The Miseducation of the Missionary Narrative

An Investigation of Discursive Ideology in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

U S

University
of Stavanger

Faculty of Arts and Education

MASTERS THESIS

Study programme: M-LEKTOR – Advanced teacher education for levels 8-13, specialising in English and the humanities	Spring semester, 2018 Open
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Title of thesis: The Miseducation of the Missionary Narrative: An Investigation of Discursive Ideology in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*	
Keywords: Narratives, Postcolonialism, Binarism, Imperialism	No. of pages: 66 + appendices/other: 10 Stavanger, May 9th /2018

Abstract

In a post-colonial world, the focus on colonial issues might seem like kicking in open doors; however, on an ideological level, narratives from the imperial era still lives on. Thus, this thesis focuses on an ideological narrative rooted in imperialism. Ideological narratives are frameworks that work to structure reality to make it more comprehensible and available to us. However, the problem arises when these narratives provide a false perception of the world. Addressing these narratives is important to disclose inherit prejudice and misconceptions. Consequently, this thesis uses the term "miseducation" in its title. The term points to, quite aptly, the possible pitfall of narratives. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the so-called "missionary narrative" and its ramifications. The missionary narrative puts forth the idea that the coloniser is superior to the colonised and, subsequently, that the colonisers have the right and duty to spread culture and religion. Derived from this narrative, is a perceived binary opposition between the colonisers and the colonised. In this thesis, this false binary is referred to as the Metropolis/Other binary. To reveal the effect of the missionary narrative and the Metropolis/Other binary, this thesis conducts close reading of three novels.

The novels in question are *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. These novels provide different perspectives and focuses regarding the missionary narrative. In my analysis, I focus on the way the novels both resist and are trapped by the narrative. Additionally, I investigate different concepts related to the missionary narrative. Through discourse analysis, these concepts reveal how the discourse around the missionary narrative has evolved over time. Namely, these concepts are the "Creole", "mestizaje", "Englishness", "multiculturalism", "Westernism", "traditionalism", and "hybridity". By looking at these novels, I wish to further the understanding of literature's role in the face of ideological narratives. Can literature serve as counternarratives against monolithic ideological narratives? If so, how does literature resist ideological structures?

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my wonderful supervisor, Janne Stigen Drangsholt. Thank you for your helpfulness, patience, and words of encouragement. You are the best supervisor anybody could ask for.

Secondly, I would like to thank my partner and best friend, Øyvind Wik Skadberg. You have been a great emotional support during the whole process and I am forever grateful. You are truly a wonderful person.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all my fellow students at UiS. After countless hours at the library, your camaraderie is what I would like to remember. Our five years of studying together nears an end, but our friendship is never-ending.

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1. Introduction

Take up the White Man's burden –

Send forth the best ye breed –

Go bind your sons to exile

To serve your captives' need;

To wait in heavy harness

On fluttered folk and wild –

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,

Half devil and half child.

("The White Man's Burden" Rudyard Kipling)

As Rudyard Kipling so arrogantly portrays, the Victorian society believed in the "white man's burden", i.e. the responsibility to spread their civilisation to those deemed less civilised. Kipling advocates a quest to fulfil this duty, which his contemporary, King Leopold II, coined "the civilizing mission" (King Leopold 124). Borrowed from King Leopold II, "missionary narrative" names the narrative this thesis discusses. This thesis will look at the implications of the missionary narrative in three different novels, namely *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad (1899), *Wides Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys (1966), and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith (2000). The missionary narrative is an ideological structure which tries to explain and justify the imperial venture. Specifically, the narrative puts forth the idea that the colonising party is superior to those colonised. Thus, as Kipling encourages, the "white man" should promote his culture to the rest of the world. This idea governed the imperial enterprise and gave it both justification and moral high ground. As the explorer and colonial administrator Frederick Lugard states, Britain's rule in the colonies was both based on development of material resources and "for the advancement of subject races" (35). However, the point of this thesis is not only to look at the missionary narrative during the period of colonisation, but also to expose the impact of the narrative after the fact. The first aim is to reveal how the narrative is either reproduced or resisted in the mentioned novels, in order to investigate whether and how literature can affect our perception of ideological structures. The second aim is to examine the evolution of the missionary narrative. Through discourse analysis, I will explore how the narrative has been

handled in a historical perspective. To reach these aims, I will conduct close readings of the novels and analyse concepts related to the missionary narrative. The novels could either be enforcers of the narrative or function as "counternarratives", i.e. literary narratives that oppose ideological narratives. Furthermore, the purpose is to reveal how the missionary narrative has been used to "miseducate", i.e. how it creates frameworks to explain the world which are false and counterproductive.

One of the main frameworks that will be examined is the division between the colonisers and the colonised, which I will refer to as the "Metropolis/Other binary". This binary presents the basic structure of the missionary narrative, which is the constructed difference between the coloniser and the colonised. It is specifically in this binary that the impact of the missionary narrative becomes apparent. Thus, this thesis will analyse all three novel's relations to the division. In order to unpack the various components of the missionary narrative, it is also necessary to consider some other concepts that show how the discourse around the missionary narrative has evolved with time. With *Heart of Darkness*, the focus is on Conrad's reception and audience. With *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the concepts discussed are "Creole" and "mestizaje". In the analysis of *White Teeth*, the highlighted terms are "Englishness", "multiculturalism", "hybridity", "traditionalism" and "Westernism". Used in a discursive analysis, these concepts show how the discourse has changed over time.

Similarly, the primary literature chosen for this thesis shows the historical evolution of the missionary narrative. Taken from different periods, *Heart of Darkness*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *White Teeth* provide the thesis with different perspectives on the narrative. What they have in common, however, is a critical eye towards the ideological structures of their own societies. *Heart of Darkness* was written by Joseph Conrad and first published in the late 19th century. The novel was published as a three-part series in Blackwood's Magazine and later as a novel. The story of *Heart of Darkness* is told through two layers of narration. The first layer is by an unknown character. He is on board a ship and tells the story about a man who tells a story. The man who tells the original story is Marlow, the second layer of narration. Marlow takes the reader away from the frame story taking place on the Thames in London, to the middle of the jungle in Congo. In Congo, Marlow learns about a peculiar character named Kurtz. In a quest to save Kurtz, Marlow sails up the Congo river and, subsequently, observes the imperial enterprise up close. *Heart of Darkness* is an example of the early critique of the missionary narrative. Thus, the novel provides the thesis with a good starting point. Since the novel is such an early commentary, it is also a good depiction of the missionary narrative's initial purpose, i.e. the imperial venture. Moreover, the novel illustrates how even the commentary on the

missionary narrative is restricted by the narrative. Therefore, *Heart of Darkness* adds a unique perspective to the thesis.

The unique perspective of *Wide Sargasso Sea* lies in the novel's illustration of the restrictions imposed by the missionary narrative on the individual. The novel was written by Jean Rhys and first published in 1966. *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes the reader back to the nineteenth century and is set partly in Jamaica and partly in England. Centred around Bertha from *Jane Eyre*, re-named Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the novel portrays life in the West Indies from the former settler generation. Slavery has been abolished and the white population is experiencing a social decline. The narration switches between Antoinette and her nameless husband, hereafter referred to as Mr Rochester. The first part is narrated by Antoinette as a child. In the second part the narration switches to her husband as he tells about the events leading up to and concerning his marriage to Antoinette. In the third part, the narration switches back to Antoinette and she is now the woman in the attic from *Jane Eyre*. Written as a counternarrative to *Jane Eyr*e, the novel contrasts a canonical work with a different perspective. In this manner, Rhys manages to expose the embeddedness of the missionary narrative in society. Compared to *Heart of Darkness*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* offers the thesis a more individual approach to the narrative. Rhys shows how the individual continues to be restricted by an ideology that is supposed to have receded with the advance of decolonisation.

Likewise, Zadie Smith focuses on the missionary narrative's continued effect in the 21st century. Her novel, *White Teeth,* was published in 2000. The plot of the novel focuses on several characters living in London. Starting with a pair of friends, namely Archie and Samad, the novel tells the story of them and their families. Throughout the novel, several smaller plots are followed, which in the end all cumulate to a single altercation. The story is told by a third person narrator and the spotlight switches from character to character. *White Teeth* adds a more contemporary view on the missionary narrative. Smith comments on how the narrative still affects the individual. Working with an omniscient narrator, the novel provides a different approach than the previous novels. The narrator is somewhat transcendent of the narrative, and, therefore, the novel does not only provide a picture of the ramifications, but also comments specifically on the ideological interpellation of the individual that the missionary narrative has generated. Thus, *White Teeth* offers the thesis a detachment that the other novels do not possess. However, all three novels are valuable in that they disclose aspects of the frameworks affecting our worldview and exemplify the missionary narrative's ideological hold.

The motivation behind this thesis is to show the continued presence of ideological frameworks that originates from the imperial period. Throughout history, colonisation has

altered the structure of the world; however, the ideological structures are not as easily detected as the physical. The investigation of this thesis will disclose some of the ideological ramifications of the imperial venture. The period after decolonisation has been named "post-colonial". However, as this thesis will suggest, decolonisation did not stop the continuance of the ideology behind imperialism. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse these ideologies or narratives and reveal how they affect the world. Working in two-fold, ideological narratives try to explain the world by providing a format to coordinate the world. Arguably, theses formats are necessary for the human brain to comprehend a complex reality; however, the problem arises when the formats do not function properly or are left unquestioned. With the narratives' performative function, they not only structure the world, but alter it as well. Therefore, it is important to continually assess the narratives in play and constantly evolve them so that they do not supply a false perception of reality. Thus, the narratives of literature come into play. The literary narratives have the same performative function as ideological narratives. Therefore, literature is useful, or perhaps crucial, when dealing with ideological structures.

Structurally, this thesis will progress from the abstract to the specific. Roughly, one can divide the thesis into three parts, i.e. a theoretical part, an analysis of the novels, and a conclusion. In the theoretical part, I provide the theoretical structure around the thesis. Specifically, I will discuss narrative theory to explain how narratives work to structure the way one views the world. In addition, to provide a discursive analysis, I also discuss concepts such as ideology, discourse, binarism, and imperialism. Following, the imperial aspect of the thesis will be explained in order to describe the discourse surrounding the missionary narrative. In the analysis, I will discuss and interpret the three novels in chronological order, based on publication, to best display the changes towards the missionary narrative. Within the chapters, the focus will be on the novel's relation to concepts within the discourse. Then, the focus will be specifically on the missionary narrative and its representation as a subtext in the novels. The thesis ends with the conclusion where I summarise my results.

2. Literary Review

In order to understand the missionary narrative's ideological hold, one must first understand the theory around narratives. To explain narratives and the way they operate, one also needs to be familiar with concepts like "ideology" and "discourse". Both ideologies and discourses are parts of the way the framework around narratives functions. Placed in the framework of imperialism, the missionary narrative is part of the colonial discourse. Thus, this chapter also elaborates on the concept of imperialism and concepts associated with imperialism. Moreover, the binary produced by the narrative will also be discussed, i.e. the Metropolis/Other binary. Understanding the binary is important to reveal the binary tendencies still existing today. In essence, this chapter wishes to explain the missionary narrative as an ideological structure that seeps into the novels. The suspicion is that the novels all function to challenge and/or affirm the narrative. Literature can either disrupt the monolithic narratives produced by imperialism or reproduce them. Therefore, this chapter will also discuss literature's role within narrative theory. *Heart of Darkness*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *White Teeth* all have a role to play in terms of imperial narratives.

2.1 Narrative

In "Narrative", literary critic J. Hillis Miller deliberates on the nature of narratives. The main question, he claims, is whether stories reveal or create reality? Miller states that the answer to such a question drastically affects one's view of the world. If one argues that stories reveal the world, that would entail that the world adheres to an underlying order and that narratives reveal that order. The work of fiction, then, is to imitate reality and show hidden truths about the world. If one argues that stories create reality, however, one is essentially arguing that there is no underlying order to the world. Instead, fiction creates an order to reality and, essentially, creates reality. Miller in this context refers to stories being "performative" in the sense that they "perform" actions and construct the real world (69). The current thesis will work on the basis of this second argument, i.e. that narratives can order and perform reality. Specifically, this thesis will focus on the idea of narrative as the way in which humankind mediate their knowledge of the world, which in turn can change humankind's perception of that world. The thesis focuses on the performative function to reveal the importance of literature in the greater context, i.e. how literary narratives can use their performativity to deflate the performativity of ideological narratives.

The theorist duo Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle agree with Miller in their book *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, that stories are not only representations of reality, but also shape that reality (54). Moreover, Bennett and Royle explain that performativity on utterance level is "a statement that not only describes an action but actually performs that action" (308). Bennett and Royle argue that the idea of the performative reveals the inaccuracy of the text and the world dichotomy. "The text and the world dichotomy" refers to the perceived difference between a narrative and the world, that is, the false opposition between texts and reality (28-29). Through performative functions, texts become a part of the world rather than mere representations. This entails that novels can affect the world around them. However, the performative function of e.g. texts does not exclude the fact that they are also affected by ideological narratives. Literature has a dual relationship with ideological narratives. Literature can, through performativity, disrupt these narratives, or reproduce them.

In the study *Narrative,* Paul Cobley explains that ideological narratives are not only connected to identity on an individual basis, but also on a larger basis such as the identity of nations. Narratives have a mnemonic function, i.e. they create a structure of different ideas and associations that helps one remember a concept (36). Cobley argues that these ideas and associations on a larger level also function to establish a framework for the nation's identity. The nation's narrative affects the way in which the individual regards herself/himself as part of a greater entity. As a consequence, the individual must either implement the nation's narrative in their own identity construction, or feel displaced in their own culture. Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha also addresses narration's large-scale identity construction in the first chapter of *Nation and Narration*. As I see it, Bhabha concurs with Cobley, and explains a nation's narrative as "an idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force" (1). Hence, he suggests that the narrative constituting the culture and myth of origin of a nation, is comprised of sets of stories that are not always compatible or logical. Therefore, these myths restrain the individual and are actually counterintuitive to for the nation's sense of community. Furthermore, these narratives create a false opposition between nations.

Cobley also points to narratives in regards to nations and explains how they can create false oppositions between countries or cultures. He points out that narratives can promote and create cultural difference (37). In their quest to synthesise a culture, national narratives use opposition as a formative power, i.e. they use opposition to other narratives as a foundation. Thus, cultural difference is created. More specifically, the cultural difference is created when narratives fail to incorporate the notion of "hybridity", i.e. the "unavoidable mingling of

cultures which are assumed to be separate" (38). With opposition as a foundation, the narratives are too inflexible to explain the way that cultures interact and are affected by each other. Resultatively, the failure to incorporate the unavoidable presence of pluralism means that the narratives behind nations present cultures as "monolithic and autonomous", thereby creating difference and opposition where there is none (37). In this thesis, the focus is on a monolitjhic narrative that helped form several nations' sense of self. Specifically, I look at what a monolithic structure which I have chosen to refer to as "the missionary narrative".

The missionary narrative rests on the idea of Europe as the saviour of their colonies. It is an ideological structure that is presented as a narrative. The term "missionary" is taken from a letter that King Leopold II of Belgium wrote named "The Civilizing Mission". In the letter, he writes about the moral duty of his countrymen to spread the civilisation of Europe to the rest of the world. Moreover, he described the mission as such: "The mission which the agents of the State have to accomplish on the Congo is a noble one. They have to continue the development of civilisation in the centre of Equatorial Africa" (124). Additionally, King Leopold II argued that the civilisation created by Europe would be a blessing to the native population which inhabited what he called "barbarous communities" (124). In essence, this narrative portrays the colonising party as the bringer of a heightened lifeform and colonies' salvation, signalling a close affinity with Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden". It comprises the kind of perspective which also underpins "The Value of British Rule in the Tropics to British Democracy and the Native Races", where Frederick Lugard tries to justify British rule in Africa by referring to the "imperial responsibilities":

> As Roman imperialism laid the foundations of modern civilisation, and led the wild barbarians of these islands along the path of progress, so in Africa to-day we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilisation. (43-44)

As Lugard postulates, the exploitation of resources was only a secondary interest. Along the same line, the exploitation of people was completely overlooked or viewed in an entirely positive light. In the words of Lugard, the colonisers were "profoundly convinced that there can be no question but that British rule has promoted the happiness and welfare of the primitive races" (44).

The thesis focuses on this particular narrative because of its wide implications. Not only does the narrative delineate the literal reference to the way in which the colonisers wanted to "civilise" the colonised, but it also springs out of a sincere belief that the colonisers were better than the colonised. As a historical phenomenon, the missionary narrative is well-known. However, in this thesis, I will show how the narrative has repercussions from the imperial era to the present day. Both on national and individual level, the narrative wields power over the way one views the world. Specifically, this thesis will look how the missionary narrative expresses itself in the chosen novels, both how the novels resist and reinforce the narrative. In order to reveal these expressions, one needs to explain narratives' in relation to the concepts "ideology" and "discourse".

2.2 Ideology and Discourse

To see how narratives surrounding the imperial discourse affect society and the individual, one needs to look at the mechanism working to implement and sustain the power structure. This subchapter will explain how the authority imbalance interferes with the lives of individuals, and, furthermore, how narratives work both to reproduce and destabilise the power relationship. To grasp the nature of this relationship, one needs to understand the concepts "ideology" and "discourse".

In his book *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire presents the equation "colonisation = 'thingification'" (42). By this simple mathematical calculation, Césaire tries to explain how colonialism, in addition to the material exploitation, dehumanises and objectifies the colonised (Loomba 41). This process can be deemed as a result of internalised ideologies. Ideology can be understood from a contemporary Marxist perspective, as designating: "a rich 'system of representations,' worked up in specific material practices, which helps form individuals into social subjects who 'freely' internalize an appropriate 'picture' of their social world and their place in it" (Kavanagh 310). In other words, ideology provides a framework from which individuals view the world. These frameworks are narratives of how reality is structured, which is taught from the moment one is born. Additionally, these narratives can also embrace others, such as colonised subjects. If one relates this to imperialism, ideologies were provided by the colonisers aiming to make the subject lose its identity. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", the colonised subject internalises the colonisers' ideology of domination and subsequently sees her/his reality through that ideology (68-69). Consequently, the colonised subject is not only colonised in material terms, but also in

ideological terms. In other words, the displaced subject buys into or subscribes to the ideology of the imperial power, and thus follows the narratives of that power. Additionally, the mechanisms behind ideologies reveal the interconnectedness of ideologies in society.

The French theorist Louis Althusser offered a way to explain the mechanism behind ideologies, i.e. how ideologies are internalised and lead to the participation in the main narrative. In his work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", Althusser describes the process by which ideology embodies major social and political institutions and elaborates on a Marxist theory of state apparatuses. He explains how previous thinkers within Marxist theory have concentrated on the State apparatuses, which consist of the government, the army, the courts, the police, and similar institutions. He calls these State Apparatuses *Repressive State Apparatuses* (RSAs). Althusser defines RSAs as unified apparatuses which belong to the public domain, and, most importantly, function by violence. Contrastively, Althusser points to state apparatuses that exist in plurality, which are mainly in the private domain and function by ideology, namely *Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISAs). The main difference between RSAs and ISAs is the mode in which they operate, i.e. either by violence or ideology. Althusser adds, however, that an RSA never functions by violence alone, there are always secondary ideological functions. Likewise, ISAs have secondary repressive functions (Althusser 1341-1343). The reason behind the distinction between RSAs and ISAs is to establish how ideology helps to reproduce the existing social relations, and thereby, create stability to the particular social regime. Through the ISAs, ideology converts individuals into subjects. Althusser calls the subject-making process "interpellation" (1356). The process of interpellation helps ideology create an "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1350). Put differently, Althusser's theory explains how ideology, through apparatuses such as religion, education, and culture, creates the individual and the reality surrounding that individual. Furthermore, this entails that these constructions also promote the dominant narrative and encourage/force the participation with that particular narrative. One of the ways this promotion occurs is through language, which is an essential part of many theories on ideology.

In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba ties together the work of several ideology theorists, such as Althusser, Foucault, Saussure and Derrida. She explains that while there are differences between the theories about ideology, there also are similarities. She presents these common traits in two parts. Firstly, the theorists all stress the importance of language. Language is no longer viewed as solely produced by the individual; the individual is also being produced by language. Language takes part in constructing the subject and the

subject's surroundings. The importance of language ties together ideology with narrative. As mentioned above, humankind mediate their knowledge of the world by language, in the form of narratives. Thus, narratives help create ideologies. Secondly, theories on ideology show the interconnectedness of ideological and social practices. In other words, theorists on ideology emphasise that economic and political processes do not occur in isolation from language, culture, or the individual (Loomba 54-55). With regards to narratives, this entails that also economic and social practices are influenced by narratives, in addition to the individual.

Althusser's student, Michel Foucault, continued Althusser's work, while also creating a break from the idea of ideologies. Loomba explains that Foucault shifted the view from ideologies to a "material medium". This material medium represents the ordering of ideas into "discourses" (Loomba 55). Foucault, then, makes the move from the idea of ideology to the idea of discourse. Loomba explains discourse as "a whole field or domain within which language is used in particular ways" (Loomba 56). Explained further, discourse is broadly used to "describe any organised body or corpus of statements and utterances governed by rules and conventions of which the user is largely unconscious" ("Discourse"). Discourse is then, put simply, the way one talks about a subject. It is the language that one uses to create an ideological narrative. In his essay "Discourse", Paul A. Bové argues that discourse is a powerful way in which humans are "subjugated" (58), i.e. turned into subjects. Furthermore, Bové argues that there is a common concern to reveal how "material discursive realities" influence individuals' actions (59). Discourse is used to create an ideological narrative, which in turn influences individuals. In order to understand the mechanism of discourse, Loomba states that one needs to perform a "discourse analysis":

Discourse analysis […] makes it possible to trace connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalised, ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and the institutions which regulate our daily lives. (63)

Through a discourse analysis one is able to reveal the ideological structure behind a narrative. In this thesis, I will analyse how the discourse around the missionary narrative has changed in relation to the primary literature. To do so, I will unpack terms that are related to the narrative. With the use of discourse analysis, the connection between language and ideology is revealed. Furthermore, discourse analysis helps one understand how discourses such as colonialism and

postcolonialism produce narratives as well as being narratives in themselves. The focus on discourse frees the discussion from not only the effect of ideologies but also their production. Foucault started a movement that steered away from the narrow view on ideologies and shifted the focus to how ideologies are organised through discourse. From a narrative point of view, Foucault shifted the focus from the main narrative to the way in which narratives are produced, and in turn affect reality.

Focusing on the way narratives are produced and maintained, Terry Eagleton addresses the role of literature in *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. His theory provides a historical analysis of literary theory. Specifically, Eagleton argues that literature is interconnected with the production of ideology and, additionally, the reproduction of repressive social orders. He points to the making of the subject "literature" as a romantic construction from the 19th century. The construction was, at least according to Eagleton, a substitute for religion. Inherited in the subject was the ideological force once belonging to religion. Previously, religion had an affective and pacifying force. However, at least in the opinion of Eagleton, religion had failed and, in turn, literature stepped up and took its place. Essentially, Eagleton punctures the imagined difference between ideology and literature. He argues that literature is an ideology. ("Literary Theory"17-23). Eagleton is key in the sense that he illuminates the power of literature; however, this thesis will not have this one-sided focus. While Eagleton focuses solely on the interpellant force of literature, this thesis will also focus how the novels resist ideologies and narratives. In her work *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson points to the way that fantasy literature has a subversive force that resists ideology. She argues that fantasy does not create a new, alternate world, but is a reproduction of the world. Therefore, it has a subversive function that resists the structures of ideological narratives. Even though Jackson speaks specifically about fantasy literature, I argue that all of literature has this power.

2.3 Orientalism

Drawing on the work of Foucault, Edward Said focused on the ideological aspect of literature and culture. He is often viewed as the founder of postcolonial studies (Leitch et.al. 1861). In his book *Orientalism*, he debates the place of "the Orient" in Western discourse. Said argues that the idea of the Orient is a Western invention. By invention, he alludes to the fact that the Orient is not a reality but a created illusion ("Orientalism" 1-2). As mentioned in chapter 2.1, narratives can create large-scale identity structures. Said points to this effect when talking about the Orient and Europe. Specifically, he argues that Europe's ideas about the Orient created a

discourse which affected the large-scale identity in these areas. However, he argues that the discourse not only affected the Orient itself, but also affected the identity of Europe. Europe used the discourse to define itself by establishing a contrast to the Orient. Said names this discourse about the Orient "Orientalism" ("Orientalism" 1-7).

Orientalism refers to the view of the Orient created by the West. Said defines Orientalism as a "collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans" ("Orientalism" 7). In other words, Orientalism is a perceived dichotomy between the Metropolis and the Other (which will be discussed in chapter 2.4.1) and the narratives connected to that dichotomy. Orientalism produces narratives which affect both parts in the imperial relationship. Moreover, Orientalism is, especially in Said's opinion, a false narrative. However, as Loomba states, Said points out that it was not that "Europeans were 'telling lies', or that they individually disliked non-Western peoples or cultures" (Loomba 61). Nevertheless, Said stresses that the knowledge produced by Europeans about the East, would always be tainted by the fact that the author/authors were part of Western civilization. As he puts it himself, "for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of *his* actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second" ("Orientalism" 11). Put differently, Said claims that the people of the West could not produce anything different than the discourse of Orientalism, because they were too tainted by the imperial narratives. As a result, knowledge about the Orient became tainted and gave room for several, often conflicting, narratives. One of those narratives can be called the idea of the colonies as an unspoiled garden of Eden.

Postcolonial theorist Jed Esty refers to a central conflict within modernist literature regarding the dissatisfaction with the modern society and the yearning for imagined, traditional communities. Esty refers to this retreat from the modernist progression as "pastoral nostalgia" (Esty 24-26). In connection to Said, Esty's remarks fit perfectly. One narrative derived from Said's concept of Orientalism can be viewed as the expression of the modernists' yearning for an unmodern society. As Loomba states, colonies were often confined to a discourse of primitivism (116). Colonies were presented as a promised land without the continuous forward progression of the West. Such a narrative affected the way in which the colonisers viewed the colonised, and, in turn, how the colonised viewed themselves. As an example, the narrative of primitiveness accentuates the way in which the West created the Orient, by contrasting its own attributes.

Essentially, Said named the tendency of the West "othering" the Other. The process of othering will be further discussed in subchapter 2.4.1. It should be noted that othering and

Orientalism are not interchangeable terms. "Orientalism" refers to the discourse produced by the Metropolis and Other binary, while othering refers to the process formed by this discourse. As a theory, Orientalism has been critiqued for focusing solely on the "othering" performed by the West, and, thereby, ignoring or deprioritising how the narratives produced affect the colonised. However, as put by Loomba, Orientalism's focus on the process does not entail that it is without consequences:

It is true that *Orientalism* is primarily concerned with how the Orient 'constructed' by Western literature, travel writing and systems of studying the East, and not with how such a construction was received or dismantled by colonial subjects. However, it would be unfair to conclude that just because Said does not venture into the latter territory necessarily suggest that the colonialist's discourse is all pervasive. (Loomba 66-67)

Deduced, Loomba argues that Said cannot be said to argue against an effect solely because he has his focus elsewhere.

Said's concept of Orientalism is an influential component of this thesis. Orientalism represents a way of thinking that is highly related to the missionary narrative. The missionary narrative labels the idea that the colonisers regarded themselves as superiors who should spread their culture. Orientalism, then, labels how this way of thinking affects the individuals involved. Likewise, Orientalism explains the force of the missionary narrative. The narrative creates a binary between the coloniser and the colonised, which in turn creates an othering process. The concept of Orientalism is also tied in with the colonial discourse. More specifically, Orientalism explains how concepts such as imperialism and postcolonialism affect both sides of the imperial enterprise.

2.4 The Metropolis/Other binary

This subchapter will address the imagined binary that the missionary narrative creates. In this thesis, this ideological dualism will be classified as "the Metropolis/Other binary". The binary is a false division, however, with vast ramifications. In order to uncover these ramifications, one needs to decide which terminology to use to delineate the two parts in the binary. In this subchapter, the terms "the Metropolis" and "the Other" will be discussed. Moreover, to properly understand the production of this binary, one needs to understand the concepts "colonisation"

and "imperialism". The missionary narrative has a dual relationship with imperialism. On the hand, the narrative helps set imperialism in motion. On the other hand, it was also a product of imperialism. Either way, it is important to understand the concept of imperialism, and thereafter postcolonialism, to fully understand the narrative and its binary.

2.4.1 The Metropolis and the Other

Through his work within deconstruction, Jacques Derrida claims that binary oppositions have been a prevailing tendency of Western thought (Leitch et.al. 2351). These binary oppositions are remnants of the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. As John Carlos Row discusses in his essay "Structure", Saussure set in motion the movement of structuralism, through his work within linguistics. Specifically, Saussure's main theory divides language into "signifiers" and the "signified". He argued the arbitrariness between a word (the signifier) and the concept the word delineates (the signified). Even though Saussure did not claim a new movement, his work inspired other theorists. The structuralists worked from Saussure's fundamental division, i.e. between similarity and difference. With similarity and difference as the basic structure for relations, structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss turned the focus from difference to binarism. As an example, he explained the relationship between culture and nature as a binary opposition with nature as culture's "other". Furthermore, Claude Lévi-Strauss' theory was applied to the civilised/savage binary which was used to justify colonisation (Row 26-36). Criticising the binary thinking of structuralism, deconstructionist theorists such as Derrida pointed to the way in which these binaries functioned as a "totalizing explanatory system" (Row 36). The focus on binaries is still present in the many narratives governing the perspective of the world. The missionary narrative, in particular, rests on the civilised/savage binary. I have renamed the binary in order to more accurately express that the binary is still present today. The terms "civilised" and "savage" have clear historical connotations, while "Metropolis" and "Other" are less historically fixed.

"The Metropolis" will be used to refer to the imagined group of the colonising party and "the Other" will be used to refer to the imagined group of the colonised party. In *A Shrinking Island*, Jed Esty conceptualises the idea of the Metropolis by referring to E. M. Foster's fable "The Other Side of the Hedge" (1904). Foster's fable depicts a secret pastoral world hiding inside the progressive, modern world (Esty 23-25). Moving from the specific to the general, the modern world represents the British Isles, while the pastoral world represents the territories

outside of Europe which could be colonised and dominated. Within the colonial discourse, the Metropolis constitutes the "geopolitical centrality" governing the colonies during the Imperial era (Esty 31). In the current thesis, all the novels in question have England as the main supposed Metropolis. The term reflects the idea of England as a central hub for imperial rule. Moreover, "The Metropolis" suits this thesis well because it mirrors the skewed power balance in the imperial relationship. The term reflects assumptions that the missionary narrative wants to put forth. For example, inherent in the word "Metropolis" is a political structure that is spatially centred, with branching power to areas outside of the centre. Moreover, the term also carries connotations to the power relationship, i.e. the term Metropolis refers to a superior position in the authority balance. The connotations and associations of the word Metropolis are useful in this thesis because they mirror some of the narratives connected with the colonising party. Furthermore, these connotations and associations are not true, but they constitute or create ground for narratives that shape reality.

As mentioned above, the term "the Other" is used in this thesis to refer to the imagined opposite of the Metropolis, i.e. the colonised party. The missionary narrative puts forth, as mentioned, a binary where both parties are essentialised, i.e. presented as homogenous unities. In the former colonies, there has been a struggle to reverse this effect, however, with varied result. In this context, it is relevant to point to J. Jorge Klor de Alva, who in "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of 'Colonialism,' 'Postcolonialism,' and 'Mestizaje'" states that there is a paradoxical struggle to reach "nonessentialized patterns of collective identity" (242). Here, De Alva is pointing to the conflicting identity narratives between the nationalist movements and to the poststructuralist intellectuals. On the one hand, nationalist movements try to synthesise the cultural and ethnical characteristics comprising the main core of the colonised party, while, perhaps involuntarily, excluding parts of the repressed. In other words, nationalist movements often tried to define the colonised group based on ethnic and cultural aspects, but ended up excluding parts of the colonised group. On the other hand, poststructuralist theorists tried to avoid such essentialism.

Poststructuralism as a school of thought is notoriously difficult to unify, but one can relate the different branches within poststructuralism to their common trunk of reluctance to reduce any discourse to an essential denotation and an insistence on plurality and instability of meaning ("Poststructuralism"). With regards to the colonised identity, the poststructuralists wanted to avoid summarising any particular fundament, and consequently struggled to combine their goal to bring fourth pride and unity within ethnic communities whilst resisting a definition of these communities (de Alva 242). In light of the missionary narrative, the poststructural

debate is an attempt to deflate the binary caused by the narrative. However, "the Other" represents the opposite attempt by the missionary narrative, i.e. essentialising all outside of the imagined Metropolis.

The term the Other refers to the colonised individuals through the only common denominator they need to have according to the missionary narrative, i.e. the Metropolis. According to the Penguin *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, the term has been used in several fields, such as phenomenology and psychoanalysis, but the term was first connected with postcolonial theory during a conference at Essex University in 1985. As with Lévi-Strauss' binary between culture and nature, the Other is defined as an "other" to the Metropolis. This process is called "othering" ("Other") and is an example of the performative effect of discourse and narratives. Additionally, by defining the Other solely by the relation to the Metropolis, one incorporates the arbitrariness of the binary. Moreover, by defining the colonised by highlighting opposition created by the Metropolis, one reflects the power dynamic created by imperialism, i.e. a relationship where the Metropolis have the discursive authority. In addition, avoiding the terms colonialism and imperialism (or any derivations of the terms), opens to instances not immediately associated with colonialism or imperialism, while representing the same type of power structure. Importantly, when the definition rests on the relational structure, one belongs to either the Metropolis or the Other based on one's place in the relationship rather than one's ethnicity. The terminology, then, comprehends the complexity of colonialism and imperialism. In the binary, the construction of the Other is purely based on opposition to the Metropolis.

When discussing the imperial binary, there are several terms that could have signalled the constructed opposition to the colonisers. Conversely, the term "Subaltern" could also be used to define the group created by the binary. The term stems originally from military vernacular, referring to an officer inferior to the captain ("Subaltern"), i.e. delineating the subordinate position in a hegemonic relationship. According to *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, "Subaltern Studies" refers, on a specific level, to a series of essays edited by Ranajit Guha. However, derived from this collection of essays, Subaltern Studies has come to signify, in a more general sense, a branch of postcolonial theory originating within South Asian studies. "Subaltern" comprises "all those groups that have been made subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender, office or 'in any other way'" ("Subaltern Studies"). The Subaltern defines all who find themselves in an inferior position to a supposed superior power. The Bengali cultural-literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak uses the term Subaltern in her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Here, Spivak questions the very nature of postcolonial studies, specifically its wish to "free" the imagined Other from the imperial control inequality. She

suggests that postcolonial studies might reinscribe imperial structures by perpetuating ideological narratives and supressing the Other's own ability to form their own narratives ("Subaltern Talk" 66-111). Spivak's use of the term Subaltern might make it seem fitting to this thesis, but the term has connotations to Asian colonised groups, rather than the world's colonised groups. The term the Other does not have such a geographical restriction. Moreover, in her essay, Spivak uses the term the Other more commonly than the Subaltern. She also highlights the process of "othering". Therefore, the Other appears as a more useful choice for the purpose of this thesis.

2.4.2 The Mission of the Metropolis

Having specified the terms, one needs to look at the conditions that created the binary between the Metropolis and the Other, i.e. colonialism/imperialism. The terms "colonialism" and "imperialism" are often used synonymously, but they are not interchangeable. Colonialism is a far older phenomenon than imperialism and has featured frequently throughout human history (Loomba 20). Traditionally, colonialism is divided in two periods, i.e. "Earlier colonialism" and "Modern European colonialism". According to Loomba, some theorists believe the divide coincides with the birth of capitalism. This view suggests that Earlier colonialism was pre-capitalist and Modern European colonialism only started after capitalism had spread throughout Europe. The division between pre-capitalist and post-capitalist colonialism, has been used to distinguish between colonialism and imperialism, colonialism being pre-capitalist and imperialism being post-capitalist. Defending this distinction, one could argue that Earlier colonialism did not change the economic structure of the countries colonised, while imperialism not only drained the colonies of their resources, but also implemented a new economy into the colonies. At the same time, colonialism has a parental relationship with capitalism. Colonialism is viewed as the "midwife" that helped capitalism into life (Loomba 22). Colonialism assisted the rise of capitalism in Europe and without the colonial expansion, capitalism would have been impossible (Loomba 21-27).

To counter the economic-historical realities behind colonialism/imperialism, the missionary narrative was involved to make the imperial realities more edible. The narrative portrays a European destiny to provide the world with culture and civility. Political theorist Hannah Arendt explains the difference between colonialism and imperialism by stating that imperialism had a "more coherent organizational in form" and viewed itself more as a "missionary project to the world at large" (Deane 354). Arendt then highlights the scale and

methodology behind imperialism to separate it from colonialism. Critic Seamus Deane adds to Arendt's definition by explaining the missionary project as a belief in a "common European destiny" (Deane 359). Deane explains how the West created a discourse of chivalry by asserting themselves as the enlightened species who should save inferior races (359). According to Deane and Arendt, such a narrative paved the way for colonialism at a grander scale resulting in imperialism. As one can see here, Deane and Arendt are both pointing to the creation of this new narrative, i.e. the missionary narrative, as the distinction between colonialism and imperialism. Both theorists delineate the shift from colonialism to imperialism temporally, following a shift in narratives. Thus, Deane and Arendt both recognise the shaping effect of narratives. The missionary narrative put forth both a "missionary project" and the "common European destiny" which is not present in colonisation, i.e. the missionary narrative was the stepping stone or the creation of imperialism. Like the chicken and the egg, it is difficult to argue whether imperialism was created because of the missionary narrative, or if the missionary narrative was created because of imperialism.

As shown above, both colonialism and imperialism can be defined through the missionary narrative. Similarly, Loomba tries to transcend the definitions based on fixed content by stating that both colonialism and imperialism are "best understood not by trying to pin down a single semantic meaning but by relating its shifting meaning to historical processes" (26). Put differently, both colonialism and imperialism manifest themselves differently throughout history, i.e. the narratives behind colonialism and imperialism have changed in form over time. Thus, locating a single semantic core is problematic. However, through examining the different definitions one can get insight to the different narratives, and, in turn, investigate how the narratives surrounding colonialism and imperialism shaped the perspective on the world. To incorporate the many variations of colonialism and imperialism, Loomba offers a definition focusing on spatial terms instead of temporal terms. She explains imperialism as a process of domination that comes from the Metropolis, and colonialism as the outcome of imperialism in the colonies (Loomba 28). By using a spatial definition, Loomba separates the experiences of the colonisers and the colonised quite clearly. This spatiality explains how not only the narrative behind colonialism/imperialism changed, but also the experience and the ramifications. As with this thesis, the focus is not only the narrative itself, but also its repercussions.

Loomba also offers this definition to diffuse some of the uncertainty regarding the "the economic and political connotations of the word" (27). The uncertainty occurs when one defines imperialism through political or economic factors alone. If imperialism is defined as a political

system, the abolition of that system would mean the end of imperialism; however, if imperialism is defined as an economic system, political independence would not end imperialism. With this spatial definition, imperialism and colonialism exists alongside one another. Imperialism can then exist without formal colonies, opening the term to more modern incidents of imperialism (Loomba 27-28). However, from a narrative point of view, Loomba's definition incorporates the way in which the influence of the missionary narrative did not end when imperialism ended. By focusing on spatiality, one is not limited to an idea of colonialism or imperialism as stationary terms without lasting effect on the parties involved.

Furthermore, discourses around imperialism and colonialism reveal some of the effect of the missionary narrative. The OED of 1989 presents colonialism as an unintentional and unproblematic process where settlers relocate and establish themselves on new territory. As Ania Loomba points out, the OED definition perfectly avoids any reference to the people already living in the areas being colonised (Loomba 20-21). Moreover, Loomba shows how the OED definition disregards the "encounter between peoples" and the immense problems related to "conquest and domination" (20-21). This definition shows how the missionary narrative has a clear influence on the view on colonialism. In a newer version of the OED from 2006, the definition is revised to "the practice of acquiring control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically" ("Colonialism"). Clearly, the definition has been significantly altered since 1989 and now takes into consideration the exploitational aspect of colonialism. The reason for this change, one might assume, is a shift in the narrative. The previous emphasis was on the triumph of the colonisers, rather than the exploitation of the colonised. Similarly, the term "postcolonialism" has been described several different ways.

2.4.3 The Problem with Postcolonial

As with "colonialism" and "imperialism", the term "postcolonialism" is closely linked to the missionary narrative. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literature in English*, postcolonial critic C. L. Innes differentiates between "postcolonial" and "post-colonial". She defines post-colonial as a historical period, while postcolonial is viewed as the study of texts and their contexts (Innes 1). This differentiation tries to eliminate one of the difficulties concerning the term postcolonialism, i.e. the terms dual meaning. Firstly, postcolonial refers to the historical period after a colonial state had been granted sovereignty. Secondly, the term more broadly defines studies of the consequences of colonialism. However, Loomba criticises the term for both its meanings, stating that they are unable to display the varieties of the

previously colonised countries, as well as being unspecific in terms of delineating a specific historical period (29). In essence, Loomba's critique claims that the definition still works from the Metropolis/Other binary and portrays the colonised as an essentialised "other". Furthermore, Loomba disapproves of the term postcolonialism based on its prefix and argues that the prefix "post" indicates a break, both temporal and ideological, i.e. that it disregards the continuous effect of the missionary narrative.

Loomba argues that a country does not necessarily need to be either colonial or postcolonial. She points out that a country can be both postcolonial in the sense that it has obtained sovereignty and be colonial in the sense that it is economically or culturally dependent on the former colonial ruler. Loomba refers to this later case as "neo-colonial" (28). Thus, Loomba points to continued ideological power within the relationship between the former colonising power and the former colony. Without the consideration of ideological power, two problems with the term "postcolonial" occur. Firstly, when used as a time period, the term postcolonialism presents the postcolonial experience as a universal process where both the mechanisms and outcome are the same. Secondly, the term indicates a clean break with the colonial power relationship. Drawn from these critiques, postcolonialism in itself reinforces a false narrative. Postcolonialism can then, as previously stated in connection with Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", revive and/or hide the colonial power structure. The term postcolonialism presents the colonial dynamic as ended, which, as this thesis investigates, may not be the case. The missionary narrative and its binary affects the view of the world even though the official colonisation is ended.

J. Jorge Klor de Alva also comments on the narratives connected to postcolonialism by tying it together with the theoretical movement of "New Historicism" (241-275). Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle explain New Historicism as the belief that history (or rather "histories") consist of several narratives (140-141). History is then viewed as a "multiple and in a process of unceasing transformation" (Bennett and Royle 142). Jorge de Alva ties together the notion of New Historicism and postcolonialism by pointing to subjectivity:

> The dismissal of the modernist view of history as a linear (teleological) process, the undermining of the foundational assumptions of linear historical narratives, and the rejection of essentialized identities for corporate units lead to a multiplicity of often conflicting and frequently parallel narratives within which postcoloniality can signify not so much subjectivity "after" the colonial experience as a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing (read: subordinating/ subjunctivizing)

discourses and practices. That, is we can remove postcoloniality from a dependence on an antecedent colonial condition if we tether the term to the poststructuralist stake that marks it appearance. (245)

As one can see here, Jorge de Alva suggests that the term postcolonialism should not be seen as the "after" of coloniality, but rather as an internal opposition to the hegemonic narratives. Postcolonialism is then no longer a time period, but a relation to a narrative. Therefore, one could argue that postcolonialism is, essentially, the opposition to the missionary narrative. Through critique of the missionary narrative, one creates a new narrative that is postcolonialism.

In the light of de Alva's view on postcolonialism, "neocolonialism" might a better term to delineate a situation where postcolonialism is not a fact, i.e. when the colonising party still have the ideological power. Innes explains that the term was first used in the 1950s by theorists such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Kwame Nkrumah. The term is used to describe colonial situations in the post-independence era when independent nations are still politically, economically and culturally dependent on a "Metropolis" (Innes 238). Neocolonialism explains the state where a nation is still caught in an uneven power dynamic with another nation and, thereby, follows the narratives of that nation. Compared to the previously discussed concept of Orientalism, neocolonialism and Orientalism can be seen as cause and effect. They refer to the same tendency, but Orientalism focuses on the way in which the imagined Metropolis affects the imagined Other through their narratives, while neocolonialism refers more simply and broadly to a continued uneven power balance between the two. In the current thesis, the concept of neocolonialisms is important because it explains how the missionary narrative still operates without politically defined colonies. In this thesis, the novels will be investigated in reference to the continuation of the missionary narrative and its Metropolis/Other binary. Put differently, I will explore the novels as de Alva explored the term "postcolonialism", i.e. as a relation to a narrative, either as reproducing or countering the narrative.

3. *Heart of Darkness*

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad was first published in 1899 as a three-part series in *Blackwood's Magazine*. The novel was inspired by Conrad's travels in Congo. Despite being published in the Victorian Era, *Heart of Darkness* is classified as a modernist novel due to Conrad's experimental narrative style and analysis of the self (Armstrong ed. ix). T. S. Eliot described in his essay "The Metaphysical Poets", the modernist period as one of "variety and complexity" and argued that art had to be equally complex and diversified (248). In my opinion, it is exactly this complexity that Conrad foreshadows. He enables the reader to see ideological narratives. In order to successfully discuss Conrad in relation to the missionary narrative, it is important to understand how the Metropolis/Other binary was viewed in his own time. In addition, it is valuable to describe his position to the imagined binary because this, in turn, shapes his comments on the missionary narrative. More specifically, Conrad's view on the binary shapes the way he addresses his audience. Moreover, such a discussion reveals the difficulty with unpacking ideological narratives, namely the way narratives structures one's way of thinking. With the relation to the binary explained, this chapter will then focus on the novel's portrayal of the missionary narrative. The focus will be placed on how the novel both participates in and/or resist this ideological narrative.

3.1 Conrad and the Binary

This subchapter will discuss Conrad and his relationship with the missionary narrative's imagined binary, i.e. the Metropolis/Other binary. In two parts, this subchapter will delineate important features regarding Conrad and the binary, which subsequently affect his novel. Firstly, I will discuss Conrad and his reception to explain conditions that the analysis of *Heart of Darkness* needs to take into account, i.e. Conrad's relation to the binary and his different receptions. Secondly, I will discuss the binary in relation to the storyteller and the audience. Through these two points, the aim is to show how Conrad's own perspectives affects the way *Heart of Darkness* is told. At the end of the 19th century, imperialism was an established world order and the missionary narrative was a great part of the justification. Consequently, the Metropolis/Other binary was highly indoctrinated in society, and Joseph Conrad, even though his novel is at base sceptic of imperialism, was also formed by the binary.

3.1.1 Joseph Conrad and His Reception

In order to understand the novel's position to the Metropolis/Other binary, it is useful, in this instance, to have a look at the author's background, especially because of Conrad's rather dual position in the English society. In *The English Novel: An Introduction*, Terry Eagleton provides an analysis of Joseph Conrad, by trying to align him with the English writing tradition of the time. Conrad was born of Polish parents who rebelled against the Russian rule. Their rebellion resulted in them being thrown into exile by the Russian government together with young Conrad. After a period of rootlessness, Conrad eventually settled down in England ("English Novel" 232). Eagleton argues that Conrad's intentional decision to participate in the English culture made him more loyal to England, and states that Conrad was "in some ways more English than the English" ("English Novel" 232). However, Eagleton also points to areas where Conrad was not as "English" as his native counterparts. He specifically points to Conrad's extremism and cosmopolitan rage as being 'un-English'. Eagleton states that Conrad is less suave and soft-spoken than the traditional English writers of his time ("English Novel" 232-233). Nevertheless, Conrad shares with traditionalist England a "hatred of socialism", "disgust with democracy" and a "patronizing attitude to the common people" ("English Novel" 233). In my opinion, Conrad decision to "be English" is a reflection of the Era's view of the Metropolis/Other binary. He viewed culture as a binary rather than a continuum. In his choice, he furthers the binary thinking of cultures. Furthermore, since he chooses to be a part of the perceived Metropolitan culture, he is adding to the imagined superiority of that culture. In a way, Conrad is giving England a Metropolitan status. Thus, in my opinion, *Heart of Darkness* is an amalgamation of Conrad's own binary thinking and his critique of imperialism.

Many critics have discussed Conrad's relation to imperialism and postcolonialism. In general, there are two schools of thought regarding Conrad and postcolonialism. The critics either conclude that he foreshadowed postcolonial criticism, or that he reproduced imperialism and had the same biases as the missionary narrative puts forth. Belonging to the second school of thought, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe famously described Conrad as a "bloody racist" in a lecture in Massachusetts in 1975 (Achebe qt. in Francis 149). Achebe argued that critics focusing on *Heart of Darkness* were embedded in the racist way of thinking and therefore ignored the novel's racist tendencies. Explained differently, Achebe claimed that Conrad's critics where too anchored in the missionary narrative and its binary to properly see the novel's injustices. However, several critics after Achebe have argued for a more nuanced view on the novel (Francis 149). According to critic Terry Collits, Achebe's mistake is to read the novel as

an unchangeable representation of his attitude towards Africa (Francis 149). Collits' argument is that Achebe does not distance Conrad from his novel, and, thereby, reads the novel as an exact representation of the author's opinions. Achebe views Conrad as a complete outsider to the imperial struggle, however, as mentioned, he witnessed his parents' fight against the Russian imperial control over Poland (Eagleton "English Novel" 232). Moreover, Collits defends Conrad as a developing factor to the birth of postcolonial theory. Similarly, in "Postcolonial Conrad", Andrew Francis discusses Conrad's postcolonial position and argues that he "wrote about the colonial world of his time in ways that foreshadowed the postcolonial interrogation of empire" (147). In my opinion, Conrad manages to critique imperialism with the tools he had. Achebe would have liked him to completely break free from the ideological structures that the missionary narrative presents, however, such a move would have been ground-breaking and perhaps impossible. Ideological shackles are not easily broken. Therefore, what Conrad achieves, is not to break free from the missionary narrative's ideological hold, but to set in motion the critique of the narrative, i.e. the ideological function of literature. As Collits and Francis claim, Conrad made postcolonialism possible, and assisted theorists such as Said in "seeing" reality in another light (Francis 158).

The analogy of sight ties in well with Conrad's own wishes for his works. As mentioned, Conrad is regarded as a modernist novelist, despite writing in the Victorian Era. One reason for this classification is Conrad's focus on showing rather than telling. Conrad states his modernist approach quite explicitly in the preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*: My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you *see*. That – and no more, and it is everything ("Narcissus" 261). Allan H. Simmons claims in "Reading *Heart of Darkness*", that the preface is considered to be Conrad's artistic manifesto (17). In the preface, Conrad gives the outline for his intentions behind his writing. He does not want to explicitly demonstrate his point, but to make the reader realise or see it for themselves. Peter Lancelot Mallios also discusses the preface in his article "Conrad's Reception". He points out that in the quotation the main labourer in the reader-author relationship is the reader. Mallios highlights Conrad's focus on the reader's autonomy (116-117). By following the "show don't tell" method, the reader is not only a vessel where one pours information, but a source of information. Put differently, Conrad's method is a way of critiquing the missionary narrative which focuses on portraying how the narrative affects the world, rather than objecting outright to the narrative. The reader is invited to reflect on the narrative for themselves.

When the reader's response is so essential to Conrad's style of writing, it is important to look at his reception. On a general rather than postcolonial level, Conrad's reception has two common denominators: analysis of difference and a focus on prophecy. Regarding the analysis of difference, Mallios explains Conrad's reception throughout the times as an examination of difference and how that difference is/was managed. Put differently, Conrad's works have generally been seen as a portrayal of contrasting perspectives, places, cultures and approaches. From my perspective, this examination focuses on binaries. Therefore, this focus exposes how Conrad is not able to break free from the Metropolis/Other binary. Regarding the focus on prophecy, Mallios points to a shared paradox regarding Conrad's reception, namely the "paradox of intermittent prophecy" (117). Mallios states that Conrad's works have, through several time periods, been read as a prevision of what will come after. Stated in a different way, Conrad's works have been seen as prophecies which disclose the troubles of the future. He attributes Conrad's success in the 20th century to his prophetic abilities. According to Mallios, Conrad keeps circling into the literary picture due to his way of looking at "general qualities of interest", namely "qualities of loneliness, of fatality and tragedy, of the necessity of illusion, of the deceptive nature of language and inescapability of 'ideas'" (119). In other words, this part of Conrad's reception focuses on his ability to take a step back and portray the missionary narrative's ramifications. Generally speaking, Conrad has been the most popular in moments in history connected with upheaval (Mallios 119). Regardless of these common denominators, Conrad's reception has gone through changes over different periods, or 'moments' as Terry Collits calls them.

Terry Collits discusses Conrad's reception in *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire* in connection to what he refers to as four different "Conradian moments" (Mallios 119). These four moments are all associated with different periods in time, specifying a distinct type of reader's reception to Conrad and his works. These moments are called the original moment, the humanist moment, the postcolonial moment, and the present moment. In this thesis, the original moment and the present moment will be of particular importance. The original moment will give insight to the way the novel was originally received and who the novel originally spoke to, which will be discussed in subchapter 3.1.2. The original moment refers to the period when Conrad's novels were first published and their immediate reception from his contemporaries. More precisely, this period focuses on the reception in Great Britain, Ireland and United States. Collits focuses on these areas because they were the main sites for Conrad's audience. The other important moment is the present moment. The present moment delineates

Conrad reception in the 21st century, where he has continued to be a prominent figure in the literary arts. He is still continuously re-examined and re-understood (Mallios 119-129).

The juxtaposition between these two moments is of relevance to the current thesis. Since the thesis deals with ideological narratives, it is crucial to reveal not only which narratives were prevalent, but also how they were difficult to reveal. The discourse around the missionary narrative has changed, and therefore, the presents and the original moment differ in their reading of Conrad. In the present moment it is easier to point to these narratives, as they, in the original moment, were a part of the governing way of thinking, and therefore quite difficult to reveal and imagine alternatives to. Thus, one needs to understand the original audience in order to understand the way in which the novel creates tension within the narratives. Both the storyteller and the audience disclose facets of the ideological picture.

3.1.2 The Storyteller and the Audience

The narrative starting point in the novel emphasises the complexity of telling a story. Who speaks, who tells the story, where is it told from and what is it told about. *Heart of Darkness* is not only a story portraying imperialism, it also tells the story of imperialism from a particular position. In my opinion, Conrad is locked in the Metropolis/Other binary. Therefore, he regards his story as a portrayal of the Metropolis effect on the Other, while being unable to break the binary. Nevertheless, he is able to comment on the missionary narrative through his story. The frame story takes place on a boat called Nellie on the river Thames. The frame story situates the story about the darkness amidst the buzzing core of the supposed Metropolis. The narrator is an unknown sailor, who listens to the main character, Marlow, tell a story about his past experiences. Marlow's audience consists of four men including the unknown narrator. Looking at the river, Marlow begins his story with pointing out that "this also [..] has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad 5). From the very beginning of the novel, Conrad highlights the interconnectedness of the place of speaking and the place spoken about. Put differently, Conrad accentuates the novel's position from the very beginning and draws attention to the similarities between what he regards as separates, i.e. the similarities between the Metropolis and the Other. The novel does this, in my opinion, because the missionary narrative focused on the differences between the Metropolis and the Other, rather than the similarities. As mentioned previously, the Other was, according to Said, created by setting it in opposition to the Metropolis. *Heart of Darkness* manages to 'reverse' the othering process by drawing attention to the similarities between the two. Conrad draws the two locations together and creates a

comparison not only based on difference. In my opinion, the novel takes a step in the right direction and complicates the missionary narrative and its binary but needs the binary to do so.

With the imagined Metropolis as the point of speaking, *Heart of Darkness* portrays the story of European conquest in Africa through a relatable viewpoint for the first moment audience. Marlow, who regards himself as a part of the Metropolis, could bring the audience into the supposed Other without losing authenticity. In a way, Marlow creates a bridge between what he perceives as the Metropolis and the Other. A typical critique of *Heart of Darkness* is that the novel does not offer any voices from the colonies. The whole story is told by Marlow and no prominent native voices colour the story. *Heart of Darkness* tells the story of the imagined Other without the voice of the colonised. However, in my opinion, the object of the novel is not to give the story of the colonised, but to give the story of the imagined Metropolis. The novel is a way of portraying how the Metropolis creates the Other, without transcending the binary. The Other is a product of the missionary narrative, and therefore Conrad uses a Metropolitan point of view to help the Metropolis find the fault within itself. The novel exposes how the perceived Metropolis creates the Other without the voice of the colonised. The original moment of reception needed to realise the way in which their own ideas related to reality. Through this reading, the omission of colonised voice is a literary implement to reveal the missionary narrative and how it works to constitute the Other. An example of the way in which Conrad uses his immediate audience's preconceptions is the omission of location in Marlow's story. As Simmons notes in "Reading *Heart of Darkness"*, Marlow's story does not mention either Africa nor Congo, nevertheless, the story has always been situated there by several generations of readers and the political backdrop at the time (15). Conrad is using the preconceptions of his audience to fill in the gaps of Marlow's story. As stated, Conrad's artistic manifest sets focus on the reader's job in seeing what he sheds light on, and, in my opinion, Conrad sheds light on the Metropolis, not the Other.

Working within the missionary narrative's binary, Conrad is telling the story about the Metropolis to the Metropolis. Conrad uses Marlow as a mediator to the original audience, while he uses the character Kurtz to represent the Metropolis. Marlow's quest to find the cryptic Kurtz mirrors Marlow's quest to reveal the Metropolis's true intentions with imperialism. Kurtz symbolises the Metropolis without the narrative cloak. Kurtz is a character surrounded by different and contrasting descriptions, just as imperialism is surrounded by different reasonings and narratives. Kurtz is an enigma that Marlow wants to solve. First off, Kurtz is described as a "first-class agent" and "a very remarkable person" by an accountant (Conrad 19). At this point, Marlow is not that interested in Kurtz, however, Marlow's attention is sharpened when

he arrives at the Station and hears the Manager's account of Kurtz. The Manager describes Kurtz as: "He is a prodigy […] He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress, and the devil knows what else" (Conrad 25). With a heightened interest, Marlow goes in search of Kurtz, both to physically find him and to mentally understand him. In my opinion, Conrad uses Kurtz as a representation of the Metropolis to portray the complexities of ideological narratives. The different accounts of Kurtz create a disguise for him which derails someone trying to get to the core of him. In the same way, ideological narratives create a disguise for reality. The different various descriptions of Kurtz reflect the way in which reality is complex and not easily accessible. The different descriptions are not necessarily untrue just because they are contradictory, they mirror the multiplicity of the world around him.

3.2 The Devil-Like Folly of Ideological Narratives

To lessen the moral sting of exploitation, the missionary narrative presented the imperial representatives in the colonies as missionaries bringing a superior culture and religion to the dark and uncivilised places on earth. In "The Moment and Afterlife of *Heart of Darkness*", Benita Parry explains this narrative as a presentation of imperialism as a "noble and disinterested mission" (384). In this explanation, the imagined Metropolis presents itself as a real-life Prometheus, bringing civilisation to the uncivilised. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad points specifically to this narrative. Through Marlow, the reader is taken on a journey to explore the European presence in Africa. However, the outcome of this journey is dual. *Heart of Darkness* critiques the fallacy of the missionary story, but the novel does not offer any alternative to the Metropolis/Other binary.

In "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*", Said reflects upon the novel's relationship to the missionary narrative. Said's article highlights the duality of *Heart of Darkness*, i.e. how the novel presents what can be called a schizophrenic view on imperialism. He claims that the novel both participates and resists the missionary narrative at the same time. The different sides are referred to as the two different 'visions' of the novel. Said proposes that the novel presents one argument where imperialism should be allowed to continue its enterprise and othering of the colonised, because there is no alternative to imperialism. Said also claims, however, that another argument the novel presents is the view that the colonised has autonomy and is able to resist imperialism and retake control ("Two Visions" 361-367). In relation to the missionary narrative, called "the mission civilisatrice" by Said ("Two Visions" 367), these two visions reflect either the impossibility of a world without the missionary narrative and its attendant

binary, or the fallacy of that world view, i.e. either an empowerment or a critique. Put differently, the first vision creates no room for an alternative to the missionary narrative and therefore a participation with the narrative. The second vision resists the narrative by rendering it unnecessary since the colonised can get by without imperialism. There is no need for a 'mission' if the colonised is not in need of saving. Through his article, Said manages to present the dualism of *Heart of Darkness*. The novel manages to simultaneously resist and uphold the missionary narrative.

With regards to the ways in which the novel resists the missionary narrative, the main character Marlow is an important piece of the puzzle. As a part of the imagined Metropolis, Marlow is a reliable narrator for the original moment of reception. Throughout the novel, Marlow gradually lifts the ideological veil and able to show the reality of the missionary narrative. In the beginning, however, Marlow is more wrapped by the narrative and sees reality through its eyes. As Marlow states himself at the start of his journey in Africa: "After all, I was also a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings" (Conrad 16). Marlow is here adhering to the narrative and speaking in the framework it has created. However, the quote also hints to a distance between Marlow and the narrative. Marlow recognises the narrative he is supposed to be a part of, but at the same time implies a dissociation between him and the narrative. The dissociation is heightened if one considers earlier statements such as "sordid farce acted in front of a sinister backcloth" (Conrad 14). In "Reading *Heart of Darkness*", Allan H. Simmons claims that Marlow gradually loses faith in the European intentions in Africa as he ascends the river. Simmons suggests that Marlow realises that imperialism is not a civilising mission but pure exploitation. According to Simmons, Marlow's obsession with Kurtz stems from a desire to reveal any sustainable moral values left within (26). In my view, Marlow can be viewed as a character who investigates the imperial venture.

The imperial venture was about profit. Both the imperial rulers and Kurtz exhume extreme greed. Both need to conceal their selfishness. The imperial power disguises its greed by cloaking it in a missionary narrative, and Kurtz does the same in his journal:

> He began with the argument that we 'whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, must necessarily appear to them in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity,' and so on, and so on. 'By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power of good practically unbounded,' etc., etc. (Conrad 50)

Using the same rhetoric as King Leopold II and Frederick Lugard, Kurtz justifies his actions as an imperial duty. He refers both to the imagined Metropolis' superior position and its ability to affect the imagined Other positively. He sees the world in a strict binary between the Metropolis and the Other. He hides behind the missionary narrative and uses it to explain his actions, however, exerts extreme greed which is not complementary to the narrative. In the quotation, there is an ironic voice. Kurtz uses the missionary narrative because it is an established discourse rather than something he actually believes. Marlow tries to examine Kurtz to see if he still has any morality left, and, by extension, if his idea of the Metropolis has any morality left. Simmons claims, that in Kurtz' last words: "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 69), Marlow is assured that Kurtz is still able to judge his own actions and is mortified by them (Simmons 26). Put differently, in his last moments on earth, Kurtz can be seen to realise the deception of the missionary narrative and is therefore finally able to see his actions unclouded by the missionary narrative's framework.

Regardless of Kurtz realisation, Simmons points out that the novel does not present any alternative to imperialism (380-384). He argues that, even though the novel is sceptic of the narrative, it does not portray a reality where the missionary narrative is not needed. Similarly, Parry refers to how Conrad protests the Belgian rule in Congo in a letter, where he points to a shared human intelligence. Parry argues that such a position is not represented in *Heart of Darkness*. Moreover, Parry argues that *Heart of Darkness* continues the missionary narrative that presents the colonised as the Other with lesser intelligence and in need of guidance (381-382). The natives in *Heart of Darkness* are presented as speechless victims unable to take care of themselves. Marlow describes the look of six natives as they pass him by: "They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, death-like indifference of unhappy savages" (Conrad 16). They are described as quite dormant and feebleminded. In the novel, there is no mention of African resistance to the European exploitation. Therefore, an alternate reality where the Other exists independently from the Metropolis is impossible. Said also points to the limitations of Conrad's Africa. Said states that Conrad does not show any native capable of independence ("Two Visions" 365). In light of Parry and Said's statements, one of the possible readings of *Heart of Darkness* involves a view on the missionary narrative as a necessary evil due to the impossibility of a non-imperialistic reality. As put by Said, the system has simply eliminated what he refers to as "non-imperialist alternatives" and "made them unthinkable" ("Two Visions" 364). Said and Parry point to the way in which Conrad is trapped in the missionary narrative and is therefore unable to portray a reality where imperialism does not exist. In my opinion, Parry and Said make valid points, however, Conrad's main objective

is not to provide an alternative to imperialism, but to highlight the way in which the narratives of imperialism affect the colonisers worldview. The natives in *Heart of Darkness* are portrayed almost as inhuman, however, they are simultaneously all presented through the eyes of Marlow, who is influenced by the Metropolis' narratives and its binary. I agree that the portrayal of natives in *Heart of Darkness* helps to uphold the missionary narrative, however, it also testifies to the way in which ideological narratives underpin one's way of thinking. Within this system of narratives, Conrad manages to show how the missionary narrative is fabricated, but he still has a binary perspective and is not completely transcendent of the narratives. As mentioned in chapter 2.2, ideological narratives are internalised by the individual and, therefore, difficult to escape (Althusser 1341-1343). The internalisation of ideology makes ideological narratives troublesome to analyse, but does not make it impossible to critique them.

Said claims that Conrad realises his own limitations, and states that Conrad sees that "like narrative, imperialism has monopolized the entire system of representation" ("Two Visions" 365). Said further claims that Conrad is able to point to this narrative because of his position as a Polish man in England ("Two Visions" 365). Said is then claiming that Conrad is, in part, an outsider to the imagined Metropolis, and therefore not entirely trapped by the narrative. However, in the novel, Conrad portrays Marlow in the midst of this narrative. *Heart of Darkness*, as I read the novel, is a journey unravelling the truth about the missionary narrative. In the beginning, Marlow has a quite removed relationship to the missionary quest in Congo. He recognises the narrative, but it is not until the end that he perceives the deception of it. Nevertheless, as he tells the story to his audience on the boat, he sums up his experiences in Africa, and how his experiences changed his view on the narrative:

> But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly. How insidious he could be, too, I was only to find out several months later and a thousand miles farther. For a moment I stood appalled, as though by a warning. (Conrad 16)

Marlow is here remarking on a devil-like folly, i.e. the missionary narrative. The devil that Marlow finds is the true intentions of the imagined Metropolis, i.e. the truth about the missionary narrative. The "he" in the quotation refers to Kurtz as a representation of the Metropolis. As mentioned before, Kurtz represents the imperial power stripped of the missionary narrative. Marlow is contemplating in hindsight and displaying a realization of the

impact of the narrative. The "warning" warns against this impact. *Heart of Darkness* depicts Marlow's journey from being caught up in the narrative to transcending it and exposing its madness.

As Marlow travels in Africa, he notices how the missionary narrative is set into motion. He points to the charade as he passes a small construction site:

> I avoided a vast, artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole. It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do. (Conrad 16-17)

In this quotation, Marlow points out the senselessness of the missionary narrative and the pointlessness of the enterprise. Through this quotation, the charade of the missionary narrative is revealed. The narrative sets a framework, but the reality in the colonies exposes the deception. The truth is just a hole. The "philanthropic desire", i.e. the missionary narrative, provides nothing but idle work for the natives. Additionally, the work is also only a front for something else, namely the exploitation of advantageous resources. Marlow also comments on the pilgrims present in Africa and their work:

> It was as unreal as everything else – as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their own work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. (Conrad 24-25)

In this quotation, Marlow is outright pointing to the missionary narrative and highlighting its deception. The pilgrims are there for their own financial gain, not to bring Christianity to the natives. Religious missionary work is only a pretence hiding the capitalist venture.

Loomba also connects the missionary narrative with Christianity. She points to the way in which Christianity enabled the missionary narrative to take form. The Metropolis hid their exploitation behind a professed desire to spread Christianity. Moreover, she argues that Christianity made the "whitening of blacks" possible (Loomba 120). Even though the missionary narrative presented a scenario where the Metropolis were supposed to affect the Other and, in turn, alter the colonial subject in the Metropolis image, there was also a part of the narrative that would make the process dangerous, or even impossible. This part is in conflict

with the missionary narrative as a whole and renders it futile. The colonisers had an idea of *transference*, because if Christianity enabled the colonised to become more like the colonisers, the opposite had to be possible as well. There was an idea of 'pollution' concerning races (Loomba 120), i.e. the danger of crossing boundaries.

The missionary narrative made the perceived "races" unstable, and by crossing the boundaries, one risked the adulteration of one's ethnicity. Those who thought of themselves as the Metropolis, viewed themselves as of a superior ethnicity bringing their civilisation to people of lower standing. However, the idea of the process going the other way around made interaction dangerous. Europeans called this effect "going native" or "turning Turk" (Loomba 120). In *Heart of Darkness* this tendency is clear in the character Kurtz. As mentioned, the character can be read as a representation of the European's real intentions, however, he can also be read as a character who is 'poisoned' by Africa. The reading both resists and strengthens the missionary narrative. Kurtz is portrayed as precarious and uncompromising man who goes rogue. He is regarded as an uncontrollable figure with delusions of grandeur. Moreover, he is regarded as having too much desire and too little restraint, for instance when Marlow's describes his deceased helmsman as having "no restraint – just like Kurtz" (Conrad 51). Marlow also comments on Kurtz lack of self-control when remarking the severed heads outside of Kurtz's headquarters:

> but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him - some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. (Conrad 57)

The quotation reveals that Marlow sees through Kurtz's actions and focuses on the reasoning behind them. He associates Kurtz with lust, but he does not fully understand him. Marlow tries to explain Kurtz's actions:

> I tried to break the spell – the heavy mute spell of the wilderness that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions. This alone, I was convinced, had driven him out to the edge of the forest, to the bush, towards the gleam of fires, the throb of

drums, the drone of weird incantations; this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations. (Conrad 65)

As shown, Marlow does not blame Kurtz for his own actions. He focuses on an outside locus of causality, accusing Kurtz's surroundings for his actions. Specifically, he is blaming Africa for Kurtz's behaviour. By extension, Marlow adheres to the pollution myth, believing that Kurtz has been poisoned by his surroundings and his interactions with the natives. In relation to the missionary narrative, the pollution myth is in keep with the narrative. The idea that crossing boundaries was a part of the missionary narrative. The idea of pollution makes out the native population to be different and less civilised, i.e. in need of saving by missionaries. Therefore, when Kurtz's actions are explained as a consequence of his interaction with Africa and the natives, it strengthens the missionary narrative. The "spell of the wilderness" refers to something inherent in Africa rendering the continent in need of saving. Kurtz's "unlawful soul" can be read, as explained, either as the way in which Europe really was without the narrative cloak, or as a symbol for the necessity of the missionary narrative.

3.3 Conclusion

As demonstrated, *Heart of Darkness* both resist and strengthen the missionary narrative, but is still confined to the Metropolis/Other binary. Parry acknowledges this duality and argues that the novel simultaneously rehearses the discourses that it tries to create distance from. Therefore, Parry maintains that the novel's "racist idiom" cannot be ignored (381). Put differently, *Heart of Darkness* has clear racist impulses which makes the novel difficult to swallow, and in turn, upholds the missionary narrative because it opposes any alternative to it. The derogatory view of natives in the novel shows how Conrad, perhaps involuntarily, follows the Metropolis' narratives. In terms of the narrative in question, the racist vocabulary and descriptions create a picture of the native as incapable of self-dominance. In turn, there is, as stated, no room for an alternative to the missionary narrative. However, as Simmons argues, the racist vocabulary is part of the idea (23). The novel tries to demonstrate the ramifications of the imperialistic values on Africa, including racism.

According to Said, Conrad draws attention to the narratives which provide a false framework: "Conrad's way of demonstrating this discrepancy between the orthodox and his own views of empire is to keep drawing attention to how ideas and values are constructed (and deconstructed) through dislocations in the narrator's language" ("Two Visions" 366). What

Said calls "dislocations in the narrator's language" is the way in which Marlow reflects upon imperialism. Since Marlow does not readily accept the missionary narrative, he helps deconstruct the narrative and, consequently, is able to show the narrative is a man-made construction rather than a fact of life. Said comments on Conrad's way of unsettling the first moment's view on reality:

> By accentuating the discrepancy between the official 'idea' of empire and the remarkably disorienting actuality of Africa, Marlow unsettles the reader's sense not only of the very idea of empire, but of something more basic, reality itself. For if Conrad can show that all human activity depends on controlling a radically unstable reality to which words approximate only by will or convention, the same is true of empire, of venerating the idea, and so forth. ("Two Visions" 367)

Even if Conrad uses racial idioms, he still manages to contrast the ideas of his audience and highlight the importance of language. Language, and, in turn, narratives, changes the way one sees reality. Conrad draws attention to this phenomenon and dismantles the internal structures of the narrative. Parry accentuates Conrad's language in relation to his deconstructive agenda:

> On the one hand this allusive and indirect language denotes a failure of representation inseparable from the epistemological constraints of the imperialist moment during which the book was conceived; and on the other hand, it signifies an apprehension of 'overwhelming realities' [34] that lie beyond the fiction's cognitive horizons. (382)

Parry points to Conrad's evasive language as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Conrad fails in trying to break completely free from narrative chains of his time. On the other hand, his allusivity hints to a greater knowledge of reality than what is directly portrayed. Explained, Conrad's language shows the instability of one's narrative convictions. Beyond the fiction's cognitive horizons, lies reality unadulterated by the narrative. *Heart of Darkness* is a cyclical story, which, as mentioned, highlights the interconnectedness between what Conrad perceives as the Metropolis and the Other. As Simmons states: "The menacing London 'gloom' anticipates the 'darkness' that Marlow encounters in the tale, suggesting that the latter is coterminous with the former" (Conrad 18). *Heart of Darkness* resist the idea of London and Congo as strict opposites, however, does not put forth the idea that the binary is a false construction.

To summarise, *Heart of Darkness* works within the missionary narrative's framework to attack that framework. Even though Conrad is still locked in the Metropolis/Other binary, he is still able to critique the missionary narrative. As Simmons, Parry, and Said agree upon, Conrad manages to reveal the colonisers' intentions with the colonised, and subsequently how the missionary narrative is a deceptive justification for exploitation.

4. *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys was first published in 1966 during the heightening criticism against imperialism and in the midst of decolonisation. The plot of the novel, however, is set around the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which creates a retrospective view on the missionary narrative and the Metropolis/Other binary. As mentioned previously, Rhys wrote the novel as a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's famous Victorian novel *Jane Eyre*. With the novel's intertextuality and alternative perspective, there are several points to be made regarding its position to the colonial debate. This chapter will uncover some of these points. In particular, this chapter will examine the way the missionary narrative works to shape the characters' perceptions of the world around them and of themselves. Moreover, this chapter will investigate the correlation between the Metropolis/Other binary and the sense of displacement. The chapter will follow a similar structure as the one on *Heart of Darkness*, but the focus will be more acutely directed towards the characters' interpellation of the missionary narrative, than the novel's own position to the narrative. Since the novels are written before and after the start of decolonisation, this division is constructive to the discussion. Nevertheless, the following discussion will debate *Wide Sargasso Sea* and its relationship to the missionary narrative.

4.1 The Blurring of the Binary

With her novel, Rhys counters the Metropolis/Other binary. Through exemplification, she shows her readers how limiting this binary is and how it restricts the individual. To grasp Rhys' comment on the binary, two terms are of particular importance. These terms are "Creole" and "mestizaje" and will be discussed in the first part of this subchapter. These terms name the supposed formation of "new" cultural and/or racial groups in the colonies. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Rhys shows how these groupings are left in limbo by the Metropolis/Other binary. In the second part of the subchapter, Rhys' own position to the binary will be discussed. The object is to show how Rhys is also left in limbo by the binary. In the third part of the subchapter, the focus will be on the narration of the novel and how it complicates the binary.

4.1.1 Creole and Mestizaje

Before diving into the novel's position towards the missionary narrative, it is useful to clear up some important terms related to *Wide Sargasso Sea*. First, the term "Creole" is used throughout

the novel. *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Terms* describes Creole as a descendant of the Spanish word "criollos" meaning anyone born in America or the Caribbean islands regardless of their ancestry ("Creoleness"). However, J. Jorge Klor de Alva states that "criollos" originally referred to the those of European descent (243). Editor Judith L. Raiskin points to this confusion in a footnote in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She states that the word Creole has had several meanings, some contradictory to the other. Raiskin argues that the original meaning applied to the European settler's ancestors who claimed racial purity. However, Raiskin also argues that the term evolved to incorporate slaves who were born in the Americas, i.e. the offspring of the imported generation. Therefore, the adjunction of white or black was often added to the word Creole to distinguish between the settlers' ancestors and the slaves' ancestors. Over time, the term developed to refer to racial mixing between the two groups (Rhys 39). In patois, which is frequently used in the novel, the term "béké" is used to describe the white population (Savory 89). In this thesis, the term "white Creole" will refer to the Europeans descendants in the Americas, while "black Creole" will refer to the descendants of slaves or ex-slaves. This division is important to the thesis because the novel focuses on Antoinette, who is a white Creole, and her conviction that she should either belong to the Metropolis or the Other. However, she possesses an attendant inability to fit into either of these categories.

The second term in need of description is "mestizaje". De Alva describes mestizaje as an inner frontier changing the social identities because of racial mixing. In addition, De Alva argues that the sexual relations between the white Creoles and the black Creoles created a progression towards constant changing social groupings. Furthermore, De Alva argues that different forms of colonisation resulted in different forms of mestizaje (243). In regards to the discussion of this thesis, mestizaje is important because it explains how the stark distinction between the Metropolis and the Other in the binary was challenged by new relationships. Moreover, the term helps identity the difference between the idea of racial contamination and interracial relationships. The first is a belief not rooted in any biological realities, but an idea connected to the missionary narrative. In relation to the character Antoinette, she is not of mixed race and, therefore, not parts of the mestizaje. Thus, her difference is viewed as a result of racial contamination.

Both Creole and mestizaje delineate parts of the population who fall outside of the imagined binary of the Metropolis and the Other. These concepts show how the discourse around the binary has evolved. In the quest to loosen the fixed categories, new terms are formed. The terms signal a shift in how the binary is viewed. The static categories of the imagined binary do not relate to reality, and, therefore create problems for the individuals that cannot be placed

in either category. "Creole" and mestizaje are examples of how these individuals are categorized without the use of the Metropolis/Other binary. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is particularly attentive to these individual, which may stem from Jean Rhys' own position in the binary.

4.1.2 The West Indian Novel

As a historical person, Jean Rhys inhabits a complex position between Europe and the colonies, and, as an author, a complex position between European and West Indian literature. Put simply, West Indian refers to inhabitants of the West Indies, i.e. a region in the Caribbean ("West Indies" and "West Indian"). However, the term gets complicated in relation to Rhys. As Francis Wyndham explains in the introduction to the Norton Critical Edition of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the author was born inn Roseau, Dominica to a Welsh father and a white Creole mother. She spent her childhood in Dominica until at the age of sixteen, when her family relocated to England. Afterwards, she spent her adult years living a rather rootless life around Europe. She relocated and remarried several times (Wyndham 3). Rhys' life was not only affected by relocation, the author also dealt with illness, poverty and alcoholism. Due to a combination of Rhys' personal problems and the political situation of the times, she only returned to Dominica once. Regardless, she detested England and the country's colonial venture ("Preface" ix). Rhys' disgust for England stands in sharp contrast to Conrad's adoption of English culture. Nevertheless, Jean Rhys occupies a medial position between the supposed opposition between Metropolis and the Other. On the one hand, she is part of the white population and descendant of the European colonial occupants. Therefore, she is not a complete member of the Other. On the other hand, Rhys resents and repels the Metropolis. In essence, she resists the binary by objecting her assigned "place", however, is not able to shake the binary thinking altogether. Because of Rhys' intermediary position, there is a dispute between whether her bibliography should be regarded as West Indian or European.

The dispute is particularly heightened with regards to *Wide Sargasso Sea*. As Kenneth Ramchand discusses in "The Place of Jean Rhys and *Wide Sargasso Sea*", the work has a peculiar position between a British novel or a West Indian novel, both due to the author's position and the novel's content. In his essay, Ramchand tries to answer the question: "What makes a novel a West Indian novel?" (181). He poses this question referring to *Wide Sargasso Sea* in particular. Ramchand refers to two different West Indian critics who try to outline the two different answers to his question, namely Edward Brathwaite and Wally Look Lai. Brathwaite argues that the white Creole population and the native population were too culturally

separated, and, therefore, the white West Indian experience was not a part of the West Indian experience at all. Brathwaite then concludes that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a mere fabrication of life in the colonies which disregards important social and historical facets. Put bluntly, Brathwaite argues that the novel is whitewashed, i.e. glossing over important colonial issues. Peter Hulme in "The locked heart: *Wide sargasso sea*" also brings forth Brathwaite when discussing the novel's position to the West Indies. Hulme claims that Brathwaite's main argument is that the white Creole population could not identify with the spiritual world of the West Indies (74). Contrastively, the second critic, Look Lai, takes a more including approach to West Indian literature and regards the white West Indian experience as a part of the West Indian whole. Look Lai then argues the theme of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is what makes the novel West Indian. By this approach, Look Lai categorises Jean Rhys' previous literature as European and *Wide Sargasso Sea* as West Indian (Ramchand 181-187). Rhys' previous works are all set in Europe. Following his presentation of Brathwaite and Look Lai's contrasting arguments, Ramchand concludes that "a West Indian novel challenges West Indians to understand the world and their social relations better and with such authenticity that the challenge cannot be ignored" (187). Conclusively then, Ramchand states that *Wide Sargasso Sea* transcends the author's geographical distance because the personal connection is so strong that it is imbedded in the novel (187). Rhys' connection to the West Indies might have been short-lived in temporal terms, but her personal connection to the location transcends this limitation. With this definition, one is able to challenge the binary thinking in that she has to be either one or the other.

The complexities concerning Rhys' classification have also been a feature in the interpretations of her novels. As a result of her turbulent life, her often similarly positioned female characters have been analysed in reference to Rhys herself. As a result, Rhys' bibliography is often classified as part of a feminist canon. However, Mary Lou Emery's essay, "Modernist Crosscurrents", divides Jean Rhys into three different canons: the female, European modernist and the West Indian. This synergy creates, according to Emery, two different approaches to Rhys' works and, more specifically, her characters. The two approaches are related to the classification discussed above, i.e. between European and West Indian. The first approach regards Rhys' characters as expressions of the author's own psychological identity. This approach is rooted in European ideas about the "self" and views the characters as an extension to the author's psyche. This approach can be linked to the classification of *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a European novel, and, by extension, Rhys as a European author. According

to Emery, the first approach dismisses the colonial displacement felt by Rhys because of her West Indian background.

The second approach focuses on the author's life as an expression of the conflicts created by colonial conflict. The dissonance between Rhys' values, ideologies and social circumstances and the colonisers, shapes Rhys' life and, subsequently, her bibliography (Emery 161). This approach is linked to Rhys classified as a West Indian author. Through the second approach, the focus is on the social forces rather than the individual. In other words, the second approach does not dismiss the colonial alienation and the process of othering as an individual character flaw. The second approach sees beyond the immediate personal similarities between author and character, and focuses on the reason behind the similarities, i.e. the West Indian context. However, in my opinion, there is no need for such a division. Ideas about the self should not be disconnected to the colonial displacement. The individual is not detached from the socio-political world, therefore, this division fails to see the interrelation between the two. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the West Indian context is explored by putting the Victorian tradition into question.

4.1.3 The Storyteller and the Audience

With *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys addresses the Victorian tradition, and by extension, the European tradition. Rhys takes a literary classic and deconstructs it by creating a more complex view of the world than its Victorian predecessor. Elaine Savoy argues in her work *The Cambridge Companion to Jean Rhys*, that the novel gave Rhys the opportunity to analyse her own relation to England (80). Similarly, Spivak explains in "*Wide Sargasso Sea* and a Critique of Imperialism" that when Rhys read Jane Eyre as a child, she was touched by the character in the attic (173). Rhys commented herself that: "She seemed such a poor ghost, I thought I'd like to write her life" (Jean Rhys qtd. in Thorpe 173). From her statement there is a sense of empathy towards the Bertha character. Because of Rhys' own experiences as a white Creole woman, Bertha was the character she felt connected to. Therefore, Rhys wanted to elaborate on Bertha's story, and created Antoinette. Rhys gives Bertha a worthy backstory, but also wanted to challenge the missionary narrative. In relation to *Jane Eyre*, Savoy states that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the postcolonial response to the Victorian novel. (79). Despite being written 1874, at the height of imperialism, there is no mention of the imperial undertaking in *Jane Eyre* (Brönte 5-385).

In my opinion, Rhys tries to contest the idea of the English novel. She holds up a mirror and shows a part that refuse simple deductions such as the Metropolis/Other binary. The objective is to show that the world is, and has never been, as the narrative portrays. Rhys' objective is similar to that of Conrad's, but with a difference in approach. Since Conrad is still locked in the binary, he believes that he tells the story of the Metropolis to the Metropolis. Rhys takes a different approach. She tells a third story, i.e. not the Metropolis' or the Other's story. Rhys acknowledges the binary and portrays its ramifications for the individual. Therefore, she picks up Bertha from the third story of Thornfield and gives her a voice. As Sandra M. Gilbert states in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress", "[In *Jane Eyre*] the third story the most obviously emblematic quarter of Thornfield" (484). In the quotation, Gilbert is referring to the symbolism between Jane and Bertha, but Rhys transcends Thornfield altogether. In *Jane Eyre*, as Gilbert argues, Bertha is seen as Jane's double. However, Bertha is also as "rich, large, florid, sensual and extravagant" (Gilbert 488). These categorisations are normally associated with the imagined Other. In the third story, Rhys complicates the categorization of Bertha/Antoinette as Other and as Jane's double. Consequently, she gives Antoinette/Bertha a voice emancipated from Jane. Additionally, she complicates the Metropolis/Other binary altogether.

In order to complicate this binary, Rhys uses different narrators. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is, as mentioned, divided into three parts with alternating viewpoints. Antoinette and her unnamed husband, Mr Rochester, experience two sides of the same story. Rhys uses the juxtaposition between these two narrations to portray the impact of the missionary narrative and expose its ramifications. With two narrators, Rhys is able to incorporate more of the complexities around the colonial relationship and avoid a simplification of the matter. Even though Antoinette narrates the first part, i.e. her childhood, Rhys consistently uses the narrator farthest away from home. In the West Indies, Mr Rochester is the storyteller, while in England, it is Antoinette. Put differently, Rhys uses the most displaced narrator to tell the story. That way, she tells the third story. In my opinion, Rhys uses the idea of the third story and the different narrators to problematise how the Metropolis create an opposition between themselves and the Other. In particular, Rhys comments on the way the missionary narrative helps create this imagined opposition.

4.2 Not Béké Like You, But Not Béké Like Us Either

The imagined opposition is, in the case of Antoinette, created partly by the belief in racial pollution. Like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, the idea of racial pollution is also present in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Antoinette is repeatedly described as "infected" by her surroundings. When Mr Rochester meets Antoinette for the first time, he describes her as: "Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either" (39). He immediately separates Antoinette from what he believes is the Metropolis. Antoinette's appearance and personality are treated as signs of the Other's effect on her. The editor of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Judith L. Raiskin adds a footnote to Mr Rochester's description stating: "The narrator hints to the metropolitan suspicion that the differences between the English and the Creoles are racial as well as cultural" (Rhys 39). Put differently, there was a belief that the close interaction between ethnicities could change somebody's race, i.e. racial contamination. Antoinette's nurse, Christophine, also comments on Antoinette's contamination: "She is a Creole girl, she has the sun in her" (Rhys 95). Having "the sun in her" refers to Antoinette being different from the imagined Metropolis due to her upbringing in Jamaica. However, she is not the only one whose location is regarded as a personality trait. One of Antoinette's fellow classmates is described saying that "unlike most Creole girls, [she] was very even-tempered" (Rhys 33). Raiskin marks this sentence with a footnote describing the Metropolitan opinion about Creoles. Raiskin asserts that Creoles were believed to have been "tropicalised". She explains that the Metropolis viewed the Creoles as "emotionally high-strung, lazy, and sexually excessive" (33). According to tropicalization, the white Creole population was too affected by the Other to be part of the Metropolis. Thus, they do not fit into the missionary narrative. They are neither the saviours nor the saved. The binary thinking of the missionary narrative is challenged and, therefore, the narrative has to make changes. Moreover, the binary thinking creates displaced identities. The missionary narrative is supposed to divide everybody into neat categories, but the concept of "white Creole" does not fit into this neatness. Thus, the concept of racial contamination comes into play. However, racial contamination was not the only explanation for the white Creole's divorce form the Metropolis.

The binary thinking is not limited to Mr Rochester, Antoinette also views the world through its division into counterparts. While Mr Rochester believes in racial pollution, Antoinette explains her distance from the Metropolis with political and social reasons. Lee Erwin comments on the notion of racial contamination in his essay "History and Narrative in *Wide Sargasso Sea*":

If we lay out the racial issues the novel addresses as they are manifested in its two major narratives, Antoinette's and Rochester's, settler and metropolitan man, it begins to appear that whereas Antoinette sees her own displaced, deracinated condition in terms of historically specific shifts in class and economic power, the Rochester figure refuses these categories and instead interprets racial difference in moral and sexual terms, specifically in terms of miscegenation and 'contamination'. (208)

While Mr Rochester attributes their differences as a sign of racial contamination, Antoinette sees her situation as a result of historical shifts in power. Antoinette, as the quotation suggests, regards her distance from what she perceives as the Metropolis as a result of social decline, while Mr Rochester regards it as a result of racial difference. In my opinion, these different explanations reveal a hole in the missionary narrative. The missionary narrative puts forth a reality where status in society is based on race. The Metropolis is superior and consists of white Europeans, while the Other is inferior and consists of everyone else. However, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, there are several instances where the white Creole's connection to the Metropolis is contested.

These instances generate the link between affluence and the supposed Metropolis. As Antoinette's childhood friend, Tia, remarks: "Real white people, they got gold money. […] Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (Rhys 14). Tia separates Antoinette from the Metropolis based on wealth. The quotation shows the hole in the missionary narrative. The narrative has gone from encompassing all of the white population as superior, but has been reduced, at least by some, to only include the affluent white population. Similarly, Antoinette's English stepfather, Mr Mason, is not accused of being racially polluted: "Mr Mason, so sure of himself, so without a doubt English. And my mother, so without a doubt not English, but no white nigger either" (Rhys 21). Mr Mason has a stronger relation to the Metropolis than Anette (Antoinette's mother), not only because he is new to the West Indies, but also because of his affluence. In the Norton Critical Edition of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the quotation is given a footnote. The footnote stresses that there was a decline, both in economy and social status, for former slave owners.

The former slave owners' social decline was rooted partly in the Emancipation Act of 1833. The Act outlawed slavery in the British Empire. Afterwards, there was a short period with an apprenticeship system which, in reality, was a continuation of slavery, however, full emancipation followed. Emancipation was a continuation of several social reforms in Britain.

Maria Frawley in "The Victorian age, 1832-1901", argues that, as a continuation of the French Revolution's impact in Britain, there was a growing sense of utilitarianism. Initiatives such as the New Poor Law and the Factory Reform Act are examples of the way in which the British Society had become more aware of the social conditions of the lower classes (Frawley 409-412). With the growing utilitarianism began the questioning slavery. As a result, the morality of the slave owners was questioned. Additionally, in the aftermath of emancipation, the former slaves proved resourceful and contributed to the diversification of the economy (Raiskin 21). Combined, the social change and the ex-slaves autonomy, created a decline in status for the former slave owners. Since the ex-slaves managed fine without their help, the white Creoles could not have been the saviours the missionary narrative made them out to be. In addition, because they now had to pay their labourers, the slave owners also experienced a collapse in income. This social and capital decline put into question the racial purity the settler class had tried to convince the outside world (Raiskin 14). Put differently, the missionary narrative's focus on race has been challenge by the slave owners' social fall. I regard the questioning the racial purity of the settlers was a consequence of the missionary narrative's static binary. Since the Metropolis has a heightened position in the missionary narrative, the settlers' social decline makes it impossible for them to belong to the Metropolis. Consequently, their race is put into question.

With their racial purity put into question, the settler population now inhabited a grey area between the Metropolis and the Other. This lack of placement in the imagined binary is especially apparent in the case of Antoinette. She is not entirely part of the Metropolis, nor entirely part of the Other. Emery refers to Antoinette's position as "double homelessness" or "double marginality" (163). Christophine puts it simply: "She is not *béké* like you, but she is not *béké* and not like us either" (Rhys 93). *Béké* is a Creole term referring to descendants of Europeans (Savory 89). However, Christophine uses the term in a wider sense meaning "ethnicity". Put differently, Christophine is saying that Antoinette neither belongs with the descendants of Europeans nor the descendants of the slaves. From previous discussion, Antoinette's homelessness stems from a development in the missionary narrative. As a result, Antoinette is not a part of the Metropolis and wants to be a part of the Other, but she is not allowed in:

> We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. […] When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only

something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on her. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass. (Rhys 27)

From the quotation one can glean the alienation felt by Antoinette. She makes the conscious decision to be a part of the Other, but is turned down. Rhys uses mirroring to signal the relation between Antoinette and Tia, however, they are still not the same. What lies between them, in my opinion, is the belief that there should be a difference between them. The missionary narrative has reigned for so long that the division between the Metropolis/Other binary is impenetrable. The fact that Tia views Antoinette as a "white nigger" or "white cockroach" is partly because Antoinette is linked to the missionary narrative differently than Tia. Antoinette is supposed to be part of the "saviour" side of the narrative, while Tia on the "saved". However, the mission has failed. The former slaves are being freed from the slaveowner and are in the process of forming a new identity. Antoinette, as a descendant of slaveowners, is not allowed to be a part of that identity. In other words, the realization categories of the missionary narrative are not an absolute has created a new opposition between the population, i.e. the opposition between the white Creoles and black Creoles.

Although the missionary narrative can be viewed as a failure in the West Indies, this does not mean that the narrative has ended. Rather, the narrative has gained a geographical component. The Metropolis' sense of superiority is now more connected to England (and Europe). Rather than race, the missionary narrative considers geographical affiliation. Consequently, England is idolised. This idolization is especially apparent in Antoinette's thoughts and utterances about the country. She asks her husband, leadingly: "'Is it true,' she said, 'that England is like a dream?" (Rhys 47). The quotation illustrates how Antoinette idolises England. Mr Rochester also comments on Antoinette's fixation:

She often questioned me about England and listened attentively to my answers, but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference. Her mind was already made up. Some romantic novel, a stray remark never forgotten, a sketch, a picture, a song, a waltz, some note of music, and her ideas were fixed. About England and about Europe. […] Reality might disconcert her, bewilder her, hurt her, but it would be reality. It would be only a mistake, a misfortune, a wrong path taken, her fixed ideas would never change. (Rhys 56)

As seen in the quotation above, Antoinette has a perceived idea of England which is unchangeable. This idea puts the imagined Metropolis at a heightened position. Antoinette regards England as an almost unattainable dream. The missionary narrative makes her view the England as a better place. Furthermore, as Mr Rochester comments on, Antoinette's beliefs are not rooted in facts, but more of a feeling retrieved from a short remark or symbol which stuck to her mind. Consequently, Mr Rochester argues that he cannot change her opinion. Antoinette is blinded by the ideological narrative and, therefore, everything she hears about England is seen through the narrative. However, Mr Rochester fails to see how he himself is also blinded by the narratives. His notions about the West Indies as Other are clouded by narratives just as Antoinette's notions about the Metropolis.

In essence, everyone is affected by various kinds of ideological narratives and social structures. The narratives functions so that they restrict individual freedom, not just from the outside, but also from the inside. Even though the novel problematises the imperialist canon's narratives restrict the individual, it is also, as Hulme states, "fundamentally sympathetic to the planter class ruined by Emancipation" (72). The novel concentrates on the white characters and how the missionary narratives and its binary shapes their actions. Moreover, the novel portrays the characters in a sympathetic way, particularly Mr Rochester. Spivak states that several critics have commented on the fact that Rochester is treated with great understanding. Rochester is given the opportunity to share his side of the story when he narrates the middle part of the novel. Spivak argues that Rhys presents Rochester as a victim. He is a victim of the patriarchal society. He is the second son and is then surpassed by his elder son in the pursuit of inheritance ("Critique of Imperialism" 243). Savoy argues that Rhys wisely chooses to incorporate Antoinette's husband as a narrator (80). By using Mr Rochester as a narrator, he is made human and the complexities of both characters are explored. In my opinion, Rhys portrays Rochester in this way in order to complicate the static view on reality. She shows how Rochester is also chained by a patriarchal narrative and achieves a more complex examination of ideological narratives. Furthermore, she identifies how ideological narratives work from the inside and colour the way one views the world and oneself.

Because of the internal work of the narrative, Mr Rochester and Antoinette are both doomed to play the roles that they have been assigned. As discussed above, Mr Rochester believes that Antoinette is racially contaminated and therefore part of the Other. *Jane Eyre* can be seen as Antoinette's completion as the Other. Spivak argues that *Jane Eyre* is a representation of the epistemic violence of imperialism and that Antoinette has to die in order for Jane to become a heroine:

In this fictive England, she must play out her role, act out the transformation of her "self" into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction. I must read this as an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer. ("Critique of Imperialism" 243)

In the quotation, Spivak points to the way in which Antoinette must change herself into the Other to fit into the role given to her by the missionary narrative. Antoinette is sacrificed in order for the missionary narrative to prevail. Antoinette is a means to an end. *Wide Sargasso Sea* discloses the process where Antoinette is forced into her role in the narrative. The novel explains how Antoinette is placed in the role of a martyr so that Jane fulfils her place as a feminist icon. *Wide Sargasso Sea* complicates this picture and resists the simplicity of the missionary narrative. As a whole, Rhys is making the point that the missionary narrative and ideology does not work to explain or make sense of reality or identity.

4.3 Conclusion

Wide Sargasso Sea is a testament to the destructive effects of the missionary narrative, both to society and to the individual. The novel's comment on the narrative can be broken down into two main points. Firstly, that the Metropolis/Other binary no longer incorporated all of the European descendants. Therefore, the white Creole population found themselves in limbo between imagined categories. This was due to a spatial shift. As with Ania Loomba's spatial definition of imperialism, the missionary narrative is spatial rather than temporal. Loomba explains imperialism as a process of domination that comes from the Metropolis, and, colonialism as the outcome of imperialism for the colonies (28). In the same way, the missionary narrative is a structure of domination originating from the Metropolis, but with a change in format. There has been a spatial shift wherein the narrative no longer incorporates people of European descent as a part of the narrative. The narrative has been affected by the social and political climate in the colonies, and instead of being rendered void, the narrative has altered its spatial terms. The Europeans are, therefore, either included or excluded based on their location. The exclusion comes in the form of accusations about racial pollution. As a result, they are left in limbo between the Metropolis and the Other. Rhys uses the novel to highlight

the people left in limbo. She attempts to give a voice to the people trapped in the middle. As Spivak states, "[t]he role of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored" ("Critique of Imperialism" 240). Rhys creates a representation of the outsiders of the missionary narrative. Secondly, the novel reveals that the Metropolis is still viewed as a real category and as superior, regardless of the spatial shift. The novel shows the subtler implications of the missionary narrative, i.e. how the narrative is still present, even though the "mission" is less prevalent. The colonisers did not hide as much behind the idea of spreading their civilization, but that does not mean that they did not still regard their civilization as superior.

Drawn from these two main points, it is clear that *Wide Sargasso Sea* exemplifies the way the missionary narrative is restrictive for the individual. Compared to *Heart of Darkness*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* comments on the effect of the missionary narrative rather than the actual narrative. In my opinion, this difference stems from the difference in publication year. As mentioned, when *Heart of Darkness* was written, i.e. the end of the Victorian Era, the missionary narrative was fully believed and colonisation continued because of it. In contrast, *Wide Sargasso Sea* was published in 1966, near the end of the imperial era. Moreover, Erwin states that the novel was in part written in 1945 then continued till its publication. This period was crucial to the disruption of the British Empire (Erwin 207). As a result of the decolonisation process, the missionary narrative was already under examination. To further the investigation, Rhys takes the reader back to the mid-19th century when the questioning of the missionary narrative first started. Subsequently, she manages to complicate the narrative picture. However, *Wide Sargasso Sea* does also share the same weak spot as *Heart of Darkness*.

One of the critiques of *Heart of Darkness* is the lack of alternative to the missionary narrative. As both Parry and Said point out, Conrad portrays the natives as incapable of self-government. Similarly, *Wide Sargasso Sea* retells the story of the mad woman in the attic in *Jane Eyre*, but the ending is still the same. Antoinette is still sacrificed. Granted, some of the specifics are altered. Antoinette does not set fire to Thornfield on purpose but knocks down the candles believing them to be part of a dream. Moreover, Antoinette believes the wall of fire is sent by Christophine to help her (Rhys 111-112). Regardless of the differences, the outcome is the same, that is, the death of Bertha/Antoinette. Therefore, one could argue that like Conrad, Rhys fails to offer an alternative to the missionary narrative other than death. However, I consider the ending of the novel as a testament to what Rhys wants to highlight, namely the inescapability of ideological narratives. Rhys does not resist the ending of *Jane Eyre*, but rather exemplifies the way the missionary narrative puts forth categories that do not translate into reality. Instead, the categories obstruct the way the characters see the world and themselves,

and ultimately destroys their lives. By not altering the ending of *Jane Eyre*, Rhys is able to portray the inescapability and destruction of the narrative. She highlights that the missionary narrative has not stopped affecting the lives of individuals. Similarly, *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith depicts the narrative's hold on the individual the 21st century.

5. *White Teeth*

White Teeth was published in 2000 and was Zadie Smith's debut novel. Following its publication, the novel has gained widespread recognition as an influential post-colonial work of fiction. The recognition is based on Smith's focus on the new postcolonial/neo-colonial identities that have formed in the aftermath of traditional colonisation. Thus, the novel correlates well with the aim of the current thesis and its focus on the individual trapped in ideological narratives. With an unnamed narrator and switching focus, *White Teeth* tells the tale of several displaced individuals in Metropolitan London. This chapter will focus on these individuals and their relation to the missionary narrative. In contrast to the two previous chapters, this chapter will focus less on the author and more on the ideas of "Englishness", "multiculturalism" and "hybridity". In my opinion, this adaption is necessary in order to show the change in discourse regarding the missionary narrative. Compared to *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *White Teeth* has a more multifaceted narration and, thus, a different approach to the Metropolis and Other binary. With the third person narrator, the character's feelings are explored in a more direct way. The narrator is in part omniscient, and therefore able to communicate not only on the character's feelings, but also on the structurers surrounding the characters of which they themselves are unaware.

5.1 Resisting or Changing the Binary?

Before embarking on *White Teeth*'s relation to the missionary narrative, it is useful to clarify the terms "Englishness", "multiculturalism", and "hybridity". These are all terms that are related to the Metropolis/Other binary. In a sense, the terms were coined to resist or evolve the binary. Equally important is the novel's position as a counternarrative to the history of British imperialism by resisting the "Westernism" and "traditionalism"[1] opposition discussed in 5.1.2. In a way, this division is a counternarrative to the missionary narrative and the Metropolis/Other binary. Combined, these two sub-chapters better the understanding of Smith's postcolonial claims about identity and displacement. Put differently, these concepts elaborate on phenomenon pertaining to the postcolonial world and delineating Smith's claims to them is helpful to extract the novel's comment on the missionary narrative.

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[1] Makdisi uses lower case "t" and capital "W" (Makdisi 535), thus, I will do the same when discussing the terms.

5.1.1 Englishness, Multiculturalism, and Hybridity

In "Re-writing Englishness: imagining the nation in Julian Barnes's *England, England* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*", Nick Bentley deliberates on the idea of *Englishness.* In his essay, Bentley describes Englishness as an "imagined community" (486). To explain the makings of this imagined community, Bentley provides two alternatives based on two theorists, namely Jacques Lacan and Paul Ricoeur. Following Lacan's theories on our symbolic environments, Bentley explains Englishness as a network of symbols through which one tries to find a wholeness. In this context, Englishness is a mere mirage of "master-signifiers" created by one's imagination (Bentley 486). Consequently, Englishness is not a part of the real, but a "series of signifiers" (Bentley 486). Alternatively, following Ricoeur's theories on narratives, Bentley explains the notion of Englishness as a series of symbols, where these symbols are only available to the individual through narrativization and emplotment, i.e. Englishness is a narrative (Bentley 488). Put differently, the imagined community of Englishness is a narrative.

In this thesis, Ricoeur's explanation of the occurrence of Englishness is given preference. In my opinion, the narrative of Englishness can, in part, be viewed as a rebranding of the missionary narrative with a more incorporating standpoint. After imperialism, there was no longer a direct mission; nevertheless, the notion of Englishness helped uphold Britain as a superior Metropolis. Englishness was a way to continue the narrative of the binary between the Metropolis and the Other. At the same time, while the narrative needed to preserve the notion of the Metropolis as separate to the Other, it also had to integrate the growing number of immigrants. As Bentley states: "To preserve its existence it must simultaneously keep in play strategies by which it can incorporate the guilt of that colonial exploitation within its presiding narrative, without threatening the framework of the whole" (487). The answer, Bentley suggests, is multiculturalism (487). Multiculturalism has become a narrative that is a part of the narrative of Englishness.

Multiculturalism and Englishness have a conflicting, but dialectical relationship. As Bentley states, the terms are regarded by critics as either opposites, overlapping or mutual (483). In the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students*, the term "multicultural" is explained as "relating to or made up of several cultural or ethnic groups". The definition presents a space where different ethnicities and cultures live together as a unity, i.e. a multicultural country is a state where individuals are free to have their own culture and ethnicity and still be part of a whole. In itself, this comes across as a positive and inclusive narrative; however, it is important to analyse the power structure behind it. Bentley explains multiculturalism as a "manifestation

of post-colonial guilt" (487). The notion of a civilising mission in the missionary narrative was, as mentioned, a way of lessening the moral sting of colonisation. However, when decolonisation became a reality, the mission no longer worked as an explanation for the endeavour. Hence, the idea of a multicultural society came to life. In his essay "Diversity", Louis Menand challenges the concept of a multicultural society. Menand argues that multiculturalism wants to deflate the idea of a common culture; however, in doing so, multiculturalism deflates any idea of communality (347). Put differently, when arguing that the idea of a common culture is arbitrary, the idea of sub-cultures also becomes arbitrary. The diversifying process within multiculturalism creates different sub-cultures, but also simultaneously breaks them down. In the end, everyone is different from everyone else and there is no sense of communality. As an answer to this complication, Menand states that rather than being multicultural, society has become mixed:

> What has happened in American life since the mid-1980s is a cultural phenomenon which is the consequence of not group mixing, not group separation […] But the consequence is that insofar 'multiculturalism' means *genuine* diversity – insofar it refers to functionally autonomous subcultures within a dominant culture – The United States is becoming not more multicultural, but less. (348)

As the quotation demonstrates, multiculturalism fails to acknowledge the way in which the cultures become intertwined. The term hybridity explains this phenomenon.

As explained by Loomba, the notion of "hybridity" is related to the terms creolization and mestizaje discussed in the previous chapter (171). Following his work on large-scale identity construction, Bhabha uses the term hybridity to explain the dialogic relationship between nationalities, ethnicities and identities (Leitch et.al. 2351). Bhabha wished to expand on Derrida's theories on binarism. Compared to creolization and mestizaje, hybridity is a more general term, i.e. not specifically linked to a location or a certain kind of cross-culture mixing. Specifically, Bhabha uses the term to break down binaries created by Western thought (Leitch et.al. 2351), which concurs with the aim of this thesis. As the *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* explains "hybridity is the margin where cultural differences come into contact and conflict and unsettle all the stable identities that are constructed around oppositions such as past and present, inside and outside, or inclusion or exclusion" ("Hybridity").

Loomba points to the word's origin in biology. The term was originally used in botany to describe a cross between two different species resulting in a hybrid. Evolving from its origin

in biology, Victorians also used the term crudely to describe the offspring of a mixed-ethnicity copulation (Loomba 171). Later, the term has taken a more encompassing form, and now also describes cultural mixing. As Laura Moss explains in "The Politics of Everyday Hybridity: Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*", hybridity is not appropriation nor acculturation, but the third product created when two cultures meet (12). Moss uses the term differently than Bhabha. While Moss uses the term to describe an occurrence of a new element, Bhabha uses the term to describe a space between two elements, but does not describe it as an element on its own. The contrast is important when discussing the term in relation to the missionary narrative.

The reason why it is important to explain concepts such as "Englishness", "multiculturalism", and "hybridity" in this context is that they comprise 'mini-narratives' within the larger narrative that is ideology and culture. In their own way, these concepts are all related to the missionary narrative, and a common characteristic is that they do not fully resist it. Englishness, as a set of signifiers constructed as a narrative, still puts forth the imagined division between the Metropolis and the Other. Multiculturalism goes further in having a more encompassing view on society, but the term does not incorporate hybridity. Hybridity, while trying to name the mixing of cultures between the colonial authority and the colonial subject, still, as Bhabha presents the term, explains the world with the Metropolis and Other binary, only with a grey area in between. In Bhabha's representation, hybridity can be seen as a synonym to the concept of racial pollution, although in cultural terms rather than racial.

Nevertheless, the concepts can also be used to resist the missionary narrative. The way in which Moss interprets Bhabha gives the term a new force. Moss' modification of the term functions better to resist the missionary narrative. As Moss states: "the myth of 'an' English national, or even post-national, identity has been replaced by an acceptance, or at least acknowledgement, of a multiplicity of identities" (12). Compared to Bhabha, Moss uses the term as a counter voice to Englishness and multiculturalism. Even though both Englishness and multiculturalism were supposed to resist the missionary narrative, they have been surpassed. The point is that the use of such terms always must be accompanied by an assessment of the impact they have. Moreover, they should be developed continually to correspond with the world. Specifically, Moss' view on hybridity takes a clearer stance against the missionary narrative. The missionary narrative wanted Metropolitan civilization to spread to the Other, but Moss highlights the fact that the transaction between culture is always a two-way bargain. Moss' conception of the term further resists the Metropolis and Other binary.

5.1.2 Westernism and Traditionalism

In his essay, "The Empire Renarrated: *Season of Migration to the North* and the Reinvention of the Present", Saree S. Makdisi discusses the novel *Season to Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih as a counternarrative to *Heart of Darkness*. As Makdisi sees it, *Season to Migration to the North* tells the afterlife of the colonial project and tries to deflate the colonial power structures (535). In my opinion, *White Teeth* can in a similar way be seen as a counternarrative to *Heart of Darkness*. The novel portrays a reality where the colonial enterprise has not resulted in the Metropolitan conversion of the Other, but portrays the hybridity that has occurred instead of the conversion. Therefore, Makdisi's essay provides relevant insight to conflicts that also present in *White Teeth*. At the core of his essay is the dispute in Arab postcolonial discourse between "traditionalism" and "Westernism". According to Makdisi, this dispute dates back to the nineteenth century. Speaking specifically about Arab societies, Makdisi claims that the ideology of modernity has been, and is, in competition with the ideology of traditionalism. The process of modernization in the Arab world was spurred on by a pressure to become more European. Somehow, there was an assumption of equivalence between the European and the modern (Makdisi 535-536). Makdisi argues that the dispute ended in a compromise that "institutionalized a permanent crisis of modernization in Arab societies" (537).

In regards to this crisis, Makdisi analyses the novel *Season of Migration to the North*. He uses this novel because it "lies between the traditional categories of East and West – that confusing zone in which the culture of an imperial power clashes with that of its victims" (Makdisi 537). Importantly, *White Teeth* deals with the same zone, only within the Metropolis. Especially, the characters Samad, Alsana, Millat, and Magid are in a similar situation as some of the characters of *Season of Migration of the North*, i.e. trapped between a traditional culture and a dominant culture. In *Season of Migration of the North*, three alternatives are represented for dealing with the opposition between traditionalism and Westernism. The first option is to try to retrieve a precolonial past. The second option is to bind together the past with the postcolonial future (Makdisi 539). The third option, however, Makdisi calls a "double negation", wherein the novel resists the social realities of both the past and the present and, thereby, creates a new present (545). Put differently, Makdisi argues that the novel manages to transcend the binaries created by the missionary narrative and highlight repressed issues. In light of Makdisi's analysis of *Season of Migration to the North*, I have chosen to view *White Teeth* as an exemplification of the ways in which false binaries create difficulty, while simultaneously presenting a space beyond these binaries as a double negation.

In my opinion, the traditionalism and Westernism division is a counternarrative to the missionary narrative. the imagined division between traditionalism versus Westernism is similar to the imagined division between the Metropolis and the Other. However, the two oppositions are based on different ideological narratives. As mentioned, the missionary narrative is based on imperial ideology, while the traditionalism and Westernism division is based on a narrative that tries to counter imperial ideologies. Traditionalism and Westernism put forth a narrative with the East as a traditional and dignified society, and the West as a corrupting force. The narrative is stuck in the same binary as the missionary narrative, but the reasoning behind the binary is reversed, i.e. traditionalism is the superior while Westernism is the inferior. In *White Teeth*, these two narratives are both in play. Moreover, the novel demonstrates how both narratives restrict the individual.

5.2 Smart Cookies Also Need Re-Education

Smith's project is, as I see it, to both give an example of how the missionary narrative restricts the individual and point to a possible escape route. With *White Teeth*, she puts into question the imagined opposition between the West and the East and exemplifies hybridity. One of the main characters in the novel, Samad, is a Bangladeshi who has immigrated to Britain. Samad believes that he and his family have been corrupted by Britain: "I have been corrupted by England, I see that now – my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted" (Smith 144). What we see here is, as in *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a belief in contamination. However, in contrast to both *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Samad refers to cultural rather than racial contamination. He feels trapped between his so-called 'roots' and his Metropolitan location. Samad views the West and the East as stark oppositions and is unable to come to terms with the "western" traits of his personality, i.e. his drinking, masturbation and infidelity. Torn between his convictions and his actions, Samad becomes increasingly discontent with his own actions and believes that England and the West are to blame. Put differently, he believes in the binary between traditionalism and Westernism, and, therefore, believes in the corrupting force of the West.

As a consequence, Samad grows increasingly conservative. He objects to the imperial force in his own life and tries reconnecting with what he believes to be a more authentic and traditional Muslim culture. As Makdisi explains in relation to *Season of Migration to the North,* "opposition to imperialism can […] be diverted into a futile search for traditions, through which the postcolonial intellectual attempts (if only symbolically) to reembrace his or her own people

and 'their' culture" (537). Makdisi's argument is comparable to the Esty's argument about the longing for traditional societies, mentioned in subchapter 2.3 (Esty 24-26). Thus, Samad tries to reembrace what he perceives as the Other. He believes that his heritage is an opposite to the world and culture around him, and therefore, he should strive to reconnect with his ancestors' culture. In effect, Samad is othering his own lineage. Since Samad is convinced of the traditionalism and Westernism division, he is not able to incorporate his hybridity in this image. Even though Samad is not primarily concerned with the Metropolis/Other binary, he is still trapped by a binary way of thinking. The traditionalism and Westernism binary is a way to resist the missionary narrative, but is does not free the individual to express hybridity. In my opinion, the idea of traditionalism and Westernism does not deflate the missionary narrative, only rebrands the limitations and adds to the displacement. Samad is not only in limbo by one binary, but by two. As an example, Samad wonders what his place will be after the war: "Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an English man there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?" (112). The quotation shows how the traditionalism and Westernism binary restricts his relation to Bengal, while the Metropolis and Other binary restricts his relation to England.

Similarly, other characters in *White Teeth* feel displaced because binarism. The narrator explains that the character Millat is in the same position, saying that "he stood schizophrenic, one foot in Bengal and one in Willesden. In his mind he was as much there as here" (219). Millat, as Samad's son, demonstrates how the feeling of displacement travels across generations. In a way, Millat represents the generation that is supposed to be "saved" by the new concept of multiculturalism. However, he is just as limited as his father before him. The so-called "multicultural society" does not enable him to express his hybridity. In a way, this shows how the discourse around the missionary narrative has progressed further than society.

With *White Teeth*, Smith illustrates the unreasonableness of situating people in this contrived dichotomy. Smith points to the ways that epistemic violence, that is the construction of the Other (Bunch 12), creates an opposition so that the individual must choose between the Metropolis and the Other. Moreover, she illustrates the fear it causes: "But it makes an immigrant laugh to hear the fears of the nationalist, scared of infection, penetration, miscegenation, when this is small fry, *peanuts*, compared to what the immigrant fears – dissolution, *disappearance"* (327). Because of the false opposition created in the binary, people who perceive themselves as Other fear becoming nullified. However, since the Metropolis/Other division is a misconception, there is no such thing as hybrid-less identity. The individual will never be able to become one or the other. As seen in the quotations above,

cultural constructs such as the missionary narrative result in characters like Samad and Millat feeling torn, because it prevents them from seeing the world in other terms than the Metropolis and Other binary. However, as a result of their hybrid status, the binary will never provide them with answers. Nevertheless, the missionary narrative's division is all-encompassing and shapes the way in which the characters view the world.

In *White Teeth*, Smith uses the twins, Millat and Magid, to demonstrate the inescapability of this narrative. In an attempt to reconnect his family with what Samad views as their culture, he kidnaps and deports one of his twins to Bangladesh. The reasoning behind the abduction is to make Magid's developing identity more in line with Samad's idea of Islam. Ironically, Samad achieves the opposite result. When Magid comes back from Bangladesh, he is an atheist and in awe of English culture. As he states in a letter to his English mentor: *"It had long been my intention to make Asian countries sensible places, where order prevailed, disaster was prepared for, and a young boy was in no danger from a falling vase […] We must be more like the English"* (italics removed, 288). Millat, the twin who stays in the supposed Metropolis, however, becomes a forerunner of a fundamentalist Muslim terrorist group. With the juxtaposition between Millat and Magid, Smith is able to show how narratives fail to describe the world and, in their failure, prevents life and understanding. Magid and Millat are both unable to express themselves because of the Metropolis and Other binary. In a quest for acceptance, both Magid and Millat try to align their lives with the narrative. Magid tries to become a part of what he views as the Metropolis, but with his Bengali appearance it is impossible. In the eyes of the narrative, he will never be categorised as a 'full' member of the perceived Metropolis. Contrastively, Millat tries to be one with his perception of the Other, however, since the Other is a fiction created only to give the construction of the Metropolis an opposite, he is unable to channel any meaningful connection to the Other. He bases his hatred for the Western world on his perception of a conflict between traditionalism and Westernism, however, the opposition is a construction derived from the missionary narrative.

As I have discussed previously, the 'mission' in the missionary narrative became less prevalent after decolonisation, however, there was still a view that the Metropolitan society was preferable and that the Other should ambulate the Metropolitan civilization. In *White Teeth*, such a position is particularly clear with reference to the Chalfen family. As an intellectual, middle class family, the Chalfens represents an ideal that the Metropolis wants to put forth. When Irie, Millat and Josuha are caught smoking hash, their punishment is that Irie and Millat have to have study sessions at Joshua's house. The logic behind this unusual punishment is, as the principal states: "Bringing children of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds into contact

with kids who might have something to offer them" (308). The Chalfens regard themselves as superior intellectuals. Moreover, they believe that they have a responsibility to help Millat and Irie. They believe strongly in the "Responsibility of Intellectuals" (353) and "A good English education" (355). However, in their quest to help Irie and Millat, Millat ends up in a terrorist group, Joshua in a radical environmentalist group, and, after a while, the Chalfens also lose interest in Irie. In short, except for assisting Irie's academic progression, the Chalpfens end up creating a lot of problems.

Mrs Chalfen inadvertently describes the missionary narrative's epistemic violence when describing the effect of thrips on a plant: "Yes. Thrips have good *instincts*: essentially they are charitable, productive organisms which help the plant in its development. Thrips *mean* well, but thrips go too far […] Thrip will infect generation after generation of delphiniums if you let it" (316). In a way, this small narrative comprises an allegory to the missionary narrative. Essentially, narratives are the way one makes sense of the world and is at the base a necessary to understand complex structures, however, can in its simplifications create structures that in turn affects one's view in a disadvantageous way. The missionary narrative explains the world in a way that locks the individual.

A symbol of the complex cultural and social embeddedness of the missionary narrative is the school that Millat, Irie and Joshua attend. As the narrator explains, their school's "Victorian benefactor" was a plantation owner named Flecker Glenard (303). The school was the former workhouse own by Glenard, where he wanted Jamaican workers to learn English work ethic and English workers to learn Jamaican godliness. Glenard embarked on this venture because it was something to "send him into his dotage cushioned by a feeling of goodwill and worthiness. Something for the people. The ones he could see from his window. Out there in the field" (304). As the quotation suggests, he wishes to continue the civilising mission he has contributed to in Jamaica. However, as the narrator points out, what Glenard's achieves is very different from his intentions:

> Glenard's influence turned out to be personal, not professional or educational: it ran through people's blood and the blood of their families; it ran through three generations of immigrants who could feel both abandoned and hungry even when in the bosom of their families in front of a mighty feast; and it even ran through Irie Jones of Jamaica's Bowden clan, though she didn't know it. (307)

As the quotation suggests, Flecker Glenard's choices and actions have had a rippling effect on Irie and her family. In my opinion, the school is a symbol for the missionary narrative. As a remnant of the views and deeds of a slave owner, the school represents the way in which the missionary narrative is still in place, only disguised. Previously, the historical person Glenard could parade his civilising mission in an obvious way, however, in a modern society, the school Glenard parades the civilising mission in a more covert manner. The missionary narrative is still in place, regardless of decolonisation. As a result, hybrid identities are still regarded as erroneous rather than the norm. Consequently, hybrid or displaced identities have a harder time accepting their own identity.

One difficulty that Smith points to regarding self-acceptance in the context of such ideological narratives, has to do with beauty. Since the Metropolis is regarded as superior, their aesthetic features are also regarded as such. Therefore, people who are categorised as Other might feel a gap between the dominant narrative of what beauty should entail and their own reflection. As a displaced identity, Irie experiences this gap. Irie, genetically half European and half Jamaican, struggles to come to terms with her own reflection. She believes that she has "ledges genetically designed with another country in mind, another climate" (266), i.e. that she does not fit into what the narrative puts forth as beautiful. Furthermore, the narrator explains why Irie does not find herself attractive: "Irie didn't know she was fine. There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a stranger land" (266). Irie's perception of beauty is too affected by the missionary narrative and its binary for her to be able to truly see herself. As a family friend comments after Irie has gotten extensions to her hair to make it look more European: "'Look: you're a smart cookie, Irie. But You've been thought all kinds of shit. You've got to re-educate yourself'" (284). This quotation is genuinely at the core of Smith's comment on the missionary narrative. Smith wants the readers to understand how narratives are learnt and then internalised. To further this image, the chapter focusing on Irie's part of the story is aptly named "The Miseducation of Irie Jones" (265). By miseducation, Smith is referring to the way in which the narratives of the Metropolis are presented as truths.

This miseducation is exemplified when Irie and her class read *Sonnet 127* by Shakespeare. While Irie is contemplating her appearance and her perceived "wrongness" (Smith 268), her class is doing a close reading of a canonical work. In the novel, the line "in the old age black was not counted fair" is read by a student as background noise when Irie ponders what she thinks is her own lack of beauty (italics removed, Smith 268). Irie's teacher does not comment on the implications of the texts, although she adds that: "She is not black in the

modern sense. There weren't any… well, Afro-Carri-bee-yans in England at that time, dear. […] unless she was a slave of some kind […] Never read what is old with a modern ear" (Smith 271- 272). The canon, which is predominantly associated with Western literature, is one of the ways that the narratives of the past are perpetuated. In *White Teeth*, the canon is merged with the modern. With this amalgamation of the past (represented in a literary classic) and the present, Smith achieves a comparison between of the two. In effect, Smith deludes the line between past and present and points to how little has changed. The standards of beauty are still governed by an imagined opposition. If there is nothing standing against regarding the past in binaries, it is difficult to regard the present in any other way. Therefore, the teacher is wrong to argue that one should not do modern readings of old texts. It is exactly through this type of reading that one can reveal how texts can maintain misconceptions about the world. In my opinion, Smith uses the same technique as Jean Rhys in this part of her novel. She juxtaposes a canonical text with another perspective. Smith, as Rhys before her, points to the way the missionary narrative is embedded in the European canon.

With *White Teeth*, Smith comments on the ways that narratives create grave misconceptions about the world. However, as Makdisi comments on regarding *Season of Migration to the North*, Smith also uses her novel to transcend these narratives and presents an alternative beyond the binaries that they produce. In *White Teeth*, several characters feel torn between these binaries. However, Smith also uses a double negation to portray an alternative to the binaries. The alternative is represented in Irie's unborn child. Irie falls pregnant after having sex with both Millat and Magid. Since Magid and Millat are identical twins, the parentage of the unborn child can never be established. Put differently, the child can never be tied perfectly to a past beyond itself. At first Irie is troubled by this uncertainty; eventually, however, Irie comes to enjoy the lack of connection to the past. In a sense, Irie is the character who consciously wants an alternative to the binary. Previously, she had a revelation when Samad has a breakdown:

> Suddenly this thing, this *belonging*, it seems like some long, dirty lie […] As Samad described this dystopia with a look of horror, Irie was ashamed to find that the land of accidents sounded like *paradise* to her. Sounded like freedom. (Smith 407-408)

From the quotation it is clear that Samad feels torn between the binary that is the Metropolis and the Other. Moreover, Samad hints at the falseness of the narrative, although he views the falseness as a tragedy rather than an emancipation. Irie, however, regards the unmaking of the

binary as liberating. Tired of feeling displaced, Irie dreams of belonging to no place. After a while, she realises that her child will in fact not belong to any particular place: "if it was not somebody's child, could it be nobody's child? […] That is how her child seemed. A perfectly plotted thing with no real coordinates" (Smith 516). In my opinion, what Irie wants is an escape from the missionary narrative and its binary. Moreover, the narrator of the novel also comments on Irie's child and states that the "child can never be mapped exactly nor spoken of with any certainty" (Smith 527). In effect, the child will perhaps be able to express herself more than the previous generation. Smith points to a future where the binary is less prominent, and perhaps even recognised as a false narrative.

5.3 Conclusion

Smith's statement regarding the missionary narrative is that the idea that binaries, such as the Metropolis/Other binary do not explain the world. Smith shows that the binaries do not function in any meaningful way. Instead, *White Teeth* is a testament to how the missionary narrative and other narratives create problems for the individual. The novel complicates not only the missionary narrative, but also traditionalism and Westernism. Because of the narratives, the individuals have difficulty developing a true sense of self-acceptance. With the split focus of this novel, Smith expresses that all the viewpoints are equally important and equally different. All the characters experience the same reality; however, they all experience it differently. Compared to *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *White Teeth* manages to incorporate more experiences and transcend the Metropolis/Other binary to a greater degree. *White Teeth* does not only focus on the occurrence of a hybrid space but deflates the notion of anything else than hybridity. In a neo-colonial world, Moss' interpretation of hybridity is inescapable.

As *Season of Migration to the North*, *White Teeth* deconstructs "many of the traditional dualisms that are associated with postcolonial discourse" (Makdisi 543). However, *White Teeth* also comments on the formation of these dualisms:

> Because immigrants have always been particularly prone to repetition – it's something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or East to West or from island to island. Even when you arrive, you're still going back and forth; your children are going round and round. There's no proper term for it – *original sin* is too harsh; maybe *original trauma* would be better. (Smith 161)

Gleaned from this quotation, the 'original trauma' refers to the colonial venture and the missionary narrative. The quotation shows how the missionary narrative has affected the lives of the descendants of the colonised. Even though the traditional forms of colonisation have been put to an end, the effect is still in place because of the narratives. The narratives keep the system of domination in place, which in turn affects the individual. *White Teeth* tries to transcend this dominating power.

As an example, *White Teeth* manages to transcend and comment on both the idea of multiculturalism and Englishness. The novel presents the idea of multiculturalism as inaccurate when describing the postcolonial world. Multiculturalism is supposed to incorporate several cultures within a greater one; however, *White Teeth* demonstrates that there is no such thing as a set culture. Cultures are always hybrid. The notion of Englishness is also deflated by *White Teeth*. As mentioned previously, the debate around Englishness tries to establish the core of what it means to be English. As the character Alsana puts it:

> you go back and back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale! (Smith 236)

Within this quotation lies the transcendental factor in *White Teeth*. Smith points to the way that the notion of roots and culture is a fabrication that functions in ways that supresses the individual. As the narrator comments "*homeland* is one of the magical fantasy words like *unicorn* and *soul* and *infinity* that now passed into the language" (Smith 402). The narrator steps away from the missionary narrative and its focus on nationality and ethnicity. Smith contests the idea that concepts based in the past should not govern the future. Moreover, Smith shows the danger of idealising concepts such as "homeland" and "origin" which are located in the past. Put simply, *White Teeth* challenges the reader to research his/her convictions about identity and the conventions of society. The novel represents a world where such binaries are gradually revealed as distorted compared to what they try to categorise.

Due to the novel's resistance of the dualism created by the missionary narrative, the novel functions as a counternarrative. *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as mentioned, only resist the missionary narrative, while *White Teeth* more actively points to a break from the narrative. In my opinion, *White Teeth* takes a more progressive stand against the missionary narrative. While *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* both depict the ramifications of the

missionary narrative, *White Teeth* simultaneously comments on the structure creating the imagined difference and, furthermore, signifies a way around the structure.

6. Conclusion

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, all three novels have a clear relation to the missionary narrative. Together, they provide an outline of how the missionary narrative has changed and, more importantly, how the critique of the narrative has changed. The discourse around the narrative has progressed and so has its criticism. In *Heart of Darkness*, the narrative was indoctrinated in society and rarely questioned. With his novel, Conrad can in many ways be said to open the critique of the missionary narrative. While the novel is still trapped in the Metropolis/Other binary, it portrays the imperial relationship with a sceptical eye. The critique of the narrative then consisted of a display of injustice and points to the ways the narrative is inaccurate in its depiction of the imperial venture. Published nearly a century later, *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes a more direct approach to the way in which the binary restrains the individual. Rhys achieves a representation of the struggle in the Metropolis/Other binary. She comments on the difficulty that the binary creates and the exclusion that follows. Rhys has a more direct approach than Conrad. She is not standing on the outside looking in, but exemplifying the struggle in the middle ground. She portrays the limitations of the missionary narrative. Culminating from new global migration, *White Teeth* paints the picture of a modern multifaceted society. As concluded, *White Teeth* has a more meticulous critique. *White Teeth* does not simply exemplify or point out the difficulties of the binary. It hovers over the narrative and its binary and comments on the mechanisms which implement the ideological structure. Therefore, *White Teeth* goes further in its commentary on the missionary narrative and its binary. What is more, Smith manages to transcend the narrative and point to a reality without its ideological force.

As with all academic work, there are more than one way to discuss the same subject. This thesis has focused on three particular novels picked from a wide selection of possible literature. Both *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* are prominent novels within the colonial discourse, however, if I were to do the thesis over, I would perhaps choose less well-known novels. For example, *Season of Migration to the North* by Taleb Salih, as discussed in chapter 5.2 would have been an alternative. Moreover, *Heart of Darkness* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* both focus white characters. To deepen the analysis of displaced identities, I could have chosen novels with main characters who were colonised or descendants of the colonised, as in *White Teeth*. Similarly, literature with a less prominent imperial theme would also have been beneficial. By analysing novels without a clear link to imperialism, I could have shown more hidden consequences of imperial narratives. Additionally, the thesis could have benefitted from

a fourth novel. Ideally, the fourth novel would be an example where the missionary narrative is not resisted at all. The novels I have discussed have all had a critical eye towards the missionary narrative. The forth novel would demonstrate how the other three novels differ. Especially in regard to *Heart of Darkness*, a Victorian novel would have been helpful in the analysis, since Conrad's critique is partially difficult for the modern audience to understand. However, because of the thesis' temporal and physical limitations, the analysis was condensed to three works.

This thesis is a testament to the role of literature. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Bennett and Royle protest the text and the world dichotomy (28-29). The dichotomy presents texts and the world as separates; however, the concept of performativity resists this notion. Literature has a performative function where it can not only critique, but also change the world. Therefore, novels like *Heart of Darkness*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *White Teeth* are examples of how literature can make the readers question their surroundings and, subsequently, change the world. As an examining force, literature has the ability to question the narratives in a different way than other ways of critique. Literature can help to disrupt narratives and created binaries by providing perspective. All three novels give the reader a new perspective one the missionary narrative. The intention of the novels is not to tell the reader what to believe, but to open their eyes and make them question their own convictions. The beauty of literature is to make the reader think for themselves. In my opinion, this thesis shows how important literature is in countering ideological narratives.

The missionary narrative is an imperial fabrication, but has repercussions that affect the world today. Thus, it is important not to lean back on set ways of thinking. Without the help of literature and other social commentaries, it is easy to fall into the pits of binaries. Today, there are many issues that, without proper analysis, leans themselves towards simplification. As an example, the idea of East versus the West is still present, and without counternarratives, this opposition will breed opposition. In the face of issues like terrorism, it is easy to have an "us" versus "them" mentality; however, such a way of thinking is not beneficial in order to resolve the problem. Furthermore, a binary mentality will exacerbate the problem. The place of literature is then to complexify these simplifications and, thereby, challenge monolithic narratives. In my opinion, the relation to narratives is what differentiates good literature from not that good literature. Literature can in many ways be the re-educator that counters the miseducation of narratives.

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