



**BODY AND BEAUTY
IN LOUIS DE BERNIERES'S
*BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS***

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**Yüksek Lisans Tezi
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Doç. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

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ABSTRACT

Louis de Bernières is one of the important novelists of our era whose works have been praised and liked by the readers. However, his novels, which are embedded with history, myths, authentic as well as simulated characters, have started to be analysed in the academic world only recently. This study has been dedicated to the analysis of the body and beauty in *Birds Without Wings*, one of the possible perspectives of the novel, since it is a multi-layered work which deserves to be pondered upon. The body and beauty have been prominent concepts in our era. Although they have been reflected in various forms of art, their analysis in novels is particularly new. As a postmodern novel, *Birds Without Wings* does not only reflect the body and beauty notions of our century, but also it resurrects or reverses earlier theories on the body and beauty. Through deconstruction and reconstruction, Louis de Bernières presents his reader an unprecedented reflection of the body and beauty in *Birds Without Wings*. For instance, one is likely to encounter Pythagorean beauty as well as Biblical beauty notions in addition to many others. Although the novel is set in the early 20th century, de Bernières reflects contemporary discourse on the body in the novel. Jean Baudrillard's notions on the body and his general theories, which can be applied to the body, can be said to be deconstructed by de Bernières throughout the novel.

Key Words: Louis de Bernières, Jean Baudrillard, the body, beauty, postmodern, deconstruction

ÖZET

Louis de Bernières eserleri okuyucu tarafından takdir görmüş ve sevilmiş, çağımızın önemli yazarlarından biridir. Ancak, tarih, mitoloji, özgün ve kopya karakterleri ile yüklü olan romanları akademik dünyada sadece son zamanlarda analiz edilmeye başlanmıştır. Bu çalışma farklı açılardan değerlendirilebilecek çok katmanlı olan *Kanatsız Kuşlar* isimli romandaki beden ve güzellik algısını çözümlenmeye adanmış olup, romanla ilgili muhtemel açılardan biridir. Beden ve güzellik çağımızın önemli konularındandır. Çeşitli sanat eserlerinde yansıtılmalarına rağmen, romanlardaki beden ve güzellik analizi özellikle yenidir. Postmodern bir roman olarak, *Kanatsız Kuşlar* sadece çağımızın beden ve güzellik algılarını yansıtmakla kalmayıp, daha önceki çağlardaki beden ve güzellik ile ilgili teorileri yeniden canlandırır ya da tersine çevirir. Yapı sökücü ve yeniden yapılandırma yöntemleriyle, Louis de Bernières okuyucusuna *Kanatsız Kuşlar* eserinde beden ve güzelliğin benzersiz bir sunumunu yapar. Örneğin Pisagor'un güzellik anlayışının yanı sıra İncil'deki güzellik anlayışına da diğer pek çoğunun yanı sıra rastlamanız mümkündür. Roman 20. yüzyılın başlarında geçmesine rağmen, de Bernières güncel beden ve güzellik algılarını romanında kullanır. Jean Baudrillard'ın beden üzerine olan fikirleri ve bedene uygulanabilecek diğer teorilerinin de Bernières tarafından romanda yapı sökücü olarak yansıtıldığı söylenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Louis de Bernières, Jean Baudrillard, beden, güzellik, postmodern, yapı söküm

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INTRODUCTION

Louis de Bernières is a best-selling British fiction writer whose works include *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (1994), *Birds Without Wings* (2004), *A Partisan's Daughter* (2008), *The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts* (1990), *Senor Vivo and the Coca Lord* (1991), *The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman* (1992), *Red Dog* (2001), *Notwithstanding: Stories from an English Village* (2009), *Imagining Alexandria: Poems in Memory of Constantinos Cavafis* (2013), *The Dust That Falls From Dreams* (2015), and *Of Love and Desire* (2016). His novels, stories, and poems are set in a wide range of geographical areas and historical periods. His novels, particularly, won a considerable number of prizes, and with *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, he reached a global audience. As well as writing, he is interested in music, anthropology, history, myths and so and so on. He reflects his interests in his works, and *Birds Without Wings*, which is our novel to be analysed, is full of music, history, myths, and the reflection of beauty and the body in the Western canon.

Although Louis de Bernières is a best-selling novelist, his works have not been analysed much. *Birds Without Wings* deserves to be analysed from different perspectives in various academic works since it excels in being a multilayered work that needs more attention. Therefore, this thesis could be said to be looking into it from the discourse of the body and beauty, and could also be said to be an attempt to give an analysis of this marvelous novel from this perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to reveal the deconstruction and reconstruction of beauty in the Western canon in the postmodern context as reflected in the novel, following a historical analysis of beauty and an analysis of the body in the novel taking into account the theories of Jean Baudrillard through the characters of Tamara, Leyla, Philothei, and Drosoula.

The body and beauty have an efficient role in our daily lives and they keep affecting the way people see and regard each other. Even though people claim that they do not take into account the way the object of the gaze looks like, they are firstly impressed by the physical appearance of the people they are looking at. One could argue that it is for protection or self-defense or for aesthetic purposes like

enjoying beauty; however, it does not change the assumption that appearance matters in our daily lives. Given that our era is preoccupied with images, and one is likely to be assaulted by these images everywhere, consciously or unconsciously one tends to regard what is pleasing and unpleasing via external factors, a fact which indicates that our perception of beauty and beautiful body is influenced by visual means.

With the advances in technology, it is not only possible to make alterations to the body through cosmetics and cosmetic surgeries, but also by means of airbrushing to change the way we look in the photographs. Even the models, who are the representatives of the perfect body, acknowledge that their images have occasionally been altered. Therefore, our beauty models themselves do not meet the beauty standards exactly. That is to say that in the contemporary world, it is not only possible to make alterations to the body and beauty, but also to manipulate the representation of beauty and the body. The suspicion over their validity began only in the postmodern context.

In order to understand the current discourse on beauty and the body, it could be beneficial to take into account the historical development of the body and beauty, and see how these concepts have evolved into the current discourse on the body and beauty. In the earlier historical periods, beauty did not have its discourse, and it gained its importance only in comparison to other qualities. What was regarded as beautiful went through alteration through ages, still its good connotation did not change drastically for a very long time. Since we do not have direct access to what people regarded as beautiful in those ages, we have accepted philosophers', artists', and writers' view of beauty as a standard for beauty through those ages. We have noticed that although what was beautiful changed through ages, beauty itself did not change much, and beauty has continued to be important through ages.

Through extensive readings and observations, we have noticed that beauty is a construct; however, until very recently, beauty was not advertised. It was seen as a good attribute, and people might have been encouraged to be more beautiful, but in the current discourse, it is seen as mandatory because now beauty and the body fall into a category as a social sign. Once it started to be advertised, it started to create

models out of it. Nevertheless, as beauty is constructed culturally, what is regarded as beautiful in a culture might not create the same effect on another culture. However, since the Western culture has been dominating other cultures, the Western canon on beauty and the body has been the most efficient one in creating the models of beauty and the body.

In the postmodern context, as Lyotard puts forward there is “incredulity towards metanarratives.” (1984: XXIV). Since beauty has been constructed through various ages in the Western canon, there has been incredulity towards beauty in the postmodern context. Beauty usually had positive connotations, and its opposition to ugliness had reflected negative connotations. In the postmodern context, the line between good and bad, beautiful and ugly is no longer definite, the postmodernist novelists resurrect metanarratives to deconstruct, reconstruct, or to subvert them. Therefore, the current discourse on the body and beauty and their historical connotations are not accepted as pertinent doctrines, and there is incredulity towards them.

As a postmodernist writer, Louis de Bernières reflects many characteristics of the postmodern era, and he deconstructs and reconstructs beauty standards of historical times in his novel *Birds Without Wings*. As one of the concerns of his novel is to recreate the historical period prior to WWI and its aftermath, it could be said to be a historiographic metafiction. In this novel, Louis de Bernières does not only focus on the troublesome global matters of that era, but also he focuses on the local problems of Eskibahçe. While he recreates historical personas, his tone is mostly serious, and as to the local people, the tone he gives to the characters is almost naïve. Linda Hutcheon describes this situation as historiographic metafiction, and she says that “By this I mean those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (2004: 5). In his novel, Louis de Bernières supplies the reader with a detailed description of the political background of the era as well as the apparently trivial matters of Eskibahçe. However, as a postmodernist novelist would do, he interweaves the local and the global, and the apparently trivial problems of

Eskibahçe start to matter in the global context in the novel. While the political problems stem from various reasons, the local problems that de Bernières creates stem from the loss of harmony in the community, which seems to be a result of the exposure and stoning of a beautiful woman. The attributions of beauty and their arbitrariness in Eskibahçe, and their consequent loss begin to reflect the universal lack of harmony.

Linda Hutcheon continues to explain the relation between the postmodern narrative and its concern in history, theory, and literature as, “Historiographic metafiction incorporates all three of these domains: that is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs...made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past.” (2004: 5). Louis de Bernières’ novels reflect these characteristics of historiographic metafiction. His characters usually benefit from storytelling, and some parts of the novel are written retrospectively. The characters try to make the reader aware of its being a fiction, and their memories mix up with what was told to them as well as what they remember on their own. Tatiana Golban comments on Louis de Bernières, and says that the novelist subverts expectable situations and character developments, and particularly he reloads them “instead with new meanings, such as self-accomplishment, nationhood, knowledge, history and ideology, truth and reality, and the relationship of man/woman to land, which become characteristic concerns of the late twentieth century fiction.” (2014a: 2497). Although this analysis of the novelist was done for *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* particularly, but for his fiction in general, her analysis could be applied to *Birds Without Wings* as well, as the novelist is preoccupied with reflecting these notions in our novel of analysis too. De Bernières intermingles local with national, and national with universal throughout the novel.

Birds Without Wings displays some common grounds with *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, which Golban reflects as, “Deconstruction, playfulness, semiological changes, the concern with myth and history, as well as the alterations of the absolutisms of the modern era, emphasize the novel’s postmodern nature.” (2014b: 12). Louis de Bernières provides the reader with a novel that is embedded with

different layers of interpretation. His text is loaded with history, myth, intertextuality, fragmentariness, deconstruction and reconstruction as well as other features of a postmodern text.

De Bernières' preoccupation with history and myth has made us question the validity of beauty myths and beauty standards of the Western canon as reflected throughout history, since we thought that it would be useful in analysing the novel. As history becomes an archive for the postmodernists, we have tried to reveal beauty in history, and see how de Bernières deconstructed and reconstructed some beauty notions, and also how sometimes he reversed them in the common manner of the postmodern literature. The analysis starts in ancient Greece and it continues up to the postmodern notions of beauty and the body. In order to frame the history of beauty, Umberto Eco's texts have been useful since he has a historical approach toward beauty.

In addition to the discussion of beauty and its deconstruction within the novel, the body and its reflection has been analysed thoroughly in this thesis. While beauty standards and connotations of different eras are deconstructed in the novel in a postmodern way, the body has a postmodern feature in the novel as well. In the recent discourse on the body, the body has been liberated, which means that its sexuality is not to be despised anymore. However, while being liberated, the body has gained a postmodern feature, which made it not only a biological being, but also a representation of social status, and a means of projection of the self to others. Nevertheless, as the body is fragmented in the postmodern context, each process it has gone through has been a concern in the postmodern context.

There have been many theorists, who have pondered on the concept of the body, yet Jean Baudrillard's views on the body and beauty have fascinated us, and we have found his views on the body useful to be applied to *Birds Without Wings*. Therefore, his concepts will form the framework of our research on the body. Taking into consideration the changes in the perception of beauty till postmodern period, the aim of this thesis will be to analyse the deconstruction and reconstruction of historical beauty notions, as well as the construction of the postmodern body and its

connotations in the postmodern context, especially through the theories of Jean Baudrillard. As the novel describes the years in the beginning of the twentieth century with the awareness of the twenty-first century, the projection of contemporary views on the body and beauty in a retrospective way have inspired us to pick this novel, which has not been analysed from this perspective.

The first chapter of the thesis aims at giving a comprehensive historical development of beauty within the Western canon. We have started with the early connotations of beauty in the ancient Greek culture. We have given a theoretical background on beauty, taking into consideration the philosophers' ideas on beauty, and mythological connotations of beauty in the ancient Greece. Construction of beauty in the Middle ages, Renaissance, Biblical beauty notions and connotations, the beauty notions of the Enlightenment period, and beauty after the Industrial Revolution, and finally beauty in the postmodern era have been given theoretically in the first chapter. The final parts of the first chapter focused particularly on the performativity of beauty, its being prone to be constructed, and its negative connotations, as well as the overwhelming good connotations' construction and deconstruction in the Western canon.

The second chapter of the thesis aims at giving a theoretical background on the body in the postmodern era. Baudrillard's ideas have been used as a framework in giving the theoretical background on the body. His theories on simulation and simulacra have been beneficial in reflecting the changes done to the body in order to look beautiful. The performativity of beauty and manipulation around beauty have been discussed in this context. Another concern of the second chapter is the analytical approach toward the body through use value versus exchange value, fetishisation and the commodification of the body, the act of striptease, narcissism, etc. The final part of the second chapter gives the relation between the body, death, disease-decay, and madness, taking into account the theories of Jean Baudrillard and secondary sources on him.

The third chapter of the thesis aims to give an analysis of de Bernières' deconstruction and reconstruction of beauty notions of historical periods in a

postmodern way. How the characters reflect and speculate upon these beauty concepts and their reconstruction and deconstruction have been the ground of analysis in the third chapter. De Bernières' recreation of beauty through the characters of Philothei, Leyla, and Tamara, and his recreation of ugliness through the character of Drosoula have been one of the concerns of the chapter. However, as a postmodern writer, he has reflected beauty through different points of view, through the eyes of various characters, and his reversion and recreation of beauty notions and their connotations have been subject to analysis in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter basically deals with the application of Baudrillard's theories on the body and beauty into the novel, and the analysis of the body through his lenses. However, once again, de Bernières has sometimes recreated Baudrillard's notions, and sometimes he has reversed them. The fourth chapter has been dedicated to give an analysis of simulation and simulacra of beauty and the body through the characters of Philothei, Leyla, and Tamara. The Biblical Madonna/whore dichotomy has been useful in trying to disclose the lines between the original and the simulation. However, as a postmodern writer, de Bernières played with these notions as well. The second part of the chapter has been dedicated to the analysis of narcissism, commodification, fetishisation processes of the characters as well as the body as a sign and the importance of nakedness and striptease in the projection of the body. The final part of the fourth chapter focuses on the integration of death, disease-decay, and madness to the society, and to the discourse on the body. This part tries to offer an analysis of the projection of these concepts in the novel.

The last part tries to give an overall but brief summary of the impacts of the body and beauty in the novel, and the importance of the body and beauty in contemporary world.

CHAPTER 1

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEAUTY AND THE BODY

1.1. The Body and Beauty in the Western Canon

The concept of beauty has been one of the topics that started to be discussed in the early periods of humanity, and it still has a role in our daily lives and our works of art. What is interesting about this concept is that it changes through time, and it is not a static being in itself. What is considered as beautiful in a period in history may be considered as ugly in another period, or what is considered as beautiful in a country may be considered as ugly in another country. It may change within the same country and period, too. Katherine Frith, Ping Shaw and Hong Cheng state that

[B]eauty is a construct that varies from culture to culture and changes over time. A buxom Marilyn Monroe was the beauty ideal in the United States in the 1950s, soon to be replaced by the emaciated Twiggy of the 1960s. Whereas porcelain skin is valued in China, scarification of the skin is a beauty process in parts of Africa. (2005: 1).

Therefore, while trying to point out the history of beauty, the construction of beauty will be limited to the Western canon, and the purpose of this chapter is to give an analysis of the concept of beauty and the body in the Western canon, and the analysis will be limited to the parts which were reconstructed or deconstructed in a postmodern novel by Louis de Bernières which he entitles as *Birds Without Wings* in relation to female body and beauty.

Since aesthetics as an area of research and study does not have a long history, the early ideas on beauty have some variables. In order to understand the concept of beauty within the Western canon, it could be beneficial to refer to some philosophers and writers as they write on beauty. Umberto Eco writes about it and says that “over the centuries it was artists, poets and novelists who told us about the things they considered beautiful, and they were the ones who left us examples.” (2004: 12). Therefore, in the analysis of beauty in the Western canon, their works will be used in this chapter as well as those of the philosophers.

1.2. The Concept of Beauty in Ancient Greece and the Objectivity of Beauty

In ancient Greece, there was not a theory of aesthetics and it was the philosophers who commented on beauty and tried to define what was to be regarded as beautiful. Beauty was analysed in relation to other qualities and criteria like light, colour, goodness, justice, truth, etcetera. It was not regarded as a separate phenomenon of its own, but it was considered to have value when it had similarities to other qualities.

When the early images of beauty is analysed in Greek mythology, one can see that beauty has a dualistic nature and it is compared to ugliness, or they are present in one being. As Umberto Eco comments on Apollonian and Dionysian concepts of beauty on the temple of Delphi and says that Greek beauty was

[I]n accordance with a world view that interpreted order and harmony as that which applies a limit to ‘yawning Chaos’, from whose maw Hesiod said that the world sprang. This was an idea placed under the protection of Apollo, who is in fact portrayed among the Muses on the western façade of the temple at Delphi. But on the opposite, eastern side of the same temple (dating from the fourth century BC) there is a portrayal of Dionysus, god of Chaos and the unbridled breach of all rules. (2004: 52-54).

They were considered as two sides of beauty and each aroused different feelings. As Eco continues his comments, Apollonian beauty is understood as serene harmony, measure and order while Dionysian beauty is to be understood as “a joyous and dangerous Beauty, antithetical to reason and often depicted as possession and madness” (2004: 58). This dualistic nature of beauty is reconstructed or deconstructed in postmodern literature. Beauty is handled in comparison to ugliness, and they can even coexist within the same body. It is necessary to have ugliness in order for beauty to arise. If it were not for ugliness, it would be harder to detect beauty. It is a ground which makes it easier to compare. This dualistic nature proves the existence of beauty. In de Bernières’ text, beauty has a dualistic nature and it gains its power when it is compared to another quality. It is often given with its opposition; ugliness. Philothei and Drosoula are like the two sides of a coin who can never be separated.

1.2.1. The Philosophers' Ideas on Beauty

Philosophers in ancient Greece had pondered on the idea of beauty, and their reflections had a great impact on the later concepts of beauty. They regarded beauty as objective and although their perceptions about beauty were different, they tried to have their typology to define what was expected to be regarded as beautiful. Among these philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle have some measures that somehow affect our contemporary concepts of beauty.

According to Pythagoras, beauty was to be analysed in relation to mathematics and numbers. In this respect, Robert P. Mills states that “Pythagoras and his followers noted that objects proportioned according to the so-called ‘golden mean’ seemed more beautiful than those that were not.” (2009: 3). They had some mathematical measures for beauty and the beauty of a body could be measured with those measures. We still use numbers to define whether a person is beautiful or not. Symmetry can also be measured in this sense and Robert P. Mills comments on this idea and says that “people whose facial features are symmetric and proportioned according to the golden mean are consistently ranked as more attractive than those whose faces are not.” (2009: 3). Therefore, it could be said that Pythagoras introduced the use of numbers in order to define what is beautiful. His theory on beauty is objective as it has golden means to measure beauty.

However, for de Bernières, this concept is reversed. For him, so as to define something or somebody beautiful, their body or existence needs lack of symmetry. It can be seen clearly in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. In that novel, Captain Corelli comments on the waistcoat that Pelagia made for Mandras. She feels ashamed because the patterns on each side do not match each other, and she thinks that since it lacks symmetry, it is not beautiful. Corelli protests and says that one of Pelagia's eyebrows is higher than the other one, and her eyes are not identical to one another. He says that “It is these things that make you both attractive and beautiful, whereas. . . otherwise you would be a statue. Symmetry is for God, not for us.” (2000: 215-216). It could be said that for postmodern novelists, historical concepts on beauty are an archive from which they take some ideas and reconstruct or deconstruct them

either directly or they reverse them. In de Bernières' case, he prefers to reverse Pythagoras's symmetry to be regarded as beautiful. For him, it is the lack of symmetry; not its presence.

Another philosopher whose ideas on beauty are still efficient in postmodern period is Plato. Plato's concept of beauty is different from that of Pythagoras and he defines beauty in relation to forms. For him, literature and any forms of art are to be dismissed because they deter us from understanding reality. What we have in art is just a copy of the original form. Plato disregards the copies. However, as Robert P. Mills says, Plato's concept of beauty resides in his belief that beauty is "something that exists within the object" (2009: 3).

De Bernières skillfully plays with this notion and presents Philothei's birth as a supernatural existence. Although she is a copy of an original, she is beautiful even as a baby. Her beauty precedes her existence, and she is beautiful in her infancy, too. However, she turns out to be a replica of the bridal figure that is to be guided by the opposition of the bridal figure. On the other hand, within this postmodern novel, the lines between the original and the copy or Madonna and the whore dichotomy are blurred. This necessitates the reader to question the concepts of simulation and simulacra introduced by Jean Baudrillard. The starting point for this postmodern idea could be linked to Plato and Mills continues his comments on Plato on the idea of the forms and imitations,

[T]he world of the Forms, is more real than the physical world. That is because the particular things that exist in the physical world are only imitations, inferior copies, of their archetypes, the Forms. Plato's most famous explanation of this theory is his Allegory of the Cave from The Republic." (2009: 3).

Plato's ideas on the copy and the cave allegory are reconstructed and deconstructed in contemporary literature. As Umberto Eco quotes from Plato's *Symposium*, Plato relates beauty to the divine and if somebody is to refrain from the copies and can see the form of beauty, it would be related to the beauty of God and "beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not the images of beauty, but realities . . . and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of

God” (2004: 41). In the postmodern context, the lines between copy and original are blurred and harder to grasp.

Being one of the most influential philosophers of his time and even modern philosophy, Aristotle had some long-lasting ideas on beauty as he had some other long-lasting ideas on other areas. Different from Plato, he appreciates the works of art, but similar to Plato, he thinks that objects have qualities in themselves that make people think that those objects are beautiful. For Aristotle, what makes an object or body beautiful can be measured. Similar to Pythagoras, Aristotle used mathematics to define beauty. For Aristotle as Mills quotes from him “the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness.” (2009: 3). Thus, beauty came to be understood as proportion, order, harmony, etcetera in ancient Greek culture.

Postmodern writers frequently resurrect ancient Greeks’ ideas on beauty in their works. Sometimes, they prefer to echo their ideas, at other times they redefine or reverse their ideas in a postmodern context. De Bernières’ novel is loaded with reversions or resurrections of Greek philosophers’ discussions on beauty.

1.2.2. The Divine Perspective on Beauty

The concept of beauty is mostly directed towards a comparison between the deities or divinity since the ancient times. When someone or something is beautiful, one is inclined to think that the person or the thing beholding beauty is bestowed upon by God or divinity. Beauty is accepted to be a gift. The analogy of the trilogy of beauty, goodness and the truth in Christianity can be traced back to ancient Greece and early readings on religions.

Beauty is considered to be a trait of God, and it is directly related to God. Robert P. Mills says that

The connections made between truth, goodness, and beauty . . . were neither arbitrary or accidental. From at least the time of Plato and Aristotle through contemporary thinkers, secular philosophers and Christian theologians alike have recognized interrelationships between what are sometimes called “the three transcendentals.” (2009: 9) .

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that beauty is regarded to be equal to goodness and truth in religion.

In a similar manner, beauty is related to light and justice in religion or mythology. On the temple of Apollo, beauty is compared to justice and what can be regarded as just can be regarded as beautiful. As Apollo is thought to be the God of light, music, beauty, and harmony, they are all intermingled in each other and they are all related in literature too.

1.3. Biblical References on Beauty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Beauty in the Middle Ages can be said to be in a transition period. As it was suggested earlier, beauty came to be regarded as light and colour. Since the period in question is a long era in itself, it has some inconsistent ideas on beauty in itself too. Philosophers like Plotinus can be said to have been affected by Plato even though at some points they differ from him. Mills puts it forward and proclaims that Plotinus “considered beauty an aspect of metaphysics, as did Plato. He also explored the connection between beauty and art, which Plato did not” (2009: 4). Augustine refers to some Platonic concepts on beauty like resemblance which makes one question the idea of the Forms and imitation, and he refers to Aristotelian properties of beauty like proportion, harmony and order. Thomas Aquinas is different from his contemporaries in that he tries to have a subjective understanding of beauty. As Mills says “he identifies three conditions of beauty: perfection or impairedness, proportion or harmony, and brightness or clarity.” (2009: 4). Stemming from this idea of brightness and light, as Umberto Eco puts forward, it can be said that for Bonaventure “light was fundamentally a metaphysical reality, while for Aquinas it was a physical reality.” (2004: 129). As for Aquinas, light was to be transmitted through the beautiful body, but for Bonaventure it gains a transcendental meaning. This transcendence of light is recreated in de Bernières’ novel and there are some parts of the novel where the characters of the novel are portrayed in relation to light. Being a postmodern novel, *Birds Without Wings* reflects this notion of light in

comparison to beauty in an opposite direction. It questions the validity of light and goodness connotation by reflecting the characters in an illuminated or dark background. Since the world is governed by chaos, light and darkness are replaced within opposite contexts. The body of the bridal figure is shut in a brothel where she prefers darkness, and the opposition of the bridal figure, the whore illuminates the house of the messiah figure by luring him into darkness.

Ugliness was another part of beauty that struck the attention of the medieval thinkers, and they were fascinated by the monsters and ugliness was appreciated almost as much as beauty. Monsters were represented as either the opposite of the beautiful, or just as a quality in itself. It could be said that since beauty is in relation to harmony, how monsters fit into that harmony is a part of that harmony and unity of the beautiful. This dichotomy is represented in the novel from its very beginning to the end in relation to unity and separation, and chaos's overwhelming power unity. Throughout the novel, diversity is celebrated as unity while eliminating diversity of preferring one species or race of body over another is a path towards chaos.

Ornamentation starts to have an important role on beauty in the Middle Ages. The use of ornaments to be more beautiful, the use of colours in precious stones or clothing will pave the path for the commercialism of the postmodern period, and ornaments and commodity will be a part of beauty, and will have a role in making women commodities too. This medieval practice is subverted towards signs in the novel and it transforms the original body, and it starts to prevail over beauty. Beauty ceases to be a characteristic of its own, yet it gains a feature which can be practiced. One can perform beauty via different means.

The last part that needs to be reflected upon in this section is the Biblical references to beauty. Although there are not many direct references to beauty in Bible, beauty is a quality that is regarded to refer to God, Jesus, and even Lucifer too. The concept of beauty intermingles with the concept of sublime, and although beauty is regarded as a positive quality in itself, only when truth and goodness accompany beauty, it can gain its utmost importance.

When it comes to the body and Biblical references to the body in Bible, Jesus is the main character to define the relation between the body and beauty within Bible. The body of Jesus is in relation with the community of believers. He is represented in relation to land and the body. There is a correlation between his body and his believers. The church comes to represent the body of believers. The wedding image is mostly used to frame the relation between his body and body of believers. He is the bridegroom; consequently, wedding image becomes an important theme for Christianity in relation to the body and beauty. Church or the body of the believers so as to call is the bride of Jesus. They will be reunited when the wedding takes place. Northrop Frye and Jay Macpherson state it as “The imagery of a wedding, of the union of the bridegroom and the bride, is one of Jesus’ favourite images for the apocalyptic or ideal world. It is essential to realize that in this case, the bride is actually the entire body of Christian followers.” (2004: 51).

In de Bernières’ postmodern novel, this relation between the body of believers and Jesus is resurrected. Nevertheless, like most of the themes are subverted, this theme is also subverted. It is a Muslim who tries to erect a temple in order to praise God. However, as the line between concepts is blurred, the believers of the two religions secretly praise the other religion within the text. Muslims lit candles in the church and Christians ask their Muslim friends to pray for them. Both religions are equally praised, and they seem to complete each other in joy and graveness. When both religions emerge, they seem to reflect perfect unity. Therefore, the transfer of the saviour figure within the text to another religion seems to be a subversion of the roles. The wedding and bride imagery is reinforced via Tamara and Leyla dichotomy due to the conversion of the roles of the bride and the whore. Although she is a Muslim woman and it is also a tradition within Islamic reference, her being stoned can be likened to Mary Magdalene and Northrop Frye and Jay Macpherson comment on her presence as “the woman who, because she was a harlot, is condemned to be stoned to death. Jesus interferes and suggests that those who have never committed any sins at all might take the lead in throwing the stones.” (2004: 55-56). In de Bernières’ text, Jesus figure always changes and when Tamara is stoned, it is another Muslim character that saves her to cast her out to a brothel

without succeeding to save her in the long run. As the body has a spatial role within religious context, once Tamara ends up in the brothel, her body is visited by almost every man in Eskibahçe. Her body is a sacred place just because she is the bridal figure and it is the land of the promised saviour. When the relation between the body and beauty, and beauty as goodness is broken, the sublime trait of beauty is lost, and unity yields to chaos. De Bernières brilliantly reveals the subversion of the roles in the religious context and loss of innocence.

1.4.The Subjective Understanding of Beauty in the Enlightenment

In the Enlightenment period which is dominated by reason, beauty starts gaining another importance. The earlier philosophers tended to regard beauty as something that is objective in itself which gives pleasure to the one who sees beauty. During the Enlightenment, beauty gains a quality which could be used in postmodernism. Beauty loses its position as a universal thing. Although Immanuel Kant does not say it directly, he comments on the perception or judgment of beauty by the beholder. Mills concludes that “Kant effectively established in the modern mind the belief that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” (2009: 7). Consequently, beauty is not to be universally measured, it has to have something to arouse in the beholder. As Immanuel Kant himself states,

When we call something beautiful, the pleasure that we feel is expected of everyone else in the judgment of taste as necessary, just as if it were to be regarded as a property of the object that is determined in it in accordance with concepts; but beauty is nothing by itself, without relation to the feeling of the subject. However, we must reserve the discussion of this question until we have answered another: how and whether aesthetic judgments a priori are possible. (2000: 103).

Different from the earlier ideas on beauty, Kant made the modern mind suspect the common traits of beauty. Formerly, beauty was considered to be an objective quality like goodness and truth. Kant made people notice that what one likes, the other might dislike. Mehmet Atalay comments on Kant and says that “Kant claims that the judgment of taste is based on a subjective principle, but it has universal validity. The subjective principle determines what pleases and what displeases us only through feeling—not through concepts.” (2007: 44). It could be inferred from these

comments that an object may arouse different feelings in people. Alexander Alberro comments on the writers of beauty and says that “most of the writers resuscitating the idea of beauty today advance the beautiful as a structure of feeling energized by a sense of transcendental meaning and harmony, and of the centrality of the human subject.” (2004: 38). It was after Kant that writers and readers, the holders of the gaze and the objects that are being gazed at have started to have a different approach towards beauty. Likewise, in a fragmented manner, de Bernières presents Philothei and her birth through different gazes. Her beauty has a priori existence and it is speculated as magical realism within the text. Her beauty is to be observed and commented on via different approaches.

1.5. Beauty after the Industrial Revolution and Beauty in the Postmodern Period

Starting with an objective theory of beauty and going towards a subjective idea on beauty, postmodern period is remarkable for its questioning of the construction of beauty. After the Industrial Revolution, what is to be considered to be beautiful has added some other criteria to its discourse, and in this discourse the power of beauty and beauty anxiety which is reflected on the bodies of people have been a subject to be discussed. The postmodern era that has lost its belief in the metanarratives and people started to question beauty too and it has tried to deconstruct some ideas on beauty. Vanessa D. Fisher argues that “It was in . . . postmodern deconstruction that all beauty came to be regarded as morally suspect, and it is here where the evolving feminist consciousness still largely finds itself today.” (2008: 70). In this context, beauty could be a constructed phenomenon in order to control women.

Theorists like Naomi Wolf have made a great contribution to questioning beauty in our era. Having written a book in 1991 about beauty and how the images of beauty have been constructed after the Industrial Revolution, Wolf comments on how the image of beauty was constructed in media, and she says that it was not until the 1830s that the image of beauty was advertised, and the first posers for the advertisements were prostitutes. However, with the proliferation of the middle-class, the image of beauty was starting to be used in order to control the women who

started to work and gain importance. She comments on the working women of the West who are “controlled, attractive, successful” and says that within these women “there is a secret ‘underlife’ poisoning our freedom; infused with notions of beauty, it is a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of aging, and dread of lost control.” (2002: 10). While being successful and attractive on one hand, the beauty standards that are imposed on women make it something almost impossible to achieve these goals. On the other hand, these standards are not solid; they keep changing all the time so as to keep the economy or politics based on it going. Women find it hard to conform to the roles that are almost impossible to achieve, and the anxiety of beauty is a burden on working women.

Even when women feel that they conform to the image of beauty, there arises another myth. Since the link between beauty and goodness starts to be questioned, Samantha Kwan and Mary Nell Trautner say that “While a large body of literature supports the beauty-as-good thesis, research also points to several disadvantages that come with being beautiful . . . beauty also signifies vanity and self-centeredness.” (2009: 50). When women achieve being beautiful and successful, they are confronted with another problem, and their private lives are thought to be lacking, and they are thought to neglect some aspects of their lives. Although subjected to the notion of have them all, they are accused of being self-centered when they have it all like beauty, success, family, and children. Women are taught to be jealous of each other. They are taught to have a critical eye on one another.

Wolf questions the validity of the discourse on beauty and accepts that beauty is an important concept, but that concept has been used to disempower women, who started to gain power, and women had to conform to the beauty standards or beauty ideals that were politically constructed via media, politics, and culture. She says that we cannot find any “legitimate historical or biological justification for the beauty myth; what it is doing to women today is a result of nothing more exalted than the need of today’s power structure, economy, and culture to mount a counteroffensive against women.” (2002: 13).

Wolf continues to argue what constitutes this beauty myth and says that it “is actually composed of emotional distance, politics, finance, and sexual repression. The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men’s institutions and institutional power.” (2002: 13). As she may be coined as a feminist thinker, her main concern is women, but she also comments on a myth that is arising for men too. In this sense, beauty myth can be linked to commercialism that tries to sell products by creating a need for them. This context could be linked to production, reproduction, and consumerism. In addition to beauty products, with the advent of plastic surgery, the female body is subjected to change so as not to fall behind beauty standards. When the female body is changed via different strategies, does it lose its originality and become a copy of a constructed beauty? Whether the link between the original and the copy exists or not, changing the female body, ornamenting it or remaking it turns into a business through which people make money. In this sense, the validity of the beauty ideals could be challenged.

With the advent and development of technology, it would be useful to question the validity of the images of beauty as well as the constructed image. Some models confess that their images are being altered via light, camera effects etcetera. In addition to the ideal body and beauty image, the exact representation of these images can be discussed. In addition to the construction of the image of beauty, imitation of that image is possible. Commenting on the postmodern state of beauty, Alexander Alberro says that “we have now reached an age in which it is possible to synthetically produce flawless harmony, perfection, and wholeness.” (2004: 40). And Alberro continues to argue that beauty can be constructed via different means to reflect ideal beauty that does not exist at all, and he comments on the construction of beauty like a product and says that “Flawless images are now fairly easy to manufacture. But digital image production today also throws into question the formerly crucial distinction between copy and original in ways not even imagined by mid-twentieth-century theorists of reproducibility” (2004: 40-41). Beauty icons are being created and even these beauty icons are being subjected to digital retouching. Their molds are being erased, their waists are being changed to look slimmer, their

legs are being retouched, and so even the original body of the beauty icon does not look like the representation of the body in the media.

Likewise, construction and consumption of everything is possible in postmodern context. Once a serious theory on a subject can be mocked and deconstructed in postmodern context. Although postmodernism achieves in deconstructing images and works of art, it is difficult to deconstruct an image in the minds of people. Many people are being subjected to magazines and advertisements, and their worldview is being shaped by these economically and politically based images. Looking at these constructions as male dominated, Annamaria Silvana de Rosa and Andrei Holman state that “the private or subjective body does not exist because it is entirely constructed and modified according to the criteria and rules of the oppressing group [to enable] male domination, including expectations about feminine beauty standards.” (2011: 77). It is true that women’s beauty standards are being shaped by the system and even when they try to control it, they fail because the system itself is protected by other powerful institutions.

For the deconstructionist postmodern writer reflecting the ideas of beauty through history or writing on anything that was constructed at a given time in history, playing with the set notions becomes a standard as they question almost everything. For them as Mills comments, we cannot find any “inherent meaning in any written text, whether a story or a poem, the Bible or the US Constitution. They reject the very possibility of ‘authorial intent,’ the time-honored belief that a writer is able to convey some specified meaning to a reader.” (2009: 8). Likewise, Jean-François Lyotard explains postmodern as “I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives.” (1984: XXIV). He implies that what is regarded as true and set can be questioned. Postmodernists believe that there are multiple layers of interpretation of art and history in general, and these metanarratives could just be signs, and they deconstruct some parts of it in their works.

As there are many things that are questioned in postmodernism, the representation of the body and beauty in literary texts can be questioned. Annamaria Silvana de Rosa and Andrei Holman state that

[T]he postmodern body is no longer a biological given whose organic integrity is inviolable; rather, it is “fragmented”, a “text” which should express the messages which synthesize one’s inner reality, reflecting one’s personality or convictions. Most of the time, these messages have a social side to them, depicting certain positions as endorsed, or belongings as assumed; yet the aesthetic is only implicit, beauty as a purpose comes second to the goal of identity display. (2011: 78).

The postmodern body is fragmented; it is ornamented; and its perception as a whole is crashed. One could grasp the link between fragmentation of the female body and striptease and fetishism when the female body turns into a commodity.

There are two ends of female beauty and sexuality. As the sexuality of women are feared by the male dominated societies, when women affirm their freedom in their sexual lives, they are pressured, and Patrizia Gentile comments on female sexuality and its being constructed and says that there are two edges of female sexuality either innocent “or something dangerous, unpredictable, and therefore to be feared. In this whore/Madonna paradox, the social and cultural anxieties attributed to female sexuality are often played out on the bodies of girls and young women.” (2007: 1). Now that feminine sexuality and its relation to beauty and the body is a construct in itself, its representation in postmodern literature is full of reconstructions and deconstructions. While a part of the representation may be taken from Plato’s conception of beauty or the concept of beauty as harmony, some part of it may be taken from the dualistic nature of beauty, etcetera.

Louis de Bernières’ novel covers the years just before WWI and the years following it. As a historiographic metafiction, it alludes to some historical events and these historical events are recreated by him. While the discourse on the female body during those years does not directly correspond to the ideas in this part, as a postmodern and contemporary writer, who is well aware of how the body and beauty developed within the Western canon, de Bernières reconstructs or deconstructs these ideas in his text. Even though the women in the novel are not exposed to the beauty standards of our time, de Bernières represents some of the characters as being exposed to this discourse by creating Madonna/whore dichotomy, innocent versus decaying beauty, beauty anxiety through the characters of Drosoula, Philothei and Leyla, simulation of beauty through commodities and he eventually turns beauty into

a kind of commodity and a sign via production. De Bernières reflects the postmodern and contemporary body and beauty ideals of the Western canon on Western and Eastern women of the time of the novel. What makes a woman's body beautiful within a multicultural society is reflected through Western gaze. There are some references to the Eastern beauty ideals inasmuch as they are related to the Western canon just like the cases of Philothei's veil as the second skin or simulation of beauty, and beauty as a kind of blessing and a curse at the same time so as to show beauty as danger.



CHAPTER 2

2. BAUDRILLARD'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE BODY AND BEAUTY

2.1. Jean Baudrillard on Simulation and Simulacra

Among the most important concepts that Baudrillard brings into literature are simulation and simulacra. He first introduces the concept of simulation and then simulacra. These two concepts could be applied to literature when analysing novels and the characters in them. As a product of the postmodern era, de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* represents some particular aspects of simulation and simulacra which are prone to be discussed in relation to beauty and the body in this thesis.

First of all, for the purpose of our research it could be beneficial to define simulation and simulacra. Simulation can be defined as the imitation of an original. Simulation is the process of imitation, which in the end breaks free of the original, and in the fourth phase turns into a simulacrum. Simulacra, on the other hand, refers to imitation without an original which either did not have an original to be imitated to start with or the original has ceased to exist. Simulacrum in this sense is a copy without an original. Baudrillard explains these terms in *Simulacra and Simulation* and while he explains the difference between representation and simulation, he says that the origins of representation is "the principle of the equivalence of the sign and the real" and on the origins of simulation he says it is "the utopia of the principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference."(1994: 6). As Baudrillard thinks that reality has been replaced with signs and symbols, so has the understanding of reality by people been altered; we do not see reality anymore, but we are left with a simulation of reality. The signs and symbols demonstrate themselves as reality, and they replace reality. Baudrillard continues to explain the correlation between representation and simulation as following: "Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the

whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum.” (1994: 6). In the contemporary world, signs and symbols replace reality and representation of reality or the process of representation turns into a simulacrum itself. “It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real” (Baudrillard, 1994: 2). It now produces something that is hyperreal and Baudrillard thinks that the process cannot be reversed anymore. As he says, “Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself—such is the vital function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection that no longer even gives the event of death a chance.” (1994: 2). Since reality has been replaced by signs and symbols of it as simulacra, the society has now reached a hyperreal which he argues as “A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.” (1994: 2-3). In this sense, hyperreal precedes the real.

Baudrillard says that there are four stages of simulation and simulacra. He describes them as first “it is the reflection of a profound reality”, here we might have a copy of an original like a painting, this is the first stage; and the second stage is “it masks and denatures a profound reality”, here one might think of an icon of God as Baudrillard states it; and the third stage is when “it masks the absence of a profound reality”, like in the case of Disneyland, and on the final stage “it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own simulacrum.” (1994: 6). This could apply to a multitude of concepts in life and literature.

In de Bernières’ novel, while he creates the female characters, there are duplications and simulated characters. Beauty as a construct has been hyperreal in itself and the reality of the concepts of the body and beauty has been absorbed by the signs and symbols of simulation and simulacra. The body or beauty has been left without a referential, or the referential for the reality is just a shadow without any origins itself. Throughout the novel, the phases that the characters go through and

the lack of correlation and arbitrary correlation proves Baudrillard right and de Bernières could be said to reconstruct Baudrillard's concepts.

Writing on Baudrillard and fashion, Mike Gane argues how simulation and simulacra are represented in fashion and explains the four stages of fashion and simulation and simulacra as “the adoption of models and their simulation, in which there is, second, a differential play of elements, and in which, third, the elements become ‘indifferent’ to one another. Finally simulation is structured by the play of uniform values” (1991: 104). The reality has been substituted by the signs, and fashion, sexuality, and the body are affected by the substitution of them by the signs. As Gane suggests, there was a correlation between the signs and reality in the past in terms of fashion, but now it is different. He gives the example of the naked body in primitive societies and current societies and says that painting or decoration of the naked body was not necessarily related to fashion but now “the system of fashion begins to invade this terrain, the symbolic order of such meanings is abolished. It even brings about a new instrumental use of the naked body to induce a sexual tactics around nudity (a new pattern of simulation of the body).” (Gane, 1991: 107). Therefore, it could be said that simulation of the body and beauty takes place in different areas of life, and while they are simulated, they gain new signs. The first of them is the sexuality of the naked body. It did not use to have the same context, but now through some tactics, it is a sign of sexuality; it is a phallic symbol in itself. Since it is the female body that has been sexualized and in a sense liberated from its former correlations, Gane argues that while women are liberated, their bodies are sexualized and “women are separated from themselves and their own bodies under the sign of beauty and the pleasure principle.” (1991: 107). Their bodies are turned into commodities to stand for lots of signs rather than being their own.

2.2. Jean Baudrillard on the Body and Beauty

The philosophers and writers have stated and will continue to state their ideas on beauty and the body. Some of these ideas have been mentioned in the previous chapter in an attempt to give a brief history of beauty and the body in the Western

canon. However, the philosopher whose ideas on the body and beauty most strike the writer of this thesis is Jean Baudrillard. Therefore, he will be regarded as a framework in analysing the concepts of the body and beauty in de Bernières' novel. Baudrillard, as a theorist of the postmodern era, has developed his own theory on these concepts of the body and beauty, and has his unique approach towards them. Although there are some similarities to the former philosophers mentioned in the previous chapter, he differentiates from them in some certain aspects when he frames the relation between the body and beauty around signs.

For Baudrillard, the body is a closed system which has its specific sign value. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, Baudrillard focuses on the body in a chapter and he entitles it as "The Body, or the Mass Grave of Signs." The metaphor he chooses to redefine the body is significant in that it reflects a closed space. Therefore, the body could be said to have its own space and to be created and recreated within that space. In Baudrillard's definition, the body does not seem to be something that is alive; it represents something which has ceased to be alive and as it is a mass grave, it implies that it was affected by outer phenomena. It is no longer a dynamic being in itself, but it is a fragmented, symbolic and static being within the political economy of signs.

So as to give a brief history of the body, he suggests that the "history of the body is the history of its demarcation, the network of marks that have since covered it, divided it up, annihilated its difference and its radical ambivalence in order to organize it into a structuralist material for sign exchange" (1993: 101). Baudrillard analyses the construction of signs which are related to the body in terms of nudity, striptease, and narcissism or as one might argue reduplication or mirror image. For him, the body no longer refers to flesh in religious terms or it does not refer to labour in relation to industrialism. He argues in *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* that "beauty and eroticism are two leitmotifs" of the body as what we have today is a "narcissistic cult" on the body. (1998: 132) Therefore it could be said that while the body is turned into a sign, sexuality and eroticism could be said to turn the body into an abstract form to be captured or enjoyed by the self too. However, Baudrillard thinks that when reappropriating the body, it is not for "autonomous ends

of the subject, but in terms of a normative principle of enjoyment and hedonistic profitability, in terms of an enforced instrumentality that is indexed to the code and the norms of a society of production and managed consumption.” (1998: 131). It is no longer for the subject herself or himself, but for social status.

Baudrillard regards that the body and beauty could be accepted as commodities in the consumerist societies, but these commodities are not just for the sake of the subject; they are for the very opposite of it. The analysis of the body and beauty is similar to that of consumption. When consumption is analysed, one can see that in the contemporary world, we do not consume things just because we need them; but because of their representations. “The fundamental conceptual hypothesis for a sociological analysis of ‘consumption’ is *not use* value, the relation to needs, but *symbolic exchange* value, the value of social prestation, of rivalry and, at time limit, of class discriminants.” (Baudrillard, 1981: 30-31). In de Bernières’ novel, one can see the social classes, how they operate, and how they consume commodities. In line with the contemporary world, in the world that de Bernières creates, how people consume shows their class and social status. Baudrillard goes on saying that the ornaments for the body or the things done to beautify the body are similar to exchange value. He says that “one does not dress a woman luxuriously in order that she be beautiful, but in order that her luxury testify to the legitimacy or the social privilege of her master” (1981: 31).

It can be seen in the refusal and the praise of the commodities offered to the wife and mistress of Rustem Bey in the novel. While one, the mistress, praises being beautified via the commodities offered to her, and she willingly accepts the social status of Rustem Bey; the other, the wife, does not use any of them from the very beginning of their relationship. She does not want to be beautified; or to be commodified to represent social status.

Through the use of commodities, and by praising their exchange value rather than use value, the society could be argued to pay more attention to the signs of objects rather than the objects themselves. It is similar to the dystopian value of things in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). However, as opposed to that novel, one

has not been conditioned to think that they need particular commodities as a strategy to keep the economy going, but what is worse is that they are aware of the fact that they do not need it for the sake of the object itself, but because of its social status. The objects consumed represent social status as well as they do in *Brave New World*, but now objects are just consumed for their signs rather than the urge to consume them. One does not necessarily believe that they really need the object itself as opposed to the urge forced on the conditioned characters of *Brave New World*. Baudrillard argues that “objects never exhaust themselves in the function they serve, and in this excess of presence they take on their signification of prestige. They no longer ‘designate’ the world, but rather the being and social rank of their possessor.” (1981: 32). Rustem’s Circassian mistress, or his watches just happen to represent his social rank in *Birds Without Wings*.

Baudrillard links beauty to consumerism. He regards that beauty today is closely linked to advertisements, and models and mannequins are the best to represent beauty. However, for him, this type of beauty or the liberation of the body is not much different from labour. Both beauty and labour are emptied of their previous discourse and have been signs of use value versus exchange value. What goes further than the consumption of commodities in order to demonstrate social status is that the body itself is “under the sign of sexuality” and “under the sign of its ‘liberation’, caught up in a process whose functioning and strategy themselves derive from political economics.” (Baudrillard, 1993: 101). It does not just refer to the body as a sign, but it also refers to the sexuality of the body, and in this way sexuality in itself gains some other powers to be turned into symbols. In this manner, through striptease and a fetishist approach, the body is turned into a fetish object. Baudrillard states that “in the ‘fetishist’ theory of consumption, in the view of marketing strategists as well as consumers, objects are given and received everywhere as force dispensers (happiness, health, security, prestige, etc.)” (1981: 91). Therefore, the body as a fetish object in itself takes its place in the consumerist society.

When the female body is subjected to dressing and undressing through the commodities and the striptease, and when it transforms itself into a fetish commodity

and Baudrillard says that “if women are not fetishists it is because they perform this labour of continual fetishisation on themselves, they become *dolls*.” (1993:110). The act of striptease itself is a way of women turning themselves into dolls and wrapping their bodies and touching the smooth naked skin is an act of seduction. Baudrillard says that “the doll is a fetish produced in order to be continually dressed and undressed” (1993: 100). However, it is not for the one who gazes: the body and beauty are expected to be desired by the subject itself who performs the act. When the woman is performing striptease, the act can be divided into good and bad. The woman performing the good striptease is seductive and she adores herself and “It is the gaze of autoeroticism, of the object-woman who looks at herself as perfection and perversion. Woman is never so seductive as when she adores herself.” (Gane, 1991: 111). Around this self-adoring and autoeroticism, it is the act of embracing one’s body and castrating the other that is the cause of most seduction. It is the mannequin itself who is the perfect representation of the body for fashion and “Around the mannequin is an intense narcissism, a paradigm of self-seduction. The woman becomes her own fetish and, therefore, a fetish for the other.” (Gane, 1991: 111). Similar to that of mannequin for fashion, the woman performing the striptease becomes her own fetish through narcissism.

The woman performing striptease is casting herself away from the audience if it is not bad striptease. Roland Barthes defines striptease as “exorcism of sex” (1991: 85). In this exorcism of sex, “a few particles of eroticism, highlighted by the very situation on which the show is based, are in fact absorbed in a reassuring ritual which negates the flesh” (Barthes, 1991: 84). Through the negation of the flesh, the act of or the performance of striptease is abstracted. There is a bar that abstracts the naked body; it arouses sex, but sex is not achievable and the body is out of reach. The only one who has contact with the body is the artist. Barthes says that props used for striptease “make the unveiled body more remote, and force it back into the all-pervading ease of a well-known rite” (Barthes, 1991:84). These props are “the furs, the fans, the gloves, the feathers, the fishnet stockings, in short the whole spectrum of adornment, constantly makes the living body return to the category of luxurious objects which surround man with a magical decor.” (Barthes, 1991: 84). It is

important in the act of striptease to create a magical world; otherwise, it would be no different than bare nudity. Barthes claims that the dance accompanying striptease is not to arouse sexual desire but it has the agenda of covering the fact that the stripper is naked and he goes on claiming that the professionals “wrap themselves in the miraculous ease which constantly clothes them, makes them remote, gives them the icy indifference of skillful practitioners, haughtily taking refuge in the sureness of their technique: their science clothes them like a garment.” (1991: 85). It could be said that what makes striptease is not nudity in itself but the abstraction of nudity.

Baudrillard has some similar points with Barthes, and he refers to the distancing effect. In order for the female body to emerge as phallus, “the bar is always there as the clothes come off, signalling the emergence of the body as phallus, even if, or, rather, especially if, it is a woman's body” (Gane, 1991: 102). Mike Gane says that rather than a direct implication of sex or making love to the audience,

[S]triptease is always indirect and works essentially as a narcissism. This is a veritable work of transubstantiation . . . of body and phallus. It does not aim for the truth of the naked body, despite all appearances, but in the opposite direction, towards the body's envelopment in the exchange system of signs. This effects the true castration of women (and indirectly of men) (1991: 110).

Therefore, it could be said that the woman performing the act of striptease is castrated because she is turned into a phallic symbol, and the men watching the act are also castrated because they cannot have contact with the body and the body is also abstracted into a sign. Baudrillard defines this act as “the meticulous ritual of the strip-tease, the smooth and faultless potency [*puissance*] of the exhibited female body always functions as a phallic display, a potency medusified, paralysed, by a relentless phallic demand” (1993: 104). What makes the erotic act of striptease and nudity more erotic is the secondary nudity. Transparency, veils, or mirrors reduplicating the image and the sign “reconstructs, like a mirror, the fundamental rule of the body as erotic matter, the nudity of becoming, in order to be phallically celebrated, the diaphanous, smooth, depilated substance of a glorious and unsexed body.” (Baudrillard, 1993: 105). Rather than direct nudity, almost nakedness arouses more feelings, and filling the dress perfectly, creating a secondary skin and veils intensify this effect.

The striptease artist adopts a fixed gaze and Baudrillard defines that gaze as “medusified” and this gaze creates the effect of autoeroticism and distances those watching the act. As stated earlier, the bar and the closure of the mirror seduce the artist in its own sign. Baudrillard depicts this stage as “Its secret is a woman's autoerotic celebration of her own body, which becomes desirable in exact proportion to the intensity of this celebration.” (1993: 108). Narcissism of the artist affects the watcher more than bare nudity. The artist adores her own body and “Without this narcissistic mirage that is the substance of every gesture, without this gestural repertoire of caresses that come to envelop the body, making it into an emblem as a phallic object, there would be no erotic effect.” (Baudrillard, 1993: 108). When she adores and wraps herself, there is not much you can give her, “because she gives herself everything, hence the complete transcendence that makes her fascinating.” (Baudrillard, 1993: 109). In her abstraction and her transcendence, the artist with a fixed gaze turns herself into a statuesque phallic symbol and she is the one who enjoys this narcissistic act more than others.

Once the woman turns herself into an object for her pleasure, she turns herself into a living phallus. Baudrillard says that “To be castrated is to be covered with phallic substitutes. The woman is covered in them, she is summoned to produce a phallus from her body, on pain of perhaps not being desirable.” (1993: 110).

Baudrillard pays attention to castration, and consequently to castration anxiety. Therefore, it would be beneficial to point out the relation between striptease and castration, and Baudrillard depicts it as “the fascination of the strip-tease as a spectacle of castration derives from the immanence of discovering, or rather seeking and never managing to discover, or better still searching by all available means without ever discovering, that there is nothing there.” (1993: 110). The search is for the female genitals, and their invisibility creates the castration anxiety. Baudrillard quotes from Freud about it, and furthermore, he thinks that

[T]he obsession with the hole is changed into the converse fascination with the phallus. From this mystery of the denied, barred, gaping void, a whole population of fetishes surges forth (objects, phantasms, body-objects). The fetishised woman's body itself comes to bar the point of absence from which it arose, it comes to bar this vertigo in all its erotic presence, a ‘token of a

triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it' (Baudrillard, 1993: 110).

The search for the female genitals and the obsession or anxiety over castration gives its own pleasure. Being aware of the bar, but the anxiety to see more of it has a perverse erotic function. While the parts closer to the genitals have an erotic role, like that of underwear or the thighs, the lack of vagina or the anxiety of its lack create a different type of eroticism.

Baudrillard does not focus on narcissism on its own, but he thinks that narcissism has started to be controlled by signs too. He thinks that narcissism is planned and managed. He refers to Freud in order to explain narcissism, and Sigmund Freud explains the women that were good-looking since childhood as they love themselves the most and those who can love them the most gains their attention and those women are not there to love the man, but to be loved by the man in question. (Baudrillard, 1993: 111). Baudrillard parallels this kind of narcissism to advertisement and consumerism: and each subject is called upon to consume and to listen to the inner voice. For Baudrillard, women become the consumers of the models.

[O]ne should revert back into one's own body and invest it narcissistically 'from the inside', not in any sense to get to know it in depth, but, by a wholly fetishistic and spectacular logic, to form it into a smoother, more perfect, more functional object for the outside world. This narcissistic relation--it is a *managed* narcissism, operating on the body as in colonized virgin 'territory', 'affectionately' [*tendrement*] exploring the body like a deposit to be mined in order to extract from it the visible signs of happiness, health, beauty, and the animality which triumphs in the marketplace of fashion. (Baudrillard, 1998: 131).

All in all, one could say that this type of narcissism is managed and planned. According to Baudrillard, narcissism no longer consists of two classical forms. It is now "an administrated dismantling and restructuration of investments, a 'reappropriation' of the body according to models of management" (1993: 112). The body and narcissism is now fragmented like that of fetishisation process. It does not have to be the full body; the parts of the body will have that effect too. Baudrillard thinks that the third type of narcissism is 'synthetic' and it means "rewriting the body, deconstructed as a 'personalised' Eros, that is, indexed on collective functional models. . . The body as a summation of partial objects, the subject of which is the

second person plural of consumption.” (1993: 112). In terms of managed narcissism, the subject is no longer the singular ‘I’, but the plural ‘you’ that represent a code rather than the individual human beings, and the body takes its place in the economy by being an object itself. Planning and managing how narcissism functions leads to new paths in the interpretation of the body. One has to invest in their body in order to be a part of the system and Gane says that “woman has become a mannequin: each is summoned to treat their body as an investment through clothing and style.” (1991: 106). It would not be wrong to suggest that being beautiful, beautifying the body, and designing your body to become a fetish object in itself which you can adore has become a new job for the modern woman.

2.3. Jean Baudrillard on Death, Disease-Decay, and Madness

It would be relevant for the purpose of our study to present Baudrillard on death, disease-decay, and madness. Baudrillard argues that there is a place for all the constituents of the society. There is a part even for the mad. However, he argues that the asylum has lost its walls and the mad have been integrated to the society, or the society has been grasped by madness; it has been normalized. “Every society that internalises its mad is a society invested in its depths by madness, which alone and everywhere ends up being symbolically exchanged under the legal signs of normality.” (Baudrillard, 1993: 127). Madness as an anomaly has lost its lines, and has been integrated to the society, and de Bernières makes use of the dead and the mad people in revealing the body in relation to beauty because they are driven to madness or they sometimes die because of love or beauty.

As well as going through what Baudrillard says about the body, going through what he says about death could be useful in analysing the body from his point of view. Baudrillard draws the reader’s attention to the relationship between the body and death. Gane says that “Beyond the question of sexuality there is another which affects even more profoundly the fate of the body: death.” (1991: 112). Baudrillard tries to figure out how the dead are received in societies and figures out that death is no longer welcome in current societies. The dead are distanced day by day, and cemeteries are being carried away of the city centres. Death is an anomaly in current

societies according to Baudrillard, and being dead “is an unthinkable anomaly; nothing else is as offensive as this. Death is a delinquency, and an incurable deviancy. The dead are no longer inflicted on any place or space-time, they can find no resting place; they are thrown into a radical utopia.” (1993: 126). However, he thinks that we have now reached an age of “a culture of death.” (1993: 127). Gane supports his idea and says “our culture is a culture of death: by abolishing that which cannot be abolished death makes its symptomatic mark everywhere.” (1991: 113). Hence it could be said that the subtle prohibition of death prevails over the current societies.

Baudrillard tries to define what death is and says that “Death is ultimately nothing more than the social line of demarcation separating the ‘dead’ from the ‘living’: therefore, it affects both equally.” (1993: 127). What strikes Baudrillard about the living and the dead is that in the primitive societies, the dead were accepted as a part of the living, and they were welcome into the society, but now, in current societies, it is unacceptable. Gane says that “One stage of initiation, as in all rites of passage, involves ritual death in order that a rebirth may occur. In primitive societies there is an exchange between ancestors and the living, a direct contact between the dead and the living.” (1991: 113). Seclusion and distantation of death does not mean its absence, and Baudrillard says “the indestructible logic of symbolic exchange re-establishes the equivalence of life and death in the indifferent fatality of survival. In survival, death is repressed; life itself . . . would be nothing more than a survival determined by death.” (1993: 127). While one thinks of survival, they are being imaginative and in primitive societies, the act of interaction with the dead, and the rituals conducted to reach out to them and the exchange ceremonies blur the line between the living and the dead. The rituals usually turn into supernatural events, but however super naturalistic they are, the primitive societies have a more realist approach towards death, and death becomes a unification ritual for them between the living and the dead.

About the diseased or decaying bodies, Baudrillard suggests that we take them to hospitals under the implication of better medical care, but in fact we want them to be

secluded from the society. Although Baudrillard does not say it directly, this could be applied to those whom the society thinks of being morally ill, or diseased. They are secluded from the society to live in the suburbs of towns or cities, and their bodies are generally reflected in the process of decaying, and even when they have to share common ground, they are cast away from the rest of the society to have their own space.

The final point to be made about death and its relation to the body is about sexuality. In the earlier periods, death was not an anomaly, but now it is and the condition is reversed for sexuality which was regarded as an anomaly in the past but it is acceptable now. Baudrillard suggests that

Death and sexuality, instead of confronting each other as antagonistic principles (Freud), are exchanged in the same cycle, in the same cyclical *revolution* of continuity. Death is not the ‘price’ of sexuality the sort of equivalence one finds in every theory of complex living beings (the infusorium is itself immortal and asexual) nor is sexuality a simple detour on the way to death, as in *Civilisation and its Discontents*: they exchange their energies and excite each other. Neither has its own specific economy: life and death only fall under the sway of a single economy if they are separated; once they are mixed, they pass beyond economics altogether, into festivity and loss (eroticism according to Bataille) (1993: 155).

It reminds one of Baudrillard’s ideas upon striptease about which he makes a correlation between death and the slow conjuration of eroticism. The act reminds one of death with the slow movements and the fixed gaze. Baudrillard says that “Speaking of death makes us laugh in a strained and obscene manner. Speaking of sex no longer provokes the same reaction: sex is legal, only death is pornographic. Society, having ‘liberated’ sexuality, progressively replaces it with death” (1993: 184). Therefore, death could be said to have replaced the role of sexuality in current societies. He comments on the correlation between death and sexuality and says that “Erotic nakedness is equal to death insofar as it inaugurates a state of communication, loss of identity and fusion.” (1993: 156). Finally, as Edgar Allan Poe suggests that when death “most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” (1846: 165). It is poetical in itself and it has a functional role. The death of a beautiful woman has haunted many stories, and death and loss of unity will be reflected in this thesis too. Baudrillard suggests that when a person dies biologically, “death and the

body neutralise instead of stimulating each other. The mind body duality . . . is death itself, since it objectifies the body as residual, as a bad object which takes its revenge by dying.” (1993: 160). Once the body ceases to exist, it should no longer prevail, but it gains other powers. It could be said that death and the body are correlated, and paying attention to death as well as the body could be useful while analysing de Bernières’ novel.



CHAPTER 3

3. THE RECREATION OF THE BODY AND BEAUTY IN THE POSTMODERN CONTEXT AS REVEALED IN *BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS*

3.1. The Deconstruction of Mythological Beauty

As a postmodern writer, Louis de Bernières plays with the notions that were previously thought as unchangeable. Throughout *Birds Without Wings*, de Bernières makes use of magical realism, deconstruction and reconstruction, scatters suspicion over metanarratives, fragmentariness, etc. He proves to be a skillful writer in reflecting these postmodern features in his novels. One can clearly see fragmentation in the episodic nature of the novel and in the use of different points of view as first person narrator, third person omniscient narrator, and third person semi-omniscient narrator. The fragmentation in the implementation of songs, poems, and letters in the novel as well as the usage of several languages within the novel contribute to the creation of this effect. As to suspicion towards metanarratives, he deconstructs history and within his narrative, personal history intermingles with national history. It represents the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the present day Turkey, as well the loss of unity, the exodus of people from the places where they felt like home, and personal relations in a small town called Eskibahçe, which represents the Garden of Eden in Turkish. In his recreation of history the novelist even entitles an episode as “Fritz and Moritz Accidentally Change History,” and Rustem’s obsession with time and clocks allude to modernity and awareness of time, while it is a means of mockery at the same time. Likewise, ground perceptions on the body and beauty are reflected upon by de Bernières, and he deconstructs and reconstructs the historical and contemporary notions of the body and beauty in a postmodern way.

Louis de Bernières has created peculiar, and yet mostly one dimensional characters in *Birds Without Wings*. These characters are mostly naïve in themselves, and even when they do some evil, it is as if they were innocent but incited by some

superior powers. For instance, when Levon the Sly is beaten and kicked by a drunken man in the town centre, there is a crowd cheering the man beating Levon. However, de Bernières describes them as “‘Kick him, kick him!’ cried the women, like an intoxicated chorus of maenads.” (2014: 161). They are mostly innocent but tempted and driven insane by the circumstances. De Bernières combines humour and seriousness at the same time, and his tone is sarcastic for most of the novel.

As to the deconstruction of the body and beauty within a postmodern context, one can see the deconstruction of beauty standards of various ages of history within the text. De Bernières deconstructs beauty in relation to other criteria, as in the historical construction of beauty. As stated earlier, beauty did not have a discourse of its own until very recently, yet it was analysed in relation to other criteria like goodness, light, virtue, truth, mathematics, symmetry, harmony, and divinity. Throughout history, beauty has had a dualistic nature too, in order to define something it is better to have its opposite. Therefore, the correlations between beauty and ugliness, order versus chaos, and light versus darkness have inspired postmodern writers to blur the lines between these opposite ends.

The first thing, considered by de Bernières in his novel, about beauty is its correlation with harmony. The first narrator of the novel is Iskander the Potter, who starts the novel in a nostalgic and melancholic way. Echoing the beauty standards of Ancient Greece and that of Apollo and Dionysus, Iskander’s epilogue starts with the explanation of Ibrahim’s insanity. The first thing to be captured here is the Dionysian beauty, which suggested “possession and madness.” (Eco, 2004: 58). De Bernières suggests that Ibrahim went mad because he was deeply affected by the war that broke the unity between different races that were living harmoniously in Eskibahçe, and consequently he lost his beloved Philothei that was apparently an accidental murder. Once he returns from war, he cannot recover and resume his old self. Eventually he fails to marry his bride, Philothei, and she is torn between her duties as a daughter and as a fiancée. She is a Christian Greek who is supposed to be a Muslim once she marries Ibrahim. However, as the union fails between the couple, she is torn between staying with Ibrahim and joining the exodus with her family.

Iskander recounts her as “in retrospect none of it seems believable, and it cannot matter much if finally I tell of the last misfortune that fell upon Philothei, sweet-natured, Christian, vain and beautiful.” (De Bernières, 2014: 1). It is noteworthy that Iskander mentions them both in the same paragraph: Philothei’s beauty and Ibrahim’s madness.

The relation between Ibrahim and Philothei echoes the correlation between Apollonian and Dionysian beauty. As Iskander reflects it, the people remaining in Eskibahçe have lost their unity, and he says “We are in any case a serious people here. Life was merrier when the Christians were still among us, not least because almost every one of their days was the feast of some saint.” (De Bernières, 2014: 1). Iskander is melancholic, and he relates his melancholy to his religion and says, “Our religion makes us grave and thoughtful, dignified and melancholy, whereas theirs did not exact much discipline.” (De Bernières, 2014: 1). The loss of merriness is often related to Ibrahim and Philothei, as Ibrahim lost his merriness, and Iskander says that “there is a sadness seeping out the stones of this half-deserted town.” (De Bernières, 2014: 2). Following this sentence, Iskander returns to Ibrahim and mentions how entertaining and joyous he was before. Christians were once a part of their life, and when Christians were forced to depart, the remaining people of the town were Muslims, and both Christians and Muslims lose their unity and harmony, and none of them ever feel complete again. Iskander feels as if he is living in an apocalyptical world in which they have forgotten to die in time.

Louis de Bernières represents the loss of harmony through a violent act. The breakdown of harmony is reflected through the exposure and stoning of a beautiful woman. She is suspected of having committed adultery, yet there is not enough evidence to support the claim. De Bernières portrays the characters that threw stones at Tamara as initially starting involuntarily. In the beginning, they did not want to do it, but once they started it, they could not help themselves. When there were not enough stones to throw, they started kicking and spitting. When Ayse examines Tamara, she notices that those who kicked her usually preferred to kick her in the genitals. The stoning of the beautiful woman is the first hint of loss of harmony in a

chronological manner. Therefore, loss of beauty, punishing the beautiful, as well the lack of evidence suggests that the correlation between goodness, order, and harmony has been lost within the local community.

Another Apollonian and Dionysian nature of beauty is represented through the characters of Drosoula and Philothei. Drosoula says that she is the personification of ugliness, and her friend Philothei is the beauty of the town. They are always together during their childhood. When Leyla sees Philothei for the first time, she wants to have her as a maid not because she wants Philothei to do housework, but because Philothei will accompany her. Leyla says that she wants to have the pretty one, not the ugly one, since she wants to be surrounded by prettiness. Rustem responds to it as “The ugly one and the pretty one are always together. I have been wondering if they are sisters.” (De Bernières, 2014: 200). In this part, one can see the reconstruction of beauty as in the temple of Apollo and Dionysus in order to represent the coexistence of beauty and ugliness. Eco comments on the Pythagorean beauty about opposites, and he says: “when two opposites are in contrast to each other, only one of them represents perfection: the odd number, the straight line and the square are good and beautiful, the elements placed in opposition to them represent error, evil, and disharmony.” (2004: 72). Apollonian and Dionysian beauty is given in opposition, and Pythagorean beauty has an opposition. However, in de Bernières’ novel, they all unite and create a harmony out of disharmony. The two girls perform the union of opposites and thus create perfection.

3.2. The Philosophers on the Body and Beauty

It was Pythagoras who introduced the famous concept of golden mean to measure beauty. Beauty could be measured, and for something to be considered as beautiful, it had to have proportion. De Bernières has already deconstructed proportion and symmetry in *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, presenting it as reversion. In *Birds Without Wings* he reconstructs it and this time it is represented in line with Pythagoras’ concept. However, he is skeptical of symmetry, and he mocks it in two different contexts. The first one is when Rustem wants to buy Leyla from Kardelen. Kardelen describes Leyla as “she is the ideal of beauty. Her face is slightly oval, her

skin is very fine and white, her eyebrows are black and meet in the middle, her lips are very red and fresh. She is neither tall nor squat.” (De Bernières, 2014: 186). Kardelen refers to her face’s symmetry and her body’s proportion; however, as the reader knows that Leyla will be bought like a possession and she will not be a wife, her body’s proportion and symmetry serve only to please Rustem, and therefore Leyla’s body is treated like an object.

Tamara is also subject to symmetry and proportion. Although Rustem has never seen her fully naked, the women in the hamam have seen her, and Ayse describes her body as “she was small and slight, but her breasts were round like pomegranates, and any mother in the hamam would have wished her as a wife for the pleasure of a son” (De Bernières, 2014: 115). Another reference to proportion and symmetry is made when Tamara is treated by Ayse. Some bones of her were broken when she was stoned, and there was a break in her collarbone too, and Ayse says that “If you don’t set it right in a woman then she’s got one breast higher than the other till she’s lying in the grave and even after...I am glad to say, and she heals up nice and square, within reason.” (De Bernières, 2014: 115). Similar to Leyla’s example, one can see that symmetry and proportion are to please men, and once Tamara heals, she will be sent to live in sanctuary in a brothel as a prostitute. Therefore, it would not be wrong to suggest that de Bernières is sarcastic about symmetry and proportion, and the use of mathematics in assessing beauty, since it always ends in serving or pleasing someone.

While Aristotle is in line with Pythagoras about the objectivity and measurability of beauty, Plato is different from them, in that he relates beauty to the divine. Plato thinks that beauty exists within the object. De Bernières reflects this in Philothei, and her birth is given in a magical realist way. She was beautiful even as a baby. All those that visit her, be them Muslim or Christian, speculate about her beauty, and yet they are all fearful of her beauty. They feel that some evil might fall upon her, simply because of her beauty. Philothei’s father, Abdulhamid hoca, and Drosoula’s father are fearful of her beauty, as Drosoula remembers her father saying, “When I saw her eyes I was afraid of God for the first time in my life. It was as if they

belonged to someone who had lived too long and seen too much. They were an angel's eyes, and they made me think of death." (De Bernières, 2014: 21). Her angelic and divine beauty makes everyone around her to think of death. De Bernières might be told to reverse the good affiliations of beauty to death. In the postmodern context, the lines are blurred and beauty does not bring one closer to God by de Bernières, but it brings one closer to punishment and death by those jealous of it, as in the cases of Tamara and Philothei.

Plato is against copies, and as it will be stated in the next chapter, Philothei is a simulation; a copy. Plato's concept of copy regains power in Baudrillard's theory on simulations and simulacra. As Plato suggests, the copies and art get one far from truth, Baudrillard takes a step further and claims that they hide the fact that they are not original, and the next step is when they cover the fact that there is no original behind them. Philothei is a copy just like Leyla. De Bernières reverses the roles, and once Rustem goes to get a beautiful mistress to make him happy, he is disgusted by the environment where Leyla lives, and "He gave thanks to God that it had not been his destiny to live in such a hell of desperation, filth and iniquity, but it did not yet strike him as paradoxical that he had come here in order to seek his happiness." (De Bernières, 2014: 177). As the reader knows that Leyla creates him a paradise through sexuality and beauty, copies and originals are reversed in an ironic way by de Bernières. The copies are too distant from truth and divine; however, in Rustem's case they allude to divinity. Nevertheless, we are aware that the copy only distances Rustem from divinity.

3.3. Beauty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

In the Middle Ages, beauty keeps being correlated to divinity. Beauty is regarded as a bestowment, yet the reader knows that it is not the case in the novel. The beautiful Philothei ends up dead. Tamara is stoned and forced to live in a brothel. Leyla has to take upon another role, race, name, and she is a mistress instead of a wife. The only ugly character of the novel, Drosoula, gets married in time, she is loved by her husband, and she survives in the end.

In the same period, there is considered to be three transcendental features of divinity: beauty, goodness, and truth. Umberto Eco says that “what is beautiful is the same as what is good, and in fact in various historical periods there was a close link between the Beautiful and the Good.” (2004: 9). However, in the novel the correlation between them is reversed. Ugly Drosoula is honest and protective. Philothei is vain and beautiful, but she is no more than that. Leyla is beautiful but she has to be a liar. She tells lies about her race, her name, and her virginity. Because of the apocalyptic nature of the novel, copies and lies triumph over truth and originality. The divine nature and relation between beauty, goodness, and truth is reversed when Rustem takes Leyla as his mistress. He wants to erect a temple if he receives a good mistress, but when he arrives home, “He has had another one of his disturbing dreams about witnessing the funeral of God, except that this time the angels are dumb, and the coffin is so minute that it would scarcely hold a babe.” (De Bernières, 2014: 200). Therefore, it would not be wrong to suggest that beauty as divine is reversed here, since Leyla’s beauty does not compensate for the loss of connection between God and human beings. God is transformed into a baby, into a needy baby whose helpers, namely angels, cannot hear anything. Human beings are left in a world where God cannot help them anymore. Baudrillard says that “There have always been churches to hide the death of God, or to hide the fact that God was everywhere, which amounts to the same thing.” (1993: 19).

A medieval and Renaissance characteristic to be deconstructed by de Bernières is the beauty of monsters. Monsters and ugly creatures were used to create memorable places according to Umberto Eco, and he says that “monsters had a friendly function, precisely because of their impressive ugliness.” (2011: 125). He keeps on explaining why they were useful and says, “in the *arts of memory*, since ancient times, those wishing to be able to recall words and concepts were advised to associate them with various rooms in a building or various places in a city where there stood horrifying statues that were hard to forget.” (2011: 125). Therefore, it could be beneficial to take into consideration that Drosoula usually refers to her memory. De Bernières might have recreated ugliness and monstrosity to allude to this function of memorability. Drosoula says that “I am just an old woman in exile, I

have no education, I am ugliness personified, but if I could break open my ribs with my bare hands, I would show you that I have a heart grown huge with love, and grief, and memory.” (De Bernières, 2014: 25). The act that she describes is a bit brutal, but she is memorable and she tries to break the link between ugliness and not being good. She also makes references to having lost some of her memories, and there are so many times that, when she refers to Philothei and Leyla’s beauty and her own ugliness, she refers to memory too.

Another feature of beauty in the Middle Ages is that of being beautified, as ornamentation starts to be used, and in the postmodern context this leads people to turn themselves into commodities. In the novel, it is usually the prostitutes whose eyes have heavy kohl, and Leyla prefers to use ornaments to beautify herself and Philothei. Her commodification process will be analysed in the next chapter, yet the things that she buys is comically given by de Bernières as “they shop for fabrics, for draughts and potions, cosmetics and liniments and lotions, for things that she insists she must have, and most of which he has never heard.” (2014: 194). Rustem, who wants to be modern, is doomed to live with a woman who is not like his wife Tamara, who did not want any ornamentation. In order to beautify herself, Leyla uses the things that Rustem bought for her in order to seduce him, like the gold string, which he bought for her forehead.

3.4. Mythological and Biblical Beauty

Beauty as light has been a subject to explore not only in mythological Apollonian discourse but also in Biblical discourse. De Bernières reflects characters glowing with light. Nevertheless, in addition to the reflection of light through the body and beauty of characters, de Bernières uses light and darkness to set a background for beauty, morality, and decay. When Philothei’s birth is announced, Iskander comments, “I swear that the whole night was changed. The dogs ceased to howl, the moon broke out from behind the clouds, there was a scent of saffron and olibanum in the air, and a bulbul began to sing in the plane tree down in the centre of meydan” (De Bernières, 2014: 9). That is the first case where light and beauty coexist to set a background. Although the scene evokes pleasant feelings, de Bernières uses this

scene for opposite purposes, since the characters do not only feel happy in this transcendental scene, but they also feel frightened, because they suspect that something bad might happen in this pleasant atmosphere.

As we have claimed earlier, for de Bernières, “Light and darkness are combined to suggest ambiguity over the correlation of virtue, goodness and light.” (Akkaş, 2016: 128). When Leyla creates a paradise for Rustem over lights, food, and beauty, de Bernières reflects moral deterioration in this paradise through light and pleasant atmosphere. Leyla gets prepared for the seduction of Rustem Bey, and her body and beauty are displayed as, “Her black hair was superbly brushed and shining, and her eyes seemed huge and infinitely dark. They glittered in the half-light. Across her forehead glowed the string of gold chains” (De Bernières, 2014: 228). Leyla has inner light, and through shining objects and a suitable background, she manages to be more beautiful. However, since Leyla is not Rustem’s wife; therefore sexual relation between Leyla and Rustem, for which she has been preparing, suggests adultery, the same reason he got his wife stoned. Leyla plays with light and darkness to create him a false paradise. Similar to the lure of Odysseus and his men, Rustem falls into Leyla’s paradise for a long time, the paradise Leyla created through beauty, sexuality, food, music, and light.

De Bernières relates beauty to light as one reads Rustem’s comments on Leyla’s beauty and light. The first thing that he says is about moonlight, and then its making it possible to see in the darkness. Then he says that Leyla is beautiful, like the night. When there is a reference to light and darkness, there is a reference to beauty too. Once he gets into the room he questions whether he is in paradise because “The inner court was a sea of glimmering, moving golden-yellow lights. There was no pattern to it. Some of the flames were momentarily still, and others were travelling” (De Bernières, 2014: 229). It brings to mind the chaotic nature of Dionysian beauty. De Bernières recreates Dionysian beauty in that sense. The lines following the still and moving lights reflect the downfall and moral deterioration in a sarcastic way: “It was as if the stars had been captured from Heaven and been set in motion there in that

small square of the lower world.” (De Bernières, 2014: 218). Although Rustem feels as if it were paradise, we know that it is the very opposite of it.

The transcendental nature of light and beauty continues when Rustem mentions the pleasantness of the night for him. “‘All my life, hanım,’ he said, ‘all of it that is granted to remain, I shall remember this night, this feast, these pretty lights, you, your great beauty. What’s better, after this? After this, there is only death.’” (De Bernières, 2014: 231). For Rustem, beauty and sexuality are transcendental and sublime. It reminds him of death. Beauty and lights are used in this postmodern context to represent the fall of humankind from heaven in Biblical context rather than to imply transcendence.

As opposed to Leyla, the background when Rustem loses Tamara and her new place to live is given in darkness. Rustem awaits Tamara to be saved by Abdulhamid to be cared for after she is stoned. Rustem returns to his house to find it in darkness. When Ayse takes Tamara to the brothel, the road is described as, “beyond to where the street turned a corner sharply and ended with a final, isolated house, flat-roofed, whose façade was draped with climbing roses, and whose windows were latticed in order to conceal the dark interior.” (De Bernières, 2014: 125). It does not only reflect Tamara’s fall into darkness, but also universally speaking the world’s fall into darkness, as soon after the incident a war is to break out.

When Rustem wants to visit Tamara in the brothel, de Bernières describes the road to the brothel and the interior of the brothel in relation to light and darkness. “He was wrapped so heavily in a black cloak as to be almost invisible, and it was obvious that he was being deliberately furtive. He stood still for a while, accustoming his eyes to the darkness, and then he set off.” (De Bernières, 2014: 411-412). Once again, physical darkness is related to deterioration, since this secret act is not based on just helping Tamara, but to have sex with her one more time. “Even in that darkness, it was clear that he knew where he was going, and there was something in his manner that betrayed great purpose.” (De Bernières, 2014: 412). On his way, he crosses through all the unities of their society, that is to say Muslims’, Christians’, Jews’ and Armenians’ houses. All the religious buildings are described

in their good affiliations by de Bernières, maybe to evoke that Rustem is going past them, and he is losing all the religious connections right at that moment. What is striking is that when he gets closer to the brothel, de Bernières uses the same lines that he had used when describing Tamara's being taken to the brothel on page 125. It might be a reference to the similarity between Tamara's and Rustem's downfall.

Inside the brothel, Rustem "found the dark pink light almost too dim, even though he had just come in out of utter darkness." (De Bernières, 2014: 412). The fall is again represented in relation to darkness, and when Rustem wants to see Tamara's face, she objects to it saying, "Why do you think we keep the light so dim? If you look at me you will see the diseases, and you will see that I am under a curse" (De Bernières, 2014: 421). There are so many references to darkness and light that even in the brothel through Tamara; she is not a bad person, and it is ironical that darkness represents decay. She does not try to please men; she does not seduce. She wants Rustem to take Leyla as a wife; she does not want Leyla to be disregarded by the people in the town, as she knows what it means to be disregarded. Yet, "Because of her decaying beauty, Tamara prefers to sit in darkness which also accounts for moral deterioration." (Akkaş, 2016: 128). Tamara is not disobedient to her fate. She has lived through it, and she patiently awaits her death, and she does not push it as the other women do in the brothel by drugs, either to die or to relieve their pain. Tamara believes that this world is governed by the devil. She cannot cleanse the earth through her tears; she knows that she cannot because she has cried enough. If she had the chance, she would buy the world from the devil with her tears if they were worth anything.

There are many Biblical references to beauty and the body in the novel. Although beauty is not a direct concern of religion, it is mostly affiliated with God and virtue. In the novel, the body of believers consists not only of the Christians, but also of Muslims and of Jews. Tatiana Golban reflects this unity as,

The mixture of spiritual and cultural strands does not spoil at all the harmonious universe of Eskibahçe. This "unity in diversity" in fact strengthens the atmosphere of the initial paradisiacal space of Eskibahçe, which is also suggested through the beauty of nature, of the village, of Abdulhamid Hoca's horse, of Philothei, of people, a beauty which is almost

unearthly. The metaphor of the Edenic space is also sustained by the beauty of the church and the mosque.(2015: 46).

The believers of these religions pray for the other religions secretly, and the lines between these religions are blurred, and it is easy to cross between religions by marriage. As the name of the town, Eskibahçe, Garden of Eden suggests, they live in paradise. Golban refers to this as, “The novel begins with the depiction of an Edenic space, where most of the characters live in harmony and relative respect for each other.” (2015: 46). However, their local troubles intervene with the global troubles, and their saviour figure fails to save them. Rustem fails to protect his bride, and she is cast away to a brothel. He wants to build a temple for God if he finds a good woman, and he actually finds one, but he fails to build the mosque that he promised to God. Another failure of him is about Levon’s daughters. Rustem saves them from being raped, and he says that he will find them good husbands while their family is being deported, yet once again he fails to protect them, and they become his mistresses, like Leyla.

The most important Biblical reference in the novel is about Madonna/whore dichotomy. The first thing to be noticed about the dichotomy is that they are inverted. Golban refers to the inversion of the Bride, and how Tamara Hanım has lost her significance whom Rustem “feverishly expected to open the gates to heaven for him, Tamara Hanım, becomes ironically the Whore of Babylon, as she destroys the faithful and the committed man through her adultery; unwittingly she triggers violence and releases the forces of evil.” (2015: 49). The bride and whore are reflected as upside down in this postmodern novel. Rustem explains the situation as “‘I have a wife,’ said Rustem, ‘but I have put her aside. She was a slut.’ ‘My aga, a good slut is not to be sniffed at,’ said Kardelen” (De Bernières, 2014: 182). The dichotomy is upside down, yet sarcastically sluts are shown as precious in this part, but Tamara is not a good slut. The men visiting her felt like “You came out disconcerted by those liquid, unfocused eyes that gleamed in the dark, and infected by her loneliness and stillness, and it made you nostalgic and sorrow-shot. There had been, it turned out, little satisfaction in using the wife of the landlord.” (De Bernières, 2014: 133). Kardelen keeps on comparing wives and mistresses and says,

“A wife is a cross between a slave and a brood mare, but a mistress is the smell of the rose that comes in through the shutters on a summer night. Think of her as semi-divine.” (De Bernières, 2014: 192). The dichotomy of Madonna/whore is once again played with, and de Bernières makes Kardelen subvert the roles and attributions.

One can also see the difference between soul and the body in Tamara in that although there were queues for her, her body was “motionless, unresponsive flesh” (De Bernières, 2014: 133). While her soul is not to be grasped, and her body is not to give pleasure, she is cast away by other women, who do not want to be associated with harlotry. One can see the unification of the wife and slut when they sit together in the hamam. Both of them are not welcome by the rest of the society, and they unite in their opposition, and they could be said to respect and care for each other.

Another reference to Bible is about the exposure and stoning of Tamara. People start stoning her, and once again like Rustem, it is another Muslim character who takes upon the role of Jesus. Abdulhamid, the imam of the Muslim religion, intervenes and protects Tamara. Abdulhamid’s name also connotes one of the last Ottoman kings and Abdulhamid, who tries hard to deter his empire from falling apart, but in the end it does even though he pays efforts to unite his empire. Abdulhamid, the imam, reminds the Christians about Jesus saving a stoned woman, and recites from Quran in order to unite them in harmony and peace, rather than evil. The religions coincide about their references to harlotry and stoning. However, de Bernières ironically makes harlotry seem like an illness for the naïve people of the town. The women do not want to touch Tamara, and Ayse says that harlotry is contagious.

3.5. Towards a Subjective Understanding of Beauty

Beauty notions of various historical eras as well as Biblical beauty are deconstructed by de Bernières in the novel. Earlier beauty notions were about beauty being in correlation with other attributes and being measurable, yet Kant introduces the subjectivity of beauty, and de Bernières reconstructs it in the novel about

Philothei. Kant suggests that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. De Bernières represents Philothei through different points of view, and many characters agree that she was born beautiful, but for Iskander she was a baby, like all the other babies, and she was not particularly different. Mehmet Atalay comments on Kant and says that “Kant thinks that the transcendental principle of general acceptability is this principle that provides the *a priori* character of taste. Such a principle, he claims, can only be common sense—*sensus communis*.” (2007: 46). Iskander does not say that she was ugly; he only says that she was not different as a baby. However, when she grows up, he remembers her as a beautiful girl. Therefore, we could assume that de Bernières recreates Kant’s subjective beauty with universal validity.

Likewise, when Mehmetçik and Karatavuk are playing, they talk about a bunch of topics, and Karatavuk comments on something that he heard, and he says, “‘Everybody says that your sister Philothei is very beautiful,’ said Karatavuk, ‘but I haven’t noticed myself.’” (De Bernières, 2014: 43). Although he does not suggest that Philothei is not beautiful, it is about people’s perceptions of beauty, and he did not notice Philothei’s beauty by himself, yet he acknowledges that she is beautiful. Her beauty exists in herself, and beauty is subjective, but it has universal validity. The subjectivity of beauty is reconstructed here by de Bernières.

3.6. The Body and Beauty in the Postmodern Era

Naomi Wolf says that until 1830s, the image of beauty was represented by the prostitutes regardless of the good and divine attributions to it. Beauty was advertised through prostitutes. In the novel this statement is reflected as assertion of beauty by Leyla. Although Tamara was beautiful too, it was only through Leyla that Rustem came to appreciate beauty, and once he sees her naked, “He suddenly realised, with a sense of profound wonder, that he had never appreciated before how beautiful a woman was, and how strange and unlike anything else this beauty was.” (De Bernières, 2014: 185). Leyla is created by de Bernières to be a representative of beauty. Apart from the moment when Tamara’s being healed, no other woman except Leyla is reflected as naked. In the hamam, the women get naked, and yet

their nakedness is not accessible to men, even though Rustem remembers how curious they were to see inside it as children.

In recent discourse, according to Naomi Wolf, beauty has started to be like a cult for women, and it has started to gain negative attributes. Women are left in a dilemma to be beautiful, and yet to be considered as self-centered. Whenever de Bernières mentions Philothei's beauty, she is reflected as vain too. Drosoula mentions her as, "she wasn't intelligent or funny or particularly interesting. She didn't have any knowledge or education. She didn't really have high spirits. She had two ambitions. One was to be beautiful, and the other was to marry Ibrahim." (De Bernières, 2014: 555). One can see the superficiality of Philothei, and Drosoula keeps on commenting on her as, "In lots of ways Philothei was nobody at all and she only lived in a very little world, and she was destined to be ordinary." (De Bernières, 2014: 555). Although Drosoula makes positive comments on Philothei most of the time, she makes it clear here that Philothei was only obsessed with pretty things and being pretty.

Beauty is like an addiction according to recent theories, and Baudrillard comments on it as,

For women, beauty has become an absolute, religious imperative. Being beautiful is no longer an effect of nature or a supplement to moral qualities. It is the basic, imperative quality of those who take care of their faces and figures as they do of their souls. (1998: 133).

Likewise, one can see the rituals that Philothei and Leyla go through to get more and more beautiful. Leyla defines her addiction to beauty as, "it's like opium, it's an addiction, you've got to have more and more of it, and it's like a great heat in the heart that expands and expands and fills you up—like having a sun inside. I just want to get more and more and more beautiful all the time." (De Bernières, 2014: 219). Leyla has become the slave of beauty in her own words, and it brings forth beauty anxiety. Drosoula is cast away from the beauty rituals practiced by Leyla and Philothei, who go to hamam, wear perfume, and look at the mirror intoxicatingly and they are themselves intoxicated in their own beauty. Drosoula only looks at her reflection in the water to see that she is not like Philothei and Leyla.

As theorists have asserted, beauty brings forth its own negative discourse too. Leyla comments on the negative sides of beauty, and she says that beautiful people cannot be sure whether the people around them like them for their beauty or personality, and she says that “Sometimes you wonder why people are being nice to you, and sometimes you know that your beauty is the reason that some people want to be horrible to you. People think that they want to know you, but really they are fascinated by a mask.” (De Bernières, 2014: 218). She likes being beautiful, but she is also aware of the dangers of her beauty too. Samantha Kwan and Mary Nell Trautner suggest that “individuals expect attractive women to be more conceited and likely to engage in adultery.” (2009: 51). We could deduct that people believed in Tamara’s adultery because they thought that she was beautiful. Likewise, Leyla, who is beautiful as well, is to be suspected of adultery if she does not follow the code of the society. It means that your appearance matters, not only through good connotations, but also through the expectations of seduction and adultery in the contemporary context. People are impressed by your looks more than your personality.

More than once Leyla regards beauty as a job, and she says that she has worked hard in order to be able to be lazy. She admits that “being beautiful is like having a job . . . If you’re a woman you can be a mother or a servant or something, but you can also be beautiful. If you’re beautiful it’s better than working, even if you have to work at it” (De Bernières, 2014: 217). Regarding the processes that beauty has gone since the Industrial Revolution, women, especially working women have been put under the pressure of being beautiful. It is not only about selling beauty products, but also about keeping them under control.

Unlike her previous self, when the war breaks out, Leyla starts to lose her beauty, and she has to do some housework at home, since even though Rustem is rich, they cannot find enough servants. Leyla starts losing her beauty, and she starts to go looking for wild greens like other women. “Sometimes she looked at the dried skin of her hands, with their ingrained dirt and scuffed nails, and even felt a little proud of herself. She no longer had that enjoyable but nonetheless guilty sense of wasting her

life on frippery and idleness” (De Bernières, 2014: 411). Her loss of beauty and also the idea of being useful makes her spirits higher.

Although Leyla is very beautiful, she says that she is not, and she makes the girls believe it. Together with Philothei they try to beautify each other. This is a bit similar to the alterations done to the bodies of the models in photography. The bodies of even very beautiful women are subject to change in the contemporary world. Women are subject to a beauty discourse to which even the originals themselves do not match. Ironically, in the novel Leyla and Philothei make use of the magic touch of modern cameras through the mirror scene. They multiply their beauty by looking at the mirror as two beautiful women. Therefore, bodily alterations of the postmodern era could be said to be deconstructed and recreated through mirror and magical realism by de Bernières.

In the feminist discourse, beauty is said to be a construct and it is constructed by men’s institutions to control women. The construction of beauty as goodness, virtue and justness mostly apply to women. Tamara questions the validity of the discourse, and although she is a beautiful woman, beauty is not for her own sake and she becomes a fetish object for the people in the town in relation to her husband’s rank rather than her own beauty. She questions the notion of adultery, and she asks Rustem whether the people would stone him if he were the one who had committed adultery. ““You would never be stoned. You are not a wife as I was. You are not a young woman who is easy to stone. You are a lion and the rabble are like little dogs. If you roared, they would run away.”” (De Bernières, 2014: 418). She criticises the inequality between men and women. When Rustem says that he sometimes feels like he is having sex with her when he is with Leyla, Tamara accuses him of infidelity, yet she mentions the society’s hypocrisy about it.

The last thing to be pondered upon in this chapter is the fragmentary nature of the body and beauty in the postmodern context. The body is split between sexuality and innocence at the same time. Feminine sexuality was not acceptable for a long time, and it is still not acceptable in some societies. The only character who is welcome to perform sexuality is Leyla, yet Rustem questions her virginity when he buys her. He

wants to have a pleasing woman who could give him pleasure and who would not be like Tamara in sexuality. Kardelen says that she taught Leyla the techniques of pleasing men, but Leyla has had no direct experience. It is on theoretical level. The hypocrisy of the society is to be deceived by Kardelen, as they want to be pleased, but they do not want the women to have practiced it.

Philothei is the representation of innocence and she is the future bride figure of Eskibahçe. Nevertheless, Louis de Bernières reverses the correlation between innocence and being the bridal figure by making the mistress teach her the secrets of being a good wife. Her mentor is not the best example in that. As Tatiana Golban comments on de Bernières and says that de Bernières “in a typically postmodern manner, achieves a playful undermining of the conventional, modern Western ideological patterns, constantly engaging the reader into the creation of new ideas and possibly new meanings.” (2014b: 11). It would be right to claim that de Bernières makes the reader question the validity of the discourse on beauty, and beauty’s constructed affiliations through ages.

CHAPTER 4

4. LOUIS DE BERNIÉRES' *BIRDS WITHOUT WINGS* THROUGH THE LENSES OF BAUDRILLARDIAN CONCEPTS

4.1. Simulation and Simulacra

Louis de Bernières' novel begins through the representation of various characters who narrate the events from their own perspective. The novelist opposes these chapters, which are narrated from the first person point of view, to the historical chapters about Mustafa Kemal, which are narrated through the third person point of view. Moreover, it is most striking the fact that at the beginning of the novel the first thing to be narrated is the story of a mad man who became mad after the death of his beloved. While the choice of words on the first page implicitly or explicitly alludes to death, loss and ghost characters, the first preoccupation of everyone is Philothei. Iskander the Potter remembers her and says that "it cannot matter much if finally I tell of the last misfortune that fell upon Philothei, sweet-natured, Christian, vain and beautiful." (De Bernières, 2014: 1). The unexpected and the tragic death of a beautiful girl, who is a specter now, a simulation of another simulation, is among the first things to be known by the readers.

Once the tragic events are depicted in a melancholic and nostalgic way for the earlier times, the birth of Philothei, a beautiful baby is given retrospectively. Therefore, another striking thing for the beginning of the novel is that it begins as a memory. It is a kind of remembrance of a trivial moment, in which is a boy's getting mad and a beautiful girl's death and birth, interwoven with real or in fact simulated historical moments. Philothei's birth and death allude to the loss of unity and the end of an era for the people of Eskibahçe. Since historical moments are recreated in the novel only in the memory of characters, it could be argued that "history itself is or was only an immense model of simulation." (Baudrillard, 2001: 41). As stated by Baudrillard, the recreation of history is a simulation itself whose reliability is at

stake. The retrospective instead of linear narration of the events only contributes to the impression of simulation.

In a world which is mostly dominated by the third order of simulation, when the real is lost, nostalgia triumphs over the moment. The feeling of nostalgia opens the gates for the events in the novel. In this simulated world, simulated characters that have lost their authenticity, or had none to start with, prevail in the novel. In order to frame the idea of simulation in terms of the body and beauty in the novel, we have focused on Philothei, Leyla Hanım, as well as on some other characters of the novel.

The novel *Birds Without Wings* is structured upon the pattern of Revelation, so some important Biblical dichotomies are easily recognisable to the reader. Moreover, a tendency of retelling and questioning of these dichotomies is strongly felt in the novel, as to example the split between bride and whore. The Biblical bride/whore dichotomy is blurred throughout the novel, and the correlation between bridal figure and innocence is refuted. The bride figure, apparently Tamara, is cast out of the system over her suspected adultery, and she is confined to live in a brothel. On the other hand, the saviour figure of Eskibahçe replaces her with a new bridal figure from a house in which unfortunate girls live which alludes to a brothel. Therefore, while the place denotes different meanings for other people, it is a place where you can actually buy alternate brides for Rustem Bey. It is a simulation of a decent house for him. He cannot tell the difference between a brothel and a house right at that moment. He does not divorce his wife, Tamara, and actually he exchanges a mistress for his wife.

Rustem Bey wants to have a Circassian mistress for himself, and he makes it very clear from the beginning of his voyage that he is seeking pleasure which Tamara failed to provide for him. Once he announces his desire to Kardelen that he is looking for a Circassian girl, Kardelen tells him a story about Circassian girls in Bursa. Through this metafictional reference Kardelen makes it become very clear that the story might not be true at all, as she implies that what she is telling him might not be real at all. However, Rustem Bey, by the oriental mood in the house like that of smoking and coffee is easily allured and mesmerised. Kardelen tells the

story about the Circassian women who were so beautiful that there were some fights and murders among the local men for them, and the women were compelled to wear a veil over their faces to hide their beauty. However, since the veil started to represent beauty, local women started to wear veils too. Kardelen says that “all the old hags start to wander about in the market places pretending to be too beautiful to show their faces!” (De Bernières, 2014: 183). This story gives the reader the first implication that beauty can be simulated. It is not just about being beautiful or ugly, but it is about acting beauty or simulating beauty. It reflects the second order of simulacra. This example does not make reference only to beauty; it can be extended to race. Therefore, like beauty, race can be simulated as well. The lines between races are in a flux here, and this flexibility shows that even a race can be simulated too.

As Rustem Bey asks for a Circassian girl whom Kardelen does not have, yet suggests that she does, Ioanna has to simulate another race. She has to impersonate another race and in fact she has to receive a name suitable for a Circassian girl. She gets to be called as ‘Leyla’, and from that moment on, she has to assume the role of a girl who does not happen to be real. Ioanna asks Kardelen ““Do I really have to be Leyla? Don’t you think that he’ll realise I’m a Greek?”” (De Bernières, 2014: 188). Kardelen says that Rustem Bey would not be able to tell the difference because he probably has not met one in real life. In this part, simulacra substitutes for real here and Baudrillard says that “It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real” (1994: 12-13). Rustem Bey has a conception of Circassian women, who are pale and round faced with red lips and has the promise of pleasure. Therefore, Leyla takes upon that pattern which exists in Rustem Bey’s mind. In this respect Bill Ashcroft says that “We know the way simulacra can count as reality even when we know they are not real. This is not dissimilar from facts themselves. There are no such things as ‘pure facts’, but there are things that count as facts because they are located in a discourse.” (2005: 202). Therefore, the beauty of Circassian women is the standard for Rustem Bey, while he does not know much about the reality of it. Kardelen, knowing the discourse on the matter, makes Ioanna be that standard.

Another thing that Leyla (Ioanna) has to simulate is virginity. Rustem Bey questions whether she is a virgin or not and Kardelen says “naturally she is a virgin, my aga. She is as virgin as the day she was born, and no one can be more virgin than that, not even Mary Mother of Jesus” (De Bernières, 2014: 186). Baudrillard says that “once freed from reality, we can produce the ‘realer than real’—hyperrealism.” (2002: 18). Throughout the novel, de Bernières makes the reader aware of reality versus simulation and hyperrealism of which the previous quotation from the novel is an example; however, the characters are naïve about it and are unable to tell the difference. Leyla protests that she has to do it one more time, which shows that it is not the first time she simulates this pattern, yet Kardelen convinces her that it will not be a problem. Instead of being preoccupied with her reality, Ioanna should better look for the benefits of this situation and she is younger again in that context. Nevertheless, the reader can follow each step of simulation and becomes aware of the demise of the real.

Kardelen claims that Leyla has not had sex; however she is aware of the techniques of pleasing men which Kardelen taught her. In order to achieve the simulation of virginity and of promised pleasure, therefore Leyla makes use of seduction techniques that will be discussed later in this chapter. She delays Rustem Bey on purpose, and thus intensifies his gratitude and pleasure. Her simulation of virginity is not only physical but also sensual in terms of sex, eroticism, the scenery, the lights, and the food. She creates a simulacrum of paradise for Rustem Bey, and he is mesmerised by this hedonic experience which seems to be unearthly. He even asks whether he died and is in paradise. Although religious books give a description of paradise, we do not have a clear idea about what it looks like or if it really exists. Therefore, within this context and regarding the background events happening in the novel, Leyla’s simulacrum reveals the fact that there is no such paradise. In fact, it is just a projection or a substitute without an original. Sexuality is represented as entrance to paradise as opposed to the religious doctrines, which propose the fall of mankind from heaven. The reader is also aware that Leyla is a mistress, not a wife. Thus, the simulacra of paradise and loss of simulated virginity are reversed and revised within the novel.

The second character who is subject to simulation of beauty is Philothei. She has an a priori beauty. Her beauty is reflected upon her birth. It was not an easy one for her mother and almost everybody who were adults at that time comment upon her birth. Some decline a priori beauty and say that “All babies look the same, and to me this particular one appeared to be a very baby-like baby.” (De Bernières, 2014: 11). On the other hand, some characters reflect upon her beauty and Iskander says that when he met Philothei’s father he looked “as if he were worried by it, ‘It’s the prettiest child I’ve ever seen.’” (De Bernières, 2014: 9). The response to that is the suggestion that so much beauty could create trouble. It is not certain whether they feel sad for Philothei either from the very beginning or their memory makes them feel like that. For most people, she represents beauty from the very beginning of her life, and birth and death intermingle in her life.

From the very early stages of her life Philothei is the one who is gazed at. Even when she recounts her own story from childhood to her teenage years, she recounts it from other people’s point of view. She declares that it is her that speaks, but her sense of self is constructed in comparison to other people’s opinions of her. Therefore, she could be argued to be an object from the very beginning of her life. Inasmuch as simulation of beauty is considered, she could be said to be a character that has to hide the fact that we cannot reach the real beauty anymore.

Once Philothei meets Leyla, her fate starts to change or her predestination begins. Drosoula comments on their first encounter and says that Leyla “spotted Philothei as she passed into the town for the first time, standing by the sunken temple, and she and Philothei smiled at each other. I remember it well, because it was as if those two recognised something in each other.” (De Bernières, 2014: 213). Drosoula remembers it like they were not two separate beings, but reflections of each other. It is something like seeing yourself in the mirror. They detect each other from the first moment, and Leyla wants Philothei to be her companion.

Since Philothei is surrounded by Ibrahim all the time and she is betrothed to him, she gets the role of the bride figure for the future of Eskibahçe. Leyla is her mentor, and day by day, Drosoula depicts Philothei’s transformation from a child to a young

girl by the help of Leyla. This process is similar to a girl's intention to resemble a Barbie. With regards to girls' desire to look like Barbie, Drew A Hyland says that "no woman is anything like Barbie. It simulates no real women. Instead, thousands upon thousands of little girls are now trying to simulate their favourite Barbie doll" (2015: 21). The reader is aware that Leyla's Circassian beauty is not based on an original pattern. She is a simulation of a bride figure and everything about her is constructed. Hyland continues to argue that little girls "are simulating simulations of women that are themselves simulations without a reference to reality. Our little girls are becoming third-order simulations." (2015: 21). Likewise, when Leyla teaches both Drosoula and Philothei how to act beautiful not only be beautiful, the reader is aware that their role model is not an original but a simulation herself. In a magical realist scene, through the help of narcissism and reunion with the self, Leyla shows Philothei the discretion of beauty. Since the moment of her acquaintance with Leyla, Philothei becomes aware of her own beauty as well as of performativity of beauty not only through the gaze of others but through her own gaze she is able to appreciate it. Step by step, Leyla creates Philothei in her own image, as her imitation; however, it is not even an imitation of an original, but of perpetually fluctuating simulation of an original.

Once aware of her own beauty, Philothei starts to act as a beautiful one as well as being beautiful. The men around are fascinated and lured by her beauty and despite her Christian heritage, she is demanded to wear a veil. It is an intertextual moment to the story that Kardelen had told earlier. Leyla's solution to the problem is that Philothei should wear a veil, but it will be so transparent that it will only increase her beauty. She suggests that Philothei's value and beauty will increase more than in the point that she started. This veil in fact blurs the line between beauty and performativity of beauty, like those of Circassian women and local women in Bursa at that time. The transparent veil is like a second skin that is more real than the real. As Bill Ashcroft says, "Simulacra—copies without an original—are not just 'pretending', they produce the same symptoms, signs and images as the real and they become the determinant of our perceptions of reality. They 'precede' the real." (2005: 200). Similarly, following the veiling of Philothei, the veil becomes a fashion

in town which represents beauty. The story that was told earlier by Kardelen precedes the veiling of Philothei and the story shows that beauty can be simulated by ugly people as well.

While Leyla and Philothei represent simulacra, there is an authentic character in the novel that resists simulating anything. Tamara, the wife of Rustem Bey, is an authentic character that does not fulfill the expectations of the systems either as a fetish object or simulating a desire. As opposed to the expectations, she does not give Rustem Bey an heir and she does not try to satiate Rustem Bey's sexual desires. She does not create a bodily heaven for him. She resists conforming to the roles, and once she loses contact with Selim, she starts to recreate her own nature. Maureen Murdock says that "A woman who has felt cut off from her feminine nature may slowly begin to reclaim who she is as she feels creativity start flowing." (1990: 126). While Leyla transforms her body into an object not only by being bought but also through commodities, Tamara resists commodification of her body from the very early stages of her marriage to Rustem Bey. She does not use any of the objects given to her until she starts seeing Selim. The only thing that she uses is the slippers given to her by Rustem Bey, which signify that she has company. Ironically, it prevents her from commodification of herself.

Tamara is always sincere about her feelings, and she does not fake anything. There is no place in her for simulation. When she is married to Rustem Bey, she refuses to create a paradise for him, which is to simulate pleasure for him. Rustem Bey accuses her by saying that "There is no pleasure in your duty. I might as well go to a whore and couple with my eyes closed. You should know that there is more to a marriage than ignoring your husband while you idle at his expense." (De Bernières, 2014: 99). She does not try to fake anything that she does not feel. When Rustem Bey meets Leyla for the first time, he acknowledges that he has never seen Tamara that much naked. She does not let him see that much of her. She does not try to project her body to anything. She is a whole in herself. Even when she is cast away to live in a brothel, almost all the men in the town visit her just because she is a fetish object in being Rustem Bey's wife, and she accepts all of them. However, she

refuses to fake an orgasm. She has no illusion, no simulation of desire or pleasure nor does she provide any illusion or simulation of pleasure for anyone else. She does not even try to kill herself; she is like Oedipus awaiting and suffering. She is an authentic person, whose value is undermined, and she does not create her identity in relation to others' expectations of her or the mirror image. She does not have a mirror or bright light in her brothel room. All in all, she could be argued to be one of the few examples of refusal of simulacra even with the price of being the bridal figure which has decayed into a whore. Her dignity emerges from her adamant refusal to simulate.

4.2. The Body and Beauty

This part of the thesis focuses on Baudrillard's theory on the body and beauty, primarily his analysis of the body as a sign, a commodity, a fetish object, narcissism, striptease, nudity, secondary nudity, fragmentation, and castration anxiety.

There are multiple possibilities of approach on the body and beauty. However, our attempt will include Baudrillard's theories on the body as a sign. From his point of view, the body starts to represent some other values in parallel to being a biological entity. The body is a construction and Dani Cavallaro says that "We can no longer view the body as a natural object. The body is actually a cultural representation, constructed through various media, especially language." (2001: 4). As the novel is set in an era when the media was not as efficient as it is today, it is language that concerns the readers most. De Bernières makes use of language most of the time to represent the body and beauty within his characters.

The bodily inscription could be seen in the names of some characters. Our choice will stop on the characters that will be analysed in this chapter that are Tamara, Leyla, Philothei, and Drosoula. Tamara is a Biblical name that means palm tree. Tamara's exposure and stoning takes place right next to a tree. As she is the representative of the bridal figure, in the novel she could be said to allude to the fall of mankind once she is turned into an abject body. Leyla means night, but it also denotes oriental beauty because of the readings of Lord Byron. However, as the

reader knows that is not her real name, and the reader can follow her naming process, the reader knows that she is constructed in many ways as she is not an oriental woman in reality. Philothei means beloved by God, as it is also explained in the novel. The reader is also made aware of the naming process of Philothei. However, one can observe de Bernières' reversion of the signs that these names represent. Tamara, Leyla, and Philothei experience and reflect the inversion of the denotations for their names. Drosoula is unlike other characters, as she does not represent beauty, she is the representative of ugliness and she is not a superficial but a lucky character. Her name suggests a strong personality.

Tamara is the first one to represent the body and beauty as social status and sign. As the wife of Rustem Bey whose class and aristocracy comes from his great-grandfather, she is supposed to have and welcome all the commodities offered to her. As stated earlier, Baudrillard says that "one does not dress a woman luxuriously in order that she be beautiful, but in order that her luxury testify to the legitimacy or the social privilege of her master" (1981: 31). As opposed to that, Tamara refuses to be a social sign. The way that her identity is constructed does not let her be comfortable in that role.

Tamara tries to do her duty for Rustem, but she is not a character that can be commodified. She is indifferent to the commodities and to the signs around her. Rustem tries to buy her gifts and "she had accepted them with a gracious lack of enthusiasm that had brought childish tears of disappointment to his eyes, which he had, with dignity and a show of indifference, held back." (De Bernières, 2014: 93). The seduction techniques through commodities do not work for her. Rustem makes an effort to bring some modern furniture that could represent his social rank and positively affect his wife. He buys her a bed and chairs that were brought with camels on pieces; however, "Tamara had tried sleeping in the bed for a while, but finally she had lost patience with it, and reverted to the customary pallet on the floor." (De Bernières, 2014: 94). Since they did not have a table, the chairs were used as divans for guests too. She does not want to use the commodities that could represent his and her social status; she tries but she cannot help it. Tamara refuses to

be represented by the objects of her husband's rank, and she is against being an object herself. She is only comfortable around the objects that she brought from her home with her as a bride.

Tamara Hanım reveals an indifference in bed too. She does not want to use the commodities and she eschews to turn her body into a sexual object for him. Rustem acknowledges that he cannot have her. "After their wedding night, however, Rustem Bey knew with angry resignation that much as he might invade her body, he would never touch her heart. Thus it was that he reaped nothing but heartache from his assault on happiness" (De Bernières, 2014: 97). He notices that he cannot have her and he recounts their first night as "In his mind's eye he saw Tamara on their wedding night, her eyes glowing with grief in the lamplight as she turned her head aside and parted her legs as she had been warned she would have to do." (De Bernières, 2014: 103).

In the moment of her exposure and stoning, when people regardless of age and religion stone her, kick her or spit on her over her suspected adultery, she admits committing it only once. Tamara refuses to conceal even her guilt. This sincerity does not impress the local people as they try to punish her for the signs that she represents. "It was satisfying, in any case, for those lowly folk to have the opportunity to destroy a spoiled and perfumed darling from a higher walk of life." (De Bernières, 2014: 103.) As we understand from the text, she is not being punished for her adultery, but mostly for her social rank. Rustem Bey experiences a disappointment not only in her but also in himself, because he fails to turn her into a commodity, sign value and social representative for his social status. She is too much of herself, too authentic to be turned into a sign and commodity. Unfortunately, Rustem Bey fails to acknowledge and appreciate the gift he was given. He becomes blinded by his rage, humiliation and also by his failure to turn her into a commodity.

The only object she uses which he bought for her is the slippers that he got from Smyrna, and she uses them as a sign to keep him away. The shoes and slippers are signs for him that she does not want him. Once Tamara leaves, he gives away

Selim's shoes which Rustem had seen from time to time. The social and sexual sign of the shoes are reversed in the text by Tamara. Shoes are an important fetish object in sexuality and femininity; however, for Tamara and Rustem they represent the sign of Rustem's castration by Tamara. Likewise, Tamara uses the veil as a way of distancing him, whereas the reader will clearly see that the veil is used for the very opposite effect by other characters in the novel. The same object functions as a sign which gains different connotations. The veil could be used for distancing someone but also it could be used as a secondary skin that is so transparent that it becomes hyper reality and becomes a lure and fetish object.

The item that Tamara leaves behind is an embroidery, a cloth that was unfinished. It is the only sign of femininity together with her "cezve" which she uses to make coffee. Even this "cezve" she does not use particularly to make coffee for Rustem as a matter of seduction. For Tamara it represents a memory of her mother, and the reader can clearly feel that she uses this object for her own self or to make coffee for her guests. The embroidery, the cloth, could be a perfect piece of femininity, but it is unfinished and it is used to cover Rustem's wounded arm. Rustem feels the cloth as "It smelled of vanilla, rosewater, coffee and musk. It smelled of Tamara, his proud, young, self-destroying wife." (De Bernières, 2014: 106). The colours of the cloth changes when he wraps his arm with it, and it could be reflecting the loss of the already inefficient relationship between the husband and wife.

Leyla is the opposite of Tamara with regards to the commodification of herself. Unlike Tamara, who came from a classy family as a bride and had her own possessions, Leyla is bought in exchange for money. However, being bought is not the only thing that turns her into a commodity and a sign. She welcomes all the things bought for her. Unlike Tamara, when Leyla meets Rustem for the first time, she makes coffee for him, and tries to use her femininity to seduce him. He is mesmerised in her presence. Every action of her is grounded on seduction of Rustem, pleasing him and making him feel appreciated. She does not only possess the qualifications that Rustem wants, like a round face, red lips, fair skin, and a pleasing and responsive body, but she also cares for his projection of the self to the

society. She does not only try to satisfy his body, but she also tries to satisfy his hunger for the social status. By calling him “my lion” she fuels both his erotic and social expectations.

Rustem has an appreciation for modern objects like clocks, a bed and chairs, etc. He wants to project himself as a modern man in the town; however, he feels awkward in big cities like Smyrna and Istanbul. He wants to get rid of that awkwardness through the help of his wife, but she is not cooperative in that. Leyla, on the other hand, is extremely responsive and this makes Rustem very happy. Drosoula remembers the first time when Leyla came to the town and talks about her beauty and beautification process but she also comments on her commodities. She says “I remember she had lovely clothes, they were everyone’s envy, and she wore gold, lots of it, so that she rattled in a dull way every time she moved. She had a chain of gold coins that she wore around her forehead” (De Bernières, 2014: 213). She is like the walking representative of his wealth and social status. While Tamara tries to use things for their use value, Leyla uses them mostly for their symbolic exchange value.

In order to beautify her body and in order to represent Rustem’s social rank, Leyla makes a great investment in both her body and beauty. For her being beautiful is like having a job, and she says that “If you’re beautiful it’s better than working, even if you have to work at it, because you can always get what you want sooner or later. It is like having money, except more fun, because having a job is work, and being beautiful is a game.” (De Bernières, 2014: 217) In this context, it could be argued that Leyla’s motivation is not primarily to please Rustem, since she is trying to have fun herself too. When she creates a simulacrum of paradise for him, it is basically based on consumerism. While liberating the body through sexuality, she also turns herself into a fetish object with an aim. Peter Hitchcock says that “The illusory aspect of commodity fetishism is that the value of the commodity appears inherent to it, whereas its value is not natural, but social. (1999: 122).

Leyla’s fetishisation process can be seen from the first moment she meets Rustem. Kardelen says that Leyla likes being naked in her room, and Leyla acts like

she hates it, but in fact the other girls make it clear that she likes the idea of getting naked and putting clothes back on. Baudrillard defines this process as turning the body into a doll, and Leyla turns her body into a doll, so that she can seduce both men and herself by it.

Tamara is the very opposite of Leyla, in that Rustem never saw his wife as naked as Leyla. Within the text, the reader sees that Tamara is constantly preoccupied by adjusting her veil. She does not let Rustem, her husband, to see her body, and this brings Rustem's anger as he exclaims: "No woman veils herself in front of her husband! Unveil yourself!" (De Bernières, 2014: 99). Tamara adamantly refuses to participate in turning her body into a fetish object, since her body should only respond to love yet unwillingly she becomes a fetish object herself in the brothel, simply because of being Rustem's wife.

In the fetishist theory of the body, Tamara in the brothel becomes a grotesque body, in that it transforms into a place where all the men in the town visit her as if it were a place for pilgrimage. Mikhail Bakhtin says that

The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world. (1984: 317).

Tamara's body is the perfect representative of the grotesque body in that it turns into a simulation of a sacred place and is visited by all the men. Ironically, she loses the sacred aura of the bride, by her decay into a whore. However, her body becomes a sign, which, although it lost its initial sacrality by Tamara's adultery, regains this hyperreal sacrality when she is visited by all the men in the town. As we can see, her body does not represent a value in itself, it becomes a value only due to the connotation of being Rustem's wife. It swallows the world in this context, and she gives birth to four children whom she loses because of her illnesses and she buries them underground, and when Rustem visits her in the brothel, she says that she is awaiting her death to join her children. Her approaching to death might be symbolical for the gradual loss of value of her body and hyperreal sacrality, since not many are interested in visiting Rustem's wife anymore.

Leyla tries to create her identity in relation to fetishisation and commodification. She recreates Philothei like herself too. Detecting her and being aware of her being Greek, Leyla tries to project her notion of self to Philothei. Philothei has been subject to commodification ever since she was born, because de Bernières reflects her through the gaze of others. Her identity is also formed via others. Her beauty is to be noticed by others rather than be experienced by herself. She assumes the role of the bride and the seductress from the earlier stages of her life. When Leyla recasts her in her own image, her commodification process starts to gain momentum. Leyla does not only decorate her body with clothes, perfumes, and a transparent veil, but she also imposes autoerotism and narcissism upon her.

Autoeroticism usually suggests a sexless body. It is neither male nor female and it does not need the other to feel complete. Throughout the novel, the fluidity of the body and gender can be observed. The perfect representation of the body and fashion is the mannequin for some theorists like Baudrillard and Gane as well. Kardelen and Selim are the representatives of the mannequin in the novel. Their bodies are not directly related to sex but they are the inter-missionaries for sex and their bodies are in a perpetual flux. Selim disguises himself as a woman to see Tamara, but his bodily properties and his sexuality is feminine, in that he is basically seductive and cares most for himself. Rustem comments on his body as “That handsome, fine face had malicious black eyes, a week’s stubble, and a superb and glossy black moustache.” (De Bernières, 2014: 101). Although he has a moustache, the way his face is described is feminine, and his voice and features are a bit feminine too. He is beautiful and he has the aim to beautify the women through his elixirs, thus deceiving the women around him.

Another character whose sexuality and body is in a flux is Kardelen. Kardelen is a mannequin because she is in between sexes. When Rustem sees her, he thinks that she is a woman with a muscular and masculine figure, but later “The suspicion occurred to him quite instanter that the somewhat intersexual Kardelen might have been a deviant man rather than a masculine woman, if indeed she was either” (De Bernières, 2014: 190). Kardelen tells Rustem that she taught Leyla the techniques of

pleasing a man. It is quite clear that she is skilled in that area because of her own experience. She is the perfect representative of the body because she has clearly freed herself from the confinements of the body and she has the power to twist reality in order to achieve seduction. She is a Godlike figure in that she has to exchange the signs for reality: she creates her own reality.

Striptease is another important element of the body for Baudrillard. Once the woman starts the act of striptease, she does not do it for the sake of the other who is watching the act, but it is a self-seduction and autoeroticism for her. If it is good striptease, she encloses herself into a phallic symbol and she becomes her own fetish object for herself. This can be seen in Leyla's striptease scene. Baudrillard says that "Its secret is a woman's autoerotic celebration of her own body, which becomes desirable in exact proportion to the intensity of this celebration." (1993: 108). This autoerotic celebration of Leyla makes her more desirable for Rustem because he has not experienced it with Tamara. Baudrillard continues his argument as "Without this narcissistic mirage that is the substance of every gesture, without this gestural repertoire of caresses that envelop the body, making it into an emblem as a phallic object, there would be no erotic effect." (1993: 108). Likewise, Leyla combs her hair, makes her marble like skin visible and appreciated by herself to start with, and only later Rustem starts to praise and appreciate it.

In her striptease scene, Leyla is so much obsessed with herself that she casts Rustem away. Although he is an observer of the scene, he feels secluded. He finds himself comparing Leyla to Tamara whom he was never able to see naked. Observing the girl "He was borne in upon by a disturbing sense of sacred." (De Bernières, 2014: 185). Through her nakedness and self-adoration, he comes to appreciate female body and beauty more. He feels like participating in a sacred ceremony in which he is not welcome. He looks into the room through a hole, and he feels the castration anxiety. "Conquering his better inclinations, he tried to see what was at the apex of her legs, but her pose and the shadows made it impossible. He felt short of breath. He had never seen his own wife Tamara as naked as this." (De Bernières, 2014: 185). The lack of genitals and the inability to see it makes him

feel the castration anxiety. No matter how hard he tries to see more of her, it becomes impossible for him, since she is so good at her art that Rustem is both mesmerised and anxious. Leyla can manipulate her nudity, like clothes and adornment.

During the act of striptease, the phallic symbols are not only confined to the body and body parts. The inability to fully see them makes each part of the body turn into a phallic symbol. Paul Hegarty comments on Baudrillard and says that “Baudrillard notes that a sexual preference which centres on a particular part of a woman’s body renders her into an object or objects to be collected.” (2004: 18). In this manner, the body is not grasped as a whole in itself, but each part of it is a phallic symbol in itself. Baudrillard says that “A particular woman is no longer a woman but merely a sex, breasts, belly, thighs, voice and face—and preferably just one of them.” (2005: 107). Leyla is not the representative of her own self and her desires in this context; she is the representative of the woman or the parts that Rustem was looking for.

As theoreticians like Baudrillard and Barthes suggest, striptease is an act that suggests death. Once the body is approached as parts rather than as a whole, the parts are objects. The fragmentation of the body into parts supports commodification and abstraction. Baudrillard says that “rouged lips are phallic (face paint and make-up are pre-eminent in the arsenal of the body’s structural enhancement).” (1991: 103). He further analyses this process and says that “This fascinating mouth, like an artificial sign, like cultural labour, the game and rules of the game, neither speaks nor eats, and no-one kisses it.” (1991: 103). Likewise the way Rustem looks at Leyla part by part shows her as objectified and abstracted. She appreciates her own beauty, so she does not only seduce herself, but Rustem too.

Baudrillard frames striptease and the body around secondary nudity and narcissism. The person performing the act should be in contact with her body and the fragments of her substitute for the entire act. Rustem “beheld the marble-white form of a young naked woman, reclining on cushions, apparently absorbed in combing out her long, shining black hair. Occasionally she puffed delicately on a very slim cigarette that she held to her lips”(De Bernières, 2014: 185). He is aroused

by each part of her and she is appreciating her beauty in each step. He goes on watching her as

Languidly the young woman moved, and Rustem saw her round plump breasts, the gentle mound of her stomach (whose navel was embellished with a blood-red garnet set in silver), the graceful curve of her neck, and the sensual tapering of her thighs. (De Bernières, 2014: 185).

All parts of her body are not only appreciated by him but mostly by Leyla. She knows that she is beautiful and continues to wrap and narcissistically enjoy herself.

Baudrillard argues that you cannot give anything to the woman who feels complete in herself through the act of striptease. Tamara makes Rustem anxious and frustrated not only due to his inability to see her body or have her body, but he felt castrated by her in a multitude of ways. She did not want him to buy her commodities and she did not expect him to please her sexually. Even when Rustem watches the act of Leyla, he remembers Tamara and her seclusion is the reason for this. Leyla is different from Tamara, because even in the slow act of striptease, in which she eventually represents the most obscene thing, she is full of life. She has the power to make herself happy to please herself, and therefore she has the promise of making him happy as well.

Leyla uses nudity and secondary skin professionally too. She does not get dressed in order to cover her body, but she proves that she can fill her body through transparency. It is her body that she uses as an instrument. In accordance with Baudrillard's theories, de Bernières entitles one of the episodes as "The Seduction of Rustem Bey." Leyla keeps Rustem waiting in order to be able to seduce him. "Leyla watched Rustem Bey carefully, knowing that she could not afford to keep him waiting too long. It gave her a kind of teasing pleasure to do so, however, and besides, she felt that she had the right" (De Bernières, 2014: 223). Anne O'Bryne comments on Flaubert and says that "As Flaubert might have it, the most erotic experiences are those we never have; the most satisfying conclusion is the one forever deferred." (2015: 16). Since Leyla was bought and cannot deter it for long, and since she wants it too, she keeps him waiting for a while. However, the most erotic fantasy of Rustem is connected to Tamara. Since she does not show

enthusiasm towards Rustem, he keeps fantasising about Tamara and her body even though he is with Leyla in her erotic paradise.

The night that she decides to seduce him, Leyla gets prepared well, and she invests in her body. Her simulacrum of paradise is based on food, lights, scent, music, and the body. “Leyla went to the hamam in order to steam every grain of dirt from her skin. She lolled, oblivious in the stifling humidity, chewing mastika to sweeten her breath, calculating and weighing all the lovely and poetic things that she would say” (De Bernières, 2014: 227). Her preparations show how much she cares about her body. Baudrillard appreciates the woman’s power of seduction and he says that women’s movement does not pay enough attention to seduction and he argues that “They do not understand that seduction represents mastery over the symbolic universe, while power represents only mastery of the real universe. The sovereignty of seduction is incommensurable with the possession of political or sexual power.” (1990: 8). Baudrillard suggests that women’s seductive power could change the symbols, and within the text, the reader can see how Leyla manipulates and changes the symbols, at least for a while, for Rustem Bey.

Her narcissistic part starts when she looks at her reflection in the mirror. “She went and sat in front of her mirror, mesmerizing herself until she was dizzy with the effort. Finally she blinked her eyes, and told her reflection, ‘This is as beautiful as we shall ever be.’ She and her image smiled confidently at each other.” (De Bernières, 2014: 227). Before anything, she appreciates her own beauty and talks to her image as another person. She is mesmerised by her beauty, like that of Narcissus. She recreates her own body in this process and she adores this creation. Therefore, it will be easier for Rustem to be affected by the image. In this part, the reader confronts managed narcissism, because it is not only the first person “I” anymore, but second person “you”. Leyla intermingles with her own reflection here. It is similar to the advertisements. “She placed a kiss upon her fingers and touched them to the kiss on fingers of her reflection. ‘Wish me luck,’ the two of them said, adding ‘Nazar deymesin’ in case there was anyone about with the evil eye.” (De

Bernières, 2014: 227). She is called upon to listen her inner voice and treat herself like another person.

Leyla does not only preoccupy herself with her own body and narcissism. She projects her narcissism upon Philothei and Drosoula too. Drosoula remembers it and ponders upon Philothei and Leyla's similarity. They are two beautiful women reflecting each other's beauty. When Drosoula recounts it and says "it was as if those two recognised something in each other." (De Bernières, 2014: 213). It is like there is a mirror between them. She hires Philothei to be around her. She thinks that Philothei will cherish her and she actually does. She teaches Philothei narcissism and, as Sigmund Freud suggests, that those women who were beautiful since an early age love being loved rather than loving the object. For Freud, "Such women have the greatest fascination for men, not only for aesthetic reasons, since as a rule they are the most beautiful, but also because of a combination of interesting psychological factors." (2012: 89). Freud also suggests that they like the men who love them the most and they see themselves projected on the one who loves them. Therefore, Philothei's love for Ibrahim is not based on Ibrahim at all, but it is based on the way that Ibrahim sees Philothei.

Drosoula remembers Leyla's secrets of beauty. Leyla suggests that beauty is not about its presence, but the belief that you are beautiful. Leyla tells them "My real secret is that the secret of being beautiful is to make people believe that you are, until you believe in it yourself, and it becomes true." (De Bernières, 2014: 217). Baudrillard's theory about narcissism proves itself here with Leyla's opinion and attitude. She takes Philothei with her to sit in front of the mirror to make her believe that she is really beautiful, and Drosoula says that "They must have gazed at themselves for a good half-hour . . . It's as if two beautiful people side by side doing that in the mirror, doing that magic, end up with the beauty of four people rather than two." (De Bernières, 2014: 220-221). Different from Narcissus, both Philothei and Leyla multiply their beauty and narcissism through each other rather than being obsessed with individual beauty. Beauty is engulfing them through the mirror here.

Drosoula thinks that it was from then on that Philothei's beauty could not be controlled anymore.

Unlike Philothei and Leyla, all people including Drosoula regard her as ugly. Leyla wants her to join her in the mirror game too, but the girl is aware of her ugliness, and she does not want anybody to see her like that. She did not have a mirror at her home; therefore, she looks at her reflection in a pool. "Well, I took one look at that great ugly moonface looking back out at me, and I knew straight away that it was hopeless." (De Bernières, 2014: 221). She is aware of her looks and she cannot participate in the narcissistic cult. However, as the story of Narcissus is based on the reflection on the water, it could be said that de Bernières deconstructs the myth and reverses it with ugliness personified.

The veiling of Philothei is another element that reflects secondary skin. After her magic with Leyla, her beauty starts to multiply, as Drosoula suggests, and the people in the town ask her mother to veil her even though she is a Christian girl who does not have such a tradition. She is really upset by the desires, but Leyla consoles her and she says that it means that she is too beautiful, and she gives reference to the story of Circassians in Bursa, and she prepares a veil for her. "That evening Philothei proudly returned home to the house of her parents, wearing an exiguous veil so finely woven that it was almost transparent, embroidered with tiny golden stars and crescent moons." (De Bernières, 2014: 242). Although she is wearing a veil, it creates the illusion of secondary skin and rather than direct nakedness, it represents beauty. The same thing that happened in Bursa happens in the town too.

4.3. Death, Disease-Decay, and Madness

De Bernières reflects death, disease-decay and madness in relation to the body and beauty. For Baudrillard, there is a place for almost all the constituents of a society within the society. It can be seen in the novel too. The first character that Iskander talks about is a mad man: Ibrahim. Ibrahim was driven mad after losing Philothei. The other mad characters are The Dog and maybe The Blasphemer. The mad men and the degraded women are the only direct characters to talk about what

they think. When Rustem visits Tamara in the brothel, the reader can see that in an apocalyptic world, the degraded people and the mad are the only honest ones. They do not try to hide anything.

In modern societies, death has become a kind of obscenity. However, in de Bernières' text, one can see that there is the representation of a primitive society, in that it has an interaction between the dead and the living. From the very first moment of Philothei's birth, it constantly reminds people around her of death. Beauty comes to represent death for them. The discourse that is based on the body is also in relation with death too. For Baudrillard the

omnipresent cult of the body is extraordinary. It is the only object on which everyone is made to concentrate, not as a source of pleasure, but as an object of frantic concern, in the obsessive fear of failure or substandard performance, a sign and an anticipation of death. (2010: 35).

Since death is not welcome within modern societies, the society which is in a flux questions death in relation to the body and sexuality as well. Philothei is mostly referred to as a phantom, whose beauty resides in the memories of those who had the chance to meet her. Michel Foucault comments on death and says that "death is so carefully evaded is linked less to a new anxiety which makes death unbearable for our societies than to the fact that the procedures of power have not ceased to turn away from death." (1978: 138). However, in de Bernières' text, the reader can see the reversion of the significance of death, because it becomes a part of the daily life in the community. It is not the best to die, but death still has a place in the community until it loses its integrity. Similarly, Foucault says "it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body." (1978: 143). Therefore, it could be said that the characters try to keep their existence, yet the mortality of men is one of the prevalent things in the novel.

The reader can also see the interaction between the living and the dead within the "Proof of Innocence" parts. Philothei's grandmother is dead from the beginning of the novel, and de Bernières reflects a ceremony in which the living tries to reach out the dead. Philothei's mother wants to send a message to her mother through a dove. They dig her body out of her grave and they can see that her flesh is gone and only her bones remain. The split between the soul and materiality of the body is given

through characters like her. Different from the modern societies, in Eskibahçe, the cemeteries are a part of the commonwealth of the society. The people are thrilled and sometimes they fear, but the children play on the graveyards and The Dog lives around the graveyard. The dead have ceased to exist, but their bones and ghosts seem to live among the people of Eskibahçe.

Unlike the dead and the mad, the decay of the bodies is shown gradually in the text. The personal and universal decay intermingle, and they are shown in the bodies of the representative characters. Tamara's body starts to get diseased in the brothel. Her body decays like all Eskibahçe. It has lost its unity and harmony. Her body is related to the place of Eskibahçe and once the sacred bridal figure is cast away, the saviour figure tries to accomplish his role and he confesses that the temple that he had decided to erect will not come into existence, and he also feels that God is indifferent to their desire if there is one.

CONCLUSION

Beauty has a very long history in the Western canon. It has gone through various stages and it will continue to change. In the past, it was about the construction of beauty in arts. Beauty was also analysed in relation to some other criteria. Nowadays, however, it is not just limited to arts and it is not analysed only in relation to the former criteria; it has a discourse of its own which is controlled by the media. Like the works of art, the bodies and beauty of people is shaped by the trends. As there are trends that support commercialism, they will try to sell not only products to make people more beautiful according to the beauty standards, but also they will sell the image of the perfect beauty according to which our bodies and minds will be chopped to fit into that image of the perfect model. The imitation of the ideal body will have an important role in our daily lives as well as our products of art. Nancy Etcoff says that “The idea that beauty is unimportant or a cultural construct is the real beauty myth. We have to understand beauty, or we will always be enslaved by it.” (1999: 242). Beauty matters and masters in contemporary world, so we should be aware of it.

It is no longer just the female body that matters in contemporary world. Men are exposed to beauty myths as well. Commenting on the ideas of the construction of beauty for men and women, Alexander Alberro states that

[W]hat is striking about the contemporary discourses on beauty is that they tend not only to associate the beautiful with the feminine and the sublime with the masculine, but to read and reevaluate their historical competition through the lenses of historical feminism. (2004: 38).

In contemporary discourse on beauty, although there are differences between male and female beauty standards, both men and women are controlled by these standards, and in order to grasp beauty as a construct, both should be analysed. However, in the postmodern novel of de Bernières it is the female beauty that prevails more and the analysis has been limited to female beauty. In other works, male beauty has started to be analysed as well.

Starting from the beauty as proportion, beauty as harmony, beauty as goodness, beauty as truth, beauty as a subjective quality, etcetera, beauty starts to be discussed

as a quality that restricts people to some constructed ideals, which many people fail to adapt to. In the postmodern period, as all the metanarratives start to be questioned, the concept of beauty starts to be challenged too. Some ideas of beauty that belong to different ages are reconstructed or deconstructed in postmodern era in postmodern works, and the way these concepts are reflected in *Birds Without Wings* have been a part of this research.

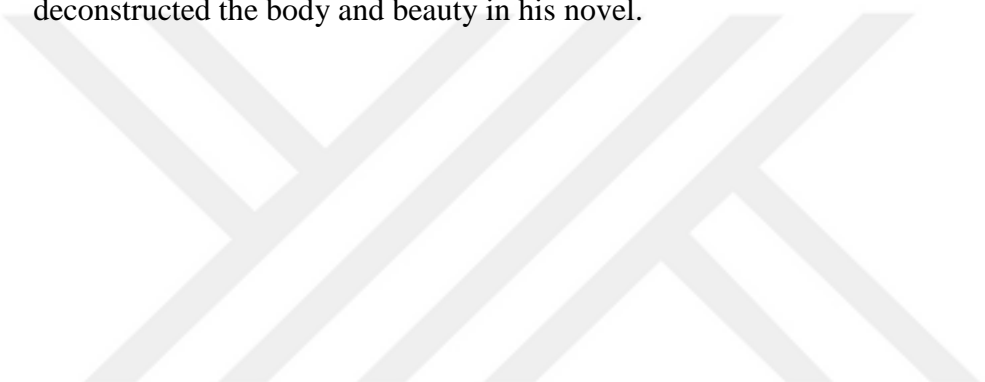
In the postmodern context, not only beauty, but also the body has been a concern for us. Our bodies are not simply biological beings that are basically subject to death when the time comes. Our bodies have been turned into signs, into objects through commodification, narcissism, and fetishisation processes of the modern era through media, and advertisements. Our bodies do not only belong to us, but they are also signs in the political economy. Louis de Bernières' points on the bodies of Philothei, Leyla, Tamara, and Drosoula have been given in this thesis from the theoretical perspective of Jean Baudrillard.

In the contemporary discourse on the body, the body is fragmented. It is no longer a whole being. When the readers analyse Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings*, they are likely to grasp the projection of body parts in their fragmentariness, and the signs created around the body. Similar to the airbrushing of photos and cosmetic surgeries, the bodies of the characters of the novel are intermingled. There was a need for a bride, which is entitled and fragmented to several characters. Once the authentic bride is cast away, the role is ascribed to a whore who tries to raise a replica of herself as a bride; however, she is herself a mistress rather than a wife. Through the introduction of simulacra to the society, de Bernières plays with the Biblical dichotomy of Madonna/whore, and offers the whore character as an alternative.

In addition to the simulation of the body and beauty, the body has turned into a social sign. It does not only reflect beauty, but also the social status of the holder of beauty and the husband of the beautiful person. In order to turn the person into a sign, the body was firstly fragmented, and some parts of it were prone to

beautification. Through the use of commodities, one can turn herself into a commodity and a sign.

Through various media, women are presented idols to copy. Once they are successful in this process of similitude, they are taught to adore or hate their bodies. There is a kind of planned narcissism going around the body, and in order to figure it out, it would not be enough to go through advertisements. It would be better to look into our works of art, and Louis de Bernières' ironic narration on the body and beauty has fascinated us, so we tried to understand how he reflected and deconstructed the body and beauty in his novel.



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