birds Without Wings*, Louis de Bernières scrutinizes this social phenomenon and questions the significance and validity of the notions such as race, religion, ethnicity or language in the nation building process. The author deplores the loss of multicultural lifestyle in a utopian, idyllic Anatolian town with the displacement of Greek and Armenian residents. The multicultural structure of society penetrates into the formal and narrative features of the novel, such as multiplicities in viewpoints, a mixture of genres, different languages and the use of nicknames for protagonists. Intercultural encounter provokes hybridity and leads to the emergence of multiplicities in society. However, the exchange of population puts an end to the long-established multicultural society structure, a dynamic cultural exchange and negotiation. The use of multiple voices, multiple characters, narrative techniques, and multiple languages in fact celebrates the hybridity and plurality of worlds throughout the novel. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the in-between third space challenges the formation of cultural identity in hybrid societies, simultaneously embracing multiplicities, pluralities, and hybridity. The writer signals to the existence of such a harmonious heterogenous society in Anatolia in the past time and laments for the loss of such an idyllic lifestyle reigned by mutual love, respect, tolerance and cooperation. The purpose of this paper is to interrogate how Bhabha's conceptualisation of "third space" finds a place in the lives of divided selves in Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* and to demonstrate how it deconstructs the binary thought and essentialist identity in intercultural encounters.

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## Sürgündeki Bölünmüş Benlikler: Louis de Bernières'in Kanatsız Kuşlar'ındaki Üçüncü Mekan<sup>3</sup>

### Öz

Louis de Bernières'in 20. yüzyılın başlarında geçen Kanatsız Kuşlar romanı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çöküşü ve Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinin kurulmasından hemen önce Güneybatı Anadolu'da savaşlar, sürgünler ve göçlerden olumsuz etkilenen bölünmüş kimliklere odaklanmaktadır. Nüfus mübadelesi kararına istinaden çok sayıda gayrimüslim, yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin yeni belirlenen sınırlarından uzakta, yabancı bir ülkeye (Yunanistan) sürgün edildi. Louis de Bernières, Kanatsız Kuşlar adlı romanında bu toplumsal olguyu irdelemektedir ve ulus inşa sürecinde ırk, din, etnik köken veya dil gibi kavramların önemini ve geçerliliğini sorgulamaktadır. Yazar, Rum ve Ermeni sakinlerin yerinden edilmesiyle ütopyik, cennet gibi bir Anadolu kasabasında çok kültürlü yaşam tarzının kaybolmasından üzüntü duymaktadır. Toplumun çok kültürlü yapısı, romanın bakış açılarının çokluğu, türlerin karışımı, farklı diller ve başkahramanlara takma adlar verilmesi gibi biçimsel ve anlatısal özelliklerine de nüfuz eder. Kültürlerarası karşılaşma, melezliği kıskırtmakta ve toplumda çoğulluğun ortaya çıkmasına yol açmaktadır. Ancak nüfus mübadelesi, köklü çok kültürlü toplum yapısına, dinamik bir kültürel alışverişe ve müzakereye son vermiştir. Çoklu seslerin, çoklu karakterlerin, anlatım tekniklerinin ve çoklu dilin kullanımı aslında roman boyunca dünyanın melezliğini ve çoğulluğunu övmektedir. Homi K. Bhabha'nın aradaki üçüncü alan kavramı, çoklukları, çoğulculukları ve melezliği aynı anda kucaklayarak melez toplumlarda kültürel kimliğin oluşumuna meydan okuyor. Yazar, geçmişte Anadolu'da böylesine uyumlu, heterojen bir toplumun varlığına işaret etmekte ve karşılıklı sevgi, saygı, hoşgörü ve iş birliğinin hüküm sürdüğü böylesine cennet gibi bir yaşam tarzının kaybolmasından yakınmaktadır. Bu makalenin amacı, Louis de Bernières'in *Kanatsız Kuşlar* adlı eserinde Bhabha'nın "üçüncü mekan" kavramsallaştırmasının bölünmüş benliklerin yaşamlarında nasıl yer bulduğunu sorgulamak ve kültürlerarası karşılaşmalarda ikili düşünceyi ve özcu kimliği nasıl yapışöküme uğrattığını göstermektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Louis de Bernières, Kanatsız Kuşlar, bölünmüş benlik, Öteki, sürgün, kimlik, üçüncü mekan

### Introduction

Depicting the early twentieth-century politics between Turkey and Greece, Louis de Bernières' novel *Birds Without Wings* focuses on the divided identities negatively influenced by wars, exile, and

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migration in southwestern Anatolia just before the decline of the Ottoman Empire and foundation of Republican Turkey. Based on the decision of population exchange, a great number of non-Muslim people were deported to a foreign land (Greece), away from the newly defined borders of the new Turkish Republic. In his novel Louis de Bernières scrutinizes this social phenomenon and questions the significance and validity of the notions such as race, religion, ethnicity or language in the nation building process. The author deplors the loss of multicultural lifestyle in a utopian, idyllic Anatolian town with the displacement of Greek and Armenian residents. The multicultural structure of society penetrates into the formal and narrative features of the novel, such as multiplicities in viewpoints, a mixture of genres, different languages and the use of nicknames for protagonists. Intercultural encounter provokes hybridity and leads to the emergence of multiplicities in society. However, the exchange of population puts an end to the long-established multicultural society structure, a dynamic cultural exchange and negotiation. The use of multiple voices, multiple characters, narrative techniques, and multiple languages in fact celebrates the hybridity and plurality of worlds throughout the novel. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the in-between third space challenges the formation of cultural identity in hybrid societies, simultaneously celebrating multiplicities, pluralities, and hybridity. The writer signals to the existence of such a harmonious heterogeneous society in Anatolia in the past time and laments for the loss of such an idyllic lifestyle reigned by mutual love, respect, tolerance and cooperation. This study aims to interrogate how Bhabha's conceptualisation of "third space" finds a place in the lives of divided selves in Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* and to demonstrate how it deconstructs the binary thought and essentialist identity in intercultural encounters.

De Bernières offers an alternate historical perspective from the Western viewpoint, expressing his critical stance towards the Independence war and the subsequent emergence of nationalism. He portrays these events as peculiar tragedies stemming from the eradication of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in late Ottoman society. Through his romanticized portrayal of the multicultural and multi-religious Ottoman Empire, De Bernières takes a critical stance against the emerging Turkish nationalist ideology during the late Ottoman period. Although his fiction is grounded in historical events, it functions as a creative projection of contemporary English values onto the Ottoman and Turkish past. Consequently, his fictionalized portrayal of Turkey and Turkish identity acts as a type of historical therapy, revealing diverse layers of fantasy. In her MA thesis whose second chapter is entitled "Creating and Dismantling a Late-Ottoman Multicultural Paradise in *Birds Without Wings*", Derya Bademkiran analyses *Birds Without Wings* by Louis de Bernières with a criticism of the extinction of a multicultural society. Her thesis begins by offering contextual information on the consequences of the First World War and the War of Independence, investigating their individual implications through the lens of Bruce Clark and Reşat Kasaba's works. In the opening section of Chapter 2, titled "Forging a Multicultural Paradise", the analysis explores the ambivalent perspective presented in De Bernières' narrative regarding the formation of Turkish identity. It specifically focuses on how the novel portrays the tragedy stemming from the emerging spirit of Turkish nationalism. This section argues that De Bernières idealizes the multi-ethnic and religious Ottoman Empire, portraying it within the context of an idyllic, prelapsarian village. The analysis uncovers the novel's critical perspective on the Independence war and pre-nascent nationalism, presenting them as the catalysts for a fall from grace, culminating in tragedy throughout the narrative. "Without any doubt, declaration of any war would be the cause of a state of emergency which provides the necessary atmosphere for homines sacri to be created as Derrida comments in his seminars when the state or the sovereign wages or joins to war, he treats the enemies like non-humans (Derrida, 2009, p. 73)" (Ozdinc, 2022, p.521).

While the novel refrains from taking a specific political stance, its primary critique is directed towards global politics, highlighting the destructive consequences for individuals. In contrast to the Turkish official historiography advocating for societal homogenization, *Birds Without Wings* takes an opposing stance on the necessity of the nation-building process during the late Ottoman period. De Bernières' narrative avoids depicting the pre-nationalist era of the Empire as troublesome; instead, it presents it as idyllic. One of the major tragedies arising from the nationalist enthusiasm and the Independence war, according to the novel, is the creation of a sense of "otherness" in society, leading to the disruption of harmony and tolerance among diverse communities. The characters' personal narratives offer a fictional yet vivid personal perspective on a specific historical period. Through this historical reinterpretation, the narrative portrays the war and the exchange as calamitous events for small communities. It delves into the varied ways in which the war affected ordinary individuals from diverse backgrounds, resulting in tragic consequences in their lives. De Bernières brings a personal touch to history by allocating chapters to individual stories, each aiming to recount the ordeals of violence, trauma, and nostalgia resulting from the wars and the exchange.

### Theoretical Framework

Hybridity stands as a central theme in postcolonial literary theory, with Homi K. Bhabha being a prominent figure in its exploration from various perspectives. As defined by Ashcroft, hybridity involves "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft, 2007, p. 108). This transcultural form can manifest in diverse realms, including politics, culture, and linguistics, signifying cultural interplay within the context of postcolonial studies. Bhabha employs the term "hybridity" to articulate his perspectives on cultural identity, viewing it as an unintended outcome of the colonial power's attempts to define and influence the identity and culture of the colonized. According to Bhabha, the dynamic interaction between the colonizer and the colonized has engendered a distinctive, blended cultural identity. He labels this convergence as "Third Space enunciation" or simply "hybrid space," contending that this "Third Space" represents the sole platform fostering genuine dialogue between cultures.

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the original Past kept alive in the national tradition of the People. In other words, the disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces the narrative of the Western nation (Bhabha, 1996, p.37).

Hybridity, born out of colonialization, offers a novel perspective for comprehending and portraying colonized cultures, free from the confines of cultural stereotypes propagated by colonial narratives. Bhabha asserts that the elusive "Third Space," inherently difficult to define, serves as a platform for cultural expression. This concept underscores that cultural symbols and meanings lack a fixed origin or stability, enabling signs to be reinterpreted, reclaimed, placed in a new historical context, and understood differently (Bhabha, 1996, p.37). In utilizing the concept of hybridity to articulate his insights on cultural identity, Bhabha argues that it unexpectedly emerges from colonial attempts to mold and shape the identities of the colonized. The interplay between the colonizer and the colonized gives rise to a unique, hybrid cultural identity. Bhabha terms this realm of interaction as "the Third Space enunciation" or simply "a hybrid space." He suggests that this "Third Space" serves as the exclusive nexus where genuine intercultural dialogue can take place. Traditionally, time and space, pivotal

elements of fictional texts, have often been treated and examined separately within textual studies. However, Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin diverged from this approach, introducing the concept of chronotope, asserting that time and space should be analyzed in tandem. This concept, rooted in Albert Einstein's "Theory of Relativity," underscores the interconnectedness of time and space. Bakhtin, highlighting the correlation between chronotopes and ideology, posited that the ideology of a text can be revealed through its chronotopes. Bakhtin's exploration involved the analysis of various novels, leading to the identification of diverse chronotope types such as road-encounter, provincial town, castle, guest room-lounge, and threshold. Furthermore, he noted that these chronotope types are not exhaustive, and there exist numerous other variations. In the two texts under examination in this study, the chronotope of the road, either directly or indirectly, conveys the notion that the sons of the nation should be "on the same path, ideology." On the other hand, mansions within the texts convey ideologies such as Ottomanism, Islamism, and Westernism. However, across the entirety of the text, they convey the idea that these ideologies are no longer viable, emphasizing that salvation lies in Turkish Nationalism. Halls serve as spaces that bring together groups with divergent ideologies, providing a platform for the expression of their ideas and, in turn, unveiling these ideologies. Consequently, the halls in the texts either directly endorse the righteousness of Turkish nationalists or underscore the imperative nature of the ideology by highlighting injustices and negative attitudes from the "other." Thresholds and chronotopes associated with thresholds manifest themselves as both individual and social thresholds in the texts. Within the novel, this state of being on the threshold primarily materializes in the context of belonging to the nation or being associated with the "other," and the struggle to maintain an identity.

Furthermore, chronotopes are the cases in which events occur and they are the places where the plots are knotted and serve as the basic point from which the fictions are opened (Bakhtin, 2001, p.234). Chronotope is a space specialized to a certain time once upon a time. It is the situation where a space expresses a certain value and a regular time for the piece and when space comes together with that specific time period, it acquires a special value and meaning. Hence chronotopes are of fundamental importance for making sense of texts. It can be argued that this role of chronotopes will be more visible and functional, especially in literary texts written within an ideological framework. When considered in the context of modern Turkish literature, it can be thought that this concept will contribute to the meaning of the reconstruction of literary texts written in line with nationalism and nation building. Such a review reveals the ideological dimension of the value attributed to time and space particularly in the novel *Birds Without Wings*. For the plot of this historical fiction novel, time and space bear both historical, ideological and symbolic meaning. The time covered in the novel symbolizes the ideological breaking points of Turkish history.

### Exploring Identity through a Post-War Diaspora Lens

The concept of "identity" has garnered considerable attention from researchers across diverse fields, including humanities and social sciences. In political science, for instance, discussions on "identity" have played a pivotal role, particularly in studies related to nationalism and ethnic conflict within the realm of comparative politics. Similarly, political theory extensively explores the concept of "identity" in discussions concerning gender, sexuality, nationalism, ethnicity, and culture. This exploration often involves contrasting these topics with liberal perspectives and other viewpoints. Despite the increasing focus on the theme of "identity" in political science, this field falls behind recent advancements in history and humanities. Social historians, literary scholars, and cultural experts have turned their attention to the historical and cultural formation of various identities. The burgeoning interest in this subject can be

attributed to various influences, ranging from the theories of Michel Foucault to contemporary debates on multiculturalism.

The exploration of identity stands at the core of postcolonial and post-war studies. Since the conclusion of World War II, scholars have dedicated substantial efforts to comprehend postcolonial identities, delving into their formation and the challenges they encounter. These theorists present diverse viewpoints on the shaping of identities in the aftermath of decolonization and the enduring impacts of colonialism. The understanding of identity, its significance, and the perceived crises associated with it often vary depending on the theorist, the specific time period under scrutiny, and the particular facets of identity being investigated. The concept of identity is among the most extensively discussed topics in postcolonial theory and studies. The pursuit of self-definition saw a significant surge following the independence movements of recently liberated nations. This trend became particularly pronounced with the rise of migration and the establishment of multicultural societies. The focus on identity is not confined solely to theoretical and literary realms but also extends to various facets of daily life. Many scholars argue that colonial influences have played a pivotal role in molding these complex identity dynamics. Pieterse highlights that during decolonization, “as colonial identities began to fade, the study of identity became more prominent” (2002, p.9).

Numerous scholars are keen on comprehending the postcolonial identity crisis, considering it a pivotal element in the intricacies arising from postcolonialism. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin underscore the significance of place and displacement in the postcolonial quest for identity, contending that the crisis revolves around establishing a robust connection between the self and one's environment or position in the world. Consequently, this subject has garnered considerable attention, with scholars eager to explore, understand, and engage in discussions about it. In the contemporary world, a substantial wave of migration and displacement is unfolding. Individuals from various regions globally are frequently on the move, often leaving their homes and seeking refuge elsewhere. Western nations, in particular, have transformed into melting pots, embracing a diverse amalgamation of cultures and nationalities. This shift has prompted a new comprehension of cultural identities, where the sense of being unrooted and out of place is prevalent. Said's works place significant emphasis on the experiences of exile and the circumstances faced by immigrants. He regards these experiences as crucial for grasping the contemporary notions of culture and identity, particularly in light of their profound connection to the notion of the “home” left behind. In “Reflections on Exile,” Said suggests that “modern Western culture is, to a large extent, the work of exiles, emigres, refugees” (Said, 2002, p. 173). He underscores that “the distinction between earlier exiles and those of our own time is, it is crucial to emphasize, scale: our era—with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological aspirations of totalitarian rulers—is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass migration” (Said, 2002, p. 174).

*Birds Without Wings* explores the theme of displacement through its central characters, shedding light on how war and cultural imperialism give rise to the dire consequences of being uprooted and engender complex identity issues. De Bernières explores how this displacement gives rise to intricate identity issues. War, as portrayed in the narrative, becomes the origin of various sorrows, uprooting individuals and instigating identity crises. For instance, Ibrahim, a character both plain and complex in the novel, can be identified by various names, titles, and therefore, identities. He embodies Ibrahim the Goatherd, Ibrahim the beloved of Philothei, Ibrahim the accused murderer, Ibrahim the war victim, Ibrahim the mad... In the chapter where he speaks as the narrator, declaring “I am Ibrahim,” he offers a similar insight into his multiple selves: “I am Ibrahim the mad, who used to be Ibrahim the Goatherd, and I have an excuse, and there is a little tiny man who is not mad, who hides in one corner of my head” (De

Bernières, p.565). The traumatic impact extends beyond Ibrahim's world, affecting all central characters. At the core of this exploration is the notion that war, with its devastating consequences and enduring aftermath, serves as the primary catalyst for the numerous challenges faced by societies and individuals. Through the intricacies of storytelling, de Bernières not only unveils the far-reaching consequences of war but also underscores the personal, intimate suffering stemming from significant geopolitical conflicts. The quote from Said, "Just beyond the frontier between 'us' and the 'outsiders' is the perilous territory of not-belonging: this is where, in a primitive time, peoples were banished, and where in the modern era immense aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced persons" (Said, 2002, p.177), resonates with de Bernières' exploration of displacement and the struggles of not belonging. The novel is expected to carve out a realm for examining how language imposes constraints on identity, power dynamics, and the formation of individual selves:

'Where is Greece?'

'Over the sea. It's not far. Don't worry, you will be looked after by the Greeks and the Franks. They will find you new homes as good as your old ones.'

'Are the Greeks Ottomans like us?'

'No, from now on you are Greeks, not Ottomans. And we are not Ottomans anymore, either, we are Turks.' The sergeant held out his hands and shrugged. 'And tomorrow, who knows? We might be something else, and you might be Negros, and rabbits will become cats.' (De Bernières, p. 527)

It's startling to witness the character being pulled into the self-determining web of interconnections and the factitious construction of identities. At the core of contemporary postcolonial discourse lie themes covering the psychology of the colonized, their integration into society, the inherent sense of otherness, and the resulting dissatisfaction. This academic field has witnessed the emergence of significant works shedding light on the emotional distress faced by individuals under colonization who internalized the ideologies of the colonial rulers. Homi K. Bhabha, a prominent figure in postcolonial studies, delves into the intermingling of cultures, while Edward W. Said explores the East-West dynamic and their perceptions and interactions, notably in his influential work *Orientalism*. Since the 1980s, Bhabha has solidified his position as a key voice in postcolonial theory. Much like Edward Said, Bhabha underscores that colonialism is founded on prejudices and assumptions that portray Eastern and other colonized cultures as subordinate. These misconceptions, in turn, justify the actions and interventions of colonial powers in these regions. This perspective illuminates the manipulative strategies employed by colonial powers to craft a distorted image of the 'other', ultimately serving their imperialist objectives.

Bhabha underscores that the colonial portrayal of the 'other' fluctuates between the extremes of particularity and similarity, giving rise to what he terms 'colonial ambivalence.' The concept of the third space, according to Bhabha, fundamentally challenges "the binary thought and essentialist identities produced by colonial knowledge" (Bhabha, 1990, p.276). This concept dismantles the binary oppositions such as the self and the other, the colonizer and the colonized, or the East and the West. Furthermore, the third space is characterized by ambiguity and the rejection of colonial authority, deconstructing authentic and essentialist polarities (Bhabha, 1990). In doing so, the novelist dissects essentialist identities, challenges and reconstructs the postcolonial discourse, questioning binary oppositions like the East and West or Christian and Muslim. This study critically assesses Bhabha's conceptualization of the third space and explores its constraints in countering colonial and neocolonial exploitation in the contemporary world. *Birds Without Wings*, as a multi-layered novel interweaving history, myth, memory, and imagination, also embraces a postmodern perspective by celebrating multiplicities, pluralities, and hybridity.

### Dislocation of identities: Divided Selves against the Divided World

When individuals are exiled voluntarily or involuntarily, they are very probable to experience an identity crisis resulting in divided selves. When they are involved in joining in another heterogenous society due to the identity politics of the host country, in contrast to homogenization, they are covered into fragmented identities in an ever-changing, globalising world as a consequence of migration and hybridity. Said highlights that “exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure,” defining it as a life led outside habitual order—nomadic, decentred, and contrapuntal. However, just as one begins to acclimate to exile, its unsettling force erupts anew (Said, 2002, p.186). He refers to the individuals forced to go out of their comfort zone owing to external factors such as exile, war or migration and driven to an ambiguous position in the third space. Nevertheless, challenging colonial power in the third space can lead to psychological and spiritual liberation, representing a form of decolonizing the mind. Bhabha’s idea of the third space seeks to disrupt colonial dominance by suggesting a space for cultural negotiation that encourages hybridity. This blending challenges the colonial narrative of fixed identity based on binary oppositions like colonizer/colonized or East/West. This subversion of colonial structures may play a role in achieving psychological and spiritual liberation, mirroring the process of decolonizing the mind. When individuals fail to overcome their personal ordeals or figure out the right way to deal with the intricacies of the modern world, they are overwhelmed both mentally and psychologically, which transforms them into fragmented identities or divided selves like Ibrahim the Mad, Drosoula or Circassian concubine Leyla Hanım in *Birds Without Wings*. The characters in the novel are portrayed as birds without wings that “are always confined to earth, no matter how much [they] climb to the high places and flap [their] arms” by the author himself (2005, p.621) and they are changed into homines sacri (sacred men) during a state of political emergency as the footfall of the upcoming change as highlighted by Tuğçe Özdiñç by an Agambenian reading (Ozdinc, 2022, p. 517).

Individuals struggling to preserve their cultural identity in multiplicities envision the third space as place where they feel at home despite all challenges and find an appropriate atmosphere to survive and perform their peculiar cultures. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha concludes that cultural identity lacks originality, homogeneity, and a shared history. Thus, he asserts that “[t]he access to the image of identity is only ever possible in the negation of any sense of originality or plenitude” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 51). Cultural identity is ever-changing, constantly being shaped and reshaped through ongoing negotiations within what Bhabha refers to as the “third Space”. This space, “though unrepresentable in itself, (...) constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity” (Bhabha, 1994, p.37). Bhabha places the idea of the Third Space at the heart of relationships between colonizers and the colonized in terms of cultural identity. He proposes that navigating through this Third Space is the pathway to advancing in human history and reaching a state beyond the current social and cultural paradigm. Only when each country achieves to create a third space for Other cultural and ethnic groups and encourages its maintenance for the sake of social unity and solidarity, cultural and identity politics would gain a great success worldwide in the name of humanity. Likewise, Laing argues that the ontological security of an individual refers to a condition in which s/he has “a sense of his presence in the world as real, alive, whole” (Laing, 1990, p.39). This unification with the whole universe without any discrimination will make the third space meaningful and indispensable for migrants, dispossessed and fragmented identities.

In *Birds Without Wings*, the author creates such a character as the Circassian mistress or concubine Leyla Hanım in order to show how individuals search for their cultural identity wherever they migrate or how they transcend cultural barriers in Third Space in a process of recreating and redefining cultural



identity. Homi Bhabha defines the third space as the gaps between conflicting cultures—an intermediate realm “that gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation”. Within this “in-between” space, fresh cultural identities take shape, undergo reformulation, and remain in a perpetual state of evolution. For quite a long time Leyla Hanım or Ionna (her Greek name) achieves to disguise her real identity just to open a new page over her dark past and to start a new life with Rüstem Bey who bought her as his concubine in Istanbul. Philothei and Drosoula become good companions to her, while she is struggling with the feeling of social and individual loneliness that dominate her inner world. In order to alleviate the pain of her deep longing for homeland, Ithaca she is afflicted with being a migrant and not speaking her mother tongue. She feels profound frustration when she witnesses that the Greek people in the village speak only Turkish and forgot their native language. Despite all her efforts to conceal her real identity, her Greek origin and her nationalist feelings overflow when she is informed about the deportation of the Christian villagers into Greece. She is a symbolic character in the novel as she represents all what other migrants suffer from or experience on their exilic lifestyle.

Furthermore, *Birds Without Wings* unveils the multiple layers of repressed memories and forgotten stories of Greek Christians and Muslim Turks living side by side in private and public sphere at the time of the Ottoman Empire. In the novel the familiar domestic sphere “home” which is associated with peace and security, turns into an alien, unknown, and in-between space where characters feel isolated and homeless within the household itself. Throughout the novel the concepts of home and family are questioned and after the decision of population exchange, multiple versions of oppression, isolation, and power struggles in the lives of Christian Greeks and Muslim Turks are exposed. The ethnic and minority characters long for a house, a room, and a space of their own. For instance, one of the central characters in the novel, Drosoula suffers from being out of place, and living away from her culture and community makes her feel disconnected. She immigrated to a new world attempting to make a space, a home that is safe with her old-world values. The new world and the city in which she labors, is filled with pain, grief, and sorrows for her and other first-generation immigrants. Drosoula contends with the complexities of assuming the roles of a mother, a Greek Christian, and a Turkish identity, finding herself in what Homi K. Bhabha terms “the third space”—a perpetual state of neither fully belonging to one nor the other (2004, p.21). Drosoula plays the role of the mouthpiece of all repressed migrants and exiles, and shares her experiences regarding her in-betweenness as follows:

I may be Greek now, but I was practically a Turk then and I'm not ashamed of it either, and I'm not the only one, and this country is full of people like me who came from Anatolia because we didn't have any choice in the matter. When I came here, I didn't even speak Greek, didn't you know that? I still dream in Turkish sometimes. I came here because the Christians had to leave, and they thought all the Christians like me were Greek, because the people who run the world never did and never will have any idea how complicated it really is. (De Bernieres, p. 20)

Moreover, in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (1994), De Bernières sheds light on to the lives of Drosoula, her husband Gerasimos, and her son Mandras after their migration to Greece and settlement into the island of Cephalonia. He narrates the suicide story of Mandras who drowns himself in the ocean after her mother's disavowal. In the novel where love and war are overlapping themes, the writer highlights the supreme power of friendship that goes beyond the borders and enmities between nations. As Yasemin Karaağaç emphasizes, the novel “celebrates the possibility of togetherness without imposing the common. Therefore, different communities on the island can live together within their alterity without reducing to sameness. In the midst of the war and crisis in Cephalonia, togetherness which is not based on common property provides a ground for analysing the novel from the perspective of Agamben's whatever singularity” (Karaağaç, 2022, p. 550). Dealing with the devastating effects of war on human

psychology, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* unfolds within the historical context of the Second World War, presenting itself as a work of historical fiction influenced by the events of the Cephalonia massacre of 1943. Just as the shell-shocked Ibrahim in *Birds Without Wings*, Mandras goes to the army to fight against the invading Italian forces after getting engaged to Pelagia, who is the daughter of Dr. Iannis, but when he returns, he is totally changed like everything changed after the war. He knows very well that Pelagia does not love him any longer, just as Philothei discovers that Ibrahim was completely changed mentally after the war and the war separated them forever. Their love took a heavy blow. Mandras gets involved in ELAS, which was a partisan communist organization and rises to a high position as a communist leader quickly in it. However, his attempt to rape Pelagia fails and drives him to the brink of depression, remorse and suicide. According to Golban, Dr. Iannis also “represents a clear case of ‘dislocation’ of the self, his position in relation to the notion of ‘the Greek’ or ‘the Italian’ describing a situation of inexorable ambiguity” (2014, p. 347), and he is a character that can be associated with hybridity while MacMillan stresses the crucial importance of the invasions for the island’s culture by saying “the wartime invasions of the island by the Italians and then the Nazis are just the latest in the island’s long history of domination by outsiders, conquests which, for better or worse, have shaped the island’s culture” (p. 24) in a reference to themes of national boundaries, friendship, and in-betweenness in the face of alterity. Ibrahim’s adoration for Philothei’s extraordinary beauty and Mandras’ choice of a girl superior to himself in status and wealth turn them into tragic heroes that experience downfall as a result of their wrong choices and divided identities in a war-stricken, fragmented world. Their distraughtness puts a distance between themselves and their beloved fiancées. The feeling of homelessness within their source cultures eradicates all reasons for being happy and feeling unified with the whole nature and other people.

De Bernières’ novel reveals the complex spatial meanings of “home” and “homelessness”. These oppressive and violent situations lead major characters to go mad, making them live in homelessness and in the “unhomely” within the domestic house itself. In his essay titled “The World and the Home,” Homi Bhabha explores Sigmund Freud’s concept of the “uncanny,” denoting the encounter with something both familiar and threatening. Bhabha utilizes Freud’s term to depict the notions of belongingness and “home”. Rather than a binary state of lacking or having a home, Bhabha emphasizes the breakdown of borders and lines between the home and the world. As Bhabha articulates, “in that displacement, the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon a vision that is divided as it is disorienting” (p.141). Bhabha suggests that the “unhomely” can be viewed as a result of repression, evident in the characters and relationships within Louis de Bernières’ works.

## Conclusion

In *Birds Without Wings* the author’s deliberate selection of characters from diverse nationalities holds significant meaning. It examines the intricate dynamics of postcolonial identity, probing the essence of multiculturalism in the aftermath of wars. In literature, discussions frequently revolve around themes such as social cohesion, solidarity, hybridity, and mimicry, along with the challenges and outcomes of a nation transitioning into a modern, nation-state era. This often centres on the regained political and cultural independence of previously subjugated populations. The culture and society in which individuals reside play crucial roles in shaping their identities. As multiple cultures converge, they may merge, adapt, or even give rise to a new amalgamated culture. Karaağaç points out that “their distinctions do not separate them but rather provide an authentic relationship between them that can be considered as a “con-sentiment” of the existence of the other from the perspective of Agamben’s

concept" (Karaağaç, 2022: 540). While some may suppress their native culture in an attempt to mimic another, others might undergo a blending without forsaking their roots. The encounters with cultural blending and imitation in literature serve as catalysts for the continual evolution and self-discovery of characters. Postcolonial individuals and immigrants frequently encounter crossroads, contending with identity issues arising from cultural disparities and personal aspirations. The interplay of identity, hybridity, and mimicry stands as a central theme in postcolonial literature, offering a reflection of the intricate challenges confronted by those navigating between various cultural groups.

The theme of displacement is central in postcolonial literature, portraying the turmoil and difficulties confronted by individuals affected by colonial rule and subsequent conflicts. Postcolonial theory explores the enduring impacts of colonial power dynamics. Wars, often depicted in postcolonial critiques, result in widespread devastation, including the displacement of populations. In essence, war brings about suffering, and displacement stands out as one of its most significant consequences. This implies that communities are compelled to abandon their homes, giving rise to multiple challenges for the displaced. While displacement is not a novel occurrence, it spans the entirety of human history, characterized by conflicts that uproot numerous people and set off a chain of crises.

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