

T.C.
YAŞAR ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKEY AND TURKISHNESS AS A
SUBJECT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE FICTION IN THE NOVELS OF
*THE SHIRT OF FLAME AND BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS***

**(İNGİLİZ DİLİNDE BİR KURGU UNSURU OLARAK TÜRKİYE VE
TÜRKLÜK KAVRAMLARININ *ATEŞTEN GÖMLEK* VE *KANATSIZ
KUŞLAR* ROMANLARINDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ÇALIŞMASI)**

Derya BADEMKIRAN

Danışman

Dr. Jeffrey Hibbert

İzmir, 2013

Yaşar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğüne Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “Comparative Study of Turkey and Turkishness as a Subject of English Language Fiction in the Novels of *The Shirt of Flame* and *Birds Without Wings*” adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin bibliyografyada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

.../.../.....

Derya BADEMKIRAN

İmza



T.C.
YAŞAR ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ JÜRİ SINAV
TUTANAĞI

| ÖĞRENCİNİN | | |
|---|--|--|
| Adı, Soyadı | : | |
| Öğrenci No | : | |
| Anabilim Dalı | : | |
| Programı | : | |
| Tez Sınav Tarihi | :/...../201..... | Sınav Saati : |
| Tezin Başlığı: | | |
| Adayın kişisel çalışmasına dayanan tezinidakikalık süre içinde savunmasından sonra jüri üyelerince gerek çalışma konusu gerekse tezin dayanağı olan anabilim dallarından sorulan sorulara verdiği cevaplar değerlendirilerek tezin, | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BAŞARILI olduğuna (S) <input type="checkbox"/> OY BİRLİĞİ <input type="checkbox"/> EKSİK sayılması gerektiğine (I) <input type="checkbox"/> OY ÇOKLUĞU <input type="checkbox"/> BAŞARISIZ sayılmasına (F) ile karar verilmiştir. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jüri toplanamadığı için sınav yapılamamıştır. <input type="checkbox"/> Öğrenci sınava gelmemiştir. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Başarılı (S) <input type="checkbox"/> Eksik (I) <input type="checkbox"/> Başarısız (F) Üye : İmza : | <input type="checkbox"/> Başarılı (S) <input type="checkbox"/> Eksik (I) <input type="checkbox"/> Başarısız (F) Üye : İmza : | <input type="checkbox"/> Başarılı (S) <input type="checkbox"/> Eksik (I) <input type="checkbox"/> Başarısız (F) Üye : İmza : |

- 1 Bu halde adaya 3 ay süre verilir.
- 2 Bu halde öğrencinin kaydı silinir.
- 3 Bu halde sınav için yeni bir tarih belirlenir.
- 4 Bu halde varsa öğrencinin mazeret belgesi Enstitü Yönetim Kurulunda görüşülür. Öğrencinin geçerli mazeretinin olmaması halinde Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararıyla ilişkisi kesilir. Mazereti geçerli sayıldığında yeni bir sınav tarihi belirlenir.

ABSTRACT

Master Thesis

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKEY AND TURKISHNESS AS A SUBJECT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE FICTION IN THE NOVELS OF *THE SHIRT OF FLAME* AND *BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS*

Derya BADEMKIRAN

This thesis explores the concepts of Turkey and Turkishness as subjects of English language fiction by analyzing two novels *The Shirt of Flame* (1924) by Halide Edip Adivar and *Birds Without Wings* (2004) by Louis de Bernieres. More specifically, this study will assess the role of fictions in the development of a Turkish national identity, in questioning that identity, of presenting alternatives to the common and state-sponsored vision of that identity. Since these two novels fictionalize the historical and political transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish Republic in Anatolia, another purpose of this study will be to demonstrate how the novels dramatize the establishment of Turkey as a nation state out of multi-cultural Ottoman Empire. Through close readings of each novel, and from autobiographical works of Adivar and early Turkish history, this thesis explores the differences in the fictional representation of the period between the two writers and also investigates the potential polemical functions of these two historically different texts, both composed in the English language for an English speaking audience. While the narrative in *The Shirt of Flame* works to legitimate the rebellion of Turkish people against Imperial powers and to introduce the new defined Turkish subject to the world through Turkish perspective, de Bernieres' fiction functions as a kind of fantasy presented to contemporary English speaking readers in which he values diversity of the cultures, ethnicities and religions of the late-Ottoman period by problematizing the war and the emergence of the Turkish nation. Subsequently, this thesis discusses that Adivar and Bernieres' texts are the expressions of their individual, fictional perspectives on Turkey as an object of desire.

Key Words: Adivar, de Bernieres, Turkishness, Multiculturalism, Turkish nationalism, Turkish novel.

KISA ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İNGİLİZ DİLİNDE BİR KURGU UNSURU OLARAK TÜRKİYE VE TÜRKLÜK KAVRAMLARININ *ATEŞTEN GÖMLEK* VE *KANATSIZ KUŞLAR* ROMANLARINDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ÇALIŞMASI

Derya BADEMKIRAN

Bu çalışma Halide Edip Adivar'ın *Ateşten Gömlek* (1924) ve Louis de Bernieres'in *Kanatsız Kuşlar* (2004) romanları ışığında İngiliz dilinde bir kurgu unsuru olarak Türkiye ve Türklük kavramını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma özellikle kurgunun Türk milli kimliğinin gelişimindeki, bu kimliğin sorgulanmasındaki ve bu kimliğin hâlihazırda devlet eliyle oluşturulmuş haline alternatif sunmaktaki rolünü değerlendirmektedir. Bu iki roman Anadolu'da Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne dönüşümünü tarihi ve siyasi açılardan kurguladığından, bu çalışmanın bir diğer amacı da romanların Türkiye'nin çok kültürlü Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan çıkıp bir ulus devlet olarak kuruluşunu nasıl betimlediğini göstermektir. Bu çalışma, her iki roman üzerinde yapılan incelemeler ışığında, Adivar'ın otobiyografik eserleri ve erken Türkiye tarihine dair makaleleri referans alarak, dönemin iki yazar tarafından sunuldukları farklılıkları inceler ve her ikisi de İngilizce olarak İngilizce konuşan kitle için yazılmış bu tarihi anlamda farklı metinlerin olası tartışma yaratıcı işlevini araştırır. *Ateşten Gömlek*'in hikâyesi Türklerin emperyalist güçlere karşı savaşını meşrulaştırmaya ve yeni tanımlanmış Türklük kavramını Türk bakış açısından dünyaya tanıtmaya çalışırken, de Bernieres modern, İngiliz dili okuyucusuna Osmanlı tarihinin son, Türkiye tarihinin ilk yıllarını, savaşı ve Türk ulusunun doğuşunu Osmanlı'nın son döneminin çok kültürlü dokusunun yok oluş sebebi olarak sunarak kültür, etnik köken ve din çeşitliliğini yücelttiği bir tür fantezi olarak romanlaştırmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Adivar ve Bernieres'in metinlerinin Türkiye'nin gerçek tarihinden ziyade bireysel, kurgusal bir Türkiye'yi bir arzu nesnesi olarak ifade ettiklerini savunur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Adivar, de Bernieres, Türklük, Çok kültürlülük, Türk milliyetçiliği, Türk romanı

LIST OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Approval Page | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Kısa Özet | iv |
| List of Contents | v |
| Acknowledgements | vii |
| | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| | |
| Chapter I: From Reader to Writer: Halide Edip’s Evolution to Revolution | 11 |
| 1.1 Fictionalising Turkish Nationalism: Re-reading of Halide Edip Adıvar’s <i>The Shirt of Flame</i> | 24 |
| Chapter II: Creating and Dismantling a Late-Ottoman Multicultural Paradise in <i>Birds Without Wings</i> | 38 |
| 2.1 Forging a Multicultural Ottoman Paradise | 42 |
| 2.2 Individual Narrators Unravel the Past | 54 |
| | |
| Conclusion | 66 |

Works Cited.....70

Works Consulted.....72

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor Dr. Jeffrey Hibbert for his continuous support and guidance on my thesis with his patience and immense knowledge.

Above all, this thesis would not have been possible without the personal support and encouragement of my mother Gülsen Bademkiran, as always, for which my mere expression of thanks does not suffice.

Last, but by no means least, I am grateful to my friends and colleagues for their warm encouragement throughout.

INTRODUCTION

The novels produced during the collapse of the late Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the early Turkish Republic period were instrumental in defining a new Turkish identity in line with an ideologically desirable model for republican citizenship. The texts created by some late-Ottoman intellectuals functioned as tools of nation building because their narratives were providing a context for the Turkish independence war, not only by addressing but also by creating an ideal Turkish audience in line with a proto-national ideology. These first examples of twentieth-century Turkish literature, especially within the genre of the novel, attempt to articulate an answer for the question “Who is a Turk?” by enfolded historical events within a fictional narrative in accordance with what would become the official historiography of Turkey. The reason for the late-Ottoman intellectuals’ attempts to determine criteria for the definition of Turkishness is the fact that the notion of the “Turk” as a discrete, self-identified ethnicity, did not properly exist before the twentieth-century, and the creation of the Turkish subject was crucial and primary to the establishment of Turkish republic, since the Turk would be the inhabitant of Turkey. Hence, the works of many writers, in a way, operated as forces for the changes employed by the new republic to raise and strengthen national consciousness in the society during the process of transition from empire to nation, from Islamic tradition to secularity, and from a multi-ethnic to single ethnic state. In other words, their narratives work for not only social but also political purposes as an affirmation of newly emerging national values during the process of engineering the ideal

Turkish nation. Subsequently, the writers who produced their works in the late-Ottoman period and the early Republican era played a crucial role in the forging Turkish identity and modernization of Turkey.

While the representations of the Turkish subject within Turkish literature helped to define the subject to him or herself, the Turkish novel in English brought the subject beyond its immediate audience. The subject of Turkish history as a source of fictional writing especially, has existed before the Turkish republic and literature about Turkish republic in English is almost as old as the republic itself. The fictional narratives that portray the transition from the multi-cultural and multi-religious empire to the Turkish republic and the genesis of Turkish nation in English have been produced both by Turkish and Western writers. However, the way these writers thematize Turkish identity in their novels in English is considerably different. The early examples of the Turkish novel in English were produced by the late-Ottoman period writers mainly to introduce the newly created Turkish nation to the English speaking audience and more importantly, to legitimate the nations' struggle of cleaning the Imperial powers from the homeland in the war of Independence. On the other hand, more contemporary Turkish and Western writers who revisit that part of the history in their fictions, focus on the trauma and problems of the dramatic shift from an empire in which it was possible for people from diverse ethnicities, believers of different religions and speakers of various languages to live together within the same community within a larger empire. Their fictional accounts of history challenge and criticize official historiographies and offer alternative directions and narratives to the ones ideologically sponsored and approved by the state. Subsequently, the function of the novel in terms of the different ways it takes Turkish identity or Turkey as a subject matter is worth analyzing.

Different points of view regarding history, ethnicity, and language will produce different trajectories for the Turkish novel in English. As Azade Şeyhan in her work, *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context*, points out:

The novel, as the modern epos, is closely linked to the foundational myths and ideologies of the nation as well as to their critique. It is the textual space where a symbolic exchange of societal values takes place and where the official history is challenged by alternative scenarios and the recovery of suppressed memory. Although poetry had been the dominant literary genre of both Ottoman literature and the golden age of Arabic literature, prose became the leading idiom of modern literary revolutions in Turkey and the Arab countries. Theories of prose writing both by Turkish and Western critics and novelists therefore enable a new articulation of modern Turkish literary history that does justice to the range of complexities that underwrite both the cultural specificity of this history and its relation to contemporary literatures [...].(*Tales of Crosses Destinies* 7)

Thus, Şeyhan makes it clear that the creation of the novel on Turkish subject matter both by Turkish and Western writers might have different aims such as defining the value systems forming the Turkish identity and forging them, or revising the Turkish history and Turkish identity from alternative point of views to breach the silence and give the reader a chance to re-evaluate it. Therefore, the portrayal of Turkish subject matter in a fictional framework in English which has emerged at different times and, offers different perspectives and historical insight can be a complementary way to evaluate and understand the mechanics of modern Turkey and Turkish identity.

Any curious reader should ask him or herself, why is Turkey and Turkishness a subject of fiction in the English language by both ethnically English and Turkish writers? This thesis proposes to answer this question in detail, but to anticipate the claims I will be making later, I would like to add that the audience for English language fiction is not Turkish-speaking readers. The audience, clearly, is English-speaking readers—historians, students, archaeologists, politicians, or others. The two novelists I will be discussing have chosen to produce their novels in English for very different artistic and polemical reasons, and my goal in this thesis is to explain those purposes and how they either succeed or do not succeed in connecting their subjects with their intended audiences.

This study analyses Halide Edip Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame* and Louis de Bernieres' *Birds Without Wings* as works of fiction in English literature in terms of their thematizing Turkish subject matter during the late-Ottoman and early republic period. The study argues that Adivar's and de Bernieres' novels can be read as oppositional but also complementary texts that fictionalize the formation of Turkish identity out of the multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious fabric of the late-Ottoman society within the historical framework as they suggest different point of views towards the subject so that they enable different voices to be heard by the reader to reconsider the part of the history and the formation of Turkish identity. In line with this, this study compares the novels of Adivar's and de Bernieres' in terms of their individual and imaginary renderings of actual, lived, shared historical events. As I will focus on in this study, the creation of these two novels on Turkish subject matter by both Adivar and de Bernieres works for different aims. While Adivar's fictional account of the foundation of Turkish republic and Turkish nation functions as a sociological and political tool to raise national consciousness to forge an ideal

Turkish nation as well as legitimating the necessity of Independence war of Turkey to international audience, de Bernieres rewrites an alternative history suggesting a more different perspective than Adivar's in which he takes a critical stand towards the Independence war and pre-nascent nationalism since they are presented as the reason for the individual tragedies resulting from the elimination of cultural, ethnical and religious diversity in the late-Ottoman society. One of the main the purposes of this study is to analyze how the question of the nascent Turkish identity is dealt with in *Shirt of Flame* and *Birds Without Wings* in line with the fictional and historical insight that they suggest and how they help the reader to make a critical understanding of the establishment of Turkish republic and formation of Turkish subject matter.

One of the most significant points about these two novels is that the both texts by Adivar and de Bernieres are expressions of a fictional, imaginary and desirable Turkey, not the Turkey of actual, eventual history. Even though Halide Edip Adivar writes about the Turkish republic and the Turkish nation in the 1930s, she writes about them as a work of fiction, and it is important not to confuse historical immediacy with historical facticity. It is the same with Louis de Bernieres because despite his extensive research on the period of Turkish history between the First World War and the Turkish-Greek population exchange, his book is also a work of fiction and not a work of history. In other words, while Halide Edip Adivar writes a fictional account of the formation of the Turkish nation and the Independence war of Turkey in which she took an active part, de Bernieres writes on the same period of time and about the same historical facts with Halide Edip Adivar in the 21st century. Therefore, Adivar's novel cannot be said to be more authentic than de Bernieres' novel, neither can de Bernieres' novel, with its clarity from hindsight, be said to be

more historically true. Therefore, seeking an answer to the question why Adivar and de Bernieres write about Turkish subject matter and Turkey in their fictions is another main objective of this study.

As I will mainly argue in this study, in *The Shirt of Flame*, Adivar legitimizes Turkey's position in the war of Independence against the imperial powers and the rise of the Turkish nation by dramatizing and devaluing the role of non-Muslim ethnicities living in Anatolia in her novel. Furthermore, creating and introducing the Turkish subject to the world at large is one of the main motivations for Halide Edip Adivar to write *The Shirt of Flame* in English because she will present Turkish nationalism not as a reactionary political force, but as a grassroots movement opposed to European imperialism. For Adivar, Turkish nationalism is a form of guerilla insurgency. As a result, *The Shirt of Flame* is more properly an anti-imperialist and anti-occupationalist novel than a xenophobic or racist text. The narrative seeks to legitimize and glorify Turkey's uprising against the Imperial forces, so it articulates the Turkish point of view of the war by not taking in a broader, international position which had previously degraded and demonized Turks as hostile to foreign people.

On the contrary to Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame*, which legitimates the necessity of the homogenization of Turkish society, the narrative in *Birds Without Wings* does not portray the pre-nationalist period of the empire as problematic. On the contrary, de Bernieres romanticizes the multi-cultural and multi-religious Ottoman empire so that he articulates a critical standpoint towards the nascent Turkish nationalist ideology in the late Ottoman period. His fiction, although it has historical grounds, is an imaginary projection of contemporary English values on an

Ottoman and Turkish past. Therefore, his fictional account of Turkey and Turkish identity works as a kind of historical therapy that presents multiple layers of fantasy.

That's why, in this study, two texts, *The Shirt of Flame* and *Birds Without Wings* are basically put into conversation with each other since they present different points of view toward nascent Turkish nationalism and provide different conclusions to its practical value. While one text presents the rise of the Turkish nation as a rare and tremendous birth, the other equates the rise of Turkey as a loss of a peaceful and more tolerant society. By putting these two texts in dialogue with each other, I hope to show how historically different writers approach the same topic with very different desires and reach very different conclusions.

This study has two chapters. The first chapter, which is divided into two sections analyses Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame*. Chapter 1, section 1, "From Reader to Writer: Halide Edip Adivar's Evolution to Revolution" investigates Adivar's accounts of coming into literacy as it is pivotal to highlight her motivations for using her writings as a tool for building Turkish nation. As a writer, scholar and a political figure, Halide Edip Adivar witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire in which she was born after the internal and external instabilities resulting from Balkan wars and the First World War and the establishment of Turkish republic out of Independence War of Turkey in which she took an active part. For the reason that a writer cannot be considered as free from the changes taking place in the society, Adivar's novel is the cultural analysis and syntheses of her first-person experiences and observations. Along with the socio-cultural and ideological changes taking place in the society, in this section, her initiation into the world of reading when she was a child is examined through her two volume memoirs; *House with Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* and *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the Further Memoirs of Halide Edip* in order to

reveal the mechanics of her evolution as a writer. Three dimensions of her initiation to the world of reading which are the oral folk dimension that she was told Anatolian legends, religious and secular dimension that she had when she was taught privately at home and western dimension that she had when she had her education in American College fed her intellect and imagination so that she produced works both in Turkish and English which function as a tool to create and present new Turkish people and Turkish literature to both Turkish and international audiences. Moreover, it is also argued that her producing nationalist works in English to address an English-speaking audience (which, at first may seem contradictory,) functions self-defensively since, with the historical and socio-political account of Turkey during the First World War and the Independence war, has not been nor could it have been understood from the perspective of an Anatolian Muslim in the English language.

The second section of Chapter I, “Fictionalizing Turkish Nationalism: Re-reading of Halide Edip Adıvar’s *The Shirt of Flame* focuses on the close reading of the novel and argues that the reason behind Adıvar’s writing *The Shirt of Flame* in English is, in a way, introducing the Turkish subject to the world at large since the most of the nationalism presented in the novel is a reaction to Imperialism. Moreover, it is also argued that *The Shirt of Flame* is a rather anti-Imperial and anti-occupation novel than any positive dedication to Turkish nation since the narrative works to legitimize and praise Turkey’s rebellion against the Imperial forces. It also propagates the resistance against the invasion of Anatolia by Imperial powers. Running parallel, the section analyzes the text in terms of how it articulates the Turkish point of view of the war by not taking in a broader, international position because that position has demonized Turks. As it is one of Halide Edip Adıvar’s rhetorical goals in writing the novel in English to present Turkish nation as more

noble and worthy as the European nations who have come to divide and exploit Anatolia.

Chapter 2, “Creating and Dismantling a Late-Ottoman Multicultural Paradise in *Birds Without Wings*, which has two sections analyses *Birds Without Wings* by Louis de Bernieres. The chapter starts with the background information about the aftermath of the First World War and the war of Independence and their consequences on personal level by referring to the studies of Bruce Clark and Reşat Kasaba. The first section of Chapter 2, “Forging a Multicultural Paradise”, analyzes the novel in terms of the ambivalent attitude of the de Bernieres’ narrative towards the creation of Turkish identity and concentrates on how it articulates the tragedy out of the nascent Turkish nationalism. This section argues that de Bernieres romanticizes the multi-ethnic and religious Ottoman Empire by setting it in an Edenic, prelapsarian village and reveals the novel’s critical view towards the Independence war and pre-nascent nationalism since over the course of the narrative they are presented as the reason for the fall from the grace and ending with tragedy. It is also argued that although the harmony of diverse religions, ethnicities, and cultures in the late-Ottoman period portrayed in de Bernieres’ fiction is somehow based on historical facts, nevertheless, it is an imaginary projection of contemporary English values on an Ottoman and Turkish past. Although the novel does not take a political stand, it mainly criticizes the global politics as it causes destruction for individuals. On the contrary to the Turkish official historiography legitimating the necessity of the homogenization in the society, *Birds Without Wings* articulates an oppositional stand towards the necessity of nationality building process in the late Ottoman period because de Bernieres’ narrative does not depict the pre-nationalist period of the Empire as problematic. On the contrary, it is narrated as Edenic so one

of the biggest tragedies caused by the nationalist stride and the Independence war is that they created the sense of “otherness” in the society and devastated the harmony and tolerance among the miscellaneous communities.

The second part of the Chapter 2, “*Birds Without Wings: The Individual Narrators Unravel the Past*”, focuses on de Bernieres’ polyphonic narrative strategy in *Birds Without Wings* as it stands against the uniformity of Turkish historiography. This part reads the chapters of the novel narrated by the selected first-person narratives as they are considered to offer multicultural individual account of the Independence war of Turkey and its consequences as opposed to the nationalist historiography of Turkey. Personal stories of the characters provide a fictional but palpable personal dimension of the part of the history, and this historical recreation and reinterpretation demonstrates the war and the exchange as a catastrophe for small communities. The narrative focuses on the diverse angles from which the war affected ordinary people from different backgrounds and led to tragedies in their lives rather than focuses on the nationalist dimension central to Adivar’s *The Shirt of Flame*. Therefore, de Bernieres individualizes history by putting chapters of individual stories that attempt to recount the violence, trauma and nostalgia resulting from the wars and the exchange. Individual narrators contribute to reconsider the past not at a national level, but at a more immediate and less known personal level that can open a space for different interpretations of the war especially in terms of individual consequences and its human costs.

CHAPTER I

FROM READER TO WRITER:

HALİDE EDİP ADIVAR'S EVOLUTION TO REVOLUTION

Halide Edip Adivar was one of the first Turkish woman writers, a scholar and political figure, and one of the most remarkable women in early Turkish republican history. Needless to say, she is still a very well-known literary figure in Turkish history, yet is less well known to contemporary English readers. She lived at a time which provided her inspiration and drive, a time when the Ottoman Empire—which was still a large empire but was struggling to control its territories spread over three continents and its internal political instability—was not enjoying the great strength and stability that it had once possessed. On the other hand, as she grew up, she witnessed the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the process of establishing the new Turkish Republic, in which she would take an active role. Therefore, her memoirs, novels, and essays are not only the products of her imagination, but also records of her experiences and observations of historical events. Much of her writing, both in Turkish and English, reflects her involvement in and propagandizing for the Turkish War of Independence, against the Allies occupying the Empire after it was defeated in World War I, as well as rise of the Turkish nationalist movement. In her lifetime, between 1882 and 1964, the Turkish Republic was established from out of a dismembered empire and a period of international occupation and after multiple violent conflicts and clashes, the new republic was able to reform the former empire's politics and practices as well as reserve a seat for itself at the table of

nations. The reason why Halide Edip Adivar has an irremovable place in the history of Turkey as one of its most significant women is the fact that she and her works were motivating forces behind the changes implemented by the young republic.

Since no writer can be considered independent from the society in which she lives or immune to its influence, the changes taking place in her society must be encountered and considered in order to understand the conditions that produce the writer and her work. Halide Edip Adivar lived during a period of Ottoman reform and its limitations, international conflict in both the Balkan and World Wars, and other international political upheavals that would alter Turkish politics, ideology and society altogether. Although she was raised during the age of the Ottomans, like many others, she became a Turkish nationalist during the revolution and would become an activist following the wars and during the development of the early Turkish Republic. Her experiences and observations can be understood as forms of cultural analysis that are also written into her novels. However, before taking a detailed look at the socio-cultural and ideological changes marking the period in which Halide Edip Adivar evolved as a writer and produced her works, it can be beneficial to examine her reading environment when she was a child; in other words, her introduction to the world of reading since it is also an important part of her evolution as a writer. As Benjamin Fortna has noted, Adivar's accounts of her reading practices compose a significant part of her memoirs (179). As I hope to show, Adivar's accounts of coming into literacy are essential to showing how and why she was interest in using writing as a tool of nation building in the early Republican period.

When Halide Edip Adivar opened her eyes to the world in 1884, there was instability in the Empire, and part of that instability was caused by inter-religious

conflict within the Empire and by competition for resources, power, and wealth between the Empire and its neighbors. All of this contributed to the growing decline of the empire that, by the end of the century, would be known as the “sick man of Europe.” In Adivar’s early years, she watched the gradual decline of this sick man from his bedside. Although loss of the lands and the immigration of the Ottoman Muslim survivors from the newly established Balkan states greatly affected the economy of the Empire, Halide Edip Adivar, on the other hand, was lucky enough to be raised in a wealthy Istanbul family. Her father served at the Palace as the keeper of Sultan Abdülhamid II’s Privy Purse (that is, financial secretary to the Sultan). In keeping with this privileged space, the financial comfort that she had would define the educational environment she could occupy, and gave her a chance to receive a good education from which many of her female contemporaries were deprived. However, even before considering her education and coming into literacy, we must consider her social environment. The Ottoman Empire which had witnessed countless wars and victories through its history was a great source and inspiration for the legends and folktales to be created. In parallel with it, before the period of her coming to literacy, “some of her most important influences came not from the sophisticated world of elite letters but rather from the realm of legends and folktales” (Fortna 179). In her memoir, *Memoirs of Halide Edip*, she reflects that at an early age, she enjoyed listening to heroic stories, especially *Battal Gazi* taking place in Anatolia from Ahmet Aga, an old Anatolian man, who was working for the family by saying that

From him I got a great deal of my early education. The fact that it was not given in lesson form made it all the more effective and appealed to the more

artistic part of nature. It was by a mere chance that I fell under the influence of a man of his type, but it was this chance that opened to me the folk-lore, the popular Turkish literature, which one of the rest of my generation of writers have enjoyed (*Memoirs of Halide Edip* 115).

These tales constituted the first influences and inspirations for Halide Edip Adivar and gave her an urge to enter to the world of literacy and reading (Fortna 183).

Anatolian war tales and legends, like their equivalents in other cultures, have survived by being passed orally from person to person until they finally were written down. Although their historical accuracy as a whole cannot be verified, they nevertheless transmit a desired-for cultural content through narrative and symbolism, and the process of their transmission reinforces social bonds between group members. The effect of this first urge to enter into the literary world by means of Anatolian war legends can be traced in her works such as *The Shirt of Flame*. Since she was influenced by the Anatolian war legends she listened to when she was a child, she witnessed and took part in the Independence war in Anatolia, she created a re-inscription of an Anatolian war legend at the pivotal historical moment of her nation to elevate its national consciousness. Her experiences created a historical framework that contextualized the Turkish Independence war and offered a legend of her own nation through a Turkish narrative point of view. She used the text as a tool of nation building by creating a rhetorically effective narrative in accordance with proto-national ideology that both addresses and creates an ideal Turkish audience. In other words, her narrative works for both social and political purposes as an avowal and genesis of national values during the birthing process of the Turkish nation.

The parallelism between her first-person experiences during the war in Anatolia and the tales told to her is crystallized in her 1924 novel *The Shirt of Flame*, an epic of the Turkish Independence War. In her book, she also tells the story of Anatolian people fighting for their independence against the Allies and attempts to glorify their bravery and sacrifices. When these facts are taken into the consideration, it can be inferred that as a reader who was deeply affected and fascinated by the heroic tales taking place in Anatolia, Halide Edip Adivar wanted to create the same effect on her readers and make them feel touched by fictionalizing the Turkish Independence War to promote the ideology of Turkish nationalism. When the fact that the book is a huge success and one of the very-well known novels in Turkish literature is considered, it seems that she achieved one of her goals as a writer.

As was the case with most of her contemporaries, her initiation to world of reading started with learning to read Arabic letters in order to be able to learn the Koran (Fortna 182). When Halide Edip Adivar started her religious education, Islam was beginning to gain much more importance as a uniting force for Ottoman Muslims. Through the period of the Ottoman Empire's dissolution, the fact that Ottoman Muslims were massacred and exiled to Anatolia because of their religion urged survivors to elevate Islam to the highest place in establishing their national identity. As a result, religion began to gain a political function for Ottoman Muslims. Since Halide Edip Adivar was surrounded by the environment dominated by Islam, "the Islamic dimension predominated early on in her life" (Fortna 180). As a part of her religious education, she took private lessons from hocas at home when she was six. She also depicts her first learning environment in her memoir, *Memoirs of Halide Edip*, as "Our hodja and his wife were recent immigrants from Macedonia and had built a tiny house behind our own. She taught little girls at home, while his

school is one of the poor quarters of Beshiktash” (Adivar 89). Her private religious education continued till she started studying at American College. From both religious and secular educations, Halide Edip Adivar gained the knowledge of the heroics and early Islamic legend which, I have argued, she will later reapply in order to raise and strengthen nationalist feelings in Turkish society. Moreover, the Ottoman elites and high-ranked foreign officers who comprised her social environment would influence her desire to learn and experience both Western and Eastern cultures. Through this interaction, she would learn Greek and English in addition to Turkish and Arabic. Through her interaction with foreigners in Istanbul, she learned the political enmity of some western Europeans for the Ottomans, as well as the existence of individual prejudices about Islam and Muslim people. Halide Edip Adivar who received a good religious education tried to change the leading perception of the Turk and Muslim in Europe as ignoble and barbarous when she became a more powerful public figure. Her literary works also emphasize this issue. For instance, in her famous speech to a mass meeting in Istanbul after the occupation of Istanbul by the Allies, she starts by saying that:

Islam, which means peace and the brotherhood of men, is eternal. Not the Islam entangled by superstition and narrowness, but the Islam which came as a great spiritual message. I must hold up its supreme meaning today. Turkey, my wronged and martyred nation, is also lasting: she does not only share the sins and the faults and virtues of other peoples, she also has her own spiritual and moral force which no material agency can destroy. (*The Turkish Ordeal* 20)

The quotation reveals that Adivar draws parallels between Islam and the Turkish nation both of which are “wronged” by “narrowness”; however, she also posits that

Islam's narrowness is the cause of the misunderstanding for the Turkish nation by others. She distances Turkey from Islam in terms of its superstitious and narrow side. Then again, she makes it clear that it is the "spiritual message" of Islam she sees as a unifying element that galvanizes the nation's "spiritual and moral force" which she claims as not destroyable by any "material agency", or, in other words, Imperialism. On the other hand, she explains that the postwar European misunderstanding of Islam (as a violent faith) was actually used by the occupation as a "pretext to occupy Istantboul in the name of peace" (Adivar 35). Allies saw their role as that of peacekeepers between warring neighboring faiths. This is one of the main reasons that Adivar does not view Islam as not a unifying element, and so she does not keep Islam and Turkey attached.

Apart from correcting the western world's misperception of Islam, her defense of Islam also has historical weight and significance. The fact that the new Republic of Turkey was established on the secular principles by the nationalists who were propagandizing through religion may seem contradictory. However, as it happened in newly established Balkan countries, shared religion was one of the most important factors that drew millions of people together in nationalist movement. Furthermore, it was one of the most important components of Turkish nationalist movement because Ottoman Muslims, who were tortured, massacred and forced to leave their homes because of their religion, recognized their commonality in it. Being aware of the power of Islam as a uniting element for the Ottoman Muslims, Turkish nationalists were also propagandizing through the religion. One of the important frontiers of Turkish nationalist movement, Halide Edip Adivar, benefitted from the religion in her propaganda as a political figure and in her career as a writer.

Her initiation into the world of reading has two dimensions so far: the oral folk dimension that she had by listening to the tales told about Anatolia; the religious dimension that she had by being taught privately at home. A third dimension of Western inspiration started when she was being taught at Uskudar American College. At the school, she had a chance to learn Western cultures and the English language, which would shape her future professionally and ideologically. Apart from many of her professions that she had in her life, Halide Edip Adivar was also a valued academician and became the head of the chair of English literature at Istanbul University. However, the more important effect of her education can be considered as her having a chance to get to know European culture and way of living. It made her aware of what was missing in Turkish society. As a result, she devoted her intellect to inform and develop her nation to reach European standards. On the other hand, this ideal of hers caused trouble when she was at the peak of her political career. When the First World War was over, she was accused of being a traitor by Mustafa Kemal since she argued that the American Mandate, (which, in simple terms, meant demanding the help of America for the new Republic of Turkey to be able to preserve its territorial integrity against Allies and also to sustain its economic growth), was the only solution because she believed that America, being more powerful than Europe, could protect Turkey from the threats of Christian minorities empowered by the Allies in the aftermath of the First World War (Adak 511). In her memoir *The Turkish Ordeal*, she makes her inclination for American policy clear by saying that “In view of the extreme difficulty of getting the Turkish side of the question published inside and outside the country [...] it is through their [American correspondents] efforts that the Turkish standpoint gradually leaked out through the dense cloud of prejudice and hatred, and the political obstruction of the West”

(Adivar 12). She believed that apart from fortifying Turkish nationalism and creating nationalist consciousness in the society, it is also crucial for the young republic to lean on America to be able to forge advantageous international partnerships. But then, her defense of Turkish nationalism and her application of it into practice in her political and writing career were contradictory to each other. Politically, defending national isolationism contradicted her support for relations with American interests. On one hand, she was a fanatical defender of Turkish nationalism and independence of her nation, but on the other hand, she was advocating the necessity of American support for the young republic to take its place among the list of world nations. Therefore, defending two opposite ideas like nationalism and internationalization at the same time brought failure to her in her political career since she was accused of being a traitor and banned from politics and had to leave Turkey for fourteen years after the establishment of Turkish Republic.

But her political career was not the only aspect of her life. In her writing career, as a multilingual writer, producing nationalist works in English seems a bit contradictory and problematic when the fact that she was a highly political figure defending Turkish nationalism passionately is considered. The dictionary definition of nationalism suggests its meaning as “loyalty and devotion to a nation; *especially*: a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups” (“nationalism”, def. 1). Taking this definition into consideration, the main conflict of her nationalist works is that as a defender of Turkish nationalism, putting her nation above all others and producing her works to promote its culture and interests, she uses English language as medium. Then again, when her political ideology is considered, addressing an international audience seems

irrelevant since the nationalist propaganda would fall flat on them. For example, Halide Edip Adivar glorifies Anatolian bravery and their stand against the Allies by writing their heroic fight for independence in *The Shirt of Flame*. The book reserves its place among other works of hers as a brilliant epic of Turkish nationalism. It is clear that by creating such a work, she aimed to affect her readers deeply to raise consciousness of Turkish nationalism. Accordingly, it makes perfect sense for Halide Edip Adivar as a nationalist to produce an overtly nationalist novel. However, by writing the same novel in English, she steps outside the nationalist framework into an international frame. If she was writing a work of national literature to be consumed by a national audience, what is the point of writing it in English? Hence, because she produced nationalist fictions in the “wrong” language, this can explain, in part, why her novels are not internationally successful. Alternatively, her producing nationalist works in English can function as a pivotal tool to present new Turkish people and Turkish literature to the world beyond itself. Consequently, her work in which she attempts to encounter actual history in fiction to legitimize her nation’s struggle against imperialism is an extension of the nationalist project of the young republic. In line with anti –imperialist documentation of Turkish history, Adivar mentions in the preface of her memoir, *The Turkish Ordeal*, that she did not translate every single word into English, she wrote the English version of what she had experienced before and after the War of Independence. As such, her works function as self-defensively in which she addresses an English speaking audience with an historical account of Turkey’s social and political formation from the First World War to the War of Independence, and point to the necessity of liberation from a Turkish point of view.

When she was a young woman in 1910s, the nationalist wind was blowing from Balkans to the empire. Through the Balkan Wars between 1912 and 1913, the

Ottoman Empire lost many of its lands and population. More importantly, the Balkan wars brought the nationalist wave to the Ottoman Turks who lost their fate in the multinational and multi-religious empire. While these changes were taking place, Halide Edip started to write articles for the newspaper *Tanin* under the name of “Halide Salih”. She was one of the intellectuals who was attempting to redefine Turkishness and forge a new form of Turkish nationalism. These young intellectuals called their ideology “Turanism” which, in simple terms, is a political movement defending the idea of the unity of all Turkic people and organized Turkish Homelands (Turk Ocakları) defending Turanist ideology. *New Turan (Yeni Turan)* is one of the early novels she wrote and narrated Turanist ideology. On account of her efforts and service for the ideology, Halide Edip was called “The Mother of Turks” among the people sharing the same ideology (Adak 510). So while she directed some of her work toward a European readership, she was doing so in order to explain to that readership the newly created sense of solidarity among Asian Turks. This seems less contradictory than a means of internationally affirming a desire to forge ties that had been formerly impossible due to the presence of British and Russian imperialism in central Asia.

Alongside her involvement in politics, she concentrated on her career as a teacher and inspector and she also worked in Syria when she was invited to organize the public instruction system. In 1918, she married Adnan Adivar, a professor of medicine who was also one of the founders of Turanism, and in the same year, she was appointed professor of Western literature at the University of Istanbul. However, she never lost her focus on Turkish national politics. She was very concerned about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. After the Armistice of Mudros ended Ottoman participation in the First World War, the Allied occupation of Istanbul and

the occupation of Izmir by the Greek military gave an impulse to the Turkish nationalist movement who watched as European powers began to carve Anatolia like a Sunday roast. The nationalist reaction to the European's feast and the Sultan's complicity would trigger the Turkish War of Independence. Halide Edip Adivar was one of those who believed the only solution for the independence was an armed resistance against the Allies. As she wrote in her memoir, *The Turkish Ordeal*, "Turkey was to be cleared of murderers, the so-called civilizing Greek army. What we wanted was very simple and it did not matter how or when we got it. Every detail of the coming struggle was of utmost importance and worth any sacrifice we were willing to make. And we were willing" (Adivar 14). In her memoir *The Turkish Ordeal*, in which Halide Edip Adivar narrates her role in the Turkish nationalist movement and especially in the Independence War, she mentions how she came to the point of rebelling by saying that "Amid all the hostile atmosphere created in our own country by the narrow policy of the victors, the internal process, which was gradually hardening me into an absolute rebel against the enemies who was capable of understanding the desperate position into which the Turks were being pushed" (Adivar 5). She was aware of the political games that were being played on Turkey by occupying forces and an acquiescent Turkish leadership, and what was once signaled as a martial loss was now being lived as an occupation.

Halide Edip Adivar gave an effective speech at a mass meeting in Istanbul in 1919, protesting the occupation of Izmir by the Greek armed forces. When Istanbul was occupied in March 1919 by the British, she fled with her husband, Adnan, to Anatolia to join Mustafa Kemal's forces and she was sentenced to death along with other nationalists by the Sultan. In Anatolia, as a well-educated lady and member of the Istanbul elite, she went from town to town and witnessed for the first time the

conditions of the poorest Anatolian people. She was greatly affected by these people's resilience, will and struggle for their independence under difficult conditions. Also, she took an active part in the Independence War by working at the general staff headquarters of the nationalist forces. She was a public speaker, journalist, writer, translator and nurse at the same time. In return of her bravery and efforts in the war, she was promoted to the rank of sergeant in Nationalist Army in recognition of her military services.

When Turkish people gained their victory after a long struggle, the new Turkish Republic was trying to rise from its ashes along with a new definition of the subject of Turkey: Turkish citizen. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Progressive Republican Party was founded by Halide Edip, her husband, and like-minded friends as the major opposition party in 1924. However, the party was banned in 1925 after Mustafa Kemal's single party regime was established. The government opened a court case against the party with the claim that it initiated a religious rebellion and plot to assassinate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Because of her opposition to Mustafa Kemal's party politics, much of her writing was silenced or censored. Articles that she had written between 1927 and 1935 regarding the nationalist movement and the war of independence were not made widely available until the publication of her *Memoirs* and *The Turkish Ordeal* in 1962 (Adak 511). Hence, this can be seen as one of the reasons why her work did not have a lasting impact on the development of the nation until 1960s. Halide Edip's autobiography, *Memoirs*, and *The Turkish Ordeal* are two separate volumes and different from each other in terms of their content. While *Memoirs* is more of a reflection of her childhood under the Ottoman reign and narrates the different phases of the Empire until the start of the nationalist movement in 1918, *The Turkish Ordeal* is the record

of Halide Edip's version of the events taking place during the Independence Struggle of Turkish people and the early years of Turkish Republic.

After her party was banned, and despite all her work for the independence and welfare of her nation, Halide Edip and her husband had to leave Turkey. They moved to Europe and to the United States in 1925 and remained abroad until 1939 when they returned to Istanbul. During her period of exile, Halide Edip was invited by Columbia University as guest professor and taught courses on the intellectual history of the Near East and on contemporary Turkish literature. After she returned to Istanbul with her husband, Halide Edip became the head of the chair of English literature at Istanbul University. She was the independent member of the parliament between 1950 and 1954. Ten years later, in 1964, Halide Edip Adivar, who had not only seen but helped to orchestrate the dramatic transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the modern Turkish republic, passed away in Istanbul. She left behind four stories, twenty novels, two memoirs and two plays.

1.1 FICTIONALIZING TURKISH NATIONALISM: RE-READING OF HALİDE EDİP ADIVAR'S *THE SHIRT OF FLAME*

The twentieth century permanently changed many countries and nations and brought remarkable changes in politics, ideology, society, culture and economics through, and despite, two world wars. Inarguably, the Ottoman Empire, which had been the ruler of enormous territories and a mixture of different religions, cultures and languages for centuries, experienced these changes dramatically. Starting the century as a large empire, it did not take long for the Ottoman Empire to lose its

possessions in the Balkans when Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece achieved their independence. Besides losing territory, the Ottoman Empire's racial, ethnic, and religious composition would dramatically change during the twentieth century as a result of new programs intended to redefine the new type of citizen for the new Republic as a Turk.

Sonar Cagaptay, one of the leading experts on the ethnic and religious changes brought about by the new republic, explains that the new Turkish citizen was defined through religious, linguistic and geographical terms—with some notable exceptions. Throughout the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, many Ottoman Muslims, including Turks, but also Bosnian, Greek, Serbian, Macedonian, Albanian and Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks), who faced extermination in the newly independent Balkan states, fled to Anatolia. In addition, many Turks, Circassians and other Muslims arrived in Anatolia from the Black Sea basin. (These had been fleeing Russian expansionism in southern Russia, the Crimea and the Caucasus since the late eighteenth century.) The immigrants joined Turkey's autochthonous Muslim groups of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Georgians and Lazes, and strengthened Anatolia's Muslim and Turkish demographic base at the expense of its Christian communities (Cağaptay 68).

Both conflict between the Ottoman and non-Muslim states and the Ottoman's fear of its non-Muslim peoples' collusion with European or Russian interests exacerbated the rewriting of Turkish ethnicity as expressly Muslim or, more to the point but perhaps less clear, not non-Muslim. As Cagaptay, explains:

Thus, the upsetting experiences of the Balkan Wars boosted a wave of nationalism among the Ottoman-Turkish Muslims. The ruling elite of the Empire lost their fate in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Empire. These intellectuals, army officers, and bureaucrats, mostly from the Balkans, started to focus on the Turks' place in the Ottoman realm. They defined Turkishness as including the Turks and Muslims in Anatolia (and Thrace). Eventually, a nationalist historiography emerged to propagate this position. (*Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey* 7)

As we can infer in Cağaptay's study, a wave of Turkish nationalism followed the sense of the crumbling Empire and its failure to secure a sense of identity despite its multi-ethnic and multi-religious makeup. The creation of the Turk as a subject was primary to the creation of a Turkish state, since the "Turk" as such did not exist prior to the twentieth-century. Using a top-down model of ethnic creation, the vanguard of the Turkish republic attempted to produce criteria for an ethnic and national group that would provide the content to the geographical space yet to be determined and inhabited.

It is obvious that the rise of Turkish nationalism helped to precipitate the fall of the Ottoman Empire and was indispensable to the creation of Turkey as a new country. Accordingly, the changing dynamics and the wave of Turkish nationalism were reflected in Turkish literature and gave rise to a new nationalist literature. The literary works produced during the period are significant in terms of fictionalizing the Turkish national movement and clearly serve to Turkish nationalist propaganda by glorifying the independence struggle of Turkey in accordance with the new definition of Turkishness. One of the pioneers of this literary movement was Halide Edip Adivar produced works such as her two volume autobiographies; *House with Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* and *The Turkish Ordeal*, and a novel; *The*

Shirt of Flame reflecting her experiences through the process of the rebirth of Turkish nation out of the wars.

In *The Shirt of Flame*, published in Ottoman Turkish (1922) and English (1924), she fictionalizes her account of the war by telling the story of Anatolian people's struggle of independence against the Allied forces and dramatizing the rising consciousness of Turkish nationalism. By trying to enfold personal and historical events within fictional narrative, she aims to draw a clear and vivid picture of the war from the Turkish point of view. As a vigorous advocate of Turkish nationalism, she presents her political ideology in her fiction by making nationalist propaganda through carefully woven fictional characters and events blended with real history which makes her book the epic of Anatolian Revolution. The novel presents a Turkish perspective of the war against occupation through the point of view of one of its soldiers. In *The Shirt of Flame*, Halide Edip Adivar aims to create historical consciousness in the reader and this can be considered as the reason of its creation. In other words, it can be assumed that Halide Edip creates a work of literature like *The Shirt of Flame* to serve to develop national consciousness and nationalist propaganda and points out the Turkish nationalist movement stirring a national consciousness; however, the unified nation upon which this consciousness is built does not exist in the novel. Therefore, in a sense, the feeling of unity of the fictionalized nation in the novel is not as indeterminate as its historical counterpart.

The Shirt of Flame is the preeminent fictionalization of the Turkish nationalist experience of the Greek invasion of Anatolia and the ways in which the war and the altered the daily experience of political affiliations, and different forms of hatred; and, more importantly, it exemplifies not only how the nationalist movement stoked feelings of solidarity, but how the power of nationalist propaganda alienated people

from one other and rendered different ethnicities as enemies. These two features cannot exist independently of one another, thus, while Adivar uses fiction to legitimize Turkey's position in war, she also propagates Turkish nationalism by devaluing the ethnicity of non-Muslims and subjects loyal to the Sultan. *The Shirt of Flame* by addressing an English audience, both introduces the new nation of Turks and also the Turkish point of view regarding the occupation of the Imperial powers to the world at large. Therefore, *The Shirt of Flame* as a work of English literature is not as much a de facto nationalist but rather an anti-occupational and anti-Imperial novel.

In *The Shirt of Flame*, Halide Edip Adivar attempts to confute the European point of view about the Turks and the war through the characters' attitudes and the events taking place throughout the novel. The heroic figure of the novel is a Smyrniot Turkish woman named Ayesha whose son and husband have been murdered by the Greek military. She has escaped to Istanbul where she is brought into contact with Turkish officers, themselves working with the English occupying army. In a significant rhetorical moment in the text, Ayesha replies to a high-ranking English officer who thinks that Turkish people should ask for forgiveness for their acts in the war. Ayesha responds to a crowd, in French, by saying:

Yes sir, let the English forgive those who desire forgiveness. Forgiveness should go from the oppressed to the oppressor. In the battle of the Dardanelles we fought neither as slaves or insurgents. We fought as an honest nation. If we killed, we died also. Since when is a defeated nation called a murderer? Is English blood the same as Turkish blood, Madam? I do not know whether the color is red or blue. But the Turkish blood is as red and as warm as fire. (*The Shirt of Flame* 48)

What is significant, and perhaps too often overlooked both in history and in the novel, is that the post-war Ottoman Empire was under occupation by the Allies, and was seen as a potential colonial prize to be divided among the victors. Ayesha sees her nation, not merely as the losing side of an international war, but a nation currently and actively oppressed by European invaders, and not as the oppressor of domestic minority populations. She legitimates the upcoming war for independence by articulating the position of a defeated people who are still accused of barbarousness, cruelty, and sadism. She praises being a Turk as a subject in opposition to her British and French interlocutors, and in significant ways she assumes the pre-nascent nationalist use of Turkishness as a crucial characteristic of the people who act and fight in opposition. Through the narrative, she announces that she is proud of a defeated people who stand and fight in opposition since these people would fit the definition of the nascent nationalists during the process of nation building so the novel centers on oppositional attitude and the critical and non-acquiescent position of these people. Halide Edip, through Ayesha, repudiates the European claim that the Turk is murderer, but also claims that they have been murdered by Europeans, which justifies the context of her outburst. This is further substantiated by Ayesha's claim that "The British, who cannot imagine pride in an Oriental race, probably felt ashamed of their conduct" (Adivar 74). One must remember that this novel was published 55 years before Edward Said would use the term "Orientalism" to describe the means by which Europe would define its culture in difference and opposition to an imagined Orient. Here, Ayesha claims the Orient for herself, a position that is neither lethargic, barbaric, nor conniving or duplicitous, and a position that is certainly not uncivilized. For Adivar, presenting the Turk as an

Oriental race that is worthy and dignified is certainly one of her rhetorical and authorial goals in translating this novel into English.

The international reputation of Anatolians comprises a significant part of the novel's early dialogue and narration. Peyami, the novel's narrator, is preoccupied with European attitudes about Turks after the war. Regarding this attitude, he says:

All mankind put a black mark on our faces, and spat at it. They, the victor's world, considered us not only as the assassins of the Armenians but also as enemies of civilization because we went into the war with the Germans, destroyers of civilization. We were barbarous and tyrannical and it was the duty of civilized men to exterminate us. Under this heavy sentence we did not despair; in our naïve and childlike souls we decided to correct this black belief the entire world held concerning us. We thought that the moment we proved the falsity of all those calumnies, Europe would see the righteousness of our cause. (*The Shirt of Flame* 20)

This quote is made up of two parts. In the first part, Peyami assesses the "black marks" on the faces of Turks, the label of "assassins" which goes above and beyond the mutual aggressions carried out between combatants in the war, and, perhaps most importantly, the position that Turks are "destroyers of civilization." In regard to the last part, Adivar's narrator speaks toward an older and uglier historical idea that Turks oppose civilization because civilization is a properly European invention. In this ideological position, neither "Huns" nor "Turks" could properly appreciate the wonders of the Allies. In the second part of the quote, Peyami takes it upon himself to correct the European's mistaken ideas about Turks. But this, too, is fraught with

uncertainty since it is only the “naïve and childlike” aspect of Turkish thinking that hopes that this is possible.

The maturing revolutionary dimension of the novel grows from the previously “naïve and childlike” hope that European attitudes about Turkey would change through Turkish intervention. The fractious and divided elements of the Turkish opposition had to be overcome strategically and ideologically, and it is the occupation of Smyrna that galvanizes the revolutionary feeling. As Peyami states:

A foreboding air of Revolution hung over Istantboul. Every one longed to take part in the Smyrna tragedy, everyone searched ways and means to go. Tea parties, propaganda and foreign newspapermen were left to the ladies in Shishly and to the University students. A propaganda office with the name of Defense of Smyrna was organized in Istanbul. (*The Shirt of Flame* 51)

The nationalist feeling began to cross over other lines that had previously divided the people of Anatolia everywhere from Istanbul to Smyrna and beyond, and in everybody no matter whether rich or poor, educated or illiterate, men or women, young or old. Cagaptay explaining that religious group feeling provided the link to bring a disparate and divided people, writes, “The leadership rallied the Anatolian-Turkish Muslims by emphasizing their common religion, shared history, and joint territory. Now, the aforementioned aspects of ethnic mobilization, such as territorial and genealogical restoration, as well as cultural revival, became the guiding principles of the Turkish struggle” (Cagaptay 11). The invasion of Anatolia after the Great War by self-interested neighbors like Armenians and Greeks aimed at gaining

territory at the expense of Turkish weakness. However, this served to intensify the feeling of Turkishness more than ever.

The sense of invasion can only be made if there is a concept of a pristine, pure homeland. And in the following passage, Payami expresses a melodramatic romanticization of Istanbul:

Oh, my white and beautiful land! On thy great square many Emperors and Empresses had passed in their magnificence and glory. They had watched the races, the wondrous ceremonies and the reviews. But on this white and eternal Hippodrome no review or race either of Byzantine splendor or Ottoman grandeur had been sanctified by the tears of a whole nation. Is it the new and divine Spirit which has begotten Turkey, teaching the Turks this wonderful observance of the spirit? (Adivar 37)

In line with the Turkish nationalist discourse, Adivar underlines the continuation and the inheritance of the Turkish nation from the Byzantines and Ottomans by referring to it as “new and divine Spirit”. With the narrative of the novel which mostly operates to forge the new definition of Turkishness throughout novel, she presents and glorifies the history of the birth of the nation by differentiating it from the race of Byzantine and Ottoman. While the first one refers to Christian race, the latter refers to multi ethnic demography of the Ottoman. Proto-nationalist ideology claims the solidarity and the unity of Anatolian Muslims as one nation against the Imperial Europeans and internal non-Muslim minorities. The narrator, Payami, calls Istanbul as his “white and beautiful land” and he claims it as a homeland and so the people who is going to inhabit the homeland to “begotten Turkey” is announced as “the new spirit” which is the new Turkish nation. In accordance with the nationalist

historiography, the text tends to propagate the resistance against Imperial powers' invasion of Anatolia by claiming it as the homeland. What is problematic about Adivar's narrative is the presentation of the solidarity and unity of the Turkish nation because it is somehow contradictory as it is limited to one particular point of view which is Turkish. It is obvious that the characters are deeply loyal to the ideal of the defined Turkish nationalism. The main characters of the novel have different backgrounds but one ideal: an independent Turkish nation.

To illustrate the characters' loyalty to their proto-nationalist ideals, Mehmet Chavoush, a "kind of Revolutionary bandit in Anatolia," is one of the most interesting figures in the novel because of the function his character fulfills in relation to the others since he is an anti-Monarchist, a Kurd, and a nationalist. He fought in the Balkans and took part in the revolution of Macedonia and is "notable for extreme nationalist attitude and desire to fight for revolution" (119). The narrator explains Mehmet Chavoush's political ideology as "He had an unshakable belief that all the Christians meant to exterminate the Turks and that the Bulgarians were the only people to take as a national model. His first and the strongest conviction was his deadly animosity to the Sultanate" and although "he was always altogether vague as who the nation was and how it should go about the matter," he says "there was one class of Turkish and Moslem people who were persecuted and massacred by the entire Christian world and then there was the real nation of fighters who had risen to save the victims and had had to go up into the mountains" (119-120). As the quotation reveals that the process of creating the Turkish nation was not completed but still in progress. But more importantly, it also shows that the Turkish identity as "one class of Turkish and Moslem people" was being created as an opposite of "the entire Christian world." However, Adivar's continuous presentation of proto-

nationalist ideal of Turkish nation as “Muslim Turks” lacks depth. As an example, Mehmet Chavoush is ethnically Kurdish man but the text does not reveal the language he speaks as Kurdish but one must remember that before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, Kurdish people living in the East of Anatolia were speaking Kurdish. Also, it is a bit contradictory for Mehmet Chavoush as a Kurdish man to show extremely Turkish nationalist traits and extreme opposition against the Sultanate because even today, after almost 90 years after the establishment of Republic of Turkey, many Kurdish people still do not define themselves as Turkish. Also, the text fits Muslim minorities like Bulgarians, Macedonians and Roumelians into the definition of Turkishness because:

The Roumelians were already familiar with the new tragedy, understanding its deeper meaning through sad personal experiences, so the villages of Macedonians emigrants were the faithful adherents of the Nationalist movement. They had fled, leaving to the invading army, their rich green fields, their white and happy homes and their rose gardens, the abode of the nightingales. They had bloody memories, as their beloved ones, even to the young and white veiled brides, had been massacred in those white dwellings. (*The Shirt of Flame* 128)

Their suffering and tragedy resulting from the Christian world and their religion were Turks and Muslim minorities’ common points and they made them “faithful adherents of the Nationalist movement” and so a part of the Turkish nation. Although most of the Muslim minorities in Anatolia were emigrants from Balkans, they were seen as Turks as they were Muslim whereas the non-Muslim minorities who had lived in Anatolia for ages left out of the nation and seen as the other (Cagaptay 67).

Since a Balkan or Cretan Muslim is defined as a Turk— even though they did not speak Turkish, the dream of Turkishness did not fit with the facts of geography or religious identification. Thus, there is enough substantial contradiction to invalidate the concept. This is again proves that the feeling of the unified nation in Adivar’s narration is not as veracious as reality.

Nationalism in the twentieth-century was an ideology that far exceeded Turkish concerns. However, as a part of the ideology, every party tried to legitimate their own causes, either by scapegoating foreign imperialism or internal minorities. In *The Shirt of the Flame*, the attitude towards the other non-Muslim nations inside of Turkey like Greeks and Armenians is clearly hostile. In the novel, in no way are they seen as people of the new nation even though they have shared the same history as their Muslim neighbors under the Ottoman Empire. Still, in accordance with Turkish nationalist discourse, generalizations of non-Muslim nations as enemies and murderers are evident in the novel. One character, Ahmed Aga, joins the nationalist movement in order to enact revenge. Adivar writes:

The Armenians in the Russian army had massacred his wife and his babies in Erzoroum and he vowed an eternal enmity to the great powers who upheld the Armenians as “a martyr race.” The “extinguisher of Turkish hearths,” he called them, picturesquely. I took advantage of this passion of his and sent him to the Ayesha, telling him about Ayesha and Smyrna tragedy and Ayesha’s revolt against the tyrants of the Turkish nation. (*The Shirt of Flame* 69)

Armenians and Russians have killed his family, yet the “great powers” continue to blame the Turks for violence against the Armenians. Ahmed Aga’s story is a story

of international prejudice: that the Christian powers have allied themselves, leaving a Muslim man like Ahmet Aga a victim not only of violence and murder but of scapegoating and blame. The text articulates the Turkish point of view of the war: it does not want to encompass a broader, international position because that position has demonized Turks. For example, the narrator Payami does not hesitate to condemn the whole Armenians without exceptions for the killings and does not mention Turk's killing the Armenians in return.

As the Anatolian Revolution recounted in the novel starts after the great fire in Smyrna, the novel fictionalizes the detailed and striking depictions of the torment that Greek soldiers did during the war. Halide Edip Adivar uses words like “murderers” and “robbers” to define Greek soldiers.

[Y]ou bring to our land robbers and murderers protected by the historic glory of your fleet. You have thrown Smyrna into blood and fire. Its streets are invaded with murderers in uniforms and the unarmed people are massacred by robbers with bullets and bayonettes. From every house a Greek goes out at daytime with loot in his hand. The old lie with broken heads on the pavement and packs of women in black fly to escape the barbarians. Innocent multitudes with hands tied at their back are dragged out before your ships, bayoneted, bitten, insulted, and spat in the face [...] I can see a man dragged from his door, torn to pieces, his little boy of five shot simply for the pleasure of shooting. Poor little round creature, shot in his heart before the tears could dry in his black eyes. It was such a good shot that he did not have time enough to utter even “Mama” in complaint. (*The Shirt of Flame* 48-49)

Her account of history is limited to the nationalist ideology she promulgates and narrativizes: as she praises being ethnically Turkish, she devalues non-Muslim others. Non-Muslims in the novel lack complexity, depth, contradiction. They are

all vehemently and violently anti-Turk. As such, Halide Edip Adivar portrays non-Muslim nations as having negative traits and as a material and moral threat for her nation. Her narrative propagates the necessity of creating a new nation of Turks and operates to justify the legitimacy of the struggle and nationalism against Imperialism. Consequently, the novel does not criticize nationalism but it displaces the criticism of nationalism onto anti-Imperialism so that there emerges the problem of her text since it articulates limited version of nationalism as a source of hegemony. As a result, her work must be considered as not nationalist because of the aforementioned limited results of its representation but as an oppositional novel. The text, which is also aggressive in prose, articulates a position accusing and admonishing European Imperialism.

In conclusion, the first woman writer of Turkish history, Halide Edip Adivar's novel *The Shirt of Flame* is an epic of Anatolian Revolution and Turkish nationalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Halide Edip who was also deeply loyal to the national movement was active in politics during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of Turkey as a new country. However, the reflection of history in her novel is limited with the Turkish point of view that makes it lack a more supple and complex attitude toward international events and non-Muslim nations. Contemporary reading of *The Shirt of Flame* indicates how as a literary genre, fiction based on real history operates and suggests subjective account of the war dramatized in accordance with the writer's point of view or her political ideology by ignoring or repressing alternate definitions of belonging and inclusion. Consistent with Turkish nationalist discourse, the novel also supports the definition of Turkish nation that includes Turks and Muslims living in Anatolia. On the other hand, it is obvious that it excludes non-Muslim Anatolian minorities from it.

CHAPTER II
CREATING AND DISMANTLING A LATE-OTTOMAN MULTICULTURAL
PARADISE IN *BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS*

A few years after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Republic of Turkey would be born from the Turkish War of Independence fought between the nationalist army of Mustapha Kemal and the armies of occupying nations. And following their victory, the Lausanne Treaty was signed between the European powers and Turkey in Switzerland on July 24, 1923. As it is stated in the Article One of the treaty, a compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece commenced: “As from the 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory. These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorization of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government respectively” (Treaty of Lausanne). As such, the great powers decided on the destiny of hundreds of thousands of people living on the same land for centuries by rupturing them from their lands, homes and languages and by sending them to their so-called new homeland, to where they had never been before. Bruce Clark, in his book *Twice a Stranger*, in which he analyses how the traumatic experience of mass expulsion of Greeks and Turks forged modern Greece and Turkey, remarks that:

The sad fact is that multinational empires have given away not to multinational democracies but to sharply defined nation-states; and the process of redefinition has often been a violent one. Even if it does not lead to outright war, it often traumatizes the people involved by sharpening divisions

which may once have been blurred. It draws lines and forces people to step to one side or the other. (*Twice a Stranger* 5)

The old Empire's Millet system, which permitted many different ethnic minorities to live together on the same land together, was over, and the new state of Turkey was established on a one-people one-nation ideal. As Turkish nationalism constituted the very base of the new republic, Turkish historiography has aimed to forge a homogeneous Turkish nation. No matter how difficult and painful was the passage from a multi-ethnic population to Turkish nation, in accordance with the nation-state model, the process of engineering a homogeneous Turkish nation meant erasing the traces of a relatively harmonious pre-national multicultural period. Moreover, official historiography glorifies the independence of the Turkish nation and purging the homeland of its internal enemies.

But who or what was the enemy, and of whom or of what were they the enemy? In his article, "Izmir 1922: A Port City Unravels," Reşat Kasaba explains that in both official Greek and Turkish historiography, "what passes as analysis of these events is usually limited to justifying the tragedy from the Turkish side or lamenting it from the Greek or Armenian perspective" (207). While the official history works to legitimate the deportations of the Ottoman Greeks, it denies the reality that most of these people were born and raised on the same land as the Ottoman Turks, had lived together side-by-side, and apparently had not considered the other an enemy until the outbreak and conclusion of the First World War. Thus, what is created and reinforced as the official, national historical narrative precisely eliminates the multiple, simultaneous yet varied voices and perspectives of Aegean and Anatolian Asia Minor. Bruce Clark remarks that:

In the schools, lecture rooms and army barracks of both countries, young Greeks and Turks are still taught to see this compulsory separation as a heroic story with a happy ending. In Turkey's official history, the removal of the Orthodox Christian minority, which had disgraced itself by acting as a pawn for foreign interests, is seen as a milestone in the country's liberation and emergence into modernity. For Orthodox Greeks, the expulsion of their co-religionists by Turkey, and their absorption into the Greek motherland; is a tragic and noble story with a happy ending. It is cited to prove the wickedness of the Turk, the incompatibility of Greeks and Turks, and the essential unity of the Greek nation, which closed ranks within the security of its borders. (*Twice a Stranger* 18).

As the quotation above indicates, both sides' national discourses work to legitimate their causes by imposing upon their people the sense that what happened as a necessary and fortuitous ending rather than a tremendous tragedy.

Despite the national historiographies' strategy of silencing individuals to strengthen national uniformity, individual narratives still can find a place in cultural products such as novels to retell the history from an individual perspective and to give the reader a chance to reconsider the past again. They challenge the official history by suggesting an alternative history which aims to reveal what is not spoken or silenced, and suggest new point of views towards the officially confirmed victories and the tragedies of the past through individual narratives as free from national identifications. As this chapter will show, Louis de Bernieres' novel, *Birds Without Wings*, suggests a different perspective towards World War I and the Turkish War of Independence through a polyphonic narrative strategy standing against the uniformity of Turkish historiography. In the novel, the story of the residents of a small Turkish, Greek, and Armenian community along the Aegean coast of Asia Minor is told through multiple narrators who also function as the eye-

witnesses of the past and suggest alternative voices to the nationally engineered history with their individual stories. Further, de Bernieres' narrativization of the period offers multicultural, personal accounts of the war and its consequences in opposition to the nationalist historiographies promulgated in Turkey and Greece.

There are one hundred and one chapters in the novel, and while many of them are told through the perspective of an impersonal non-character-based narrator, thirty-six of them are told through the points of view of seven characters who are ordinary people living in the village. The variety of narrators, in itself, suggests both multiple and different perspectives as well as potential disagreement regarding the events of their shared history. The chapters in which the characters tell their stories intertwine with short chapters regarding the biography of Mustafa Kemal from his childhood to his rise as the founder of modern Turkey. The purpose of intertwining the fictional lives of multicultural Eskibahce with the semi-historical rise of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish War or Independence is multiple. First, it shows how average lives of average people are radically changed by grandiose plans of individual men. Secondly, it shows that great leaders are shaped and developed in response to the historical and cultural environments in which they live. Thirdly, and perhaps in contradiction to the former, de Bernieres' narrativization opposes ordinary people to an extraordinary figure, Mustafa Kemal. While global politics leads Mustafa Kemal to the peak of his political career, it causes the fall of the ordinary people of the village. Therefore, de Bernieres intermingles real historical events and figures with fictitious characters standing for ordinary people of the period so that he can open a space for different interpretations of the war, especially in terms of the personal consequences and human cost of it.

2.1 FORGING A MULTICULTURAL OTTOMAN PARADISE

Ten years after the success of his 1994 novel, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, the attention of British author Louis de Bernieres, returned to the Aegean in *Birds Without Wings* to tell the story of multi-ethnic and multi-religious people living relatively harmoniously in a small Southwestern Anatolian village along the Turkish coast, Eskibahçe in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Despite the religious and ethnic relationships between the characters in the fiction, the waning days of the Ottoman Empire, the whirlwind of World War I, and, the Independence war of Turkey would change their lives forever. De Bernieres sets his novel during tumultuous years in Turkish and European history, when nationalist fervor raged and when individuals who could not control sweeping global change had their lives irreparably altered. The fictitious village where the novel is set, Eskibahçe, or “Old Garden,” in English is presented as an Edenic place inhabited by different ethnicities—including Ottoman Turks, Greeks, and Armenians—living side by side, apparently to demonstrate the historically multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious fabric of the Ottoman Empire.

De Bernieres romanticizes the peaceful coexistence of religions and ethnicities in the novel, but his romanticization also mirrors a historical tolerance in the Ottoman Empire for difference (as long as it was properly assessed and taxed). Bernieres writes:

It was said that in those days one could hear seventy languages in the streets of Istanbul. The vast Ottoman Empire, shrunken and weakened though it now was, had made it normal and natural for Greeks to inhabit Egypt, Persians to

settle in Arabia and Albanians to live with Slavs. Christians and Muslims of all sects, Alevis, Zoroastrians, Jews, worshippers of Peacock Angel, subsisted side by side and in the most improbable places and combinations. (*Birds Without Wings* 167)

As this passage shows, the combinations of people and religions were made possible by both the politically weakened Empire and the dynamic ethnic differences of the Empire's population. Movement between different regions of the Empire was possible because they all lived under the same rule. The First World War between the Ottomans and the Allied powers and the Turkish War of Independence would permanently change the ethnic and religious makeup of Anatolia. In *Birds Without Wings*, de Bernieres' narrative dramatizes the interpersonal tragedies brought about by the rise of nationalism and politicized religion as well as the newly created political differences imposed between characters who had once been neighbors and friends. However, no matter how realistic or accurate de Bernieres' novel may be, it is still an imaginary work in which he projects contemporary English values on an Ottoman and Turkish past. As the quotation above indicates, de Bernieres establishes and values a multicultural Turkey and, through the novel, he portrays the creation of the Republic as a neighborly and interpersonal tragedy.

Compared to Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame*, *Birds Without Wings* presents a very different, more romanticized and perhaps naïve position regarding the relationships between Muslims and Christians, Turks and Greeks, Turks and Armenians, and urban elites and villagers. De Bernieres' novel reflects concerns in line with liberal millennial British and American fantasies of multicultural utopias. This is not meant to devalue the novel, but to point toward one of the conditions of its production. The novel romanticizes religious tolerance and the cultural diversity

in the late Ottoman period while, at the same time, reproducing its exoticism and distancing itself from its Oriental subject. As de Bernieres writes of Istanbul:

There were Muslim Greeks, Catholic Armenians, Arab Christians and Serbian Jews. Istanbul was the hub of this broken-felloed wheel, and there could be found epitomized the fantastical bedlam and Babel, which no one realized at the time, was destined to be the model and precursor of all the world great metropolises a hundred year hence, by which time Istanbul itself would, paradoxically, have lost its cosmopolitan brilliance entirely. It would be destined, perhaps, one day to find it again, if only the devilish false idols of nationalism, that specious patriotism of the morally stunted, might finally be toppled, in the century to come. (*Birds Without Wings* 167).

Beginning with either surprise or pleasure in the ethnic mixing of Istanbul, the narration moves on to suggest the impossibility of its longevity. In this way, the novel's "fantastic bedlam" that will "have lost its cosmopolitan brilliance entirely" is a decadent and Oriental but model urban place; if it were possible to regain its international and multicultural brilliance, then it would only be possible to do so in a post national era. However, the novel's fictionalization of the late Ottoman period's tolerance does not mean that the acceptance of difference within rural communities did not exist in reality. Historically, in 1900s, under the Ottoman rule, diverse religious and cultural groups were living side by side, and walking on the streets, and it was possible to hear many languages spoken. This diversity was mainly insured by the empire's administrative category, the millet, which referred to the communities each with distinct language, culture, and religion living in the Ottoman society. Reşat Kasaba describes this diversity as, "On all levels and in all occupational groups, western Anatolian society was diverse. It became even more so in the course of the nineteenth century. There were Greek and Turkish peasants, non-Muslim and

Muslim merchants, Muslims who worked for foreign banks and for the Public Dept. Administration” (209). Therefore, the social categories for the characters in the novel did exist, historically: the actual relationships depicted in the novel between these categories are, however, the invention of the writer. By fictionalizing the period like “the fantastical bedlam and Babel,” de Bernieres takes an ambivalent attitude towards the creation of Turkish identity because, as the above quotation from the novel also points out, it is the nascent nationalism, which intrudes like the devil into this bird paradise.

The main trope of the novel, the fall from the grace, is presented through Eskibahçe which functions as both a unique and ubiquitous microcosm of rural Anatolia at the end of the Ottoman period. As mentioned above, the story is told through different narrators who are neighbors with different religions and ethnicities. To illustrate the harmonious life of the town, the opening scene of the novel in which the Christian woman named Polyxeni gives birth to Philothei who is endowed with astonishing beauty is significant in terms of presenting this harmony. One of the narrators, Iskander the potter, says for the incident, “The birth was, I suppose, unexceptional. The mother had drunk from a bowl engraved with verses from the Koran, and in which further verses had been dipped for extra assurance, and had slept with a cross on her belly for at least a week”(De Bernieres 9). The quotation points at the reality that the religion was not something which differentiated people, it united people in the time of need. As it is presented in the novel, the different religions were intermingled in practice, even though they weren’t in terms of personal identification. In line with it, the same narrator also points out that:

Philothei's family was Christian one, but at that time we were very mixed up, and apart from the rantings of a few hotheads whose bellies were filled with raki and the Devil, we lived together in sufficient harmony. Therefore it was not altogether to be wondered at that people of all sorts called at the door of that house bringing small presents of coffee, lokum, allspice and tobacco, in the hope of catching a glimpse of this child who was becoming a legend before she had even uncrossed her eyes. (*Birds Without Wings* 10)

The notion of the neighbor is central in the novel: tolerance is the norm and the only exceptions are angry alcoholics. The entire plot of the novel will orbit around the relations between characters rather than large historical events in which they play no direct part. As the quotation above exemplifies, at the beginning of the novel, neighbors are defined as those who bring gifts, neighbors are those who welcome children into the community, and, are likely those who will raise the child and make her into the "legend" they expect. By setting up the conditions in which differences are both negotiated and respected, de Bernieres also sets up the conditions for their undoing. In other words, the neighbor who is not necessarily someone like you or not someone who is your enemy suddenly at the some point of the novel becomes something other than "the neighbor." It becomes the source for vehemence and a target of anger. De Bernieres' narrative tries to reveal the destructiveness of the nascent nationalist identities through the shifting definition and negotiation of the concept of the neighbor.

In the novel, the concept of the neighbor is addressed from various racial and religious angles such as, Muslim and Christian neighbors; and Greek, Armenian, and Turkish neighbors. As for Muslim and Christian neighbors, the relationship between them is presented as quite harmonious. While it seems normal for Muslim women to

ask their Christian neighbors to light candles in the church and pray for them to Virgin Mary Panagia, the Christian women drink water with verses from Koran in it as a protection from evil. Additionally, the religious leaders of the village, Imam Abdulamid Hodja and the Father Kristoforos, are respected equally by villagers of both faiths. More than that, the love between Christian Philothei and the Muslim boy Ibrahim is pivotal in terms of the relation between the people of different faiths in the village. Since they are betrothed to each other, it is obvious that the people from different faiths in the village have been marrying to each other and they have been intermingled and interbred so far. De Bernieres' fictionalization of the village and its residents pinpoints the precise nonexistence of a national identity among the community. The characters see and define themselves as a local community, and a small star in the Ottoman galaxy, before Greek and Turkish nationalist fervors reach the village.

At the same time, the Greek schoolmaster Dascalos Leonidas is significant character because he is the only Greek nationalist in the village and is presented as “a bad character stirring up trouble” (8). Leonidas Efendi is considered as an eccentric and he is not taken seriously among the community because, in the novel, he “was one of the ones who was fussing and campaigning, saying that the Christians should speak Greek and not Turkish. He forced the children to learn the Greek tongue that to them was like chewing stones, and he stirred up resentment in them with stories about how we Osmanlis had taken the land from the Greeks, and that the land was rightly theirs” (8). The children themselves see no contradiction in being Turkish-speaking Christian Greeks, but Leonidas alienates the Muslim Turkish children by claiming a Greek national right to the town. His ideas personify Greek *Enosis* which was one of the motivating factors of the conflict in Asia Minor after the World War I.

Constituting the basic of the Greek nationalism, the *Megali Idea* was the Hellenistic thesis that promoted the reunification of the Greeks and reconnecting them with their history, which was the source of classical Western civilization and it aimed at constructing a modern Greek state based on the reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire. Racial and religious divisions among neighbors became more widespread after the Greek military invasion of Asia Minor, the establishment of Greek administration was set up in Izmir in 1919 (Kasaba 214-15). On the other hand, in the novel, Greek nationalism is presented through different perspectives of Greek characters. For instance, as opposed to Dascalos Leonidas' ideas, his father who is himself a rich trader promoting their town as a paradise, opposes the *Megali Idea* by saying that "Here in Smyrna we have the most pleasant and delightful city in the world. We are all prosperous... We are in Paradise, and you and your friends want to mess it up with your stupid Big Idea, for God's sake!" (De Bernieres 259). As the quotation indicates, not all the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire were overcome with the excitement of independence. Especially, those who were trading and enjoying prosperity under Ottoman rule had an ambivalent attitude towards the Hellenic idea.

A very significant moment in de Bernieres' narrative in terms of signaling the sense of change between the neighbors is the scene when Levon the Armenian, the apothecary of the village, was attacked and humiliated by the drunken Christian man, Constantinos. Before the incident takes place, de Bernieres' third person narrative informs the reader about the global and internal changes in politics which provides a basis for the change that begins to take shape in the village.

Consequently, the tides of war carried opportunist Armenian settlers into territories freshly emptied of Muslims. Unsurprisingly, to Ottoman ears the word Armenian became virtually synonymous with "traitor," and thus was

life made arduous or dangerous for those hundreds of thousands of Armenians scattered throughout the empire and living side by side with Ottomans of other denominations and races, who could not distinguish between one type of Armenian and another, and who would not have lowered a raised fist just because a particular Armenian was in fact a Protestant or a Catholic, or a loyal subject of the Sultan. (*Birds Without Wings* 158).

As this quotation indicates, the word “Armenian” begins to have a different local meaning as a direct result of global and internal politics. As a mirroring effect of it, although “there was certainly nothing about his outward appearance that would have marked him out as an Armenian” (159), when Levon the Armenian accidentally bumped into the drunken Constantinos in the *meydan* (central square), he was attacked by Constantinos and insulted as ‘Pig! Filthy Armenian! Traitor pig!’ (159). During their fight, almost all the residents of the village, men or women, Turk or Greek, Muslim or Christian are happened to be in the meydan watching the incident without interfering. Above and beyond interfering, Iskander says “look at the coward!”(161) while the Greek Charitos provokes the drunk by shouting “He’s not a man, he’s a dog!” and the women, on the other hand, cry “Kick him, kick him!”(161). Only when Levon defends himself by saying that “I am a loyal Ottoman. Long live the Sultan Padishah” (161), his attacker gives up on kicking him. The narrative of de Bernieres demonstrates the “intoxication” of the neighbors with the seeds of national identity and as a result of it, the changing mechanics in the society. The incident is significant in terms of revealing the changing sense of the neighbors who were not the same but neither were they enemies either until then. Levon who was one of them began to be seen as ‘the other’ who is a source of anger and hatred and consequently, he was ostracized. Subsequently, de Bernieres’ fiction as a 21st century British product presents a historical perspective which underlines the

ruptures in the multicultural mixture of the society and the growing sense of ‘otherness’ leaking into it.

In his research on the growing tension between different ethnic groups in Izmir in the 1920s, Reşat Kasaba explains the reasons behind the growing conflict of “the ethnic other”:

It’s quite clear that starting from the final decades of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman, the Young Turk, and the nationalist administrations became increasingly suspicious of the position and the aspirations of the Greek and Armenian residents of the empire. The persecution of the Muslims in the Balkans after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, the shifting policies of the great powers, and the uncertainties inherent in Turkish nationalism are some of the factors that brought about this general mistrust. By the early decades of the twentieth century, the Greeks and Armenians had become the “others” of Turkish nationalism. (*Izmir 1922: A Port City Unravels* 222)

As Kasaba’s research points out, through the political circumstances dating back to the end of the 19th century and the postwar nationalist project of homogenizing the Turkish nation, ethnic minority communities like the Armenians and Greeks were “otherized” by the engineers of the new nation. Contrary to official Turkish historiography which both defended and legitimated these activities, *Birds Without Wings* articulates an oppositional stand towards the necessity of a nationalist building process in the late Ottoman period. Rightly or wrongly, De Bernieres’ narrative does not depict the pre-nationalist period of the Empire as problematic. On the contrary, since, as I have argued, it is presented as Edenic, the nationalist movement and the war of Independence war is presented as a fall from grace, as the loss of paradise, and the expulsion of a people from the place they called their home.

On the other hand, the drowning of the Greek merchant Georgio Theodorou, one of the narrators in the novel, in the harbor of Smyrna is especially pivotal because it functions as another metaphor of the fall from paradise. However, de Bernieres uses a magical realist narrative technique (the narration of the drowning man as he is drowning) in order to illustrate the dismantling of the late-Ottoman multicultural paradise created in his fiction. De Bernieres sets this moment during a very significant historical incident: the Smyrna Fire, in September 1922. September 9, 1922 was the last day of the Greek administration of Izmir after nearly three years of occupation. While the Greek army was retreating, the Turkish nationalist troops were entering the city and thousands of fearful Ottoman Greeks and Armenians were massing on the waterfront with the hope of fleeing with Allied warships. Even worse, the massive fire started on 13 September in the interior of the city and quickly spread. Consequently, the people massing on the waterfront were trapped between the fire and the sea. While some of them were lucky enough to be rescued by the Allied ships, many were drowned in the sea.

In the novel, Georgio Theodorou is depicted as one of the unfortunate ones whose life ends in Smyrna harbor. He lists whoever or whatever is responsible for the fall while “sinking slowly through the oily waters down to the harbour floor” (507). The narrator defines himself as “a twenty-four carat Asia Minor Greek” living “in Smyrna for generations” and indicates his pragmatic view of life by saying that “I will hobnob with any old Turk or Jew or Armenian or Levantine as long as they are incline to strike a mutually beneficial deal. I make no distinctions of race and religion as long as there is a lovable cash in it” (507). His character is significant in the novel as he is one of the few who do not get into the nationalist fervor’s stride, however; his life is about to end because of the ideals of Greek and Turkish nationalism.

Through the narration of Georgio Theodorou, de Bernieres lists the culprits of the personal tragedies of hundreds of thousands. Greek people take the first place in his list because he criticizes them for being romantic about the Big Idea of rebuilding Byzantium: “Clodpoll number two, the Greek people again for being just as romantic as the aforementioned romantic, for thinking that just because the civilization here used to be approximately Greek in the distant past and is now partially Greek, it should be forced into political union with Old Greece” (517). Through the narrative, de Bernieres questions the false ideals of nationalism which is, as suggested in the novel, a source of destruction. In the second place, religion becomes a defining marker of identity within national boundaries. “Talking of which, what about the positive plague of firebrand priests we’ve been inundated with? All these men of God who want us to go out and kill Turks in the name of Holy this and Holy that? What about all this talk of rebuilding Byzantium? What on earth for?” (508). This quotation points out the critical attitude of the novel towards the war of Independence and its consequences. De Bernieres’ narrative does not propose nascent nationalism and religion as a productive and progressive activity for people but as a cause of the destruction of the religious tolerance and the harmony of multi-ethnic fabric of the society. The same narrator indicates, “We, Asia Minor Greeks, were caught between the hot-headed idealists and nationalists who wanted to turn the world upside down in the name of a beautiful vision of Byzantium”(262). The day on which the scene takes place is significant for both the Turkish and Greek people. From the Turkish nationalist perspective, it was the day of liberation and victory, clearing the so-called enemy from the homeland in accordance with the official Turkish historiography. But for the Greeks, it was a catastrophe since they “were forced to abandon one of the oldest centers of Hellenic civilization in Asia Minor and

leave the city and a region that had become a site of great commercial prosperity” (Kasaba 208). Following the Turkish victory, the Lausanne treaty led to the violent division of Asia Minor Greeks and Turks as a result of the compulsory population exchange. In parallel, in the novel, the sinking merchant Georgio Theodorou symbolizes not the individual, but the collective fall from grace; the drowning of the multicultural the Ottoman Empire. De Bernieres has a sense of tragedy of the Independence war. His narrative which offers a more contemporary perspective of 21st century to late-Ottoman and Turkish history laments the multiculturalism already presented in the Ottoman Empire and suggests that the war and nationalism carry serious material consequences, incredible loss of life and degradation. De Bernieres’ fiction functions as a kind of historical therapy since the multicultural paradise that he creates and presents in his fiction is a part of the fantasy of the Ottoman Empire that he offers to the readers. In other words, although he sets his novel in a real history, and weaves the novel’s plot with historical facts, both the creation and the dismantling of the multicultural paradise of the Ottoman Empire is a part of the fictional recreation of Turkey for a contemporary English language audience. Therefore, his novel in which he criticizes the establishment of Turkish republic on Turkish nationalism as they are portrayed as the reason for interpersonal tragedies is a projection contemporary liberal British concerns which value a multicultural Turkey.

2.2 INDIVIDUAL NARRATORS UNRAVEL THE PAST

The narrative of *Birds Without Wings* begins at the end of its action. Iskander the Potter, a wise man known and a maker of proverbs in the village (and the father of Karatavuk, another of the novel's narrators), narrates the prologue of the novel, which reflects what has happened during the war and its consequences years after. He remarks that life for everybody has changed dramatically in the village since the Christians have left. He says, "There are many here who say we are better off without the Christians who used to live here, but as for me, I miss the old life of my town, and I miss the Christians. Without them our life has less variety, we are forgetting how to look at each other and see ourselves" (De Bernieres 5). He blames global politics, the people who rule the world, and the destiny from which the ordinary people like him cannot free themselves because, he claims, they caused the war and the population exchange. Different from the rest of the people in the village who, in accordance with Turkish nationalist discourse support Turkish national identity years after the war, de Bernieres' narrator longs for the multicultural society that existed in the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, through this narrator who witnessed the transition from the multicultural empire to establishment of the new republic and new national identity as Turk, de Bernieres criticizes the position that when diverse cultures were erased from society, the people lost tolerance and respect towards each other's culture and beliefs because they ceased to look at each other as neighbors not as national identities. So de Bernieres legitimates his fantasy of a multicultural Ottoman Empire to his readers by addressing the outcomes of its abandonment it as opposed to the nation-state ideal which claimed the necessity of a

singular collective cultural identity. The paradise that he fantasizes in his novel is dismantled through the narration of the individual stories in the novel. Clearly, Iskander the Potter stands for an individual voice in the novel telling his story from a Turkish point of view; however, his point of view is not limited to the dictates of Turkish nationalism. Perhaps more importantly, in the same chapter, his narration of the origins of national identification is crucial in exemplifying how confusing the changing identities shaped by national identification were for the people. He remarks that:

In those days we came to hear of many other countries that had never figured in our lives before. It was a rapid education, and many of us are still confused. We knew that our Christians were sometimes called “Greeks,” although we often call them “dogs” or “infidels,” but in a manner that was formality, or said with a smile, just as were their deprecatory terms for us. They would call us “Turks” in order to insult us, at the time when we called ourselves “Ottomans” or “Osmanlis.” Later on it turned out that we really are “Turks,” and we became proud of it, as one does of new boots that are uncomfortable at first, but then settle into the feet and look exceedingly smart. (*Birds Without Wings* 4)

As Iskander the Potter also puts it, before the spirit of nationalism arrived, the notion of nationality was uncertain, vague, and lacked any specific cultural referent. Furthermore, while the term “Turk” was used within the empire to refer to a simple Anatolian peasant, the term for Ottoman Muslim had a more elegant meaning. On the other hand, the Greek term “Hellene” used by Greek nationalists for the devotion to ancient Greek had a pejorative meaning referring to a pagan worshipping the old deities of classical Greece (Clark 17). Iskander the Potter informs the reader about his and his neighbors’ gradual process of national identification through the rise of a

new state system. He presents that national identities, which once had no more reference than a means of insulting became instead something to be proud of. By doing this, he draws attention to the artificiality of the concept that was imposed upon them from outside.

Apart from the artificiality of nationalism, Iskander also contemplates the effects of the remarkable changes taking place in the world on ordinary people and how they intrude into their lives. Especially, he relates the tragic death of the town's beauty Philothei, and the madness of Ibrahim (to whom she was betrothed) to the rise of Mustafa Kemal in global politics. He says, "It is strange indeed that if you should wish me to tell you how one young Christian woman dies by accident in this unremarkable place, you must also be told of great men like Mustafa Kemal, and little men like me, and you must be told the story of upheavals and wars. There is, it seems, a natural perversity in the nature of fate, just as there is a natural perversity in ourselves" (5). Again, the fall of the unremarkable is counterpoised with the rise of the remarkable. But what is more remarkable is that he addresses his speech directly to an imaginary reader. Who is this reader, this person to whom the potter is addressing his story? For de Bernieres, the reader is clearly an English speaking (and reading) audience. But within the fiction, a person's fascination in these two distinct subjects is part of the perversity of curiosity and the perversity in telling. There is something both epic and minute in the story to be told, but the first will not complement the latter.

The character of Iskander the Potter and his narration demonstrate that the war—and, ironically the victory—was a cause of personal tragedy, as opposed to the national narrative's official legitimization of the war and its glorification of victory. In de Bernieres' narrative, Iskander the Potter is a very significant character who functions

to explain, immediately and at the beginning of the novel, how Ottoman Muslims at the end of the Ottoman period were transformed into Turks. But far from being proud and happy to call himself a Turk, Iskander is wistful and nostalgic for a happier time in his community before he was “freed” from his low social position. The chapters narrated by him and his story suggest the reader a unique personal dimension of the part of the history and this reinterpretation demonstrates the war and the exchange as predicament and misery for individuals. De Bernieres’ narrative focuses on the diverse angles from which the war affected ordinary people and led to tragedies in their lives rather than nationalist dimension which legitimizes the war as a victory against the enemy, and by doing so; he offers his readers an alternative historical insight which opposes the uniformity of national historiography. In other words, the way that de Bernieres reassesses the history in his fiction devalues the war and the independence of Turkey because he looks at them from a liberal multiculturalist standpoint. Another significant character-based narrator in the novel is Ayşe, the Imam’s wife, who narrates two chapters, in one of which she tells the story of Rustem Bey’s wife, Tamara, who was brought to her house after being stoned because of her adultery. Especially, at the end of the chapter, she remarks that how good people can easily turn into bad when given the chance and says “but what shocked us more than anything and made us shake our heads and worry about the good people of this town, and what made me less surprised about what they did to each other later, was where they’d been kicking her when she was lying there in the dust in the meydan” (115-116). In Ayse’s chapter, over the course of her narrative, de Bernieres takes the attention of the reader to the mob mentality and the sense of collective outrage. During the scene, the people of the village who generally live in a quiet harmony, and get on well with each other act in an extreme violence towards

Tamara when they gather at the *meydan*. This shows that people who would not turn violent easily if they were alone, are acting in this way within the group of large people under the effect of mob mentality. Therefore, de Bernieres points out that these good people succumb to the collective outrage and turn into the assaulters of Tamara because they lose their self-awareness when they are part of the group. He strategically includes the incident like adultery and the collective outrage of the villagers into the plot to criticize collective identity and its consequences as it makes people lose their sense of individual identities.

In the last chapter Ayşe narrates, she reflects upon the exchange of Greek and Muslim populations. She feels pity for the Greeks who have been expelled from the village and feels suspicious of the Greek-speaking Muslims who have come from Crete to replace the Turkish speaking Christians who have left. She says:

And it was said that the ship took our people to Crete, which is a land in the west, and it was from that land that some Muslims came to replace them, but not as many as the number we lost. And these Cretan Muslims are rather like the Christians that we lost, so that we wonder why it was necessary to exchange them, because these Cretans dance and sing as our Christians used to do, except that they have a new dance called pentozali which it lifts a heart to watch. A few of these Cretans speak only Greek. At least all of our Christians knew how to speak Turk (*Birds Without Wings* 560).

Ayşe's contemplation on the mass expulsion of Greeks and Turks is significant in terms of reflecting the general tendency in the society after the exchange towards the Muslim Turks exiled to Turkey. Exiled Muslims who were forced from their homelands experienced another trauma when they arrived in their new homes because, aside from sharing a common religion, they had nothing in common with

their neighbors. Most importantly, their religion was not, in many cases, their primary mode of self-identification (Kasaba 217). The Turks who were resettled in Asia Minor spoke Greek and had different customs, and as a result, were not easily integrated into their new society. The people who were exiled from where they lived because they practiced the “wrong” religion, at first lacked a way to form connections with their new neighbors. Clearly, de Bernieres’ multiple narrators work to bring light to the individual experiences out of the war and the exchange from diverse angles as different from the national historiography. The traumatic experiences of exiled Muslims are only one of them.

Another significant narrator of *Bird Without Wings* is Drasoula, an ethnically Greek woman living in Eskibahçe and a character from de Bernieres’ *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*. In three chapters, presented in exile on the Greek island of Cephalonia, she reflects in her old age upon the tragic death of her best friend Philothei, and more importantly, she narrates her traumatic experience of the exchange from the viewpoint of the Greek people who were forced to exile. After the Lausanne Treaty, while approximately 1.2 million Greek populations were exiled from Turkey to Greece not to turn back again, 400.000 Muslims living in Greece were forced to leave their homes behind and sent to Turkey (Clark xii). De Bernieres’ narrative through Drasoula sheds light on the effects of the exchange on individuals who experienced it as different from the official versions of the exchange which promote the forgetting the past before the exchange to fortify national history and offers an alternative interpretation of the exchange. Drasoula reflects her longing for her lost homeland by saying that:

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. Perhaps, it's only possible to be happy, as I am here in this foreign land that someone decided was my home, if one forgets not only the evil things, but also the perfect ones. 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. (*Birds Without Wings* 24)

Drasoula's meditation on the possibility of happiness in exile longs for the past and her sweet memories of her lost homeland, but resolves that only way to feel happy is to repress or actively forget both the trauma and the pleasure of the past. What de Bernières offers through Drasoula's story is a personal tragedy resulting from the exchange. Therefore, he individualizes the history by putting chapters of individual stories telling about the violence, trauma and nostalgia resulting from the wars and the exchange at the center against the official history which aims to nationalize history. Individual narrators like Drasoula contribute to reconsider the past at not national but personal level which is less known.

Chapters narrated by Drasoula are crucial in terms of being the self-narration on the exile. The personal narrative that de Bernières uses for her experiences functions as evidence for the multifaceted processes and the outcomes of exile on individual basis within a realistic framework. Therefore, her individual narrative is not all about her personal experiences. Her personal story also stands for collective experience of the exile. However, perhaps more important than this, Drasoula's individual narrator experience of the exile is significant as her memory reflects the comparison of the past and present, what is lost and what is new so that de Bernières presents the exile in his novel through personal narrator to compare the before and after of the nationalism which is a part of his creation and dismantling a fantasy of multicultural Ottoman Empire. As a part of her experiences in the exile, Drasoula

articulates her alienation from the Greek society where she is not welcomed. She reflects the discrimination that she had to experience in Cephalonia by saying that

[...] 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's 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 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, so if you call me a Turk you might think you're insulting me, but it's half true, and I am not ashamed. People used to call me 'Turk' when I first came here, and they didn't mean it kindly either, and they pushed in front of me and shoved me aside, and they muttered things under their breath when I passed by. (*Birds Without Wings* 20)

Although the people were exchanged because they were Orthodox Greek or Muslim in accordance with the national identification, they could not speak the language of the country that they were sent. Consequently, they did not easily fit into their newly gained national identities and it caused them to be insulted by being called as "Turkish seed" or "Greek seed" by the citizens with who they were supposed to be compatriots (İğsiz 65). Apart from criticizing the discrimination and insult that Ottoman Greeks had to endure in the exile, through Drasoula's voice, de Bernieres also points out the artificiality of nationalities by directly addressing the people who wear the cloak of national identity and act in accordance with it. He underlines the fact that although people are nationalized and the past is silenced by the national historiography, the fact that they were once mixed in the multicultural society remains the same. Therefore, he problematizes national identities like "Turk" or "Greek" as they are the concepts shaped by "the people who run the world" because

for him, they do not only aim to gather people sharing the same religion, language and history under the same umbrella, but also discriminate against the ones who do not fit. De Bernieres presents the bitter experiences of the population exchange from both Turkish and Greek individual points of view in the novel so that it gives the reader a chance to re-evaluate the war and its consequences on personal level rather than nationalistic.

Another significant narrator, Karatavuk, a young boy from Eskibağçe, narrates his recollections as an Ottoman soldier serving at Gallipoli during the First World War. Apart from drawing vivid descriptions of the war in which he was a soldier, he also contemplates the logic of the war. In the first chapters Karatavuk narrates, he sees the war as holy because it was between Muslims and Christians, so at first, he does not even feel remorse for killing soldiers in the Allies' trenches. However, after all the violence, merciless killings and bloodshed that he experiences during the war, he begins to question the existence of God and the truth of the religion until finally, he loses his faith. In one of those moments that he questions the God, he says that:

When I think back to those early days, the first thing I recall was that all of us believed it was a holy war. We were told this is over and over again, and every unit had an imam who repeated it to us, and the Sultan himself declared that it was a jihad. As the first fighting broke out on the Feast of Sacrifice, we all understood that it was we who were the lambs. I will say now that I doubt if there is any such thing as a holy war, because war is unholy by nature, just as a dog is dog by nature, and I will say now, since no one will read these lines until I am dead, that in my opinion there is no God either. I think this is because I have seen too many evil things and I have done too many evil things even when I believed in Him, and I think that if there was a God He would have prevented all these evil things. (*Birds Without Wings* 330-331)

As this passage reveals, Karatavuk begins to understand that religious and nationalist propaganda was used to motivate and manipulate soldiers during the war. Religion has been a very powerful tool to manipulate the masses during the wars to give them the courage to fight and overcome the fear of fighting. Perhaps ironically, religious propaganda was extensively used during the Independence war of Turkey despite the fact that Turkey would be established as a secular country after the war. The Pro-war propaganda, which was set in terms of the language and ideology of Islam, sought to persuade the people who left their homes to fight, kill and risk their lives that it was the will of God. The soldiers were being told that if they were killed in the war, they would go to heaven and be welcomed by seven beautiful virgins waiting in a palace made for them. Moreover, the enemy was continually being demonized and the soldiers were convinced that they would be rewarded for each enemy that they killed in the heaven. Thus, the soldiers like Karatavuk believed that it was a holy war for Muslim people and the God is with them. However, after numerous killings in the name of God, Karatavuk realizes that the religion is one of the biggest motivations for the all the evil happening in the war and after that point, his narration shifts to the human cost and futility of the war. In fact, this is one of the major differences between Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame* and de Bernieres' *Birds Without Wings*. While Adivar tries to legitimate the necessity of the war against imperial powers for the freedom Turkish nation and glorifies the fight from a Turkish nationalist framework in her fiction, de Bernieres' criticizes the futility of the war by emphasizing the human cost of it from a late twentieth-century liberal British point of view. Describing the interaction between the enemy soldiers and them in the battlefield, Karatavuk says that

After the hatred at first, and the merciless killing, we and the Franks had got to know each other a little, and I think that, strange as it may sound, we had come to like each other. Speaking for myself, I had discovered that infidels are not necessarily devils, which I should have known already because, after all, I grew up in a town among many different kinds of them, except that they weren't Frankish. (*Birds Without Wings* 405)

De Bernieres' narration from a soldier's point of view brings the readers' attention to the trauma of the soldiers as individuals who got stuck in the battlefield and cannot free themselves from the global politics and the war, and more importantly, who did the killings in the name of God and nationalism. Moreover, de Bernieres highlights the fact that it was religion and nationalism which traumatized their lives during and after the war as opposed to national historiography which demonizes and dehumanizes the enemy and glorifies the soldiers' bravery with the heroic stories of them which tells how they willingly gave up on their lives just for the sake of the will of the God and their nations.

In conclusion, in his 21st century novel, *Birds Without Wings*, Louis de Bernieres offers his readers an alternative viewpoint on the process of transition from multicultural Ottoman Empire to one-nation state Turkey after World War I and the war of independence by focusing on the interpersonal tragedies as a result of the rise of nationalism. His fictionalization of the period romanticizes cultural diversity in the late-Ottoman society through the fictional the village, Eskibahçe and its residents. Although his novel is built upon real history and includes historical facts, it is an imaginary work in which he creates a pre-nationalist paradise of multicultural late-Ottoman period and then he dismantles this paradise through the individual tragedies with the intervention of the war and destructiveness of the national identities.

Therefore, his fiction presents multiple layers of multicultural Ottoman Empire fantasy as opposed to the establishment of the Republic and the nascent nationalist identities. De Bernieres' work can be considered as a historical therapy on Turkish and Ottoman past for the English speaking readers because it projects British liberal multicultural fantasy on Turkey which values the diversity in the late-Ottoman society rather than Turkish nationalism on which Turkish Republic was established.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion to *Birds Without Wings*, the character Karatavuk writes that “For birds with winds 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 [...]” (*Birds Without Wings* 621). When the Turkish Republic emerged like a bird from the fractured shell of the Ottoman Empire, this change also erased the diverse racial, ethnic and religious composition of the empire and created a state which defined its citizens as singularly Turk. Since then, literary texts investigating and portraying this transition and the emergence of the notion of Turkishness from various frames of narratives have been produced by both early republic and contemporary writers both in Turkish and English. As I hope to have demonstrated in the previous chapters, *The Shirt of Flame* and *Birds Without Wings* are two examples of these literary works which fictionalize the difficult birth of Turkishness out of multi-cultural Ottoman legacy in the English language. The position that these novels take about the war of Independence and the necessity of the transition from a multi-cultural society to Turkish nationhood is quite different in terms of the historical perspective that they offer to their readers. Perhaps, as a result of the time that these writers produced their works, their historical positions are different from each other, so Adivar’s and Bernieres’ novels are built from differing ideologies and different sets of values.

When both the turbulent socio-political environment Halide Edip Adivar lived in and her biographical and literary experiences are taken into consideration, it is clear to see how Adivar was shaped by a dynamic Imperial era and transformed

both by external aggression and internal opposition. She witnessed and took part actively in the First World War and the Independence War of Turkey as a writer; her intellect and imagination were fed by these experiences, and thus she produced *The Shirt of Flame* in which she used fiction for dramatic and proselytizing purposes. Her analysis of the transition of Turkish society from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic and the struggle that the society faced through the clash between Eastern and Western culture during the period let her emerge as one of the most important literary figures in Turkish literature and her novel *The Shirt of Flame* as an epic of Anatolian Revolution and Turkish nationalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, writing the same novel in which she propagates Turkish nationalism in English to address English speaking audience seems contradictory. Her fictionalization of the Independence war and the birth of Turkish nation that she offers to English reader is limited to a particular newly emergent “Turkish” point of view consistent with Turkish nationalist discourse. Furthermore, her novel does not include alternative definitions of belonging and inclusion, a more flexible and complex attitude toward non-Muslim nations, nor to international events. Therefore, *The Shirt of Flame*, which can be categorized as a nationalist work in Turkish, emerges as an anti-Imperial and anti-occupation work in English since Turkish perspective of the war against occupation is presented in the novel to legitimize the rebellion of Turkish people against Imperial powers and to introduce the new defined Turkish subject to the world. Moreover, Halide Edip Adıvar imparts her story through the character, Payami who is the only narrator of the whole story and he articulates only Turkish point of view rather than a broader point of view including non-Muslim minorities of the late-Ottoman period in consistent with the uniformity of Turkish historiography. Therefore, *The Shirt of Flame* works as a political tool

which has different functions in Turkish and English but in both languages, Halide Edip Adivar's aim to fictionalize the period seems to work for the interest of the new Republic and the nascent Turkish nationalism.

On the other hand, Louis de Bernieres sets his narrative in the context of the same part of the history with Halide Edip Adivar in an opposing way. He offers his readers a 21st century perspective on the nascent Turkish nationalism. His fictionalization of the late-Ottoman and early Turkish history presents a fantasy to contemporary English speaking readers which problematizes the war and the emergence of the Turkish nation since they are presented as the reason for the destruction of the multicultural fabric of the late-Ottoman period. Therefore, what is presented as a victory in *The Shirt of Flame* is presented as a tragedy in *Birds Without Wings*. Bernieres' fictional account of the period portrays diversity existing in the late-Ottoman period as a harmonious pre-national paradise. The intervention of national identities, on the other hand, is depicted as evil leading to individual tragedies. In this way, Louis de Bernieres projects contemporary British liberal concerns which appreciates multi-cultural legacy of late-Ottoman period and as an extension of the ideology, he recreates Turkey which is portrayed as better with the coexistence of different ethnicities, cultures, religions, and languages in his fiction. His narrative technique is also notable since the novel consists of numerous chapters and some of them are told by different first person-narrators as opposed to Adivar's narrativization in which the story is narrated by a single first-person narrator. Chapters narrated by the multi-cultural individuals stand against the uniformity of the national historiography and they function as eye witnesses of the tragic events that took place during the transition from multi-cultural period to Turkish nationalism and

suggest alternative viewpoints to reveal what has been repressed, ignored or silenced by the national historiography of Turkey.

In conclusion, this thesis investigates the two novels, *The Shirt of Flame* and *Birds Without Wings* as alternative fictional accounts of late-Ottoman and early Turkish history in terms of how they take the nascent Turkish nationhood as a subject matter in their fiction and the aim of their production in English language. Although Halide Edip Adivar and Louis de Bernieres set their narratives within the frame of real historical events, their works must be understood as works of fiction and express individual desires for a future that could exist and a past that could have existed. Therefore, concluding that one is more accurate or more authentic than the other would be inappropriate. I hope this comparative study will enable the reader with the new articulations of the early Turkish history and the Turkish subject matter in English literature as it is presented from completely oppositional perspectives in these two novels. However, I think this diversity of the perspectives on the part of the history as articulated in these literary works will provide more critical and objective understanding of the period and the emergence of Turkish identity so, in this respect, they are oppositional texts, but they are also complementary for the reader.

WORKS CITED

Adak, Hülya (2003). "National Myths and Self-Na(rra)tions: Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and *Halide Edip's Memoirs and the Turkish Ordeal*." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102. 2-3, 509-529. Print.

Adivar, Halide Edip. *Mor Salkımlı Ev*. Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2011. Print.

Adivar, Halide Edip. *The Shirt of Flame*. New York: Duffield & Company, 1924. Print.

Adivar, Halide Edip. *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the Further Memoirs of Halide Edip*. Wisconsin: The Century Co., 1928. Print.

Cagaptay, Soner. *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Cagaptay, Soner (2002). "Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*," 8:2. 67-82.

Clark, Bruce. *Twice a Stranger*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006. Print.

Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol, signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923, [1925] LNTSer 14; 32 LNTS 75.

De Bernières, Louis. *Birds Without Wings*. London: Vintage, 2005. Print

Definition: "Nationalism" from
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nationalism>>

Fortna, Benjamin C. *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Iğsız, Aslı (2008). "Documenting the Past and Publicizing Personal Stories: Sensecapes and the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange," *Contemporary Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. 26, 457-487. Print.

Kasaba, Reşat (2006). *İzmir 1922: A Port City Unravels*. Fawas, L. T., and C. A. Bayly,(Ed.), *Modernity and Culture: From Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (204-229). New York: Colombia University Press.

Seyhan, Azade. *Tales of Crossed Destinies : Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008. Print.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Feroz, Ahmad. (2006). *Bir Kimlik Peşinde Türkiye*. (S. C. Karadeli, Trans.). İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, Print.
- Kasaba, Reşat. (2006). *Dreams of Empire, Dreams of Nations*. Esherick, W.J.,
- Kayalı, H. and Young, V. E., ed. *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World (198-225)*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, Print.
- Spiridon, Monica. "Paradise Lost: Story and History in Identity Building." *Interlitteraria*. (2007). 12, 52-62. Print.
- Ülker, Erol. "Assimilation of the Muslim communities in the first decade of the Turkish Republic (1923-1934)." *European Journal of Turkish Studies*. (2007): Web. 18 Jan. 2008, from <[http:// ejts.revues.org/index822.html](http://ejts.revues.org/index822.html)>
- Aktar, Ayhan. (2003). "Homogenizing the Nation; Turkifying the Economy: Turkish Experience of Populations Exchange Reconsidered." *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*. Renee Hirschon, ed. (79 – 95). Oxford: Berghahn Books. Print.
- Tovar, Ramos Elena. "Pain and Joy: The Psychic Structure of Transnational Families." *Migration and Development*. (2012): Volume 10, 153-171. Print.