

**GENDER AND SEXUALITY BUILDING IDENTITY
IN JEFFREY EUGENIDES'S *MIDDLESEX***

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Petru GOLBAN

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T.C.
TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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TEKİRDAĞ-2020
Her hakkı saklıdır.

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ABSTRACT

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The current study presents the thematic characteristics and history of the Bildungsroman and its origins in the German literature and its flourishing in the English literature. The terms of gender and sexuality are also defined in the study. The aim of the present thesis is to analyze the postmodernist author Jeffrey EUGENIDES's *Middlesex* which deals with the "new" American identities of the second and third generation Greek immigrants who live in the US, and to present it through the protagonist of the novel, Calliope/Cal's point of view. The present study displays how the events and actions in the novel make it possible to be regarded as a Bildungsroman in terms of gender and sexual identity formation of Calliope/Cal. Identity formation, ethnicity and generation gap as well as the interaction between generations are presented by the novelist benefiting from myths and mythical heroes. The study reflects how the expectations of the family and society impact identity formation as well as the 5-alpha reductase disease, which results in the intersex condition of Calliope/Cal. In a world, which becomes more and more global each day, the protagonist of the novel is an intersex person, a minority in terms of gender and sexuality but also a Greek-American, a minority in terms of ethnicity. The history of the country and the globalization of the world are reflected through the protagonist. Cal/Calliope is born twice. When he is born the second time, he begins to grasp the world better. The novel, *Middlesex*, can be regarded as a Bildungsroman when it is analyzed in terms of gender and sexuality and the novel, in general, presents the postmodernist thematic concerns of immigration, generation gaps, inclusion of myths and mythical heroes into the contemporary life and identity formation.

Key Words: the Bildungsroman, gender and sexuality, Eugenides, *Middlesex*, intersex

ÖZET

Kurum, Enstitü, ABD : Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
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Bu çalışmada Oluşum Romanının karakteristik özellikleri ve tarihçesi, Alman edebiyatında ortaya çıkışı ve İngiliz edebiyatında gelişimi değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada cinsellik ve cinsiyet kavramları değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı post-modernist bir yazar olan Jeffrey EUGENIDES tarafından yazılan ve Amerika'da yaşayan ikinci ve üçüncü kuşak Yunan asıllı göçmen ailelerin geçirdikleri değişim ile “yeni” Amerikan kimliklerini romanın ana karakteri Calliope/Cal'ın bakış açısıyla ele alan *Middlesex* romanını incelemektir. Çalışmada Calliope/Cal'ın kimlik oluşumu üzerinde etkili olan olgular ve olaylar Oluşum Romanı geleneğiyle uyumlu bir biçimde cinsiyet ve cinsellik açısından değerlendirilmektedir. Kimlik oluşumu, etnik köken ve kuşaklar arası etkileşim, bu romanda yazar tarafından efsanevi ve mitolojik öğeler kullanılarak ele alınmaktadır. Eserde, Stephanides ailesinde üç nesil boyunca var olan fakat Calliope'nin doğumuyla ortaya çıkan ve onun çift cinsiyetli olmasına sebep olan 5-alfa eksikliği isimli kalıtsal bir gen hastalığının yanı sıra ailevi ve toplumsal beklentilerin kimlik gelişimini nasıl etkilediğini incelenmektedir. Romanda ana karakter olan Calliope/Cal çift cinsiyetli bir kişi olmanın yanı sıra, her gün gittikçe küreselleşen dünyada, göçmen bir Yunan Amerikalı olarak hem cinsellik hem de etnik kimlik açısından bir azınlık olarak yaşamaktadır. Ülkenin gelişimi ve dünyanın küreselleşmesi de ana karakterin gözünden yansıtılmaktadır. Karakter iki kez doğar. İkinci kez doğduğunda, dünyayı ve etrafında olup biteni daha iyi anlamaya başlar. *Middlesex* romanı tüm yönleriyle ele alındığında, göçmenlik, kuşaklararası etkileşim, kimlik oluşumu, mitolojik ve efsanevi karakterler vb. post-modernist tematik unsurları yansıtır ve cinsiyet ve cinsellik gelişimi açısından bir Oluşum Romanı olarak değerlendirilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oluşum romanı, cinsiyet ve cinsellik, Eugenides, *Middlesex*, çift cinsiyetlilik

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INTRODUCTION

The Pulitzer Prize winner author Jeffrey Eugenides is among the prominent novelists and short story writers of the postmodern period. His novels *The Virgin Suicides* (1993), *Middlesex* (2002), and *The Marriage Plot* (2011) have received worldwide acclamation. His short story collection *Fresh Complaint* includes stories such as “Air Mail”, which was selected by Annie Proulx among the best American short stories. His fiction deals with the concerns of the contemporary world, which are identity building, anxiety, ethnicity, and the issues of the periphery. Besides dealing with contemporary issues, Eugenides masters at including archetypes and mythological characters to his fiction. Among Eugenides’s novels and short stories, the present study focuses on *Middlesex* and the aim of this thesis is to analyze the protagonist of *Middlesex* as reflecting the thematic concerns and structural pattern of the Bildungsroman as a postmodernist novel and show the protagonist’s identity formation in terms of gender and sexuality.

The Bildungsroman was evidently popular in realism but its popularity continues in the postmodern period for particular reasons. The postmodernist novels deal with characters from the periphery and these characters’ individual history are reflected in reference to the history of nations. When one takes *Midnight’s Children* or *Brick Lane* into consideration, they are Bildungsromane embedded with the individual experience of identity formation and the formation of a hybrid nation. “The evident capacity of the Bildungsroman to represent diverse experiences contributes to its popularity in American literature, as does its strategy of representing the nation from the perspective of youth” (Castle, 2019, p. 141). *Middlesex* similarly reflects the popularity of the Bildungsroman and gives an account of America through the eyes of Greek-American Calliope Stephanides, who also has an intersex condition

Calliope Stephanides is born in Detroit to parents, who were also born in Detroit, to Greek descendant immigrants from Turkey to the USA. Besides being an intersex person, the protagonist, Cal/Calliope/Callie, experiences ethnic identity building as a Greek American, a minority both in terms of sexuality and ethnicity in

a city, Detroit, which becomes more and more global each day and the development of the country and the globalization of the world is reflected through the development of the protagonist. The protagonist is born twice. The first birth is in Detroit and the second birth takes place in a sexual disorders clinic in Michigan. When Cal is born for the second time, he begins to understand the world a lot more in terms of gender and sexuality. Cal's story does not start with his birth since his biological sex was based on a genetic disease. His story begins with his grandparents and this plot structure, starting the novel with the protagonist's grandparents, enables the novelist to overcome the anxiety of influence as a writer. In an interview, the novelist answers the question of originality of writing about a hermaphrodite and claims that there has been books about hermaphrodites but "a book about a person with a real genetic mutation that results in his being intersex and that causes him to trace the mutation and, in so doing, to tell the story of his family and the history of Detroit—that hadn't been done before" (Schiff, 2006, pp. 106-107). In this respect, Cal's story is interwoven with his grandparents' story and the history of Detroit. The novel reflects the world from the 1920s to the end of the century but includes Greek myths and legends and the Greek American intersex person carries the genes of a nation to the global world and imprints the world with his particular mythical, magical and at the same time realist being.

Calliope Stephanides' parents have a son, Chapter Eleven, and they want a daughter to accompany Tessie, Calliope's mother. Calliope's grandmother, Desdemona, is an extremely superstitious woman who sticks to her Greek ethnicity and she keeps on guessing the biological sex of babies through the help of a silver spoon. Unlike Desdemona, Milton, her son, attempts to become a science-oriented Greek American and he wants to conceive Calliope with the help of science as a girl. The obstructive characteristics of Calliope's parents and grandparents makes Calliope to build her gender identity as a female but at puberty, she finds herself drawn to a classmate at a girls' school in a gated community.

The passion that develops between Calliope and the Obscure Object and Calliope's failure to develop a girl's body leads Calliope to realize the fact that she may not be or is not like the other girls at school. Calliope's gender and sexual

identity formation starts with the suspicion of sexual orientation and the novel reflects the pattern of the Bildungsroman in terms of gender and sexual identity formation of Calliope, who later becomes Cal.

The first chapter of the present study focuses on a theoretical approach to the Bildungsroman as a subgenre of the novel. The novel types or subgenres are explained and the Bildungsroman is defined in the first chapter. The Bildungsroman has its own thematic and structural pattern and the chapter defines them. Bakhtin's perspective on the Bildungsroman is given in detail. The first samples of the Bildungsroman can be found in German literature and the first novel to be acknowledged as a prototype of the Bildungsroman is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels*, which reflects the Romantic notion of the hero's growth and formation. The Bildungsroman flourishes in Victorian Age through the help of realism and the most prominent samples of the Bildungsroman can be found in realism. Since *Middlesex* is a postmodernist novel, modernist and postmodernist samples of the Bildungsroman and their characteristics are also given in the first chapter. The chapter presents a historical approach to the Bildungsroman, starting from the earliest samples to the postmodernist samples.

The second chapter focuses on gender and sexuality as reflected in *Middlesex*. The aim of the chapter is to define gender, sexuality and sexual orientation. It constitutes a theoretical approach to gender and sexuality and displays how they are reflected in the novel in terms of gender and sexual identity formation as a sample of the Bildungsroman. The conventional gender and sexuality, the dichotomous approach is first explained, then the queer theory is defined and *Middlesex* is reflected as combining these approaches. "*Middlesex* is a family and immigrant saga dealing with Greek-Americans. It's also a psychological coming-of age story about a contemporary hermaphrodite who discovers the complexity and ambiguity of her gender as she reaches adolescence" (Schiff, 2006, p. 101). In this manner, the second chapter defines gender and sexuality and reflects how the protagonist of the novel and the ancestors of the protagonist develop their own sense of gender and sexuality in reference to sexual orientation. There is a significant difference between male and female Bildungsroman and Labovitz claims that "Every male hero of the

Bildungsroman is guided by a mentor; something that the female heroine rarely acquires” (1986, p. 24). Calliope Stephanides finds it difficult as an intersex person to acquire a mentor that can help her/him about sexual orientation and gender and sexuality.

The third chapter focuses on the thematic and structural elements of the Bildungsroman as reflected in *Middlesex* in reference to building gender and sexual identity formation. While the Bildungsroman reflects the protagonist in relation to the society and the social and psychological development of the protagonist and his or her identity formation, *Middlesex* deals with the protagonist’s identity formation in relation to gender and sexuality. The protagonist is raised to be a girl and “the model of the female community offers an alternative form of intimacy grounded in gender identification” (Felski, 1989, p.132). Calliope Stephanides needs to develop gender and sexual identity but as s/he was raised as a girl, s/he suffers from isolation. In Calliope’s attempt at building gender and sexual identity in reference to the Bildungsroman, s/he finds it hard to conform to one role as “the male protagonist is expected to defy societal norms in his sexual initiation. However, if a female protagonist would venture to do the same, she would be ostracized from society for rebelling against her assigned female role” (Brändström, 2009, p. 15). The third chapter, therefore, focuses on the postmodernist Bildungsroman as reflected in Calliope/Cal’s gender and sexual identity formation.

The conclusion part basically gives a summary of the ideas discussed throughout this thesis and presents a table of the thematic concerns of the Bildungsroman and how these concerns are reflected in *Middlesex* through the protagonist Calliope/Cal.

CHAPTER 1

1. A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE BILDUNGSROMAN

The novel has been one of the most prominent genres of modernity and postmodernity to the recent years. Although it is relatively new when compared to its traditional equivalents like epic, drama or poetry, it has its unique development. Henry Fielding suggests in his Preface to *The History and Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, the novel, which he calls “the comic epic in prose,” could be regarded as a traditional genre practiced by Homer, which was lost in time but revived through the works of Cervantes and the other novelists, including himself, who followed his pattern and developed it.

In terms of the construction of the hero or the heroine, the novel types are categorized according to Mikhail Bakhtin as “the travel novel”, “the novel of ordeal”, “the biographical (autobiographical) novel”, and the “*Bildungsroman*” (1986, p. 10). Since it would require much space to analyze how each of these types developed, the concern of this chapter is dedicated to the *Bildungsroman* as a subgenre of the novel.

Although there are some disagreements as to what constitutes a *Bildungsroman* or as to what novels one may regard as *Bildungsromane*, this chapter focuses on the general characteristics of the *Bildungsroman*, its definition, its fictional elements, its significance in the history of realism in the light of Bakhtin’s views on the *Bildungsroman*, as well on its German origins and Goethe’s work, its flourishing in English literature, and its path through modernism and postmodernism.

Before going further into analyzing the subgenre, it would be beneficial to give a detailed explanation to the thematic and structural elements of the *Bildungsroman*. In terms of theme, the *Bildungsroman* focuses on the identity formation of a hero or heroine regardless of the outcome of the development to be a success in the end or not. Most of the novels of this type start with a child and show the reader how the character develops and changes in time. In terms of its structure, there are some patterns to follow in order to see how a *Bildungsroman* is constructed.

However, as it has its roots in the earliest types of the novel, there are some differences with regard to various periods and trends as with *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Jane Eyre*, or *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or some postmodernist incarnations. In this respect, this study focuses on the development of the Bildungsroman through ages and attempts to give a basic understanding of what Bildungsroman is and what works can be regarded as examples of this subgenre. Finally and most importantly, the present study reveals how Jeffrey Eugenides's novel *Middlesex* reflects the pattern of the Bildungsroman and constitutes its contemporary version.

1.1. The Definition and Fictional Elements of the Bildungsroman

1.1.1. The Definition of the Bildungsroman

J. A. Cuddon defines the Bildungsroman as “a term more or less synonymous with Erziehungsroman - literally an ‘upbringing’ or ‘education’ novel...it refers to a novel which is an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine (usually the former)” (1999, pp. 81-82). Chris Baldick defines the Bildungsroman as “a kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity” (2001, p. 27). Although these definitions have a lot in common, it is not that easy to define the Bildungsroman simply as the development of a hero, which would not differentiate it from biographical novel. The Bildungsroman has its particular patterns in terms of theme and style.

As the Bildungsroman has become one of the most prominent genres of various ages, its definitions and its range differ from one period and one culture to another. While some critics claim the Bildungsroman to be present only in German literature, others reject this by claiming that it flourishes in English literature, particularly in the Victorian Age. As to its range, there are some disagreements; however, Thomas L. Jeffers quotes from Buckley and claims that

Buckley defines the *Bildungsroman* by reference to an archetypal plot. A sensitive child grows up in the provinces, where his lively imagination is frustrated by his neighbors'—and often by his family's— social prejudices

and intellectual obtuseness. School and private reading stimulate his hopes for a different life away from home, and so he goes to the metropolis, where his transformative education begins. He has at least two love affairs, one good and one bad, which help him revalue his values. He makes some accommodation, as citizen and worker, with the industrial urban world, and after a time, he perhaps revisits his old home to show folks how much he has grown. No single *Bildungsroman* will have all these elements, Buckley says, but none can ignore more than two or three. (Jeffers, 2005, p. 52)

Although it looks like a general definition, it should help the reader to understand how it works since it has a bunch of thematic similarities. Jerome Hamilton Buckley defines these fictional thematic characteristics as “childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy” (1974, p. 18). That is to say, the *Bildungsroman* has more to do with its thematic perspective yet the way in which these themes are developed in the structure of the novels is also prominent.

In order to analyze the *Bildungsroman* as a novelistic subgenre, it is important to take some points into consideration. Petru Golban states that “the *Bildungsroman* is neither a closed system nor a static or rigid one; it is alive and dynamic, complex and varied—as varied as the life samples that the novels designated as *Bildungsroman* reflect” (2018, p. 1). In order to be able to understand what the *Bildungsroman* is, one needs to consider the following: the *Bildungsroman*

(1) is subject to precise definition, (2) represents a particular type of novel, (3) possesses its own history of rise, development and consolidation as a literary tradition, and, above all, (4) constitutes a system of defining elements that are rendered typological by their thematic and narrative perspectives (Golban, 2018, p. 2).

By taking all these elements and arguments into consideration, one could see its progress and development in the realist literature, which grounds an astonishing aspect of the genre.

The genre of the *Bildungsroman* is generally thought to be reflected best in the realist movement, yet some modernist and postmodernist *Bildungsromane* can be also regarded as perfect examples of the genre. Although these movements or trends have their own stylistic approaches to literature, which some scholars find hard to apply to the genre because of their nonlinear character reflection or nonlinear time, in terms of the theme of character development and formation, they fall under the

category of the Bildungsroman. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Midnight's Children* can be regarded as two striking representative texts as Bildungsromane in the periods of modernism and postmodernism, respectively.

1.1.2. Fictional Elements of the Bildungsroman

Many scholars believe that in English Literature the Bildungsroman reached its peak with realism in the Victorian Age. In its diachronic advancement, the subgenre borrowed some elements from its preceding types and owes a great deal to Romanticism as well, due to its focus on inner life and experience of childhood. The prototype of the subgenre is widely acknowledged to be Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels*, which reflects the Romantic notion of the hero's growth and formation. The subgenre reaches its flourishing in realism based on its efficiency in reflecting a linear development of time and space, giving details about historical events, showing the hero concerning the society they live in, and reflecting the concerns of the age.

Not all the Bildungsromane reflect the same themes, but all of them textualize the principal of identity formation and have a common pattern. Although they may not reflect its all thematic elements and, since sometimes the formation of a character may end in failure, there may be some missing aspects; however, most of the Bildungsromane display a unique system which, according to Petru Golban, contain the following elements:

- 1 a child (sometimes orphaned or fatherless) lives in a village or provincial town
- 2 he/she is in conflict with his actual parents, especially father, or any parental figures (the trial by older generation)
- 3 he/she leaves home to enter a larger society (usually city, especially London, definitely not a *ultima Thule*); the departure is determined by 2 or other external stimuli, or an inner stimulus (for instance the desire for experience that the incomplete, static atmosphere of home does not offer)
- 4 he/she passes through institutionalized education and/or self-education
- 5 a young person now, he/she seeks for social relationships with other humans

6 his/her experience of life is a search for a vocation and social accomplishment

7 he/she has to undergo the ordeal by society (professional career)

8 he/she has to resist the trial by love (sentimental career)

9 he/she passes through moments of spiritual suffering and pain

10 now in his/her early manhood, he/she experiences epiphanies that lead to (or should determine) his/her final initiation and formation (complete or relativistic, or not existing at all-that is to say, the final stage of the formative process implies the dichotomy success/failure, or a third possibility of partial success/partial failure) (Golban, 2003a, pp. 239-240).

The order may differ in some cases; nevertheless, the steps are visible and trackable in many texts of the genre.

Golban refers to the Bildungsroman as thematizing the formation of a character on an autobiographical substratum reflecting the “biological and intellectual development usually from childhood till early maturity according to the principle of chronotope whose spatial and temporal components form the basis of its entire narrative structure and the basis for its analysis” (Golban, 2003b, p. 306).

The development or the formation of the hero or the heroine represents the unifying factor of the various themes and motifs. The author’s focus is basically on the three different phases of the character, which are childhood, youth, and maturity. Childhood usually covers the years when the hero or heroine is still at home, and life is static and incomplete during these years. Youth covers the years when the protagonist departs from his or her home, which is mainly provincial, and joins a larger community, mainly a city where the character receives education and struggles to achieve a formation which the character would not be able to achieve unless leaving home. The third phase is maturity as the final stage of the process of character becoming, where formation is achieved or it is a mere failure. The protagonist, whether successful in uniting with the society and finding an authentic self and identity, is largely created by the social determinism of the Victorian era.

The chronotope in the Bildungsroman reveals an impressive typology and encompasses the chronotope of home, the chronotope of roadway, the chronotope of city, and the existential chronotope. Home refers to the family circle of the character and shows his or her origin. Roadway shows the movement and reflects the spatial

and the temporal changes. City refers to joining a larger society and is the new place where the character will go through the process of formation. Existential chronotope refers to the experience of life in general rendered as a formative process.

All these elements can be seen particularly in the Victorian Bildungsroman. Following the years of the Enlightenment, which is dominated by reason, and then those of Romanticism, dominated by individual experience comes Victorian realism which borrows some elements from the earlier periods while opposing others. The Victorian Bildungsroman reflects the progressive mind of the era and the thriving newly developing urban culture and often shows the character being subjected to the notion of social determinism, whereas in some other cases still relying on the Romantic notions of individualism and self-sufficiency.

1.2. Bakhtin on the Bildungsroman

1.2.1. The Hero in the Travel Novel, the Novel of Ordeal and the Biographical Novel

Mikhail Bakhtin is a distinguished Russian literary critic, not known much to the Western world until recently, and now being regarded as a prominent scholar. In his later essays, in particular, he contributes significantly to the theoretical and critical consideration and approach to the genre of the novel. His own approach is historical and presents a classification based on the image of the hero reflected in the novel. In the travel novel, space and journey are very important, and since there is movement, there is a diversity of places. According to Bakhtin, the hero is static and flat; with regard to whether the hero is a concern of the novel or not, in this type of the novel, the focus is on the world rather than the hero.

The second type of novel is the novel of ordeal. The hero is important in this type of novel so far as his values are subject to be tested. The hero is static but round and with a complex personality. In terms of chronotope, time is missing and lacks significance, and the world is just a mere background and, therefore, static. Diachronically, the novel of ordeal comes from the ancient ages to the eighteenth

century. It has its own typology including ancient and medieval romances and so on. They focus on the test rather than on the whole life of a hero.

The third type is the biographical novel. In this type of novel, the hero is static, but becomes the main concern of the novel. The world is no longer a mere background for the hero. The typology of the biographical novel includes classical biographies, autobiographies and others alike.

The fourth type of the novel is the Bildungsroman, or “roman vospitaniya”, in Bakhtin’s terms.

1.2.2. Towards the Bildungsroman

In order to grasp what Bakhtin argues concerning the Bildungsroman, one needs to see the development of the Bildungsroman from the previous genres and types and realize how it diverges from the subgenre of the biographical novel.

The Bildungsroman borrows some elements from the travel novel, the novel of ordeal, and the biographical novel. From the travel novel, it borrows the idea of travel and journey since the hero has to leave his provincial background to join a larger community, and his journey is not only one that focuses on a physical journey but also a psychological one. From the novel of ordeal, it borrows the focus on the hero, the testing of the values, and the psychological time. From the biographical novel, it borrows the presentation of some typical aspects of life (“life course”, in Bakhtin’s own words), such as crisis and rebirth, biographical time as presented in reality, the representation of the world in a strong relationship to the character and, mainly, the focus on the hero. In Bakhtin’s view, in the previous types of the novel, the hero is static, which in the Bildungsroman, the hero is dynamic, changes, becomes and emerges.

The Bildungsroman affiliates as a novelistic subgenre when the character is subjected to the process of becoming, emergence, and formation. Bakhtin depicts this process to be among the “principles for the formulation of the hero paved the way for the development of synthetic forms of the novel in the nineteenth century, and above all for the realistic novel (Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, Dickens, and

Thackerey).” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 19) He continues his argument on the realistic novel. The characteristics of the Bildungsroman paved the way towards the realistic novel of the nineteenth century. That is to say, to be able to understand the nineteenth century realistic fiction, one has to know about the Bildungsroman, which emerged in Germany.

Bakhtin argues that the main purpose of his essay is to discuss the image of the man in the novel and in relation to the principles of time and space: “hence our more specific and special theme—the image of *man in the process of becoming* in the novel” (1986, p. 19). The process of becoming is the key term to understand what Bakhtin says about the Bildungsroman. Bildungsroman is a subgenre of the German novel which focuses on character formation, education, etc., having in turn its typology.

Bakhtin distinguishes five main categories of the Bildungsroman, the first two being cyclical novels, the third one being biographical or autobiographical, the fourth one being didactic-pedagogical, the fifth one being realist type about the individual’s emergence in relation to history, which he favors the most.

The first type of the Bildungsroman is a cyclical novel and this novel focuses basically on age; it is not a pure type, according to Bakhtin, since “elements of it were scattered throughout the work of eighteenth-century idyllists and the works of novelists of regionalism and *Heimatskunst* in the nineteenth century” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 22). This type is also followed by the humoristic type of the Bildungsroman, and this form is adopted by Tolstoy as well.

The second type is also cyclical in terms of emergence; it is also loosely related to the age and “traces a typically repeating path of man’s emergence from youthful idealism and fantasies to mature sobriety and practicality” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 22). This type usually deals with the life and experience as forms of education and schooling, and is of best represented by Goethe, Jean Paul, Keller and Hippel.

The third type of the emergence novel or the Bildungsroman is autobiographical/biographical type, which is not similar to the first two in terms of cyclicity. It reflects the biographical time of the hero, and “Man’s destiny is

created and he himself, his character, is created along with it. The emergence of man's life-destiny fuses with the emergence of man himself. Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Dicken's *David Copperfield* are novels of this type" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 22).

The fourth type of the Bildungsroman is the didactic-pedagogical one, in which one can see the pedagogical progress of a character in relation to the world. This type constitutes the works of Goethe, Rabelis, Xenophon, Fénelon, and Rousseau.

The fifth type of the Bildungsroman is the most significant one in that "man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence. Man's emergence is accomplished in real historical time, with all of its necessity, its fullness, its future and its profoundly chronotopic nature" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 23). In the former four types, man's emergence is achieved in relation to a static, ready-made and immobile world background. In this fifth type, called the "realist Bildungsroman", the "world, existing and stable in this existence, required that man adapt to it that he recognize and submit to the existing laws of life." (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 23) In this fifth type of the Bildungsroman, the individual experience is given in relation to society.

This process brings the novel close to being credible, and, as Bakhtin states, it enables "a radical reinterpretation of the elements of the novel's plot and opened up for the novel new and realistically productive points for viewing the world" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 23). The world is still static, read-given and immobile but provides the ground for life as education and experience. This is the case of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and, either, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. This type shows the formation of the character in relation to the world and larger community, and the man created is a new man, which is best reflected in the fiction of realism.

1.3. German Origins and English Flourishing of the Bildungsroman

1.3.1. German Origins

The Bildungsroman was founded as a subgenre of the novel in German literature. In his book review of *the Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, David Lodge comments on the different versions of the Bildungsroman and says that

In Germany, the Bildungsroman spawned several variants, each with its label (*Entwicklungsroman*, *Erziehungsroman*, *Kunstlerroman*) but in English literature, the boundaries between these types have not been closely observed, and Professor Buckley sensibly uses the original term broadly to denote “the novel of youth and apprenticeship” (Lodge, 1975, p. 860)

These types are “*Entwicklungsroman*, or ‘the novel of development,’ ‘a chronicle of a young man’s general growth;’ *the Erziehungsroman*, or ‘the pedagogical novel,’ ‘with an emphasis on the youth’s training and formal education;’ and *the Kunstlerroman*” which basically deals with the artist’s development” (Li, 2007, p. 23). Because of the restricting style of the genre and since there are many subcategories of the genre in Germany, only a few works would fall under the category of the Bildungsroman.

The term Bildung is the starting point for the formation novel and, as Tobias Boes says the “German scholars occupied themselves with differentiating between ever finer gradations of Bildung and with honing the thesis that the novel of formation possesses an inherent national particularity” (Boes, 2006, p. 232). For them, the Bildungsroman is a national genre and could only be reflected in the national context: “During the Wilhelmine Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi reign, this was often done in an expressly chauvinist fashion: the Bildungsroman was celebrated as the German answer to ‘decadent’ French and English ‘novels of society’” (Boes, 2006, p. 232) This subgenre is the nationalist representative of German literature. The name of this subgenre of the novel was different at first; it was later coined as the Bildungsroman in literary criticism.

Goethe's prototype of this subgenre is usually coined as the first of the *Bildungsromane*, yet "the idea of *Bildung* was conceived by the late-eighteenth century Weimar classicists, and in the following century was adopted in England by writers such as Carlyle, Mill, Arnold, and Pater, and in America by Emerson, Thoreau" and these writers happened to be "transcendentalists—all romantics or heirs of romanticism—who helped create the climate of concepts and assumptions that novelists in their day and after worked within." (Jeffers, 2005, p. 46) In this context, one might argue that the *Bildungsroman* is regarded as a genre that flourished in realism, but it has its roots in Romanticism and continues within various ages and movements.

The novel of formation has been introduced to English literature first by the translations of Goethe's prototypical work by Thomas Carlyle. Later, he wrote his own work, *Sartor Resartus*, as his own adaptation of the subgenre.

1.3.2. English Flourishing of the *Bildungsroman*

The *Bildungsroman* was first introduced into English literature via Carlyle. He translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels* into English, and provided some literary comments on the text, then wrote his own *Bildungsroman*, *Sartor Resartus*: "Carlyle reveals indebtedness to Goethe and assumes and adapts the model of the *Bildungsroman* to the particular construction of certain thematic perspectives in his quasi-philosophical anti-novel *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834)" (Golban, 2013, p. 63). While some might regard this work as an anti-novel because of the fragments in it together with the writer's explanations and comments, the second part of the novel acts as a *Bildungsroman* in that it shows the formation of the character.

Since the genre first came into being in the Romantic Movement, and since Carlyle was deeply inspired by Goethe, "Carlyle's work contains ideas that are closely linked to those of Romanticism, which reveals a Romantic origin of the *Bildungsroman*, although its flourishing and popularity take place within Realism" (Golban, 2013, p. 63). Being under the influence of Romanticism as well, Carlyle

emphasizes the importance of childhood as the Romantic Wordsworth and Blake had done and their followers in the realist literature would do. For Carlyle, according to Petru Golban, there is an emphasis on “the importance of the childhood experience for the whole long process of intellectual, emotional, and artistic development leading to a mature understanding of the social identity and creative capacities of the protagonist” (Golban, 2013, p. 68).

Carlyle diverts from his realist countrymen writers, and come closer to Walter Pater in his adaptation of the Bildungsroman. According to Golban, Pater conceives his work *Marius the Epicurean* to reflect the aesthetic and philosophical issues, and, likewise, “Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* departs from the socially and morally concerned realistic novel of formation Carlyle uses the model to open moral and political debates and express his own philosophical beliefs on the human and the social” (Golban, 2013, p. 81). The earliest examples of this subgenre can be said to have their own peculiar style and techniques.

Be it realist or non-realist, the thematic elements which define a Bildungsroman are basically the same: a type of autobiographical/biographical novel, showing the process of growth of a particular character and his or her maturation process, and the formation of the character in terms of both biological and intellectual development as well as his or her relation with society, which starts “from childhood till early maturity based on individual aptitudes and motivations as well as on inter-human determinism and social relationship” (Golban, 2013, p. 66).

In England, the Bildungsroman became a favorite literary model for Victorian realists, as “its fictional pattern, consisting of the literary treatment of the process of development and formation of a character in relation to society, offers the necessary extension and complexity to the literary concern with individual experience and social background” (Golban, 2012, p. 221). Following the pattern of Goethe, Carlyle and Pater who diverged from the tradition in their own terms, the realist novelist would yet favor the pattern as exposed by Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, George Eliot and other novelists who reflect the character’s development and formation “in relation to society, offers the necessary extension and complexity to the realistic literary concern with individual experience and social background, a

concern which is framed within a large-scale diachronic model of human existence” (Golban, p. 62). In short, the Bildungsroman became favorite with realists because these novelists wanted to reflect the notions of the age, and this pattern enabled them to do this.

In a realist novel, the main concern is to reflect the social background and the individual in a way of determinism, which means that the institutions, norms and realities of the larger community and society have an impact on the formation of the character. Being one of the prominent writers of his age, and having contributed to the genre of the Bildungsroman with great works, Charles Dickens reflects two different viewpoints in two different Bildungsromane. The first one is *David Copperfield*, which was published in 1850; it reflects the life of the novelist as a more romantic young man in his belief “in the power of the individual to shape the future in spite of all determinism, whereas *Great Expectations* (1861) reveals a mature, realistic author understanding the impossibility of escaping the influences of the milieu” (Golban, 2012, p.221). In *Jane Eyre*, social determinism is also very strong but as a highly individualized character, Jane is a representative of the milieu and she achieves her formation despite the drawbacks of her era.

Victorian realist novels usually deal with the theme of morality and, in *David Copperfield*, the character follows the moral code and his inner self, and his drives remain unchanged and his formation is a success. On the other hand, “In *Great Expectations*, the moral lesson also refers to the necessity to follow ethical principles which, if changed or eradicated by the effects of social determinism, lead to the failure of formation” (Golban, 2012, p. 222). In *Jane Eyre*, the moral code enables the character formation and the heroine’s acquisition of social status.

1.4. The Modernist Bildungsroman

The Bildungsroman is one of the novel genres whose main focus is the hero or heroine whose experience of life is rendered as a formative process. The novel constitutes not only time and space of the character as a mere background but the character as an individual subject, a living organism with his and her relation to the

society and the formation of the individual character in relation to the society he/she lives in. The modernist writer with his approach to end conception of literature diverges from the realist approach that focuses on society, but likewise thematizes the formation of the individual and “individual completion of one’s consciousness; it entails spiritual, psychological, or other forms of inner accomplishment, whether intellectual and philosophical” (Golban, 2018, p. 30). The modernist Bildungsroman focuses on the individual accomplishment and “In such novels stressing the inner existence, the hero’s development rather relates to frustration and, in relation to society, to alienation, which are to be replaced with personal choice and solution leading, in turn, to formation.” (Golban, 2018, p. 30).

Gregory Castle claims that “the modernist Bildungsroman harbors a powerful sense of frustration” (2006, p. 3). This frustration ends up in a negative dialectics, yet “the negative term exists solely to guarantee the self-identity of the positive term” (Castle, 2006, p. 3). In the end, the hero or heroine of the modernist Bildungsroman may be triumphant and achieves the aim to build an autonomous self which is related to “identity, nationality, education, the role of the artist, and social as well as personal relationships” (Castle, 2006, p. 3). Thinking of the changes that the modernist literature had to go through, it is inevitable that there are some different approaches to identity. For instance, in James Joyce, the concern is the Bildung of an artist, whereas in Virginia Woolf, the concern is more about the feminist building of the self.

Frustrated by the modernity and focusing more on the individual, modernists seem to “reject the balance between inwardness and milieu, refuse the interiorization of socialization, and re-legitimate individual consciousness and subjective experience as a self-sufficient domain in the process of identity development and formation” (Golban, 2018, p. 57). Meaning that the modernist identity development is more self-directed and achieved in that way.

1.5. The Postmodernist Bildungsroman

The postmodern concern with the hero's or heroine's identity development diverges from the earlier types of the Bildungsroman in certain aspects. First of all, the thematic concerns of the postmodernist literature are far more varied than those of the earlier periods. While the protagonist of the postmodernist Bildungsroman goes through the same pattern of existence as in earlier Bildungsromane, the characters themselves are much more diverse as they are the characters of the periphery: "In its shift from the center or a dominant position to the margin or periphery, literature becomes excentric (outside the center), and "ex-centric" means "eccentric", that is, unconventional, original, new" (Golban, 2018, p. 41). The characters of the postmodernist Bildungsroman represent the periphery such as queer characters, ethnic characters, etc. This approach matters because their development is different from the development and *Bildung* of the center. Golban argues that this could be achieved in two different ways "(1) to come within dominant discourses and try to modify them from within, and (2) to accept and proclaim marginalization and try to make fringe move into center" (2018, p. 41).

The concept of center and margin in the postmodernist literature can be seen in various ways. For example, the periphery could be based on gender and sexuality as in the case of the novel *Middlesex*, which our thesis will attempt at deciphering. In this particular case, the literature on feminism and the feminist discourse could be useful in analyzing the novel. The discourse on gender was basically regarded in male and female dichotomy. However, *Middlesex* reveals that this is not the case. Concurring with the theories of Judith Butler and other feminist writers, *Middlesex* argues that while sexuality is regarded as a biological being, it could not be regarded as just two sexes, yet there are others that need to be regarded as normal rather than marginal. The novel also reflects the gender to be a construct: the "center and margin dichotomy in feminism and social studies is actualized as male/man as center and female/woman as margin, heterosexual versus sexual minorities, dominant nationality or race versus national or racial minorities, and so on" (Golban, 2018, p. 42). In this respect, *Middlesex* can be regarded as a Bildungsroman that tries to break

down this dichotomy and merge these oppositions in a way that befits postmodernist novels.

The postmodernist concern with the individual and its integration into society and being accepted by the society even though the character might be queer or of the periphery, in general, is reflected in the literature of the postmodern period. Along with applying different techniques as to the style of literature, postmodernist novelists are preoccupied with reflecting the thematic concerns of the period as well as focusing on the identity development and welcoming each identity to the somehow fragmented yet united society. The development of the character and identity, then, could not be separated from the development of the nations, and the world in general as well. As to this concern, Golban puts forward the idea that the postmodern writers reflect the building of the character by creating the individual “as produced historically, constructed socially, conditioned culturally, and subjected to discourse, or as a free individual proclaiming his or her own autonomous values, and whose personal experience is a means of identity construction (2018, p. 57). Therefore, these individuals who have been subjected to a larger society, and a world have a voice of their own and are welcome in the way in which they create their own particular and authentic identity.

Although the representatives of the Bildungsroman reveal thematic similarities in the postmodern era, they differ in the ways in which they handle the development of the character. The genre revives itself in various places, in various forms, and receives recognition in the postmodern era.

The techniques applied in the postmodernist literature can be found in *Middlesex* as a Bildungsroman as well. The novel reflects the thematic concern of the postmodernist Bildungsroman. The protagonist of Jeffrey Eugenides’s *Middlesex* is a Greek American intersex person whose maturity and identity go in line with ethnicity as well as sexual identity development. In addition to being an intersex person, the protagonist experiences ethnic identity building as a Greek American, a minority both in terms of sexuality and ethnicity in a place which becomes more and more global each day and the development of the country and the globalization of the world is reflected through the development of the protagonist. The character is born

twice, and the second time he is born, he begins to understand more about the world and the novel reflects the world as it started in the past through myths and legends and the Greek American intersex person carries the genes of a nation to the global world and imprints the world with his particular mythical, magical yet at the same time realist being.

The novel is preoccupied with the postmodern concerns as forementioned and reflects almost all the characteristics of the postmodernist literature. As depicted above, the Bildungsroman does not lose its significance but reflects the thematic concern of it in the way that the postmodernist novelists prefer. *Middlesex*, whose narrator reflects his story through the history of his nation and race in a way similar to that in *Midnight's Children*, shows the reader that an in-between or an all-together status and being could be possible in the postmodern era. Therefore, the novel could be said to have started in a village in Turkey through the stories of his grandparents and the fragmentation of the world into nation-states, and to have continued in America through both protagonist and his parents who experience a life which is between their origins and the society in which they live, which is an international and interracial one. Finally the narration might have found its resolution in the world becoming a global village. The mythical element gives its way to advertisements and brands which make the world become a global village where it is almost impossible to find one's roots and this rootlessness or being fed by the roots of all nations make it possible for a new world to emerge and for a new and different way of becoming for the protagonist.

CHAPTER 2

2. GENDER AND SEXUALITY: BETWEEN THEORY AND ITS EXPRESSION IN *MIDDLESEX*

Gender and sexuality have long been recognized as a part of the constituents of identity. While they differ in their definitions and while they are coined as different domains, they share a lot in common. As the constituents of a person's identity as well as other domains, gender and sexuality have been deconstructed in the postmodern era as well since the era demarks change and fluidity. Theorists like Foucault and Butler question gender, sexuality, desire and identity. In her masterpiece *Undoing Gender*, Judith Butler basically argues that gender is a construct, in particular a social construct. In addition to the fact that gender is a social construct, Jeffrey Eugenides presents biological sex as a construct as well and displays gender, sexuality, biological sex, sexual orientation and ethnicity as domains that construct identity by reflecting how these terms affect a character's mind and the concept of the self.

In order to be able to reflect on how Eugenides's character develops his identity, it would be useful to demonstrate how these terms are defined. In Oxford Learners Dictionary, gender is defined as "the fact of being male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, not differences in biology" and sexuality is defined as "the feelings, attitudes and activities connected with a person's sexual desires", in the same dictionary. In the Cambridge Online Dictionary, gender is defined as "the state of being male or female," while sexuality is defined as "the way you feel about sexual activity and the type of sex you prefer". When these definitions are taken into consideration, one notices a pattern regarding gender as being related to one's perception of himself or herself regarding social and cultural concerns in terms of being or performing male or female or a state of being somewhere in-between. Sexuality, on the other hand, is seen as being related to sexual desire and sexual orientation. The terms "sex" and "sexuality" are generally regarded as being related to the erotic, while gender is

regarded as being related to a particular code of behavior and manner of thinking and acting in certain social situations.

In defining sexuality and gender, Jackson differentiates between them as the “former is a sphere or realm of social life, lacking defined boundaries while the latter is a fundamental social division ordered in terms of a clear binary distinction” (2006, p. 107). Focusing on the social division and boundaries and the lack of them, Jackson, thus, enables us with a broader definition of gender as “a social division and a cultural distinction, given meaning and substance in the everyday actions, interactions and subjective interpretations through which it is lived” (Jackson, 2006, p. 106). Therefore, it would not be wrong to assert that gender is made up in everyday actions while sexuality refers to biological sex and sexual orientation as well as the erotic.

2.1. Building Sexual Identity and Gender Identity

Gender and sexuality could be argued to be independent terms, yet for the scope of the current thesis dealing with building identity and constituents of sexual identity, they are regarded as being co-dependent since *Middlesex* reflects a pattern between gender and sexuality and how these two terms co-exist. While we expect gender to be socially constructed, in general, we also expect it to be similar around the world. However, studies show that this is not the case. In *Middlesex*, which is a novel whose story starts in a small village in Bursa and progresses in the USA and finds its way to Berlin, gender is reflected as a fluid term that progresses and changes throughout time and place. As to sexuality and what one finds sexual, many try to find a pattern yet what would be more acceptable would be to expect a sexual response or building sexual identity from individuals when regarding asexual sexual identity as well. Much as there might be differences based on what arouses them, we try to find a pattern: “Although men and women are sexually aroused by different sexual stimuli and prefer different types and frequencies of sexual behaviors, most people attend and respond to sexual stimuli in the environment” (Kauth, 2006, p. 2).

Many theorists used to believe that biological sex had an impact upon sexuality and sexual orientation as well as building gender as well. Freud is one of these theorists and he assumed that anatomy was important in building sexuality. While Freud failed to make the distinctions between biological sex and gender when he assumed that they were both based on anatomy, he “made gender crudely derivative of the anatomical differences between the sexes” (Goldner, 2002, p. 63). Therefore, the initial response to gender was to expect gender as a result of biological sex. However, the current discourse on sex and gender requires a more detailed study on sex and gender and Kauth argues that the former is about the biological and physiological features “that differentiate males from females (e.g., sex chromosomes, hormone levels, testes, ovaries), while gender refers to social characteristics and roles that typify men and women (e.g., masculinity or femininity, husband or wife, clothing, occupations)” (2006, p. 15). This means that sex is in the realm of anatomy while gender is in the realm of sociology.

Once the distinction between biological sex and gender is clear, and once gender is regarded as a social realm, the distinction between sex and sexuality should be pondered upon. Sex, as said earlier, is in the realm of anatomy, yet what one finds sexual and how one feels sexual orientation could not simply be explained through biology. “While ‘sex’ denotes carnal acts, ‘sexuality’ is a broader term referring to all erotically significant aspects of social life and social being, such as desires, practices, relationships and identities” (Jackson, 2006, p. 106). For instance, in the postmodernist context, not only human beings but also things are regarded as sexual as well. A building, shoes, clothing, etc. could be sexy and could arouse sexual feelings: “This definition assumes fluidity, since what is sexual (erotic) is not fixed but depends on what is socially defined as such and these definitions are contextually and historically variable” (Jackson, 2006, p. 106). When one thinks about the commercials, it is easy to spot what is regarded as sexual in a certain society. However, since the world is becoming like a global village and since advertisements are everywhere, what is regarded as sexual earns a more global aspect as well. For instance, cars, speed, red lipstick, nudity, garter, and so on, start to be regarded as sexual, and *Middlesex* reflects these characteristics of sexuality when building a

sexual identity of the protagonist when Cal mentions how advertisements and production make it almost impossible for the people to be able to differentiate one another's origin. For example, in the past, one could think that long hair was a sign of beauty and sexuality as well as in the case of Cal's grandmother, yet long hair loses its significance in the USA, and once she moves there, they cut her hair. However, she sticks to her traditions and vow to never cut it again. In the case of Callie, long hair becomes a means of hiding herself rather than exposing beauty and sexuality. Sexuality is, therefore, a fluid term in the novel.

Sexual orientation is a term that is affected by other factors as well. Lippa argues that "most past studies on links between sexual orientation and personality have focused on measures of M-F, masculinity, and femininity. However, a number of broader personality traits are linked to gender and perhaps to sexual orientation as well" (2005, p. 122). Therefore, it is not easy to suggest that personality depends just on sexuality, but it should be noted that gender plays an important role in building personality as well. Not only sexuality and sexual orientation, but also gender has a function in both sexual identity and identity in general.

2.1.1 Conventional Sexual Identity and Gender: The Dichotomous Approach

The traditional approach towards sexuality, gender and sexual orientation is dichotomous. Even in the contemporary world, many expect them to be dichotomous and as male and female gender and sexuality. Additionally, many expect a harmony between them as well: "Most of us take for granted a harmony between our biological sex and our psychological experience of being female or male, our gender identity" (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 166). This is a too simplistic approach. In this sense, it is not any different from calling a baby a girl or a boy. This case makes the protagonist of *Middlesex* suffer from the very beginning of his life when declared to be a girl. According to this approach, "We just are women and men, and the relative effortlessness of this identity can lead us to reify a simple, dichotomous view of gender. People are meant to be either female or male, both physically and

psychologically” (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 166). Sexual identity and gender identity themselves are not that simple, let alone an intersex person or a transgender person to discover their sexual orientation. Therefore, “persons who are intersexed or transgendered often experience this relationship as ambiguous or completely contradictory. They wonder whether they are female or male, neither or both” (Looy and Bouma 2005, p. 166).

One might find it easier to suppose there is just same-sex sexual orientation or other sex sexual orientation. This notion also calls for a dichotomous approach to sexual orientation. While, therefore, building sexual and gender identity, “the notion that gender identity is always either female or male, and the task in the case of a person who is intersexed is simply to determine which gender identity is likely to emerge, is far too simplistic” (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 169). Particularly when trying to decide an infant’s sex and gender, the doctors and psychologists are prone to make errors as in the case of Cal.

2.1.1.1 Male Identity

The first thing to ponder upon building male gender and sexual identity could be the phallic symbols used to define them. Julie Konik and Abigail Stewart state that when children try to build sexual identity, a difference could be observed between boys and girls. When they are playing, “boys are likely to build tall phallic structures of exteriors, while girls tended to design interior configurations and arrange their toys in a circular pattern” (2005, p. 820). This approach suggests that the basic difference is caused by their biological sex difference of having internal sexual organs or having external sexual organs. Even when Gustav Klimt’s works such as *The Kiss* and *The Virgin* are taken into consideration, he portrays women in circles, and their clothing consists of circles, while men are in rectangular forms or lines as well. This shows that in the western context, women are reflected as in circles and men in a more linear form.

Cal’s grandmother, Desdemona, tries to guess the sex of children though a silver spoon, and if the spoon rotates, it is a girl, and if the spoon goes forward and

backward, it is a boy. Eugenides makes the reader question if this could reflect the truth and in the first page, he makes the reader aware that gender identity is fluid while mentioning a case study in which Cal turns out to be a boy after 14 years of experience of being a girl, like Tiresias who is also an intersexed mythological character.

The second thing to ponder upon could be the Oedipal complex in building male sexual and gender identity. In this dualistic approach towards sexuality and gender, the boy needs an association with the mother. Based on Freud's terms, "attention has been redirected to the fact that before the boy wants to have his mother, he wants to be her, or at least be with what she provides, her maternal nurturance" (Diamond, 2006, p. 1100). The first association and the first thing to build male sexual and gender identity, then, is to have female characteristics. Later, the boy needs to build sexual orientation. While doing this, the boy takes his father as an example and a drawback as well. "Hence, the boy's preoedipal relationship with his mother and the actual involvement of the father in the early triadic environment are now seen as crucial to understanding male gender identity." (Diamond, 2006, p. 1100) While building male gender and sexual identity, there is a necessity to break free from both the mother and the father; therefore, the character needs to break free from his roots. This is reflected in all the male characters of the novel, including Lefty Stephanides, Milton Stephanides, Chapter Eleven, Cal and Fard. For instance, Fard changes his identity to become the leader of the Muslim society in Detroit after his fake death. All these male characters of the novel break free from their history to build their identity.

2.1.2.2 Female Identity

Different from male gender and sexual identity, female identity is regarded to be built via history. Konik and Stewart quote from Flax, who suggests that "women may gain agency by conceptualizing a consistent self that permits them to claim their memories and histories. She pointed out that 'without a sense of an I among we's, politics as (distributive) justice is not possible'" (2004, p. 817). While men try to

break free from their roots, women stick to them. When Desdemona comes to America, she brings her silkworm box with her. The silkworms in the box are thrown away dismissed only as insects, which makes her really sad since the silkworms have a history that goes back to China and the Silk Road. Although the box does not have the silkworms, it still reminds her of her past, and she keeps carrying it all her life. Her memory is always linked to her past and history. Therefore, she even asks Milton to go back to Turkey and restore the old church. While Lefty breaks free from his past, Desdemona sticks to it.

Another factor related to female gender and sexual identity is that it is expected to be heterosexual. Konik and Stewart state that when it is particularly women's sexual identity building, "heterosexuality is mandated for women as a consequence of our patriarchal social arrangements." (2004, p. 818) When Lefty and Desdemona leave Turkey to go to the States, they plan to go to their cousin, Surmelina. Surmelina, or Lina, first went to America to get married to a man, and she was sent there because she was not heterosexual and was caught in intercourse with a woman. She could not be accepted like that, and she had to leave the village. She was an outcast. When she was in America and when her husband, Jimmy Zizmo, fakes death, and starts a new life, Lina is also free. Since *Middlesex* reflects the postmodernist concern with the periphery, she starts a new life with a woman and breaks down traditional gender expectations.

2.2 Queer Sexual Identity and Gender or the Periphery

The postmodernist concern with the periphery and breaking down the traditional identity building is reflected in *Middlesex*. Much as the traditional concern with gender and sexuality was dualistic or namely diachronic, even the title of the novel suggests an in-between status as well. The protagonist of the novel is an intersexed person and is the concern of Queer theory. Butler suggests that "Queer theory aims to open up the field of possibility for gender without dictating which kinds of possibilities ought to be realized" (1990, p. viii)

Queer theory deals with the periphery of sexual identity and these people are called LGBTI. Among these, there are many studies on lesbian, gay, and bisexual sexual orientation. However, in terms of gender and sexual orientation, transgendered and intersexed people need to be pondered upon as well.

When individuals have no evidence of an intersex condition, but believe that they in fact are a gender different from that suggested by their biological sex, they are called transgendered (Meyer-Bahlburg, 1994). That is, the genetic, gonadal, hormonal, and genital aspects of sex appear to be consistently female or male. The only inconsistency is in gender identity, and, as a result, in desired gender role. Thus, a biological male who is transgendered may consistently express a desire to be, or claim that he already is, a girl, prefer to play with other girls, and long to adopt a stereotypical female gender role” (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 168).

The scope of our thesis is limited to an intersexed person, while there are people with other sexual orientations as well. The protagonist claims that he was born twice. The first birth was as a girl whom the doctor fails to notice that is an intersexed person and the second is as a teenage boy who notices that he is interested in girls and wants to keep his penis as well. While the doctor decides that Cal is a girl in terms of gender, Cal is aware that his sexual orientation is towards women, and he feels like a man. While the doctor wants to perform an operation, Cal runs away. Queer theory suggests “a non-normative sexuality which transcends the binary distinction homosexual/heterosexual to include all who feel disenfranchised by dominant sexual norms” (Walters, 2005, p. 8). Cal does not want to be turned into a single-sex person, namely into a woman, and prefers to remain an intersexed person.

As in Dr. Peter Luce’s decision to make Cal/Callie a “normal” girl at their parents wish, many intersexed or transgendered people are regarded as abnormal that need to be corrected. Since Callie lies when in the doctor’s office, they regard her gender as female and sexual orientation as being towards men and want to change him. This process is called “normative”: “institutionalized, normative heterosexuality regulates those kept within its boundaries as well as marginalizing and sanctioning those outside them. The term ‘heteronormativity’ has not always captured this double-sided social regulation” (Jackson, 2006, p. 105).

Since the protagonist of the novel is an intersexed person, our handling of the queer theory is reduced to intersexed people and their gender building. As to

intersexed people, studies show that some of them do not show evidence of being intersexed until puberty:

One inherited condition causing ambiguous genitalia is known as 5- α -reductase deficiency. When this enzyme is non-functioning, male infants are unable to convert testosterone into the more highly active dihydroxy testosterone necessary for male external genitalia development before birth. Cases range from mild to severe, with the latter presenting as an infant with male internal reproductive organs but female external genitalia that undergo virilization at puberty (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 168).

The information stated above basically means that although defining biological sex seems easy at birth, many people could suffer from that rack decision when they were born. It is said to be easy to remove the ambiguous penis just after birth since a child is not born with sexual orientation.

One of the things that cause intersexuality is 5-a-reductase deficiency which can be considered to be the case of Cal. Once these children find out about their biological sex, they might experience some problems related to their gender identity, yet “Children with 5- α -reductase deficiency generally seem to have little difficulty adopting a male gender identity and role when their external genitals masculinize at puberty” (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 169). Cal, although raised as a girl notices that he is into girls and his sexual orientation is towards girls, moreover, his body does not turn into a girl’s body. These intersexed people’s “intersexuality is due to the lack of another androgen, dihydroxytestosterone, that is primarily responsible for the development of the external genitals” (Looy and Bouma, 2005, p. 169). However, once they reach puberty, the penis, which seems to be mistaken for the clitoris, develops and the external organ makes itself visible.

Once the intersexed persons find out the biological sex they feel, they need to build their gender identity as well. Gender identity is not in itself either male or female and could be somewhere in-between, too. Cal feels that although it has been many years that he has become a man, he still has some characteristics that remain from his old self like his attention to details, his gestures as well. His body has changed completely through exercise and attention to clothing, yet his gender has some constituents of the female gender, too. Towards the end of the novel, he nevertheless builds a coherent identity. Identity has a “function for the individual in

providing a sense of unity and coherence across different social situations” (Konik and Stewart, 2004, p. 816). Although he was accustomed to falling for a woman and then once the things get serious to escape from her, towards the end, one can see that he builds a coherent identity and is happy with his gender, sex, and sexual orientation. He starts a new life with his girlfriend in Berlin, which reminds him of being divided into two.

The postmodern concern with the individual from the periphery enables a character to build their identity by themselves since they are not driven by tradition: “Building on deconstruction’s insights into human subjectivity (selfhood) as a fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible ‘selves’, queer theory defines individual sexuality as a fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities” (Tyson, 1999, p. 337). Being fragmentary yet coherent in itself, the postmodernist novel character has many possibilities to build their gender and sexuality.

CHAPTER 3

3. *MIDDLESEX* AS A POSTMODERNIST BILDUNGSROMAN AND THE BUILDING OF SEXUAL IDENTITY

Middlesex is a postmodernist Bildungsroman in which a periphery character, an intersexed Greek-American, tries to build his identity in terms of gender and sexual identity. The first page of the novel summarises what is to happen in the narrative which is rendered in a retrospective way. Much as the main plot is summarised in the first few pages, and the sub-plots which are driven by mythological times, stories, and family history seem to impact the main plot in the novel. Although the novel introduces Calliope/Callie/Cal on the first page to be the protagonist of the novel and reflect the personal story of Cal, it is embedded with myths, family history, ethnicity, and globalization. The character himself does not come from a provincial background, yet his grandparents do, and this assimilation process or discovering the true identity process goes throughout all over the novel.

Building gender and sexual identity as the title of the novel suggests, is based on an intersex situation as well as on some other dualities and dichotomies. Lefty and Desdemona are both brother and sister, and wife and husband. Milton and Tessie are both cousins and husband and wife. They are all Greek but American as well. Since it is a postmodernist novel, the novel is full of periphery characters that are in-between and are loaded with mythical symbols as well as modern incarnations. Cal prefers to call his situation a hermaphrodite rather than an intersexed person, and this reflects the mythological aspect of the plot. Cal tries to avoid the term intersexed and “in his attempt to portray himself using this mythological image, actually constructs a plausible identity of someone close to reality, endowed with flaws, incompleteness, imperfection, as opposed to the improbable perfection and oneness that the mythological term suggests” (Kostova, 2015, p. 311).

Once, in a school play, s/he becomes Tiresias, who is also a person who was one thing once and then another one, just as Cal suggests: “I was a shoo-in to play the old, blind prophet ... My half-changed voice had a disembodied, inspired quality.

Tiresias had also been a woman, of course. But I didn't know that then. And it wasn't mentioned in the script" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 335). The novel is based on fluidity and diachrony, and this change between sexes also benefits from historical figures. Gender has been regarded as fluid itself and the fluidity of sex is also reflected in the novel. Cal's biological sex is thought to be female in the beginning, but he turns out to be an intersexed person with a sexual drive towards women. Therefore, while building gender and sexual identity, the character sometimes goes through between them just like his biological sex is placed between masculinity and femininity.

Postmodernism reflects the characters attempting to find themselves, and this attempt does not have to be linear. While Cal recalls his story, he says that since his intersex situation is driven by a genetic problem, his story has to go back. He is now in Berlin, an in-between city only after the two sides united, and he is in his forties trying to build his own gender and sexual identity. The novel starts when he is not that young, but since he was born twice, one could suggest that his male identity is in his early twenties. The narration is retrospective, and he narrates the story from the point of view of the first person trying to see through the eyes of other people and how they may have felt at the time. Therefore, the narration is not reliable, but he excuses himself by making it clear as well.

Another postmodernist characteristic of the novel is that Cal's father and mother were conceived just after the couple Lefty and Desdemona and the other couple Jimmy and Sourmelina watch a play entitled *The Minotaur*. While couples do not watch the whole play, they are aroused by the mythological creatures, and since they have Greek origins, they feel like united with their roots. They refuse to watch the whole play because it does not reflect their traditional reality: "How the child of that union, Asterius, came out with a bull's head attached to a human body. And then Daedalus, the maze, etc. As soon as the footlights came on, however, the production's nontraditional emphasis became clear" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 107). They are irritated by the fact that the play does not reflect traditional reality, yet they find something new and exciting in the play. They do not see Poseidon or the maze, but there are dancer girls by whom Sourmelina is aroused, and against Desdemona's will, she was aroused by the play, too: "The Minotaur's savage, muscular thighs. The

suggestive sprawl of his victims. Ashamed of her excitement, she gave no outward sign. She switched off the lamp. She told her husband good night. She yawned (also theatrical) and turned her back. While Lefty stole up from behind” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 108). Desdemona pretends not to be interested, yet she encourages Lefty. Both babies are conceived at the same time, in the same house, one in the upstairs, and the other in the downstairs. Desdemona is very superstitious and she is afraid that her baby might be like the monsters that she has seen in the play since she feels like she is committing a sin by being with her brother:

A momentous night, this, for all involved (including me). I want to record the positions (Lefty dorsal, Lina couchant) and the circumstances (night’s amnesty) and the direct cause (a play about a hybrid monster). Parents are supposed to pass down physical traits to their children, but it’s my belief that all sorts of other things get passed down, too: motifs, scenarios, even fates. Wouldn’t I also sneak up on a girl pretending to be asleep? And wouldn’t there also be a play involved, and somebody dying onstage? (Eugenides, 2003, p. 109)

This part reflects how Desdemona was afraid of giving birth to a monster, and the narrator connects the two plays, the one watched by his grandparents and the one that s/he was to perform at school. Everything is shown as if what a parent does will somehow be reflected in someone in the family.

Each baby to be born into the family makes her nervous, and when Cal is conceived, she wants to figure out his biological sex as well and is the only person that goes against the odds that Cal/Callie is a girl. It is also noteworthy that when Cal finds out his situation of being an intersexed person, the other word to describe his status is a *monster*. Therefore, Desdemona’s fear of monstrosity or maybe her ridiculous fear turns out to be a prophecy that fulfils itself. Cal is just like Tiresias, the blind oracle of Apollo. There are some passages in the text, which clearly reflects that Cal sees himself like the oracle and figures out his gender and sexual identity much before the doctors find out.

3.1. The Formation of Character in Terms of Gender and Sexual Identity

While building gender and sexual identity, as previously mentioned, gender is the sociological aspects that define how a person acts and sees himself or herself within certain social, political and economic discourse in terms of masculine and feminine behaviour codes in a certain society. It is regarded as being constructed. However, sex, particularly biological sex is reflected as being assigned and prone to change as well in the postmodernist context. Heteronormative operations make it possible for transgendered persons to fit into the sex they feel in: “Indeed, the medical and surgical management of intersexed bodies can be considered symptomatic of a heteronormative imperative” (Carroll, 2010, p.187). However, since the baby does not have the right to choose, this heteronormative process is wrong in itself. Nevertheless, once an intersexed baby is born, doctors are likely to define the baby’s sex at birth by conducting an operation much before the baby grows up to find out their sexual orientation. Banner suggests that the novel was successful in that it “influenced pediatric endocrinologists to look at intersexed babies from a new standpoint” before conducting an operation on them” (2010, p. 845).

Looking at gender and sexual identity from the standpoint of the Bildungsroman, *Middlesex* is a Bildungsroman whose protagonist Cal is a successful character in terms of achieving formation in a postmodernist manner. He is an intersexed person whose sexual drive is towards women, and as much as some manners and gestures of him reflect his upbringing as a girl, his sexual identity turns out to be that of a man and his gender is somehow in-between, and he gets reconciled with that at the end of the novel. He is in a broader community divided into two; but united later, he has a fulfilling job, and he has a girlfriend who is happy to be with him. He formerly explains himself as “Descended from Asia Minor Greeks, born in America, I live in Europe now. Specifically, in the Schöneberg district of Berlin. The Foreign Service is split into two parts, the diplomatic corps and the cultural staff” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 40). He is a character that is made up of dualities, yet he makes

peace with himself, and just like his sexuality, his roots and the places that he visits or is connected to are hybrid places or people as well: “The symbolism of a unified east and west is compounded by Cal’s somewhat awkward courtship of Julie Kikuchi, whom he meets in Berlin, Julie bridges the apparent polar opposites of east and west” (Moynihan, 2010, p. 89). Since Julie is also a hybrid person like Cal, Cal is united in terms of culture and being, and Eugenides “implicitly over determines the metaphor of hybridity to refer at once to the body, to cultural identity, and to narrative structure” (Shostak, 2008, p. 384).

Spending fourteen years of his childhood as a girl makes Cal good at understanding women and fulfilling his parents’ expectations from him to be a girl, to be his mother’s girl, who would accompany Tessie, Cal hides behind his hair and clothes and even fakes menstruation to fit into the gender and sexual role that is assigned to him. He even lies to the doctor when Dr. Luce tries to figure out his gender and sexual identity. However, he notices that he does not want to fake anymore, and once he discovers his true sex, he wants to live accordingly, deserts his family in fear of the so-called normative operation, and fulfils building gender and sexual identity in the end: “Middlesex traces Cal’s nonnormatively sexed body to a historical incident—the marriage of his immigrant grandparents, a plot point that brings the disparate narratives together into a ‘hybrid’” (Shostak, 2008, p. 384). The past and the present coexist in the novel and Eugenides reflects these both in the story and the way in which the story is told which is nonlinear: “Eugenides’s sconflation of meanings under the sign of hybridity allows the two narrative components of Middlesex—the immigrant family epic and the hermaphrodite’s coming-of-age-memoir to attempt to bring into alignment the discourses of gender and ethnic identity” (Shostak, 2008, p. 387).

3.1.1. The Historical Background and Birth: Family History, Provincial Background, Migration, and the First and the Second Birth

In a Bildungsroman, the protagonist of the novel usually comes from a provincial background; in our case, however, Cal/Calliope was born as a girl for the first time in Detroit, which is definitely not a provincial background. Nevertheless, Eugenides succeeds in providing the provincial background through the character's ancestors and enabling a connection to the sexual and gender identity of the character and his ancestors who come from a provincial background via alpha 5 reductase deficiency, which is a genetic cause for intersexuality. Desdemona's silkworm box is like the genetic disease that they pass on Cal and "it thus stands as a figure for inheritance: for the gifts from the past, for it pressures on the present, and for the scraps of cultural identity we carry with us into alien territories" (Shostak, 2008, p. 392). When Cal, the authentic narrator, starts telling his story to the reader, he makes it clear that it is necessary for him to give a family account, which apparently caused his intersexuality, and this part makes almost one-third of the novel.

Desdemona and Lefty are sisters and brothers in a village, which is inhabited mostly by Greeks in Turkey in the 1920s. Since the country has been wiped out and terrorized several times by the Greek as well as Turkish forces, many people have died, and Lefty and Desdemona have lost their parents in one of those battles. There are few people to marry in the village, and while Desdemona takes care of the silkworms and produces silk at home, Lefty goes to a nearby city, Bursa, to sell these silkworms and silk. Their division of work is designed by their gender. In accordance with their gender, Lefty goes to the bars and gambles as well as trying his first sexual experience with girls. Desdemona is at home in the small village waiting for her brother to come back home. Both of them have fallen for each other since their early childhood, yet they try to stay away from each other based on religious grounds, but their ethnic mythological grounds make it possible since the Gods and Goddesses in Greek mythology were basically brothers and sisters as well. The duality of existence

prevails from the very beginning of the novel in terms of sexuality, sexual drive and ethnicity.

Desdemona tries her best to get Lefty to marry a Greek girl, but he has just two options as Lefty says: one of them has a moustache while the other smells really badly. This also shows gender expectations and sexual expectations of men in the 1920s. When a man smells bad, it reflects hard work and masculinity, yet a woman does not have the right to smell bad or have a moustache. The reader does not know whether Desdemona can find someone to marry herself, yet it is her duty as the woman of the house to find a suitable wife for his brother. She attempts feminizing both girls, by teaching them to wear fragrance and also wax. They both look like models in their father's magazine, which Lefty recognizes.

When Lefty refuses to marry either of them, both the brother and sister are relieved. They notice the fire coming towards their village and decide to join their cousin Sourmelina who now lives in Detroit, in the USA. Sourmelina's sexual orientation causes unrest in the village because she is a lesbian. Konik and Stewart claim that "heterosexuality is mandated for women as a consequence of our patriarchal social arrangements" (2004, p. 818). As stated, women's sexual orientation is expected to be heterosexual. Knowing Sourmelina's sexual orientation before she married a man, Lefty and Desdemona are sure that she will reveal their incest and true identity, but if they can make it to Smyrna and survive the voyage to the States, they would decide to marry and hide their identity.

They go on board as distant cousins and act as if they do not know each other on the board, as if they met there for the first time. Their marriage has many affiliations with Greek mythology as they see each other at night and fail to look into one another's eyes as in Eros and Psyche. "Lefty had seen Desdemona undress many times, but usually as no more than a shadow and never in the moonlight. She had never curled onto her back like this, lifting her feet to take off her shoes" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 69). Shadow and light dichotomy are reflected here as an allusion to Eros and Psyche myth to reflect Desdemona's and Lefty's ancient Greek counterparts. Lefty watches Desdemona and thinks "how different his sister looked, in moonlight, in a lifeboat. She glowed. She gave off white light. He blinked behind his hands. The

moonlight kept rising; it covered his neck, it reached his eyes until he understood: Desdemona was wearing a corset” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 69). This corset makes Desdemona more naked than the times Lefty had seen his sister undress through the curtain that divided their room. This corset is also made up of silk, and it represents Desdemona’s obsession with history and the past: “Desdemona’s body also converges with the silkworm’s in the shared space of the cocoon, collapsing any distinction between Desdemona’s eggs and the silkworm’s.” (Holcombe, 2018, p. 8) It could be argued that through silkworms, which have made their way from the Chinese princess to the world, Desdemona and her history are to make their way to the new world of the United States.

Once they are in the USA, and when the people at the border throw away Desdemona’s silkworms disregarding and diminishing them as insects and once they cut her long hair, she feels disconnected from her history. She is disappointed yet tries to continue her past by living the traditional Greek way. Lefty, on the other hand, as males do, is ready to be melted at Ford’s melting pot. Lefty and the men working at Ford’s factory are required to speak acceptable levels of English. Lefty joins Ford’s language school, and the graduation ceremony takes place as the people of different nations come to the USA in their traditional clothing, and “the melting pot boils over. Red lights brighten. The orchestra launches into ‘Yankee Doodle.’ One by one, the Ford English School graduates rise from the cauldron. Dressed in blue and grey suits, they climb out, waving American flags, to thunderous applause” (Eugenides, 2003, pp. 104-105). These men come out of the melting pot in suits suitable to Americans. Adaptation to a new environment, then, changes between sexes and genders.

Lefty does his best to survive through the Great Depression and to assimilate to Americans, whereas Desdemona does her best to resist it. Lefty first joins Ford’s factory, then becomes a smuggler, then a secret club owner, where he serves alcohol to people, and finally a restaurant owner in town. Desdemona, on the other hand, sticks to her past and when she watches the play on the Minotaur, she gets pregnant to Milton, yet she waits for birth in fear that the child might turn out to be a monster like the one she watched and because of the sin she committed. She promises to God

that she will never have sex with Lefty again. She keeps her promise for a very long time, and Lefty feels frustrated to claim that she needs to support the family financially as well. Desdemona would work at home being good at taking care of silkworms, which she thought to be affected by sin and their product to fail in quality.

For the very first time, she has to leave her comfort zone to work with the Islamic Foundation in Detroit in a part of the city that was inhabited by the black people. She is at first afraid of the environment, yet she feels at comfort at her job since she will teach young girls how to take care of silkworms. The first thing she teaches the young girls is to be virtuous since silkworms could be affected by sins as her mother had once taught her. “‘To have good silk, you have to be pure,’ she used to tell her daughter. ‘The silkworms know everything. You can always tell what somebody is up to by the way their silk looks’” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 22). She then notices that Fard Muhammad was actually Jimmy Zizmo. This determines her to go under surgery: “A surgeon made two incisions below her navel. Stretching open the tissue and muscle to expose the circuitry of the fallopian tubes, he tied each in a bow, and there were no more children” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 165). Fard makes it clear to her that he knows about Sourmelina’s inclination towards women, and Desdemona suffers from the other possible outcomes of her incest as well.

Although Desdemona does not have to work afterwards, she keeps doing her traditional business, which is to guess the sex of a baby. She keeps her box and her silver spoon in her bedroom and asks Chapter Eleven to bring her box downstairs. She tries to guess Cal’s sex, and she declares a boy, but once Cal is called a girl by the doctor, Desdemona is overlooked, yet she always suspects Cal’s biological sex as a boy rather than a girl, and when Cal goes back home, he meets Desdemona who tells him, “‘My mother she used to tell me something funny,’ she said. ‘In the village, long time ago, they use to have babies who were looking like girls. Then—fifteen, sixteen—they were looking like boys! My mother tell me this but I never believe’” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 526). Her guess was correct from the very beginning.

As for the conception of Cal, there were several precautions taken by both Milton and Tessie. Their firstborn was a boy, Chapter Eleven, and they both wanted

their second child to be a girl. As opposed to both Milton's and Tessie's conception in the realm of magical realism, now, in the realm of science and the city, Cal's conception is dominated by science. Tessie keeps measuring her body temperature, and even the position they choose was to conceive a girl. They tried to define the biological sex of the baby and their gender expectations were alike as well. When Desdemona tries to guess the baby's sexuality, she says that the baby will be a boy. Based on his so-called scientific calculations, Milton protests it. Tessie says that she does not mind that much: "I don't mind if it's a boy,' my mother said. 'I really don't. As long as it's healthy, ten fingers, ten toes.' 'What's this 'it.' That's my daughter you're talking about'" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 17). Even before Cal/Callie was born, his parents were making plans. In this postmodern novel, Eugenides's choice of gender adds a tragicomic element to the novel since Cal/Callie's sexuality and gender are hard to define.

His second birth takes place when he is a teenager. This time, it is a conscious one. Cal is aware of his sexual orientation, and he does not want his biology to fit into the gender and sexual role that is expected from him. He does not want to offend his parents, yet he does not want to go against his own instinct and drive as well.

3.1.2. Early Childhood and Education

The first thing about Cal is that both his biological sex and gender were decided by his parents yet influenced by a much greater destiny. In the novel, his sex has similarities to the mythological times. Raised to be Tessie's daughter, as a child, Calliope was a beautiful girl, but as a teenager, the case was no longer valid. Although Tessie and Milton were obstructive in a sense, they like Calliope no matter what:

If Milton missed having a beautiful daughter, I never knew it. At weddings he still asked me to dance, regardless of how ridiculous we looked together. "Come on, kukla," he'd say, "let's cut the rug," and we'd be off, the squat, plump father leading with confident, old-fashioned, fox-trot steps, and the awkward praying mantis of a daughter trying to follow along. My parents' love for me didn't diminish with my looks. I think it's fair to say, however, that as my appearance changed in those years a species of sadness infiltrated my parents' love. They worried that I wouldn't attract boys, that I would be

a wallflower, like Aunt Zo. Sometimes when we were dancing, Milton squared his shoulders and looked around the floor, as if daring anyone to make a crack. (Eugenides, 2003, p. 305)

Calliope's parental figures of at this level are apparently obstructive since their first aim was to raise a girl. Milton is obsessed with money, becoming rich and fulfilling the American Dream of the post-world war period, and his obsession with cars, houses, and money reflects this. He is Greek and he is fond of wealth; he also desires to attain the American Dream of being affluent: "Even if Milton is very attached to his Greekness, as an ethnic situation, he refuses to live in the Greek town of Detroit, but finally finds a house up to the Grosse Point, the upper class suburb, 'where you go to wash yourself of ethnicity'" (Coavoux, 2012, Paragraph 14). As to the gender roles, Milton is a great example since he seems to stick to his ethnicity but also to wash it away. Tessie is the typical housewife who devotes herself to the care of her house. The other parental figures in the novel are Desdemona and Lefty, who also fail to make peace with themselves. All these characters are confined to the Greek-American gender roles, in which Calliope is also confined to her role in serving drinks on a Sunday to men and pleasing their eyes with her/his beauty.

While Calliope grows up, things start to change both for her and the city. Calliope's identity is connected to the places as well. In Detroit, in her childhood, racism and race problems were rising. The restaurant run by Lefty is now run by Milton, who is unable to comprehend the changes in the community and the loss of the value of property. However, since Lefty has experienced a couple of fires destroying villages, towns and cities, he insists that Milton should keep insurance from three companies at least. What seems to be a loss during the riots turns out to be a gain for Milton since he gets a considerable amount of money from insurance companies. Calliope also experiences this at first hand when s/he wants to see her/his father. She is in the middle of the riots. When Milton burns down the restaurant himself, and when he receives the money from insurance companies, a new chapter of life starts for the Stephanides family.

The family's middle-class status changes towards an upper-class family in a gated community. Since they are regarded as ethnic, the real estate agent does not want to sell a house to Milton, but he pays in cash:

Milton scrambles up the ladder of socio-economic opportunity and achieves inclusion fighting his way alone out of overwhelming material deficiencies. Taking up his father's bar, he sets up Hercules Hot Dogs chain and unlike Harry Mark Petrakis's characters becomes successful in the Greek business par excellence, restaurant-ownership. Integration is achieved through education and adherence to the laissez-faire individualism and enterprise (Trendel, 2011, p. 4).

He fulfils his American dream, and the family finds themselves in a house which reflects their character as well. "The Stephanides house, named for its position on Middlesex Boulevard in Grosse Pointe, also suggests the uncomfortable alliance of the past and the present, the Greek and American, in its own doubleness: a strange house, 'futuristic and outdated at the same time'" (Shostak, 2008, p. 396). Their house has a name and a unique structure. It is called Middlesex, which reflects both Cal's sexuality and the ethnic background of the family.

The house represents Stephanides family's changing fortune and class. This is the exact place where Cal has the first hints of his sexuality. Since they have an ethnic background, many people are not ready to welcome them into the community, but Calliope makes a friend, Clementine, and both of them find themselves in the bathhouse on a grey October day. Clementine teaches Cal to kiss. This is the first time that Calliope notices a difference in her/him. Since the novel is preoccupied with myths, it is in water that Calliope notices the sexual drive in her/him. They play geishas that day and "Steam rises from the surface so thick it obscures the walls, the ceiling, the dark shape in the corner" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 165). Obscurity helps the narrator define the vague awareness of sexuality. Clementine wants Cal to be a man when they kiss. Clementine starts throwing water at Cal, and her face is now visible out of the steam. Although Cal imagines that they are going to kiss one more time, "she wraps her legs around my waist. She's laughing hysterically, covering her mouth. Her eyes widen and she says into my ear, 'Get some comfort.' She hoots like a monkey and pulls me back onto a shelf in the tub" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 266). Cal does not know what to do and is anxious that her/his sexuality might be revealed because s/he does not feel comfortable: "I fall between her legs, I fall on top of her, we sink . . . and then we're twirling, spinning in the water, me on top, then her, then me... Steam envelops us, cloaks us; light sparkles on the agitated water; and we keep spinning, so that at some point I'm not sure which hands are mine, which legs"

(Eugenides, 2003, p. 266). Cal is still not aware of what is happening in this scene but later confesses that “Various submerged softnesses on Clementine’s body are delivering crucial information to mine, information I store away but won’t understand until years later” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 266). When Lefty sees them, he has an expression on his face that Cal cannot figure out. This first glimpse of sexuality and sexual drive is commemorated by Cal in his adult life.

With regard to school and education, an important element of the Bildungsroman literary system, the protagonists of the conventional Bildungsromane usually find themselves in a boarding school or another form of institutionalized education. Milton wants Calliope to go to a private school for girls, which becomes more and more difficult to adapt to. The class system is obvious in the locker-room and the bathroom where the girls have a shower. The baths have a class system based on the richness and whiteness of the girls as well as their beauty. Cal does not fit into any of these categories; she waits until the others leave in order to get undressed after a match: “I reached under my athletic tunic and pulled down my shorts. After tying a bath towel around my waist, I unbuttoned the shoulder straps of my tunic and pulled it over my head. This left me with the towel and my jersey on. Now came the tricky part. The brassiere...” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 299). Calliope is an outsider. Although Tessie buys Calliope a brassiere, which does not have anything to be filled with, that is the body of Cal that the teenage character has. The body belongs to a boy rather than a girl: “For despite the Dionysian revelry that had broken out in my body (in my throbbing teeth, in the wild abandon of my nose), not everything about me had changed...No breasts. No period, either. (Eugenides, 2003, p. 295). Almost all the girls at school have changed in terms of the body, but Cal can be said to stand for a Dionysian side rather than the beauty of Apollo or Aphrodite.

3.1.3. A Glimpse of Awareness of Sexual Identity and Gender

Calliope feels good at school, meaning the time s/he feels good apart from the courses, is when s/he notices a girl at school. She is one of those late enrollers, and although she seems to lack the enthusiasm for the drama course, her pleasing body

makes Calliope question her/his sexual drive. Calliope, at this stage, hides behind her/his hair, preferring to avoid sexuality which s/he uses just like Desdemona, who does it for ethnic reasons.

Calliope was beautiful during childhood, but teenage years are the time when a person's body starts to change. Even as a child, Chapter Eleven was curious about sexuality and paid Calliope money to see her genital parts, yet Calliope notices that something is not ordinary with her body. She does not grow into a girl; instead, "I grew tall. My voice matured. But nothing seemed unnatural. My slight build, my thin waist, the smallness of my head, hands, and feet raised no questions in anybody's mind. Many genetic males raised as girls don't blend in so easily" (Eugenides, 2003, pp. 303-304). Some features of Cal/Callie help her blend in and most of her features make her acceptable as well, but there are things that do not fit: "My rickety height and foal's legs gave me the posture of a fashion model. My clothes weren't right, my face wasn't right, but my angularity was. I had that saluki look. Plus, for whatever reason—my dreamy temperament, my bookishness—I fit right in" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 304). Things related to gender expectations make Cal to be considered a girl; however, his/her face gives some clues like the facial hair and Adam's apple.

Her depiction of a shower after a game shows how alienated she feels, but there are some outcasts as well just like her. She is not the only one to be considered different, yet she is the one who is the periphery; in her own words: "Hierarchies exist everywhere, but especially in locker rooms. The swampiness, the nudity brings back original conditions. Let me perform a quick taxonomy of our locker room. Nearest the showers were the Charm Bracelets" (Eugenides, 2003, pp. 295-296). She does her best to adapt to the sexual and gender roles, though, as she goes to a hairdresser for wax, and she fakes menstruation, too.

3.1.4. Towards a Discovery of Gender and Sexual Identity and the Ordeal by Society

As Calliope spends time at school, she notices that she is in love with the Obscure Object, who makes her notice her sexual orientation. It is particularly during

a play which they were to perform that Calliope becomes Tiresias, and one of the girls who act in the play dies. It is also symbolic in that Tiresias was two things at the same time and Calliope's ignorance as a girl is dead. She notices that she is in love with the Obscure Object, and likes holding her.

The following summer is when Calliope gets fully aware of her body and in the summer house of the Obscure Object's family; Calliope has the first sexual experience as a girl. However, it is just to make the Obscure Object jealous. She also feels transcended to the body of a boy, and this is depicted as "Calliope's strong attraction to the Object and her readiness to imagine herself inside a male body reveal her repressed desire to be male rather than female" (Kohn, 2011, p. 139). This implies that Calliope is in the phase to welcome male sexual identity. Calliope depicts one night as "the Oracle of Delphi had been a girl about my same age. All day long she sat over a hole in the ground. A teenage virgin... Why do I bring this up? Because Calliope was also a virgin that night" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 373). This part reflects not only the connection between Cal and Tiresias, but also implies that Cal will get aware of his sexual drive. At the other side of the room, Rex is making his move against the Obscure Object, "but it was my hands that took hold of her bra and, as if snapping up a window shade, let into the room the pale light of the Object's breasts. I saw them; I touched them; and since it wasn't me who did this but Rex Reese I didn't have to feel guilty, didn't have to ask myself if I was having unnatural desires" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 375). The sexual orientation of Cal makes him feel sham, and, at the same time, relieved, since he is just transcending. However, after his desires and his sexuality are revealed, his parents intervene: "For Eugenides, desire and control exist in a dichotomous relationship. As Calliope's desires for sexual fulfilment manifest during puberty, her parents' attempts at exerting control—at protecting the sanctity of her alleged girlhood—become more extreme" (Womack and Mallory-Kani, 2007, p. 162).

After figuring out that Cal and Jerome had sex, the Obscure Object becomes jealous, and Cal thinks that the Obscure Object's body welcomes Cal: "Slowly, trying not to make a sound, I moved closer to her. Tiny muscles in my flank, muscles I hadn't known I possessed, suddenly made themselves available. They propelled me

millimeter by millimeter across the sheets” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 383). The summer nights go similarly to the above-mentioned experience, and Cal climbs up to the Obscure Object’s bed. This experience is similar to Lefty and Desdemona, that is, Eros and Psyche, having sex in darkness. However, one day, while they are out, Cal/Calliope goes further to explore, and this is depicted as “I put my hand on the Object’s thigh, palm down. And as we continued to swing, looking at each other while crickets played their fiddles in the grass, I slid my hand sideways up toward the place where the Object’s legs joined. My thumb went under her cutoffs” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 390). The Obscure Object does not protest and they keep doing it for a long time. This is something new and educational for Cal. Cal/Calliope feels at peace for the very first time, but the Obscure Object’s brother notices what they are doing; and he says that he is open-minded, yet he has always noticed something freak about Calliope. A chase starts between the two, which ends up Calliope being crushed by a tractor. “The tractor had just made a turn onto the road. High in his seat, the farmer didn’t see me. I was looking back to check on Jerome. When I finally turned forward it was too late. Right in front of me was the tractor tire. I hit it dead on” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 393). It is symbolic that the first time Calliope accepts her/his sexual orientation, there is physical obstacle thwarting his spiritual becoming.

Following this incident and after the discovery of sexual orientation, a doctor who examines Calliope calls her parents to inform them about Calliope’s intersexed situation. Consequently, her first sexual orientation and fulfilling this sexual orientation result in the discovery of her intersexuality: the “doctor bent closer, mumbling to himself. The intern, rather unprofessionally, raised one hand to her throat and then pretended to fix her collar” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 396). The doctor and the intern inform Tessie and Milton over Cal’s intersexuality.

Obstructive parental figures once again find their path into intervening in Cal/Calliope’s biological sex. They do not mean bad, but since Cal/Calliope knows that they want her/him to be a girl and to act like a girl, s/he pretends feeling like a girl. Although her/his biological sex is apparently that of a male, the doctor decides that since Calliope was raised up as a girl, through therapy and an operation, Calliope could be a girl and her body would be suitable to that. Tessie’s and Milton’s

obstructive qualities can be observed in the following: “‘He said Dr. Phil should have noticed when Callie was born,’ Tessie answered. ‘This whole thing could have been fixed back then.’ And then Milton again: ‘I can’t believe he’d miss something like that’” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 403). They could have observed it themselves, but they were too blind to see that. When the doctor at the sexual disorders clinic says that Cal/Calliope’s situation is difficult because of Cal/Calliope’s being a teenager and being raised as a girl, they become anxious: “He heard ‘treatment’ and ‘effective.’ Tessie, on the other hand, heard the words that weren’t there. The doctor hadn’t said my name, for instance. He hadn’t said ‘Calliope’ or ‘Callie.’ He hadn’t said ‘daughter,’ either. He didn’t use any pronouns at all” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 414).

Once Calliope understands her/his intersexuality, s/he notices that her/his sexual orientation was what s/he always wanted. S/he goes against heteronormative processes that require an operation. This enables Cal to be reborn. The second birth takes place in an operation room after reading Webster dictionary’s definition and, significantly, the birth takes place after embracing the so-called monster definition, which is as follows: “hermaphrodite —1. One having the sex organs and many of the secondary sex characteristics of both male and female. 2. Anything comprised of a combination of diverse or contradictory elements. See synonyms at MONSTER” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 430).

Cal’s teenage years were spent trying to act like a girl while his body was giving the signals that he was not female. He was taller than other girls, he was too thin, he did not have breast and he did everything to conform to the female gender role that was cast on him but his body denied it. Once making up his mind, as in male gender identity, he has to break free from his father. Oedipal complex requires men to break free from their fathers. He runs away and one of the first things that he thinks of is to go as far from home as possible, which is his comfort zone and which encapsulates him to continue the female gender role.

All his life, he tried to act like a girl, but now he tries to avoid femininity to perform his newly discovered identity. He goes to a barber and, for the first time, wants to have his hair cut. His hair was a mask behind which he was able to hide his male side. This time, he is no longer afraid of being looked at in terms of appearance,

and this is defined in the gaze theory as well. “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. ... In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed”, so that they are the targets of the gaze while men are the ones that look (Mulvey, 1999, p. 837).

He buys men’s clothes and is now ready to show his Adam’s apple as well. However, while he tried to look like a man, he cannot fully escape the female gender. Things are once again in-between and this time, he is regarded as a homosexual boy who likes men. His gestures, the way he walks and many things related to his gender reflect femininity: “My jaw looked squarer, broader, my neck thicker, with a bulge of Adam’s apple in the center. It was unquestionably a male face, but the feelings inside that boy were still a girl’s. To cut off your hair after a breakup was a feminine reaction” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 445). However, the “novel questions the exclusivity not only of a binaristic gender system but also, by extension, of all such rigid categorizations” (Narcisi, 2018, p. 219). Cal should not fall into such a mistake and just regard that he can be either male or female.

While he is hitchhiking, a rich man tries to abuse him, and another man picks Cal up in his car, and this man changes his destiny. For a while, he acts as if he is going to go to university, but the man is aware that he is not, and stays in a park with some other homeless people and tries to adapt to them as well. However, he is too clean and is disturbed by men’s toilets. “At restaurants I began to use the men’s rooms. This was perhaps the hardest adjustment. I was scandalized by the filth of men’s rooms, the rank smells and pig sounds, the grunting and huffing from the stalls.” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 465) Eugenides keeps playing with gender roles. Once the other homeless team notices Cal’s biological condition, they abuse him and piss on him, which is a humiliating thing for all human beings. Then, he feels obliged to call the man who had offered him a job, but he does not feel like calling his parents since he is afraid that they may try to change him.

At the club Sixty-Niners, he feels at home, and for the very first time in his life, Cal has a role model, a parental figure who helps him build his sexual identity. He does not feel isolated there since he acts in a tank or pool and shows his genitalia

to the people who are there to watch him: “The surface of the sea is a mirror, reflecting divergent evolutionary paths. Up above, the creatures of air; down below, those of water. One planet, containing two worlds. The customers were the sea creatures; Zora, Carmen, and I remained essentially creatures of air” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 484). Although they, as hermaphrodites, belong to a different dimension, Cal feels united and, at the same time, separated there. Cal claims that hermaphrodites are the creatures of both the air and the water, and Queer theory’s inclusion rather than exclusion enables him to make peace with himself. He feels complete and accepted, as if completing his formative process. “The fog of San Francisco provided cover for hermaphrodites, too. It’s no surprise that ISNA was founded in San Francisco and not somewhere else” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 488).

The nights there, however, are not ordinary, and they all take opium, which enables them once again to be in-between. This time, they are in-between dream and reality. The pools that they are in enable them to be both in water and on the ground. They talk and smoke and drink. They share many secrets together while surprising the customers in a way that the one in Angela Carter’s *Nights at the Circus*. These people are the ones to be looked at rather than to make them invisible. The tone does not make it clear, though, as to whether they are perceived as miracles or freaks:

“Once upon a time in ancient Greece, there was an enchanted pool. This pool was sacred to Salmacis, the water nymph. And one day Hermaphroditus, a beautiful boy, went swimming there.” The voice continues, but Mr. Go is no longer paying attention. He is looking into the pool, which is blue and empty. He is wondering where the girls are. He is beginning to regret buying a ticket to Octopussy’s Garden. But just then the voice intones:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, behold the god Hermaphroditus! Half woman, half man!” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 482)

As stated, they are regarded as representatives of a different era, of a time of legend and myth. Mr. Go is not sure if he likes what he sees and he keeps watching. Cal says that he would not feel comfortable if his eyes were open but “I don’t think I could have performed in a regular peep show, face-to-face with the voyeurs. Their gaze would have sucked my soul out of me” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 484). His fear of gaze shows that his gender is still a female.

One of Cal's friends there, Zora, helps him embrace his sexual and gender identity while she particularly focuses on sexual identity. She provides the information Cal is yearning for: "Beautiful or not, Zora didn't want to be a woman. She preferred to identify herself as a hermaphrodite. She was the first one I met. The first person like me. Even back in 1974 she was using the term "intersexual," which was rare then" (Eugenides, 2003, pp. 487-489). Zora is one of the most beautiful people Cal has ever met. Yet, she does not want to be a woman. Her sexual orientation is towards lesbians rather than men. Cal is relieved to see someone like him. Cal asks Zora why she told people that she was a hermaphrodite because nobody would know if she did not tell them: "Zora folded her long legs under herself. With her fairy's eyes, paisley-shaped, blue and glacial looking into mine, she said, 'Because we're what's next'" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 490). Zora makes Cal realize that they are not inferior or should not be regarded as freaks; instead, but they should be happy with themselves:

"There have been hermaphrodites around forever, Cal. Forever. Plato said that the original human being was a hermaphrodite. Did you know that? The original person was two halves, one male, one female. Then these got separated. That's why everybody's always searching for their other half. Except for us. We've got both halves already." (Eugenides, 2003, p. 489)

Zora determines Cal question his nature and make peace with it. Cal is yet divided into his body and his mind, but Zora wants him to feel united as they are the only ones that are united and in harmony. Zora also explains to Cal the difference between gender and sex: "Remember, Cal. Sex is biological. Gender is cultural. The Navajo understand this. If a person wants to switch her gender, they let her. And they don't denigrate that person—they honor her. The berdaches are the shamans of the tribe. They're the healers, the great weavers, the artists" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 489). In this sense, she is the only parental figure who helps Cal to build and be at peace with his gender and sexual identity.

Accepting one's sexuality and gender may require a long period of time: "Let's hear it for Hermaphroditus, ladies and gentlemen! Only here at Octopussy's Garden, where gender is always on a bender! I'm telling you, folks, we put the glam rock in the rock lobsters, we put the AC/DC in the mahi mahi ..." (Eugenides, 2003, p. 485) Eugenides once again shows the fluidity of gender. It is also reflected as if it

is magic as well, but at the same time, it is mocked too since the characters are just drinking and conversing on daily things while they are shown as doing magic. Rachel Carrol argues that “a memorable fictional voice to one of ‘those incoherent’ or ‘discontinuous’ gendered beings’ who, as Judith Butler puts it, ‘fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined’” (2012, p. 111). This discontinuity is reflected in Cal’s confession that his nights and days are just like his body. They are divided just as in his confession he claims that he still acts as a girl even after having decided upon his sexuality.

Cal’s parents are looking for him and waiting for him to call them. Father Mike, who is married to Cal’s aunt, is disappointed in his marriage since he wanted to marry Tessie. Frustrated and also disappointed, he marries Milton’s sister and he is a failure in terms of the American Dream. “Milton’s name is symptomatic of such an enhancement: behind the English poet there is an ancient Greek general, Miltiades. Likewise, Tessie and Milton’s consanguineous marriage is the result of an attraction based on each other’s American looks and attitude” (Trendel, 2011, p. 3). While everything about Milton has been dedicated to economic advancement, Father Mike cannot pass beyond being a clergyman, and he cannot make much money and fails to have a happy family relationship as well. Disenchanted by his failure, he wants revenge on Milton and calls Milton to claim that he knows where Cal/Callie is, and Milton does not know who the caller is. He takes the twenty-five thousand dollars that Mike asks for, and yet towards the end, he suspects the authenticity of the knowledge to figure out that the caller is Father Mike.

A chase begins between the two, which goes towards Canadian border where his father Lefty would conduct smuggling during the 1920s. As related to the country’s economics and dream, Milton drives a new car every year and speed is his cause of death while chasing Father Mike. Even when Milton is about to seize Father Mike at the Canadian border, he just thinks that if Father Mike went to Canada, he would have to pay commission to exchange the dollars that Mike got from him. Milton is just a man of economics.

While Cal seems to discover his sexual identity in San Francisco, his father dies in a car crash, and simultaneously, the place where Cal works, Sixty-Niners, is

under police investigation when Cal is noticed to be underage. Cal calls home to learn about Milton's death. Cal confesses that Milton's love for him would make Milton accept him the way he is, but he is relieved that they will not have to experience this problem. Chapter Eleven flies to San Francisco to take Cal back home and he says that he is okay to have a brother. The symbolic meaning of the city continues while they drive home from the airport. Cal wants Chapter Eleven to go through the old parts of the city, which reminds him of the past. Finally, he feels united with his past as well: "On the riverfront the Renaissance Center was being built, inaugurating a renaissance that has never arrived. 'Let's go through Greektown,' I said" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 517). It is the beginning of a new period in life for Cal, yet in the Greektown "amid the ethnic kitsch, there were still a few authentic coffee houses, patronized by old men in their seventies and eighties. Some were already up this morning, drinking coffee, playing backgammon, and reading the Greek newspapers" (Eugenides, 2003, p. 517). Like many other things in the postmodern period, the city is an in-between being just like Cal is.

Upon returning to Middlesex, family members do not seem to protest against Cal's newly acquired sexuality. Desdemona is now a living dead among the living, and she isolates herself from almost everybody. Upon her husband's death, she casts herself away and awaits for death herself. She does not recognize anybody, including Cal. However, when Cal announces his sexual identity to her, she accepts it and says that it was all her fault.

The reader is not given much information about what happens to Cal after his father's death until he is in his forties. In an interview, Eugenides explains it as it follows:

[I]t seemed to me that it's a novel about many different transformations of identity. You have the grandparents being brother and sister, then man and wife; they begin as Greeks and they become Americans. There are lots of different changes. Jimmy Zizmo begins as a Greek bootlegger and ends up as the founder of the Nation of Islam, and the central change, of course, is Calliope becoming Cal, this girl taking on a male identity. It seemed to me that once I told the story of that transformation, the novel was essentially done. I thought about what I could say of the years after this had all happened. He goes to college, he gets his first job—all normal stuff which didn't seem to reveal any more about his character or the story of this family (Schiff, 2006, p. 116)

This would allow us to consider the novel a Bildungsroman in terms of gender and sexual identity; otherwise, if it had focused on a different dimension of identity building, the novelist would have written a different book.

3.1.5. The Formation of Identity in terms of Sexual Identity and Gender

The final chapter of Cal's gender and sexual identity development is reflected when he is in his forties. The reader is told that he is now in Berlin, works for the American Embassy in Germany, which suggests that he graduated from university, and has a body which is masculine. He claims that it was not difficult for him to build the masculine body and to avoid feminine gender was not easy as well. He says that even though he looks like a man, when he checks if there is something under his feet, he looks at it the way women do.

The formation of the character takes place in this part because he falls in love with a woman and has a successful relationship in the end. He depicts his interest in the woman as it is no longer easy to figure out one's ethnicity. In the past, by looking at the shoes and clothing of a person, you could tell their ethnicity. However, in the contemporary world, it is not that simple because of globalization and also advertisements. Everything is available everywhere and, similar to ethnicity, one's sexuality and gender cannot be figured out by just looking at them. What Eugenides suggests is that Cal's identity formation process is successful in that he is not just masculine or feminine but both. As quoted above, the idea in Ancient Greece was that the "original person was two halves, one male, one female. Then these got separated. That's why everybody's always searching for their other half. Except for us. We've got both halves already." (Eugenides, 2003, p. 489) As an ethnic Greek American, Cal reflects on this unity: "Greeks found a mythical way out of the contradictions and the ambiguities that characterize the fragmented human being in search of unity through Hermaphroditus, the figure of an indivisible duality, quite appropriate to express the diverse reality of American unity" (Trendel, 2011, p. 1).

For a very long time, Cal does not feel ready for a relationship. He says that he is good at flirting and understanding women, but he does not feel ready for a relationship since he is afraid of the reaction of women. He says that at university, he had a girlfriend, Olivia, who knew about his condition, but adds that they “were drawn together by our common woundedness. Olivia had been savagely attacked when she was only thirteen, nearly raped. The police had caught the guy who did it and Olivia had testified in court numerous times” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 319). Cal also says that they were good together because that way Olivia would be able to pass onto the next man she wanted. They are more or less buddies rather than partners.

He has several more attempts at establishing relationship, yet he deserts women when they get close and stops calling them. Cal and Julie go on a vacation, and on the way, they see some naked men. Cal feels disturbed, yet they both make fun of the aging bodies. They make a plan to buy a house while they are joking. This is a plan to settle down, but Cal does not feel comfortable about himself and he does not want to reveal his sexual identity to Julie, so he stops calling her too.

The final twist happens when they accidentally meet at an organization. Cal is smoking cigars, and he looks at his nails just like women do: “I never felt out of place being a girl. I still don’t feel entirely at home among men. Desire made me cross over to the other side, desire and the facticity of my body” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 479). He looks into the mirror as women do, and he depicts this as being his mother’s girl, so his gender is a bit in-between but this is not reflected as a bad thing in the novel. “Cal’s emotional life is a magnificently complicated *mélange* of masculine and effeminate feeling, defying clear gender categorization as—I suspect—nearly all human personalities ultimately do. Cal’s decision to identify as male is motivated partly by sexual desire” (Warhol, 2004, p. 227).

When Julie sees Cal at the organization, she asks for a cigar as well and they start to talk. Cal explains his condition this time and towards the end of the novel, the reader is made aware that Cal has established his sexual identity as an intersexed person since he does not go through an operation and sexual orientation as the male with a sexual desire towards women and his gender is in-between, which is in line with the postmodern reflection of the dualism of gender. His gender and sexuality

seem to be queer. Queer theory is inclusive and “Queer theorists emphasize choice rather than destiny, and typically stress that the positions occupied by those who identify as queer are experimental and performative rather than grounded in empirical-seeming categories such as gay or lesbian” (Zajko, 2009, p.180). Inclusion of all the defined terms makes Cal feel a bit relaxed and “Cal’s fluctuating gender calls attention to the performative aspects of all gender construction; the normalization of Cal’s experience reminds us of the constructed nature of all identities and thus questions the societal dynamics that encourage passing” (Narcisi, 2018, pp. 220-221).

Building gender and sexual identity and the success of this process are depicted in the following:

I was trying to keep up the banter. I was also taking off my clothes. So was Julie. It was like jumping into cold water. You had to do it without thinking too much. We got under the covers and held each other, petrified, happy. “I might be your last stop, too,” I said, clinging to her. “Did you ever think of that?” And Julie Kikuchi answered, “It crossed my mind.” (Eugenides, 2003, p. 514)

It is observed that Cal is now about to experience his final relationship and they both are ready to accept one another as they are. There was a time when Julie was mistaken for a boy as well, but since gender is liquid, this notion is created and recreated throughout the novel. Cal’s identity building is successful in the end in terms of gender and sexual identity. Since in the postmodern era ethnicity also matters, Cal falls in love with another ethnic American. “Cal’s romantic pursuit of a fellow ethnic American: Julie Kikuchi, reveals an alternate and frequently overlooked genealogy for intersex genitalia: the sexing of racialized or ethnic bodies.” (Hsu, 2011, p. 87); it signifies, we may add, the end of Carl’s formative process, his acquiring of a self, and the unity of his newly built identity.

CONCLUSION

Middlesex can be read from different points of view. It can be read as a postmodernist novel depicting the ethnic problems and conforming to the ideal of the American Dream in terms of business; it could be read as a myth driven novel; or it could be regarded as a coming of age novel, that is a Bildungsroman. The present thesis has particularly been dedicated to the analysis of the protagonist, Cal, and his building of gender and sexual identity in a postmodern background which would rather dictate them upon the individual.

In order to show the way in which *Middlesex* fits and, at the same time, departs from the Bildungsroman thematic pattern, the following table would be revelatory:

Table 1

Thematic Elements of the Bildungsroman	How <i>Middlesex</i> Reflects the Thematic Pattern
a child (sometimes orphaned or fatherless) lives in a village or provincial town	Calliope/Cal is born twice. Both times take place in a city. The first one is in Detroit. The second time is an emergency room in Michigan. Although the protagonist does not come from a provincial background, his grandparents are from a small village in Bursa and since his biological sex is determined by a genetic disorder, 5-Alpha-Reductase, this enables the protagonist a provincial setting in a postmodernist context. After his second birth, his father dies in a car accident, which enables him to build his sexual identity and makes him an orphan.
the child is in conflict with his actual parents, especially father, or any parental figures (the trial by older generation)	Both his parents want Calliope/Cal to be a girl, and they conceive him/her accordingly to ensure that the baby will be a girl. They raise Calliope as a girl and refuse to accept the lack of bodily changes. When they discover that Calliope/Cal is intersexed, they want to stick to the female sex, so in order for Cal to be born, he has to flee.
the child leaves home to enter a larger society (usually city), and the departure is determined either by (2) or other external stimuli, or by an inner stimulus (usually the	In order to discover his gender and sexual identity, Cal goes to San Francisco, where he works at a club. His departure is driven by his sexual orientation. At home, they want

desire for an experience that the incomplete, static atmosphere of home does not offer)	him to continue being a girl.
the child, or the adolescent, passes through institutionalized education and/or self-education	Cal's education process can be divided into two. The first part is the formal education s/he receives at a girl's school. The second part is when he is in San Francisco. Zora teaches Cal on gender and sexuality.
a young person now, the character seeks for social relationship with other humans	Before going to San Francisco, Cal notices that he is different from the other girls at school, so he is a bit isolated from them. When he discovers that he likes the Obscure Object, he seeks for a romantic relationship.
his/her experience of life is a search for vocation and social accomplishment, as well as, or rather above all, a working philosophy of existence	Cal's identity formation is driven by gender and sexual identity. Thus, his social accomplishment is not the focus of the study. It is not the focus of the novel, either. He works as an employee of the State Department of the U.S. in Germany.
he/she has to undergo the ordeal by society and occupational requirements (professional career)	Cal has a good job, so his formation is not on occupational requirements. However, the ordeal by society exists in the sense that he feels that he has to conform to gender roles.
he/she has to resist the trial by love (sentimental career)	The trial by love starts in an earlier phase of Cal's life. Cal is an intersexed person, who was raised to be a girl. At school, Cal notices that his sexual orientation is towards women, and he falls in love with a classmate from school, the Obscure Object. When they are experiencing an intimate moment, the Obscure Object's brother notices them. Then, Cal is taken to a hospital to undergo an operation. He flees from it. His following romantic and sexual relationships also have a pattern. He gets close to the girls, but he abandons them fearing that they will refuse him when they discover that he is intersexed.
the character passes through moments of spiritual suffering and pain	Cal's spiritual suffering is related to his sexuality. His anxiety is about his body and his gender. He feels that he will be deserted by women upon their discovery of his biological sex.
now in his/her early manhood/womanhood, after having passed through physical change, the character experiences epiphanies that lead to (or should determine) his/her final spiritual (psychological, moral) change in the sense of initiation and by this achieve formation as the concluding stage of the	Cal makes it clear that he has a body of a man. His appearance conforms to the expectations of a man's body. He has the muscles and the height, but he still has the anxiety when he sees naked men. When he meets Julie, he feels that Julie is a bit like him, a combination of dichotomies. She

<p>process of development; formation is complete or relativistic, or not existing at all, that is to say, the final stage of the formative process upon entering maturity implies the dichotomy success/failure, or a third possibility of partial success/partial failure.</p>	<p>looks both like a child and a grown up woman at the same time. She has an ethnic identity like him. She is Asian-American. At first, Cal treats her the way he treats other women. He gets close to her, but when he feels that they are about to get closer in terms of sexual intimacy, he stops calling her. When they meet at a museum, Julie comes and talks to Cal. Cal tells Julie the truth and they go to Cal's apartment. Cal and Julie talk about his condition and they both speculate that they could be the last stop for each other. Cal, thus, achieves in gender and sexual identity formation although his gender identity is still in-between male and female. His identity formation is successful in this sense.</p>
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As it can be seen, the main difference between *Middlesex* and the traditional Bildungsroman is that Eugenides's novel emphasizes the principle of formation of identity to be considered a successfully fulfilled endeavour not with regard to achieving professional and social performance that would reify the personal inner expectations, but concerning the construction of a gender and sexual identity which would confirm and correspond to the personal choice of an individual subject.

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