

**THE CONCEPT OF AUTOIMMUNITY IN *CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN*  
AND *THE ENGLISH PATIENT***

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**Yüksek Lisans Tezi  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı  
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## ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Jacques Derrida'nın son dönem kavramlarından biri olan otoimmünite'ye dikkat çekmektir. Derrida bu kavramı daha çok politik bir bağlamda açıklamıştır, daha açık olmak gerekirse, demokrasi açısından açıklamıştır. Otoritenin, yani egemen olanın, gücünü alışılabilir bir biçimde muhafaza etmesi durumudur; demoktarik otorite, demokratik olmayan yollar kullanarak kendisini sürdürmeli ve vatandaşlarının hakkını totaliter bir yapı karşısında korumalıdır. Fakat otoimmünite kavramı bu çalışmada, insan benliğini çeşitli özelliklerden oluşan homojen bir organizma olarak tanımlamak için kullanılmıştır. Bu özelliklerin arasında, vücut bütünlüğüne karşı çıkabilecek ve arızalı çalışan, yanlış yönlendirilmiş bir bağışıklık sistemi olarak hareket edenler vardır. Bu bakış açısı, *İngiliz Hasta* ve *Yüzbaşı Corelli'nin Mandolini* adlı romanlardaki altı adet ana karaktere karşılaştırmalı olarak uygulanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Otoimmünite, Kendi, Oto, Kişilik, Jacques Derrida, *Yüzbaşı Corelli'nin Mandolini*, *İngiliz Hasta*, Egemen

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to draw attention to Jacques Derrida's one of latest concepts; *autoimmunity*. The term is expressed by him in a more political axis, to be more precise, from the point of view of democracy. It depicts a situation in which an authority- namely the sovereign- secures its power in an unorthodox way; the democratic authority should utilize undemocratic means to continue itself and preserve the rights of its subjects in front of a totalitarian body. However, in this study, this concept has been applied to the unity of the human 'self' and described it as a homogenous organism that is made up of several traits. Among these, there are seldom traits that can turn against the body unity (the sovereign) and act as a malfunctioning and misguided immune system. Also, this point of view has been applied to characters from two novels; *The English Patient* and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* by comparing and contrasting six of the major characters.

**Key Words;** Autoimmunity, Self, Auto, Identity, Jacques Derrida, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, *The English Patient*, Sovereign

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explain one of Jacques Derrida's latest terms 'autoimmunity' and examine its projections on two novels; *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* by Louis De Bernières and *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje.

The novels will be discussed primarily from the point of view of identity and its fragmentary structure. The second chapter 'Alors, qui êtes-vous?' tries to explain and observe the meaning of identity, shaping of identity, controlling and smaller operating mechanisms and the relationships between them within identity, as well as some key terms such as *self*, *ipseity* and *auto*. Having explained these, the third chapter aims to raise awareness on the issue of residing opponent parts within the structure of identity, which leads to our subject of study: autoimmunity. The following two chapters reveal the autoimmunity issues of characters from the two novels. While the fifth chapter traditionally focuses on human characters, the fourth chapter concentrates, not only on human beings, but also upon an organization within the state body that functions as an autoimmune subject. Lastly, the conclusion involves a comparison and contrast between the selected characters of the novels.

Before comparing the two novels and explain certain characters' behaviors, we intend to discuss the emergence of the term 'autoimmunity'. Derrida borrowed this term from biology and adapted it to his philosophy. With this concept, he managed to deconstruct the politics of foreign policy, especially aiming United States of America, as well as giving examples from the Continent. Later, we aim at presenting the concept of identity and also how the subject matter term affects the identity of the characters.

When looked at the subject matter of the study, the identities of the authors of the two novels appear to be different from each other. Ondaatje, a Sri-Lankan born Canadian novelist, has created a universe for his characters set in Africa and Italy. The other writer, Louis de Bernières, a British novelist with French roots, similarly set his novel in a small Greek island. Both writers, at first glance, represent their national identities; Ondaatje from a Canadian and de Bernières from a British identity. However, by means of



language, they were both able to create different kinds of identities for their characters. Culture, here, serves as a binding contract for people because it unifies the people who wish to represent themselves with it. However, when we say 'culture' there is no specific meaning nor any specific agent to contribute to culture. Still, with its fragmented structure, it serves as a roof or a specific ideology to unite under. For instance, while de Bernières is under the British culture and identity, Ondaatje is under the Canadian culture and identity.

All the same, culture and national identity are a roof for people up to a certain point. As we interact with a different national identity and allow our universe collide with another, we transplant fragments of that identity. At this point, the disseminated meanings dwelling in the language constitute a fragmented and disseminated identity. Therefore, people are consisted of different emotions and all these parts contribute to our identities.

## CHAPTER 2. ALORS, QUI ETES-VOUS?

### 2.1. Identity and Construction of Identity

'Alors, qui etes-vous?' asked Jacques Derrida to Michael Naas on their first introduction. The question later turned out to be one of Naas's major study fields as it paves the way to the concept of 'friendship', because this question is a sign of opening a door to another person, accepting their exposure to ourselves as it somehow encourages the subject of the question to express, to talk more about themselves. The question does not only ask as a person who he is, but also invites him to open himself a bit more and give a little idea to the person who asks the question, therefore making the two acquaintances.

What Jacques Derrida really meant to ask was simply 'What is your name? How can I call you?', asking Naas only about his name and nothing more. While the question 'Alors, qui etes-vous?' asked 'So, who are you?' and led to a whole massive concept of friendship, 'What is your name?' looks like a much more simpler inquiry about the identity of the person in front of us. Still, for Derrida, even this small question is an invitation, an acceptance for the person in the target of the question.

While 'What is your name?' can be seen merely as an introduction of oneself, 'So, who are you?' encourages one to reveal more about himself, his identity, what kind of a person he is. The real concern is whether one can reveal all about his identity in one question. Is identity something a person can tell about? Is it a massive, solid structure that can be described? In order to understand this phenomenon of identity, one should firstly engage in the issue of language and writing, since both have the power of creating discourses and likewise, since the human being operates on and via these two, he has also the power of creating an organism that generates and holds its own power.

For Jacques Derrida, as he put it in his book *Of Grammatology*, 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' which can be translated as 'there is no outside-text' (1976; 158). The text itself is the point of origin for a human being because it is the grounds, the universe he creates himself in. As the text is made up of language, the coding of this universe is embroidered with words, only in the written form. Derrida naturally initiates from French,

his mother language in which sometimes the written and the spoken form of a word slightly differ from each other. That is the reason why he insists on seeing the written form of words to generate a meaning, a context out of them.

Now, even in the case of the written text, the meaning of a word can grow in ambiguity. Examples can be seen in sense verbs of English. For instance, 'sound' is both a noun describing an auditory effect on us or it can also be used as a sense verb, like in the sentence 'guitar sounds nice'.

For Derrida, language is the ground for a human being to establish his being and then on experiencing this being, he constantly creates himself. As each human being is responsible for his use of language, he determines his own boundaries. With every word he utters or writes, he creates new meanings for words and hence for language, creating dynamism within language. Along with this dynamism, people continue to attach new meanings to words so that a word may beckon several meanings and the number may just be infinite. Throughout this process, new meanings are created as a dissemination, a meaning of a word could go out as far as it can and design disseminated meanings rather than stable ones. This dissemination process also decenters the meaning. In the classical sense, usually one meaning is attached to a word. However, with dissemination, every meaning of a word stretches out to forge its new discourse. Even Derrida's term *autoimmunity* has a flexible meaning. It is originally borrowed from the science of biology therefore inherently two discourses of autoimmunity are present; the biological discourse of autoimmunity and the philosophical discourse of autoimmunity. The two types of discourse use the same words, terms, but there is a variety of meaning in their different usages.

It was pointed out that in order to create themselves and live their experiences, people need language and since language has an ambiguous and non-stable nature, the identity we create is also subjected to the same ambiguity. Just as meanings of a word are flexible and fragmented, we construct our identities with the help of small fragments that could be compared to the disseminated meanings of a word. People represent a unity of every discourse they have created with the help of language. Should we turn to ourselves and look at the identity we have created, it is going to be very far from a stable and concrete mass, but is going to be rather a synthesis of what we have generated by

ourselves as well as what we have borrowed from the outside. Collision of self-created universes is simply unavoidable and the more we are exposed to the outer world and other universes, the more we are subjected to identity flexibility.

Prior to the issue of discourse of identity, which will be defined in terms of deconstructionist philosophy, a reference to Derrida's perception of Heidegger's philosophy should be made. Derrida did not deny the influence of Heidegger's 'Destruktion' and more importantly 'dasein', yet chose to apply the term in his philosophy in a distorted way. Dasein is mostly considered to be the reflection of physicality of human beings, however, what Heidegger focused on was the spirituality of this being, or more likely, the self. In order for this dasein to exist, it should establish itself in a world, here being a place where it could find a meaningful discourse and expand itself in terms of time and space. As the space in this discourse, the physical world provides for dasein to be a Being-in-the-World and express its fragments within the self as thoughts or mood states. But as for the time, it is rather a more far-fetched issue; dasein establishes itself in no located chronological period, rather it is ambiguous time-wise because the 'being' suggests something with an ambiguous start, so dasein covers a continuous entity of time in itself.

Heidegger also depicts some qualities of being according to the traditional conception of western philosophy. According to this, being has three fixed arguments; first of all 'being is the most universal concept', secondly 'concept of being is indefinable' and lastly 'being is of all concepts the one that is self-evident' (Being and Time, 1927). What is relevant to this study is the first quality of this being as the most universal concept. Here, universality suggests a comprehensive and all-inclusive body that gathers all under its authority. There is the possibility of other beings and fragments but the comprehensiveness of being absorbs all orbits, therefore establishing a homogenous, consistent and harmonious structure. Being is always the ultimate body according to this thought. While all fragments can be seen as subdivisions and more importantly harmoniously functioning subdivisions, being is the controlling mechanism of all.

This kind of structure and comprehensiveness displays a kind of gathering movement in the structure of being as it assembles all orbits and subdivisions. Still, it differentiates itself from the other beings and checks the security and safety of its

fragments, creating and securing its immune system, in a way. By strengthening the immune system, being constructs a system of rights as it is the ultimate control. This system practically functions as a constitution supported by laws. Now, the discourse of law provides the law to 'require a common language and any difference in language may produce an injustice for those less familiar with this common language' (Linell Secomb, 2010). This common language would provide for the harmonious structure of the being and also secures the unity within the structure. This constitution provides the being turn itself into a sovereign identity which, at times, might risk forcing its rightful power in its fragments. However, in the case of a forceful application, being would also risk turning itself into a totalitarian body.

Yet, the identity and being in Derrida's deconstruction system works in a slightly, or as depicted before, in a distorted way. Dissemination enables being to cast its power to its fragments, but at the same time it casts a controlling gaze on these. The unity and the act of functioning together somehow give strength to the controlling body. As it was expressed in the introduction, there are some common points in the writers of the two books, yet the differences in the smaller details of their lives are what differentiate them. De Bernieres's identity naturally shows a British male with a French background and Ondaatje's Sri Lankan originated Canadian male identity suggests a fragmentary background that would never lead to a totalitarian body. Of course, when we take the Sri Lankan originated Canadian male identity into consideration, it does certainly not mean that all the male members of Canada would share the same interests, accent, or language with Ondaatje, or not all the France originated British males are expected to write novels. Therefore, while constructing identity, any fixation in identity would not work at all.

The case is more or less the same in the matter of language. These two writers come from countries where English is the official language. Yet, the chosen lexicon, dialects and accents show differences. However, even if Ondaatje bears elements of other identities, but mostly known as a Canadian, it does not require the same procedure for the other Canadian males. Another citizen may have traces of European roots in his identity and it would show that identity also bears different fragments in itself and could

not be regarded as a fixed and immovable structure. But it is rather a disseminated design.

## 2.2. Ipseity and Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a key concept in the construction of identity as the identity, once it has come to a point where there is a fixed center that reigns and observes its subjects, starts to operate as an ultimate reigning body. When this word is uttered, several referents come into mind and most probably one of the first is monarchy. As a political system, monarchy centers on a sovereign that holds a kind of unquestionable power and this power stretches out to the death of the sovereign in which case, as the sovereign cannot be questioned, this power is infinite. Of course, there are other political systems, but here, democracy is taken as the opponent of the monarch. On the surface, when looked at the dictionary meanings of sovereignty and democracy, they tend to stay away from each other, yet these two concepts stay connected just like the case of writing and speech. The sovereign tends to describe a central authority that gathers the power on itself and rules its territory, extending its power to the units orbiting it whenever necessary. In traditional sense, this sovereign is projected as a totalitarian body that establishes an unquestionable authority on its subjects. Yet according to Derrida, this sovereign is sooner or later subjected to be deconstructed. A new sense in the sovereign suggests a division of this body. If we look at the self from this point of view, the self unifies itself as the ultimate sovereign but as it cannot escape the necessary deconstruction, the self becomes divisible. However, this division act does not necessarily mean a loss in power, but by distributing it, the self actually strengthens itself.

The sovereign and the autoimmune have been explained from an interdisciplinary point of view, yet there is another discipline that should be involved in this concept. The concept of sovereignty has caught the attention of theologians who decided to express the ultimate sovereign as God. The belief in this supreme being happens almost automatically because the human being, out of the need for a sheltering feeling, accepts to embrace it. In theology, God is the supreme being who owns, protects, rules and above all gives will to its subjects. With the power of will awarded to them, the human being has automatically an amount of power against this supreme authority. The situation begs the question; can they become autoimmune fragments? Naturally, God is to protect the unity of its self, but out of autoimmunity, the self may be subjected to a fragmentariness process. A comparison could be made here, with the monarchy of the politic discipline

and the sovereign of the discipline of theology. Since in monarchy, the sovereign, either the king or the queen, is seen as successor, a descendant, a shadow of the ultimate power-holder, therefore, its authority is not subjected to any inquisition by any other earthly and temporal being. Because the sovereign is almost equal to the godly power, it is also considered to be as sacred as God and so it requires obedience. All these discourses suggest the presence of an autocracy; a word that shares one of its components with democracy which is *kratos*, meaning authority.

If we look at the case of democracy, it suggests a meaning that the controlling power takes all the major and minor elements within itself into attention. The silhouette of democracy may seem more optimistic as it is willing to distribute a fair share of power to all its components, even the smallest minority will be held as important as the most crowded majority, yet when the circumstances are against the democratic authority, democracy, instinctively, chooses to protect itself against these autoimmune elements. This act, which is actually against the philosophy of democracy is considered to be an aporetic one. Here, *aporia* can be described as a state of puzzlement and it is this puzzlement that is against the democratic self. The self is actually expected to provide opportunity to the minority within to express itself, even if the intentions of that minority is destructive. But the democratic self chooses to secure itself, in order to prolong the effect of unity and equality, at the same time, shutting and ignoring a minority that is considered to be threatening.

Another term that Derrida uses, comes into play here; 'ipseity'. He uses this term to refer to the unity of the sovereign in his book *Rogues*. With his own words the term ipseity suggests

[S]ome 'I can', or at the very least the power that gives itself its own law, its force of law, its self-representation, the sovereign and reappropriating gathering of self in simultaneity of an assemblage, being together, or 'living together' as we say. (Derrida, 2005:11)

If looked at the discourse structured by Derrida, he suggests the empowering lexicon like 'gather, simultaneity, assembly, together'. All these suggest a unity, a crowd, a swarming motion around the center, a kind of being on the same wavelength. Likewise, simultaneity suggests a parallel movement, a working together act between the orbiting fragments of the self. This swarming act actually enables the self to turn itself into a



complete sovereign. In other words, ipseity is the mastery of the self. So hereby, ipseity can be assumed as the self. Victor Li explains this concept in a rather far-fetched manner as 'the circular return of the self to itself, the rotary movement which secures self-determination, self-completion, self-sameness- in short, the autonomy of the self- thus names the principle or axiom of sovereignty 'before any sovereignty of the state, of the nation state, of the monarch, or, in democracy of the people' (Li, 2007: 146).

Thus the concept of ipseity could be relevant to both self and to state as a unified body. The politics of power are the same for both of them. The power, all the time, travels back to the body in authority, therefore, the sovereignty of the self and the state is always round and circular.

The origin of the word 'ipseity' also contributes to the fact that it is unanimous with the self. The root of the word 'ipse' is originated from Greek which can roughly be expressed as autos. This core word autos will be expressed more broadly in the next chapter, yet it can be said that as the self is also the rightful owner of authority, it is therefore autonomous. Being autonomous enables the self to rule itself and become the sole and unquestionable reigning body. However, as it was suggested before, self should avoid concreting itself, but on the contrary, it should distribute the power in the right amount to the fragments. Being static does not contribute but contrary to this, hastens the dissolving process. 'The self is thus autonomous only to the extent that it is automobilic and autotelic, that is, only to the extent that it can of itself, by itself, give itself its own law with its own self in view' (Rogues, p:11)

In addition to the fact that ipseity could be considered to be unanimous with the self, this word also has a broad discourse of its own. Again in Rogues, before suggesting and using the term in the book, Derrida explains what ipseity covers;

[o]f some automobilic and autonomic turn or, rather, return to self, toward the self and upon the self; indeed, it seems difficult to thin such a desire for or naming of democratic space without the rotary motion of some quasi-circular return or rotation toward the self, toward the origin itself, toward and upon the origin, whenever it is a question, for example, of sovereign self-determination, of the autonomy of the self, of the ipse, namely, of the one-self that gives itself its own law, of autofinality, autotely, self-relation as being in view of the self, beginning by the self, with the end of self in view- so many figures and movements that I will call from now on, to save time and speak quickly, to speak in round terms, ipseity in general. (Derrida, 2005:10-11)

So, Derrida here makes ipseity basically equal to the sovereign since they bear the same qualifications more or less; the 'I can' state of the authority, that it is the natural provider of law, that its law is basically unquestionable, providing the necessary simultaneity for its fragments and distributing the power in a just way. Here, simultaneity and dissemination of the power and giving the fragments their own will, in a way, provide for a homogenous setting. While the situation in democracies can rather be described as heterogeneous since, although there are differences among the small fragments, they actually do not blend like in the case of sovereignty. Thus a sovereign body, because as it respects the differences, it melts and blends the necessary aspects of these fragments.

### 2.3. *Auto* and *Auto*-words

Related to the concept of identity of a person and relevant to this study is to mention the thoughts on writing and speech. When looked at the physical structures of both, writing is rather connected with signs whereas speech is bound to sounds. However, Derrida refuses to make a distinction between the two and regards both- and many others- as a text. For him, there is nothing outside the text, as expressed before; therefore every word written down and every utterance that comes from the mouth are bound to a discourse. The discourse may be close around one referent or it can be far from the core meaning but the movement of deconstruction always requires a turning back to the text. In *Dissemination*, Derrida mentions 'it is not any less remarkable here that the so-called living discourse should suddenly be described by a metaphor borrowed from the order of the very thing one is trying to exclude from it' (Derrida, 1981: 148). By 'living discourse' he describes the unity of meanings attached to a text are always in the process of an evolution, that the text goes on to exist by deconstructing and reshaping itself. But, as it is mentioned, even if we try to exclude certain players from the discourse, in this case of the relationship between writing and speech, they are intertwined. It is necessary for both players to exist. However much one of them tries to question the legitimacy and the authenticity of the other, it simply fails because an ultimate and purely powerful identity is non-existent, 'it is always contaminated by what it tries to exclude' (Saul Newman, 2001). Automatically, one observes that 'no identity is ever complete or pure: it is constituted by that which threatens it' (Saul Newman, 2001). In the light of all these, it can be assumed that the identity harbors the autoimmune elements.

Here, another term necessarily comes into play: supplementarity. The term comes from the root 'to supply' which gives the meaning of backing up a body of organism whenever it is necessary and it also suggests a positive meaning and contribution. However, the term slightly changes when it comes to join the logic of identity. This supplementariness exhibits other orbits evolving around a body of authority. Their position can rather be described as diffused and although they may look like autonomous particles, they always contribute to the main body. The main body is always regarded as the proprietor of the ultimate power but as it does not comply with the logic of fragmentariness, this ultimate power cannot be held in concrete bodies of authority. Here,

the power that generates a function gathers its strength from a variety of fragments. In other words, authority cannot be accomplished within one body of identity. Other supplements also have to contribute to this administration. Therefore, 'power is and identity that is always unstable, contingent and diffuse' (Saul Newman, 2001).

This kind of unstable ground in the formation of identity is both a chance for it and also a possibility of collapse which if it comes from outside gives way to a situation of war with the outside world, but if it comes from within, in this case, called as 'autoimmunity'. If we look at the structure of this word, the word 'auto' serves as a wildcard, so to speak. Depending on the word that succeeds it, auto changes its meaning, but as a root it beckons the referents; self, sovereign-self, sovereignty, freedom, equality and people.

Before we come to the key concept: autoimmunity, *auto* words would give a clue on the impact of this late Derridean concept. As expressed before, auto is identified with self, but a self that controls. In order to strengthen this meaning, it can be said that the self is always connected with authority. Since authority is also connected with the rightful owner and practitioner of law, self is the beholder of authority over all other fragments. Without the control, authority of the sovereign identity, there would be no unity as well and the self would be subjected to an act of dissemination. This authority provides the self with one more strengthening fact; the self is the sovereign and therefore is indivisible. Also as the self is the ultimate power, at the same time, its authority is unspeakable and unquestionable. The united feature of the self is above the effects of destruction, it cannot be demolished and likewise there cannot be any debate to its uniqueness. This unity/sovereignty is peculiar to the self and only to that self identity and by no means passed onto or shared to another. The sovereign self lives in its microcosm but it is subjected to the forces of the outer world in order to fulfill its existence and therefore exposed to the rules, laws and language. As these agents try to stereotype individuals, this effort is a kind of 'counter-sovereignty' to the self, therefore the self- if fails to protect its unity- compromises and autoimmunizes itself. This whole process is aporetic on the grounds that while the law tries to establish a sovereignty on the masses, it causes an autoimmune process on the individual.

Time, space, language and the other; the quartet that the sovereign self has no authority on and therefore is subjected to these forces (presumably exposed to these forces altogether).

As for the *auto* words; *autochthony* can be a starting point since it can be expressed as and as Michael Nass does in his *Derrida From Now On* 'being indigenous, native born, indeed born from out of the earth itself' (2008: 151). As birth is the starting point and the point of origin of our bodies and identities, we can often consider this point as our core and if necessary, our controlling point, the place where the roots and therefore the power is. Power, here, is absorbed from this natural root and makes the identity a mighty sovereign.

Secondly, *automobility* suggests an act of mobility. This mobility, or moving around could either be towards the interior of the self or it can mean a physical or symbolic journey in the outer world. As the ipseity is the controlling mechanism of the organism, it may check the functioning parts as being the sovereign requires this kind of inspection from time to time. But because the ipseity always contains a quasi-structure –return movement, return to itself. While constructing the identity, it was mentioned that, interrelations with other identities also contribute to self. With automobility movement, these interrelations are established.

*Autonomy* is maybe the most powerful of these *auto* words which describes a government, a ruling action, a law-maker identity. This autonomy gives the self, besides being the law-maker, a kind of immunity against the laws of the others. While the self, this autonomous being, establishes and regulates law, it is, at the same time, independent from and is above the laws of other identities.

One that is more related to narration rather than the structure of the self is that; *autobiography*; writing or narrating about the self. The importance of this narration comes from the opportunity to establish itself from the point of view of itself, again. This narration highly gives the self a massive amount of power since there is no opposition to narrate against it, therefore it is a subjective act to a great amount. In the case of autobiography, a reference should be made to the writing styles of the authors. Quite in a parallel way, both authors choose to narrate their fiction in accordance with the qualifications of

dissemination. Both in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *The English Patient*, the narration consists of a variety of voices and narration styles. While the titles of the books focus on an individual character, both writers prefer to give the story, from the point of view of other characters also. The voice of the author also exists, yet in order to provide authenticity, the reader hears the characters' voices as well. This condition, while it provides grounds for fragmentariness and dislocation in the narration, actually is more successful because it relieves the reader from one boring narrator's voice. The case could be a first person or a third person narration, which is of no importance, only one narrator's voice is definitely not enough for reflect upon the essential sides of the story. For example, in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, the reader involves in the minds and identities of several characters by seeing and experiencing the war setting. This could be a homosexual soldier's mind, or it could be a dictator's concerned feelings for the Second World War. Or sometimes, the reader experiences the feeling of being under siege from the behaviors of a local doctor, or from the perspective of a Nazi soldier. Of course, the third person narration gives the character a limited amount of power, yet if the character is narrating the story from his own eyes, in a way, he is narrating an autobiography and centralizing the power upon himself in that chapter. In a way, in the chapters where the character is the narrator, automatically, that character becomes the sovereign who holds the power of writing his own history, making his story the only true text.

About the case of autobiography, if the character also chooses an alias or a nickname for himself, this also falls in the realm of autobiography. After all, the narrator may choose to use an alias to provide for anonymity in storytelling. Many sovereigns throughout history either have chosen to or have been referred to with nicknames. For example Mary I of England was referred to as 'Bloody', or Elizabeth I of England was referred to with more nicknames as 'Gloriana, the Virgin Queen or Good Queen Bess. Adjectives provide for an anonymity and at the same time attribute a certain degree of power. For instance the nickname for Süleyman I of the Ottomans is both the Lawgiver and the Magnificent. Lawgiver gives the meaning of an undoubted and definite ruler and magnificent crates a feeling of awe upon the person. Likewise, the adjective bloody gives the sense of a cruel and tyrannical ruler, yet this kind of bitterness also transforms itself into power, therefore is not despised but obeyed.

Lastly, the core of this study: autoimmunity which, among all *auto* words, is the only one to suggest a loss of power within the self. In the preceding concepts concerning auto, all the words suggested the presence of a powerful authority which will use its power at will, yet autoimmunity gives the meaning of harboring toxic and harmful elements within the structure of the ipseity. If we look at the word, autoimmunity apparently shows an immune system which is supposed to protect the authority figure, but turns against to the very sovereign. In his interview *Philosophy In a Time of Terror* with Giovanna Borradori, Derrida explains the term as such; 'as we know, an autoimmunitary process is the strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-suicidal fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its 'own' immunity' (2003: 94).

As the self is prone to a process of dissemination and a de-anchoring of the core self, at the same time, it is open to an undoing and resolving process. Naturally, pure sovereign self cannot be achieved, it is simply a utopic concept, as the self is always exposed to time, space, language and the other, it is constantly in a process of denying or autoimmunitising itself. In a well-functioning body, the role of the immune system is to detect the defective parts of the system and provide for a defense mechanism. Once the harmful fragment is disposed of, the immune system has done what it has to have done. But in the case of autoimmunity, the whole organism, along with the identity, has come to find its own protecting system as an opponent.

## CHAPTER 3. JE SUIS EN GUERRE CONTRE MOI-MEME.

### 3.1. *Rogues* and Foundation of Autoimmunity

In the last years of his life, Jacques Derrida dealt with some issues in politics, especially with European political systems. Among these, the issue of democracy was paid the most attention. He states in *Rogues* that 'democracy would be precisely this, a force (*kretos*), a force in the form of a sovereign authority and thus the power and ipseity of the people (*demos*)' (2005: 13). As mentioned before, he would take sovereignty and democracy as two separate terms, yet he does not deny a possibility of absolute power- here being sovereignty- but the absolute power of a unity of the demos, the people. However, he uses another term called 'democracy-to-come' to mention about the illusion of democracy. Democracy-to-come suggests a motion that has not taken place yet so he comes to suggest that democracy as a political system is not what it is, they are different things as theory and practice.

Democracies create states that are legal and are recognized by other states. These are also called sovereign states because it has a constitution that is a set of basic rules binding the state and its citizens. Making the law embodies the state as something material and concrete. Also the presence of a population, territory, recognition and authority justifies the existence of this state. When it takes its population into account by giving them legal rights such as voting, it automatically recognizes the authority of its individuals. The principle of this ideology, as its name suggests, invite its population to take part and decide for the state they live in, so it creates a sense of belonging. But if we go back to the concept of democracy-to-come, this kind of a political system is merely utopic since there is a level of accepting the voice of the population, even in democratic systems. That is why, Derrida calls some European and especially the American states as 'rogue states'. Hypothetically, such states should not be referred to as 'rogues' because they tend to act on a democratic basis that evaluates each individual in a just and equal way; a shareholder to the power, even. Yet in certain cases, some democracies have failed to preserve this qualification. Derrida gives an example from Algeria where, at the time of the democratic elections, the democratic government chooses to secure the good of the democratic system as it was threatened by a religiously



fanatic group. If the present government had not suspended the elections, the possibility of this extremist group would wholly demolish the present system. But this act could not spare the Algerian government from acting in an undemocratic way for the sake of democracy. What this situation created was an *aporia*. The inescapable and impossible situation probably forced the government to make such a decision but also became an example to the yet-impossible nature of this political system. Here, democracy has acted against its ideal, out of the need to protect and maintain itself, it actually ended up limiting itself.

Again in *Rogues*, Derrida discusses about the matter of sovereignty and opens the discussion by defining it as 'the one who has the right to suspend law' (2005: XI). So, clearly, sovereignty is unbreakably related to the law. The sovereign needs a territory to establish its power and rule. And in the pursuit of this chance, it encloses an area of dominance and this area is almost always described as spherical. Indispensably, the sovereign itself is round. If this sphere breaks, the sovereign loses its power and in the end loses the title as well. Therefore, the power should always comprise this sphere and should always return to the central ruler. This turning movement suggests a mobility in action and an action that always makes a full circle back to the self which is identified as the sovereign and at the same time, the point of origin.

If applied to the matter of identity, the same logic is also present here. Ipseity needs to enclose an area to establish his authority. In its enclosed space, ipseity is safe as it gets to state its rules just like a state does and provides a homogeneity and a semblable environment for its controlling body and its other components. Such an environment may seem as a totalitarian structure but it also brings a certain amount of freedom. As Derrida puts it in *Rogues*;

Freedom is essentially the faculty or power to do s one pleases, ti decide, to s-choose, to determine oneself, to have self-determination, to be master and first of all master of one-self (autos, ipse). A simple analysis of the 'I can', of the 'it is possible for me', of the 'I have the force to' (Kretos), reveals the predicate of freedom, the 'I am free to', 'I can decide'. There is no freedom without ipseity and, vice versa, no ipseity without freedom – and, thus, without a certain sovereignty.'(2005: 23)

All the components of this structure, ipseity which can be seen as the spirit of the body, the sovereign that can be seen as the controlling mechanism and all the autos are intertwined into each other and around each other.

However, as can be inferred from the title of the chapter, there is also the presence of a warlike situation in the sovereign if it tries to block the evolution and cycle of ipseity. As it was given as an example before, the case of the Algerian government expresses such a situation. In his same book again Derrida explains the situation as;

The new power itself then had to interrupt the democratization under the way; it had to interrupt a normal electoral process in order to save a democracy threatened by the sworn enemies of democracy. To immunize itself, to protect itself against the aggressor (whether from within or without), democracy thus secreted its enemies on both sides of the front so that its only apparent options remained murder and suicide; but the murder was already turning into suicide, and the suicide, as always, let itself be translated into murder. (2005: 35).

He expresses the impossible to escape and vicious circle-like structure of the problem of the democracy. Later he goes on to show the condition of aporias;

Although aporia, double bind, and autoimmune process are not exactly synonyms, what they have in common, what they all are, precisely, charged with, is, more than an internal contradiction, an indecidability, that is, an internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy that risks paralyzing and thus calls for the event of the interruptive decision. (2005: 35)

The autoimmune process comes into play here. This process exactly explains the being in a war against one's very own ipseity. On the one side there is the body of the sovereign, the ipseity that holds the power, sets the rules and regulates if they are running properly or not and all the powerful autos. Yet one single autoimmune component, which is ready to attack the whole system, which is turned against the very thing that has authorized it, is a major threat to the whole controlling body and to the ipseity. Although considered to be a lethal situation for the self, 'Autoimmunity is more or less suicidal, but, more seriously still, it threatens always to rob suicide itself of its meaning and supposed integrity.' (2005: 45). As Derrida explains here in *Rogues*, although it depicts a scenario of an organism whose system turns against itself and in a way these components are practically committing suicide, the most serious damage is not caused by the destruction of the organism but it happens when the integrity of the body is damaged.

Here, one can think of the dissemination phenomenon of the ipseity. Dissemination depicts an act of the referents' mobility inside the self, but this does not mean that these particles are free to abandon the controlling body. They could always interact with the outer elements as well as with each other and this act eventually gives

the sovereign more power, as each particle passes data with one another. Eventually each particle answers to the authority of the sovereign and therefore the dissemination process is a success. Now, while dissemination does not mean anything of a loss, autoimmunity, likewise, does not mean a complete destruction.

Originally borrowed from the discipline of biology, the autoimmune process depicts a situation in which the particles of the immune system take its hosting body as a threat to it and so turn against it. Some diseases that transform the immune system are the results of such acts.

However, Derrida does not strictly use this term as a destroyer force of sovereign bodies. When it comes to identity, *autos*, as depicted before mostly the owner of the power and the law-maker, is also open to its undoing by the autoimmune components in itself, it is quite prone to this autoimmunization process because a pure sovereign self cannot be achieved, it is simply a utopic concept as it is always exposed to time, space, language and the other; so it is constantly in a process of denying, autoimmunizing itself. From this point of view, autoimmune components also function as the auditors and the inspectors within the system. The autoimmune has the duty to protect the immune system, immunity of the *autos* in order to live on, to sustain its life.

It may sound quite aporetic that the autoimmune components inspecting the immune system but while they do this, they also clean the immune system from the possible foreign agents. If the self does not counter with time, space, language and the other, it would mean a complete suicide as it would cut its bonds with life. As the absence of life is death or a machine-like existence, the self finds itself in a vicious circle and cannot sustain itself anymore.

If we take another look at the title of the chapter again 'Je suis en guerre contre moi-meme.' Derrida has uttered the sentence in an interview with *Le Monde* in 2004, short before his passing because of pancreatic cancer. He has expressed his illness in terms of autoimmunity; the cancer cells slowly weakening the immune system and leaving the body exposed and vulnerable to outer and inner threats. Yet this 'war' in his body also gave him the chance observe his body and understand the process that has been going on. At the same time, this war in his body also enabled him to realize that

there are still parts in his body that are active, alive and fighting against these foreign agents. After all, Derrida regarded death as a natural phenomenon and that it would not ever diminish completely, but thanks to the spectrality of the self, would go on existing.

### 3.2. War

Both *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *The English Patient* take the Second World War as time in part of the chronotope. As places, the geography of the settings are not far from each other but still it can be said that they are the soils which have witnessed the tragedy of the war.

We have decided on 'war' as a subchapter that is different from the situation in the novels because war, especially the Second World War creates the grounds for the states, nations and individuals to be estranged from themselves and also provides a chronotope for both novels. We can begin by discussing the politics of war firstly. It is a phenomenon initiated by one or more states against another, or in this case against others. The reasons of this occurrence could be related to money, territorial disagreements or etc., but in any case there is the case of a power play among the states that take side. A state which tries to establish its hegemony on others is the actual reason the war takes place. In order to protect its boundaries the opposition state also either takes it guard for defense or prepares to meet the hegemonial state in battle. Or sometimes there is the possibility of finding itself in the war while expecting nothing.

In the first situation, the hegemonial power pushes upon its legacy and alleged rightful act on the opponent state. When the Italian forces are preparing to invade Greece, Italian state sends a warning notice beforehand saying that;

The Italian government asks the Greek government not to oppose such occupation and not to place obstacles in the way of the free passage of troops that ae to carry out this task. These troops do not come as enemies of the Greek people, and by the occupation some strategic points, dictated by contingent and purely defensive necessities, the Italian government in no way intends to prejudice the sovereignty and independence of Greece. (De Bernières, 1995: 113)

The ironic part of this notice is that the Italian forces are invading the sovereignty of another country without the intentions of causing any harm to it. However much the intentions are pure in invading a country, there is always the reality that both the state and its citizens, even the occupying forces' soldiers, are subjected to a state of chaos.

The third option occurs when the selected spies of the opposition forces a state to enter war in disguise of a false attack. The situation is seen in *Captain Corelli'*

*Mandolin*, when the Italian soldiers Carlo and Francesco are sent to the Albanian border disguised as Greek soldiers to blow up a post and therefore break the sovereignty and the unity of the Albanians. They are the selected soldiers to act as foreign agents between two sides to poke and disturb the defense system of a state which can be compared to the immune system. Such an act is considered to be ungentlemanly according to the politics of war.

Additionally, even though the war finishes and possible foreign agents pull off from the state, this does not necessarily mean the immune system shall be restored to function properly again. A weakened immune system is also vulnerable to the threats that may come from within. Such foreign agents constitute a serious threat against the legacy and identity of the state. Again in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, Greece faces a serious Civil War period. The alleged Communist party, when it takes over the authority of the state, becomes more tyrannical than the monarch and starts to eliminate all the antibodies in its territory under the guise of protecting itself. Here the original autoimmune actually operates as the sovereign which equals to the Communist Party that started and ruled the state for a painfully long time. The reader can see the situation from one of the characters of the book; Pelagia;

Pelagia had taken pride in the idea that she lived at the very center, but now, if such a thing is possible, she gave up being a Greek... (t)he barbarity of the civil war had knocked out of her forever the Hellenic faith which her father has instilled in her. She could no longer believe that she was heir to the greatest and most exquisite culture in the history of the earth; Ancient Greece may have been the same place as modern Greece, but it was not the same country and it did not contain the same people. (De Bernières, 1995: 462)

In this situation, one can observe the collapse of the national identity after the sufferings of war and the civil war. Later with the growth of a multinational economy and the possibilities of easy travel, the island of Cephallonia is, for the second time but this time permanently, is invaded by tourism industry. The national identity could only show itself in the souvenirs that are imported from China.

While the reader can see the question of identity and its politics in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, in the case of *The English Patient*, the effects of war are directly projected on the characters and how it led to the shattering and destruction of individuals' identities.

While the state of war causes physical difficulties like, lack of food, shelter and medicine, the spiritual impact is much more devastating on the human psyche.

Once witnessed the miseries and tragedies of the war, or even being subjected to these cruelties opens irrecoverable scars. For instance, the mutilation of his thumbs by the Italian interrogator is something that Caravaggio has to live with and every time he looks at his hands, the memories of cruelty will swarm in this brain. It is ironical, though Caravaggio was such a humanitarian thief, he was also subjected to the brutality of the act.

In Hana's situation, while she was under the great suppression of war and is surrounded by continuous deaths of soldiers whom she sincerely called 'buddy', her choice to have an abortion is quite understandable, since it is an environment with the absence of hope.

## CHAPTER 4. CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN

### 4.1. Mandras

The handsome fisher boy of the story, at first glance, may look like a side character, but as an identity, Mandras plays a significant and striking role in the Second World War years of the story. Son of Drousula, a relatively unattractive woman and a fisherman who gets lost in the sea, Mandras also grows up to follow his father's profession. In the beautiful island of Cephallonia, the professions are already fixed and since the boy receives no education, he continues in his father's steps. One of the most handsome boys in the village, he falls in love with the beautiful Pelagia, the local doctor's daughter. In the dreams of his simple mind, he wishes for a marriage with Pelagia, catch fish, sell some and get by happily ever after. Traditionally, the groom's side has received dowry from the bride's side which helped the couple to start their family and such practice is considered to be natural; bride's side giving property to the groom's side just because the groom has agreed to marry the bride. It cannot be denied that it is an ancient tradition, and in such a close and traditional Greek village, it is not a surprise that this tradition would continue. It is somehow transferred all through centuries in the nation's identities and therefore difficult to erase. However, Dr. Iannis is not the typical man who would succumb to such ancestral and orthodox practices since he had the chance to travel a variety of places and become a learned man. Traveling, practicing medicine, self-education, speaking different languages and curiosity has made Dr. Iannis quite a modern and eccentric man in the eyes of this fellow villagers. He quite exceeds the average Cephallonian villagers with his world view and therefore he definitely refuses even the idea of a dowry. The national identity and culture relationship becomes quite loose in his case and he is determined to pass this to his daughter also.

Mandras, upon hearing that he shall not receive a dowry, firstly, respects Dr. Iannis and accepts the situation but this is to a great amount against the mentality that governs his identity. As a man, who has come to age, can start a family, handsome, powerful and without any serious competitors should receive a large sum he thinks. By thinking so, he justifies this authority as a handsome and strong man who has the right to marrying a beautiful girl and quite rightfully receiving a dowry. Yet this justification does not mean anything to Dr. Iannis who has given Pelagia a proper education, taught her to



read and write and even to speak Italian. Also, as she attended to her father's treatment of patients, she practically learned a great deal of medicine thanks to her father. Therefore, by making a simple comparison and out of common sense and modernity the world has brought him, he lets Mandras know that he would not give dowry. Should their marriage take place, it should be out of love and affection they feel towards each other, he thinks.

Nonetheless, it is hard for Mandras to agree and give in to the situation because his identity still authorizes him to the right of receiving one. De Bernières sketches him in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* as, while in his boat fishing, he constantly thinks about the situation and looks for the mistake in himself, thinking that he is not a powerful man and therefore does not deserve it;

I love Pelagia, but I know that I will never be a man until I've done something important, something great, something I can live with, something to be esteemed. That's why I hope there's going to be a war. I don't want bloodshed and glory, I want something to get to grips with. No man is a man until he has been a soldier. I can come back in my uniform and no one will say, 'Mandras is a likable lad, but there's nothing to him.' I'll be worth a dowry then. (1995: 80)

As Tatiana Golban also states in her book *Rewriting the Hero and the Quest*, 'Mandras is now captured in the status of a naïve and innocent young man willing to explore the unknown and being extremely attracted by guns, gunpowder, and the implied heroic ability of using them.' (2014: 42). The absence of education and the lack of luck to gain a worldly view has apparently made Mandras unable to breach the fixed identity he has acquired all through his life. Having failed to be exposed to the outer world sufficiently, he bears the stereotypic ideology about manhood and being a soldier. Politics of power abuses this duty, serving in the army, for granted, so to speak. Any boy who comes to a certain age, regards military service as completing the 'being-a-man' process. It gives a certain glamour as there is the possibility of defending one's nation and providing the beloved ones sleep soundly in their homes. It is rather equal to being a hero and the ones who did not fulfil their military service are seen as 'half-man'. It is quite degrading for male members to be deprived of such an opportunity. 'In his naivety, Mandras thinks that a war would help him overcome this complex of inferiority and increase his worth.' (Golban, 2014: 43)

Of course, there was not a sustainable military system at the time in Greece, therefore not every man had to go to war and serve their country, but the succession of two world wars nearly made it necessary to join the army and complete their military service. The illusion of obtaining more power, likewise, has captured Mandras' mind also and that is why he hopes that here would be a war to join.

At the same time he is so naïve to wish for a clean war 'without bloodshed and glory', but the false illusion of war in his mind makes this thought ironic and amusing. He only wishes for a clean, uncut uniform to come home to and maybe a photograph at the front to show to his fiancée, proving his heroic deed. He does not even pursue a victory in the battle, losing but still surviving in a heroic way is sufficient for him to avoid Dr. Iannis' alleged pride and eventually demanding a dowry. He again justifies this situation by thinking;

I feel so useless and insignificant here on this island. I'm going to make (Pelagia) understand in defending Greece I will be defending her and every woman like her. It's a question of national salvation. Everyone has the duty to do his utmost. And if I die, then it's too bad, I won't have died for nothing. I will die with the name of Pelagia and the name of Greece equally on my lips, because it amounts to the same thing, the same sacred thing. (De Bernières, 1995: 82)

However, as told in the chapter about war, his naivety would prove him quite wrong and after he has returned home, he would have no identity whatsoever regarding the prideful existence of men.

Driven by such instincts, he registers to join the war, out of the wish for fulfilling his manhood, rather than a simple dowry. He is so glorious while he is leaving his village for the front, but this glorious feeling will not linger once he is distributed to his post. Witnessing such slaughters, deaths, starvation, cold and a feeling of nothingness, his authority over his identity is shattered. Although Pelagia writes to him very frequently, expressing her love and support, as he is illiterate, the letters are of no use for him. In return, he cannot write back and this behavior also causes a shattering in the soul for Pelagia. She assumes he is either lost or does not love her anymore and so she begins to question her commitment to Mandras.

After managing to survive somehow and travelling long distances on foot with rags he arrives at Pelagia's house in a miserable situation. The beautiful and strong man

has gone along with his glorious authority and what returned from war is something that is not Mandras, both physically and spiritually. Pelagia and Drousula tend to him and heal him patiently but the scar that is opened by war is incurable;

Everything has become a dream. There is a veil between me and them, so that they are shadows and I am dead, and the veil is perhaps a shroud that dims the light and blurs the vision. I have been to war, and it has created a chasm between me and those who have not; what do they know about anything? Since I encountered death, met death on every mountain path, conversed with death in my sleep, wrestled with death in the snow, gambled with dice with death, I have come to the conclusion that death is not an enemy but a brother. (De Bernières, 1995: 168)

Death would be considered as the antagonism of life and life is provided by a certain degree of autonomous choices people make through their lives. But after such horrific and miserable situations experienced, just like in the case of Mandras, death then becomes a counterpart to the self. An awkward acceptance of death would mean that the self is overrun by autoimmune elements but Mandras does not kill himself after experiencing such scenarios, but rather learns to live with them and with the intention of restoring the lost power he joins rebellion forces that reside in the mountains.

The decision to join such groups is again ironic for him because the first choice he made to go to war was fighting for the Greek king, the sovereign and also to prove his manhood to Pelagia and her father. But this time he decides to join an anti-monarch group who considers itself to follow the path of communism by fighting against the Axis powers. Yet, again aporetically, they end up terrorizing the Greek villagers who refuse to share their food and money with a group of men who practically have turned into bandits. Also, his illusion to impress Pelagia has taken a sharper and furious manner because in his absence, the island was taken by the Axis powers and Captain Corelli had entered their lives. The presence of an opponent apparently made Mandras a more vindictive and resentful person and led him to grow a feeling of revenge against Pelagia because he could not accomplish his dreams at war and still had a long way to go to prove himself.

Mandras commits many crimes such as murder, rape, theft while he is with a group called ELAS, in the leadership of a Hector. Out of his naivety, Mandras believes every equality and gaining the power speeches Hector gives them and unconditionally obeys his orders, questioning these orders only after he commits a crime, aporetically. Still, his resentful feelings because of his unaccomplished identity, makes him commit

these crimes, sometimes even picturing Dr. Iannis' face in a person he executes. Picturing the doctor's face gives him the opportunity to reestablish the necessary ground to his authority for his identity. Unfortunately, Mandras does not recognize these deeds as crimes but as rightful acts to establish and order of equality while they act as tyrants. Such anger and fury shows that he is unable to come over the thoughts of feeling belittled over a dowry matter and apparently he is going to his own destruction.

This blindness to his own destruction is still existent after he returns home to his island. He still had not shaken off these vengeful and resentful feelings during his days as a bandit but this time when returned, the balance of the character was changed. Mandras comes into a village run over firstly by Axis powers and then the Communist groups. Physically good in condition himself, he finds a skeleton-like Pelagia and a broken and crooked Drousula; the reflective condition of his first arrival from war.

Strangely enough, possibly with a drunkenness of power, he shows no pity for the both women, rather when Pelagia tells him that her father was abducted by one of the Communist groups he replies as 'Well, he must have done something to deserve it... There would be reasons. The party is never wrong. Whoever is not with us is against us.' (De Bernières, 1995: 447). These sentences show that, he still blindly follows the ideology of the Communist party, which actually was good for nothing other than torturing and terrorizing the Greek people, their very fellow citizens. This kind of brutal power is metamorphosed into something evil in the hands and minds of such twisted people like Mandras. He has internalized this cruelty and is ready to abuse this power whenever he wishes to, but unaware of the seriousness of the corruption in his self.

When Mandras tries to abuse his power on Pelagia, because he still has the resentfulness towards her because of the letters she had written. During his days on the mountains, he had learned to read and write and at last found out that Pelagia did not love him anymore. Before he joined ELAS, he had already sensed a distance from Pelagia and the existence of an Italian captain who is interested in her made him more vengeful.

Now that a weakened Pelagia was standing in front of him and the absence of her father made him feel powerful enough to abuse this power on her. Pelagia is only saved

from Mandras' brutality and cruelty with the help of Drousula, his mother. With the fury of not being able to accomplish his tyrannical power made him stand up to his mother but strangely enough, this woman who gave birth to Mandras was strong enough to shatter this tyrant into pieces;

Everything had come to nothing, everything was lost. The torment of the war in the ice of Albania, the years in the forest, the deluded self-confidence of his mastery of writing and his lexicographical knowledge of the technical terms of revolution, his new power and importance, it was all a vapor and a dream. (De Bernières, 1995: 450)

As he tried to seek for forgiveness, Drousula broke the last bits of illusion of power in him because at the same time, she was holding a pistol to his own son;

How dare you call me 'mother'? I am no mother, and you are not my son.' She paused and wiped the saliva from her mouth with her sleeve. 'I have a daughter...' she indicated Pelagia, who was now curled up with her eyes closed, panting as though she had given birth, and this is what you do. I disown you. I do not know you, you will not come back, never in my life do I want to see you, I have forgotten you, my curse goes with you. May you never know peace, may your heart burst in your chest, may you die alone.' She spat on the ground and shook her head with contempt, 'Nazi rapist, get out before I kill you. (De Bernières, 1995: 451)

A completely broken down and overrun Mandras leaves the house, unable to find anything to make a whole self again and commits suicide by drowning himself. The very power, or rather the illusion of power is the cause of his own destruction.

## 4.2. Carlo

The reader does not receive much information in regards to the character development of Carlo. At first he is introduced to us through a series of chapters with the titles 'La'omosessuale' which can be translated as 'the homosexual'. Apparently he did not have a secure childhood and teenage years as he always had to hide himself from the society he lived in. As an Italian Catholic, because being homosexual is seen as a sin and an erratic behavior, Carlo Piero Guercio had to bear the burden of hiding this secret in his soul. Even if he expressed his true self, he would not be accepted in his family and society, claiming to have problems, something 'wrong' in his identity.

The traditional identity, just like in the case of Mandras, would lead him into choosing a woman for himself to marry and have children as this is what is expected from him. But he chooses to deny all these presupposed roles and criticizes the society by saying;

I am like spy who has signed a covenant of perpetual secrecy, I am like someone who is the only person in the world that knows the truth and yet is forbidden to utter it. And this truth weighs more than the universe, so that I am like Atlas bowed down forever beneath a burden that cracks the bones and solidifies the blood. There is no air in this world that I am fated to inhabit, I am a plant suffocated by lack of air and light, I have had my roots clipped and my leaves painted with poison. I am exploding with the fire of love and there is no one to accept it or nourish it. I am a foreigner within my own nation, an alien in my own race, I am as detested as cancer when I am as purely flesh as any priest or doctor. (De Bernières, 1995: 27)

Very tragically, Carlo resembles the society he lives in to a body of authority and regards himself as an autoimmune fragment which holds a threat against this body. Under such strict rules, the society does not welcome anyone that is off the limits of the conventional identity. Therefore, because he has different choices in his private life, Carlo both considers himself as a threat and a victimized individual who would be cast away from the circle of authority as he would be a danger.

The identities that societies create are strong stereotypes and it needs them in one uniformed shape because it has created them and needs them functioning as they always did. The ultimate power, here the society, establishes itself upon such structures and regards even the smallest deviation from this stereotype as a threat to its authority. Immune system immediately starts to function and cast away the foreign subject.

Being torn off in such a harsh way is difficult for Carlo to internalize because he knows he would have reactions as he is a cancer cell waiting to break down the whole immune system and therefore the reigning body.

The unbreakable authority is not aware that with the acceptance of different character like Carlo does not necessarily mean the loss of all power but actually accepting such differences makes the arch stronger.

To amuse himself, but in reality to escape the hypocrisy of his society, Carlo enrolls in the military. As a joke, he reflects his mocking by addressing to the existence and amount of the gay relationships and if he is lucky, that he might find someone to share his love with. Of course, he does not take the conditions in the fronts into consideration and finds nothing but misery in his first post. Yet, he finds a romantic interest in a fellow officer named Francesco who is married and is quite religious. Carlo, let alone expressing his love towards him, cannot even treat him outside the norms of brotherhood that is built around them to provide for the solidarity in the war zone. He treats Francesco as a brother and this actually provides a closer relationship between the two with no one suspecting any 'strange' behavior. He himself describes the army as; 'regardless of the matter of sex, soldiers grow to love each other; and, regardless of the matter of sex, this is a love without parallel in civil life.' (De Bernières, 1995: 38) Carlo finds the affection, not in his life and family in Italy but among complete strangers. Yet this kind of affection gives him a chance to feel the hunger for affection and feed it, so to speak.

Originally in his own society, it is also painful for him to exist as he is forced to act as someone he is not and abide by the laws of that strict stereotype. He says; 'I am not a misogynist, but you should understand that to me the company of a woman is painful because it reminds me of what I am not, and of what I would have been if God had not meddled in my mother's womb.' (De Bernières, 1995: 37). In this fragment he acts as an autoimmune fragment against God, the ultimate sovereign of people. Questioning his act is equal to seeing oneself equal to it and this kind of utterance, if expressed in public, would definitely receive criticism, therefore Carlo chooses to stay hidden.

Although it is wartime and they are surrounded with complete misery, actually these are the happy times for Carlo because he is definitely happy to have Francesco around him and this provides him to flourish, so to speak. The horrible scenario around them actually has no meaning at all to him as he is in a way completing the emptiness in his heart and soul, making himself a stronger person. Carlo is physically a strong man who is nearly two meters tall and is well-built. But the soul in him is fragile to the same amount. It is quite ironic to see such a man trying to accomplish his identity and gain power to the harsh conditions of the outer world, yet he is still one of the strongest characters. When their superior sends them on a covert suicide mission in order to start war and find a cause to fight the Greek, surprisingly both Carlo and Francesco avoid death by realizing the outfit they are wearing. Even in this situation Carlo does not mind dying out of such a reason as Francesco is by his side. His presence is the only thing that makes Carlo find a meaning for his own existence and celebrate his difference.

Nevertheless, on another attack on the Albanians, Francesco is hit and spends his last moments with Carlo. Even at that moment, Carlo does not risk revealing his identity to Francesco but buries it in himself along with his love for Francesco. His affection for Francesco is so vast that, when he returns to Italy after the battle and when he visits Francesco's family, he narrates his death in the most heroic manner. While he is creating his autobiography about the war in a purely heroic manner and out of distrust, he also narrates the biography of Francesco in the same heroic manner. With Francesco's mother and wife in front of him, he mentions about the epic battles they have won against the enemy, how brave Francesco was when he was fighting and how passionate he was when he was dying. Creating such a myth around both himself and Francesco enables him to be accepted by the society and gives him a false sense of belonging. Yet Carlo is quite aware of this false security feeling and does not linger there to let it capture him.

Later he is posted to Captain Antonio Corelli's Acqui Division and he arrives to the island of Cephallonia. Very peaceful in origin, he and the other soldiers does not behave as invaders of the island but rather see the island as a place from Heaven and act like they are practically having a holiday. With the leadership of Captain Corelli, who is very fond of music, they form a small opera group called La Scala and give small



concerts among themselves and to the locals. This small opera group is also a chance for Carlo to have a sense of belonging, which he rarely obtains. In the relatively peaceful atmosphere of the island, Carlo keeps on writing his journal in order to fulfil his autobiography and authority to maintain his self from falling apart in the absence of someone to show affection to. As time passes, he starts to narrate his growing feelings for Captain Corelli who day by day is falling in love with Pelagia. Quite aware of the situation, Carlo again does not express his feelings for his captain but with the help of his diary, is able to unload some of the impossible love and its sorrow from his soul.

In order to unload some troubling feelings and getting revenge from the lying authority of his nation, he cooperates with Dr. Iannis and writes and distributes a pamphlet mocking the 'Duce'; a sovereign who makes mistakes out of the greed for power and pushes his nation to an unsuccessful war. Questioning and mocking the meaningless authority is a relief for him because, among other, his own ruler deceived his nation and caused it to fight a war that, for sure, they would not win.

Even though Carlo and the others spend their days getting familiar with the locals and enjoying the heavenly island, his love for Captain Corelli becomes unbearable for him. Knowing that he would never accomplish such a relationship, no matter how much he amuses himself and spends his time, is an extra burden that he has to bear.

In the autumn of 1945, when Italy signs an armistice with the Allies, the German forces on the island ambush and murder the Acqui Division to take the revenge of the disobedience to their authority. Every soldier in the division is killed except for Captain Corelli, who is saved by Carlo's sacrifice. When he shielded his body over Corelli to save him from dying, Carlo has already given up with the meaninglessness of life for him as there would be nobody to share his affection with. The necessity to hide his homosexuality, the fact that Corelli was in love with Pelagia and that he would never have a chance with him have driven Carlo, in a last minute decision, to sacrifice himself for the sake of his affection towards Corelli.

Most probably, his homosexuality was functioning as an autoimmune fragment in his soul, because he could not set it free, this hiding act would make him spend a certain amount of effort, but has come to a point that he could not bear. Only years later, when

Pelagia finds his journal in his father's hidden cache, then this heavy burden was revealed.

### 4.3. ELAS

Abbreviated as ELAS, or also known as Greek People's Liberation Army, was an organization assembled during the Second World War, in Greece with a purpose of taking action against the Axis Powers. As it was depicted in the book, part of Greece and Cephallonia were under the invasion of Axis Powers which are here Germany and Italy. As the story is set in Cephallonia, the reader sees the Second World War from the eyes of the villagers residing on this island and also from the eyes of the occupant force soldiers such as Carlo or the German captain Weber.

Located in the west of Greece, Cephallonia was subjected to mainly Italian abduction with German forces present also. The tragic and miserable war conditions had practically turned the heavenly island to a nightmarish place and upon that, after the great sufferings, this time, something from within stroke the island and the country.

In the first day of the occupation, when they first set foot on the island, Carlo describes Cephallonia as;

“It is a light that seems unmediated either by the air or by the stratosphere. It is completely virgin, it produces overwhelmingly clarity of focus, it has heroic strength and brilliance. It exposes colours in their original prelapsarian state, as though straight from the imagination of God in His youngest days, when He still believed that all was good. The dark green of pines is unfathomably and retreatingly deep, the ocean viewed from the top of a cliff is platonic in its presentation of azure and turquoise, emerald, viridian, and lapis lazuli.” (De Bernières, 1995: 191)

The island apparently a utopic place that is too beautiful and perfect to be true. The locals of the island have created a microcosm-like place and are quite content with what they have. They have originated an authority but this authority belongs to no man but to the island itself as they have a certain respect to the way the sovereignty of nature rules itself.

The closed circle of this microcosm gives a great amount of security to its inhabitants; no foreign object to break the peace and unity and therefore people do not depend on the outer world and suffice with the offerings of the island. Such a place would

of course to be cherished and protected by its inhabitants but face to face with a greater power than themselves, the outer wall of this circle is broken down by the Axis powers.

The threat which comes from the outer world can lead to a solidarity among the inhabitants of that circle and trigger the immune system against the foreign agent. Yet, if the threat is coming from within, the shock of the situation could not be easily handled. The situation in Cephalonia was exactly the same when the first division of Italian army set foot on the island, followed by the Germans. The locals showed that they were disturbed by the occupants as much as they could and once they realized that they were, especially the Italian division, embodied no threat against them, they even accepted their existence on the island.

However, against the authority of the king in Athens and against the occupying Axis powers, Greek citizens, moved by the ideology of Marxism, began to rebel against these two tyrannical authorities. Once the young of the Greek would join the war out of glorifying their nation and their king, yet now they would be curious about the promised equality of the Communist movement. Seeing that the authority of their sovereign is questionable even by a common villager, there occurred a spirit of protest and revolution in the country; 'Long live the king' cohabited without apparent anomaly with 'Workers of the world unite', 'Wops fuck off' abutted with 'Duce, eat my shit.' (De Bernières, 1995: 194).

Young men like Mandras, after seeing the meaninglessness of the war, which they have fought for practically nothing, decided to look for a more powerful authority which would both help them regain their freedom as a nation and one that would guide them out of the false authority of a sovereign. As their first motive was to clear their land from the occupants, these men formed groups like ELAS. But before the formation of such groups, there were autonomous small teams which really fought against the Germans and Italians. A very enthusiastic Mandras, finds himself in one when he leaves his village for the second time. Disorganized, but very passionate in soul, they would give much damage to the enemy and cared for by the villagers as a sort of gratitude. Living in the caves in the villages, feeding with what villagers bring and getting their clothes washed by villager women, they bore the true spirit of being andartes. They would blow up bridges or chop off the wooden feet of passages when a convoy of Germans was

passing. Every small resistance was a true victory for their spirit; an accomplishment for the immune system. However, the retribution of the Germans was much more bitter against the villagers, so they were asked by the villagers themselves to move away. Ironically, they were more content with the occupying forces that they were with the andartes.

Mandras and many others later pick themselves a group called ELAS;

‘which was the military wing of an organization called the EAM, which in turn was controlled by a committee in Athens whose members belonged to the KKE. Intelligent people realized immediately that any group with such credentials must have been Communist, and that the purpose of having such attenuated chains of control was to disguise from ordinary citizens the fact that they were a Communist organization. (De Bernières, 1995: 229)

Such organizations are the examples of autoimmunity because while the king in Athens represents the autonomous state body, KKE, EAM and ELAS are all the autoimmune subjects driven with the urge to weaken the authority of this center and establish a new system with the help of revolutionary ideology. These groups actually were made up of a variety of individuals from different backgrounds;

Initially their recruits came from all walks of life, and included Venizelist republicans and Royalists, as well as moderate socialists, Liberals and Communists, all of whom were easily duped into believing that they were a part of the national liberation struggle, and not part of some convoluted hidden agenda which was more to do with seizing the power after the war than beating the Axis. (De Bernières, 1995: 229)

As it can be seen from the fragment, different particles bearing different qualifications all rise up to one authority which is now exposed to an autoimmunizing process. The unity of all these particles gathers and forms an attack on the controlling body to diminish its power and establish their own. Yet the problem with this dynamic is that, once they have destroyed the controlling body- the sovereign- they, themselves are subjected to a process of dying out because while they are supposed to protect it, they turn against it and choose to destroy the whole body by leaving a weak structure that is exposed to outer threats this time. Quite apparent from the fragment again, the very suppliers and supporters of these groups expect the exact moment to take over these small fragments after the destruction process. And this is what exactly happened in the story.

Mostly with the help of the British forces who supplied them with weapons and provisions, these groups were also given a certain amount of an area to cover. Every small group would operate in its area, not to interfere with any 'others'. But after the war was over and the occupying forces were withdrawn from the country, these groups did not end their activities. Greedy with the power they obtained, they would punish the hungry villagers, or the ones that refused to help very severely by claiming that the rebellious ones were 'Royalists'. Therefore, it would be right to say that, these groups which bear autoimmunity motives, this time turned right against the very thing that they were supposed to protect, autoimmunizing both themselves and the state. Such 'liberation' groups did not only fall into the trap of autoimmunizing themselves but also left a huge impact on the well-being of the common citizens. Tatiana Golban asserts that 'in their desire to liberate the masses, the "natural law of value" should have signified freedom and the establishment of happiness and harmony for people.' (Golban, 2014: 2509). In their once-naïve attempt to protect their sovereignty, these groups ended up following ideologies they thought would be the best for their nation but the attempt was nothing more than an establishment of another totalitarian system.

Executions would be very harsh and the reasons of these small, yet the controlling instinct gave them a certain amount of Godly power. Deciding who lives and who dies meant that these groups were also abusing their power. And at the same time, they had started to turn against each other. For example, when Mandras encounters with Hector's group, he is seriously warned that they would not be welcome if they were from EDAS. In their nature, however, both groups are fighting for the good of their nation, yet the only thing these groups cared for was their own benefit. As Tatiana Golban argues;

Although every community aims at preserving itself as pure and uncontaminated by foreign agents, and even if it manages to keep its safety from the intruding foreigners, it always preserves an inner threat, and there is always a possibility that this community will destroy itself from within. (Golban, 2014: 359)

By collecting money, food or other provisions from the villagers, they would establish their own rule in their territory, and when they are powerful

enough, they would turn against each other; 'During the night two of (the andartes) would take their weapons and disappear in the search of a band that fought the Germans instead of their fellow Greeks.' (De Bernières, 1995: 279). Aporetically, they would hunt members from other freedom groups and they would do this for the sake of the nation's good.

Within these groups, it was actually clear that while destroying an authority, there should have been a stern authority, a controlling position to secure their revolutionary deeds. In one of his speeches, Hector says;

'And another thing. It's clear to anyone with any brains that leadership is a functional specialization, and that therefore it inevitably presupposes centralization. So stop moaning that we're not fighting the Germans enough, and stop moaning about having to fight EDES and EKKA' (De Bernières, 1995: 281)

Here, Hector himself gives the perfect example of autoimmunizing act against the other components of the body and the body itself. As depicted before, this situation can even be described as the components turning against the autoimmunizing elements with an intention of not saving the controlling body but destroying every one of them.

Supported and at the same time manipulated by the Allies, these groups, under the illusion of obtaining the complete power, would start to turn to each other, leading to a more harmful and corrupting situation in the country;

'The Allies had invaded Sicily for strategic reasons, and in doing so betrayed their most longstanding and gallant ally, Greece. They left the Communists a year for preparing a coup, and a year for civil war. ELAS destroyed EKKA, and drove EDES into a corner so far from the centers of power that Zervas, their leader, would feel betrayed by the British for the rest of his life.' (De Bernières, 1995: 359)

What came after all the fight for the power was a more serious threat to the nation of Greece. All the small autoimmune parts had turned against each other and devouring the one another in the first chance, ELAS was the remaining one. But would it mean that it would put the sovereign to a side and rule the country on its own? The situation actually led to a more miserable and terrible atmosphere in the country; the Civil War.

Communist ideal had taken over the country at last, yet this situation was far from bringing equality to the people of Greece. There was clearly a kind of admiration towards the Soviets, yet the same system would not work with the Greeks in the atmosphere of a Civil War. Encouraged by the bullying of ELAS, several groups began to appear, against the central power, one more time. The economy and social balances had already been suffering from the war and now people were to suffer more while 'one kind of Fascism was about to be replaced by another.' (De Bernières, 1995: 359). Journalists that were the spokesmen of the brand new authority would make news about the executions and violent interrogations of the Royalists by the Communists. Such brutal news helped this new authority to legitimize itself by using publicity because it would also be used as a legitimate way to write their own history and autobiography. While they made and practice the new laws, anyone dared to question their authority would 'disappear', only to be interrogated. Dr. Iannis was one of the many to be abducted from his home under the guise of interrogation, only to return two years later, broken and unable to speak. The arch would fall upon innocent people in an unexpected time. Such cases were establishments of the unquestionable power of the new regime and a small reminder to people about what would happen if they refused to obey the new authority.

In all this there was both an irony and a tragedy. The irony was that if the Communists, had continued their wartime policy of doing absolutely nothing, they would undoubtedly have become the first freely elected Communist government in the world. (De Bernières, 1995: 443)

De Bernieres, himself explains the situation as aporetic because the autoimmunity process of the post-war times was much more harmful in the constitution of a nation. Greece was a recovering nation after a long invasion period and during this period they already had known their enemy. Now that some of their own was turning their backs on the nation was a more traumatic experience and that experience was called The Civil War.



## CHAPTER 5. THE ENGLISH PATIENT

### 4.1. The English Patient

One of the protagonists in the book, at the same time, the one who gives the book its title is Count László de Almásy, or for the most of the book referred as the English Patient. If we begin by discussing his identity, only much later in the book, the reader acknowledges the origins of the Count. The anonymity this Count bears enables him to reveal his true identity at first and therefore is immune to the inspections of the army officials. Salvaged from a plane wreck, miraculously he is cured by the Bedouin, only to realize that he was kept alive for a purpose. After the crash, as he was almost wholly burned, but the tribe was able to cure the skin as most as they can, though still the physical appearance of the Count was gone, unable to be recognized. This loss of his self image also gives him the chance to be above the norms of a stereotypical nationality and a loss of his painful past, only to be remembered by bits and pieces all through the novel.

Originally born in Hungary but had spent most of his life in England, he is fluent in English and therefore, after he was interrogated and as a proof he had given his serial number, officers agree that he is a British official and is transferred to the army health care providers. During his stay in this section, he was mobilized to several places, but after a young nurse named Hana, a young but grieving woman, decides to settle in an Italian villa to look after him, the Count also spends his last days there.

After the arrival of Caravaggio to the villa, they discover that this English patient has quite a story to tell and more importantly, to live by its memories. The story of the English patient continues in fragments from different timelines, his narration is full of gaps that his audience has to complete them. Just as his body was nearly broken down into pieces, his mind also had the same process.

Through bits and pieces, the identity of the English patient is revealed to be a mapmaker during and between the two world wars; actually flying over the desert to mark places and then drawing maps for the British. At the same time this provided him to obtain a British identification which he uses to his own benefit to prove his nationality. Although

he comes to hate all the national identities and refuses to be a part of one whenever he can, the Count gives an example of the futility of fixed, pre-shaped identities. This estrangement to oneself actually displays the fragile and prone to disintegration identity. He expresses this condition as;

By 1932, Bagnold was finished and Madox and the rest of us were everywhere. Looking for the lost army of Cambyses. Looking for Zerzura. 1932 and 1933 and 1934. Not seeing each other for months. Just the Bedouin and us, crisscrossing the Forty Days Road. There were rivers of desert tribes, the most beautiful humans I've met in my life. We were German, English, Hungarian, African - all of us insignificant to them. Gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation-states. Madox died because of nations. (Ondaatje, 2004: 147)

The desert itself was an unbreakable identity of nature and this made it unlimitedly beautiful, harsh and at the same time powerful and all the humans could do was to yield to this autonomous power held by nature. The nationality would be of no matter there as differences or superiorities would have no power or jurisdiction over the desert. It was the ultimate thing to yield to because in the event of a rebellion against it, the desert would simply swallow you, no matter what your identity was. As the Count was aware of this power, he respected the people who have adapted to the harsh conditions of the climate and the system of the nature. After all, he could have survived in the desert by accepting its first rule; that the human being had no power here no matter who he was.

Also the Count describes the people of the desert as the most beautiful people he has ever seen in his life. The reason is that the identity of the people has blended in with the spirit and power of the nature. The human being does not have to show his differences to survive, but on the contrary, all he needs to do is to become unanimous with the nature itself therefore he can learn the wisdom and the necessary things to survive successfully. If he does that, the nature would sure be generous enough to award them. In the Count's case, he sees the desert people are awarded with the beauty of the nature.

As the Count did not believe in national identities, and even comes to despise the pretentious European ones especially, while he was aiding the British in the first place for the sake of geography and explorations, later with his maps for the battles in the Northern African desserts, he would later guide the Germans into the desert in return for receiving Katherine's body from the cave where he left her. This provides the fact that spying or

working for any nationality is not a matter for the Count. The important thing is to save an important piece to his own identity.

During the time while he is in the dessert with a fellow pilot and some Bedouin to guide them, the thing that would change his whole life happens; Cliftons arrive at the desert camp and this is where the Count first meets Katherine. At first, out of respect to her elegant gestures, he tries to persuade Geoffrey to take Katherine back to at least Cairo as the harsh conditions of the desert is not a place for the women to adapt yet this act could also be interpreted as a precaution to secure his authority since her presence would suggest a foreign agent against his unity. Around the campfire, while amusing themselves, Katherine reads the story of Gyges of Lydia. Impressed by her reading, he falls for her and soon after they start their affair which will lead to the destruction of everything and everyone around them.

The affair that the Count and Katherine have compels them to secrecy and therefore creating a claustrophobic environment for both. Acting with the dizziness of passionate feelings, they consume the love they have in a short time and the claustrophobic atmosphere of their love begins to suffocate them. The lack of relationship with the outer world stricken their relationship to take a suffocating turn for both of them. The feeling of guilt also contributes to the reason why both agree to end the affair.

Even after ending their relationship, they understand that they cannot stay away from each other, and they unite again. They realize that both have become the necessary components that complete each other and the absence of the other would mean an essential part missing from their selves. When they start the relationship again, this time it is obvious that the relationship between them has become more passionate and the guilt has grown at the same amount. The passion, love and affection now have become the very autoimmune elements in their identities, which, if not controlled, would lead to their destruction. Actually, both are aware of the situation as can be seen from one of the Count's letters to Katherine;

'July 1936,

There are betrayals in war that are childlike compared with our human betrayals during peace. The new lover enters the habits of the other. Things are

smashed, revealed in new light. This is done with nervous or tender sentences, although the heart is an organ of fire.

A love story is not about those who lose their heart but about those who find that sullen inhabitant who, when it is stumbled upon, means the body can fool nothing – not the wisdom of sleep or the habit of social graces. It is a consuming of oneself and the past.' (Ondaatje, 2004: 104).

However, traditionally, their great love story ends up with a tragedy. When Geoffrey learns about the affair, he tricks them into an expedition in the desert with the intentions of a murder-suicide. Their affair has now turned against the as an autoimmune component would have done. In the crash, Geoffrey dies, the Count manages to save a lethally wounded Katherine. Without any vehicle, he carries her to the Cave of Swimmers, an ancient site that they had discovered together and the Count had to leave Katherine to go and look for help. The British garrison he encounters in the desert takes him for a spy and detain him. Much later when he is released, the Count settles with the Germans in exchange for help to get Katherine from the cave, providing the Germans with maps of the desert and at the same time acting as a foreign agent himself for the Allies. Yet ironically, after he takes Katherine's body from the cave, his plane is shot again by the Germans and the oil dripping on him causes him to catch fire and burn as he jumps from the falling plane.

The English patient in the Italian villa, tells his story – his autobiography- only under the influence of morphine as the medicine helps him forget about his physical pain and take a dive into his subconscious only to bring up the details of the story which mesmerizes his audience: Hana, Caravaggio and Kip.

When he completes his great love story, the Count completes his mission to remember and honor the memory of Katherine and accomplish his autobiography. This accomplishment also enables him to reach his self through and with the help of language. Though his story is a tragic one for him, as the autobiography helps build a sense of renewal, give a feeling of freshness through memory, the Count has actually relieved his conscious of adultery and ready to embrace his death.

## 5.2. Hana

A young, Canadian nurse who has volunteered to stay in a villa to take care of an almost burnt patient in his final days, Hana looks like the embodiment of a sacred and affectionate figure. Indeed, she is a young nurse who has witnessed so many miseries of the war at such a young age and as she grows older, scars of the war would remain in her soul just like the English patient and Caravaggio. At such a young age, because of witnessing such events, her soul had become as thick and old as the patient she is caring for. As such experiences would cause highs and lows in the personality, Hana was also suffering from such a condition;

She was twenty years old and mad and unconcerned with safety during this time, having no qualms about the dangers of the possibly mined library or the thunder that startled her in the night. She was restless after the cold months, when she had been limited to dark, protected spaces. She entered rooms that had been soiled by soldiers, rooms whose furniture had been burned within them. She cleared out leaves and shit and urine and charred tables. She was living like a vagrant, while elsewhere the English patient reposed in his bed like a king. (Ondaatje, 2004: 15)

The things that Hana has experienced, apparently caused her to be rather careless in places where she must pay the most attention. Acting like they had nothing to lose could only be seen in people who actually lost the dearest thing to them. It is obvious that Hana has also lost something dear to her life at such a young age and later experienced a whole terrible and bloody war. One could not expect her to forget about everything and go on with her life, just like her two companions in the villa, she is bound to carry the burden in her soul until she dies.

Upon receiving the news about her fiancée's death in the battle, Hana starts to believe that everyone around her is bound to die and that she is somehow cursed. Witnessing so many deaths at the military hospitals possibly contributed to this situation a lot, yet also left a great emptiness in her soul, leaving her more vulnerable and exposed when she receives the news about the death of her father also. After this incident, losing two important men of her life and witnessing the deaths of so many soldiers, she decides to take care of the neediest patient who happens to be the Count.

After feeling so secluded she decides to stay behind in the villa which is used as a military hospital for some time. This need to retreat causes speculations among people that 'she's got her own ghost, a burned patient. There is a face, but it is unrecognizable.'

(Ondaatje, 2004: 30). Hana chooses to replace the unrecognizable face with her father's, so she could forget the pain of not being with him when he died. In other words, she has done such a thing to collect the pieces of her identity. She chose the villa, an old military hospital, so that she could cure herself and her patient and strengthen their immune system to the outer effects, but still vulnerable against the problematic feelings and thoughts in their selves.

This seclusion in a villa actually provided for each of the residents of the villa to accomplish a feeling of security in their miniature worlds. If we are to look at identity in times of distress, we can assume that this retreat is the curing of the self. Under pressure and sadness, the self automatically alarms and warns the immune system that it needs a recovery period. Hana, who knew that the English patient would actually never be cured, in fact aims to make him feel more comfortable in his remaining days. Also this is an attempt to help him remember and collect the peaceful memories of his happy days. She is quite aware that she is actually trying in vain while waiting for her only patient to recover, but indeed she wishes to give him a peaceful ending.

The trauma she experienced has also driven her into a state of insecurity;

She never looked at herself in mirrors again. As the war got darker she received reports about how certain people she had known had died. She feared the day she would remove blood from a patient's face and discover her father or someone who had served her food across a counter on Danforth Avenue. She grew harsh with herself and the patients. Reason was the only thing that might save them, and there was no reason. The thermometer of blood moved up to the country. Where was and what was Toronto anymore in her mind? This was treacherous opera. People hardened against those around them- soldiers, doctors, nurses, civilians. (Ondaatje, 2004: 52)

Denying her own image is a sign of her not wanting to embrace herself and make herself whole again. The trauma she had undergone has been so shaking that she turns against herself and rejects the very thing that describes her; her face, her appearance. This is actually a sign of her immune system collapsing down and her doing nothing to secure herself. The possible ghosts of her past would come and remind her of the futility of her life and that she had such a curse of causing the death of the ones that are close to her. Even her eating habits had changed; from a curious and appetent girl to a woman 'who desired to swallow fast. She wanted nothing exotic, just bread, meat.' (Ondaatje, 2004: 53).

While the loss of appetite, the need for seclusion and denial of her image are one of the major signs of a malfunctioning immune system, we see the biggest autoimmune disorder when she has an abortion of her own choice. When Ondaatje describes her body as 'Her body had been in a war and, as in love, it had used every part of itself.' (Ondaatje, 2004: 86) he resembles Hana's body to a battle ground which has seen many deaths and embraced them and heavy with their weight. Such a weight is also a burden to her soul and all this is also functioning as autoimmune subjects against her soul.

After all these things she experiences, the death of her fiancée makes her feel as if his baby in her womb would not be of any consolation for her. Normally, one would think that the arrival of a baby would be a great support to her, yet she also rejects this baby and chooses to undergo an abortion. This deliberate act is actually giving up the hope to be a complete person again. Instead of a new life and silver linings, Hana chooses to stay in the miserable past with the decaying ghosts just as the patient she is left behind with.

Upon Caravaggio's asking about the baby, she replies 'I lost the baby. I mean, I had to lose it. The father was already dead. There was a war.' (Ondaatje, 2004: 87). Her first sentence again reflects a self denial as if losing the baby was not her own making but rather a natural process she had experienced. Only then she confesses that it was a deliberate act. She had given up her baby while she had the chance to keep it just because of the war and her unstable mind at that time.

In the first place, the existence of the baby was a source of hope for her and that she would talk to it from time to time. The baby had been another identity which would help her stand on her feet again, to hold from her hand again, practically being a mother to her. Yet after the death of father, as she had no one to raise the baby with and that it stopped talking to Hana, she decided to remove the baby from within and try to carry on her own. Moreover, every time a soldier died on her watch, she imagined the baby washing away along with the dead soldier. Soon, this guilt causes more trouble than ever and she would see her child protesting against her through a dying soldier; her own child calling her a 'bitch' because of terminating her pregnancy.

When she accepts that she was the one responsible for destroying a life inside her, this acceptance feels as though a slap on her face and after a long time, she opens her eyes to the world and sees the man she really wants to take care of; the English patient. The Count is perfect for her to care because he has no connection to her and even without a past, a memory and an identity- just a blank slate. This is a perfect opportunity for her to start a new life, leaving the sorrowful one behind and maybe look for unknown and mysterious memories.

As the news of her father's death came after she had the abortion, this was ultimate sadness that her soul could reach and she was affected by it more than the loss of the baby. After all, she had spent years with him and shared her love with him. Therefore, losing someone she knew was harder for her than losing a child whom she never met. As her father died in the battle by burning- after they were bombed and practically all the soldiers and he was burned to death, Hana chose to take care of the English patient, at the same time looking for an opportunity to reconnect with her father again. She always thinks to herself;

Did her father struggle into his death or die calm? Did he lie the way the English patient reposes grandly on his cot? Was he nursed by a stranger? A man not of your own blood can break upon your emotions more than someone of your own blood. (Ondaatje, 2004: 96)

As a result, she unifies her father's being with the English patient's and that is how she comes to take care of him on her own in the villa. Also she remembers how her father 'loved a city of his own invention, whose streets and walls and borders he and his friends had painted. He never truly stepped out of that world.' (Ondaatje, 2004: 97). This act was actually creating a microcosm, a safe place, of his own and Hana, as a child, witnesses this process and learns to boost her immune system by doing the same thing.

The place she chooses to remain with the English patient is a centuries-old Italian villa surrounded by gardens of plum trees and the season is a spring which is making a pass into summer; the perfect time and place for Hana to find herself again.

The arrival of Caravaggio and Kip the sapper actually is a kind of remedy for her. While she takes a journey into the English patient's past whenever he took morphine, she



shares memories of her childhood with her father with the help of a common friend, Caravaggio and she ventures on a new love affair with Kip. Cherishing her memories with her father helps her to see her father not as a ghost anymore but, on the contrary, as the man who would provide her with a feeling of security. What is more, her passionate love affair with Kip enables her to get over the loss of her fiancée and her baby. She does not have any excuse to see their faces in the dying soldiers, it is rather that her mind is now filled with a new feeling of triumph and passion. When she decorates their room or arranges for a picnic out in the field, she actually expresses her enthusiasm for a restoration of the self. That is why she is the happiest of all days when Kip takes her to see an old cathedral and swings her with the help of a simple seesaw system, making her go up as high as the ceiling and see the sculptures with a torch. Lighting such beautiful fescues is actually a kind of exploring her deeper parts of her identity and find beautiful things residing there, and that her immune system is still actually functioning.

What took her interest in Kip, the Sikh sapper, was that, like the English patient, he was also in denial of his own self when he came to Italy along with the British division of sappers. He was the only foreigner in the whole division with a wonderful intellect to diffuse complicated bombs. He had abandoned his homeland and his Indian nationalist family as he was also not interested in the stereotypical national identities. However, the de-anchored spirit in him also caused him not to stay in place for a long time and soon it was time to start a journey to elsewhere. After he was gone, the English patient had already revealed his story that led to his self destruction and that there was nothing more to reflect herself upon and at the same time nothing for the English patient to cling to. Towards the end of the summer, Hana yields to the Count's wish for an overdose of morphine in order to save him from his both physical and spiritual pain. Next, she leaves the villa once again in pursuit of a new place where she can strengthen her immunity against the ghosts of her past.

### 5.3. Caravaggio

The reader encounters David Caravaggio firstly in the Italian villa, when he decides to visit Hana and the mysterious English patient she is caring for. His arrival is a surprise for Hana who appears to know him before the war. It is later found out that Caravaggio is actually a family friend who has witnessed much of Hana's growth.

Originally a Canadian and a thief by profession, David Caravaggio was used by the British as a spy during the Second World War with the purpose of obtaining and leaking Axis powers' documents. Yet Caravaggio for sure had been an interesting character even before the war, while he was a thief in Canada. Ondaatje describes him as;

Caravaggio was constantly diverted by the human element in his burglaries. Breaking into a house during Christmas, he would become annoyed if he noticed the Advent calendar had not been opened up to the date to which it should have been. He often had conversations with the various pets left alone in the houses, rhetorically discussing meals with them, feeding them large helpings, and was often greeted by them with considerable pleasure if he returned to the scene of a crime. (Ondaatje, 2004: 221)

This fragment describes his interesting personality; he is a thief, yet a thief with a consciousness large enough to pity the animals in the houses he burgled. Also, getting furious with small details like a calendar not showing the supposed date shows how a delicate and sometimes obsessed nature he has. Normally, one could expect a thief to be far from elaborate when he is breaking into and stealing people's belongings and definitely show no mercy to the pet because of the risk of an alarming sound but he proves this stereotype quite wrong as seen from the fragment. In the days that he spent with Hana and the others in the Italian villa, he even befriends a dog and treats him as a pet; feeding it even in situations of a serious lack of food. The company of animals seems like a necessity and a relief for him when he confesses that he does not recall seeing a dog on the streets during the war and therefore very content to feed one in the villa. His squats down by the animal to watch him feed and this position actually expresses his pity and fondness for the animal. However, this feeling of pity, if we look at what happened to him later, could be seen as his autoimmune fragments in his identity. The identity he belongs to requires a certain amount of stern standing, while the reader does not encounter such things in him. On the contrary, as he puts it in the book from his mouth;

Thieves like us were used a great deal during this war. We were legitimized. We stole. Then some of us began to advise. We could read through the camouflage of deceit more naturally than official intelligence. We created double bluffs. Whole campaigns were being run by this mixture of crooks and intellectuals. (Ondaatje, 2004: 269)

As a thief, he had been stealing for a longer time than official spies were educated. That is why thieves like Caravaggio were more useful for the army and the intelligence as they were 'naturals'. He could observe and read the moods of people to calculate the exact time and spot to commit thievery so he used this ability in his 'official' job also. Just as he confesses, some members of this group even became more successful to gain a more important place in the relationships.

After he was caught by the Axis powers and interrogated by the Italians about the espionage he committed, he somehow becomes a different man. Before the interrogation, Caravaggio was already effected by the war condition around him as he had to be extremely careful while he was doing this job. Yet somehow he is caught and very ironically is interrogated by a Ranuccio Tommasoni. Here, if the historical references to both Caravaggio and Tommasoni are to be expressed; the relationship between the two and its projection in the book could be defined as ironic. The historical Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, a well-known 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian painter, caused the death of a Ranuccio Tommasoni with unknown and ambiguous motive. After the incident he flees from Rome to seek immunity with the Knights of Malta but never answers to justice for the crime he committed. And we find the ironic projection of this incident in the novel. As if the ghost of Tommasoni has returned to take revenge, the official with the same name tortures Caravaggio by having a woman cut off his thumbs.

A few hours later, when he was released from the interrogation room, Caravaggio is set free. When he wanders in the streets, he is sure that he is set off to be observed by Italians to lead them to his supervisor but actually, along with the Germans, the Italians are pulling off by blowing up and burning cities. Caravaggio himself witnesses and is subjected to such an action when he collapses near a bridge, only to be blown up by the Germans. The foulness of the situation, being blown up and ending up in the river and coming face to face with dismembered body parts shatter his soul, so to speak.

When Hana writes about this old friend in her journal, she depicts him as;

There is a man named Caravaggio, a friend of my father's. I have always loved him. He is older than I am, about forty-five, I think. He is in a time of darkness, has no confidence. For some reason I am cared for by this friend of my father. (Ondaatje, 2004: 65)

As Hana describes how dark Caravaggio has become since the days she knew him as a little girl, a complete transformation has replaced the elegant thief in him into a hollow and worthless ex-spy. Even this last profession of his, espionage, actually causes him to become estranged to himself and the others. After all, he was a Canadian spy who worked for the British and his irrelevant identity in the war caused him to be underestimated when his cover was revealed. Not being British was a mistake in his condition because a genuine British nationality would help him to be helped and cared for after the war, but now that he was not, his own supervisors had abandoned him. The army would not take him seriously as he was originally 'the other'. He did not belong to the British national identity and so he was practically 'collateral damage' if something happened to him. And also in the case of being a double agent, it would also be easier to get rid of as the authority would not harbor such autoimmune fragments in itself. So he tried finding some peace with an acquaintance in an Italian villa.

The horrific situations he witnessed during the war and the physical abuse he was subjected to have made him a morphine addict. Stealing the morphine capsules normally reserved for the English patient enabled him to sway away from the harsh reality and the memories actually show that he was in pursuit of being freed from the painful authority of the self. In his totally conscious hours, both the physical pain of his hands and the spiritual pain that is caused by the memories of war and his interrogation would generate great disturbance to him and therefore he preferred an alternate reality where this pain would be less. This time Ondaatje describes his situation as; 'War has unbalanced him and he can return to no other world as he is., wearing these false limbs that morphine promises. He is a man in middle age who has never become accustomed to families.'(Ondaatje, 2004: 123)

During the time he spends in the Italian villa with the others, it looks like the only times that are bearable for him are the times when he gets morphine and talks about his past. At some point he discovers that the mysterious allegedly English patient is not who he says he is, but one of the notorious spies of the war, like himself. His conversation

both with Hana and the English patient are a sort of relief to him because he finds a chance to accomplish his autobiography. The war, which is a phenomenon attempted by two 'sides', leaves little choice but to take a side and identify yourself with it. Yet the condition of spies like Caravaggio is always more troubling because he gets to observe practically both sides and eventually comes to sympathize with both. The situation is even worse with a character like Caravaggio with a high emotional level. Thus when the war ends, he loses many emotions, memories and concerns along with his thumbs.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

In the conclusion of this study we have observed that one of Derrida's latest concepts, autoimmunity could be applied to the discipline of literature. The term has been linked to the concept of 'identity' and by doing so, the fragmentary structure of identity has been shown.

After the introduction, in the following chapter '*Alors, qui êtes-vous?*' initiating from a simple question that Derrida asked one of his students, the identity has been discussed. The question, at first, looks like asking only the name of the recipient but in fact could also be asking for the characteristics of the person. *Characteristic* may not even be replaced for *identity* as the latter expresses a much more broader term. The fragmentary structure of the identity provides this question a very long answer as the recipient may also answer by discussing what kind of a person he is. So, the issue with this question is the amount of narration the answer will be covering. As the response will either be spoken or written, the recipient of the question will have to use language to express himself. Here, language is the crucial element to construct a discourse about one's identity. Because words have secondary meanings, language tends to be multitudinous, in other words, a word could cover a vast number of referents, therefore making the language capable of generating various discourses.

As for the issue of identity construction, this process is unending since people need to interact with one another. This exposition to the outer world is not only limited with the *other*, but identity is also exposed to the impact of time, language and space. Space and time are the chronotope that an identity establishes itself on and they may as well refer to the physical world and its exposure on the identity causes a formation or an evolution. The self may be influenced by the national identity around it as we can see from the case of Mandras. He is a fisher boy from a small village who is stuck in the Greek male identity. In order to accomplish it, he even wishes for a state of war, thinking that fighting a battle will complete his manliness and he will get what he deserves as his right. Of course, this national identity and its referents do not always apply for all individuals of a nation. For instance, Count Almásy, or mostly known as the English patient, completely rejects his Hungarian identity and only picks up one whenever he needs. He is the perfect example of 'the individual's relationship to nation and identity within newly emergent

visions of community.’ as Aparna Halpé expresses (2010: 120). An act of disintegration in the nation and national identities had already begun before the war, and this process is now even faster now than it was after the war. Furthermore, as Mandras commits suicide upon realizing that the very identity he carried is the destruction of him, the same situation can be observed in the case of the English patient. The deaths of these two characters provide a symbolic death for national identities. Already emptied and destroyed because of the war, nationalism comes to an end in the bodies of these two characters. Once functioning as a unifying agent, after the war, nationalism becomes an anti-agent for individuals. We can see this situation also in the other characters such as Hana, Kip and Caravaggio. All have somehow denied their restrictive national identities and all in the limbo of a combination of cosmopolitanism and the feeling of a void in them.

In the next chapter ‘Je suis en guerre contre moi-meme.’ The relationship of the self with other components within is discussed. As the title suggests, the self is at war with itself, which suggests that the threat is coming from the inside. In the case of war, the threat is expected to come from the outside as we tend to think that the self acts like a complete sovereign and therefore secure in itself. Yet in some cases like autoimmunity, there are some fragments in the organism that may mistake its own body for the enemy and start a war against its own self. Having borrowed this concept from biology, Derrida firstly applied it in politics. However, the same situation could as well be relevant in the structure of identity. Also, in the same chapter, as both novels choose the Second World War as their chronotope, the impact of war can be seen both nation-wise and also its projections on individuals. War is an extraterrestrial agent that threatens the harmony of the nations first, and through them, it casts its peril on the individual, causing them to witness the chaotic nature of war. What is more, under such circumstances, a bigger harm comes if some bodies within the state start to turn against the sovereign such as in the case of ELAS which pushed Greece, along with other Communist organizations, into a state of totalitarian regime. The ones to suffer were, after all, the innocent individuals that were the victims of a devouring cruelty.

In the following two chapters, five characters in total and an organization are given as examples of victims who faced the destructive impact of war. The organization ELAS, at first, started its role as a group ridden by patriots from common individuals, later to turn

into a revolution that devours its own children. One of the most striking examples is Mandras; the boy from Cephallonia who turned himself to a mighty God when he took part in executions. The striking metamorphosis eventually caused Mandras to lose his inner war to himself and commit suicide.

The condition of Carlo, the homosexual Italian soldier, different from Mandras, yet as effective as his. Carlo rebelled against the national identity which imposed on him a role of a masculine male character. In an attempt to escape this situation, he joins the army but as he gradually understands that affection and love were the two things he would never find. His own autoimmune act was, in order to save his captain Antonio, shielding his huge body against him and save him from the German massacre.

Lastly, the three characters that reside the Italian villa San Girolamo, the Count, Hana and Caravaggio, all of whom try to live with their ghosts from their pasts. The villa serves as a shelter yet, as their losses are too great, they have to live in a 'decultured, deracinated postwar limbo.' (Halpe, 2010: 146). Even though they are relieved from the burden of their national identities, the ambiguity of the situation, the static environment gives them a state of stability that they cannot break and 'within the villa, they inhabit a space in which the nation is dismantled in place of a post-national Utopian community' (Halpe, 2010:146). The illusion of this utopia is to break as soon as the war is over and each one of them is compelled to pursue their own ambiguous futures.



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