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A Feminist and Postcolonial Approach to Charlotte Brontë's Novel *Jane Eyre* (1847)

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1. Introduction

"It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism […] was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English", claims Gayatri Spivak in her famous essay "Three Women's Text and a Critique of Imperialism" in which she analyses Charlotte Brontë's bildungsroman *Jane Eyre* (243). Indeed, simultaneously with the growing British Empire, the topics of imperialism, race, and slavery became increasingly conspicuous in British novels (David 86). The reason for that may be the awareness of those issues in the British society and the preferred genre of novels in the nineteenth century. According to Deirdre David, in the Victorian age, "novels were valued for being a fictitious meditation on and mediation of reality" (388). Since everyone seemed to be involved in the affairs of the Empire either through family members in the colonies or through their own participation in the flourishing plantation business (Brantlinger "Postcolonial" 2), consequently this found entrance in literature as well.

Jane Eyre, as a realist novel of the mid-Victorian period, is no exception of this phenomenon. Even though, at first sight, it solely deals with the coming of age of its heroine Jane, imperial motifs run through the whole book. The arguably most overt evidence of them is Mr Rochester's wife Bertha. Her construction by Jane as Other, which would be considered as deeply racist today, will be the central focus of this thesis. However, Bertha's Otherness is not reasoned by race and heritage alone but also by her being a woman. Since "the default human in Anglo-American Victorian culture is the white […] male" (Heiniger 7), Bertha is already Other because of her gender. Moreover, the patriarchal society of the mid-Victorian age allocates specific expectations of femininity to women which they need to fulfil to appertain. Through Jane's construction, the figure of Bertha does not remotely do this which contributes to the impression that her representation in the novel is problematic.

I chose the novel *Jane Eyre* for my bachelor thesis because it offers a rich amount of complex relations between race, gender and class which seem to be rewarding to analyse. Furthermore, though there already exists plenty of secondary material, there are still gaps concerning Bertha, her construction and the influence of the narrative situation on that, which I would like to fill.

Due to that, my aim is to ascertain how Jane's narration of the story and Bertha's representation correlate. Additionally, I want to observe how the perception of Bertha as being Other is constructed and which impact that has on the characters and on the novel itself. Concurrently with this, my goal is to determine the possible reasons for Bertha's representation as Other and the influence which the attitude of the white middle-class Britons in the mid-Victorian age may have on that.

Since *Jane Eyre* is considered as Charlotte Brontë's best-known and most successful novel, there exist numerous – often contradicting – readings and interpretations of it. As it is a bildungsroman by and about a middle-class woman, it especially attracted feminist approaches with Gilbert and Gubar as two of its most prominent representatives. Their construction of the Jamaican Creole Bertha Mason as Jane's "dark double" (Gilbert 492) has been widely discussed and has later been challenged by the emergence of postcolonial readings. Other feminist critics, like Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter and Pat Macpherson, emulate Gilbert and Gubar's deeds in that they mainly focus on Jane, her development, and the role of the middle-class woman in a patriarchal society while ignoring "the complicity between the female or feminist voice and imperial processes and motifs in the novel" (Azim 173). Bertha, on the other hand, gets deprived "of any independent textual significance by confining her to the privatistic cell of Jane's psyche" (Donaldson 16). She is only relevant to smooth the way for Jane while her own character is usually neglected. In order to fill this gap, postcolonial critics as Spivak, Azim, Brantlinger and Meyer concentrate on Bertha's construction as Other, and on the colonial motifs in the novel. However, though they follow the same approach, their opinions about Bertha differ significantly. While Carl Plasa, for example, compares her to a "revolted slave" (90), Jenny Sharpe labels her "a female version of the 'immoral West Indian planter'" (qtd. in Sharpe 45) Nevertheless, an aspect which both feminist and postcolonial critics have in common is that they mostly disregard the narrative situation and its influences. Only few critics, like Kevin Stevens and Carolyn Williams, focus on the narration, and they agree that Bertha's representation by Jane cannot be trustworthy (Stevens 209-213, Williams 12-14).

To find out more about the construction of Bertha Mason and her functions in the text, I will use a feminist and a postcolonial approach. The latter will allow for an analysis of the imperial motifs and unfold the meaning of the Other in the Victorian era and for the novel itself. Central concepts for that will be those of being Other, the meaning of race, and that of colonialism. On the other hand, the feminist approach will serve for an analysis of Bertha's (lacking) femininity, gendered hierarchies and the relationship between Jane and Bertha. For that, the terms of patriarchy, gender, gender construction, and femininity will be used.

With the aid of those approaches, I will prove the following thesis: I argue that Charlotte Brontë's bildungsroman *Jane Eyre* offers a particularly ambiguous representation of the Caribbean Creole character Bertha Mason. This serves the construction of the female protagonist and first-person narrator Jane Eyre as well as that of the central male character Mr Rochester. Jane Eyre's characterisation of her opponent presents Bertha Mason as the inferior racial and sexual Other demonstrating an attitude which is deeply embedded in white middle-class thinking of mid-Victorian Britain.

The thesis will begin with a presentation of the feminist and postcolonial approach, as well as with the definition of the key concepts which I mentioned above. Thereafter, I will

analyse some important imperialist tropes in chapter three. The tropes chosen will illustrate the attitude of the white English middle-class towards the Empire and due to that, towards Otherness and the role of the Victorian woman. Subsequently, the main part of the thesis will focus on the character construction of Bertha Mason. In order to fill the gap of the missing analysis of the narrative situation, the fourth chapter of my thesis will begin with the very same thing. The aim here is to ascertain the reliability of the narrator and how it influences the perception of the character Bertha. Afterwards, I will analyse the character conception and characterisation to show how exactly Bertha is represented and which facts about her are available at all. Furthermore, the chapter will reveal the racist undertone with which Bertha is depicted as the inferior Other, and additionally, the intentions that Jane may have for representing her opponent in the way she does. With the latter, I will continue in the last chapter of my thesis. There, I will focus on the overall plot construction, how the plot serves to portray Jane and Rochester as superior, and Bertha's specific functions in that.

2. Theories and Methods

2.1 The Feminist Approach

Feminist Criticism as it is known today emerged in the 1960s as a result of the "women's movement" in which women's inequality in society was once again proclaimed and represented in literature (Barry 123). One of the main aims of Feminist Criticism is to "attend to women's marginalised and often silenced voices" (Kiguwa 225). Thereby, it is explicitly political, deems patriarchy and gender "organising principle[s] in society" and frequently takes intersectionality into account (226-7). In my bachelor thesis, I will predominantly use it with regard to Bertha and her standing in society as a marginalised and silenced woman. For that, I will apply certain terms and concepts, namely that of gender, gender construction, femininity, and patriarchy, which I will define in this chapter.

The first central concept is that of gender. For my thesis, I will use the definition of Edwin Segal who claims that gender is a "culturally based complex of norms, values, and behaviors that a particular culture assigns to one biological sex or another" (3). Thus, there is an important distinction between the terms 'sex' which is biological and 'gender' which is social. In different cultures, people would probably ascribe the same defining attributes to the biological sex, whereas their understanding of miscellaneous genders would likely be more varied. In order to analyse *Jane Eyre*, it should be kept in mind that the concept of gender as we know it today certainly did not exist in the Victorian period. Therefore, it is assumable that the Victorians valued gender, as a social construct, to be just as natural as the biological sex. This attitude can also be observed in the novel's treatment of men and women and in the characteristics, which are attributed to different genders there.

Gender construction, as the second concept, is intrinsically linked to that of gender and also to that of femininity. According to Sophie Freud, gender construction "postulates that our understanding of the world is based not on objective facts, truths, or realities, but on more or less consensual social constructions" (38). Hence, it shows how gender is constructed through aspects which are "not dependent on biological realities" (Segal 3) but which are a result of cultural agreement. In my analysis, I will use that concept to explore how Bertha is represented as a sexual Other.

The third concept is that of femininity. Just as gender and gender construction, it is not based on biological facts but on constructs which a specific society creates and which differ among cultures. In my thesis, I will deploy the definition of Sarah Gamble who states that femininity is "a set of rules governing female behaviour and appearance, the ultimate aim of which is to make women conform to a male ideal of sexual attractiveness" (230). However, in the Victorian period, the sexual attraction was mostly not the overt reason for adapting to standards of femininity because feminine women should be too innocent to seek for that kind of affirmation (Steinbach 135). Instead, femininity was generally represented as „something to be admired and cultivated" (Heilmann 290). In *Jane Eyre*, it is evident that a large part of Jane's and Bertha's representation is the result of the novel's aim to let them please or not please the male characters and especially Rochester. This happens through constructing them as more or less female which, in turn, should make them more or less appealing.

The focus on the aims of men, which becomes apparent in the meaning of terms like femininity, leads to the last concept which I will concentrate on within the feminist approach: patriarchy. Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (214), and this is also how I will use the term during my analysis. In Jane Eyre, patriarchy is visible in the treatment of Jane, Bertha, and other women and in the way that men naturally consider themselves as superior. Especially Bertha is an object of Rochester's constant demonstration of power.

2.2 The Postcolonial Approach

The Postcolonial Approach emerged "as a distinct category" in the 1990s (Barry 194). According to Peter Barry, one main characteristic of postcolonial criticism is that it focuses on the depiction of non-Europeans as Other (196), whereby 'Otherness' is one of the concepts which I will define in this subchapter. A second consideration of postcolonialism is language which reveals "colonial structures" in literature (197). Moreover, a postcolonial perspective is used to discuss topics of identity and how it may be "doubled, or hybrid, or unstable" due to the Othering of different groups (197). All those aspects will support me in analysing Bertha's depiction as a racial Other and in exploring why the novel represents her as that. Central

concepts which I will deploy for that purpose are the meaning of race, Otherness, and colonialism.

Race is a term which seems to have several different meanings that vary depending on time and perspective. From a biological point of view, race is a synonym for subspecies (Templeton 263). However, genetic data sets prove that the variations in the DNA of people around the world are so small that one cannot speak of subspecies among homo sapiens (262). Features which are regularly used to refer to races, like the skin colour, are only "adaptive traits" and cannot justify a splitting of humans into distinct races (262). Nevertheless, in literature as well as in life, the term 'race' is often applied to humans of different origin or appearance. According to Susan Meyer, the categorisation of humans into races happens because of "historically specific economic and political conditions" (12). One example of that could be slavery, in consequence of which Africans were categorised as an inferior race by the colonisers to legitimise their treatment (12-3). Since those categories depend on the mentioned social conditions, the notion of race can change over time. Thus, race can be defined as "an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" (13). In my thesis, I will refer to the term of race as it was used in the Victorian period and especially in *Jane Eyre*. In that time of history, "scientists agreed that humankind was divided into discrete races, that race was a crucial determinant of physical, intellectual, and moral character, and that white Europeans were of the superior race" (15). This attitude is also overt in *Jane Eyre* and a main reason for the representation of Bertha as Other.

Otherness, then, as the second central concept, is defined as "the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group ("Us," the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups ("Them," Other) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination" (Staszak 2). Whereby, a difference emerges from facts while Otherness is the result of discourse (2). This principle can be applied to several areas, so that the creation of a racial as well as that of a sexual Other is possible. Due to that, Otherness is also a central term for feminist criticism. Nevertheless, I chose to define it in the postcolonial section because in my thesis, I will focus more on Bertha's representation as a racial Other. In both cases, however, an imbalance in power between the Self and the Other is essential for the creation of Otherness (2). Only the dominant group can "impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and […] devalue the particularity of others" (2). Hence, a black man can be interpreted as the Other of a white man, and a woman as the Other of a man but not the other way around (2). In the Victorian period, the process of racial Othering was reinforced by colonialism which made it easy to define an Other as opposed to the Western self. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha takes that part as the racial (and sexual) Other.

The last concept for my thesis within postcolonial criticism is that of colonialism. For that, I will deploy Osterhammel's definition which is the following:

> [Kolonialismus ist] eine Herrschaftsbeziehung zwischen Kollektiven, bei welcher die fundamentalen Entscheidungen über die Lebensführung der Kolonisierten durch eine kulturell andersartige und kaum anpassungswillige Minderheit von Kolonialherren unter vorrangiger Berücksichtigung externer Interessen getroffen und tatsächlich durchgesetzt werden. (21)

In the case of *Jane Eyre*, this means the relationship between the colonists in Britain and its colonies in the West Indies. Since Bertha Mason is from Jamaica, a British colony at that time, colonialism is an essential concept to understand her meaning in the novel's plot.

3. The English vs. the Other: Imperialist Tropes

In order to discern what it means that Bertha Mason is constantly constructed as the Other, it is necessary to analyse the attitude towards the Empire and the colonies that predominated in society during the time the novel was published. Considering that *Jane Eyre* is a realist novel, whose task it is to "represent nothing less than life itself" (D'Albertis 119), it is very likely that it suggests a mindset common in a middle-class woman in the mid-Victorian era which it exemplifies with its narrator Jane. That it really did so is supported by the novel's "immediate popular success" (Langland 393) after its publication in 1847, showing that *Jane Eyre* accomplished the objective of representing life in a way in that it pleased its Victorian readers. This was essential because novel-readers preferred narratives which had a "basis of shared human experiences and emotions" (Azim 98). Like many novels of that period, *Jane Eyre* rarely, if ever, addresses the Empire directly (Brantlinger "Postcolonial" 106), but it alludes to it through different imperialist tropes in "masked words" (148). Thus, an analysis of those tropes will lead to an improved understanding of the meaning of Otherness to the Victorian society, and due to that, of the reasons of Bertha's construction as Other.

First, it is vital to comprehend what imperialism meant to the British. According to Brantlinger, an imperialist ideology had three ingredients: "loyalty to the existing Empire", a belief in the "racial superiority of white Europeans" and "a belief in the civilizing mission of Britain" ("Rule*"* 8). All of those aspects can be found in differing manifestations in *Jane Eyre*.

Loyalty to the empire is most evident through patriotic statements of the characters in the novel and also through a clear outward demarcation. For example, Mr Rochester simultaneously demonises Jamaica and glorifies Europe when he reveals his personal past with Bertha to Jane. He describes the "sulphur-steams" and the mosquitos in Jamaica (*JE* 370) which are both associated with biblical elements: the sulphurous smell with hell and the mosquitos with the ten plagues – both obviously negatively connoted. At the end of his tirade, Rochester even mentions hell specifically in declaring that his whole life in Jamaica was hell and adds that "this is the air – those are the sounds of the bottomless pit" (371). Moreover, his

detailed report of a storm with its “black clouds”, the noises of the sea which he compares to an earthquake, and the moon that appears as “a hot cannon-ball” (371) contribute to his imagery of Jamaica as a dark and dangerous place. The storm functions as a gothic element here that “permeates the novel by turning commonplace phenomena (the weather) into symbolic realities” (Smith 82). Constructing Jamaica as a threat to the white man could also allude to the slave rebellions of the 1820s and 1830s, as Sue Thomas suggests (46). All in all, Rochester entirely excoriates Bertha’s home country, which is so different from England, and whereby does the same to Bertha herself.

In contrast to this depiction, Europe functions as the voice of reason. Rochester tells Jane how “a wind fresh from Europe blew over the ocean” and how after that “the storm broke, streamed, thundered, blazed, and the air grew pure” (*JE* 371). This metaphor illustrates how European Englishness takes control over the colony which is thus perceived as an uncivilized non-Western culture although the colonisers are whites themselves (Steinbach 62). Europe breaks the storm and with it, it does not only suppress the slave unrests, but also the insecurities of Rochester who suddenly knows what he has to do. “’Go,’ said Hope, ‘and live again in Europe’” he recites to Jane and remembers how his heart “filled with living blood” (*JE* 372). The thought of his English home revives him, and he makes it sound as if it even kept him from committing suicide. Thereby, Rochester’s patriotism and at the same time, his rejection of the tropical colony is obvious in the scene.

Nevertheless, it is not Rochester alone who displays patriotism and shows national pride. Jane, for instance, reflects that it would be better to be “free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England” than to live “in a fool’s paradise at Marseilles” (434). Later, she claims that in leaving England, she would “leave a loved […] land” and would “go to premature death” (488). In those quotes, the same trope of a simultaneous celebration of England and rejection of non-Western countries as displayed by Rochester is visible. This attitude seems to be characteristic of novels in the Victorian period and therefore, of middle-class society, as Brantlinger mentions in his essay “Empire and Nationalism” (252-253). There, he declares that in general, “British writers either assumed or asserted that Great Britain was the greatest nation the world had ever seen” (265). Although this is rather subtle in *Jane Eyre* because the actual topic of the British Empire is not discussed overtly, the quotes above show that patriotism pervades the story.

Moreover, it is not only important what is in the novel but also what is lacking. Therefore, it is noticeable that although Rochester married a plantation owner’s daughter and Jane inherited a fortune from her uncle in Madeira who probably traded in slave-produced goods, the topic of slavery does not explicitly occur in *Jane Eyre*. St John, who wants to go to India as a missionary, tries to convince Jane to accept the inheritance without mentioning that the practices his uncle used to gain this money may have been indefensible: “The entire fortune

is your right: my uncle gained it by his own efforts; he was free to leave it to whom he would", he declares (*JE* 467). Instead of making "real" slaves a subject of discussion then, it is Jane who represents herself as a slave several times in the novel, especially as a child. There, she calls her bullying cousin John Reed a "slave-driver" (6) and compares herself to a "rebel slave" (7) and a "revolted slave" (10) when she resists the seemingly unfair punishment. Though this choice of words suggests that they solely serve the construction of Jane's character as being an especially passionate child who perceives an unfair treatment more severely than other children her age, it must be remembered that Jane narrates the story from a distance of several years. However, there is no evidence that she reflects upon her feelings as a child and is retrospectively disapproving of them. Instead, she uses the slave metaphor again as an adult when Rochester tries to persuade her of accepting expensive clothes and jewellery as his future wife. In this situation, she likens Rochester to a sultan and herself to a slave whom the sultan's "gold and gems had enriched" (322). Afterwards, Rochester becomes the "Grand Turk" in their discussion who participates in "extensive slave-purchases" (322).

In both situations, Jane uses the slave metaphor to refer to her own life of "marginality and disempowerment" (Meyer 72) and "to represent class and gender inequality in England" (75). Certainly, her position as an educated white middle-class woman who works for a salary in a house that she has chosen cannot be compared to that of a slave in the West Indies on a plantation. In this sense, the metaphors "empty slavery of its racial signification", as Jenny Sharpe correctly argues (32). On the other hand, the representation of patriarchy should be shocking and show the severity of the situation for women in England (Plasa 82). So, in fact, "the concern is not with 'the horrors of slavery' in the West Indies, but with suffering much closer to home" (99), namely the unequal treatment of men and women in a patriarchal society. At the same time, due to the loyalty to the Empire and to the social norms of femininity, this is rarely addressed directly but rather through "transferences of metaphor" (85). Additionally, it is never the English man who oppresses someone in those metaphors but always a non-white person. For example, in the paragraph in which Jane feels like Rochester's "favourite slave" (82), he is compared to a sultan and not to an English emperor. The same is true for the following dialogue between the two in which Rochester depicts himself as a "Grand Turk" with his "seraglio" (*JE* 322) even though he, as a white Englishman, committed bigamy himself and thus, cannot claim that to be a typical Eastern transgression. This way of dealing with – or rather ignoring – the topic of slavery presents the belief in the nation and its English inhabitants to not be involved in cruel practices even though "a vague notion exists that there is something disgraceful in [the] tenure of India; that the native population has been somehow sacrificed to […] ambition and cupidity" (Martineau 55).

The second aspect of imperial ideology, that is believing white Europeans to be racially superior, is also visible in *Jane Eyre*, though it is expanded by a belief in the racial superiority

of white English people not only over non-white and non-Western cultures but also over other Europeans. The general feeling of superiority can already be found in the examples of slave metaphors mentioned above. In "marking all aspects of oppression 'other' – non-British, non-white, the result of besmirching contact with 'dark races'" (Thomas 42), other cultures are degraded whereas English supremacy is emphasised. Even the most white and most English element of the colonies, the plantation owner, is "othered" through constructing its representative Bertha Mason as the daughter of a Creole woman (*JE* 349). Thereby, the villain is no prototypical Englishman but a woman of an allegedly dubious origin. Since "the British often did not consider white colonials British" (Steinbach 71), it becomes clear that the imagined superiority did not originate from skin colour alone but also from the ancestry which results in labelling even a white Creole Other. The main point is that a real English man is better than other men. He restrains his "physical aggression" (133) and thus, cannot be officially involved in punishing slaves. Due to that, other, ostensibly less civilised races (62), undertake this part.

Additionally, the feeling of racial superiority can be seen in several encounters with people of other "races" in *Jane Eyre*. Most obvious are certainly the ones concerning Bertha Mason and her brother Richard, however, those will be analysed more profoundly in the following chapter. Another representative of a supposedly subordinate "race" is Adèle, Jane's pupil, who is the illegitimate daughter of the French dancer Céline Varens (*JE* 167). Though Jane likes Adèle (127), and apparently identifies herself with her because they both share the experience of being abandoned by their relatives, Jane still displays her disapproval of her pupil's home country and of her "French defects" (546). In her opinion, those involve dancing, singing, and recitation which are represented as theatrical/performative capabilities typically 'French' and as "opposed to Jane's quiet, inward-gazing Englishness" as possible (McCarron 86). Therefore, they urgently need to be "corrected" by a "sound English education" (*JE* 546) before Jane can allow Adèle to live with her and Rochester as a family member. After this English education, Jane calls the French girl "docile, good-tempered, and well-principled" (546) while before, she deplored her "superficiality of character […] hardly congenial to an English mind" (173). Jane's attempts to cure Adèle from her continental flaws demonstrate her strong belief in the superiority of Englishness and result in representing Adèle as a national and colonial Other almost similar to Bertha. Rochester supports this isolation of the child in that he frequently reminds everyone around him that she is only a "French dancer's bastard" (363) and that they are nothing alike (172). He has no proof that Adèle is not his own illegitimate child, but she is too French, too non-English and too Other to make her acceptable as his daughter. Hence, he underlines that it is solely because of his magnanimity that he "took the poor thing out of the slime and mud of Paris" so that she can "grow up clean in the wholesome soil of an English country garden", and no feeling of affection (172). The only reason is that a

country other than England is not good for a child to live in which again illustrates the superiority of the English "race" as well as the established patriotism.

A further aspect of racial superiority was the belief that "the English were 'the imperial race', whose destiny was to rule other races for their benefit" (Brantlinger "Empire" 252) which is also present in *Jane Eyre*. For instance, Rochester's dominant behaviour towards Richard Mason shows that it feels natural to Rochester to bully the Creole. When Jane contrasts and compares the two, she describes Mason as a "meek sheep" and Rochester as a "keen-eyed dog, its guardian" (*JE* 227). This animal metaphor supports Brantlinger's thesis in that Rochester does not oppress Mason but allegedly protects him from a possible predator, thus from the real villains who are not English. Consequently, the belief in racial superiority resulted in a "mission to rule the supposedly inferior races of the world" (Brantlinger "Postcolonial" 2).

This mission is also part of the third aspect of imperialist ideology, in which the English view it as their duty to civilise non-white colonial peoples. Especially after the abolishment of the slave trade and of slavery in 1807 and 1833, respectively, the British "felt as liberators" (18) and aimed at sharing their moral superiority with the rest of the world. This idea alone reinforces the aspects of patriotism and racial superiority because in fact, the English upper and middle classes in particular benefitted from slavery for so long that they basically cannot claim to be able to teach others about moralities. According to Spivak, those projects of "soul-making" only served to justify imperialism "through the assumption that 'heathens' need to be 'humanised' so that they, too, can be treated as individual ends in themselves" (112). St John Rivers follows this mission of soul-making without questioning it and by repeatedly emphasising that it is for "bettering their race" (*JE* 452, 427). Still, missionaries were widely seen as heroes and celebrated for their good deeds on behalf of Christianity and the Anglo-Saxon race (Brantlinger "Postcolonial" 23-4). Even Jane values it as a respectable task in saying that she wants to "go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are enslaved" (*JE* 322). The only reason which restrains her from that in the end is that she could not endure the thought of being married to St John. Nevertheless, she sees him as "a stiff-necked fanatic and a hero" (Brantlinger "Postcolonial" 22) which simultaneously expresses her assumption that St John will probably die in the dangerous non-Western country and that she still evaluates it as being for a good cause. Eventually, his heroism is especially valued because he is the very last character about whose life the novel reports in the last chapter (*JE* 548). This attributes a special meaning to him and his mission, even though he dies in the end.

One reason for Jane's belief in the social mission of England is probably the practice of sati which she mentions when Rochester claims that Jane would have to die together with him. Jane refuses this idea and says that she will "not be hurried away in a suttee" (327). The campaigns against sati were popular in England (Mana 2) because they "were seen as evidence that British rule in India could civilize instead of corrupt" and because sati allegedly

proved that the colonies clearly needed the British to save them (Brantlinger “Empire” 254). Furthermore, sati reworked “the doctrine of woman’s mission” (Sharpe 30) which once more linked the English women to the ‘inferior races’ in the colonies. At the same time, it degraded the colonised people even more because it constructed them as being cruel Others again.

Eventually, the three aspects of imperialist ideology answered the purpose of maintaining, justifying, and expanding the British Empire. In order to achieve that, it was not only necessary to represent the English as superior and unassailable in their moralities but also to construct an enemy image. In this case, it was simply everything non-English which was viewed as Other and thus, as inferior. Whereby, with the aim of legitimising their social mission, it was especially important to degrade the “dark races” in the colonies. From a present-day perspective, to speak bluntly, the mid-Victorians were racist. Though English women were also seen as inferior and Other to men and hence, often compared their own lives with those of the colonised, they nevertheless took part in racial Othering. They used the anguish of the colonised “to encourage British men to give them some female emancipation by associating female repression with ‘backward’ and ‘foreign’ Eastern societies and cultures”, as Joyce Zonana argues (qtd. in Lodge 115). In *Jane Eyre*, all those aspects are present, and all are interconnected. English patriotism is particularly distinct and “often indistinguishable from racial chauvinism” (Brantlinger “Postcolonial” 2) which leads to the other two aspects. All of them can be observed in Bertha’s construction as Other, as I will show in the next chapter.

4. Character Construction of the Female Colonial Other Bertha Mason

4.1 The Narrative Situation and its Functions

“Bertha has no narrative”, states Nicole Plyler Fisk (220) and refers with that to a central aspect of Bertha Mason’s construction in the novel. Indeed, before beginning to characterise Bertha, it is inevitable to analyse the narrative situation of the novel in order to find out about the reliability of her representation. For that purpose, I will use Gérard Genette’s terminology and systematisation, as it is described by Nünning and Nünning (118-123). Afterwards, I will explore the functions of the narrative situation regarding Bertha and the impact this has on her construction as a character.

First, since the novel is written like an autobiography[1], the narrator of *Jane Eyre* is Jane herself. As the protagonist of the narration, she tells the story of her own life. This makes her

[1] *Jane Eyre* is obviously no autobiography because it does not recount the life story of its author, Charlotte Brontë. However, it initially was released as one; allegedly edited by Currer Bell which is the pseudonym of Charlotte Brontë.

an intradiegetic as well as an autodiegetic narrator (119). Due to that, she appears as an overt narrator who exposes personal traits and characteristics (119). In terms of focalisation, Jane is the only figure from whose point of view the story is perceived, so the focaliser is internal, and the focalisation is fixed (122).

The fact that all narrational aspects are focused on Jane, is certainly accounted for by the construction of the novel as an autobiography. By and large, her story follows the typical plot of a bildungsroman "in which the hero moves teleologically, and the story usually ends with the completion (or failure) of the heroic task" (Feng 2). Thus, the narrator tells the reader about Jane's coming of age and the obstacles she must overcome before she finally obtains her happy ending in an ostensibly equal marriage with Mr Rochester. Basically, it appears as if she publicises her entire life and all emotions, she ever felt, which unavoidably generates intimacy between her as the overt narrator and the implied reader. This effect is reinforced by Jane directly addressing the reader which "implies a high degree of intimacy" again (Fludernik 26). In turn, this raises the problem that "readers become so familiar with her point of view that they can more easily go along with her character and her version of events" (Pond 206) than with that of a secondary character. Jane's rendering of the story is rarely questioned, especially because, due to the narrative situation, everything is coloured by her perceptions, persuasions, and aims. Moreover, the form of an autobiography, which comes along with a quite chronological way of telling, naturalises her story (Eagleton 91). In consequence of the generated trust between Jane and the readers, the latter "find themselves responding to narratives empathetically" (Smith and Watson 361) and hence, they largely accept Jane's version of the story which can be inferred by the small number of critics who take the narrative situation into account. This means that even seemingly neutral descriptions and recitations of others can never be entirely objective because they are already interpreted and valued by Jane before they are represented to the reader. Since the faux autobiography is "clearly a mode which would invite editing and revision of certain elements for an eventual audience" (Williams 12), it must be assumed that the narrative situation serves Jane's figure to manipulate her story in a way that it suits her.

An aspect that should not be neglected here is Jane's narrative distance. She allegedly writes her autobiography ten years after her marriage to Rochester (*JE* 546) and, quite naturally, "it is impossible to construct a single unchanging self capable of remembering and reciting the totality of the past" because "an 'I' is never unified nor stable" (Smith and Watson 357). Certainly, this allows for retrospective alterations as well because the heroine and her story should be constructed in a way that fits the final outcome; in this case a "feminist fairy tale" (Williams 14) which leads to an seemingly independent woman who wastes no thought about the first wife of her husband. To succeed in that, Jane particularly manipulates her depiction of Bertha. Her manner of narration is severely affected by subjectivity and emotional

involvement and thus, cannot be regarded as reliable. This becomes apparent through Jane's assuring that she is trustworthy, her underreporting of critical scenes, and her detached attitude concerning Bertha's appearance.

The first demeanour which hints at Jane's unreliability then is her repeated affirmation of her honesty. After Bertha's first appearance, Jane announces in close succession that she is "merely telling the truth" (*JE* 127) and that the reader should forgive her "for telling the plain truth" (129). According to Vera Nünning, this way of directly addressing the readers to persuade them from the own trustworthiness, is common for homodiegetic unreliable narrators (10) because "from the narrator's point of view, the most important function [of narration] is to convince others of the truth of their stories" (13). The closeness of those assertions to the debut of Bertha in the novel suggests that Jane's character changes some aspects concerning Bertha's story which would damage the novel's picture-perfect presentation of a dramatic love story of Jane and Mr Rochester.

A second indication is Jane's "underreporting" of intricate affairs that could disturb her careful construction of her own female development (Stevens 211). For example, when Rochester explains his liaison with Céline to Jane in chapter fifteen, Jane completely ignores his allusions to Bertha. In this scene, Rochester reflects upon his past and how he likes Thornfield now, even though, for a very long time, he "abhorred the very thought of it" and "shunned it like a great plague-house" (*JE* 169). Later, after the revelation of Bertha's existence, he asserts forcefully that he will "shut up Thornfield Hall" and "nail up the front windows door and board the lower windows" (362) to keep Jane safe and with him. This parallelism should be effortlessly detectable for Jane in retrospective; however, she does not comment on it. Even after Rochester adds "How I do still abhor- ", she does not question him and his thoughts (169). The same thing happens only a few sentences after that, when Rochester seems to wander off the initial topic entirely. "She stood there, by that beech-trunk – a hag like one of those who appeared to Macbeth", he declares to Jane (169). It is obvious that he is no longer talking about Céline here because he never mentions in his story about her that she once visited Thornfield. Their whole affair takes place in Paris. Moreover, Rochester's quotes of the woman who accompanied him ("Like it if you can! Like it if you dare!" 169) resemble the "lunatic" Bertha (373) more than the French opera dancer who is described as promiscuous but not as mad or aggressive. Furthermore, he calls the woman a hag; a word he uses for Bertha when he also promises to shut up the entire building ("*my wife,* as you term that fearful hag" 362) which interconnects both scenes again. Nevertheless, Jane "shows no interest in pursuing this inquiry" (Stevens 211) and rather leads the conversation back to Céline. However, it appears unlikely that the figure of Jane would not scrutinise Rochester's incoherent memories since she is depicted as a character who normally does not mind challenging him and his speeches (*JE* 158, 241, 362). Once again, this gives rise to doubts

about her credibility because she apparently leaves out some information. As a result, the reader who does not know about Bertha yet, becomes vaguely aware of a dark secret at Thornfield without entirely grasping its topic. If Bertha had become a subject already in this early phase of their relationship, it would have casted an entirely different light on Jane and Rochester and maybe could have discredited Rochester before Jane's narration could transform him into her equal counterpart. Additionally, the novel aims at constructing Rochester as a Byronic hero (McCarron 85). As that, he needs this kind of a dark secret which Jane grants him with her style of narration. Consequently, Jane's underreporting serves her own construction as well as that of her husband.

The same process is also visible in Jane's reaction when the mystery of Bertha is finally solved. The whole time, from the disruption of her wedding until Rochester's presentation of his wife, there are rarely any emotions visible in her report. After Briggs proclaims Rochester's crime, Jane describes her shock but instantly subjoins that she was "collected, and in no danger of swooning" (*JE* 348) and later, that she was "too calm" for crying (355), in order to emphasise her reliability. "An open admission of truth had been uttered by my master; then the living proof had been seen; the intruders were gone, and all was over" (355), Jane summarises the events quite prosaically and disperses all possible doubts about her being too emotional to remember the occurrences correctly with that. Likewise, her depiction of Bertha is "strangely detached" (Williams 29). She does not show jealousy as at the thought of Rochester marrying Miss Ingram (*JE* 190, 220), no sympathy as for Adèle, and no other nameable emotion. According to Stevens, this is an effective technique of storytelling which she discovers through Miss Temple (214). At Lowood, Jane ascertains that "restrained and simplified, it sounded more credible: I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me" (*JE* 81). As a former overly passionate child, now that she is an adult, she understands the power of remaining calm and uses it to make her readers accept her characterisation of others. In referring to that meta level of Jane's style of narration, the novel hints at her being not entirely trustworthy. That her discovered technique emerges just when Bertha is officially introduced, shows her need to sound credible, and thus, the possibility that she is not.

Concerning possible functions, the main function of the narrative situation is clear: through assailing the implied reader with details about the daily routine, childhood, first love, and several emotional outbursts of its protagonist Jane, and through combining those insights with a constructed emotional bond between reader and main character, the novel attempts to win the reader over to Jane's side. Though the examples above indicate that Jane's story is not entirely coherent, this is rarely perceived by the reader because the autobiographic style and the fixed focalisation bestow all attention on Jane. I will show next, how, in order to keep it that way, the novel actively silences Bertha, the Gothic enemy image of the novel. This happens by means of taking advantage of the narrative situation.

During the whole novel, Bertha does not speak a single world directly. Instead, Jane frequently describes different kinds of “murmurs” (126, 129, 175) and the “demoniac laugh” (175) of Rochester’s first wife. When the two women meet in the attic, Bertha is again only represented as crying, bellowing, and yelling without uttering an intelligible word (352-3). Even Rochester, who seems to understand Bertha, judging from his complaint about her “foul vocabulary” (371), advises Mason not to “mind her gibberish” (254). With that, he reduces her language to something untranslatable, as Jane does with referring to her words with murmurs. Nevertheless, in the same scene, Bertha’s speech appears indirectly. Mason, still in shock, recites his sister who apparently “said she’d drain my heart” (253). Hence, her ability to speak did not degenerate over time but continues to be recognisable. The question is then, why Jane does not translate it. As the daughter of an affluent plantation owner from Jamaica, it is likely that Bertha speaks French or English, “perhaps inflected with an accent or an influence of Creolized French or English” (Stevens 207). Since Jane’s French is quite well (*JE* 119), she should have been able to at least recognise that it is a language that Bertha utters.

According to the feminist critic Pat MacPherson, the reason for Jane’s unwillingness to decipher Bertha’s words is that “the ‘pure’ must stop her ears to the siren song of the ‘fallen’; reason is only tempted into darkness by desire” (19). Thus, she interprets Bertha’s ostensible inability to speak as Jane’s success in remaining on the right path – the path of pure and passionless femininity which would be in danger if she listened to the “dark” woman. Like other feminist critics, for example Elaine Showalter (qtd. in Lodge 73), she believes that Bertha must be destroyed before Jane can fully unfold her individuality. However, McPherson’s perception of Bertha as “that hungry, angry solitary woman vengefully haunting the two lovers who dream of their escape into the world of romantic love” (23) merely displays what the narrative situation aims for. McPherson interprets the story as the autodiegetic narrator presents it and echoes Jane’s perspective without challenging it. Since I have already explained why Jane is not trustworthy as a narrator, I would not agree with that. It is not the character of Jane who simply ignores Bertha’s speech in order to save herself from the bad influence, but the novel which consciously silences Bertha’s voice with it (Stevens 208). With stealing her voice, then, the novel ensures that the reader maintains to empathise with Jane and is not distracted by a different perspective of the events. Yet, Bertha’s noises which are typical of “characters, whose voices are […] marginalized by controlling and manipulative narrators” (203) are not entirely concealed. They serve to express the power dynamics between the narrator and the source of those noises by interrupting Jane’s conscientiously constructed narrative. As a result, suppressed as she may be, the character of Bertha still constitutes a threat to the superior couple which needs to be further demeaned. I will revisit this topic and elaborate on the question how silencing Bertha influences her character construction in the subchapter about her characterisation.

Altogether, “Jane’s perspective remains largely unchallenged” (Pond 206) due to her dominant position throughout the novel. Her way of presenting unpleasant events – and people – to the reader, clearly leads straight to the accomplishment of her own aims, namely a suspenseful love story and her growing as a woman. Since Bertha stands in her way, it is likely that the novel neglects important information concerning her opponent’s appearance and background story. Moreover, Jane manipulates the reader through her choice of words and focus. Considering that Bertha can never defend herself and has no possibility to challenge Jane’s version, Jane’s construction of her rival can under no circumstances be regarded as trustworthy. Nevertheless, I will use Jane’s words for the following analysis of Bertha for the simple reason that there exist no other in the novel. However, it is important to keep the narrative situation and its manipulative impact in mind.

4.2 Character Conception of Bertha Mason

Due to the narrative situation, Jane is in control about everything that the reader may learn about the Caribbean Creole Bertha Mason. In this chapter, I will show that Bertha is not concepted to be a lifelike character as Jane and Rochester are. Instead, she exists to fulfil certain functions as the inferior racial and sexual Other and with that, affects the other figures as well as the plot level. To prove this, I will analyse Bertha and her construction through a character conception which will be supplemented and expanded by a characterisation of Bertha in the following subchapter.

According to Manfred Pfister, a figure conception “refers to the anthropological model that the dramatic figure is based on and the conventions involved in turning this anthropological model into fiction” (170). In order to examine the conception, he provides the categories of dynamic, dimension, individuality, and openness which I will use (170-180).

First of all, Bertha displays more features of a static than of a dynamic character. Through the major part of Jane’s stay at Thornfield, she is the uncanny; “that which is concealed from others” (Azim 183). Her presence transforms Mr Rochester in a “man of mystery” (DeLamotte 208) because he wants to hide her from Jane and the society. In the period until her revelation, Bertha is not even a separate character. Her whole existence is denied by the inhabitants of Thornfield who try to persuade Jane that “the curious laugh” (*JE* 125) she perceives several times has its origin in the servant Grace Poole (126). Even after Jane saw Bertha in her room in the night before her wedding, Rochester adheres to his statement that it must have been the “strange being” (342) Grace. Nevertheless, the novel continually hints at Bertha’s presence. The gothic setting of Thornfield and Rochester’s secret-mongering demonstrate that “the central mystery of [the] gothic plot” (MacPherson 25) still needs to be discovered and that Rochester’s unconvincing explanation of the affairs cannot be the solution. Moreover, the inmates of Thornfield whisper behind Jane’s back about

something she does not know (*JE* 195). Due to that, Jane discerns that “there was a mystery at Thornfield” from which she is “purposely excluded” (195). This process builds up suspense which is only dissolved when the marriage is interrupted, and Rochester confesses committing bigamy. It is not until then that Bertha becomes officially recognised as an own character with a name and a detailed description of appearance without Jane deeming her a ghost. Yet, after her scene of revelation, and thus, with the awareness that it is Bertha and not Grace who is the gothic mystery, the narrative does not concede many more actions to Bertha. Her last active participation in the narrative is burning Thornfield and committing suicide, and even that spectacular ending of her imprisonment is only exposed retrospectively through the voice of “the late Mr Rochester’s butler” (515). Consequently, Bertha is not allowed to go through dynamic changes and remains static. Whereby, she is consequently portrayed as the mad and mysterious woman who needs to be concealed in the attic.

The only little development that can be detected is granted her through tales of the past. However, those are mainly told by her abusive husband and displayed by the woman who should supplant her which raises doubts about the credibility of the figures. In contrasting Rochester’s story and Jane’s later description and representation of the Creole, then, a difference between the Bertha in Jamaica and the Bertha in the attic becomes visible. When Rochester recounts his past with Bertha in Jamaica, he severely criticises her unfeminine behaviour and her “cast of mind” (368). Nevertheless, he also displays her as the woman that every man, including him, “seemed to admire” for her beauty (368). Moreover, she provided him with thirty thousand pounds as her fortune (367) which allegedly makes her a good choice to marry in Rochester’s situation. Later in Jane’s room and in the attic, Bertha is no longer recognisable as that woman. No reader would mistake her for a rich beauty in that scenario. Consequently, it seems like Bertha actually changed fundamentally. However, this development constitutes only a small part of Bertha’s conception, and Rochester summarises this retrospective image of his first wife in very few words. The current condition of Bertha, on the other hand, is vividly described by Jane and does not shift into another direction throughout the novel. Bertha remains the “madwoman” (362) who keeps attacking people and stands in the way of Jane and Rochester until she finally dies. Since this picture of her is the most prominent in the novel, and it is not significantly altered during the story, Bertha can better be labelled a static character.

The second distinction of characters is that between mono- and multidimensional ones (Pfister 178). Matching her stableness, at least at the first sight, Bertha is more of a monodimensional figure which is “defined by a small set of distinguishing features” (178). Even though her background story is partly uncovered by Rochester, it does not add new characteristics but merely emphasises those traits of her which are already focused on. For example, Rochester tells Jane about Bertha’s mother but only to prove that his wife is as mad

as “her mother, the Creole, […] a madwoman and a drunkard” (*JE* 351). Everything that Bertha does during the whole novel can be ascribed to her mental state which in turn is an expression of her Otherness, so that the reasons for her deeds are not questioned. Her relations with the other figures are also shaped by her madness. Since she does not speak – or at least not in a language, that Jane seems to be capable of translating – she cannot explain why she visited Jane at night, set Rochester’s bed on fire, and attacked her own brother. This reduces her again to her malady and with that, to an aggressive lunatic who barely resembles a human being like Rochester and Jane are.

Attributable to her being monodimensional, Bertha’s depiction can rather be described as a personification than as a representation of an individual. The reader gets to know numerous details about Jane’s appearance, behaviour, speech, and biography. Certainly, this is accounted for by the novel being a written as an autobiography, so that it seems natural to learn about the main character and narrator of the story. However, also Mr Rochester is depicted as an individual who has an particularised past, a way of speaking which is typical of his figure, and a mostly coherent manner that makes the reader feel as if he was an autonomous, individual ‘person’ (Wenzel 51). This situation is different with Bertha. Since the facts which are revealed about her all lead to the same main premise – Bertha as mad, aggressive, and Other – she cannot be recognised as an individual character. Instead, her representation is “designed in its totality to illustrate an abstract concept with all its implications” (Pfister 179). In her case, this is the concept of a racial and sexual Other which is inferior to the main characters Jane and Rochester and which fulfils the function of representing them as a superior and successful couple. Bertha’s appearance, her actions, her family, and all that Rochester exposes about his marriage with her is subordinate to this function.

Nevertheless, Bertha remains an open figure instead of a closed one. Even though Jane’s representation constantly forces Bertha to discharge her duty of embodying the sharp contrast to the superordinate English couple, her character is still shaped by an “irreducible ambiguity”, as Eric Bentley terms a crucial component of an open figure construction (qtd. in Pfister 180). Due to the narrative situation and Jane’s unreliability as a narrator, as it is shown in the previous subchapter, Bertha becomes not only enigmatic because of the structure of the story which marks her as the gothic mystery. Another reason for it is that the information about Bertha seem incomplete and too biased by Jane’s own aims to regard her as a completely defined character. Her conception as the personification of a specific function shows that Bertha should not be perceived as an own character but rather as a construct that emanates from Jane’s mind.

All in all, the application of Pfister’s categories proves that Bertha is solely constructed to serve two main functions: she is the gothic mystery which is instrumental in creating suspense, and she serves as a racial and sexual Other whose existence allows Jane to

distinguish herself and Rochester as superior and thus, to depict them as more promising as a couple than Rochester and Bertha were. Making her an individual through personal traits and complexity would not strengthen those functions and hence, they are neglected in Jane's narration. However, it is not alone due to omitting characteristics that Bertha becomes a monodimensional construct. In the following characterisation, I will demonstrate how the novel actively describes the role of being Other to Jane's opponent, and how this again strengthens her function as the enemy image.

4.3 Characterisation: Bertha as the Other

As I already mentioned earlier, characterising Bertha is impossible without drawing on Jane's perception and her choice of words which bears several challenges. Jane's characterisation of Bertha consists in great part of "explicit-figural" and "implicit-authorial characterisation techniques" (Pfister 183-195). The former refers especially to Bertha's appearance, behaviour, and context which is normally part of an implicit characterisation (190). However, the narrator of the story is also a character in the novel which makes all named aspects subjective. On top of that, I have already shown that Jane is not reliable as a narrator and that the novel is constructed to serve her aims and not Bertha's. Consequently, I will refer to those descriptions as explicit because they fulfil functions which go beyond the mere representation of reality. The latter technique, on the other hand, expresses how the figure of Bertha is used to compare her with other characters, especially with the heroine, Jane. Even though the figure of Jane also manipulates that part in using her might as the narrator to emphasise the contrast between her and Bertha, this is not as superficial as with the explicit-figural technique. Hence, I will continue to call it implicit. In the first part of the characterisation, I will demonstrate how Jane dehumanises Bertha and marks her as inferior due to her race and sex. In the second part, I will focus on the implicit-authorial characterisation technique to analyse how Jane harnesses her construct of Bertha to define her own character in contrast to the created Otherness of the Creole. In the end of the characterisation, I will show which functions Bertha has and how that affects the interpretation of her character as a whole.

The probably most overt expression of dehumanisation in representing Bertha is that Jane constantly likens her to non-human creatures and particularly to animals. For example, after the captive attacked Mason, Jane relates Bertha's noises with "a dog quarrelling" (*JE* 249), and later refers to her as a "wild beast" (251), while her own brother participates in this process in comparing Bertha to "a tigress" (253). Subsequently, Rochester terms Bertha's speech "wolfish cries" (371), whereas Jane calls them "dog howling" (338). Whereby, it becomes already visible that Jane does not objectively describe Bertha's noises, but that she chooses her words after a pattern which makes her characterisation explicit. Additionally, it

illustrates that Bertha is not coincidentally deprived from her humanity but that this is a direction that the novel targets. Due to that, it is not only Bertha's voice which seems to resemble animals but also her behaviour and appearance as Jane allegedly memorises it. Thus, Jane remembers that at their first encounter, she could not tell whether Bertha was "beast or human being" (352). She refers to the woman with "it" and "the figure" to emphasise her confusion about the demeanour. Apparently, she only recognises her as human in the end because "it was covered with clothing" (352). Otherwise, Jane seems merely able to see something else than the "wild animal" in Bertha which "grovelled […] on all fours" at one time and "stood tall on its hind-feet" at another.

According to Shuttleworth, linking people to animals is a "common representation of the 'savage', the working classes and the insane" in novels of the Victorian period (165). All three attributes have in common that they are regarded as less worth than counterparts: a savage is inferior to a gentleman or a lady in the emerging "culture of sensibility" (Thomas 41), members of the working-class to those of the middle-classes and the gentry, and the insane to the lucid ones. In case of Bertha, two of those attributes – allegedly she is savage and insane – match her character. Consequently, Jane's description labels her as subordinate because when she can be mistaken for an animal, she apparently lost the "very essence of humanity" (Goodwin 650) and simultaneously her human dignity. Concurrently with this, the simile "renders the human/animal frontier as acceptable indeterminate", as Spivak rightly argues (247). Due to that, Jane seems to legalise how Bertha is treated in her prison. If she appeared more than a normal human, to be confined in a "room without a window" (*JE* 352) and without contact to her environment would have seemed considerably more outrageous to the reader of Jane's narrative. Presenting her as an animal instead, is the first step in persuading the readers that confining Bertha was in fact inevitable for Rochester.

In addition to the animal simile, the Creole is compared with supernatural beings on several occasions which contributes to her dehumanisation. The most used term here is "goblin" (176, 249, 342, 372) which both Jane and Rochester deploy frequently to refer to Bertha and her laughter. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a goblin as "a small, ugly creature that is harmful to humans" which expresses quite aptly how Bertha should be perceived: she is not solely non-human but actively damages others. This adds a malicious intent to her character which would not be as severely as an animal which may only follow its instincts. Furthermore, she is termed a "vampire" (341) after she materialised in Jane's room. Mason picks up on this perception of Bertha's character after she attacked him and apparently "sucked the blood" out of his heart (253). Consequently, her depiction as a vampire and as a goblin both demonise her as supernatural. The varying non-human creatures exhibit that Bertha should not be discerned as a regular human but rather as a Gothic and dangerous monster.

Simultaneously to the process of dehumanisation, which is only the tip of the iceberg in presenting Bertha as inferior, Bertha is actively depicted as the sexual and racial Other, as I will demonstrate in the next part of the chapter. In order to achieve that, Jane delineates her opponent as unfeminine, black, and mad, and uses the prejudices towards white Creoles that are widespread in the Victorian society to discredit her even further.

The first aspect of portraying Bertha as unfeminine is representing her as highly sexual. This is visible through linking her to a vampire again. According to Robert Mighall, the monster "symbolizes an erotic threat" to the "orthodox sexuality" of the Victorian era (211) which sexualises Bertha as well. Another important manifestation of the "dangerous" sexuality is her passion which is shown through her outward appearance – one more explicit characterisation of Jane. The heroine continually illustrates Bertha as a dark figure. For example, she mentions the "discoloured face" (*JE* 340) and the "fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments" (341) in her room and remembers the "purple face" and the "dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane" (352) at their second encounter. Anna Wöckinger interprets this darkness as "a sign of passion in ladies" (54) which is certainly true. Bertha is definitely passionate which is expressed through her incapability to tame herself. She attacks her brother who visits her, "gaze[s] wildly" at the spectators on the failed wedding day and goes at Rochester's throat (*JE* 353). Even at the time before she was confined in the attic, Rochester describes her as "intemperate and unchaste" and emphasises her "violent and unreasonable temper" (369). However, the darkness does not only serve to show how passionate Bertha is but also that she is unfeminine. The "big" and "corpulent" woman, "in stature almost equalling her husband" (353) does not at all resemble the ideal image of a Victorian lady who should be "pure, innocent, and relatively passive" (Flint 275). None of those aspects match a dark and tall woman who, on top of that, is "perverse and imbecile" (*JE* 369). Obviously, she should also not be passionate because that would interfere with the ideology that women are "sexually ignorant" (Vicinus ix) and due to that "morally superior to men" (xiv). In all other areas, of course, they should be dependent on their husband or father (Steinbach 133). Bertha, however, with her manly and strong appearance who nearly wins her fight with Rochester, does not seem to tolerate her dependence which makes her unfeminine again. Consequently, Bertha is presented as a sexual Other. Though women themselves are already othered in the Victorian patriarchal society consisting of "systematic masculine dominance" (Newman 462), Bertha even differs from those women due to her sexuality which does not match the ideal image of "naturally passionless" women (Wood 24).

Another reason for Bertha's Otherness which is closely linked to her presentation as a dark figure and a sexual Other is the blackness attributed to her. Bertha has a Creole mother and a father who is a "West India planter and merchant" in Jamaica (*JE* 349), and since she is born in the West Indies, Bertha is a Creole as well (Plasa 80). A Creole, by definition, does not necessarily have a connotation of colour, so "there may be white Creoles, coloured Creoles,

or black Creoles", as Anthony Trollope summarises it (qtd. in Thomas 32). However, in England, Creole was a pejorative name for the owners of West Indian sugar plantations (Sharpe 45) and since those were mostly white, Bertha can be considered white or "passing for white" (Thomas 37) as well. Nevertheless, in Jane's narrative, she appears dark or even black which the preceding examples prove, and which beguiled some critics like Goodwin to mistake Bertha for "the black woman in the attic" (607). One reason for this is that it is a quite common historical trait to sexualise and demonise black women in literature (638). Consequently, it may have seemed more natural to the readers of a realist novel to see this done to a dark person instead of a white. As the white British in the Victorian period were racist and firmly convinced that white Europeans were superior to other races, this process of making Bertha black can also be considered as racist. Through changing Bertha's appearance, Jane transfers all prejudices which exist in middle-class society towards dark people of other races on Bertha. Those are, for example, that Caribbean women are "hypersexual" (Steinbach 62), so in fact, Bertha's racial Otherness underlines her sexual one as both are connected. Moreover, the character of Bertha shows how non-Western cultures were perceived as "simultaneously exotic and uncivilized" (Steinbach 62). When Rochester explains to Jane why he married Bertha, he not only mentions the money that she brought him but also her beauty. He describes how he was "dazzled" and "stimulated" (*JE* 368) by the "tall, dark, and majestic" woman (367) he met there. Yet, right after that, he begins to lament over all her threats which illustrates the duality of evaluating non-Western people.

A further "stereotypical attribute […] of blackness" (Thomas 40) that Bertha takes on through her darkening is her madness which is probably her most defining trait and an important factor in characterising her as Other. According to Azim, her madness and blackness are inextricably linked (183) which once again externalises the prevalent racism in the British society. Rochester claims that Bertha's madness stems from her Creole mother (*JE* 351) and thereby evaluates it as something inheritable. Consequently, Bertha's mother, and thus, her heritage, are to blame for her mental condition. This corresponds to the common belief of the time that "madness specifically passes from mother to daughter" (Vrettos 77). The assumption is supported by the fact that Bertha Antoinetta Mason is named after her mother, Antoinetta Mason (*JE* 349). Antoinetta, then, is an interpretative name and an implicit-authorial technique (Pfister 194) to characterise Bertha in the way that it transfers the madness of Bertha's mother to Bertha, exactly as it has been done with the name. As a result, madness is attributed to origin as well as to femininity because only women were involved in transmitting the ailment. Whereby, racial and sexual Otherness are again interconnected in Bertha's character.

Furthermore, madness and femininity not only correlate in Bertha in the Victorian period. Elaine Showalter argues that "madness came to be understood as a 'female malady' in Victorian culture" (qtd. in Vrettos 77). It was often connected with hysteria which gained new

prominence in the nineteenth century (Wood 12) and was used for women who did not conform to Victorian ideals of womanhood. Hence, the criteria for diagnosing hysteria were nebulous and could either be applied to women with weak and women with too strong wills (45). Moreover, hysteria was regularly linked to an untameable, female desire (Schößler 39). Since Bertha occupies sexual passion and apparently has a strong will which becomes visible in her several outbreaks, it is hardly surprising that she is represented as mad, too. Thus, it is not coincidental that Bertha is mad but an expression of her racial and sexual Otherness.

Even though the process of darkening Bertha and the interconnected stereotypes of blackness are ever-present in *Jane Eyre*, it must be remembered that Bertha is not black. Nevertheless, her whiteness as a Creole strongly contributes to representing Bertha as Other as well. White Creoles have a special position in the constructed racial hierarchy in the Victorian period because they may have been white like the typical English society, but were perhaps even "more threatening than a free person of color" because they indicate that "'whiteness' alone is not the sign of racial purity" (Sharpe 46). Hence, whiteness is no homogeneous category but has further gradations.

This attitude occurs in the novel as well and becomes apparent when Bertha's brother – logically also a white Creole – speaks for the first time. In her narrative, Jane recounts his accent which she perceived as "not precisely foreign, but still not altogether English" (*JE* 226). Resulting from this implicit-authorial characterisation which parallels Mason and Bertha, Bertha is already Other because she is dislocated from her origin and is not entirely accepted by the British society. Moreover, she must cope with several prejudices described to white Creoles which are also detectable in the treatment of her brother Mason. For example, while Bertha is constantly depicted as manly, strong, and dark even though she should be passionless and pure, Mason is feminised. Through the means of physiognomy, "a science for reading character on the outward features of the body" (Taylor 188), Jane criticises that Mason is lacking power, firmness, thought, and command (*JE* 226). Since dominance and independence are key characteristics of Victorian manliness, Mason is presented as more female than his sister. This is also obvious when Jane compares Rochester, her prototype of manliness, and Mason, the "meek sheep" (227), his "passive disposition" and submission towards Rochester (251). The reason for this representation of the siblings may be that many British believed that Creoles degenerated because of the climate (Thomas 33), so that they could no longer reach English standards. Using physiognomy to analyse their inferiority supports this assumption because it facilitates an allegedly scientific proof of it. Through masculinising Bertha and feminising Mason, the novel displays their racial Otherness. On top of that, it legitimises the social mission of the Empire because apparently, they are uncivilised and hence, in need of the "soul-making and English character-building project" of English imperialism (Thomas 51).

A further essential factor in characterising Bertha is contrasting her with other characters and especially with Jane. With the aid of this implicit-authorial technique, both figures are characterised simultaneously, whereby Jane becomes the innocent and superior woman and Bertha the threatening and inferior Other. The function of this contrasting is aptly named by Peter Wenzel: “Durch den Kontrast zwischen Helden und bösem Gegenspieler wird der Held noch unschuldiger, der Bösewicht noch böser“ (56).

The difference between Jane and Bertha that is emphasised the most in the novel is their appearance. After the revelation that Rochester is already married, he loses no opportunity to stress the strong distinctions between both women. “Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder – this face with that mask – this form with that bulk” (*JE* 353-4), he requests the guests of his wedding. Thereby, Jane as Rochester’s preferred wife, his “young girl” (353), is contrasted with “a demon” (353) who has balls instead of eyes, a mask instead of a face and an undefined bulk instead of a form. Consequently, Bertha is again dehumanised which is underlined by Rochester’s wish for “something at least human” (351), like Jane is. Furthermore, “the interplay of light and dark, positive and negative” as it is typical of Gothic literature (Botting 3) can also be seen in the context of the scene. Jane still wears her white wedding dress and veil and enters the attic as Rochester’s “girl-bride” (*JE* 309). Before their wedding, Rochester refers to Jane several times with variations of that term, and calls her, for example, his “good little girl”, “little English girl” and “inexperienced girl” (315, 322, 170). Due to that, it is not only Jane’s age that is emphasised but especially her purity. Jane herself describes her pupil Adèle as “so tranquil, so passionless, so innocent” (343) which are the same qualities which Rochester ascribes to her through linking her to a little child. On the other hand, there is Bertha, whose black hair and darkened skin contrast Jane’s white dress and veil, and whose “lavishly display” of “her charms and accomplishments” (367-8) is opposed to Jane’s restraint and inexperience. Consequently, Bertha is characterised as Other, while Jane gains the status of being “absolutely other to Bertha” (Plasa 88). Like Wenzel argued, through the contrast between the characters in the novel, Jane, the light, becomes “the epitome of modesty” whereas Bertha, the dark, is transformed into “a cautionary tale of female excess” (Williams 38). This is obviously the reason why Rochester’s figure compares the two women this sharply because with that, the novel attempts to excuse his own behaviour. “Remember with what judgement ye judge ye shall be judged” (*JE* 354), he warns any person who may dare to condemn him for his bigamy and assumes whereby that nobody would earnestly blame him for choosing light over dark.

The second great difference between Jane and Bertha evolves from their similarities and supports Jane in constructing her story of success. Even though they seem like the exact opposite of one another when they meet in the attic of Thornfield, during Jane’s childhood, in fact, there are many parallels between Jane and Bertha. Yet, in all cases, Jane’s behaviour or

situation is not as severe as Bertha's and still offers her an escape through improving herself which is not granted Bertha. For example, the younger Jane is also treated as too passionate for a Victorian girl or woman and is called a "mad cat" (7) in this process. Like Bertha, she is compared with an animal in this scene. However, cats are not connotated with death like a hyena, or a tigress is. Instead, cats symbolise femininity (Park 43) which shows that even when Jane is depicted as an animal and thus, temporarily deprived from her humanity, she is not masculinised as Bertha is later. Moreover, even mad cats are normally not deadly and consequently, Jane's madness does not seem as severe as Bertha's. By comparing them to different animals, then, the novel indicates that they are on different stages of madness. While Bertha appears to have reached the point of no return, Jane still has the chance to develop in a supposedly more favourable direction, as the genre of the bildungsroman suggests it. She can still become feminine and docile and with that, accepted in society.

The same is true for the aspect of racial Otherness. At Gateshead, Jane declares herself "an uncongenial alien" (*JE* 12) and "a heterogeneous thing" (11) which could not be loved because she is an "interloper" (12) of the Reeds' race and thus, not really a member of their family. Sally Shuttleworth sees a link between Jane and Bertha here. According to her, a Creole is the "literal realization of Jane's self-depiction as a 'heterogeneous thing'" (164) because while Jane does not entirely fit in with her family, it is the same for Bertha and England. This is only partly correct because the decisive factor here is that Jane's heterogeneity emanates from class differences whereas Bertha's Otherness literally originates from her race. During Jane's fight with John Reed, he violently declares what makes her different: "'You are a dependent […]; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us" (*JE* 5). Later, Bessie takes the same line in warning Jane that she "ought not to think [herself] on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed" (8). At the end of the novel, however, Jane is a rich woman who is married to a man of the gentry. Bertha, on the other hand, cannot change her fate of being a white Creole. As a result, Jane is again only a weakened version of Bertha because she may perceive herself as racially Other at this moment in time, but she has the chance to save herself if she can attain a higher class through marriage or undiscovered family relations. For the character of Bertha, Jane's social advancement only puts emphasis on her own unsolvable Otherness.

The third thing the young Jane and Bertha have in common is their sexual Otherness. At Gateshead and later in Lowood, Jane is constantly told to "remain silent" (1), to be "useful and pleasant" (8) and to "endure patiently" (61) what she has to. Moreover, she is called passionate at different stages of her life and from different people (6, 38, 359) which always carries a negative connotation with it. Since women should be passionless, the more adapted women in her life, like Mrs Reed, Bessie, and Helen, regularly attempt to persuade her to conceal her emotions instead (8, 38, 64). The critic Jane Wood deplores that attitude because

she perceives that “cultural requirement of repression” is a reason for mental suffering (43). In the case of Bertha, whose constructed unfemininity I already explained, this means that her madness could represent the outcome if a woman fails in hiding her passions.

The consequences of that for Bertha are the treatment of her husband. When he understands that with Bertha, he would “never have a quiet or settled household” (*JE* 369), he decides to lock her away. He aims for the Victorian trope of the angel in the house which “spiritually refreshes” the husband when he returns from work (Shuttleworth 76) and cannot see this in Bertha with her “absurd, contradictory, exacting orders” (*JE* 369). Due to Bertha’s unwillingness to adapt, he finally confines her and with that makes sure that she can no longer sully his name and outrage his honour, as he calls it (372). This perspective makes clear that much of Bertha’s madness and dehumanisation stems from her imprisonment whereas the cause it not the madness but her refusal to act more like an ideal Victorian woman. Consequently, Bertha is depicted as the cautionary tale of what a woman should never become. Jane forms a sharp contrast to this image in the end of her story, even though she and Bertha both started as overly passionate women. However, Jane successfully manages to conceal her feelings and eventually fills the gap in Rochester’s life as his “good angel” (379). The extremely different endings – Jane happily married and Bertha who committed suicide – seem to indicate that women should rather choose Jane’s way of developing instead of Bertha’s who did not change her unfeminine behaviour. This fits a popular Victorian opinion that claims that “everyone can cure bad habits through self-help” (Vrettos 73) for which Jane could serve as a role model. By contrasting her with her failed rival then, Jane once again represents herself as superior.

Eventually, Bertha’s most defining trait is her Otherness. No matter if it is about her sexuality or her racial origin, the novel loses no opportunity to represent her as inferior to its heroine Jane. Whereby, the racist aspects that depict her as less worth than a white English person, explain why Rochester perceives “her nature wholly alien” to his (*JE* 368). They also imply that Gilbert’s and Gubar’s famous interpretation of Bertha as Jane’s “truest and darkest double” (492) is untenable in this way. One might argue that Bertha is “the secret self” (492) of Jane because it still costs her an effort to conceal her emotions as it is required by Victorian women. This becomes visible in her occasional outbreaks, for example when Rochester mocks her about his ostensible marriage with Miss Ingram, and Jane feels “the vehemence of emotion […] was claiming mastery” (*JE* 302). Thus, it is comprehensible to view the wild and passionate Bertha who instantly acts out any emotion as the personification of Jane’s repressed anger. However, Gilbert and Gubar ignore the narrative situation which manipulates the story in a way that all attention is focused on Jane. Correspondingly, the two feminist critics miss how the novel renders the story so that it optimally depicts Jane. This results in romanticising Jane and in a “race-blind analysis” of Bertha, as Carl Plasa calls it (“Prefigurements” 10). In this

interpretation, Bertha is not considered as an own character in the story but only as a part of Jane. With that, they entirely disregard the racist intentions behind the construction of Bertha.

All in all, the character of Bertha Mason is shaped in large measure by Jane's aims and wishes. Since Jane is the heroine of a bildungsroman, she must develop during the narrative. The success of her progress is emphasised through depicting Bertha as failing the same task. Due to Jane's numerous explicit characterisations, she is represented as the sexual and racial Other that barely resembles a proper human being. Instead, she is reduced to serve several functions which differs her from Jane and Rochester who are more human-like figures. That her voice is silenced to an extend that she can solely catch attention through murmurs, significantly contributes to that. Bertha's main functions then are to make Jane appear superior and to justify her and Rochester's relationship by demonstrating that Bertha could never be an equal counterpart of Rochester. The latter aspect will be analysed more profoundly in the following chapter about the plot construction.

5. "Reader, I married him": Plot Construction in *Jane Eyre*

At first sight, the superordinate topic of *Jane Eyre* seems clear: it's a love story. Not only critics of the novel focus especially on that aspect of the plot, but also its adaptions are promoted with slogans like "A love story as fiercely intelligent as it is passionate" (*Jane Eyre 2011*) and "This year's most romantic love story" (*Jane Eyre 1996*). This impression emerges because, for the most part, the novel follows the typical marriage plot which is "the narrative of courtship culminating in a happy marriage that restores order and lays all tensions to rest", as Lau defines it (355). The marriage plot is highly popular today through several other novels and films, for example Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its adaption *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001). However, *Jane Eyre*'s plot cannot be entirely defined as a marriage plot because it shows significant variations of that pattern and contains aspects of other generic plots, like the Gothic tale. Since *Jane Eyre* is a realist novel and a bildungsroman, the plot is vital in understanding the characters and their development on the one hand, and the central concept and aim of the novel as the whole on the other. Thus, analysing the plot will also serve for an improved comprehension of Bertha's role, her construction, and her functions.

First, I will demonstrate how *Jane Eyre* is largely constructed as a marriage plot. According to Harrison, those plots typically deal with "the courtship between a heroine and hero and emphasize the perspective of the woman" (113). This is obviously true for *Jane Eyre*, with Jane and Rochester as the resulting couple and the narrative situation completely emanating from Jane. The next aspect, which are "conflicts, misunderstanding, and tension" which "threaten to derail the relationship" (113), is where Bertha comes into play. Though Jane and Rochester actually have several problems, like Miss Ingram, and their power struggles which originate from Rochester being the wealthy employer and Jane the dependent

governess, the conflict that finally leads to a temporal separation is Bertha being the wife of Rochester. This already makes her the central disturbance of the novel without needing further characterisation. Rochester likes to exploit that to blame his own sins on her and due to that, he represents her as "the aggressor in their relationship", while victimising himself (Williams 39). The last part of the marriage plot is that the lovers express their feelings for one another and that the marriage, "projected to be a happy one", completes the story (Harrison 113). This is the same in *Jane Eyre,* when Jane begins the concluding chapter of the novel with her famous declaration "Reader, I married him" (544). Afterwards, she only informs about some secondary characters like Adèle and St John, whereby the central assertion is that everything turned out all right.

A feature of the marriage plot that has nothing to do with the chronology of events is the emphasis that it is a marriage of love. According to Harrison, this concept is a new ideology of novels following this plot in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (114). In *Jane Eyre*, Jane frequently stresses the emotional attachment between her and Rochester, for example when she claims that "no woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" (*JE* 546). Simultaneously, her character attempts to make clear that she deploys a marriage for money, when Rochester wishes to dress her in expensive gowns, and she quite rigorously rejects him (82). Here, Bertha's function is to underline the new ideology because her failed marriage with Rochester is based on an economic alliance. Rochester himself describes how he "never loved" and "never esteemed" her (368). Through the marriage plot then, in which an affective marriage is the ultimate goal, it seems natural that their relationship could not last. Hence, Bertha's figure serves once again as the bad example which is needed to detect the contrast to Jane who is constructed to be the better choice for Rochester. Furthermore, this part of the plot absolves Rochester from his guilt because allegedly, he cannot be blamed for having no feelings for Bertha. This desired perception is supported by the novel's construction of Bertha as Other.

The Otherness of Bertha is also essential for a further aspect of the marriage plot, namely its determination of gender roles. The sexual double standard of the Victorian period, which contains that sexual desire in men is normal while the same feelings ought to be seen as disgusting in women (Steinbach 135), is interconnected with the marriage plot. Jane, for instance, is warned by Mrs Fairfax to "try and keep Mr Rochester at a distance: distrust yourself as well as him" (*JE* 317) which expresses the women's task of always being resistant. Rochester, on the other hand, as the man, should be the dominant part that initiates sexual contact (Harrison 118). In order to increase that dominance, men were "typically represented as older and more powerful" in novels of the nineteenth century (118) which matches him as well. Consequently, both main characters seem to show the behaviour which the marriage plot demands from them. As I have demonstrated in the characterisation, Bertha does not. As a

result, she serves as a sharp contrast to Jane again and emphasises Jane's and Rochester's alleged fate to be together.

Even though the novel's plot and the typical marriage plot have many things in common, there is a difference in the direction of the story. The plot is not always "driven forward in time by the promise of the plot's conclusion – the matrimonial denouement" (119) but is interrupted through untypical actions of the female protagonist. Those are that Jane has some requirements for her life after the wedding, namely that she wants to keep working as a governess to not be entirely dependent on her husband (*JE* 323). With that, she seems to showcase her progressive nature because it was highly unusual and regarded as inappropriate for middle- or upper-class women of that time to work (Steinbach 125). Additionally, she apparently supports more rights for women, which is also visible in her long monologue where she states that women can do more than "making puddings and knitting stockings" (*JE* 129). However, her demand for more rights for women obviously does not include non-English women, since she does nothing to aid Bertha. The reason for that is that Bertha's function in the marriage plot is not to be a woman but to be an unhuman obstacle in the way of Rochester and Jane. Thus, she does not need to be saved but only to be disposed of.

However, also Jane's other resolutions dissolve into thin air when the novel returns to the marriage plot in the end. Jane eventually marries Rochester and immediately gives up being a governess because her "time and cares were now required by another", her husband (545). The progress she attempted to live is no longer visible in this rendering of her situation. Instead, marrying, quitting work, and having a son as their successor seems to be *the* conservative solution. Nevertheless, the ending "offers an uncomfortable and unsure placement within society" (Azim 176) because everything is done to let Jane seem more autonomous than she is. The incredible amount of money she inherits from her uncle (the 20.000 pounds Jane inherits would equal approximately 1,4 million pounds today) should make her independent to maintain the progress for women in the plot. However, the doctrine of coverture in the Victorian period made sure that all possessions of the wife belonged to her husband after the wedding (Steinbach 136) which "reinforced the hideous practice of gender subordination and marginalization", as Goodwin rightly argues (633). In order to avoid that Mr Rochester exploits Jane like he did with Bertha who brought him even more money (today it would be about two million pounds), he becomes "a cripple" (*JE* 519) in the novel who can barely see and misses one hand. Regarding that, Jane proudly declares that she is "the apple of his eye" and that "he saw nature – he saw books" through her (546). Their constant power struggle appears to be resolved with Jane as its winner. Therewith, I would agree with Helen Moglen who explains that Rochester's mutilation is "the necessary counterpart of Jane's independence" (qtd. in Lodge 71). Rochester's character becomes so dependent on Jane's

that he cannot turn against her. Due to that, the novel precludes the history of Bertha from repeating itself with Jane.

On the marriage plot level, Bertha's main function is to be the obstacle in the way of Jane and Rochester which causes trouble but cannot restrain the superior couple from finding their happy ending. She exists to allow Jane a second thought about marriage and to grant her time to increase her might. Moreover, she is an important factor in two minor plots which the marriage plot involves: the bigamy and the failed marriage plot. With both, she "undermines the security of a wedding" (McAleavey, 919) because apparently not every story ends in a jubilant wedding. Thus, she obtains the suspense for the reader who should not be too sure about the ending of the novel. Nevertheless, Bertha's eventual destruction is short and unambiguous with her lying "smashed on the pavement" (*JE* 518). Apparently, her function for the marriage plot is fulfilled, so she does no longer occur in the novel.

Aside from the marriage plot, there are also numerous features of the generic Gothic tale traceable in *Jane Eyre.* Those features do not change Bertha's functions but add to them through their contrasting of the realism in the novel with the existence of "mystery, magic, wonder and monstrosity" (Botting 2). According to Botting, the Gothic plot normally displays two central figures: "a young female heroine and an older male villain" (4). While the young woman is obviously Jane, the villain in Rochester is harder to detect because he is already extremely romanticised through the marriage plot which constructs him as the predestined lover of Jane. However, he matches the description of the Gothic villain who desires body or money of a woman and "gives free reign to cruel, selfish desires and ambitions and violent moods and intentions" (5). This behaviour is most obvious in his treatment of Bertha whom he first marries for her beauty and wealth and then locks away because she does not fulfil his expectations. Nevertheless, he also threatens Jane to do the same to her and wants to attach her to a chain when he has "fairly seized" her (*JE* 324). Moreover, he severely manipulates Jane to trick her into marrying an already taken man.

Another feature of the gothic plot which directly points to the character of Bertha is the presence of one or several monsters in the text which should distinguish "norms and values from deviant and immoral figures and practices" (Botting 8-9). Due to the huge effort the novel makes to dehumanise Bertha, it is apparent that she represents this monster. Additionally, since Gothic responds to the "social and sexual, [but especially] racial, apprehensions of the literate middle and lower middle classes" in England (Malchow 4-5), Bertha's transformation into a monster expresses the imperialist social and political anxieties of the British. Thus, her construction as a white Creole who is mad and violent depicts "the colonial as a disturbing agent" (Paravisini-Gebert 249) who menaces the superior and white couple and needs to be destroyed to set them free. For the plot, this serves to Other Bertha while representing Jane and Rochester as superior, like I already mentioned in the characterisation. Additionally, her

presence as a mad and violent woman aids Rochester to represent himself as a hero instead of a villain which deviates it from the typical Gothic plot. Here, Rochester gets the change to bravely protect Jane from the monstrous Bertha and to pretend that he only wants the best for his first wife. For example, in chapter 26, he flings Jane behind him when Bertha attacks him (*JE* 353). Later, he displays his alleged good character when he claims that "he would not use cruelty" against Bertha, even though only "cruelty could check" her (369). With that, the novel refers to the Victorian ideology which I mentioned in the chapter three, which implies that English men are not aggressive and would not harm their colonial subordinates.

Jane, on the other hand, is the "remarkably active and resourceful" protagonist as it is typical of Gothic plots (DeLamotte 221). For a Victorian middle-class woman, she travels a lot, takes walks to the town, and wanders through the moors. Hence, she disregards "the Victorian cult of domesticity" for women and the ideal of separated spheres (Dzelzainis 116) which once again makes her seem progressive. However, she returns to the formerly rejected domestic sphere in the end of the novel.

Returning to the introduction of the chapter, the question remains if *Jane Eyre* is truly a love story. Certainly, it fulfils most of the criteria of a marriage plot whose emphasis on an affective marriage should convince the reader of the couple's love. Moreover, aspects of a Gothic plot indicate that Jane and Rochester are more suitable for one another than Rochester and "the monster". Nevertheless, a vague feeling remains that the fairy tale ending is odd and exaggerated. Jane's description of Rochester as "an ugly man" (*JE* 271) and his own discovery that he is "old enough to be [her] father" (158) could stand for unconditional love, but they also make a loving relationship quite unlikely. Additionally, there are Jane's and Rochester's different classes in society which create the impression that there must be other reasons for their union. To use Mrs Fairfax words, "gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses" (317). Thus, the love story is probably only an overlay of another, more hidden plot, like the upward mobility that Jane experiences through the novel and which could be a variation of a "rags to riches plot" (Booker 52). Jane's story then, would not be directed towards marriage but towards permanently ascending into a higher class. This would also explain why she wants to marry an ugly, old man who not only manipulates her throughout the whole novel but also keeps his wife confined in a windowless attic. Bertha would represent a failed try to improve her life in this scenario because even though her family is already wealthy, she once wanted to marry Rochester because of his "good race" (*JE* 367) and hence, aims at moving up the social ladder as well. For this reason, I would agree with Goodwin who claims that "for both women, the novel is also about financial security – as one woman gains – the other loses" (659). Thereby, the whole plot could serve as a metaphor which represents the English exploitation of the colonies, since all money (Bertha's and Jane's inheritance from her uncle in Madeira) originate from plantations and possibly from slave trades.

6. Conclusion

My aim for my bachelor thesis was to ascertain how the character of Bertha Mason is constructed in *Jane Eyre* and which functions she fulfils in the novel. For that, I deployed a feminist and a postcolonial approach. Moreover, I analysed Bertha and her influence on several levels, including the narrative discourse, character and plot level.

The first thing I discovered is that an imperialist ideology may not be overtly displayed in *Jane Eyre*, but it still exists. Loyalty to the Empire, patriotism, racism, a belief in the racial superiority of the white English and a resulting conviction in social missions are all facets of imperialism which *Jane Eyre* demonstrates. Those aspects lay the foundation of Othering Bertha because they result in the creation of an enemy image which is represented by non-English and especially non-white people. Additionally, they already show that besides racially Other people, also women as sexually Other people were discriminated in the Victorian period. Both features are fundamental to understand the reasons of Bertha's depiction which is shaped by racism and a deeply patriarchal society.

Adding to that, the narrative situation is a decisive factor in the ambiguous representation of Bertha. The novel constructs Jane as the central figure of the story and does not allow different characters to interrupt her linear development. Even though Jane's narration is not reliable because, as the protagonist, she is too involved in the story to offer a trustworthy rendering of the story, she succeeds in manipulating the readers in a way that her version is widely accepted by them. In order to secure this blind confidence, the novel proceeds in actively silencing Bertha. Due to that, it is assumable that Bertha's character is represented to serve Jane's aims of displaying her love story and growth.

This is visible in the conception of her figure which differs significantly from that of Jane or Rochester as well. Bertha should not arouse an emotional response from the reader but support the novel's protagonists. Thus, she is represented as static, monodimensional and personified rather than individualised. The reader should not identify with Bertha but continue to believe in the love of Jane and Rochester as the superior couple. Bertha's only functions are to create suspense as the Gothic mystery at Thornfield and to increase the superiority of the protagonists by being racially and sexually Othered. However, she is not automatically Other but actively Othered by Jane. The heroine simultaneously characterises her opponent as black, even though her heritage shows that she must be white and uses Bertha's status as a Creole to apply several prejudices against Creoles and black people. The most significant one is Bertha's madness which seems to embrace her whole being and is the main reason why Bertha's confinement is not criticised more severely in the novel. This is reinforced by dehumanising Bertha which Jane does through linking Bertha to dangerous animals and supernatural beings. As a result, Rochester's treatment of his first wife seems to be sufficiently

legitimised which supports the construction of Rochester's allegedly noble character. Moreover, the topic of Creoles serves to depict him as especially manly and heroic when he is contrasted with Bertha's brother Mason who is considered to be depraved because of his origin in the novel.

For Jane, it is similar then she contrasts herself with Bertha in the course of events. The novel draws several parallels between her as a child and the Creole as she is now. At different times of her lives, both are too passionate to meet the strict criteria of femininity and both are, at least in some sense, dehumanised and Othered. Nevertheless, it is conspicuous that Jane is always offered a chance to escape and improve her life whereas Bertha has to accept her fate. Due to that, Bertha becomes the cautionary tale of untamed female desires while Jane serves as a good example of a developing woman who wants to adapt to the wishes of society. Again, this process also aids Rochester to defend his choice because the Victorian society would probably support his wish for an English woman instead of a colonial one.

Eventually, my analysis of the plot revealed that *Jane Eyre* mainly follows the generic marriage plot. The main topic is the progress of Jane who finds her true love in Rochester and whose happy ending is reached through a wedding. Her obstacle is the Othered Bertha who is removed through letting her commit suicide once she is no longer needed for the progress of the story. The marriage plot is supplemented by Gothic elements which particularly serve to represent Bertha as a monster, but which also indicate that Rochester could in fact be a villain. Ultimately, I discovered that the love story, and with it the entire wedding plot, are probably only an overlay for a rags to riches tale which the novel attempts to conceal.

This aspect could also be a starting point for further research. Since most feminist and postcolonial approaches seem to focus on the more obvious plots of marriage and Gothic, it would be interesting to find out about the role of women and especially that of Bertha in a more class-oriented approach. Certainly, this would contribute to an even more elaborate understanding of the "mad woman" and her functions.

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FILMOGRAPHY:

Jane Eyre. Created by Cary Fukunaga, performance by Mia Wasikowska (Jane Eyre) and Michael Fassbender (Mr Rochester), Universal Pictures, 2011.

Jane Eyre. Created by Franco Zeffirelli, performance by Charlotte Gainsbourg (Jane Eyre) and William Hurt (Mr Rochester), Miramax Films, 1996.

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09.02.2020

Erstgutachten zur Bachelorarbeit von Name (Matr.-Nr.) zum Thema „A Feminist and Postcolonial Approach to Charlotte Brontë's Novel *Jane Eyre* (1847)"

Die Verfasserin hat zum Abschluss ihres Studiums eine englischsprachige Bachelorarbeit zum Thema „A Feminist and Postcolonial Approach to Charlotte Brontë's Novel *Jane Eyre* (1847)" vorgelegt, die die Anforderungen sehr gut erfüllt.
Die zielführend strukturierte und in idiomatischen Englisch geschriebene Arbeit überzeugt zum einen durch ihren souveränen Umgang mit einer Vielzahl einschlägiger Fachliteratur, die die Verf. immer wieder deutlich auf deren Leistungen und Grenzen hin befragt (bes. gelungen 15, 25f) und mit Hilfe derer sie ein historisch valides und komplexes eigenes Argument entwickelt. Zum anderen erlaubt ihr ihre ausgezeichnete Kenntnis des Romans eine ausgewogene Quellenarbeit, die ihre Interpretationen auf der Struktur- wie auf der Detailebene nachvollziehbar macht. Obwohl Brontës Roman zu den am häufigsten behandelten Kanontexten der englischen Literatur gehört, gelingt es der Verf. durch die Kombination der beiden gut gewählten Ansätze, dem Text neue Facetten abzugewinnen und bekannte Aspekte neu zu akzentuieren. Sie führt die Leser sehr gut durch ihre Überlegungen, in dem sie die Übergänge zwischen den Kapiteln immer mit einer Zusammenfassung und einer Vorausschau versieht (11, 14f, 19, 27).

Die **Introduction** präsentiert zunächst den Forschungsstand, für dessen Darstellung die Verf. sich angesichts der Materialfülle sinnvoll auf die Figur der Bertha Mason konzentriert und den sie so knapp und zielgerichtet beschreibt, dass sie daraus ihr Anliegen ableiten kann. Sie fällt ihr bei der Sichtung der feministischen und postkolonialen Sekundärliteratur zum Roman auf, dass diese die Implikationen der Erzählsituation nicht beachtet und daher oft zu vereinfachenden Schlüssen kommt. Daran schließt sie ihre komplexe These an, die die Funktion der Nebenfigur Bertha Mason für die beiden Hauptfiguren in den Blick nimmt und diese wiederum in die koloniale Denkungsart des bürgerlichen 19. Jahrhunderts einordnet (2), die sie später zutreffend als rassistisch bezeichnet (11).
Das gut lesbare, weil stringente **Theoriekapitel** definiert die zentralen Begriffe aus beiden Ansätzen, die die Verf. bereits hier auf den Roman bezieht und dessen

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Konstruktion der Bertha Mason als „sexual and racial Other“ (21, 27) die Verf. zurecht besonders interessiert. Für den problematischen Begriff „race“ orientiert sie sich passend an der zeitgenössischen Verwendung, weil diese dem Roman unterliegt (5).
Das **3. Kapitel** „The English vs. The Other“ widmet sich den imperialen Tropen, die den Roman durchziehen und deren Funktionen die Verf. anhand von drei Aspekten diskutiert, die sie einem Aufsatz von Brantlinger entnimmt. Ungewöhnlich für eine Bachelorarbeit gelingt es ihr hier zu zeigen, wie im Roman Ungesagtes dennoch nationalistisch und imperial aufgeladen ist (6ff) und wie sich diese Befunde deuten lassen (11).
Folgerichtig beginnt das **4. Kapitel** in **4.1.** mit der Analyse der Erzählsituation und deren Funktionen für die Konstruktion der Bertha Mason als Gegenpol zur Erzählerin. Die Arbeit bewegt sich durchgehend auf einem sehr hohen Abstraktionsniveau, das sich in der korrekten Verwendung der literaturwissenschaftlichen Begriffe mit besonderer Betonung des Funktionsaspekts zeigt (13ff, auch wenn Bertha mal richtig als „character“ und dann wieder als „figure“ bezeichnet wird). Die Verf. verweist zunächst auf die der Sekundärliteratur entlehnten Beobachtung, dass die Figur der Bertha Mason im Text keine eigene Stimme hat und verfolgt dann im Detail, wie die Ich-Erzählerin ihre Leser zu manipulieren sucht (16, 18, 26). Dann diskutiert die Verf. im Kapitel **4.2.** detailliert die Figurenkonzeption der Bertha Mason anhand der Kriterien aus Pfister (der leider in der Bibliographie fehlt) und der Genrekonventionen des Schauerromans. Das Unterkapitel **4.3.** zur Konstruktion des “Anderen“ belegt die historischen Kenntnisse der Verf. (zu den Kreolen in der kolonialen Karibik, zur den bürgerlichen Frauenrollen im 19. Jahrhundert, zur Konstruktion von Wahnsinn), die sie sowohl aus feministischer wie postkolonialer Sicht erfolgreich auf den Text anwendet. Sie kann die Charakterisierungstechniken und deren Ergebnisse erkennen und überzeugend interpretieren. Immer behält die Verf. die imperiale Verfasstheit Großbritanniens im Blick und verbindet diese Kenntnisse sinnfällig mit den formalen Befunden (25, 30). Auch besticht die Arbeit durch ihre genauen Formulierungen (z.B. 21, 23), die in dieser Art in Abschlussarbeiten selten sind.
Im **5. Kapitel** analysiert die Verf. die Handlungsführung und konzentriert sich dabei auf die Handlung und deren – in unzähligen Filmadaptionen (nicht „adaptions“, 27) immer wieder vermarktete – Liebesgeschichte zwischen der Protagonistin und der männlichen Hauptfigur. Dazu bietet die Figur der Bertha einen Kontrast, mit dem der Roman den imperialen Ängsten seiner potentiellen Leser Ausdruck gibt. Die **Conclusion** fasst die Ergebnisse der Arbeit noch einmal auf hohem Abstraktionsniveau zusammen.

Die vierseitige **Bibliographie** ist beeindruckend umfangreich und belegt, wie intensiv sich die Verf. mit den verschiedenen Aspekten von Theorie, Literaturgeschichte und Interpretation des gewählten Romans befasst hat. Sie enthält nur sehr wenige Fehler, wobei allerdings drei Texte fehlen (Eagleton 12, Pfister 16ff, McAleavey 30).

Die Arbeit ist technisch sehr sauber gestaltet und benutzt das MLA Style Sheet korrekt. Die wenigen sprachlichen Fehler betreffen den Genitiv mit „own“ (13 auch17, 18, 27, 32), gelegentlich die Verwendung der Präpositionen und die uneinheitliche Schreibung von „G/gothic“. Stilistisch ist der Text

abwechslungsreich und verwendet ein sehr fortgeschrittenes akademisches Englisch, das sich flüssig liest.

Die ausgezeichnete Arbeit wird mit der Gesamtnote **1,0 (sehr gut)** bewertet.

Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Leibniz Universität Hannover

Englisches Seminar

Erstprüferin: Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Zweitprüfer: PD Dr. Ralf Haekel

eingereicht am: …

Bachelorarbeit

"This barbarous moor" – "The valiant moor":

Constructions of Race in William Shakespeare's

Titus Andronicus and *Othello*

Name
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Matr.-Nr. …

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The Renaissance, or early modern period, has been described as an epoch "of enormous transition in religious, political and social terms" (Hiscock 110), which was "dominated by international conflict, dynastic questions, religious tension and economic confusion" (Jones 13). During this era, defined by Hiscock as ranging roughly from the end of the 15th century to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 (110), England saw "a sequence of wide-sweeping religious, political and economic changes" (110). England developed from "a rather marginal European kingdom" (110) to one "much more central [...] [in] the arena of European affairs" (110).

At the same time, theatre developed in England as a public art form without rival (Kinney 1). William Shakespeare is certainly one of the most prolific playwrights of this era, and his plays are quintessential examples of the range in topics and variety of themes in evidence on the early modern stage. Shakespeare, as other Renaissance writers,

> engaged tightly with the radically changing cultural landscape which [his] audiences were experiencing and often explored in new and challenging ways the direction which this developing nation might take (Hiscock 110).

While he has proceeded to be hailed "as a universal genius who outshone all his fellows" (Wells and Taylor xv), it is noteworthy that despite the purported universality of Shakespeare's plays, their themes remain "firmly rooted in the circumstances of [their] conception" (xv). As with all texts, the plays are also not 'universal' in the sense that they convey a certain unified meaning or message for an audience, but they instead offer a plethora of different possible readings that may each foreground certain topics over others. As Greenblatt writes:

> Shakespeare's language and themes are caught up, like the medium itself, in unsettling repetitions, committed to the shifting voices and audiences, with their shifting aesthetic assumptions and historical imperatives, that govern a living theater (*Self-Fashioning* 254).

The Renaissance period saw the emergence of England as a colonial power. Some of Shakespeare's plays also engage with this development, and it is this subject matter that I shall focus on. Two plays in which colonialism and its effects feature prominently are *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, written in 1592 and 1604 (Wells and Taylor ix-x) respectively. By 1592, at least two major companies established solely for the purpose of colonisation had been founded in England (Hiscock 181), and by the time *Othello* was written, a further two had come into being, amongst them the East India Company (181). As Loomba writes, "it is

useful to think about the 'early modern' as the 'early colonial' because colonization and imperial ambitions were the midwives that assisted in the development of the European nations, and made possible what we now call modernity" (16). It is not surprising that Shakespeare's plays engaged with such topics, as theatre "was the only widespread public medium for commentary on religious, political and social life" (Kinney 2). To examine how the effects of early English colonialism are represented in Shakespeare's two plays, I will focus on the character level. This is productive here, as both of them feature black characters who, to a certain extent, embody how colonialism (differently) shapes colonised individuals, and how colonialism has shaped their surroundings. I contend that this is closely linked to the category of race, which is key in constructing colonialism on the level of individual people. In the plays I will therefore examine character conceptions and character constellations.

In *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron, a black slave, takes chief hand in a revenge plot against a Roman family by a Goth queen and, for a time, accumulates an immense scope of power. *Othello* initially sees its titular black character formally powerful through his military achievements, who is then brought to a tragic downfall – "the hero's self-construction and destruction" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 5) – by the plotting of his ancient Iago. I will also examine how the two characters perceive themselves, how they negotiate their difference and to what extent they display signs of interpellation, i.e. the invoking of racial connotations from a dominant ideology of normative whiteness.

Within a new historicist framework, which establishes "a sense of the larger networks of meaning in which both the author and his works participate" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 4), I shall examine how race is constructed in the interplay between societal norms and values and their representation on the stage. Shakespeare's plays are productive texts for the examination of English Renaissance race constructions, since, as Greenblatt notes "for the early sixteenth century, art does not pretend to be autonomy; the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power" (*Self-Fashioning* 7). While neither play is set in early modern England, they were conceived by an English playwright, and the implied audience is English as well. The dynamics between society and theatre is thus two-fold: Shakespeare's plays negotiate societal norms and values, and at the same time participate in societal discourse and might also have helped shape these norms and values. As Kinney comments, theatre "was also especially powerful in the messages it could convey and the results it might incur" (2). As early modern theatre had a mixed audience in terms of class (Gurr 58), the discourses of race evident in the plays may be taken to be representative of English Renaissance society on all levels.

English colonialism invariably led to encounters with foreign populations who, for the purpose of justifying colonising them, were marked as different, as inferior, as Other, opposed to an English Self (Loomba 9-10). A major part of this Othering was based on visible Otherness. This was achieved by constructing as well as developing notions like blackness (9-10). The ideology of racial inferiority is established through the usage of stereotypes. I will examine these sets of stereotypes contextually together with contemporary attitudes and developments in part three, "Race in the Renaissance".

I shall argue that the plays attempt to transcend the binary nature of the Self/Other-dichotomy and explore discourses of race to a point where the stereotypically connoted attributes are no longer discernible and even overturned. However, while in both plays these discourses are challenged and unmasked as non-universal constructs for a time, the eventual capture of Aaron and downfall of Othello ultimately result in the respective societies being able to re-establish processes of Othering blackness as an alleged natural order.

2. Theory and Method

My point of departure for the examination of Shakespeare's plays will be the new historicist view that "literature does not reflect a 'given' historical moment but negotiates cultural concepts and values" (Meyer 187). My analysis will combine a new historicist reading with additional usage of the notion of Othering and the Self/Other-dichotomy from postcolonial theory. This combination is useful, as the subject-matter of the two schools of theory overlaps frequently. Stephen Greenblatt's seminal study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, which is regarded by many as the first new historicist study (Barry 166; Grady 228; Belsey 27), breaks the

> long, unspoken taboo within Renaissance studies of interrogating the relation between the canonical masterpieces of Renaissance literature with the horrifying *colonialist* policies pursued by all the major European powers of the era, including Elizabethan and Jacobean England. (Grady 228, my emphasis)

Thus, my analysis will attempt to find out how the constructions of race are linked to connotations of race inherent in Renaissance society, which were in turn influenced and shaped by the burgeoning colonialism.

While new historicist scholars usually combine fictional and non-fictional documents in their examination of cultural concepts, for reasons of textual brevity and limited space, I shall draw on negotiations of Renaissance ideas as provided by new historicist scholars, rather than frame the texts within a new non-fictional background. Nevertheless, I will follow

Greenblatt in "interpret[ing] the interplay of [...] symbolic structures with those perceivable [...] in the larger social world as constituting a single, complex process" (*Self-Fashioning* 6).

Shakespeare's plays can be considered valid historical documents for contextual examination under the new historicist paradigm. As mentioned previously, at the time of their conception and production on stage, they would have been an active part of popular culture. It is therefore useful and productive to examine constructions of race contextually on the basis of the plays. I will examine and analyse *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello* for constructions of race and how the category of race as such is negotiated. My main point of focus will be this cultural negotiation based on stereotypes, power and agency. This will encompass how dramatic conventions such as monologues and soliloquies are utilised. Stylistic features[1] such as metonymy or imagery will be taken into account to highlight the functioning of stereotypes and ideology, and the construction of power and agency.

Before establishing the processes at work in Renaissance attitudes and forms of Othering, it is necessary to reify certain terms that are central to my analysis. The term Other and processes of Othering, established as a crucial part of postcolonial studies by Edward W. Said, will be central to my analysis. I will follow Wolfreys in defining the Other as a "state of existence of being other or different from established norms and social groups" (*Glossary* 305). The concept of the Other relies on a clear-cut division between Self and Other, with the latter "[deserving] to be ruled" because of its Otherness and inferiority (Said xi). The process of Othering thus means that certain groups of people are moulded by a Self to exist in this different state and as the opposite to a dominant system of norms and values.

A term necessary in order to clarify the mechanics of Othering is 'stereotype'. Stereotypes are strongly simplified and fixed ideas about other groups of people, which are known on a widespread scale to the groups that create these ideas (Nünning 679). Generally speaking, they are a cognitive strategy of selective perception for a reduction of complexity (679). However, in connection to Othering they are often used to establish hierarchies and mark inferiorised groups with negative connotations which are taken to be universal and to apply to each and every member of the group in question. Stereotypes are closely linked to the establishment of a dominant ideology in societies.

Ideologies are "systems of cultural assumptions [...] which uphold [...] social order, [and] [...] provide a coherent structure of thought that hides or silences the contradictory elements in social and economic formations" (Wolfreys, *Glossary* 301). In the case of race, the ideology of white racial superiority and the Othering of blackness can be defined as being

[1] I shall follow Nünning and Nünning's definitions of generic stylistic and rhetorical devices as well as dramatic conventions.

upheld by the utilisation of stereotypes and fixed racial connotations. In the context of Renaissance England, this form of ideology "establish[es] the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and assert[s] the *naturalness and primacy* of the colonizing culture and world view" (Ashcroft et al. 186, my emphasis). The aforementioned racial ideology thus becomes naturalised and acquires "strength [...] from the way it gets to be common sense; it 'goes without saying'" (Sinfield 64).

Ideology and Othering are also linked to the establishment of power: "the other is the excluded or 'mastered' subject created by the discourse of power" (Ashcroft et al. 188). As Greenblatt adds, "power [...] is in effect an allocation method – a way of distributing resources to some and denying them to others" ("Authority" 442). However, because the notion of power is ambivalent in the two plays under scrutiny, the term itself has to be defined more specifically: I will generally follow a definition of power in Foucauldian terms, in which power and knowledge are intrinsically linked: "power implies knowledge, and vice versa" (Wolfreys, *Glossary* 306). In this vein, forms of empowerment are constituted through knowledge and may deviate from societal formations of power and thus from dominant ideologies. One example would be that individuals may be powerful as they have knowledge of events and plans that other individuals – who are officially 'empowered' through a state apparatus – do not have.

Generally speaking, "power serves in making the world both knowable and controllable" (Wolfreys, *Glossary* 306). In societies, this is usually achieved in established systems of governance with certain sets of norms and values which, in military or political hierarchies, empower certain individuals to a wider range than others. These systems exhibit that "the nature of power [...] is essentially proscriptive, concerned [...] with imposing limits on its subjects" (*Glossary* 306). On a societal scale, this means that colonised black individuals can officially never achieve any form of power, as they have the greatest amount and most comprehensive limits imposed on them in normatively white societies. However, on a more conceptual level, when these individuals gain power through knowledge, these impositions can be overturned. In the same vein, individuals, while being nominally lower on a hierarchy than many others, may be able to influence their superiors through knowledge of their ideologies. In doing this, "the power in given circumstances to constitute bodies of knowledge, discourses and so on as valid or invalid, truthful or untruthful" (Wolfreys, *Glossary* 306) can be redistributed. In securing power, these individuals will invariably show their competence in acquiring agency. I shall follow Wolfreys in defining agency as "one's ability to act on the world on one's own behalf [...] [and] the extent to which one is

empowered to act by the various ideological frameworks within which one operates" (*Glossary* 293). Although not officially empowered by the ideological frameworks they live in, even hierarchically low individuals may be able to acquire agency through the understanding and consequent subversion of the ideologies of their peers.

3. Race in the Renaissance

In the following passage, I will examine how the category of race was connoted in the Renaissance. Before establishing this context for the analysis of the plays, it is necessary to define race more closely, as it is a contested, highly malleable category (Loomba 3). My initial, general definition of race shall follow Wolfreys in that race is a constructed concept which attempts to assign different individuals to groups, based on their (real or imagined) genealogical and biological specifics of common origin and heritage or anatomical and corporeal differences (*Keywords* 204). However, as race is not a 'natural' concept, this definition has to be handled with care, for as Loomba writes: "what we call race does not indicate natural or biological divisions so much as social divisions which are characterized as if they were natural or biological" (3). Race as a category is not only used to divide people into different groups, but more importantly to place them in systems of hierarchies: "race is a [...] category which historically has been deployed to reinforce existing social hierarchies and create new ones" (3). Frequently, "colour [...] becomes a visible sign of apparent racial identity" (Wolfreys, *Keywords* 211). My main point of focus shall be how the category of race is used to establish hierarchies and naturalise them, and how this goes hand in hand with a received set of connotations solely based on normative whiteness (Self) and inferior blackness (visible Otherness). This received set of connotations defines those humans who belong to a visible Other specifically as inferior in terms of sexuality, class and religion. Although some scholars, like Loomba, measure colour as one racial category next to sexuality, class, religion and others, my contention is that most of the stereotypical connotations of race are based on visible Otherness in the first instance. Although race as a category is socially constructed, it is not a delusion but has had very real effects on people's lives (Loomba 4); for that reason, I follow Loomba in not placing the word within quotation marks (4).

As previously mentioned, blackness as a category of race which leads to Othering is a construction. Greenblatt reminds us how in the English Renaissance whiteness is constructed as well: "Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other [...] must be *discovered or invented* in order to be attacked and

destroyed" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 7, my emphasis). This is usually an intertwined process. As Loomba writes, "images of blackness, for example, did more than produce ideologies of whiteness – they also helped legitimise actual exploitation of black peoples and nations" (10): the Renaissance saw the beginnings of colonial ventures from England. From the middle of the 15th century onwards, European nations engaged in "greater commerce in exotic goods such as ivory and gold" (Hiscock 180). This, in turn, led to "the establishment of the European role in enslaving African natives" (180-81). It is notable that many of these early colonial ventures were private, commercial ventures; however, King James I already went on to "style [...] himself as the sovereign over the 'Empire of Great Britain'" (183). The 16th century especially saw the foundation of many colonial companies, which usually secured their funding from private investors interested in reaping the profits from colonial ventures.

> Commercial ambitions which governed overseas trade were further consolidated in subsequent decades with the founding of the Muscovy Company, for example, in 1555, the Cathay Company in 1576, the Levant Company in 1592, the East India Company in 1600, the Virginia Company in 1606 and the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629. (181)

The 'discovery' of foreign peoples and their subsequent enslavement was initially a by-product of these commercial, colonial ventures. However, it is notable how quickly these foreigners were constructed and utilised as a commodified good.

> When ships did return, they might also bring back native people from these new-found lands – unsurprisingly, it was rare for these displaced persons to survive in their new surroundings. Nonetheless, they remained valuable curiosities even in death and were clearly seen as lucrative investments. (182)

Colonialism in itself can only be explained within a society that constructs itself as educated by inferiorising the inhabitants of colonies. This can be achieved by discovering or inventing Otherness in terms of norm and value systems like sexuality and religion, and deeming these different paradigms as inferior. As colonialism commenced and "the nations of Christian Europe initiated their attempts to conquer and shape other people in their own image, what we call modern racism was born" (Loomba 17), despite crude negative stereotyping of black people pre-dating systemic colonial slavery and exploitation (40). The stereotypes which were applied to the colonised Other were not new, many had existed since antiquity, and many of the prescribed attributes were reapplied from other disenfranchised groups, e.g. the Poor: "those whom the Europeans colonised were portrayed in terms that had already been applied to poor people – rude, uncultured, dirty, unrefined, and unintelligent" (34), thereby also inferiorising the Other in terms of class.

In these processes, every norm and value that did not conform to Eurocentric ones was made inherently inferior, and political agendas like Christianisation were established in order to mark deviances from Eurocentric norms as something to be eradicated. At the same time, deviances from a Eurocentric norm as perceived in the Other were also used to codify normative behaviour in Europe. For instance, the stereotypes of Muslims and Africans being hyper-sexual and given to same-sex practices were described in travelogues or sermons and other texts of the period to warn the inscribed readers or listeners of the bestiality of deviating from normative sexuality (Loomba 31).

The fact that even today scholars like Greenblatt use terms like 'discovered' instead of 'constructed' regarding Othering shows how even contemporary language has a tendency to suffer from the inherently hierarchical view of the Renaissance Other. In addition to these processes of Othering, the Orient – the region that defined the Other in terms of space – was also perceived as an irrational, backward, lazy, sensuous and deviant region, and the establishment of a binary opposition between the European Self and the Other, the Orient, was crucial to sustaining Europe's image of itself (Loomba 9; Said xi-xii).

The early phase of English colonialism in the Renaissance is marked by a binary opposition between the simultaneous opening and closing of belief systems:

> as Europeans searched for new markets and colonies abroad, they became culturally more open, and yet in many ways more insular. They began to bring in foreign slaves, and to trade with outsiders, but also to expel those they considered 'foreign' from within their own nations. They became increasingly aware of the power, wealth and learning of other peoples, of the precise histories and geographies of worlds beyond Europe, and yet this awareness often only intensified expressions of European and Christian superiority. (Loomba 4)

Despite the notion that "Renaissance representations of the Moor were vague, varied, inconsistent and contradictory" (Bartels 434), there are several points of agreement when it comes to defining connoted attributes to Renaissance usage of the term 'Moor'. Generally, "nakedness, savagery, and general depravity" (Mason Vaughan 52) were paramount features ascribed to the visible Other. Fears of racial mixing were transformed into codified moral values, which characterised black people as sexually deviant: black men were said to have an "ingrained moral infection, a taint in the blood often linked to sexual perversion and the desire to possess a white woman – her body, her status, her wealth, or her power" (Mason Vaughan 62). Linked to this notion of sexual difference is the fear of a rise in black population due to a higher birth rate: "women belonging to 'uncivilized' races can give birth easily and without pain, and [...] labour comes naturally and easily to them" (Loomba 34). It is noteworthy that apart from connotations that were overtly connected to blackness, others were covertly

established, e.g. through pictorial or literary representations that would link blackness with other concepts: "religious and literary texts as well as popular culture depicted Muslims, Jews and the devil as black. In medieval dramas, figures of Vice or the Devil were often in blackface" (Loomba 27). Accordingly, blackness is not only deviant in religious terms, but deemed the direct producer of anti-pious actions. Pre-existing notions of blackness were reinstigated for the purpose of colonialism: "the association of godlessness and blackness goes back to medieval literature and theology, but it was increasingly reinforced by the slave trade[, which] [...] linked blackness to servitude, as well as to moral inferiority and ugliness" (Loomba 47). Nearly always, the colonising powers were successful in distributing stereotypes also among the colonised Other. In this process, black people might invoke stereotypes of blackness constructed by the colonizers: "subjects may be interpellated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing function of the colonizing power" (Ashcroft et al. 187).

These discourses of colonialism and race would have been well known to early modern audiences, as this early phase of colonialism was

> accompanied by an intensified production and reproduction of visions of 'Other' worlds, some handed down from classical descriptions, others generated by actual encounters and recorded as travel narratives, others shaped by dramatic and literary conventions already in place. (Bartels 433)

Many contemporary texts, like Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589), presented alleged 'facts' about 'Moors' alongside observations that imply them being uninterested if not idle, erratic if not cunning, and unreliable if not treacherous (Bartels 441). These travelogues "helped define the boundary between the domestic and the foreign" (Loomba 12) and also served an ideologically colonialism-oriented purpose: "Hakluyt reminded his countrymen that they had lagged behind other European nations in gathering the riches of the two Indies, and he ardently advocated English participation in both 'Eastern trade' and 'Western planting'" (Loomba 12). Thus, any form of travel and travel report was intrinsically linked not only to an exploration of the foreign, but also an economic and colonial exploration which was to improve life in Europe. In a remarkable turn, the image of the Other is reapplied to England by Hakluyt, when he describes "idle Englishmen as cannibals" (Loomba 13), fearing that if these idle Englishmen "were not rejuvenated by colonialism, …[they] would become 'man-eating savages similar to those which inhabit the Americas'" (Loomba 13). By producing this fear of a destruction of whiteness and the rise of 'savages', the agenda for economic success is not only governed by economic advancement and the fear of lagging behind European counterparts, but also by fear of losing ideological superiority altogether. One further function

of colonialism here is that "imperial discourse constructs its others in order to confirm its own reality" (Ashcroft et al. 189). This fear of losing ideological dominance and the ideal of maintaining a homogenous white population in England produced racist actions by society.

> In 1551, about 500 citizens had demonstrated before the mayor of London, threatening to kill foreigners. In 1595, tradesmen rioted against 'strangers' in Southwark. Such hostile demonstrations were frequent, the result of growing anxieties about being engulfed by outsiders. (Loomba 16)

Even the English political administration responded to fears of being engulfed by foreigners: "In 1596 [Queen] Elizabeth sent a letter to the mayors of London and other towns asking that black people be deported" (52).

4. Constructions of Race in Shakespeare

Bearing in mind the range of the aforementioned stereotypes and thus the construction of race and blackness, it is unsurprising that on the early modern stage, "blackness had shock value" (Mason Vaughan 59). The explorations of blackness in Shakespeare's plays take varied forms. Before examining how these explorations are made explicit in *Othello* and *Titus Andronicus*, it is again important to note that Shakespeare's plays do not independently stand apart from historical development, but participated in public discourse in terms of the issues they addressed. At the time, theatre was popular entertainment, and the subject matter of Shakespeare's plays would reach a wide spectrum of London society: "dramatic performance was perceived in terms of popular entertainment and there is no evidence [...] that anyone was willing to attribute to it any elevated artistic status" (Hiscock 151). Shakespeare's plays are representative for a general set of attitudes towards race at the time, as the social composition of theatre audiences was heterogeneous. Renaissance London saw

> a large urban artisan class, [...] a citizen class of merchants and manufacturers [...] an increasingly literate class of schoolmasters, scriveners and clergy [...] Almost all of these distinct classes in the middle stratum can be found amongst Shakespearean playgoers. Their composition broadly defines the composition of a majority in the London playhouse audiences, though the complete social range goes all the way from earls and even a queen to penniless rogues [...] families of beggars, and the unemployed. (Gurr 58)

Many theatregoers would get "their images of foreign people from the stage, rather than [...] from real-life interactions" (Loomba 8), and "Shakespeare's theatre was enormously influential in forming English public opinion about the world" (Loomba 7). However, the plays also presuppose that the audience has knowledge of the aforementioned sets of

stereotypes. Accordingly, throughout the plays "Shakespeare exploits a discourse of racial difference that by 1604 had become ingrained in the English psyche" (Mason Vaughan 51).

4.1 Character Conceptions

In the following passages I shall examine how the characters in *Othello* and *Titus Andronicus*, primarily the black characters, Othello and Aaron, are constructed, and how this is linked to the category of race. The examination of these two black characters is productive for the establishment of Renaissance constructions of race, as the process of Othering is intrinsically linked to the construction of blackness. In connection to my thesis statement, I will focus on what ambivalences there are within their character conception. To explore and analyse the character conceptions, I shall first examine how Othello and Aaron are characterised by other characters, before investigating how they construct themselves in monologues and soliloquies. In the latter part, Iago will serve as counterpoint to Aaron in analysing the respective construction of their plotting.

One starting point for the analysis is that Aaron is an unusual character for the early modern stage: black men have "a voice of acquiescence rather than resistance" in narratives of the time (Bartels 441). Contextually, this again implies that the formation of the Other rests on blackness being constructed as inferior and subject to subjugation. Aaron subverts this inferiority, defies his subjugation and even unmasks white characters like as being jealous, readily violent and sexually deviant – features that would usually be connoted to blackness at the time.

4.1.1 Characterisation by Other Characters

Despite Aaron being the primary agent in *Titus Andronicus*, he is not one of the primary characters. He is a henchman, whose deeds lead to widespread plot development in the conflict between the Goths and the Romans. Generally speaking, he is only a slave who is accepted as an agent by the Goths because they know he is Tamora's lover. It is therefore unsurprising that he is not characterised extensively by other characters; Aaron's blackness is only addressed in a few instances.

Bassianus and Lavinia criticise Tamora vehemently for her association with Aaron. Bassianus constructs Aaron as disgusting and repellent due to his blackness: "your swart

Cimmerian / Doth make your honour of his body's hue, / Spotted, detested and abominable" (2.2.86-88). He also implies that they have separated themselves from the Goth group only to have sex, thus reinforcing the stereotype of black men being overly sexual: "Why are you sequestered from all your train, / [...] And wandered hither to an obscure plot, / Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor, / If foul desire had not conducted you?" (2.2.75-79). When they decide to leave, before they are hindered by Chiron and Demetrius, Lavinia adds: "Let her joy her raven-coloured love" (2.2.83). The love between the two characters is implied to be tainted by Aaron's colour.

After Aaron convinces Titus to cut off his hand, allegedly in order to save his sons, Titus compares Aaron to a black bird: "O gentle Aaron! / Did ever raven sing so like a lark" (3.1.159-60). In the same way as the (black) raven can generally not change its singing voice, it is implied here that attributes of blackness are fixed and stable, and that Aaron's alleged kindness is a deviation from an essentialist framework of race. Later in the play, when Titus discovers that Aaron tricked him into cutting off his hand, and that his sons are killed nevertheless, his attitude changes. In scene 3.2, Titus begins to display signs of his alleged madness and chides Marcus for having killed a fly. Marcus, knowing Titus's hatred of Aaron, employs a form of Othering to justify killing the fly: "Pardon me, sir, it was a black ill-favoured fly, / Like to the empress' Moor. Therefore I killed him." (3.2.68-69). Titus agrees to killing those flies denoted as black and offers to hit the fly again: "I will insult on him, / Flattering myself as if it were the Moor / Come hither purposely to poison me [...] we can kill a fly / That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor." (3.2.72-79). The latter sentence inferiorises black life to the point where it is described as entirely worthless.

Aaron is referred to by Titus once more. In scene 5.2, Tamora and her two sons arrive at Titus's house, pretending to be Revenge, Rape and Murder, hoping to take advantage of his alleged madness. Tamora's plan is to convince him to call Lucius back from the Goth army by pretending to be mythical beings. Although the extent or reality of Titus's madness remains unclear at this point, one hint the audience does have that Titus has seen detected their plot is that he tells them they are lacking a 'Moor' – probably expecting that they would have involved Aaron in their plot. In doing so, he uses the image of blackness as being devilish: "Well are you fitted, had you but a Moor; / Could not all hell afford you such a devil? / [...] It were convenient you had such a devil" (5.2.85-90). In a similarly religious vein, after Aaron has been captured by the Goth army under Lucius' control, Aaron tries to strike a bargain with Lucius to let him live. Lucius deems Aaron to be uncontrollable, because he is not even able to believe an oath, being deviant in religious terms: "Thou believest no god. / That granted,

how canst thou believe an oath?" (5.1.71-72). Aaron responds by mocking Lucius for his religiosity and in doing this, reinforces his own religious deviancy: "What if I do not? – as indeed I do not - / Yet for I know thou art religious / [...] Therefore I urge thy oath; for that I know / An idiot holds his bauble for a god" (5.1.73-79).

Aaron, having been unmasked as the main planner of the Goth revenge over the Andronici, is described by Lucius as a "barbarous moor, / This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil" (5.3.4-5), who thus combines three stereotypes of blackness. Aaron is not only inferiorised in terms of civilisation, but also deemed an insatiable animal and a godless being. After Aaron has spoken his last lines, Lucius intensifies his characterisation by finally denying him humanness: "Away, inhuman dog, unhallowed slave!" (5.3.14). It is apparent how the final insults are strongly linked to Aaron's skin colour.

One of the primary differences between *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello* is how the racial conflict is moved to the centre of the plot in the later play. Despite Aaron being one of the primary agents in *Titus Andronicus* and being at least partly responsible for most of the intrigues, the conflict on which his actions are based is not founded in his character. In *Othello*, the conflict centres on the black character and how he is not fully accepted by Venetian society generally and Iago specifically. Iago elaborates on his hatred of Othello – because he has given Cassio the position of officer instead of Iago – before his name is even mentioned on stage: "I know my price, I am no worse a place. / But he, as loving his own pride and purposes, evades them" (1.1.11-12) – Iago thus follows a self-conscious remark about himself with calling Othello self-conscious.

In *Othello*, there are several characterisations by other characters that refer to Othello's blackness. When Roderigo and Iago are in front of Brabantio's house, telling him about Desdemona's marriage to Othello, they metonymically align Othello with visible Otherness through the stereotyping of bodily features as well as animal metaphors: "the thicklips" (1.1.66), "very now, and old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.88-89). The latter also introduces the notion of blackness as being bestial and not human. Interracial relationships are also characterised by Iago as unnatural and wrong in religious terms: "the devil will make a grandsire of you" (1.1.91). He again makes use of animal metaphors: "you'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you" (1.1.110-12). Although Othello is a Venetian army officer, Roderigo refers to his Otherness by calling him "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (1.1.136). When Brabantio confronts Othello about having married his daughter, Brabantio is certain that Othello must have used supernatural means to have convinced Desdemona of this 'unnatural' relationship:

"thou hast enchanted her" (1.2.63), "She is abus'd, [...] corrupted [...] / For nature so preposterously to err, / (Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,) / Sans witchcraft could not." (1.3.60-64), "Whether a maid, so tender, fair and happy, / [...] Would ever have [...] Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such *a thing as thou*?" (1.2.66-71, my emphasis). Othello is not only deemed 'unnatural' by Brabantio, but also dehumanised by being called 'a thing'. The Oriental notion of unnaturalness, deviancy and sensuousness is personified by Othello in Brabantio's view. Brabantio finally marks interracial relationships as not Venetian and consequently as uncivilised by equating them with the beginnings of a state of anarchy: "If such actions may have passage free, / Bond-slaves, and pagans, shall our statesmen be." (1.2.98-99). It is important to note that these two lines finish scene 1.2 with a rhyming couplet. In consequence, Brabantio's statement is particularly emphasised and thus might acquire the status of a maxim which is presented to the Venetians as a common truth. It also echoes the kind of arguments xenophobic Londoners at the time of the play's production might have used to demand the expulsion of foreigners.

Iago engages in Othering in terms of both gender and race when he tells Roderigo that Desdemona and Othello are equally volatile in their emotions: "It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love unto the Moor, [...] These Moors are changeable in their wills" (1.3.342-48). He also equates blackness with devilishness again and tells Roderigo that Othello is not a refined being: "what delight shall she have to look on the devil? [...] sympathy in years, manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in" (2.1.224-229).

The racial stereotype that Othello, being black, must be very active sexually is referred to as well. After Othello and Desdemona are reunited in Cyprus and take their exit in 2.3, Iago tells Cassio "our general cast us thus early for the love of Desdemona [...] he hath not yet made wanton the night with her" (2.3.14-16). When Othello is told he has to leave for Cyprus immediately, he is eager to leave quickly to have some time alone with Desdemona: "I have but an hour / Of love [...] / To spend with thee; we must obey the time" (1.3.298-300).

How marred with contradictions Othello's characterisation by others is throughout the play only becomes apparent in its full scope through an analysis of the positive characterisations. Specifically, within "the ambivalence of Othello's relation to Christian society[,] the Moor at once represents the institution and the alien, the conqueror and the infidel" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 234). For instance, the Duke acknowledges Othello as being instrumental in making Venice a successful military power and equates Othello's military success with making him ideologically less black. He says to Brabantio: "if virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.289-90). High-

ranking military men such as Montano call him "brave Othello" (2.1.38), and even Iago has to acknowledge that "The Moor [...] / Is of a constant, noble and loving nature" (2.1.283-84) and that "His soul is so infetter'd to her [Desdemona's] love" (2.3.336). Additionally, when Emilia realises that Othello is changing under the influence of Iago's scheming and suggests he might be jealous, Desdemona interestingly reverses a stereotype of blackness: "I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humours from him" (3.4.26-27). Here, the stereotypical connotations of blackness are overturned: Characters like the Duke, Montano and Desdemona recognise the admirable character traits in Othello and ennoble him by such characterisations. By doing so, they also garner sympathy for Othello towards other characters and the audience.

Lodovico is taken aback when he witnesses Othello's changed attitude towards Desdemona as he knows of Othello's reputation of being steadfast in Venice: "Is this the noble Moor [...] / This noble nature, / Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue / The shot of accident, nor dart of chance, / Could neither graze, nor pierce?" (4.1.260-64). Despite these positive characterisations, the notion remains that "blackness – the sign of all that the society finds frightening and dangerous – is the indelible witness to Othello's permanent status as an outsider, no matter how highly the state may value his services or how sincerely he has embraced its values" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 240). Towards the end of the play, "Iago's efforts to prove the rational general and irrational moor" (Bartels 447) finally succeed[2], Iago having established in Othello the changeable nature usually attributed to blackness:

> [a] connection between temperament and location gave rise to stereotypes that became fixed as attributes of particular races. For example, Robert Burton's influential *The Anatomy of Melancholy* suggests that 'Southern men are more hot, lascivious, and jealous, than such as live in the North'. Jealousy became widely understood as a trait of Moors, Turks, and Africans, even if, like Othello, they no longer lived in 'the South'. (Loomba 54)

4.1.2 Self-Characterisation in Monologues and Soliloquies

Interestingly, while Aaron is barely characterised by other characters, and Othello is also not characterised extensively by others, they both engage in extensive self-characterisation, primarily within monologues and soliloquies. In order to also compare and contrast the two

[2] I shall analyse how Iago succeeds in deconstructing Othello's fashioning of himself as the successful, superior military man – and how this is linked to the category of race – in depth in the later passages on agency and power.

primary agents that produce violence and death, black Aaron and white Iago, I shall begin by examining how Iago and Aaron use soliloquies to characterise themselves. Afterwards, Aaron and Othello shall be compared to examine how the two black characters speak about themselves and to what extent they have invoked stereotypes of blackness and Othering that are inherent in the societies they live in.

Monologues and soliloquies are a "specifically dramatic form of representing consciousness [...] [They] are only plausible in the context of the author's and the audience's shared acceptance of this convention" (Nünning and Nünning 87). In the context of examining Shakespeare's plays for constructions of race, it is especially productive to analyse soliloquies, as they allow a character to construct himself with only the (implied) audience as witness.

While it is certainly true for all three characters that "the information conveyed in monologues and soliloquies is often characterised by a high degree of subjectivity" (Nünning and Nünning 87), the specific functions of monologues and soliloquies diverge depending on the character that is speaking. Aaron and Iago frequently "arous[e] expectations with regard to future developments (generating suspense)" (Nünning and Nünning 89), as they are the chief agents in the two plays. Aaron, Iago and Othello generally engage in "commenting on previous events from the[ir] [...] perspective" (Nünning and Nünning 89), however, only Aaron and Othello usually give "expression to the[ir] [...] innermost thoughts and feelings" (Nünning and Nünning 89). Throughout the play, the audience does not learn of any 'true' feelings or motivations of Iago's, as his thoughts and feelings are usually intrinsically linked to his plans, intentions and decision processes to attain power. The feelings he shares with the audience and thus his justifications for his plotting against all other characters remain obscure. This, however, may result in his enigmatic character fascinating and engaging the audience. This is especially powerful when he produces dramatic irony by making the audience hear the conception of his plans and then see the subsequent realisation of them.

In Iago's long monologue held in the presence of Roderigo, Iago first announces his scheming: "Were I the moor, I would not be Iago: / In following him, I follow but myself" (1.1.57-58). Iago circumscribes his duplicity and thus the difficulties in characterising him himself: "I am not what I am" (1.1.65). Despite him divulging his plans, even his statements to the audience are in parts not believable. Iago attempts to justify his actions not only by saying he has been ignored in the selection for military positions, but also by stating that he believes to have been cuckolded by Othello and Cassio: "I hate the Moor, / And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets / He's done my office; I know not if't be true… / Yet I, for mere

suspicion in that kind, / Will do, as if for surety" (1.3.384-88); "I do suspect the lustful Moor / Hath leap'd into my seat" (2.1.290-91), and "I fear Cassio with my night-cap too" (2.1.302). While Emilia's unfaithfulness might be a plausible motivation for revenge, the audience ultimately has no reason to believe that she committed adultery. As mentioned before, Othello is shown steadfastly devoted to Desdemona. Emilia, Iago's wife, is characterised as unquestioningly obedient, and it is only during the course of the play that she learns to speak up for herself. In scene 2.1, Emilia is nearly completely silent when Iago talks in sexist terms of women: "You rise to play, and go to bed to work" (2.1.115). She steals Desdemona's handkerchief for Iago in scene 3.3 which he then plants with Cassio to convince Othello that Cassio has been intimate with Desdemona: "I am glad I have found this napkin; / [...] I'll [...] give't Iago: what he'll do with it / Heaven knows, not I, / I nothing know" (3.3.294-303). She only openly opposes her husband when it becomes apparent that Othello has killed Desdemona because of Iago's scheming: "Let me have leave to speak, / 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now" (5.2.196-97). Having established Emilia's unquestioning obedience, it does not seem plausible she would have been unfaithful with Othello and Cassio. I would therefore contend that although Bartels claims that "Aaron's motives [...] [are] slippery and obscure" (445), Iago's motives, apart from his lust for power, and his frustration at having a black man as superior, are at least equally, if not much more slippery and obscure.

Bartels also writes that "in his opening soliloquy he [Aaron] entertains hyperbolic illusions of gaining power but is unable to sustain an image of himself as dominator" (445). She fails to acknowledge that the only reason why Aaron's plans to gain power are illusions and why he cannot be an official political dominator is that he is black and a slave to the Goths. He has not the means to rise in any meaningful way from his inferior position but by aligning with Tamora. Interestingly, the first time Aaron speaks in *Titus Andronicus*, he is alone on stage and addresses the audience in a soliloquy. Beforehand, he has only been on stage silently, first as a prisoner, then as an eyewitness to the shift of power from the Andronici to Saturninus and Tamora. His soliloquy displays his eloquence and education, and outlines the plans he has for his advance in power with Tamora: "Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top / [...] Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts / To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress / And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long / Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains / [...] Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!" (1.1.500-517). Here, "Aaron recognizes that her victory over the Romans may also bring real power for him" (Loomba 79). His notions of Tamora being bound to him out of love are a usual form of male dominance, and they are only contradictory because Tamora is the empress, and he is the

slave. Apart from this contradiction, his plans are by no means more or less hyperbolic than the other characters struggling for power.

According to Bartels, Aaron's high register of speech "simultaneously betrays his malign differentness [...] as he outlines his intentions, he reveals a purposelessness that makes his villainy all the more insidious" (445). What Bartels does not take into account here is that although the purpose of Aaron's deeds is not exactly reputable – taking revenge on the Andronici in Tamora's interests for their killing of Alarbus – there is an inherent purpose to his actions, one that he follows in concordance with Tamora. Although it might seem contradictory in terms of power, Aaron is so successful in this prowess due to his nominal slave position. He is able to engage in actions that Tamora is unable to perform, as she is in an official political function and has to keep her plans of revenge covert. In addition to his social status, Aaron's racial Otherness also renders him an advantage, since people show a tendency to underestimate him because of his colour. Aaron's knowledge of this apparent advantage means that he can establish superiority over the white characters who – being stuck in their respective Roman and Goth systems of hierarchies – can be controlled by him, because he has understood how their ideologies work. In connection to this awareness, "[a sense of his own blackness is] integral to Aaron's defiance of the white world around him" (Mason Vaughan 60). However, he has also made stereotypes the Romans and Goths have established for blackness part of his self-conception. In a monologue addressed to Tamora, he emphasises how the will for revenge is part of his nature: "vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand, / Blood and revenge are hammering in my head" (2.2.38-39). As Loomba writes, Aaron thus conforms to those stereotypes ascribed to blackness:

> As Aaron becomes increasingly vocal and active, he repeatedly describes himself as a person whose blackness and villainy explain each other [...] also, disturbingly, for Aaron himself, blackness is a moral equality. [...] His delight in crime is presented as haphazard, connected not to his race or class consciousness, but to his race and class themselves. Thus it only conforms the notion of the motiveless malignity of blacks. (79-81)

In an aside, Aaron again confirms that he has invoked societal stereotypes of blackness: "O, how this villainy / Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it. / Let fools do good and fair men call for grace, / Aaron will have his soul black like his face" (3.1.203-6). This rhyming couplet emphasises the view of his own blackness, equating the colour of his face with the supposed colour of his soul. He aligns with the notion that vice or devil-like qualities are dark and that such darkness goes hand in hand with visible Otherness.

Aaron also knows that his child is born into a society which makes blackness something inferior and to be enslaved: "Come on, you thick-lipped slave" (4.2.177). Here, he

uses the same metonymy to describe his child which Roderigo uses to characterise Othello. However, Aaron is also proud of having become a father, and his "paternal concern is also a form of black pride" (Mason Vaughan 60). In defending his child in a monologue, he emphasises how glad he is that he has a child, and sets blackness in a binary opposition to whiteness: "Coal-black is better than another hue / In that it scorns to bear another hue; / For all the water in the ocean can never turn the swan's black legs to white" (4.2.101-4). He also connects blackness to emotions, emphasising how he thinks black people are advantaged as they do not show their emotions through bodily reactions: "Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing / The close enacts and counsels of thy heart" (4.2.119-20).

Despite knowing and living in a state of inferiority society ascribes him with, Aaron is also empowered through his ability to tell narratives (Haekel 30). After having been captured by the Goths under Lucius's leadership, Aaron constructs himself as the ultimate villain in several long monological passages. He begins by noting that Chiron and Demetrius have probably picked up their evil nature from him: "That bloody mind I think they learned of me" (5.1.101). When Lucius asks him whether he is not sorry for the deeds he has just enlisted, he replies "Ay, that I had not done a thousand more. / Even now I curse the day [...] / Wherein I did not some notorious ill, / As kill a man or else devise his death" (5.1.124-28). Aaron is aware of his power stemming from the fact that he has absolute knowledge of the events – "I'll show thee wondrous things / That highly may advantage thee to hear" (5.1.55-56) – and knows that re-telling his plans, i.e. forming a narrative is something that is key to his self-fashioning: "I *must* talk of murders, rapers and massacres, / [...] abominable deeds" (5.1.63-65, my emphasis). Forming narratives to plot against the Andronici and later telling and retelling his deeds empowers Aaron to the point where he has to be forcibly silenced in order to lose his authority (Haekel 31). Thus, blackness is constructed as a precondition for continuous justification and re-establishment of power, which Othello and Aaron both achieve through their ability to tell narratives which adhere in register, elegance and vocabulary to those of white characters in power.

Othello also has to tell his 'story' to manifest his rank and power. His story is that of his own colonial history: "A courageous man like Othello could be captured in battle, sold into slavery, escape, and fight in triumph over his former owners" (Mason Vaughan 62-63). The fact that Othello is able to tell such tales gives him a diverse range of possibilities of self-fashioning which the white Venetians do not have; however, he is under the constraint to justify his rank and power due to his blackness making him an 'alien'.

Othello's first long monologue follows Brabantio's accusations that he must have used supernatural powers to woo Desdemona, and the Duke's request of him to respond to these accusations. In his monologue, he shows that he is aware of his subordinate position and that his Otherness marks him as inferior despite his being as well-spoken in register as the Venetians: "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors, / My very noble and approv'd good masters: / [...] Rude am I in my speech, / And little blest with the set phrase [...] yet, (by your gracious patience) / I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver" (1.3.76-90). By calling his eloquent speech rude he also makes use of irony, as Brabantio's attitude to Othello previously can only be called rude. The Duke addresses Othello by asking him "What in your own part can you say to this?" (1.3.74) Before Othello is able to embark on his monologue, Brabantio cuts him short and replies "Nothing, but this is so." (1.3.75). Othello thus establishes a contrast which not only pleases those of his listeners who want their prejudices of black people as inferior in speech supported, but at the same time displays his superiority as a mediator.

Othello goes on to show that he is sure of himself and sure of Desdemona being able to stand up to her father: "Let her speak of me before her father; / If you do find me foul in her report, / The trust, the office, I do hold of you, / Not only take away, but let your sentence even fall upon my life" (1.3.116-19). He demands that she be brought to the Duke to tell her side of the story, and while Iago fetches her, he recounts to the senators the story of their falling in love in a long monologue (1.3.128-170). In this monologue, he not only tells the senators why they enjoy each other's company – Othello having the opportunity to tell his stories to an avid listener, Desdemona enjoying his tales – but is also able to construct himself through his ability to tell narratives.

> The battles, sieges, fortunes,
> That I have pass'd: [...]
> Of moving accidents by flood and field;
> Of hair-breadth I' th' imminent deadly breach;
> Of being taken by the insolent foe;
> And sold to slavery, and my redemption thence,
> … this to hear
> Would Desdemona seriously incline
> … She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear
> Devour up my discourse; …
> She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
> And I lov'd her that she did pity them. (1.3.130-68)

This telling of narratives is an important part of his self-characterisation, as he is able to mediate between his societal nominally inferior position and his military position by

recounting his achievements. That Othello is successful in bridging this gap is apparent by the Duke's response: "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (1.3.171).

Othello does not engage in any further self-characterisation until Iago has already begun his scheming and has started convincing Othello of the alleged affair between Cassio and Desdemona. Here, Othello becomes increasingly unsure of himself and, in a soliloquy, makes comments on why Desdemona would probably have interest in someone like Cassio: "For I am black, / And have not those soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd / Into the vale of years [...] / She's gone" (3.3.267-71). He equates his own blackness with a less elegant level of speech, although he subverted this stereotype cleverly in the first act. As Iago deconstructs the 'black, yet superior' self that Othello has constructed, he begins characterising himself with attributes of inferiority. Othello loses confidence and begins conforming to the stereotypes that a society marking him as an 'alien' has established.

When Iago is able to produce what Othello believes is visual evidence of Desdemona's alleged unfaithfulness – the handkerchief – he becomes aggressive and announces his intention to take revenge on Desdemona. Like Aaron, he links his revenge to his colour: "Arise, *black vengeance*, from thy hollow cell, / Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne, / To tyrannous hate" (3.3.453-55, my emphasis). This again shows how character traits ascribed as being pertinent to all black people are invoked by the two black characters.

In one of his last monologues, Othello distances himself even further from the kind of self-characterisation he was able to construct in the beginning of the play. After having killed Desdemona and being handed over to his Venetian superiors, he even speaks of himself in the third person: "Here is my journey's end, here is my butt, / [...] Where should Othello go?" (5.2.268-72). He thus distances himself from his own fashioned self, his body and mind, by treating it like an stranger. He also imagines himself as being in a form of hell, thus engaging in the 'devilish' connotation of blackness: "Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur, / Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire" (5.2.280-81). This also shows that he has invoked Christian, religious systems of fear and punishment for his Venetian self.

In his last monologue, which directly precedes his suicide, Othello has regained some of his verbal power and asks Lodovico to relate the events to Venice as they were, without any euphemisms: "I have done the state some service, and they know't; / No more of that" (5.2.340-41). He is aware of the fact that he has had a life of military achievements, but at the same time knows that his military career has come to an end. Having killed Desdemona, he realises that as a private person he is a failure and feels he has forfeited his right to live.

Othello "recogniz[es] himself, for the last time, as an outsider, a discredit to the social order he has been persuaded to respect" (Sinfield 65). Just before killing himself, he draws on his foreign experiences by telling an 'oriental' tale in which he equates himself vehemently with an Other and uses these connotations to align with inferiority: "In Aleppo once, / Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk / Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state, / I took by the throat the circumcised dog, / And smote him thus. [*Stabs himself*." (5.2.353-57). As Sinfield remarks, "virtually, this is what Althusser means by 'interpellation': Venice hails Othello as a barbarian, and he acknowledges that it is he they mean" (63).

4.2 Character Constellations

As Greenblatt writes, "Shakespeare relentlessly *explores* the relations of power in a given culture" (*Self-Fashioning* 254, author's emphasis). To establish what power relations are evident in *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, and how they negotiate the category of race, I shall examine the character constellations of the two plays in terms of agency and power.

I shall scrutinize the two primary agents Aaron and Iago as to the motivations for their deeds, and how they also use racial categories to undermine the other characters' agency and thus consolidate their own agency. To highlight the nominal power hierarchies between the characters in each of the plays, I shall examine the respective dramatis personae. In a second step, I will then analyse how the two primary agents, Aaron and Iago, achieve power, and how this is linked to stymieing other characters' nominal power. The analysis will attempt to find out how actual power is thus distributed in the plays, and how this is intrinsically linked to the category of race.

4.2.1 Agency

Agency is an important category and especially pervasive in the two plays:

> "Indeed if there is any inevitability in the new historicism's vision of history it is [an] [...] insistence of agency, for even inaction or extreme marginality is understood to possess meaning and therefore to imply intention. Every form of behaviour, in this view, is a strategy: taking up arms or taking flight are significant social actions, but so is staying put, minding one's business, turning one's face to the wall. Agency is virtually inescapable." (Greenblatt, "Resonance" 55)

Iago, as a common soldier, and especially Aaron, as a slave, are both characters who are nominally at the order-receiving end. They are not supposed to act on their own behalf, nor

give orders to the characters above them in hierarchy. Nevertheless, they both efficiently masquerade their actions as advice or assistance and establish themselves as the primary agents in the respective plays. However, there remain manifest differences between the two agents.

While Iago acts only on his own behalf, with Aaron, the case is more complex. I would oppose Bartels' statement that "while Shakespeare allows the Moor the freedom and ability to manipulate and maneuver close to the court circle, he [...] [is] always the alien whose malice is less directed (and therefore more malicious) than that of Saturninus, Tamora or her sons" (444). Aaron's establishment of his own agency is not an act for its own end, but is intrinsically linked to Tamora's plan for revenge. Aaron cleverly consolidates his agency through actions that do not display any alleged 'devil-like', especially malicious qualities at all. Instead, Aaron is precisely aware of how the Roman and Goth ideologies both covertly instigate the other characters to aspire to more dominance. It is thus possible to read the play and Aaron's actions as stemming entirely from Aaron's knowledge of the other characters being readily violent, jealous, and lusting for power. Commenting on Aaron's motivation for his deeds, Mason Vaughan writes that "blackness remains the sign of Aaron's largely unmotivated, satanic villainy. While the play's white characters commit grossly despicable acts, they seek vengeance for injuries to themselves or their families. Aaron does evil for evil's sake" (60). I would call this point of view into question and contend that it is more fitting to describe Iago as doing 'evil for evil's sake', as the consolidation of his own agency is entirely for his own advantage. As Loomba comments,

> Aaron is not really the 'chief architect' of the plot in the same sense as Iago, to whom he is often compared. [...] For all his wickedness, Aaron only intervenes in and redirects a dynamic of rivalry and revenge between the Goths and the Romans whose logic has already been set in motion [...] the Roman-Gothic rivalry [...] sets the real agenda of the play [...] one way for Aaron to ensure her [Tamora's] continuing dependence upon him is by taking charge of her revenge against the Romans (78-82).

Although Aaron acquires a form of agency early on in the play, he primarily acts on behalf of Tamora's purposes. Only later in the play does Aaron establish agency vehemently for his own intent and purpose, when his child with Tamora is born: "Aaron is individualized and humanized by his passionate defense of his child" (Mason Vaughan 60). The significance of this child should not be underestimated:

> Tamora and black Aaron produce [...] a child who is repeatedly called a 'devil'. By bringing this baby on stage, Shakespeare was doing something entirely unprecedented, but it was also a scene he never repeated. Aaron's son is the only child of an interracial couple that we actually see on the early modern stage in England. (Loomba 52)

The nurse which brings on Aaron's child characterises it as "A devil." (4.2.66). She also summarises the existence of the child as "a joyless, dismal, black and sorrowful issue. / Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad / Amongst the fair-faced breeders of our clime" (4.2.68-70). She thus engages in Othering the black child in binary opposition to 'proper', white children. She also passes on the order to rid society of this child which is not permitted to exist, being the product of sexual contact between a white queen and a black slave: "The empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal, / And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point" (4.2.71-72). This juxtaposition of violent action with a sacred ritual amplifies the notion that killing the child represents a necessary cleansing of society. Aaron responds vehemently to this demand by questioning the Nurse's construction of inferior blackness: "Zounds, ye whore, is black so base a hue?" (4.2.73).

Following this protest, Aaron begins developing his own agency in defending the life of his child, also towards Chiron and Demetrius. Chiron tells Aaron that "Thou hast undone our mother" (4.2.77). Aaron prides himself in his sexual prowess and daringly makes use of sexual innuendo in responding: "Villain, I have done thy mother" (4.2.78). Aaron clearly tells the other characters present that his child "shall not die" (4.2.83). When Demetrius offers to kill the child, because Aaron is not willing to follow Tamora's order – "I'll broach the tadpole on my rapier's point. / Nurse, give it me; my sword shall soon dispatch it." (4.2.87-88) – Aaron threatens Chiron and Demetrius and reminds them of their relation to his child: "Sooner this sword shall plough thy bowels up. / Stay, murderous villains, will you kill your brother?" (4.2.89-90). Demetrius goes on to remind Aaron of his allegiance to Tamora: "Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus?" (4.2.108). Here, Aaron pinpoints a division between his allegiance to Tamora and the love he has for his own child: "My mistress is my mistress, this myself, / The vigour and the picture of my youth" (4.2.109-10). To finally make Chiron and Demetrius give up their readiness to kill his child, he again reminds them of the mother they share with his child, advocating the radical view that kinship is not dependent on race: "He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed / Of that self blood that first gave life to you, / [...] Nay, he is your brother [...] / Although my seal may be stamped in his face" (4.2.124-29). Aaron succeeds in the consolidation of his own agency as Demetrius acknowledges Aaron's defence and even goes on to demand orders from him: "Advise thee, Aaron, what is to be done / And we will all subscribe to thy advice" (4.2.130-31).

As Loomba writes, "although almost every character participates in [...] gory violence, at the end of the play two people [Aaron and Tamora] are singled out as pariahs who must be cast out so that Rome can be restored to civility and health [...] [Aaron] is called 'the chief

architect and plotter of these woes' and 'breeder of these dire events' (5.3.120, 177)" (77). However, while Aaron's actions are crucial in preparing the death of most of the killed characters, he in fact only kills one character himself: the nurse, who is killed to ensure there are no witnesses to the existence of Tamora and Aaron's interracial child. Titus, on the other hand, kills five characters, among them his own daughter and one of his sons, and Lucius, his son, kills Saturninus and is a driving force in the ritual killing of Alarbus. Indeed, the instance in scene 5.3 where Tamora, Titus and Saturninus are all killed within four lines (5.3.62-65) occurs after Aaron has been gagged and is no longer able to speak. Aaron's agency thus stems from a readiness to use violent means rather than actual violence.

It is productive to compare Aaron's plotting to that of Iago, for as Mason Vaughan remarks, "in his complex intriguing, [...] [Aaron] may be a forerunner of Iago" (60). Iago works on the same basis as Aaron in the consolidation of his agency. He lays bare and awakens in other characters the jealousy, lust for power and desire for personal furtherance that they are capable of. He also achieves more actual power through his ability to construct (false) narratives and is thus a "great manipulator of the prevailing stories of his society" (Sinfield 61). This ability to achieve power through the telling of stories might be termed 'discursive self-empowerment', something that Othello, Iago and Aaron all engage in.

Iago compensates his lack of formal power by discursive self-empowerment. By fashioning himself as the friendly, honest, common soldier and average man, he shapes himself through a performance of the ordinary. Othello engages in discursive self-empowerment through a performance of the extra-ordinary. While nearly all characters in *Othello* know that their position in politics or the army is relatively secure – notwithstanding the dangers of not achieving or sustaining higher military ranks – Othello, as a former 'alien', has to continuously renegotiate his nominal power by justifying it. As Greenblatt describes this form of narrative self-fashioning:

> [Othello's] identity depends upon a constant performance [...] of his 'story', a loss of his own origins, an embrace and perpetual reiteration of the norms of another culture [...] he cannot allow himself the moderately flexible adherence that most ordinary men have toward their own formal beliefs. (*Self-Fashioning* 245)

Othello has to tell and re-tell "all [...] [his] travel's history" (1.3.139); "the battles, sieges, fortunes, / That I have pass'd: [...] / Of moving accidents by flood and field; / Of hair-breadth I' th' imminent deadly breach; / Of being taken by the insolent foe; / And sold to slavery, and my redemption thence" (1.3.130-38). What becomes visible here is Othello's full subscription to a "monological power [...] [which] ultimately denies the possibility of plenitude" (Greenblatt, "Authority" 442). To gain any form of recognition and maintain his agency,

Othello has to conform entirely to Venetian norms and values, i.e. those of the society which has colonised him.

Iago's superiority is based on his realisation that the self is not god-given or fixed, but founded on a process of self-fashioning: "'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus: [...] why, the power, and corrigible authority …, lies in our wills." (1.3.319-26). He characterises Othello as predetermined for failure as he is not as flexible in his moral attitudes as the other Venetians, who will readily change their views and allegiances if it is for their own advantage: "The Moor [has] a free and open nature too, / That thinks men honest that but seems to be so: / And will as tenderly be lead by the nose… / As asses are." (1.3.397-400). Iago knows that it lies within his reach to unmake the self Othello has fashioned, and to destroy the social status that Othello has acquired through successful military and narrative performance:

> Iago's attitude toward Othello is [...] colonial: though he finds himself in a subordinate position, the ensign regards his black general as 'an erring barbarian' whose 'free and open nature' is a fertile field for exploitation. (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 233)

Before Iago begins setting the major part of his scheming into motion, Othello is portrayed as a good, honourable statesman. When Brabantio confronts him for having allegedly stolen his daughter, Othello acknowledges Brabantio's rank and urges him to refrain from violence: "Good signior, you shall more command with years / Than with your weapons" (1.2.60-61). This also shows that although he is a soldier and fights in Venice's wars, he wishes to refrain from the usage of violence within Venice. He thus supports the form of domestic civility that Brabantio himself advocated in the scene before: "this is Venice, / My house is not a grange" (1.1.105-6). Shortly afterwards, the Duke speaks to Othello before even noticing the presence of Brabantio. This implies that hierarchies are fluid to a point and that Othello's military services are valued highly, even though Brabantio might be higher in rank and superior in racial terms: "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you, / [...] [*To Brabantio*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior" (1.3.48-50).

Part of the success of Iago's plot to convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity is Othello's awareness of the fact that the society he lives in marks his marriage to Desdemona as unnatural: "Even characters who want to support Othello's story accept that he is superficially inappropriate as a husband for Desdemona" (Sinfield 62). Nevertheless, or therefore, Othello's makes his link to Desdemona key to his success as a human being: "My life upon her faith" (1.3.295). Iago knows that this is something he can latch onto to deconstruct Othello. This is of course also linked to norms of male dominance that apply to all Venetian males: "It upsets the husband's honour, his masculinity[, ...] Even the rumour of

Desdemona's adultery is enough to send powerful men in the state into another anxiety" (Sinfield 78). Othello is constantly aware of his situation as an outsider, and this constitutes an inherent 'flaw' in his self-fashioning: "One man's authority is another man's alien[, ...] When one authority or alien is destroyed, another takes its place[, ...] any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss" (Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning* 9). While Othello should be the primary decision-maker amongst the main characters, Iago's mastering of acting on his own behalf and employing forms of discursive self-empowerment undermine Othello's ability to do so.

4.2.2 Power

It has already become apparent that there is a discrepancy between the nominal distribution of power and how Aaron and Iago's acquiring of agency subverts this. I shall now examine how power relations are redefined throughout the two plays, and how the establishment of power is linked to the category of race. The examination of the dramatis personae is useful for the establishment of nominal power hierarchies, as they list characters in terms of the hierarchies in place at the beginning of the plays. For instance, it is noteworthy that in *Titus Andronicus* the Roman and Goth characters are separated into two groups. It is implied that at the beginning of the play, where the Goths have just been defeated by the Romans at war, even the basest Roman is higher in terms of hierarchy than any of the Goths. Highest in the Roman hierarchy are the late emperor's two sons, Saturninus and Bassianus. Saturninus's impending rise to power is already established: "eldest son of the recently deceased Emperor of Rome, later Emperor". Titus follows the two and is described as "a Roman nobleman, general against the Goths", his brother Marcus as "a Tribune of the people", descriptions which each establish their respective military and political power.

In the Goth character realm, Tamora's shift in power is already hinted at, as she is described as "Queen of the Goths and later Empress of Rome by marriage to Saturninus". Aaron is "A Moor in the service of Tamora" and "her lover". As he is the only character whose colour is deemed noteworthy, even the dramatis personae already bears traces of Othering. At the same time, Aaron is only superseded by "Other Goths" in the list, and is thus established as the name-bearing character lowest in hierarchy.

Although Aaron is the basest character initially, he is able to subvert the nominal power of the Andronici in Tamora's plan to take revenge for Alarbus. Most of the violence stems from this plot. However, it would be futile to search for the source of all violence in the

play as stemming from Aaron's plotting. In the depicted society, the establishment of power is inherently linked to the utilisation of violence for all Romans and Goths from the beginning.

It is important to note that a Renaissance audience would not necessarily perceive the Romans as the 'good' and the Goths as the 'bad' group, as there was a certain ambivalence in viewing the two groups: "In Elizabethan England, the Goths were viewed as brutish and lawless, but also as ancestors of the English. On the other hand, the Romans were both conquerors of England and imperialists worthy of English emulation" (Loomba 83). The conflict between the two groups is not entirely resolved – at the end of the play, the Andronici are only able to reinstigate their power with the help of the Goths. Marching on Rome, Lucius now leads the Goth army: "By the end, the opposition between barbarism and civility has been so rearranged that the Goths become crucial agents in the righting of the Roman order" (83).

However, the Romans construct themselves as victors in military and moral terms, for instance when Marcus juxtaposes them to other groups which are allegedly less civilised: "Thou art a Roman, be not barbarous" (1.1.383). However, their actions unmask them as readily violent through the ritual killing of Tamora's youngest son Alarbus. As Loomba writes, "Lucius [...] also relishes describing the deed afterwards" (77): "Alarbus' limbs are lopped / And entrails feed the sacrificing fire, / Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky." (1.1.146-48). Here, the slaughter of Alarbus is ritualised and, by Lucius's use of euphemisms, narratively transformed into a killing of superior nature. This first death after the start of the play "inaugurates a spiral of increasing violence" (Loomba 77). Tamora appeals to Titus's feelings as a father before Alarbus is killed, "but for Titus to acknowledge these similarities would be for him to undermine the reason he has fought the Goths. He insists on the violent 'Roman rite' which only confirms the incivility of Rome" (Loomba 83). Titus also shows how "both the nation and the family require violence against outsiders but also against disobedient insiders" (Loomba 77). Killing his son Mutius for intercepting him, Titus says: "What, villain boy, barr'st me my way in Rome?" (1.1.295). He even readily renounces allegiance to his sons for disobeying him, after just having praised their military achievements in the same scene: "Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine" (1.1.299). This not only shows the requirement of violence to uphold military and social order, but also that Titus holds his military superiority in higher stead than the well-being of his family.

When Tamora asks Titus for Alarbus to be spared, she utilises several, highly personal arguments and appeals to Titus's feelings as a father:

> And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
> O, think my son to be as dear to me.

> … must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
> For valiant doings in their country's cause? [...]
> Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
> Draw near them then in being merciful. (1.1.110-21)

Titus does not take her view into account and responds: "Religiously they ask a sacrifice. / To this your son is marked, and die he must" (1.1.127-28). Here, it becomes apparent how ritual violence in Rome is an established societal practice and remains unquestioned by the Roman characters. It is unsurprising that a society that condones this form of establishing power and superiority through violence produces individuals who are readily violent. As previously mentioned, Aaron is also successful in his establishment of power due to his nominal slave position, as people underestimate him because of his blackness: "He that had wit would think that I had none" (2.2.1). He knows that the white characters' ideology inferiorises him through racial stereotypes and that they do not believe he could in any way acquire power through his own means and act on his own behalf. He is thus only perceived as a henchman. Aaron reinforces this image by constructing himself towards Titus as a 'powerless' messenger: "my lord the emperor / Sends thee this word" (3.1.151-52). In this scene, Titus readily cuts off his hand, thinking it will save his sons Quintus and Martius after they have been framed for the murder of Bassianus: "Gentle Aaron, wilt thou help to chop it off?" (3.1.162). Titus unquestioningly believes that this will indeed save his sons. Aaron utilises the ritualisation of violence here: In a society in which ritualised violence is an established practice, it is not far-fetched that Titus should believe that this may be some form of (Gothic) rite.

Earlier on, Quintus and Martius, the two sons of Titus whom Aaron frames for the murder of Bassianus unquestioningly trust Aaron: "Come on, my lords, the better foot before. / Straight will I bring you to the loathsome pit / Where I espied the panther fast asleep." (2.2.192-94) Here, Aaron plays on their lust for success in hunting. Eager to kill an animal they unquestioningly follow him.

Saturninus as a prospective emperor also shows how he is jealous and lusting for power, saying to Titus: "Andronicus, would thou were shipped to hell / Rather than rob me of the people's hearts" (1.1.210-11). It is unsurprising that Tamora has to urge Saturninus time and again to refrain from making such comments in the open. When Saturninus is eager to take revenge on Titus, and says "What, madam, be dishonoured openly, / And basely put it up without revenge?" (1.1.437-38), she replies "Not so, my lord." (1.1.439). Tamora knows that in order to uphold superiority as an emperor, one should not make statements of intent overtly.

In the same vein, Aaron is successful in his subversion of power, as he knows that conflicts and violence have to be carried out in secret in order to be successful. He might be termed a better politician than many of the other official politicians. When he finds Chiron and Demetrius fighting on the streets, he chides them by saying: "So near the emperor's palace dare ye draw / And maintain such a quarrel openly?" (1.1.545-46) Aaron knows that to maintain power, their plans should not be made openly, but in the shadow of the forest at the hunt the following day: "The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf and dull: / There speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns; There serve your lust" (1.1.628-30). Aaron takes Chiron and Demetrius' capacity and willingness for violence and rape and perfects it by directing it, ensuring there will be no direct consequences within Rome's city walls. Chiron acknowledges Aaron's superiority and more coordinated violence: "Thy counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice" (1.1.632).

Although Aaron's establishment of power and the revenge plot mainly consists of awakening the capacity for violence in other characters, the fact that he is black enables the other characters to mark him as a scapegoat for violence. At the close of the play, violence itself is brought into direct connection with black Aaron, and marked as an Other that can be expunged from Roman society with him. For a character like Lucius, who survives and is in a position of power at the end of the play, this means that he does not have to re-evaluate the initial ritual death of Alarbus, but can cleanse himself and society through casting out the black Other Aaron. Lucius does not have to call into question his own capacity for violence and lust for power.

Generally speaking, the two plays both see "moors who are situated in a potentially threatening position very near the 'inside' of authority and power" (Bartels 442). However, to examine the considerable differences between their positions, it is necessary to reify Aaron's and Othello's nominal rank and power in contrast to their actual forms of empowerment. In contrast to Aaron, who is the last named character to appear in the dramatis personae, Othello is the titular character. In *Othello*, the dramatis personae is structured differently: not entirely by military hierarchy, but also partly by the importance of the respective characters. However, Iago, despite being the driving force behind the plot development, comes after Othello, Brabantio and Cassio, which already points to the fact that Cassio has been promoted above Iago, and that Iago is formally not very powerful. Othello's colour is made explicit, while the adjective 'noble' is used to clarify that he is not a 'savage' but has been colonised successfully by Venice: "a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian state".

This is another fundamental difference between Aaron and Othello: While Aaron is part of a social structure which will inherently not acknowledge his position or indeed any position of nominal power – he is not even entirely accepted by those whose conflict he is supporting by his actions – Othello is in a nominally powerful position and officially accepted by Venetian society.

There is a notable racial difference between the two plays, not only because Iago is white. Iago's establishment of power is linked to his knowledge of racial stereotypes with which he plays in connection to Othello on two levels – on the one hand, he uses stereotypes in communication with other characters, on the other hand, he exploits them to "prove [Othello] the [...] irrational moor" (Bartels 447) by making Othello conform to racial stereotypes of being unpredictably jealous and deviant.

Roderigo's motivation to follow Iago's plans stems from the notion that he truly believes his efforts towards Desdemona will be successful, as an interracial marriage is allegedly predestined for failure. "It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love unto the Moor, [...] These Moors are changeable in their wills[, ...] When she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice" (1.3.342-52). Iago changes bases flexibly and easily and manages to appear to be holding allegiance to different people simultaneously. Roderigo and other characters willingly adhere to this paradox, as they readily accept deceit as long as they believe it is for their own personal good. Thus, Roderigo trusts Iago even after he draws his weapon against him, defending Othello: "You, Roderigo, come sir, I am for you." (1.2.58) Iago also convinces Roderigo to fight Cassio to improve his chances with Desdemona "by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires" (2.1.271-73). When, much later in the play, Roderigo confronts Iago with reproaches that he has done nothing to increase his chances with Desdemona, Iago again convinces him to take action. In this case, he demands assistance from him in killing Cassio, an order Iago has by then received from Othello. The reason he gives is that Desdemona will soon depart to Mauritania with Othello, and Cassio is allegedly replacing Othello. Desdemona can only be kept in Cyprus if Cassio is removed: "Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place, / knocking out his brains." (4.2.229-30). Roderigo replies eagerly: "And that you would have me to do." (4.2.231). Driven by the desire to possess Desdemona, Roderigo readily follows Iago's suggestion.

Again, the case may be similar here to that of Aaron. Because Iago is only an ancient and his advice very often seems sound and common-sensical on the surface, the other characters do not expect any malice or agency to emanate from him:

> As Peter Stallybrass has observed, Iago is convincing not because he is 'superhumanly ingenious, but, to the contrary, because he is the voice of "common sense", the ceaseless repetition of the always-already "known", the culturally "given".' The racism and sexism in the play should not be traced just to Iago's character, therefore, or to his arbitrary devilishness, but to the Venetian culture that sets the conditions of plausibility. (Sinfield 63)

When Iago speaks negatively of women, the audience does not know whether his stereotypical statement about the inferiority of women is truthful. It might be a device to construct himself as less intelligent than he actually is and make other characters underestimate him or to further his image of the speaker of common sense. His comments lead Cassio to characterise him as "more [...] soldier than [...] scholar" (2.1.165-66). Iago is also fully aware of Othello's trust in him and that he does not suspect him of any wrong advice. As with other villains in Shakespeare, "triumph is shown to rest upon [...] a hypocritical manipulation of appearances, and a systematic betrayal of friendship" (Greenblatt, "Resonance" 56). Iago himself says of Othello: "he holds me well, the better shall my purpose work on him" (1.3.388-89).

The audience has to assume from the beginning that Iago has established himself as a steadfast soldier. Othello emphasises his honesty and other positive values at least twelve times: "A man he is of honesty and trust" (1.3.284); "honest Iago, / My Desdemona must I leave to thee" (1.3.294-95); "Iago is most honest" (2.3.6); "Honest Iago" (2.3.168) "I know, Iago, / Thy honesty" (2.3.237-38); "I know thou art full of love and honesty" (3.3.122); "This honest creature" (3.3.246). He repeats this to the point where he seems to have to convince himself of Iago's honesty: "This fellow's of exceeding honesty" (3.3.262); "O brave Iago, honest and just" (5.1.31); "Honest Iago" (5.2.73), "An honest man he is" (5.2.149), "My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago" (5.2.173). Interestingly enough, also Cassio speaks of Iago in similar terms: "Good night, honest Iago" (2.3.326); "I never knew / A Florentine more kind and honest" (3.1.40-41). Iago even jokes about his being perceived as an honest person – in an aside about Desdemona and Othello he says: "O, you are well tun'd now, / But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, / As honest as I am." (2.1.199-201). Iago's talent rests on the subversion of power while maintaining the image of himself as a helpful, honest individual on the surface level: "Shakespeare's plays are centrally and repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder" (Greenblatt, "Authority" 443).

When Cassio is made drunk by Iago and Othello finds Cassio having engaged in a brawl, Cassio is worried about his stable place in society as such, as well as about his reputation, a term he repeats five times in four lines: "Reputation, reputation, I ha' lost my

reputation! [...] my reputation, Iago, my reputation!" (2.3.254-57). Iago is able to use Cassio's obsession with his reputation and the desire to have his rank back for his plans. Accordingly, he advises him to seek Desdemona's help to make his case before Othello, planning then to use Cassio's contact with Desdemona to make Othello jealous: "Confess yourself freely to her, importune her she'll help to put you in your place again" (2.3.309-10).

As previously mentioned, jealousy is an attribute stereotypically assigned to black men: "jealousy became widely understood as a trait of Moors" (Loomba 54). Iago succeeds in installing jealousy in Othello, probably being fully aware of the fact that Othello would know of this stereotype and might even be trying to avoid it actively. In the same vein, Iago knows he has the ability to stir certain emotions in Othello and readily uses it: "Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me, / For making him egregriously an ass, / And practising upon his peace and quiet, / Even to madness" (2.1.303-6).

One of the reasons why Iago's plot to convince Othello of an existing affair between Cassio and Desdemona is so successful is that the match between Cassio and Desdemona might indeed seem to suggest itself as more predestined. Cassio is a soft-spoken, well-mannered, known admirer of women, and also respected military man, the kind Brabantio, in addition to Cassio being white, would probably prefer as a son-in-law. Iago refers to Cassio's charms in an aside by saying: "Ay, smile upon her, do: I will catch you in your own courtesies: [...] you are most apt to play the sir …: good, well kiss'd, an excellent courtesy" (2.1.169-75). Iago knows that he can make Othello jealous of Cassio, despite Cassio's whiteness possibly being the only real advantage he has in society over Othello.

Iago employs rhetorical tactics in order to sow the seeds of doubt. He makes Othello think he has proof for Desdemona's infidelity although there is no convincing proof. This is a long-winded process, ranging from scene 3.3 well into the fourth act. Iago begins by simply repeating what Othello says: he pretends to hide his doubts for Othello's own good and thus succeeds in installing doubt of Cassio in Othello. Here, he plays with honesty again: Othello: "Is he not honest?" (3.3.104), Iago: "Honest, my lord?" (3.3.105), Othello: "Honest? ay, honest." (3.3.106); "By heaven, he echoes me, / As if there were some monster in his thought, / Too hideous to be shown" (3.3.110-12). Othello now begs Iago to tell him more of his doubts, to which Iago responds with a revealing phrase, which even plays on his own two-facedness. Here, as in many other instances, Iago also produces dramatic irony: "Men should be that they seem, / Or those that be not, would they might seem none! [...] Why then I think Cassio's an honest man" (3.3.130-33). Othello responds by demanding the worst-case scenario from him: "Nay, yet there's more in this: / I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings, /

As thou dost ruminate, and give the worst of thought / The worst of word" (3.3.134-37). Iago then gives Othello no concrete information but speaks in unclear phrases for 30 lines, before warning Othello from becoming jealous: "O beware jealousy; / It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock / That meat it feeds on" (3.3.169-71). Iago says this is the reason why he does not give him any further thoughts of his. Othello is eager to hear more and emphasises that he is not jealous but trusts Desdemona, as she chose him freely: "Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw / The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt, / For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago, / I'll see before I doubt" (3.3.191-94). He is not aware of the fact that by demanding the worst-case scenario from Iago, he is already doubting Desdemona's honesty and has been manipulated by Iago into doing so.

Iago tells Othello to simply observe Cassio and Desdemona: "Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio; / Wear your eye thus, not jealous, nor secure" (3.3.201-2). In doing this, Iago also cleverly echoes Brabantio's comment about Desdemona. Brabantio said to Othello: "Look to her, Moor, have a quick eye to see: / She has deceiv'd her father, may do thee." (1.3.292-94). Iago reproduces the notion of deception: "She did deceive her father, marrying you" (3.3.210). Othello, later alone on stage, begins calling his marriage into question: "Why did I marry?" (3.3.246). He also elaborates on how he fears he cannot control Desdemona: "O curse of marriage / That we can call these delicate creatures ours, / And not their appetites!" (3.3.272-74). He mourns that he is allegedly not as perceptive as Iago, he "doubtless / Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds" (3.3.246-47).

The hierarchy is now distorted: Othello is Iago's superior on the military hierarchy, but by Iago's attacks on his personal mindset, Othello becomes vulnerable and acts on Iago's directions, cleverly masqueraded as well-meant advice. Additionally, Othello begins conforming to racial stereotypes: Although the audience has been shown that Othello is very able to fashion himself as an equal to other Venetian soldiers in terms of register, style and behaviour, he now constructs himself as inferior to Cassio and links this to his colour and his age: "Haply, for I am black, / And have not those soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd / Into the vale of years" (3.3.268-70). Iago's deconstruction of Othello is now progressing swiftly.

As Othello is not yet fully convinced of Desdemona's infidelity, he demands proof from Iago: "Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore, / Be sure of it, give me the ocular proof" (3.3.365-66). Again, he utilises racial imagery: "I'll have some proof: my name, [...] / [...] is now begrim'd, and black / As mine own face" (3.3.392-94). Iago then goes on to tell him a story of Cassio in which he allegedly fantasised about Desdemona in his sleep. This can

easily be termed an outrageous story, as there is no reason why Iago should not have told Othello it before. However, Othello has now reached the stage where he seems convinced and only wants to be certain of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Iago then introduces the prop of the handkerchief. Emilia steals a handkerchief given to Desdemona as a present from Othello and Iago deposits it in Cassio's room. Even before Othello sees Cassio with this handkerchief, he believes in Desdemona's infidelity to be proven. Iago has literally 'talked him into it': Although Othello demanded visual proof, he now believes Iago entirely. This can be explained through Iago's ability to construct false knowledge in narratives and thus establish his power: "Now do I see 'tis true; look here, Iago, / All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven,… / 'Tis gone" (3.3.450-52).

Iago at the same time also increases his displays of allegiance towards Othello. He kneels before Othello, thus visibly constructing himself as his subordinate in a gesture of supplication: "Witness that here Iago doth give up / The excellency of his wit, hand, heart, / To wrong'd Othello's service" (3.3.472-74), "I am your own for ever" (3.3.486). In doing this, he increases Othello's liability to believe him, as Othello gradually shifts his entire foundation of trust in his societal position from Desdemona to Iago: "I greet thy love; / Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous" (3.3.477-78). Iago's plan now even promises success for him on the military hierarchy: Othello asks Iago to kill Cassio and offers him Cassio's position of lieutenant as a reward: "Within these three days, let me hear thee say / That Cassio's not alive. / [...] now art thou my lieutenant" (3.3.478-85).

At the same time, Desdemona is still caught up in the old plot strand, in which she is trying to convince Othello to give back Cassio the position he has lost. Othello does not listen to her but only demands the handkerchief off her. While Desdemona asks "I pray let Cassio be receiv'd again." (3.4.86), Othello responds "Fetch me that handkerchief, my mind misgives" (3.4.87). Searching for an explanation, Emilia tells Desdemona that sometimes men become jealous for no reason. She uses an essentialist view of (black) men: "Is not this man jealous?" (3.4.96); "They are not ever jealous for the cause, / But jealous for they are jealous" (3.4.158-59). In the next act, when Desdemona is increasingly worried about Othello's changed attitude towards her, Desdemona recounts to Emilia an anecdote of a black man which seems to stand metonymically for the changeable nature of black men: "My mother had a maid call'd Barbary, / She was in love, and he she lov'd prov'd mad" (4.3.26-27). After having praised Othello previously for his non-black nature, she is now also convinced of his adherence to racial stereotypes.

Shortly before her 'insight', Iago tells Othello that Cassio confessed to sleeping with Desdemona. This tale finally destroys Othello's ability to adhere to a high register of speech which is marked by his sudden change to prose: "Lie with her, lie on her?... Zounds, that's fulsome! Handkerchief – confessions – handkerchief!" (4.1.35-37). At the end of this fit-like monologue he "*falls down*" (4.1.43). Thus, Iago ultimately displays a greater ability to construct narratives, powerful ones, that are able to finally destruct Othello's nominal power.

Following this, Iago makes Cassio talk about Bianca, a courtesan. Othello is convinced by Iago that Cassio is talking about Desdemona. Iago ensures that Othello only hears what he is supposed to hear: "As he [Cassio] shall smile, Othello shall go mad, / And his unbookish jealousy must conster / Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour, / Quite in the wrong." (4.1.100-3). Iago bases this part of his plot on the readiness of Cassio to recount his female conquests. Cassio also still trusts Iago as he still has hopes to reacquire his position back. After this final 'proof', Othello decides to kill Desdemona for her infidelity. Iago counts on Othello's ability to be violent and convinces him to decide on a more violent murder. Instead of poisoning her, he should "strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated." (4.1.203-4). Othello conforms to Iago's suggestion: "Good, good, the justice of it pleases, very good" (4.1.205).

In the last dialogue between Othello and Desdemona, Othello no longer listens to Desdemona's pleading, but only expresses his conviction that she is morally corrupt, despite her angelic looks: "O thou *black weed*, why art so lovely fair?" (4.2.69, my emphasis). Interestingly enough, innocent, white Desdemona has now joined Othello in his 'blackness', but Othello is so obsessed with her supposed adultery that he is blind to the fact that he himself has turned into a 'black' villain morally. After Othello has killed Desdemona, Emilia reveals Iago's plot by saying she was the one who stole the handkerchief. Iago kills Emilia, runs off and later returns as a prisoner.

Here, in his final scene, Iago does the opposite of what Aaron does. While Aaron has to be forcibly silenced, Iago knows his production of power through superior knowledge is at an end. He knows that the other characters are now on the same level of knowledge as he is, and that his speech will be of no further use to him: "Demand me nothing, what you know, you know, / From this time forth I never will speak word" (5.2.304-5). Although Iago is himself finally captured and his rise to power has not been successful, his attempt to deconstruct Othello's self-fashioning has worked. He has proved in him the racial stereotypes society has set out for those of his race.

5. Conclusion

The ideology of black inferiority left its indelible mark on English Renaissance society. In the following decades, colonialism would grow and become even more mechanised and central to the economy of the burgeoning British Empire. The sets of stereotypes already visible in Shakespeare's plays continued to be utilised to mark an order of Self and Other in the Eurocentric world.

The ambivalence of the two plays in their portrayal of race still remains notable. While in 1592 it is only a slave the audience sees on stage, in 1604 it is a black, yet also successful military man, who seems to have overcome the social order of inferiority. He has a developed colonial history and shows how black men are able to assimilate into a white society, becoming what at first seems to be an equal. Despite Shakespeare's daringness to show increasingly powerful black characters on stage, one has to keep in mind that Othello and Aaron are ultimately deposed. Aaron and Othello can never escape their blackness, "the visual sign of [their] [...] Otherness, a difference that the play[s] [...] insist [...] can never be eradicated" (Mason Vaughan 52).

Nevertheless, the established Renaissance Self/Other-dichotomy of whiteness versus blackness becomes blurred in the two plays. While the two black characters, Aaron and Othello, are sometimes shown as 'irreligious' or 'devilish' and overly sexual, they are also steadfast lovers or loving fathers. White women choose them freely as their companions and believe and trust in them. The two black characters are also wiser mediators or 'politicians' than some of the white characters in power.

When Othello is praised for his positive attributes, he is ultimately marked as being an extraordinary exception from the norm of blackness. Nevertheless, the scope of his good character is notable: he has a tendency to assume an innate goodness in others, thus unfortunately misconceiving Iago. Othello also calmly opposes violence within Venice when Brabantio confronts him. He is a better husband than Iago and displays an honourable attitude towards women – unlike Iago's maltreatment of Emilia or Roderigo's belief that Desdemona will invariably eventually choose him.

While the societies the two black characters live in do not acknowledge them as valid competitors for power, they acquire power through their actions and their ability to establish themselves as agents. Despite being proven jealous or irrational, they are also shown to do so not because of an inherent natural state, but because of ideological manifestations of interpellation or the plotting of white characters.

At the same time, the plays also have white characters equally showing features stereotypically assigned to the Other. Iago definitely shows a continuous disposition to do 'evil'. The Roman characters around Titus Andronicus show a disposition for violence, which they support as a public rite and an equally viable means to take revenge for wrongdoing. The juxtaposition of deviant sexuality between white and black culminates in the brutal actions of two white characters: Chiron and Demetrius rape and mutilate Lavinia, and then go on to harshly criticise Aaron for his production of an interracial child – the latter act deemed morally more reprehensible than the former. Roderigo and Iago are also jealous – of someone else's wife or someone else's military position – even from the outset, without someone having to prove it in them.

Renaissance theatre as an institution had a powerful voice in establishing societal views, and the significance of Shakespeare's two plays emanates from the fact that in their ambivalent portrayal they do not advocate a certain unified view of race. They dare to bring out powerful black characters who are versatile speakers, enigmatic individuals, who attempt to resist stereotyping and even show superiority over other white characters. Yet, the established Renaissance social order is set right at the close of the play with the black character proven inferior. The exploration, or even celebration, of these ambivalences in constructing blackness is where the plays do acquire a kind of universality. Each member of the audience in Shakespeare's time could have decided for themselves which conclusion to draw from their theatre visit: either that black individuals are indeed inferior or dangerous to society, or that they are indeed capable of more than inhabiting the realm of their constructed inferiority – that they are equal human beings.

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Erstgutachten zur Bachelorarbeit von Name zum Thema „‘This barbarous moor‘ – ‚The valiant moor‘: Constructions of Race in William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*“

In seiner übersichtlich gegliederten Bachelorarbeit beschäftigt sich der Verfasser vor dem Hintergrund des frühneuzeitlichen englischen Kolonialismus mit den Konstruktionen von Rasse in zwei Dramen von William Shakespeare, wobei er mit *Othello* geschickt ein bekanntes und mit *Titus Andronicus* ein weniger oft untersuchtes Stück zur vergleichenden Betrachtung auswählt.

Die sehr gelungene **Einleitung** widmet sich zunächst einem Grundproblem jeder kontextorientierten literaturwissenschaftlichen Studie – dem Verhältnis zwischen Textproduktion und historischer Wirklichkeit (1f). Unter Rückgriff auf den *New Historicism* versteht der Verf. Shakespeares Dramen und ihre Aufführungen im London der Renaissance als Teil der Gesellschaft (3) in einem bestimmten historischen Moment (10) und fasst dann deren ambivalente Konstruktionen von *Otherness* als Beitrag zu den zeitgenössischen Diskursen über das Eigene und das Fremde. Die anspruchsvolle These verweist auf die Mehrdeutigkeit der Konstruktionen, mit denen die Stücke den Gegensatz zwischen Schwarz und Weiß über die Figurenkonzeptionen und -konstellationen zunächst hinterfragen, um sie dann mit den Konfliktlösungen wieder zu bestätigen (3).

Bereits der im Titel der Arbeit benutzte Begriff der *construction* zeugt vom sehr reflektierten Umgang des Verf. mit der Problematik. Im **2. Kapitel** zu Theorie und Methode definiert er anhand zahlreicher Fachtexte und einschlägiger Nachschlagewerke seine dem *New Historicism* und den *Postcolonial Studies* entlehnten zentralen Analysebegriffe *Othering*, *stereotype*, *agency*, *power*, *ideology* und *interpellation,* die er sinnfällig zueinander in Beziehung setzt und in ihrer Funktion für die folgenden Untersuchungen bestimmt (3ff).

Sein **3. Kapitel** widmet der Verf. der Kategorie *race* in den Diskursen der englischen Renaissance, wofür er wohlüberlegt und fundiert mit einer eigenen These (6) auf Sekundärtexte aus der Sicht des *New Historicism* und der *Postcolonial Studies* (wie Mason Vaughan zur Definition des *moor* sowie Loomba) zurückgreift, deren Erkenntnisse er überzeugend synthetisiert. Es geht ihm hier besonders um den Zusammenhang zwischen den britischen Kolonialisierungsbestrebungen und dem Begriff *race*, der in zeitgenössischen Diskursen dazu benutzt wird, Hierarchien herzustellen (6, 9). Während die weiße Hautfarbe das britische Selbst als überlegen markiert, fungiert die schwarze Hautfarbe als Zeichen für das untergeordnete Fremde und koloniale Andere. An dieses

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Grundverständnis lagern sich komplexe Systeme von Normen und Werten an, die über Sexualität und Religion sowie soziale Zugehörigkeit diese hierarchischen Machtverhältnisse nachzeichnen und die im Folgenden anhand der in den beiden Dramen verwendeten Charakterisierungen und Charakterisierungstechniken sorgfältig herausgearbeitet werden.

Das mit 26 Seiten längste **4. Kapitel** präsentiert in zwei großen Unterkapiteln zur *Character Concept*ions und *Character Constellations* die detaillierte und fundierte Textanalyse und –interpretation. Der Verf. setzt die literaturwissenschaftlichen Analysekategorien im Verbund mit den theoretisch abstrahierenden Kategorien durchweg korrekt und zielführend ein, wenn er in **4.1.** zunächst die Charakterisierungstechniken in beiden Dramen betrachtet und dann in **4.2.** die Befunde unter den Aspekten von *agency* und *power* bewertet.

Nach treffenden Beobachtungen zur Textästhetik (13ff) in Verbindung mit der Aufführungspraxis behandelt der Verf. die Selbstcharakterisierungen von Aaron und Othello sowie von Iago in den verschiedenen Monologformen, deren Funktionen er einträglich diskutiert (15ff). Er setzt sich in seiner Untersuchung kritisch mit der Sekundärliteratur auseinander und entwickelt selbstbewusst davon abweichende Deutungen (17, bes. auch 23). Sehr einleuchtend analysiert der Verf. wie beide Figuren schwarzer Hautfarbe die stereotypen Zuweisungen sowohl transzendieren als auch ihnen genügen, wie er anhand von Othellos Niedergang und Selbstmord später zeigt (27, 22, 34). Von besonderer Bedeutung ist in beiden Dramen die Fähigkeit der zentralen Figuren, über das Erzählen ihrer eigenen Lebensgeschichten und -auffassungen wenigstens zeitweise Deutungshoheit zu erlangen und damit – im Fall von Aaron und Othello - den Status des untergeordneten Fremden zu konterkarieren (19ff). Dieses Moment der narrativen Selbstschöpfung von Aaron, Iago und Othello (dazu s. Greenblatt) wertet der Verf. dann als Zeichen der Selbstermächtigung und bietet zum Beleg erst eine einfühlsame Analyse der Figur des Aaron im Kontrast zu Iago (23ff) und danach das Pendant für Othello (25ff). Im letzten Teilkapitel geht der Verf. von den *dramatis personae* aus, um unter Verwendung der Kategorie *race* zu erkunden, wie die hier angezeigten Hierarchien und Machtverhältnisse in *Titus Andronicus* (27ff) und *Othello* jeweils unterschiedlich ausgespielt werden (30ff).

Das abschließende **5. Kapitel** fasst die Erkenntnisse präzise zusammen und betont noch einmal die Mehrdeutigkeit der Konstruktionen von *race* in den beiden Dramen als Teil der Renaissancediskurse über das Eigene und das Fremde. Während die Figurenkonzeptionen rassistische Stereotype zurückweisen, etablieren die Schlussgestaltungen jedoch die auf der Hautfarbe gegründeten Hierarchien, die die schwarzen Figuren als unterlegen definieren (37f).

Die vorliegende Arbeit weist keine formalen Fehler auf. Das beinahe fehlerfreie, idiomatische und stilistisch gehobene Englisch liegt deutlich über den Anforderungen an eine Bachelorarbeit. Der Verf. beschreibt und interpretiert die komplexen Probleme mit einer Klarheit und Abstraktionsfähigkeit, die den Text zu einer angenehmen Lektüre machen. Die Bibliographie enthält einschlägige und aktuelle Sekundärliteratur und entspricht vollkommen den Vorgaben des *MLA Style Sheet*.

Ich bewerte die überdurchschnittlich gute Arbeit mit der Gesamtnote **1,0 (sehr gut).**

Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Nach ausführlicher Durchsicht der Arbeit „‚This barbarous moor' – ‚The valiant moor': Constructions of Race in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*" von Name komme ich in meiner Bewertung der Arbeit zum gleichen Schluss wie die Erstgutachterin und schließe mich ihrem Gutachten an. Die Note lautet: **1,0 (sehr gut)**.

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Ralf Haekel (Zweitgutachter)
Hannover, den 20.09.2015

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Bachelor Thesis

“Style, not sincerity is the vital thing!” - Irony and Wit in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

When discussing Oscar Wilde's most famous play, scholars agree on the play's obvious humour. For many, the fascination with it lies in its wit and genius which is made evident in Wilde's use of language and style, but few have made the effort to investigate thoroughly the humorous components that the play is composed of. A rhetorical device that contributes greatly to the humorous appeal is Wilde's extensive use of irony. In fact, since the play is more ironic than sincere, but since there is always some truth to irony, the play is often regarded as a parody of the Victorian society Wilde was a member of. The characters (a portrayal of figures/types to be found in the Victorian society) are constructed as being concerned more with appearances than with the truth and facts and this is exactly what Wilde takes advantage of. It is essential to keep in mind that the play is a work of art and should be regarded as such - its artificiality is indispensable.

Whereas Wilde's early plays, such as *Lady Windermere's Fan* are usually considered society plays, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde's final play, he departs from this generic tradition and creates a "comedy of manners" (Foster 19). With the telling subtitle „A trivial comedy for serious people", the play already implies to the Victorian readers, that its contents should not be taken seriously. Trivial and serious are concepts which appear to be mutually exclusive, but by uttering them in the same frame, some meaning of the opposite is being added to the other concept. This opposition prepares potential readers or audiences to examine the play within this dichotomy and already points to the ambiguity stressed through the comedy's playful use of language.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* when talking about morality, Lord Henry comments that "being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know" (Wilde 11). That fits adequately with the mindset of the Victorian upper class as presented in the text and already shows how deeply engrained the concept of "keeping up appearances" is. Everything in life is simply a pose of one kind or another, implying that no one is genuinely natural or authentic but putting on a show to not let slip through their personal misery. All this is simply a farce, and irony is a well-used device to hide that fact. Irony is not sincere, because it hides one's true statement by implying the opposite. In act 3 of the comedy, Gwendolen Fairfax captures the essence of the play in her exclamation of "style, not sincerity is the vital thing!" (Wilde 47), as irony is more a stylistic device than a feature of sincerity.

I contend that Wilde's play highlights the double standards and double moral of the upper-class Victorian society by employing stereotypical characters who contradict themselves constantly in speech and action. This effect is produced through the plays' frequent uses of concepts of irony, wit, sarcasm and paradoxes that reveal the hypocrisy in the Victorian upper class that Wilde himself, as a well-known dandy, was familiar of.

In this bachelor thesis, I will work with an approach that combines linguistics and literary analysis since it has been famously proclaimed by one of the leading female characters in the play, it is (linguistic) style that matters. In chapter 3, I will employ linguistic concepts from the field of pragmatics to analyse humorous elements: Grice's Maxims and the Cooperative Principle will be used to demonstrate how Wilde's characters flout patterns of usual conversation. The concept of Social Functions will identify how irony works on the social level of a linguistic exchange. On the findings of the linguistic analysis I will base a literary analysis using a new historicism approach to examine the prevailing morals and values of the upper classes and their potential for social criticism. I will show how irony in *The Importance of Being Earnest* can be read as a means of constructing and perpetuating class hierarchies. Moreover, my analysis will prove that not only the aristocratic protagonists but also their supposedly inferior servants make use of verbal humour and can be read as insincere and hypocritical.

2. Theory and Methodology

Oscar Wilde's dramas of the 1890s are widely known for being rich in his famous witticisms. In the play at hand, irony is noticeably found since the characters act contrarily to what they preach. As irony can be located in both the paradigmatic field of linguistics, as well as in the field of literature, where it is more context-oriented, the combination of a linguistic and a literary analysis allows for a thorough analysis of the dualistic theme that manifests itself in the language and the literary context and for an investigation of their interplay.

Since irony is defined in linguistics, pragmatics to be precise, as well as it is used in literary analyses, a linguistic definition will be presented first, before the next subchapter defines the irony as a literary term. In this chapter I will present the Cooperative Principle alongside the Gricean maxims and the Social Functions of irony, before turning to to the literary theories of Structuralism and New Historicism as they provide the background for my literary analysis in chapter 4.

2.1. Irony and Wit in Linguistics

König and Pfister claim that the origin of the concept of irony lies in the "Greek comic charactertype of the 'Eiron', who engages in verbal contests with his opponent 'Alazon'", by using this certain "discoursive strategy, his *eirōneía*" (95). This strategy is defined as working on the basis of a "self-belittling understatement" (95). In its literal meaning, *eirōneía* is translated to 'pretence' or 'deceit'. Yet, for irony to unfold its full potential, it requires physical communication tools like gestures and mimics, as well as intonation accompanying the remark that can only be conveyed vis-á-vis (96). This might be a reason for the strong appeal of irony in dramatic literature, since this medium does, in performances, not only convey text, but also visual codes such as facial expressions and gestures (Nünning 84).

Terms linked with irony are sarcasm and cynicism, as well as parody and satire, since irony is not limited to a single remark but can be applied to a longer scene. The illustration or imitation of someone else's mannerism oftentimes contains parodic or satiric elements, and in this regard, irony is linked to satire, as both concepts simultaneously conceal and disclose "an aggressive tendency in the speaker towards the opponent he addresses" (König, Pfister 101). Even though irony can be considered a means of displaying aggression, in its subtlety, this device can "exhibit sympathy for its target and distance towards it is of humorously bemused tolerance for its weaknesses" (101) which is called self-irony, and in its other extreme is called sarcasm, which is considered far more hurtful and sharp-cutting.

2.1.1. Communication Model of Dramatic Texts

According to Nünning, in any drama the communication situation is made up of two communication levels for the dramatic dialogue, the extra- and the intratextual level: the characters of the drama function simultaneously and interchangeably as addresser and addressee on the intratextual level, whereas the historical author as the addresser and the audience or reader as the addressee are located on the extratextual level (79). The dramatic dialogue is needed for the communication between the characters and the exchange of information to ensure the progressive unfolding of events in the drama. Additionally, this model allows for discrepant awareness and dramatic irony, which occurs when

> the audience or the reader [is] privy to information that is not available to the character concerned. This superior level of knowledge grants the audience or reader an insight into the character's errors of judgement, which imbues his or her remarks with an unconscious or unintentional additional meaning. (Nünning 90-1)

A necessary distinction regarding dialogue is that of everyday life and the artificial literary construct that "perform[s] specific roles within the play" (Nünning 86). Its artificiality manifests itself in the form of wit, which was central to the popular genre of the comedy of manner that came into existence in the late seventeenth century, where witty, intellectual verbal duels were the key style of conversation. As a rhetorical figure, wit in the form of paradox, puts two mutually exclusive concepts on the same level (87).

In chapter 4, I shall analyse the dialogue in *The Importance of Being Earnest* according to its artificial construction of witty exchanges.

2.1.2. The Cooperative Principle, the Gricean Maxims and Conversational Implicatures

When analysing dialogue and stylistic devices such as irony, Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle and the resulting maxims for successful communication are an inevitable source. According to Grice, conversation participants should "[m]ake [their] contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which [they] are engaged" (Grice 26), while ideally adhering to the following four maxims:

The first one, the maxim of Quantity, refers to the extent of shared information andrequires the contribution to be balanced: to be "as informative as required" while not being "more informative than is required" (26). The second maxim refers to the Quality of the contribution, its accuracy and truthfulness, and hence requires the speaker to "try to make your contribution one that is true" (27). The third maxim for a successful exchange of information requires the statement to be "relevant" (27) to the exchange, thus being called the maxim of Relation. The last maxim, the one of Manner, demands the utterance to "be perspicuous" (27) and simultaneously being precise, brief and orderly, in order to avoid misunderstandings, obscurity and ambiguity. The concept works because

> Anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in

> talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims. (Grice 30)

In natural conversations, speakers tend to instinctively adhere to the Cooperative Principle and the maxims, as they have learned to do so from an early age onwards, and it would be cost-ineffective to depart from the established pattern, yet, sometimes the exception proves the rule (29). Adhering to the Cooperative Principle and the maxims do not necessarily need to align, as in a conversation, a remark can comply with the Principle, without adhering to the maxims and is in fact a frequent occurrence in a conversation, in which a partner

> may *flout* a maxim; that is, he may blatantly fail to fulfil it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfil the maxim and to do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is not opting out and is not, in view of blatancy of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem: How can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall Cooperative Principle? (Grice 30)

Additionally, so-called "conversational implicatures" follow the flouting or exploiting of a maxim and establish the contrast between "what is said" and "what is implicated", as conversations consist of more information conveyed than are obviously shared:

> A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that p has implicated that q, may be said to have conversationally implicated that q, PROVIDED THAT (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, q is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) IS required. (Grice 1975 49–50)

Accordingly, my analysis will not only focus on the literal statements that are part of the dramatic dialogue, but I shall analyse utterances of the characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and determine in how far they violate the maxims and consequently interpret the produced effect.

Aligning with the conversational implicatures, König and Pfister state that there are two messages conveyed in an ironic remark, "one of which is said explicitly and corresponds exactly to the meaning of the sentence uttered, the other one being implicit but expressing what the speaker really means (speaker meaning) and intends to communicate" (101). Thus, the linguistic definition of irony proposes a duality in speech, which lends itself to conclusions to the personalities and moral judgement of characters uttering sarcastic or ironic remarks. Language as a stylistic device has the power to construct and deconstruct.

2.1.3. The Social Functions of Irony

Other than the already mentioned linguistic functions, Dews, Kaplan and Winner have described and categorised the social functions that irony possesses. These functions mitigate the effect of the meaning of the statement made:

Humour: One of the social functions of irony is to wrap criticism into a humorous remark to soften the criticism, since "irony may be funnier than literal language because of the surprise yielded by the disparity between what is said and what is meant" (299).

Status elevation: When a speaker utters a critical remark, he or she heightens his own status above the addressee's status and belittles the listener. By the added component of irony, on the one hand, even more judgement is introduced as the speaker enhances the elevating capacity of the criticism by pointing out the false behaviour and providing a better alternative conduct. On the other hand, irony has the characteristic of reducing the status elevation due to its joke qualities (299).

Aggression: Because of its contrast in meaning and literal statement, irony is often perceived as even more humiliating and hurtful than an unfavourable remark, since it not only points out the negative aspect but intensifies it by mocking. Other definitions propose that ironic criticism to be regarded as less destructive than direct criticism, due to its indirect and less confrontative qualities and thus provides more room for interpretation for the insulted person (299).

Emotional control: Here, irony appeals to its comic function and shows the ironist's self-control, since through the joke, the negative remark is almost turned into a positive one. Therefore, the relationship between the conversation partners is not jeopardized to such a great extent (300).

In the course of the linguistic analysis of dialogue extracts in chapter 3, I will refer back to the here established social functions when examining the implications of a witty remark.

2.2. Irony and Wit in Literature

In this thesis, I shall use both linguistic analysis and literary analysis to investigate irony and its function for the play. In chapter 2.1.3, I have already addressed linguistic perspectives on irony. In this sub-chapter, I shall firstly define irony, as used in the academic discipline of literary studies. Afterwards, I will consider the second concept in my title, namely wit. I shall define the concept and provide reasons for my selection of "wit" instead of similar terms.

2.2.1. Literary Definitions of Irony

In ancient times, rhetoricians used the term *ironia* to describe "a manner of discourse in which, for the most part, the meaning was contrary to the words", hence displaying a "double-edged nature" (Cuddon 371). The word irony entered the English language in the sixteenth century and denoted in grammar that a man says one thing but through the use of irony makes it evident that he means the opposite. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, intellectuals explored irony as a "mode of thinking, feeling and expressing" (371). In the eighteenth century, German philosophers and writers detected irony in theatre plays and "by the end of the 18th c. irony was not just a rhetorical device but denoted an entire way of looking at the world" (Cuddon 372).

According to Meyer, in literary studies, irony can be reduced to basic definitions which are as follows: (1) **verbal irony**, which denotes "the opposite of what is said is meant" (41) or simply "saying what one does not mean" (Cuddon 372), whereas in (2) **situational irony** "the opposite of what is expected occurs" (Meyer 41) or when someone first laughs at the misfortune of others while being unaware that the same misery is upon him (Cuddon 372). To detect irony, a "frame of reference and the underlying values" are necessary (Meyer 42). **Intentional irony** "expresses the opposite of what is meant" (117), while **dramatic irony** defines the "difference between external and internal communication" and refers to the disparity of knowledge and information that the characters and spectator possess. The audience is knowledgeable of the fact that the character is unaware of the consequences of his or her remarks or actions – and yet, dramatic irony does not always "serve a comic purpose" (Meyer 118), but can have serious effects for the unfolding of events. This difference in knowledge of the spectators and the play's characters is called discrepant awareness, as the spectator usually knows what kind of genre he

or she is going to witness, but the characters do not know if the events unfold tragically or comically (116).

2.2.2. Literary Definitions of Wit

Associated with irony is the concept of 'wit' which used to refer to sanity or 'sense', in the Middle Ages, then changed its meaning to 'intelligence' or 'wisdom' in the Renaissance era and described something or someone 'genius', since someone quick-witted must possess a high mental capacity (Cuddon 773). Poets, such as Dryden and Pope, made great use of the concept and called something witty when it was well expressed or well phrased, while a hundred years later critics denounced that wit lacked sincerity. Nowadays, wit is more positively regarded and refers to verbalism and "intellectual brilliance and ingenuity" (Cuddon 774).

'Wit' does not describe a single literary phenomenon. Instead, the use of different stylistic devices is often referred to as witty. One example of wit is paradox, which is defined as an "apparently self-contradictory (even absurd) statement which, on closer inspection, is found to contain a truth reconciling the conflicting opposites" (Cuddon 510). A paradox can be particular by manifesting itself in form of a "pithy statement which verge on the epigrammatic" (510) or contain a more structural meaning which is often used in poetry.

In Wilde's case, his witty remarks are often referred to as epigrams, which denote "a short, witty statement in verse or prose which may be complimentary, satiric or aphoristic" (Cuddon 242/243). The popularity of Wilde's epigrams is displayed in the modern media coverage, for instance by *The Guardian* that featured in 2012 an infographic by Vasiliev and Frost, enumerating the "most enduring epigrams", containing at least seven from *The Importance of Being Earnest*, one being the title of this thesis.

Another term used to describe Oscar Wilde's comedy is farce, namely a "charming and whimsical farce" (Gillespie x), which describes the "exaggeration of character and situation; absurd situations and improbable events (even impossible ones and therefore fantastic); and surprises in the form of unexpected appearances and disclosures. In farce, character and dialogue are nearly always subversive to plot and situation" (Cuddon 270).

Despite lacking definitional clarity as a literary studies term, I have decided to use the term "wit" in this paper as it is a term that is used in Victorian England as a central category for aristocratic and middle-class value judgement (Gohrisch), a term that is frequently associated

with Wilde's humour. So much so, that in their sketch "The Oscar Wilde Sketch" Monty Python have parodied Wilde and other Victorian characters who proclaim witticisms such as:

> Oscar: (Graham Chapman) Your highness, there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.
> (There follows fifteen seconds of restrained and sycophantic laughter.)
> Prince: Very witty Wilde. Very very witty.
> Whistler: (John Cleese) There is only one thing in the world worse than being witty, and that is not being witty.
> (The Oscar Wilde Sketch, *Monty Python's Flying Circus* Series 3, Episode 13)

2.3. Literary Theory: Structuralism and Cultural Materialism

The theory of Structuralism as explained by Peter Barry denotes the concept that "things cannot be understood in isolation – they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of (hence the term 'structuralism')" (38). The advocates of Structuralism propose that the "things" in this world do not carry meaning in themselves, but that the meaning is imposed on them from the outside. They seek "to establish a model of the system of literature itself as the external reference for the individual works it considers" (Scholes 10). Instead of 'zooming in' on literary texts, structuralists 'zoom out' and attempt to place a text inside genre conventions as well as historical and philosophical contexts that are associated with it (Barry 39).

Structuralism follows the assumption that structures and contrasted elements organise the world we live in and are vital for our understanding of it. Examples for these kinds of structures are recurrent patterns or motifs in the literary text, be it on the linguistic level, the cultural context or encoded in symbols referring to binary oppositions. Structuralism looks for parallels, patterns, contrasts, repetitions, etc. in the plot, the characters, the situation, the structure and the language used in the literary text at hand (Barry 51).

New Historicism and Cultural Materialism take the concept of parallelism as established in Structuralism to a new level, as these theories demand the parallel reading of a literary text next to a non-literary text from the same era to place it within its authentic historical and political background in order to be able to make legitimate claims for the analysis. Unlike other theories that value the literary text higher than non-literary texts and read it biased by former literary critique, New Historicism refuses to follow suit as it assumes both texts to "constantly inform

and interrogate each other" (166) and juxtaposes them. New Historicists also look for structures but not necessarily on the internal level but more on the external one with regard to cultural mind-sets and prevailing political or historical ideologies and practices (173).

I will stray from the New Historicist convention to read a non-literary text alongside the literary text, which is the drama at hand, but will apply the notion of the literary text being informed by its non-literary surroundings, as I see the significance of reading it in itshistorical and cultural context for my literary analysis.

3. Linguistic Analysis

In this chapter, I will consider verbal irony in *The Importance of Being Earnest* from a pragmatics standpoint. I will recite different humorous exchanges between the play's characters and relate their humour to the Gricean Maxims they flout. I will show the implications of each of these floutings and analyse how they establish the characters as witty and verbally superior to their surroundings. Afterwards, I will apply the social functions of irony as established in chapter 2.1.3. to the uttered statements in a specific scene of the play and place them in the context of the scene.

3.1. Flouting the Gricean Maxims

A witty exchange, as an artificial conversation construct, necessitates the flouting of the Gricean maxims while still requiring the conversational implicatures to work. Even though the Gricean distinction suggests that only one maxim can be flouted at a time, "it is quite common for a contribution to a conversation to break more than one maxim at a time" (Leech and Short 296). In the following exchanges, I will thus attempt to identify all the maxims violated with the presented speech act:

The play at hand starts off with such a flouting, when Algernon, the master in this specific relationship, is heard playing the piano, before entering the stage and addressing his butler:

> ALGERNON: Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?
> LANE: I didn't think it polite to listen. (Wilde 5)

Here, the maxim of Quality is flouted as he provides Algernon with more information than he had asked for – a simple 'yes' or 'no' would have been sufficient. Yet, by raising the topic of

politeness, he refers to their master-butler relationship and class difference, as an obeying butler is expected to be polite and not comment on his master's behaviour. Thus, Lane is also violating the maxim of Quantity, as he shares more information than necessary.

The irony here lies in Lane's answer, since the members of the audience were clearly able to listen to Algernon's melody, it must be inferred that Lane would have heard his master play, as well. One would assume that that as a healthy human being one is incapable of not listening to tunes that reach the ear, but Lane presents it as if it was in his power to decide what he wants to listen to and what not. And that, being a faithful servant, his politeness overcomes even physical limitations of humans.

At the same time, the master seems to intend to consult his butler about his opinion on his musical abilities. Therefore, instead of being polite for not listening, Lane would then oppose his master's request. Accordingly, this interchange between butler and master questions the very concept of obedience; at the one hand by suggesting that obedience is stronger than human capacities; on the other hand, by mocking obedience as being impractical in certain situations.

In a different scene, Algernon asks Cecily to comment on the Dr. Chasuble's competence as a rector of the church; whether he is "thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the Church?" (37).

> CECILY: Oh yes, Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows. (37)

With that ironic and witty remark, Cecily demonstratively flouts the maxim of Quality, as she obviously does not hold Dr. Chasuble in high regard and considers him incapable of writing a book because of his lack of knowledge. As pointed out in the theory and methodology chapter, wit links two concepts or terms that tend to exclude themselves, and here Cecily associates the term "learned man" with "never having written a single book". The exaggeration of the additional comment is ironic, as one usually associates a knowledgeable person capable of writing a book. At the same time, this remark may be read as criticising current literary developments, suggesting that someone who is in fact knowledgeable cannot be part of the contemporary scene, when uneducated people perform literary criticism as Algernon suggests (11).

A different interpretation could read the previous interchange as an example of the flouting of the maxim of Relation, since Cecily's answer does not actually provide information about

the rector's qualities as a member of the church, but rather about his intelligence and writing skills that do not necessarily have an impact on his correct adherence to "rites and ceremonials".

In the following scene, the male protagonists discuss Jack's lies concerning his "Aunt Cecily". These remarks follow after a conversation, in which "Ernest" has already admitted to lying about his name. After confessing that his name is, in fact, not Ernest but Jack, the conversation continues as follows:

> ALGERNON: Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come on, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.
> JACK: My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression. (Wilde 10)

The maxim being violated here by Jack is the maxim of Manner, who tries to avoid a direct answer by speaking a simile, where he sets up the image of him being in a dentist's office and blaming Algy for pulling out the information of his mouth like teeth – based on the assumption that both the removal of foul teeth as the extraction of uncomfortable information are generally accepted to be an unpleasant, yet necessary, experience. In the case of the dentist the simile works literally; in the sense of the information extraction it works figuratively for telling an unpleasant truth.

In this exchange, the dramatic irony lies in the fact that neither Algernon nor Jack are any better than the behaviour they criticise, since, through their Bunbury-ing, both do not speak the truth but revert to "false impressions". Only a few lines earlier, Jack had already admitted that his "name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country" (10), purposely producing a false impression and deceiving the people with whom he interacts depending on his geographic location.

Another interchange concerned with geographic location occurs in the first scene, when Jack describes his motives for coming to town:

> ALGERNON: How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town? JACK: Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should one bring anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy! (6)

In this welcoming scene, again Jack is the one flouting the communication maxim of Quality, by saying that his quest for pleasure justifies his visit to London, when in reality it is essentially his intention to propose to Gwendolen, that he reveals a few moments later and Algy refers to as "business" instead of pleasure (7). One would assume, that a proposal itself is a pleasurable experience and in this case, Jack would not be speaking an actual lie but rather omit partof the truth, making this an example of the maxim of Quantity, since Jack only communicates the bare minimum. He also deviates from the maxim of Relation, as he swiftly changes the topic by commenting on Algernon's eating behaviour. This dialogue is a clear example of how an exchange can still fulfil the cooperative principle despite flouting three different maxims within a single utterance.

In the following exchange, Jack and Algernon continue their dialogue by discussing the merits and disadvantages of town and country.

> JACK: *(Pulling off his gloves.)* When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country, one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.
> ALGERNON: And who are the people you amuse?
> JACK: Oh, neighbours, neighbours.
> ALGERNON: Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?
> JACK: Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.
> ALGERNON: How immensely you must amuse them! (*Goes over and takes sandwich.*) By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?
> JACK: Eh, Shropshire? Yes, of course. Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea? (Wilde 7)

In this conversation, Jack flouts the maxim of Quality twice: firstly, by saying that he entertains his neighbours in the country and an instant later declares that he never converses with them, so one of the statements must necessarily be untrue. Secondly, when he agrees that his country address is Shropshire, although he later tells Gwendolen to find him in Hertfordshire (23). He additionally flouts the maxim of Relation as he inquires after all the effort Algernon has made and after the expected guests, instead of revealing the additional information on his country home that Algernon had hoped for.

In the extract above, the irony lies in the linking of the idea of entertaining neighbours, preferably ones whom one likes to entertain, and its immediate reversal when Jack exclaims that his neighbours are far from agreeable and he in reality never talks to them. Algernon's following exclamation is ironic in so far, in that he wants to point out that does not believe Jack, since one is hardly able to amuse one's neighbours without speaking to them. Here, the verbal irony Algernon uses in his ironic remark serves obscurity, thus intentionally flouting the maxim of Manner and relying on the conversational implicatures.

So far, the linguistic analysis has shown, that the characters, especially Algernon and Jack, are hardly serious when conversing which each other, delighting in outdoing each other with their witty remarks, regardless of their truth or sincerity:

> ALGERNON All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.
> JACK Is that clever?
> ALGERNON It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilized life should be. (Wilde 21)

Here, Algernon puts emphasis on his witty remark, instead of the content of the statement. Hence, the ambiguity of their statements allows them to twist and turn the truth as it suits them, either being interpreted in their favour or disfavour.

Another concept alongside irony is cynicism, which is made evident and overtly pointed out by the characters in the following excerpt on the construction of marriage in French drama:

> ALGERNON […] You don't seem to realize, that in married life, three is company and two is none.
> JACK *(Sententiously.)* That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.
> ALGERNON Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.
> JACK For heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical. (Wilde 12)

The epigrams above state that cynicism is easier to be achieved than a sincere and truthful statement. Jack criticises the lax moral propagated in the French drama, whereas Algernon believes them to be inevitable for a happy married life. Jack is annoyed by the linguistic style that his friend delights in displaying.

As established throughout this chapter, one of the functions of irony is to reveal two (or more) sides of meaning of the uttered statement, thus allowing language to construct and deconstruct concepts simultaneously. The concept of duplicity, deceit and dishonesty can not only be found on the linguistic level, but also, and even more so on the literary level which I will investigate in a following chapter.

3.2. Social Functions of Irony

The social functions of irony become excessively evident in the tea ceremony scene between Cecily and Gwendolen, which takes place in the frame of social etiquette but ridicules the same through the exaggerated behaviour of the ladies performing it. The scene starts off quite serenely and the ladies agree on getting along very well, but after the revelation of their engagement to the same Ernest, the tension rises and they perform a contest of quibs and jibes. The at first innocent portrayed ladies turn out to be not so innocent after all but to be masters of repartee. Throughout the play, Wilde does not shy away from making use of stage directions to indicate how he wants a statement to be conveyed to produce the intended effect.

In this scene especially, the intended ironic meaning is indicated in the stage directions. Gwendolen calls Cecily ‘darling’ (Wilde 40), when she is about to try to prove her wrong. The belittlement by calling her an endearing term evokes the status elevating function of irony and thus strengthens Gwendolen’s following argument. After being accused, Cecily’s friendly feelings to her now-rival Gwendolen turn into the opposite, yet she manages to control her emotions by ironically stating that it “would distress [her] more than [she] can tell [her], dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish” (40) before disappointing her. Gwendolen’s answer is staged as “meditatively” and her following exaggerated description of the “poor fellow” who “has been entrapped in any foolish promise” (40) is thus turned ironic as she attempts to take the wind out of Cecily’s sails.

Cecily outperforms Gwendolen’s performance by making her next response sound “thoughtful and sad” (40). Both almost theatrical performances allude to the social function of aggression - which is thus restrained here -, as well as emotional control. With Gwendolen’s next response staged as “satirically” (41), Wilde emphasizes her understanding of Cecily’s preceding statement as ridiculous.

Subsequently, Cecily informs Gwendolen about the geographical specialities of her home area and answers “sweetly” (41) to Gwendolen’s silly exclamation that this justifies her city

residence. The use of the "sweet" intonation reveals the intended irony and makes Gwendolen's remark appear even more absurd. After all the accusations, one would not expect the ladies to stay in each other's company for much longer and start drinking their tea, yet by doing so they remain closely in the outlined societal conventions and by having them keep up appearances Wilde mocks the strict social protocol. He furthermore indicates in the following stage directions that the ladies continue to converse "very politely" or even "with elaborate politeness" (42). Cecily and Gwendolen hide their aggression behind the "shallow mask of manners" which they simultaneously criticise (41). Situational irony occurs in this scene when - as foreshadowed by Jack in the beginning of the play - the ladies forget their initial quarrel and negative feelings towards each other immediately, upon learning that they share the same misfortune and soon start calling each other sister after having called each other a lot of other things first (Wilde 43).

The already analysed dialogues and following ones of Algernon and Jack do not necessarily serve status elevating or aggression-mitigating social functions but are intended for humorous appeal and do not need to be enumerated here again. Contrarily, Lady Bracknell's satirical remarks certainly serve a status elevating purpose to prove her moral superiority and to show her disregard of society.

4. Literary Analysis

The linguistic analysis only offers a method to identify the irony as a pragmatic device and its artificiality on the intratextual level, and is by no means exhaustive. A linguistic analysis does not take into account the political and historical context in which the utterances are made and is less interpretive and more observant and categorising. A literary analysis offers a wider perspective on the plot, taking into account more information from the extratextual level and includes the historical and political context, thus offering more room for interpretation. In the following chapter I will present a literary analysis of the play at hand and consider it in the context of the time, shining a different light on the irony and witty remarks that amuse the audience.

4.1. Construction and Deconstruction of Victorian Upper-Class Norms and Values

Wilde's drama is set in Victorian Britain; a time that is often associated with a distinctly structured society and a focus on morality and discretion. In contrast to these ideologies that

were particularly prominent in the upper classes, Wilde's play suggests that the upper-class protagonists do not, in fact, adhere to the morals they themselves proclaim as important.

In the following sub-chapters; I will outline four means by which the text constructs the Victorian aristocratic society as immoral. Firstly, I will analyse the importance of the title of the play, questioning the "earnestness" of the main protagonists. Secondly, I will focus on Lady Bracknell, whose hypocritical statements call into question the decency and morality with which she characterises herself. Thirdly, I shall explore in how far "decorum" can be seen as a supplement for politeness and affection and, lastly, I will investigate the functions of witticisms and witty remarks as a contrast to concise and truthful language.

4.1.1. Ernest and Being Earnest

Wilde poignantly titled his comedy *„The Importance of Being Earnest – A Trivial Comedy for Serious People"*. The title itself is already witty, as the definition of comedy generally contains comic and humorous elements which contradict the play's alleged appeal to "serious people". This light-heartedness and comic purpose contradicts the titular seriousness. In the following analysis I will show that there is a certain amount of social criticism to the play that targets the characters' earnestness. All social commentary is softened by the title's claim, that the content of the play should not be taken too seriously, allowing the author more freedoms with his voicing of social criticism.

In his play, Wilde plays with the female characters' obsession with the name Ernest, since the "importance" in the title can be associated with the importance of being a person called Ernest or with displaying the character trait of earnestness. Furthermore, the term 'earnest' refers to both the characteristic of seriousness and sincerity, where serious means earnest and sincere refers to an honest character. Especially with regard to literary conventions, the name Ernest can be read as irony, since telling names are usually used to "draw attention to a [typical] feature" of a certain character (Nünning 195). Readers would, therefore, expect the Ernests of the play to exhibit these particular characteristics.

When discussing dinner arrangements, Jack and Algernon comment on seriousness:

> ALGERNON: […] may I dine with you to-night at Willis's?
> JACK I suppose so, if you want to.

> ALGERNON: Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them. (Wilde 12)

The irony here lies in the fact that Algernon is not serious about a lot of things in his life and is more concerned about making perfectly phrased statements, whether they be true or not, but demands sincerity in others. Moreover, Algernon expects seriousness concerning a potentially trivial aspect of life, which again points to the dichotomy already hinted at in the plays sub-title "A trivial comedy for serious people".

While Algernon demands seriousness when it comes to his dining experiences, both characters who are referred to as Ernest, are generally seen to oppose sincerity and seriousness as indicated in the following scene:

> ALGERNON: The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!
> JACK: That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.
> ALGERNON: Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that people who haven't been at university. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know. (11)

This scene introduces the first obvious structural irony in the play, namely that the main characters, Algernon and Jack, practice the art of Bunburying, by inventing alter egos that allow them to undertake activities which might be disregarded by the society they live in. Jack invents a naughty younger brother called Ernest that allows him to embark on journeys to London from his country home more often than usual to supposedly rescue him from inconvenient situations, whereas Algernon contrives a poorly friend called Bunbury who resides in the countryside so he can escape London whenever he pleases under the pretence of caring for his friend (Wilde 11). Both feigned reasons are perfectly plausible and socially well regarded, so the gentlemen do not feel guilty about their deceitful behaviour. Yet, Jack admits that this deceit ought to come to an end, should he marry Gwendolen, Algernon's cousin. Algernon seeks to continue the pretence for as long as possible and finds it especially useful for married life, lecturing Jack on how if he does not see the advantage of Bunburying, then his wife will want to make us of it (12). With his statement of the "happy English home" (12), Algernon suggests that double lives – and double morals - are necessary for domestic bliss. A certain dramatic irony arises with the

fact that both characters, who call themselves Ernest are the ones that are predominantly associated with ironic remarks that often contradict literal truths. In the previous chapter, I have analysed different statements from the play, showing how each of them flouts one or several of Grice's maxims. As has become obvious, the exchanges between Algernon and Ernest formed a major part of my linguistic analysis since both of them are frequently insincere or at leastnot literally earnest. For readers or the audience, this would lead to a certain humour based on the discrepant awareness of the audience who knows Algernon and Jack to be dishonest despite their proclamations of being E/earnest.

Moreover, situational irony with regard to the two male protagonists arises in the latter part of the play when Jack's invented brother Ernest is contrasted with the later revelation of the play that Jack actually has a brother, who strangely turns out to be his best friend, so while pretending to have a brother, he actually had one all the time. The second irony is that Jack calls his fictive brother Ernest, and later finds out that he is actually the one who had been christened Ernest, after his father's name (Wilde 58). With regard to Jack's/Ernest's character, Degroisse states that "in embodying a man who is initially neither "earnest" nor "Ernest" and who, through forces beyond his control, subsequently *becomes* both "earnest" and "Ernest", Jack is a walking, breathing paradox and a complex symbol of Victorian hypocrisy" (42). The irony on the literary level thus reveals the prevalent hypocrisy in the Victorian society, becoming apparent in Wilde's "epigram-spouting dandies" (Mackie 148). They apply two systems of moral codes: one for the country and one for the city. Whatever is said in one of the locations, does not need to apply in the other. When discussing marriage, Algernon lectures Jack on the value of knowing how to Bunbury, inferring that married men should (and do) live a double life. Degroisse remarks, that the "moral values are reversed" (25) in Jack's explanation to Algernon for his reasons of feeling the need to create a fictional brother in the following exchange:

> ALGERNON […] Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?
> JACK My dear Algy, I do not know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of a guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple. (Wilde 10)

In this explanation, Jack links his lie of having a brother to the truth, which in itself is highly ironic and paradoxical. Jack is aware of his immoral behaviour, yet he gets away with it by insisting on the strict need of morality and his duty as a guardian that is society's expectation towards him. The hypocrisy that comes to light here is that as long as plausible reasons are provided and the lie is wrapped in a proper appearance, immoral behaviour is completely accepted in the Victorian society.

Generally, the concept of living a double life was well-known in the Victorian society and is associated with gentlemen entertaining a mistress next to their wife, which Wilde exaggerates extremely in the case of Jack, who "literally splits in two" (Degroisse 26), where one personality is morally impeccable and the other one is the wicked one, yet without ever actually naming the immoral activities he gets entangled in. Degroisse argues that the obsession with the name of Ernest reveals another Victorian conviction, the one of determinism, with the flawless part of the double persona being called Ernest, as if only the name would make him behave accordingly (27).

The female characters in the play are more in love with the idea of Ernest than with the men themselves, as "there is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence" (Wilde 15) and Gwendolen was "destined to love" the man she assumes to be called Ernest. According to these observations concerning the name Ernest, it becomes clear that the play questions the very concept of being earnest. Poague argues that

> "The final clause completes the deflation of Victorian values: Gwendolen's highest ideal, in an age of ideals, is to marry a man named Ernest. Ideals are thus a matter of labels. You invest moral value in something by putting a proper name to it; a proper name, like a proper address, assures one of success in a society of surface appearances and superficial values." (252, 253)

By constructing those characters who are supposed to be the most earnest ones as being deceitful, the plays suggests that all other character must be just as lacking in earnestness as the male protagonists are.

4.1.2. Victorian Morality and Hypocrisy

Throughout the whole play, Wilde's main target of irony is clearly the conventional Victorian morality as he continues to mock the Victorian morals in the character of Lady Bracknell, who

follows a strict societal protocol. According to Degroisse, Lady Bracknell impersonates a member of the conventional and prejudiced Victorian upper-class, who is subsequently a victim of the concomitant hypocrisy (43).

> LADY BRACKNELL I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. […]
> ALGERNON I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.
> LADY BRACKNELL It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. (Wilde 13)

Lady Bracknell follows the societal obligation to look after someone who is in mourning and is surprised to find the widow looking rejuvenated instead of exhausted from grief. One would assume that if one's husband had died one would most probably find traces of grief in the face of the left-behind, but the comedy lies in the addition that the widow looks completely freed from negative emotions, which suggests that she is better off without him. The second assumption here is that hair turns grey in phases of stress, grief or anxiety, yet surprisingly the widow's hair has turned gold instead of grey, which is a euphemism, since the hair did obviously not change colour from grief, but she had probably done something to it (13). Yet Lady Bracknell dismisses the fact that Lady Harbury does not adhere to the societal conventions and acts opposing to them (Degroisse 43).

As a Victorian upper-class character, Lady Bracknell is greatly concerned with social status and her main occupation is to find a suitable husband for her daughter. According to her definition, suitable means firstly that the prospective partner has to have the right address, although both the fashion or the actual address could be altered if need be (Wilde 18). This remark is in so far ironic, as Lady Bracknell does not possess the power to change either ofthe two. Secondly, the eligible young gentleman, in this case Jack, has to align with her political views, which he does, before she moves on to "minor matters" (18), such as his origin, which is ironic, as it turns out to be a major matter which the whole play revolves around. In this scene, a conventional feature such as an origin story is turned into the absurd when Jack declares to "have lost both parents" (Wilde 18) which is an incident that is conventionally received as a tragedy. Against expectations, Lady Bracknell does not empathise with Jack but chides him for his "carelessness" (18). Thus, Lady Bracknell finds fault with Jack's unfortunate origin, without knowing who his actual parents were. She does not withdraw from her principles - principles

that look like morality and adhering to societal norms, but are ultimately nothing more than arbitrary standpoints that support whatever argument she wants to make - even if they do no one any good, neither her nor her daughter or her nephew. When interviewing Jack she approves of many of his answers, but when he fails to provide a sound financial record which was important as "during the Victorian era, it was unthinkable to marry below one's own social class" (Degroisse 43) and furthermore fails to provide an appropriate family origin, Lady Bracknell displays snobbish and superficial characteristics, as she is more concerned about money as the key to success and not a good character (42). She thus deems Jack as socially inadmissible and calls the situation a "social indiscretion" (Wilde 19), and this points out the "ever-looming threat of social scandal" in the Victorian upper-class which motivates her protective behaviour (Mackie 151).

Jack's social background proves to be no more than a hand-bag and for her "constitute[s] a violation of decorum in their vulgar *literalness*", since in her understanding she asked for his social, not his literal background (159). In this scene, Wilde discloses the flaws of the Victorian upper-class who are concerned with the wrong matters, namely "their greed, their cold-heartedness, their narrow-mindedness and their snobbery" (Degroisse 49), instead of a good and upright character. As established in chapter 2.1.3, ironic and witty remarks possess the quality of mitigating criticism and especially in this scene Wilde's wit uttered by the characters themselves "lightens the harshness of the criticism as his audience was also his target" (49).

When Jack asks what he can do to satisfy Lady Bracknell in order to be good enough for her daughter, she advises him on "produce at any rate one parent" (Wilde 20), while not caring about how he achieves this as long as the appearances are kept up and society does not have a reason to disapprove (Degroisse 46). This further reveals the hypocrisy and the irony in the behaviour of the upper class where the members dread giving society reasons to call them a liar, even if this is to be achieved through immoral behaviour such as openly lying, which Degroisse calls "a form of cynicism" (46).

The irony here lies further in that Lady Bracknell criticizes Jack for not being able to provide a respectable background, while she herself "had no fortune of any kind" (Wilde 51) – but that did not stop her from marrying wealthy Lord Bracknell. Wilde mocks Lady Bracknell's obsession with money as one would not assume that her social and financial disposition would be a legitimate reason to not marry someone with a higher financial background – quite the opposite. Lady Bracknell's obsession with money becomes evident when she interviews Cecily

as a prospective wife to her nephew, who only becomes attractive when she hears about her fortune (50). Lady Bracknell acknowledges, but regrets to say that they "live, […] in an age of surfaces" (51), yet is quite superficial herself. She furthermore deplores "the two weak points in our age" that "are its want of principle and its want of profile" (51), when in the next sentence she approves of the "distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile" (51). Concerning her earlier criticism of a want of principle, she herself can be seen as a good example of that. She strictly observes Victorian upper-class norms when it comes to a possible marriage between Gwendolen and Jack. She opposes a marriage between them based on his supposedly inferior family background. However, when she later argues in support of Algernon's wedding, her only concern is for his appearance:

> JACK: I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.
> LADY BRACKNELL: Upon what grounds may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?
> JACK: It pains me very much to have to speak to you frankly, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve of his moral character. I suspect him to be untruthful. *(ALGERNON and CECILY look at him in indignant amazement.)* (52)

Here, Lady Bracknell does not adhere to her own principles and thus reveals her hypocrisy.

Lady Bracknell's views are not only inconsistent when it comes to social status and marriage but also on education. Gwendolen's comments to Cecily can be read metaphorically as well as literally when talking about her mother who brought her up strict but also "short-sighted" (39). The fact that her upbringing was short-sighted could suggest that it was not founded on durable principles but only concerned with the immediate future. At the same time, being short-sighted suggests that her horizon is rather narrow – metaphorically – and read literally that she has a physical condition and requires glasses. These glasses can also be read as that she desires to adopt a new perspective or admits that she has her own certain way of looking at things.

4.1.3. Politeness and Decorum

Moreover, the social criticism can be observed in the way the play constructs questions of decorum. In his article "The Function of Decorum at the Present Time: Manners, Moral Language, and Modernity in an "Oscar Wilde Play"," Gregory Mackie examines Wilde's unique style of "pithy witticisms of aphoristic speech that artfully suggest an unexpected fluidity between the respective vocabularies of ethics and etiquette" (145) at a time when manners and morality were in constant rivalry and stylised dialogue conducted "the staging of decorum accomplishes more than an ironic mockery of the conventional moral shibboleths" (146).

This "staging of decorum" manifests itself in the quintessentially British tea-time scene between Cecily and Gwendolen where "all conventional attitudes are pushed to their hypocritical limits" (Degroisse 51). Upon arrival, Cecily and Gwendolen being complete strangers, Gwendolen immediately expresses fondness of Cecily just by learning her "sweet name" (Wilde 38). Wilde here mocks the superficiality of relations between acquaintances in the upper-class as they behave as if they know each other much better than they actually do. He furthermore criticises the quick judgement that the ladies are prone to, as they are fast with expressing their attachment and equally swift with expressing their hostility towards each other after having learned that they are both rivals for the same gentleman called Ernest.

Their superficiality is made evident in their behaviour after the revelation that they are both engaged to someone called Ernest, as they both take out their diaries – which contain more fiction than an account of their real life, which Gwendolen admits as important to "have something sensational to read in the train" (Wilde 40) – and fight over who was the first one who got engaged to Ernest instead of "being devastated by the duplicity of their lover" (Degroisse 53) which makes the situation highly ironic and absurd. During the tea-time scene, both ladies try to keep strictly to the protocol of politeness, even though the situation revealing such devastating news would allow for straying from the protocol. The hypocrisy lies in the contrast of their speech and behaviour as they accuse each other of the nastiest things while staying perfectly calm and collected. Only when Gwendolen accuses Cecily of having "entrapped Ernest into an engagement" (Wilde 41) , Cecily tells Gwendolen quite frankly, that "this is no time for wearing the shallow masks of manners" (Degroisse 54). Ironically, this is what the ladies have been doing all afternoon long and Wilde once again points out the hypocrisy of the upper-class. Cecily further explains that "when I see a spade I call it a spade",

what induces Gwendolen to the answer that she has “never seen a spade” (42). Degroisse interprets Cecily’s remark as elucidating her sincerity, whereas Gwendolen understands its literal meaning and thus satirizes Cecily’s identity as a country girl (Degroisse 54).

As established in chapter 2.1.3, a comic remark can hide or mitigate criticism, and in this case the subject of class conflict is clothed in Gwendolen’s satiric utterance. Mackie calls the ladies’ overly and superficial politeness at tea-time a “Wildean slippage between style and sincerity” (160). When the ladies become aware that they have been misled and decide on confronting Algernon and Jack with their deceitful behaviour, they are still hesitant to accept the truth, yet the “wonderful beauty of his answer” (47) seems to weigh heavier in that situation than the actual facts. Algernon’s eloquence and charm induce Gwendolen to declare that “in matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing” (47). The ladies have realised the scope of the deceit, yet they decide to close their eyes when confronted with the truth, intentionally hiding from it. Gwendolen’s statement becomes even more ironic, when regarding the assumption for her, in “grave matters” style is allowed to take precedence over sincerity, when in such matters usually sincerity is appreciated more wildly than superficial style.

Another instance in which decorum and superficial politeness are upheld is the proposal scene between Jack and Gwendolen:

> JACK: [Astounded.] Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.
> GWENDOLEN: I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet.
> Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.
> JACK: Well . . . may I propose to you now?
> GWENDOLEN:. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you. (Wilde 16)

Here, Gwendolen insists that Jack properly follows the protocol of a marriage proposal, even though she already exclaimed that she “passionately” (Wilde 15) loves him. This shows that even so intimate a scene as a proposal cannot overcome the barriers of politeness and decorum.

Similarly, Cecily constructs a detailed dating history in her diary both to be entertained by her sensational notes and also to make sure that her relationship with "Ernest" can live up to her expectations. She even admits that she had written letters to herself in his name:

> You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.
> […] The three you wrote me after I had broken of the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little. (Wilde 36).

Not only these letters but also the break-up are forged to legitimise their relationship in the eyes of society. When Algernon asks for her reasons for breaking off their faked engagement, she answers that "[i]t would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once" (Wilde 36/37).

All scenes above feature the female protagonists in seemingly private situations. Nonetheless, they still observe proper decorum, but, ironically turn the ideas of decorum on its head. In the tea ceremony, only their words, not however their actions, could be described as polite. In the engagement scenes, both women insist on their partners' adherence to decorum as before accepting their proposals. Thus, the text ridicules the concepts of modesty and decorum and constructs these social protocols as arbitrary and insincere. Decorum and etiquette are taken as the governing (really only) principles for all social life and are exaggerated to such an extent that their violation becomes hilarious (Mackie 160).

4.1.4. Wit and Intellectual Superiority

As stated in the Theory and Methodology chapter of this bachelor thesis, Wilde's play and his characters are often regarded as witty. Mackie considers this form of dialogue a "stylized formulae of wit" (146). In the previous chapters, I have already presented examples of wit and verbal humour. Many of these examples, as I have already observed in my linguistic analysis, can be found in both Jack's and Algernon's speeches. One very prominent example, especially through its central position in the resolution of the play is Jack's following statement: "Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?" (Wilde 58). This statement playfully

subverts the readers' expectations. Usually forgiveness is only necessary after someone has acted immorally or after he or she has hurt the other person. Here, however, Jack asks Gwendolen to forgive his truthfulness, a characteristic that is usually regarded to be a virtue and not a vice. This quotation proves Jack's quick-wittedness. Even though the revelations of the play's last scene would be difficult to overcome quickly, Jack does not lose his verbal humour even in supposedly chaotic situations.

It is not surprising that Jack, whose duplicity has already been established in the very first scene and whom Degroisse considers a "walking, breathing paradox" (42), should be one of the characters whose utterances can be considered as witty. However, also the female characters partake of the verbal duels in this play. Following, I shall engage with two female examples that can be considered as witty.

When Cecily discusses literature with her teacher, the following dialogue takes place:

> MISS PRISM: Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.
> CECILY: Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.
> MISS PRISM: The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means. (Wilde 25/26)

Here, Cecily's remark concerning the happy endings of novels can be considered as witty. By stating that happy endin/gs depress her, she combines two supposedly contrary concepts in one sentence and challenges the conventions of poetic justice that reward 'good' characters (for example with a marriage) and punishes 'bad' characters wit death or financial ruin (Nünning 193). If one regards the plot of the drama at hand, this text suggests that poetic justice is not applicable in all circumstances. In Wilde's play, nearly all characters conform to the conventions of comedy and are rewarded with a marriage, independent from the characters' morality during the earlier scenes.

Similar to Cecily, Gwendolen displays intelligence through verbal humour in the play. When "Ernest" (Jack) proposes to her she states that

> Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. (Wilde 22/23)

She thus uses a common criticism, namely that young people do not respect their parents enough, and reverses it.

In all of these witty statements, the characters do not necessarily speak literal truths. Instead, they come up with intelligent answers or paradoxical statements that demonstrate that "saying the truth" as in Jack's statement, might not be as important as society expects.

In this chapter, I have shown how the concepts of earnestness, morality, politeness and truthfulness are ridiculed throughout *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In the instances above, I have concentrated mainly on the upper-class protagonists. In the subsequent chapter, I will show that the lack of sincerity and clarity does not only occur in the protagonists' utterances.

4.2. Morality, Class and Gender

The Victorian society, as constructed in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, does not feature a high range of characters. Whereas the protagonists live off their land and inherited wealth without the need to work, only few characters are part of the middle or lower classes. The play features two servant characters (Lane and Merriman), the unmarried Miss Prism, who is employed in the position of governess and the rector Dr. Chasuble.

In Victorian Britain, the social, political and economic developments of the early nineteenth-century and the forming of new identities led to the emergence of a class structure. From that point onward, class consciousness and class struggle were a key feature of the society. Yet, the hierarchic structures remained more present than ever, the people and politicians being equally aware of the construct and supporting it, regarding it as 'viable', living accordingly and thus based their superiority on that principle (Cannadine 104). These constructions of superiority and inferiority occur throughout the whole play. As already stated in the linguistic analysis, Lane is clearly aware of his inferior position and performs his obedience accordingly (Wilde 5). In the same scene, he voluntarily takes the blame for the eaten sandwiches to uphold his master's pretence of hospitality (Wilde 13). Contrary to that, Cecily frequently uses her intellectual and societal superiority to manipulate her teacher Miss Prism, who, as a governess, would usually be of genteel origin but still financially inferior to her pupil.

Clearly, the middle- and lower-class characters behave according to their class. Thus, they are not allowed to verbally contradict their superiors too much. Nonetheless, all of Wilde's

characters partake in the play's verbal humour and irony. As already mentioned in chapter 3.1., Lane's utterances flout the Gricean maxims making him statements not literally true. Later on, Lane again uses a humorous statement that also emphasises his inferiority. Talking about marriage, he claims

> LANE: I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.
> ALGERNON: [*Languidly*.] I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.
> LANE: No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself. (Wilde 6)

This dialogue proves both Lane's verbal humour, by claiming that being married once should be considered inexperienced – while for others this is considered an ideal state - but also his inferiority, since Algernon does neither show interest in his family life nor in his humour.

With regard to Dr. Chasuble, verbal humour is characterised as being rather accidental than witty. Talking to Cecily, he states:

> […] Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [*Miss Prism glares*.] I spoke metaphorically.--My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr.Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet? (Wilde 26)

Here, his explanation for his metaphor appears completely nonsensical. Instead, bees are commonly for a metaphorical description of sexual intercourse. So, his attempt to make his earlier statement appear less sexual fails, showing that he is not as witty as the upper-class characters. He is still, however, constructed as insincere. While earlier proclaiming that he is a celibate (Wilde 54), later, he agrees to marry Miss Prism (Wilde 58).

Therefore, it has become clear that not only aristocratic characters, but all characters in this play frequently subvert the ideals of sincerity and morality. In the cases of the lower-class characters, irony works on two levels. On the one hand, other characters use irony against them in order to demonstrate their superiority (as with Miss Prism and Cecily). On the other hand, they themselves use irony, paradoxes and witticism and hence demonstrate that, even for them, "sincerity" is not the vital thing. Even Algernon, whose hypocrisy and insincerity I have noted earlier, regards Lane's morality as "somewhat lax", stating that "Really, if the lower orders

don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility" (Wilde 6).

5. Conclusion

Wilde's comedy is still nowadays often quoted because it contains numerous witticisms that still have relevance today, but the depth of his ironic remarks becomes only evident upon further analysis. The dualistic theme that is apparent on all levels of the play does not only manifest itself in the obvious paradoxical behaviour of the characters but is also illustrated in the language they speak – irony as a language of duplicity. This intensifies the revelation of the hypocrisy prevailing in the spheres of the Victorian upper-class. Wilde playfully portrays social criticism in humorous epigrams so that there is room left for interpretation on both sides, as the target of his criticism were his audience and readers.

In the introduction of this thesis I have contended that Wilde's play highlights the double standards and double moral of the upper-class Victorian society by employing stereotypical characters who contradict themselves constantly in speech and action. Oscar Wilde's most popular comedy is not simply humorous because of its overblown characters who manage to get themselves in irrational situations framed by an unlikely plot, but has much greater humorous relevance and validity. A main characteristic lies in the character's artificial and constructed speech that makes them constantly utter paradoxical remarks so that the audience or reader can hardly take them seriously and can never be sure on which side of the irony the actual truth lies. The characters make a statement but due to their use of irony they intend to say something else and in the course of the plot it turns out that their first – intendedly untruthful and immoral – statement was true the whole time.

Wilde manages to artfully connect all the dots and pull all plot strings and linguistic strings together, yet one of the points of criticism is that he does not succeed in finding an appropriate solution for Algernon who does not turn into an Ernest in the end. Another objection is that Wilde fails to offer an adequate alternative for the issues he criticises, such as personal identity, the duplicity and interchangeability of Victorian morals, the disparity between speech and action. This insincerity can be seen not only in the upper classes but also among the servants of the play. The characters are not faced with any misfortune resulting from their immoral behaviour, quite the opposite, as Jack's problematic origin is eventually resolved, he turns into

the Ernest society so strongly wished him to be and all the prospective couples are finally allowed to marry each other. Moreover, as I have shown in my analysis; the play's verbal humour fulfils other functions than the portrayal of insincerity. It is used to control emotions; to disguise aggressions and to construct inferiority and superiority relations.

This thesis's title is one of the most famous epigrams of the play at hand, since I have shown in my analysis that style in language is valued much more highly in the Victorian upper-class than sincerity in character. Sophisticated speech can hide indecorous behaviour as it produces a false impression, which is exactly the intended effect. The "shallow mask of manners" is brittle, yet indispensible as the ground for a society that wants to be deceited for the purpose of keeping up appearances.

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06.10.2019

Erstgutachten zur Bachelorarbeit von Frau Name (Matr.-Nr.) zum Thema „‘Style, not sincerity is the vital thing!‘ – Irony and Wit in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)“

Die Verfasserin hat zum Abschluss ihres Studiums eine englischsprachige Bachelorarbeit zum Thema „‘Style, not sincerity is the vital thing!‘ – Irony and Wit in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)“ vorgelegt, die die Anforderungen ausgesprochen gut erfüllt. Die Lektüre ist kurzweilig, was sowohl den passend zitierten Sequenzen aus Wildes Stück als auch der klaren Interpretation der Verf. zu danken ist.

Wie es der Titel ihrer schlüssig gegliederten Arbeit ankündigt, untersucht die Verf. die Sprachgebung dieses Klassikers der Weltliteratur. Sie beschreibt zunächst linguistisch, wie Wildes Drama Komik erzeugt und erklärt dann literaturwissenschaftlich die außersprachlichen Funktionen der ästhetischen Mittel. Diese Kombination aus den anglistischen Teildisziplinen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft wird von den Studierenden leider sehr selten ausprobiert und ist daher umso positiver hervorzuheben. Besonders angebracht ist hier der Vergleich zwischen beiden, bei dem die Verf. die Leistungen und Grenzen der Linguistik betrachtet, um die Rolle der Literaturwissenschaft für ihre Arbeit zu bestimmen (16).

Die zielführende **Introduction** stellt zwei Thesen vor, die die Verf. im Weiteren sehr gut nachvollziehbar belegt. Der ersten These zufolge dienen die Ironie sowie ihr verwandte Techniken der Erzeugung von logischen Inkongruenzen („wit“, Sarkasmus, Paradox) dazu, die bürgerliche Doppelmoral vor allem der viktorianischen Oberklasse zu entlarven (2). Die zweite These ergänzt dies um eine wichtige sozialhistorische Dimension: „I will show how irony in *The Importance of Being Earnest* can be read as a means of constructing and perpetuating class hierarchies.” (2) Wenn man auf diesem hohen Niveau überhaupt von einer Schwäche der Arbeit sprechen mag, dann zeigt sie sich zu Beginn von Kapitel 4.2., wo die Verf. in nur zwei Sätzen historisch verkürzend und inkorrekt die Entstehung sozialer Klassen erwähnt und dann nach einem Verweis auf Cannadine sich wieder dem Stück zuwendet (28). Dies wird aufgewogen durch das gute Abstraktionsniveau der Arbeit, das vor allem bei der Übertragung der linguistischen Konzepte auf das Drama sichtbar wird.

Im **2. Kapitel** stellt die Verf. kurz und bündig ihre Zugänge vor und definiert ihre tragenden Konzepte aus der Linguistik, wo sie sich zum einen auf Paul Grice und

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zum anderen auf Dews/Kaplan/Winner konzentriert. Die literaturwissenschaftlichen Definitionen von Ironie sowie weitere Fachbegriffe entnimmt sie aus Lehrbüchern und Nachschlagewerken. Das Unterkapitel 2.3. zur Literaturtheorie befasst sich knapp mit dem Strukturalismus und dem *Cultural Materialism*, sollte aber statt des nicht verwendeten *Cultural Materialism* unbedingt den *New Historicism* enthalten, der zwei Mal explizit bemüht (2, 9) und sehr passend in seiner strukturellen Neuerung gewürdigt wird (9f).
Die beiden großen **Kapitel 3** (10-16) **und 4** (16-30) widmen sich der linguistischen bzw. der literaturwissenschaftlichen Analyse und Interpretation des Dramas. Die Verf. verwendet alle Fachbergriffe korrekt und gewinnbringend und wendet zunächst die *Gricean Maxims* auf sieben gut ausgewählte Textstellen an, an denen sie zeigt, wie Komik durch das *flouting of maxims* entsteht. Nach einer Zwischenzusammenfassung benennt sie die sozialen Funktionen von Ironie (3.2.), auf die sie auch im **4. Kapitel** immer wieder verweist (19, 22, 25) und die sie in einem Fall um einen neuen Aspekt ergänzt (28f). So bleiben die bis dahin gewonnenen Einsichten den Lesern gut in Erinnerung und der Text erscheint als einheitliches Ganzes. Die Verf. präsentiert sehr gute und überzeugende Beobachtungen, wie z.B. zur Interpretation des Titels und des Untertitels von Wildes Stück (17f) sowie zur Funktion der doppeldeutigen Sprache für die Darstellung der bürgerlichen Doppelmoral (20ff). Sie greift sehr ausführlich auf ihre gut ausgewählte Sekundärliteratur zurück (z.B. 24ff), ohne jedoch die Gelegenheit zur kritischen Auseinandersetzung damit zu nutzen.
Die **Conclusion** fasst die guten Ergebnisse der Arbeit treffend zusammen, verweist auf Leerstellen im Stück und kommt schließlich auch noch einmal auf das Titelzitat zu sprechen (25, 31), was die Arbeit schön abrundet.

Die Arbeit ist sauber gestaltet, hätte jedoch noch gründlicher Korrektur gelesen werden sollen, denn sie enthält orthografische Fehler (z.B. ausgelassene Worte, 12, 14, 18, 29 bzw. überzählige Worte, 11) sowie Grammatikfehler (Präpositionen, Zeitformen, Kongruenz, z.B. 22, 24, 30). Das Englische ist idiomatisch und liest sich sehr flüssig, denn die Verf. bewegt sich sicher im gehobenen akademischen Register.
Die Bibliographie enthält ausreichend einschlägige Literatur und entspricht den Vorgaben des MLA Stylesheet. Gillespie muss als eigenständiger Beitrag aufgeführt werden, weil er auf S. 8 zitiert wird.

Die Arbeit wird mit der Gesamtnote **1,7 (gut)** bewertet.

Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Leibniz Universität Hannover

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Datum der Abgabe: xx.xx.xxxx

Bachelorarbeit

Constructions of Femininity in Alice Munro's Bildungsroman

Lives of Girls and Women (1971)

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Table of contents

1. Introduction

In 1971, a year in which Second Wave feminism sought to expose patriarchal structures on the North American continent (Gutjahr 68), the Canadian author Alice Munro published her work *Lives of Girls and Women*. While considered a collection of short stories among some literates, this work is usually referred to as a Bildungsroman, as it contains distinctive features of the Bildungsroman genre. Presumably, the most obvious characteristic in *Lives of Girls and Women* is that the story is built around a young protagonist, as youth is "both a necessary and sufficient definition" of Bildungsroman protagonists (Moretti 4). However, as this paper takes a structuralist approach to the construction of femininity in Munro's work, a more detailed, multifaceted examination of the Bildungsroman genre will be needed. This is because structuralism in literature states that an individual text "cannot be understood in isolation" but only in relation to its superordinate structure (Barry, 2017, 40). Central conventions of the Bildungsroman include the focus on the protagonists "interiority" (Moretti 4), a weighing of the protagonist's ambitions and peer's norms (Jacobs 63 f.) as well as a focus on social mobility processes and character development. At the beginning of the story, Bildungsroman protagonists are distinctively introduced as naive characters (Swales 98). For instance they can be introduced as children with a reduced understanding of superordinate structures that cause problems in their literary world. In the further course of the story, Bildungsroman protagonists steadily enhance their understanding of these structures. Consequently, their naivety decreases gradually. The decrease of naivety is distinctively accompanied by an individual learning process, during which the protagonists learn from their own committed mistakes (Jacobs 15). At the end of the Bildungsroman, protagonists have acquired maturity, which is defined as a lucid notion of personal limitations that they cannot overcome, but which do not prevent them from leading a fulfilling life (Jacobs 66). The theory chapter will discuss and clarify further conventions of the Bildungsroman genre.

The aim of this paper will be to analyse contrasts and parallels between Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* and the central conventions of the Bildungsroman genre. The analysis will focus on the role of focalization, which is characteristically internal in *Lives of Girls and Women*, and on the representation of the main protagonist Del's character development.

The contrast chapter, on the other hand, will focus on social mobility, which is rather a marginal phenomenon that concerns only a minority of main characters in the story. Furthermore, the contrast chapter will examine, if Del is to acquire maturity at the end of the story, or not. As the installation of a female protagonist in the era of Second Wave feminism suggests a message about gender roles, a further focus will be put on the prevailing construction of female and male character construction in Munro's work. The entirety of these contrasts and parallels suggests that Munro purposefully chose the Bildungsroman genre in order to construct an image of middle-class femininity in the Canadian 1970s.

2. Theory and Method

2.1 Historical outline and the conventions of the Bildungsroman

The Bildungsroman is a sub-genre of the realistic novel. It arose at the end of the 18th century after the publication of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-1796), which is considered the first realization of the Bildungsroman (Abrams 192f.). In the course of the 19th century, Goethe's work was established as the basic form of the genre, prompting its heyday. Central features of the Bildungsroman genre are the focus on the protagonist's interiority, prominently the representation of inner dissatisfaction, as well as a focus on social mobility (Moretti 4f). The aspect of social mobility gained relevance for the genre, as the Industrial Revolution[1] brought a change to society through the exponential growth of cities in Western Europe. Young men of the working class did no longer overtake their father's work, but increasingly tried to make their livings in towns, which usually ended in their own exploitation (Hobsbawm 69). In order to represent the process of social mobility, the protagonist's youth is an essential feature of the Bildungsroman genre (Moretti 4). Additionally, the protagonists share similar personal development patterns: At the beginning of the story, protagonists start as naive characters, which gradually learn from their mistakes through self-reflection. In the main part of the story, the protagonist seeks to find a compromise between personal ambitions and the sobering realities of the real world (Swales 98). Gradually, the protagonists learn from mistakes and solidify their location in society.

[1] Time frame of the Industrial Revolution: 1780 – 1840 (Hobsbawm 34)

At the end of the Bildungsroman, the protagonist has eventually acquired maturity, a lucid notion of the personal limitations that he cannot overcome, which, however, does not prevent her or him from leading a fulfilling life (Jacobs 66). Due to patriarchal conventions, young women were seldom chosen as Bildungsroman protagonists until the second half of the 20th century (Gutjahr 62). Therefore it was only in the 1960s, that the female Bildungsroman started to become extensively acknowledged. This process was supported by Second-Wave-Feminism,which prompted gender emancipation and emphasized the necessity of female self-exploration (Gutjahr 69). Once the emancipatory revolution started to repress patriarchal conventions, female protagonists like Del in *Lives of Girls and Women* appeared more frequently in Bildungsroman works.

2.2 Representation of interiority in narrative texts based on Toolan (2001)

Concerning the representation of character discourse, Toolan distinguishes between eleven "modes of speech and thought representation" (119). While five of these modes refer to the classification of speech situations between characters, six modes concern the classification of thoughts and interior perceptions in narrative texts (Toolan 122). In his elaboration, a basic distinction is made between thought expressions that occur either with or without "a narrator's framing clause", while expressions unbound to these clauses belong to the group of "free" modes (Toolan 121). In fact, only two of the six modes for the representation of character thoughts are not affected by the distinction of free and framed modes. These modes are the "Stream of Consciousness" and the "Narrative Report of Thought Acts" (NRTA) (Toolan 122). Both of these concepts are frequently chosen for the analysis of the presentation of consciousness in narrative texts, while the latter term is usually referred to as "psycho-narration" (Nünning 2014). The other four modes for the representation of character thoughts, "Direct Thoughts (DT), Free Direct Thoughts (FDT), Indirect Thoughts (IT) and Free Indirect Thoughts (FIT)" (122), are all affected by Toolan's distinction of free and framed modes. Toolan implies that each of these six modes of thought representation implies a smaller or bigger degree of the fictive narrator's "alignment" with the values and perceptions given to the character of the narrative text (135). Accordingly, the smallest degree of alignment between narrator and character referring to the presentation of the characters' interiority is associated with NRTA.

This mode which distinguishes itself from the other modes through the simplifying summary of longer thought processes (Toolan 122). Slightly more alignment between narrator and character is attributed to the mode of Indirect Thoughts; a form in which the extradiegetic narrator presents the thoughts of the characters in his or hers own words using a superordinate framing clause (Toolan 130). Leech and Short suggest that this mode is the neutral "norm" chosen for the report of the thoughts of a different person (1981: 344). Following this view, NRTA can already be seen as a deviation from the norm and as a narrative technique, by which the narrator attempts to increase distance from the character. Distance between character and narrator, on the other hand, unfolds possibilities for the usage of ironical comments (Toolan 138). On the other side of the "Thought-mode continuum" (Toolan 138), the mode of "Free Indirect Thoughts" is set.

FIT differs from IT in so far that framing clauses neither precede nor follow the character thoughts. However, in FIT the thoughts are also formulated by the words of the narrator. Even more alignment between narrator and character is expressed by DT mode (139). This mode categorizes text passages that are accompanied by superordinate framing clauses. In contrast to IT, however, DT passages use the words of the intradiegetic characters in order to present their thoughts directly to the reader (Toolan 125). FDT mode, on the other hand, refers to text passages that use the characters' words in order to represent their thoughts, but lack superordinate framing clauses (Toolan 122). In this mode, the discernible narrator already receded almost utterly to the background, bringing the character and his perceptions to the fore. According to Toolan, text passages of FDT mode thereby represent the utmost alignment of the narrator to the values of his character (135). Although not integrated in the "Thought-mode-continuum", Toolan states that the stream-of- consciousness mode is set on the same level as FDT (138f.). As the stream-of-consciousness is, however, a "highly mimetic" technique for the presentation of interior perceptions (Nünning125), this mode will be treated as the most extreme form of character-narrator alignment in the analysis chapter.

2.3 Word types – Activity verbs and mental verbs

Linguists distinguish different verb domains depending on the semantic functions of words. Apart from linguist investigation, this distinction is also of use for the analysis of literary texts.

The analysis of verb types is especially useful for narrative texts in which the degree of internal and external focalization varies. This is because it can be assumed that text passages with external focalization contain a larger number of activity verbs, as the narrator will use these verbs to describe outwardly perceivable events. According to Biber et al., activity verbs "primarily denote actions and events […] associated with choice" (2000, 361). By implication, text passages with predominant internal focalization are assumed to contain a larger amount of perception verbs, so-called mental verbs. In contrast to activity verbs, mental verbs "do not involve physical action", but express both "cognitive meanings and emotional meanings" (Biber et al. 2000, 362). However, while most verbs do have a core meaning that suggests an assignment to a certain verb class, there are also verbs that cannot be unambiguously assorted to either verb group. "For example, the verbs *hesitate*, *pretend*, *find* and *resist* can be regarded as both activity verbs and mental verbs" (Biber et al. 2000, 361) and will therefore be excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, for the morphemes *left* (past form of *leave* and directive indication) and *like* (present form and comparative article), a closer semantic analysis for the usage was made. Consequently, only the verb forms were considered for the analysis in chapter three. The Appendices section of this work offers an overview over the quantitative appearance of verb types in all eight chapters of *Lives of Girls and Women*.

3. Parallels and Contrasts: *Lives of Girls and Women* and Bildungsroman conventions

3.1 Parallels

3.1.1 Functions of proleptic comments by the fictive narrator Del Jordan

In *Lives of Girls and Women*, internal focalization is fixed. Interior processes presented to the reader are therefore restricted to the perspective of the main protagonist Del Jordan. Only her thoughts, emotions and perceptions are accessible to the reader. As self-reflection is an important convention of the Bildungsroman genre (Jacobs 16), extradiegetic comments on the same character were chosen as part of this paper's structuralist analysis.

Concerning the protagonist Del Jordan in *Lives of Girls and Women*, a basic distinction needs to be made. On the one hand, Del appears as a character who is involved in the action of the story and, on the other hand, Del Jordan is also the extradiegetic narrator of the story who is located outside of the narrated world.

In Nünning's communication model for narrative texts (104), the character Del is located on the second level of intratextual communication, while the narrator Del is located on the first level of intratextual communication[2]. As the narrator is located outside of the world of the characters, Del Jordan therefore takes the role of an extradiegetic narrator.

Generally, the story is narrated in a chronological way. In some parts of the story, however, the extradiegetic narrator uses proleptic comments in order to predict future events to the reader. These comments contain information the character Del Jordan is not aware of at the moment of the presented scene. Nevertheless, this information can be presented to the reader. This is because the extradiegetic narrator, the adult Del Jordan, has already acquired it in the meantime between her experiences in her youth and the time of her narration. The functions of these proleptic comments differ, depending on the addressee they refer to.

A basic distinction can be made between comments that refer to the characterization of internal and external subjects or objects. An example of a proleptic comment applied to external characterization can be found in the first chapter "The Flats Road". In this chapter, the fictive narrator Del reveals to the reader that her mother would "later on […] find out that she [does] not belong to Jubilee", even though she temporarily attempts to integrate into this city. However, this piece of information can only be given to the reader, as the extradiegetic Del, the fictive narrator, has learned about the difficulties her mother personally faces in Jubilee in the meantime. Characteristically, proleptic comments in contexts of external characterization are made about characters Del encounters in the course of *Lives of Girls and Women*.

Concerning internal comments, in which Del evaluates the development of her former self, two exemplary text can be found in the fourth chapter "Age of Faith" and in the epilogue chapter "Epilogue: The Photographer". In the first example, Del describes how her naive view on burglars, which is still valid at this part of the story, would change as she would "beg[i]n to doubt of the existence of burglars or at least that they could operate in this [organized] manner (Munro 103) "later on".

[2] Cf. Fig. 2 "A Communication Model for *Lives of Girls and Women* based on Nünning (104 [edited])"in the Appendices

This is an example of internal self-characterization. In all proleptic comments however, the extradiegetic perspective only emerges shortly and the perception of intradiegetic Del is already reassumed seven lines after this comment, when the narrating Del changes the topic and starts to recount the character Del's attitude towards religion. Functionally, this comment suggests a development of the character Del, who is getting rid of her naive assumptions. In the epilogue chapter, the extradiegetic Del describes her growing mistrust concerning her mother's views on life in Jubilee in a later stage of her life. While she is at first willing to believe that the amounts of suicides in Jubilee exceed average figures, the narrator reveals that her belief changed in a later stage of her life (Munro 265). In fact, proleptic comments describing a development of intradiegetic Del often revolve around attitudes of her mother Ada. This becomes especially clear in the chapter "Princess Ida", which sets a discernible focus on Ada and, through internal focalization, Del's thoughts about her. Thereby extradiegetic self-descriptions from extradiegetic Del, on the one hand, serve to clarify character development in the form of maturing processes, and, on the other hand, to provide belated criticism of intradiegetic Del's acquaintances.

In the latter chapters of *Lives of Girls and Women*, extradiegetic comments on other characters get fewer as internal focalization of the character Del becomes a more central element. Furthermore, proleptic comments are made about historical events, as in the chapter "Princess Ida": In that chapter, the extradiegetic Del remarks that, while her mother Ada is trying to earn money by selling encyclopaedias to farmers, "[t]he [Second World] [W]ar was still on then" (Munro 73), implying that it would end rather soon. There are various reasons for extradiegetic comments by the fictive narrator. The first possibility is to offer contextual background information to the reader. The comment about the war, for instance, stresses the difficult requirements, Ada was made to face during her distribution of encyclopaedias. This comment suggests that farmers were more concerned about their own survival, and were probably not willing to spend their money on education. Likewise, this comment also suggests that the extradiegetic Del is made to take a critical perspective on her mother's idea, to sell encyclopaedias to farmers in the countryside. This point describes a second use of extradiegetic comments.

They can characterize figures that appear in the story in a direct or indirect way. To sum it up, extradiegetic comments on other characters serve to provide the reader with additional contextual background information and prospects of further character development of the intradiegetic Del's future.

3.1.2 Level of communication and the role of internal focalization

Internal focalization is an important component of the narrative situation in *Lives of Girls and Women*. In the case of *Lives of Girls and Women*, internal focalization is fixed. The reader can only be certain of Del's emotions; no other character's perceptions are made objectively available to the reader. Generally, internal focalization is a concept that is compatible with a focus on interiority, which is a basic convention of the Bildungsroman genre. This is because internal focalization sets a focus on the character's inner perceptions, emotions and motives in contrast to external focalization, which is restricted to the description of outwardly observable action (Genette 121).

During the entire course of the story, the Del Jordan serves as the focalizer of the story. Even episodes that describe background development of other characters, like the text passage about the childhood of Del's mother Ada in the third chapter "Princess Ida" (Munro 83-91), are never objectively presented, but always derive from the knowledge of Del Jordan. For the analysis of the variation between internal and external focalization, appearance of activity verbs and mental verbs in the all eight chapters was examined and compared. In order to get a representative result, the analysis included those ten activity and mental verbs that, statistically, appear most frequently in fiction texts[3]. Information about frequency of activity verbs (367f.) and mental verbs (368f.) was taken from Biber et al. (2000). Moreover, as *Lives of Girls and Women* is told through an extradiegetic narrator, each verb's past tense form was analysed. In order to include negation constructions, the analysis was later extended by present form verbs. A first important result of the study is that, according to the measurement, internal and external focalization varies within *Lives of Girls and Women*. While in all chapters, activity verbs are more frequent to be found than mental verbs, the ratio of activity verbs in comparison to mental verbs differs within the chapters of the literary work.

[3] cf. Figure 4 "Appearance of activity verbs and mental verbs in the chapters of *Lives of Girls and Women*"

The predominance of activity verbs does not, however, suggest an unusually high degree of external focalization in *Lives of Girls and Women*. Actually, appearance of activity and mental verbs in the average fiction work, regardless of fiction genre, is considerably higher than in *Lives of Girls and Women*. Throughout Munro's work, activity verbs appear 1.25 times as often as mental verbs. As activity verbs in the average fiction work appear approximately 2.16 times as often as mental verbs (Biber et al. 366) however, it can be deduced that internal focalization, measured by verb types, plays a significantly higher role in *Lives of Girls and Women* than in the average fiction work. The biggest difference concerning the ratio of activity and mental verbs thereby lays between the chapters "The Flats Road" and "Princess Ida". While in the chapter "The Flats Road", activity verbs appear 1.53 times as often as mental verbs, activity verbs appear only 1.08 times more than mental verbs in "Princess Ida". Apart from the first chapter, external focalization is considerably higher in the fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies" (1.43 activity verbs per 1 mental verb). On the other hand, chapter four "Age of Faith" (ratio of 1.27), chapter six "Lives of Girls and Women" (ratio of 1.23), chapter two "Heirs of the Living Body" (ratio of 1.22) and chapter seven "Baptizing" (ratio of 1.16) can be said to be located in the middle range between external and internal focalization. Additionally to "Princess Ida", chapter eight "Epilogue: The Photographer" has characteristically dominant internal focalization (ratio of 1.1). In the following text, possible reasons for the different ratio of internal and external focalization in the four most extreme chapters will be discussed.

The first chapter "The Flats Road" (ratio of 1.53) and the fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies" (ratio of 1.43) contain many verbs that suggest a predominant external focalization. "The Flats Road" is a chapter that introduces the story protagonist Del Jordan as a young girl, a child of about ten years of age.Concerning the discourse of this chapter, a basic difference to the following chapters is the rather uncritical, descriptive narrator. Many issues are addressed in a simplified, child-like way. For example, Del has a childish-possessive notion of the lake near her Uncle Bill's house, describing it as "ours" (Munro 4). Moreover, the child-like narrator also becomes apparent through the description of activities.

These activities include Del's and her brother Owen's childish game to "name off things" their uncle has in his house (Munro 6) or by the usage of children's language words, like "spy-bugger" (Munro 21). Furthermore, a structural difference to the following chapters consists of Del's presented attitude towards her mother. In this chapter Del primarily describes the externally visible behaviour of Ada. In contrast to the other seven chapters, an embellished image of Del's mother is presented to the reader. Among other comments, the narrator in this chapter even attests "cheerful energy" (Munro 13) to Del's mother, a notion that will be contrasted in the following chapters.

Another chapter with an apparently high degree of external focalization is the fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies". Substantially, this chapter describes Del's experiences in school during her preparation for the school musical "The Pied Piper". While her mother is rather a marginal character in this chapter, Del's best friend Naomi is introduced as a character with increasing influence on Del's perspective on the world. The chapter's central topics are a school operetta that Del wants to participate in and the description of her teacher Elinor Farris. On the deeper level, "Changes and Ceremonies" is different from other chapters in so far that it draws a rather optimistic picture of the pubescent Del. By coincidence, for example, Del manages to get a part in the school operetta "The Pied Piper". At this point of the story, this is very important to her, as she is desperately trying to be different from those girls "who would never under any circumstances been chosen at all" (Munro 136f.) for the play, mainly due to outward appearance. The duration between the moment when Del hears that she will allegedly not have a part in the play until the moment when her teacher Miss Farris changes her mind, is rather short concerning both, story time (one day) and discourse time (Munro 139-141). Dissatisfaction, frequently mediated through internal focalization, is therefore reduced in "Changes and Ceremonies" Another contrast to other chapters, which becomes especially clear in comparison to the following chapter "Lives of Girls and Women", is the representation of the concept of love.

Generally, in "Changes and Ceremonies" a rather romantic image of love is conveyed. Del is confronted with her first crush Frank Wales, an "unselfconscious" boy who plays the role of "Pied Piper" in the operetta (Munro 138).

In the course of the chapter, the narrating Del frequently swarms of Frank Wales and indulges in day dreams about him (Munro 149). When Frank Wales is about to ask Del to go out with him at the end of the chapter, however, Del is gratified once he does not do so, as she is afraid to be taken out of her romantic dreams (Munro 148 f., 152f). A metaphoric element for the romantic undertone in "Changes and Ceremonies" is the image of snow, which is described frequently in the chapter (Munro 133, 136, 140, 145, 147, 149, 153) until "spring reveal[s] the [sobering] ordinary geography of the place" (Munro 154) at the end of the chapter. The retreat of winter, thereby symbolizes a change of Del's notion of love, which is to be become more corporal and less naive in the following chapter "Lives of Girls and Women".

In contrast to the chapters discussed before, the third chapter "Princess Ida" and the eighth chapter "Epilogue: The Photographer" have a word type ratio that suggests internal focalization. Actually, "Princess Ida" was found out to be the chapter in which internal focalization is strongest as activity verbs only appear 1.08 times as often as mental verbs. Structurally, "Princess Ida" sets a clear focus on Del's mother Ada. This focus already becomes clear from the title of the chapter, as Princess Ida is the nom de plume Ada uses when she writes letters to the local newspaper (Munro 90f.). In literary history, Princess Ida is a character, which is connected to the emancipation of women and especially women's education. The figure was introduced by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem "The Princess", which was published in 1847 in Victorian England. Tennyson's poem addresses gender emancipation and the need of women's education in a humorous, but also in a critical way with reference to a serious background (Schmidt 101). Later, however, the character of Princess Ida was readopted in Gilbert's *Princess Ida,* an opera play which ridicules women's strive for emancipation and education. Under consideration of this, the choice of this nom de plume indicates both, the social role Ada imposes on herself as well as the role the fictive narrator Del Jordan imposes to Ada. It can be assumed that Ada chose the pseudonym "Princess Ida" in order to emphasize her role as an advocate for women rights.

On the other hand, this name also constructs the role Ada is ascribed by the narrator, as it is an allusion to the hard time Ada has in Jubilee, where she fails to integrate and gradually becomes an outsider. The critical view on her stems not exclusively from the inhabitants of Jubilee, but is shared by her own daughter as well. Apparently, the chapter's focus on Ada through the perspective of Del Jordan is also a very important reason for the high degree of internal focalization. A central finding in this context is that Del's critical comments are usually presented to the reader, when Ada assumes her role of "Princess Ida". Concerning Ada's activity, to sell encyclopaedias to famers Del describes how she feels the "weight of her mother's eccentricities" (Munro 72) or how uneasy she feels when her mother tries to make Del a part of her work (Munro 75f.). The same critical point of view is assumed by Del when her mother comes to Del's school in order to talk about her encyclopaedias and Del states that she "could not bear anything about her" (Munro 90) anymore. On the other hand, the extradiegetic narrator Del also creates another side of Ada by presenting the struggles that her mother had to face in her childhood, when she was neglected by her "religious[ly] fanatic" mother (Munro 84) and when she was harassed by her brother Bill (Munro 86).

Even When Bill and his wife Nile later visit Ada and Del, Del mainly stands by her mother, as her critical comments switch to Bill. A deviation from this is only discernible when Ada readopts her role as "Princess Ida", supporting women's education. When Ada tells her brother how she dearly she had possessed theses encyclopaedias as a child, Del indicates her annoyance by stating that this must have been the "fiftieth time" (Munro 98) her mother has said so. Concerning her uncle Bill, Del criticizes his arrogant, self-possessive by presenting him as an unremitting who is not responding to the comments of her sister Ada and even his wife Nile.

The last chapter in Lives of Girls and Women "Epilogue: The Photographer" was found to contain the second highest degree of internal focalization, with a slight predominance of activity verbs that appear 1.1 times as often as mental verbs.

The chapter is set in an unspecified time after the main story and Del has decided to write a novel about a case of suicide, committed by Marion Sheriff, an inhabitant of Jubilee. Del has made the names of Jubilee's inhabitants unfamiliar in the novel. Generally, Del's ideas for her novel strongly resemble a caricature. For example, Del describes the inhabitants as either "very thin" or "fat as bubbles" (Munro 270). Possibly, Del seeks to take revenge on the inhabitants of Jubilee for her disappointing experiences in Jubilee and for her failed advent in this city. In order to express her inner dissatisfaction, Del flees into a world of her one, her thoughts. The same strategy can be observed at the very end of the chapter, when internal focalization shows, the real emotions has about Bobby Sheriff, who invites her for a piece of cake. Symptomatic for Del's inner dissatisfaction at the end of *Lives of Girls and Women* are her fatalistic and bitter final words "'Yes', I said, instead of Thank You" (Munro 277).

The analysis on variation of focalization suggests that internal focalization is used in order to demonstrate the inner dissatisfaction of the protagonist, which is a central convention of the Bildungsroman. Critical comments by Del mainly focus on Del's mother, especially when she assumes the role of "Princess Ida", a role Del is determinedly defying. External focalization, on the other hand, was found to be strongest in chapters, in which the narrative Del represents the intradiegetic Del as naive.

3.1.3 The thought-mode-continuum – Evidence for Del's character development

The narrative situation in literary texts strongly influences the representation of characters' thoughts. In *Lives of Girls and Women*, Munro installed a homodiegetic narrator, the protagonist Del Jordan, who is constructed to tell the story from an extradiegetic perspective. Due to the extradiegetic narrative situation, Toolan's thought modes NRTA, IT and FIT (122) can be expected to be the most frequently appearing modes in *Lives of Girls and Women*. Generally, FIT passages indicate to passages of character development. This is because in these passages the experiencing Del tackles problems stemming from experiences, which Del fails to assess at her current stage of development. Furthermore, FIT passages are often followed by scenes in which Del takes a certain risk.

This risk, then again, represents a chance of committing a mistake and the opportunity of Del to learn from this mistake through self-reflection a pattern frequently found in the Bildungsroman (Jacobs 15).

The following analysis of the presentation of interior processes consists of 92 text passages. As some of the chapters vary considerably in length, the amount of text passages chosen was put in relation to each of the eight chapter's length[4]. In order to provide possibly representative data, at least five text passages were analysed for each chapter. Moreover, the 92 text passages are meant to represent a balanced choice throughout the story, in order to prevent too strong a focus on few scenes. An overview of all scenes analysed can be found in the Appendices section.

In the first chapter "The Flats Road" a total of ten passages were analysed. 70% of the analysed text passages could be assigned to NRTA mode. Predominance of NRTA mode was found to be especially strong in the beginning and middle part of the chapter. Probably, the predominance of NRTA passages is connected to the narrative style of the chapter, visible, also, by the high degree of external focalization. Many of the narrated thought passages are embedded in the narrative description of outwardly observable processes. For example, Del introduces her formerly childish notion of quicksand, mixing it up with quicksilver and attesting it a shining surface (Munro 4). Through such childish notions that reappear frequently in the first chapter, the extradiegetic Del outlines the reduced reliability of her perceptions as a child. In that manner, the intradiegetic Del of the first chapter becomes marked as "naive", a central characteristic for Bildungsroman protagonists at the beginning of their development (Swales 98). Furthermore, NRTA mode creates a normative distance between the fictive narrator of Del Jordan and the experiencing character of her younger self. The extradiegetic Del is thereby distanced from the naive views of the experiencing Del. The end of the chapter, however, also contains first allusions to the character development Del is to experience in the following chapters.

[4] Chapter 1: 30 pages → 10 text passages; Chapter 2: 39 pages. → 13 text passages; Chapter 3: 30 pages → 10 text passages; Chapter 4: 27 pages → 9 text passages; Chapter 5: 28 pages → 9 text passages; Chapter 6: 38 pages → 13 text passages; Chapter 7: 70 pages → 23.text passages; Chapter 9: 13pages → 5 text passages

Once, FIT mode is used to doubt her mother's views, although it is yet only on the harmless lyrics of a song (Munro 31). Apart from this allusion however, Del's character is presented as naive and childish in "The Flats Road".

In the second chapter "Heirs of the Living Body", FIT and IT modes represent approximately 60% of the analysed text passages. In the course of this chapter, the narrative Del introduces the relatives of her father. A central topic is the inevitability of death for all living things. Generally, it is conspicuous that the relative amount of critical utterances increases remarkably in comparison to the preceding chapter. The main focus of her criticsm is, however, not on her mother, but on her meticulous and slightly hypocrite aunts Grace and Elspeth. A central understanding to Del, presented in FIT mode, is that she is treated differently from her cousin Mary Agnes, as Grace and Elspeth seem to prefer her mother Moira over Del's own mother (Munro 45). Del makes a few critical comments on her mother as well, but usually in NRTA mode (Munro 43), which creates little emphasis due to the implied lack of alignment between narrative and experiencing Del. Regarding Del's state of development, "Heirs of the Living Body" suggests a rebellious phase in late childhood. Del's attitude towards her core family – her mother, her father and her brother – remains largely intact. On the other hand, Del develops a critical view on the relatives of her father and realizes differences between them and her mother.

In the third chapter "Princess Ida", Del and her mother Ada leave their home at the Flats Road, which is at the edge of the countryside, and move to the small town Jubilee. Evidently, the new environment makes an impression on Del, who is assimilating her thoughts using a mode transition from NRTA to SOC (Munro 79). Using SOC techniques, Del portrays auditory and visual impressions of her new life in town. The arrival of Del in her new urban setting represents the starting point for predominance of FIT and IT modes in this chapter. Her new critical perspective on urban life also becomes clear by the visit of her Uncle Bill and Aunt Nile at the end of the chapter. In IT mode Del describes how she takes her aunt, who is used to the luxury life in cities, for "an idiot and yet […] frantically admire[s] her (Munro 97).

By using FIT, it becomes clear that Nile's emphasis on her outward appearance and her lack of "adaptability" (Munro 93) prompt a process of self-reflection in Del. At this stage of development, Del is not yet able to form an opinion on urban life. The opposite pole, the lack of willingness to adapt to town life, is represented by her mother Ada. Characteristically, Del develops a critical view on her mother as well, and, in comparison to previous chapter rather sympathises with the "tender properties" (Munro 72) of her aunts Grace and Elspeth. The new critical view on her mother also becomes obvious through Toolan's mode continuum, when Del criticises her mother using IT, a mode which suggests high alignment between the viewpoints of the narrator and the experiencing Del (Munro 76). Furthermore, the new rebellion against her mother suggests Del's onset to puberty.

The fourth chapter "Age of Faith" sets a focus on religion. As Del's mother confesses herself agnostic due to experiences with her own mother, religion delivers a pretext for Del to distinguish herself from her mother. Generally, the modes chosen for the presentation of Del's thought appear rather equable. Out of the nine analysed text passages from this chapter, three passages belong to NRTA mode and thereby create distance between the narrator and the experiencing Del. It is conspicuous that these examples all appear at the beginning of "Age of Faith", while the density of FIT mode examples increases in the second part of the chapter.A dialogue between Del and her mother can thereby be seen as a turning point for the mode presentation of thoughts. In this dialogue (Munro 117-119), Ada convinces Del that "God was made by man" (Munro 118), and not vice versa. Even though Ada leaves her daughter the choice to continue to go to church, her words have an impact on Del. In contrast to the previous chapter, the end of "Age of Faith" thereby suggests a slight moral convergence to her mother, which is also observable through the more frequent appearance of NRTA when she comments on her.

The fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies" introduces Del's first notions and experiences with boys. Right at the beginning, FIT with SOC elements conveys how Del is shocked by the disrespectful behaviour of boys in the first place (Munro 129).

This attitude changes however in the course of the chapter, when Del starts to become curious about boys, and eventually falls in love with Frank Wales (Munro 146). Her romantic notions of love are frequently put in NRTA mode, which is an indication that the narrating Del seeks to create moral distance between herself and the experiencing Del. Apart from falling in love, Del makes other pleasant experiences in the chapter, when she meets her first friend in Jubilee, Naomi Campbell, and when she gets picked for the operetta play in school. Due to the lack of agitating experiences, Del is not induced to ponder about irritating events, which is a reason why FIT appears rather seldom in this chapter. A further consequence is, however, that Del's character development remains relatively reduced throughout this chapter.

In the sixth chapter "Lives of Girls and Women" FIT mode is predominant, especially in the second half of the chapter. A central motive in this chapter is Del's new perspective on love, which becomes much more corporal in comparison to the concept presented in "Changes and Ceremonies". A reason for her increased interest in sex is the fact that her mother is restrictive on discussing this matter, in contrast to her best friend Naomi's mother, who is intensifying Del's curiosity by starting sexual rumours (Munro 162). A reason for the high degree of FIT mode in the second part of the chapter is the fact that Del is repeatedly abused by her mother's adult acquaintance Mr. Chamberlain. The repeated cases of abuse cause a rejection of the formerly romantic notion of love and daydreaming (Munro 146), which was underlined by NRTA mode in the previous chapter. Moreover, this process leads to a reduction of Del's naive notions of love. Instead, Del feels that she is introduced to the "secret violence of sex" (Munro 178), prompting a sharp decline of naivety, represented by FIT mode. Yet again, FIT functions as a tool for Del experiences that are incomprehensible to her. Although this chapter portrays a sombre notion of sex, the extradiegetic Del uses FIT mode in order to represent this decrease of naivety, which comprises an important step in Del's character development. At the end of "Lives and Girls and Women", seems to have reached the character level of a teenager who is on the threshold of adolescence.

The seventh chapter “Baptizing” also conveys a dominance of FIT mode, which suggests strong character development within the chapter. Moreover, many of those passages presented in FIT mode have significantly increased in length, probably an effect to the higher complexity of Del’s problems in comparison to the first chapters of *Lives of Girls and Women*. A central nuisance to Del at the beginning of “Baptizing” is that she considers herself inferior to those girls who have adopted the superficial, but restricting norms of town life, which she cannot understand. Passages in which she quarrels with the restrictions of town life, into which her best friend Naomi has escaped as well, are therefore generally presented in FIT mode (Munro 196f/ Munro 201). On the other hand, passages in which she describes her own actual emotions and wants, like listening to the “Metropolitan Opera” (Munro 200) are usually presented in NRTA mode. Thereby again, the extradiegetic Del creates an alignment towards the consequences of a life in town, while she distances herself from her own desires. A possible reason for this is the retrospective mourning after missed chances, as Del actually chose to live according to her own preferences, which eventually results in the end of her friendship with Naomi and the insight that she will not integrate into town life. Furthermore, FIT mode is frequently used when Del describes her emotions concerning Jerry Storey, a highly intelligent, but reclusive boy she meets in High School. The unhappy relationship that develops between Del and Jerry becomes obvious when Del assimilates that she does not know what is expected of her in FIT mode (Munro 223). The implied alignment of FIT mode thereby suggests that the extradiegetic Del still reproaches Jerry for his allegedly inappropriate behaviour. In comparison to her relationship with Jerry, Del is temporally happier with Garnet French, a poor young man whom she meets slightly later. In contrast to the description of Jerry, extradiegetic Del predominantly uses NRTA mode for the representation of Garnet (Munro 240). However, some of these descriptions also imply ironic self-characterization, for example when Del confesses that she “could not have made sense of any book, put one word after another, with Garnet in the room” (Munro 242). Therefore, although the descriptions of Jerry and Garnet differ remarkably, extradiegetic Del suggests that both relationships will not be lasting.

The frequent usage of NRTA combined with ironical self-comments mode suggests however, that blames herself, instead of Garnet French, at least at the beginning of their acquaintance. In the aftermath of a scene in which Garnet tries to baptize Del in the local Wawanash river (Munro 258-261), realizes that their relationship was never meant to last, as they "had seen in each other what [they] could not bear" (Munro 262). At the very end of the chapter "Baptizing", Del presents a rather optimistic comment to the reader, suggesting that her experiences with Garnet prepared her for her "real life" (Munro 264). This conclusion contains SOC however, which suggests that Del has not really acquired maturity, a notion that will be confirmed in the epilogue chapter.

In the last chapter "Epilogue: The Photographer", the alleged optimistic final judgement made by Del in "Baptizing" is revoked. This last chapter, in which internal focalization predominates, suggests that Del has actually not succeeded in leading a fulfilling, "real life" (Munro 262). Her thoughts, represented in FIT mode, rather indicate a restless life. For example, Del describes her desire to "make list", indicating the uselessness of this action, however, by stating that "no list could hold what [she] wanted" (Munro 276). As this comment is put in FIT mode, it becomes clear that this view is in alignment with the opinion of the extradiegetic Del. This last chapter thereby revokes a central convention of the Bildungsroman genre, the acquisition of maturity at the end of the story (Jacobs 66).

Generally, the application of Toolan's mode continuum to character development was a useful tool in order to analyse Del's character development. The frequent use of NRTA in the introductory chapter "The Flats Road" confirmed that intradiegetic Del is a naive protagonist at the beginning of story, a central convention of the Bildungsroman genre. In the following chapters, predominant FIT mode was found to be an indicator of character development. Apart from the fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies", a chapter which suggested a slight return to naivety, steady character development is attested to Del throughout the whole story of *Lives of Girls and Women*. Likewise, the persisting dominance of FIT mode to the epilogue chapter suggests that Del has not in fact acquired maturity and did not manage to find her location in society.

By deviating from this central Bildungsroman convention, Del, as a representative of the female middle class, is constructed as not having found her social space in society. This deviation is a possible allusion of the real author Alice Munro that many middle class women of the Canadian post-war era had difficulties to integrate into social life. Probably, this is especially true for young women like Del, who were unwilling to submit to the superficial norms demanded from women in city life.

3.2 Contrasts – Gender construction and social mobility

3.2.1 Characterization of male and female characters

The dramatis personae in *Lives of Girls and Women* consist of 186 characters. Counting 102 male characters, the Munro's story is composed in the majority of male characters, while 84 characters introduced in *Lives of Girls and Women* are female. Concerning gender proportion, male characters therefore cover 54.8%, while female characters take up 45.2%. In spite of this slightly unbalanced gender proportion, however, male characters do not have a dominant role in the course of the story. The following analysis will examine differences concerning the characterization of female and male characters within *Lives of Girls and Women* on the base of collected data from all 186 characters. The data[5] includes information about the availability of the character's name to the fictive reader, the practised profession of the character or, respectively, the relationship towards the protagonist Del. Furthermore, an estimated social status concerning supposed acceptance in the urban environment of Jubilee was assorted to those characters, which were supplied with sufficient background information.

A conspicuous difference concerning the construction of female and male characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* lies in the availability of background information. 15 out of the 84 female characters in the story are neither equipped with a first name nor with a surname. This makes a share of 17.9% nameless female characters. Concerning male characters, on the other hand, the amount of nameless figures is 45 out of 102, which comes to a share of 44.1% in nameless male characters. If all nameless characters were excluded from the cast, female characters (69) would therefore exceed male characters (57) rather considerably.

[5] cf. Table 2 about female characterization and Table 3 about male characterization in the Appendices section

Nameless characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* are usually flat characters that are either defined by their professions (e.g. a lawyer) or by their relationship to certain main characters (e.g. Del's grandfather). Even some characters that play a vital role and reappear frequently remain un-named (e.g. Del's father or her best friend Naomi's parents). In Del's closer vicinity, nameless characters usually were found to have contrastive views on Del's moral values. For example, Del rejects Naomi's mother's superstitious views on sexuality (Munro 132) as well as Naomi's father's attempt to convince her of a life in chastity (Munro 172). Another difference concerning the transmission of information on female and male characters is connected to the possible assignment to the social status. From the 102 male characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* 34 characters were not supplied with sufficient information in order to enable an assignment to social status, which sums up to 33.3%. In contrast to male characterization, only 16 out of 84 female characters could not be assorted a social status, which makes 19.5%. Usually, characters that could not be assorted to a social status consist of marginally named characters, like the Otis family mentioned in the Jubilee radio (Munro 164).

The total numbers of characters, which were either nameless, not assignable to a certain social status, or which combined both attributes, sums up to 61 male and 30 female characters. For this study, those 61 male and 29 female characters were classified as one-dimensional characters. The proportion of female one-dimensional characters in relation to all female characters is therefore 35.7%, while the proportion of one-dimensional male characters in relation to all male characters sums up to 59.8%. These numbers refute the apparent quantitative dominance of male characters in *Lives of Girls and Women*. Multi-dimensional characters, in distinction to the characteristics described above, consist of 41 male and 54 female characters, contributing to a total of 95 multi-dimensional characters. In contrast to the quantitative predominance of male characters, suggested by the consideration of the dramatis personae, female characters comprise the majority of multi-dimensional characters. 56.8% out of all 95 multi-dimensional characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* are female, while only 43.2% of those characters are male.

On the whole, the character construction of the multidimensional characters based on their social status was found to be rather balanced.

The share of polarized female and male characters, associated to the "high" or "very high" social class is nearly identical[6]. For the most part, this phenomenon concerns family structures and is usually attributed to the strong correlation between the profession of the male head of family and the remaining members of the family. This strong correlation becomes obvious in several chapters of *Lives of Girls and Women*, like in the fourth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies", which focuses on Del's life in school. The two popular students Gwen Mundy and Marjory Coutts, which are both preferred to their classmates for the appointment in the school operetta "The Pied Piper" (Munro 137), are the daughters of, respectively, a lawyer and a store proprietor. These respected professions contribute to both, their success in school and to their hegemonial status in school. Another example, clarifying the significance of the father's income concerns the role of an albino boy in class. Del describes how this boy would have probably become a victim of bullies in her class due to his outward appearance if his father did not possess a small grocery, which "bought his survival" (Munro 137), as the boy brings candy as presents to school. Furthermore, in *Lives of Girls and Women* social status is constructed in that way that it potentially legetimises, or even permits, socially reprehensible behaviour. Two doctors, Dr. Phippen and Dr. Wallis, are reproached for sexual abuse of their patients and Del herself even becomes a victim to the abuse of Mr. Chamberlain, a war veteran, who is well-respected for his radio moderation in the Jubilee Town Radio (Munro 163). Another case of sexual misconduct is connected to the United Church minister's son, Dale McLaughlin, who evidently rapes the student Violet Toombs (Munro 148). All of these cases of sexual misconduct committed by representatives of the "high" or "very high" class in Jubilee remain without any consequences. If these cases are discussed at all, the fault is often attributed to the female victims, e.g. through Naomis's superstitious mother (Munro 148). Naomi's mother, who was constructed as a nurse, is a representative of the "high" class in Jubilee by herself, and therefore merely defends her own class.

A bigger difference concerning the gender construction between multidimensional female and male characters was observable in the "low" social status area.

[6] Cf. Figure 3 „Association of female and male multidimensional characters to social class"

In this class, female characters are remarkably overrepresented and have approximately double as high a share as male characters. Male multi-dimensional characters with a "low" social status are, for the most part, married farmers. Female multidimensional characters, on the other hand, are composed of farmers' wives, while some of them have remained unmarried in order to take up low income jobs. Yet again, these characters solidify the central significance of patriarchal conventions in *Lives of Girls and Women.* The data clearly suggests that marriage is constructed as a vital step in the acquisition of a high social status. In contrast to female characters, several male characters like Art Chamberlain, a radio moderator, or Bert Mathews, an inspector, could be assorted a "high" social status in Jubilee. Even those few unmarried female characters that managed to acquire a social status without marriage are usually laughed at or despised by the inhabitants of Jubilee. This applies, for example, to Del's teacher Elinor Farris, whom the extradiegetic Del portrays as an eccentric, hysterical woman that eventually commits suicide (Munro 156). One of the few last resorts for unmarried women is represented by Del's fussy aunts Elspeth and Grace. These characters have taken the working environment of their successful brother Craig as a substitute for a marriage partner and dedicate their lives to household duties in his house. Elspeth and Grace take their marks as very pedantic housewives and are careful to draw "the clearest line" between "men's and women's work" (Munro 38). By subordinating to patriarchal structures they are solidifying their social reputations in Jubilee, while they despise female characters that strive for female education and independence, like Del's mother Ada. The funeral of their brother Craig, however, dispossesses Elspeth and Grace of their social role within *Lives of Girls and Women*, a process which is also depicted by their mental and physical deterioration (Munro 68).

The multidimensional characters associated with a "very low" social status within Munro's Bildungsroman are largely composed of mentally disturbed characters, acquaintances of Garnet French, and informal or dishonest workers. While this class comprises a balanced share of female and male characters, its members usually live outside of the boundaries of Jubilee. Apart from the latter part of the penultimate chapter "Baptizing" and the last chapter "Epilogue: The Photographer" these characters do not come directly into contact with the protagonist Del.

Instead, they are rather presented as unpredictable and potentially dangerous characters, especially in chapters with a higher degree of narrator naivety. In the first chapter "The Flats Road", for example, Irene Pollox is described as threatening for the young Del Jordan, who is afraid of Irene "chasing children on the road" (Munro 10). In chapters with reduced naivety, however, "middle" class Del repeatedly tries to improve her understanding of members of the "very low" class. This phenomenon can be observed in the chapter "Lives of Girls and Women" in which she ponders over the life of the prostitute Peggy (Munro 169), which eventually contributes to her new, more violent notion of love and sexuality. In the seventh chapter "Baptizing", Del experiences the life of the "very low" class for the first time, when she comes to the farm of her boyfriend Garnet French, a black Baptist who has been to jail before. Interestingly, Garnet's mother − Mrs. French − seems to be in command of the action, as she is the only one who introduces herself to Del, while Garnet's father is only mentioned marginally (Munro 244). The representation of Garnet's environment is largely described as chaotic.

3.2.2 Social mobility − A marginal phenomenon in *Lives of Girls and Women*

In order to assess the role of social mobility in Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, the social status of Del Jordan and 40 characters with considerable influence on her character development was analysed. The decision if a character had significant influence on Del's development was made on the basis of several factors. Almost all of the 40 characters in this study have appearances in multiple chapters of Munro's literary work. The remaining characters in this list were chosen when their activities in the story initiated self-reflection on Del – like the prostitute Peggy – or when they introduced important elements of social classes to Del, like Mrs. French or the Anglican believer Mrs. Sheriff.

A major result of this study was that social mobility was identified in only seven characters. These characters are the protagonist Del, her mother Ada, her brother Owen, her two aunts Grace and Elspeth, her friend Naomi and her first love Frank Wales. Out of these characters, Del's mother Ada is the only figure whose career of social mobility starts before the start of Del's story *Lives and Girls and Women* and is therefore narrated retrospectively in the third chapter "Princess Ida".

A further result of the analysis is that five out of the seven characters involved in a process of social mobility appear as underage characters. Only the social mobility of Del's aunts Elspeth and Grace takes place exclusively in their adulthood after the death of their brother Craig. Del's aunts were also identified as the characters with most drastic social descent. As pedantic housewives there role is conventionally patriarchal in *Lives of Girls and Women*. After their brother's death, they are left without a role and steadily alienate from social life in Jubilee.

A character that experiences social decline is Del's brother Owen. While he is an ordinate student in the early part of *Lives of Girls and Women*, he eventually choses to stay at his father's farm on the countryside and becomes an economic victim to the slump of the family's fox farming business after the end of the Second World War. While Del's aunts and her brother Owen therefore represent social decline, her best friend Naomi and her first love Frank Wales are constructed to represent the possibility of economic rise.

For the character development of Naomi, a separate chapter was created, as she – in contrast to Del' aunts – represents the prospect of promotion of patriarchal characters in *Lives of Girls and Women*. Frank Wales, however, seems to represent the inspicuous, unspectacular boy in school with mediocre talents (Munro 138). He visits Del's class for several years, but eventually takes up the profession of a dry cleaner in order to earn his own money (Munro154f.). Frank Wales therefore seems to represent the unspectacular male worker who manages to attain a high social status by means of his own effort – a development which is not attainable for the female version of social rise, Naomi. While the character development of these five characters could be defined as eiter clearly successful or disappointing, Del's and Ada's development is significantly more complex.

Ada Jordan is a character with a transgression of multiple social statuses. She originally stems from a very poor farmer family which seemed to have accepted patriarchal conventions. Ada's parents did not think it necessary that Ada should receive sophisticated education. Instead her father wanted her to attain social status by marriage (Munro 87). As Ada was unwilling to live by her parents' expectations, Ada escaped from their house in order to live at a nearby boarding house with the elder Mrs. Seeley.

In order to finance her stay at the house, she, ironically, helped her lodger in the household and thereby fulfilled the patriarchal expectations on female characters. However, her success in high school would have enabled her to lead an independent life. Prior to meeting Del's father, she got engaged to a man who "remain[s] a shadow" according to Del's description (Munro 89). Judging from the character development of Ada it is probable that this man could have been a respected representative of the established middle class. The temporary rise in social status was then undone shortly later, when Ada's describes that this man "did not turn out to be the person [she] thought he was" (Munro 89). If it is supposed that this man is a representative of middle class, this is a first allusion to the problems Ada tends to have later when she lives in the city of Jubilee. Shortly after this engagement, she met Del's, who is a fox farmer, and whom she happens to fall in love with (Munro 89). In fact, the marriage of Del's parents is constructed as solid in many parts of *Lives of Girls and Women*. Del's father turns out to be a tactful mediator between his wife and his sisters Grace, Elspeth and Moira, who live by patriarchal conventions. For example, Del's father manages to convince Ada that she should restrain her desire to utter her scientific ideas about death at the funeral of Uncle Craig in "Heirs of the Living Body" (Munro 56). The marriage of Del's father, however, also seems to draw Ada back to the "low" social status class, and Ada discovers that farm life does not make her happy, as she is yet again reduced to the life of a housewife. These experiences probably make her move to the town of Jubilee. Her outset in Jubilee is quite optimistic in the beginning, when Ada starts to make parties in order to get to know her new neighbours in Jubilee. However, it soon becomes clear that urban, "high" class society in Jubilee does not approve of her actions which revoke patriarchal conventions on female behaviour. Her performance on the piano soon gets interpreted as "showing off" (Munro 82). Furthermore, Ada has to find out that many women are not willing to participate in her party games. Soon, Ada gets annoyed by the genteel habits of her guests (Munro 82).

Eventually, her lack of integration leads to Ada's withdrawal from society, and Ada starts to put her hopes on the education of her daughter Del. Ada therefore functions as a tragic character in *Lives of Girls and Women*, whose flight from oppressing patriarchal norms, depticted mainly by her father, eventually leads her to another class with patriarchal conventions, the "high" class. Thereby, her venture into a new social environment eventually becomes senseless. At the end of the novel, Ada is represented as a stricken woman with several smaller complaints like "ringing in the ears" or "nosebleeds" (Munro 201). It seems as if her permanent struggle against the patriarchal norm has eventually affected her psychological conditions as well. Furthermore, her hopes in her children have "collapsed" (Munro 263). In spite of her repeated attempts, her struggle therefore is ultimately in vain.

The social mobility of the main character Del is yet again different from her mother's mobility. As the intradiegetic Del still lives with her parents, she is basically dependent on the economic wealth of her family. The family's income is mainly earned by her father, who is working as a farmer on the family's fox farm. Del's mother tries to add to the family's income by selling encyclopaedias, but as she turns to farmers, she is also dependent on the prosperity of the agricultural sector. While the fox farming business is described as quite profitable during the war, the family's income is rather meagre at the end of *Lives of Girls and Women*, when the war is over and "the price of pelts ha[s] fallen" (Munro 251). Therefore, economic mobility of the Jordan family rather takes a declining course, which increases the pressure on Del to attain a profitable job through high marks in school. When Del goes out with Garnet French and starts to neglect school, Del describes how her mother deteriorates physically and psychologically, as she loses "her hopes of the future, through her children" (Munro 263).

Apart from the seven characters that were attested social mobility, 33 characters were associated with rigid social status, meaning that their status did not alter throughout the course of *Lives of Girls and Women*. This result shows that the literary world, in which the protagonist Del is located, is rather deadlocked. Social mobility for women, is constructed as only possible through marriage. Female characters that try to get social improvements by own efforts are depicted as forlorn, which is clearly shown by the example of Del's mother Jordan.

3.2.3 Character analysis – The character development of Del's best friend Naomi

In *Lives of Girls and Women* the extradiegetic Del describes Naomi as her best friend. Naomi is introduced in the story's fourth chapter "Age of Faith". Apart from Del, her mother Ada, her brother Owen and her first love Frank Wales, Naomi is one of only five figures that experience character development. Del and Naomi are constructed as friends in spite stark differences concerning their character perspectives. Their small agreement on norms already becomes clear to the reader when Del denotes the fact that they live in bordering streets as "the basis of [their] friendship" (Munro 133), instead of similar interests or character traits. The problematic nature of Del's and Naomi's friendship is further emphasized by Del's description that each of the two girls is unpopular in their friend's house (Munro 162). The reason for this lacking hospitality lies in the character construction of both, Naomi's mother and Del's mother Ada. A crucial point that seems to separate the attitudes of both mothers, is each one's respective approaches to sexuality: Del's mother tries to withhold any information about sexuality from her daughter. For example, Ada denies the intimate relationship between Mr. Chamberlain and her boarder Fern Dogherty, denoting Del's suspicions as "nonsense" (Munro 162). Furthermore, Del describes a "gloom that overcomes [Ada] in the vicinity of sex" (Munro 86). In the third chapter "Princess Ida", Del alludes to potential reasons for her mother's restrictive behaviour, sexual abuse by her younger brother Bill, in a proleptic comment (Munro 86). Naomi's mother, on the other hand, is constructed as a nurse in a hospital and represents the counter-piece to Del's mother regarding sexual education: Her role in *Lives of Girls and Women* seems to be to spread abstruse and superstitious sexual stories to Naomi and Del. Naomi's mother indiscriminately blames women as responsible agents for sexual misfortunes, usually by supporting her claims with outrageous reasoning. For example, she ascribes the responsibility for illegitimate sex to women, stating that they should be able to control themselves in contrast to men, as women's sexual organs are "on the inside" (Munro 148). Moreover, Naomi's mother spreads the rumour that unmarried women are more likely to give birth to children with congenital malformations (Munro 132). The conveyed attitudes of Naomi's mother therefore suggest an acceptance of patriarchal conventions on her side as well as the acceptance of a subordinate position to men, while Del's mother seems to be representing a rebellion against these conventions.

In contrast to Del's relationship towards her own mother, however, Naomi seems to take her mother's views for granted, by generally sharing them in an unfiltered way with her best friend Del. The representation of Naomi's uncritical attitude towards her mother's claims in early parts of whole story already suggests an eventual assumption of her mother's patriarchal conventions. While Naomi is constructed as a character who shares Del's wishes for what the Jubilee society would denote as boyish adventures in the sixth chapter "Lives of Girls and Women", Naomi is brought to a local hospital in the end of that chapter. After her life-threatening residence in that hospital, Naomi reappears as a transformed character. The change has thereby taken place on various levels: While Naomi was henceforth described as a slightly overweight character, common ground with Del, she is suddenly fifteen pounds lighter. On the psychological level, Del describes that Naomi has lost her "forthrightness" and that she rather choses to watch her friend playing volleyball, instead of playing herself (Munro 190). The impression that Naomi has accepted a passive role is underlined by her description of the abuse by Dr. Wallis to whom she found herself "quite helplessly exposed" (Munro 190) in the hospital. In contrast to Ada's rebellion against her brother, Naomi does not seem to make any attempts for a rebellion, but has apparently assumed her mother's point that any abuse is the girl's fault. In the commencing lines of the seventh chapter "The Baptizing", Del then describes how Naomi leaves her school in order to take up an office job as a trainee (Munro 195). Her new working life introduces Naomi then to her new social class, on the cost of a self-determined life. In the office she is surrounded by Molly and Carla, two female characters which preferably discuss their laundry habits (Munro 197), while she is repeatedly visiting stores in Jubilee, in order to put aside dowries for her future marriage (Munro 199f). After her hospital stay, Naomi is therefore close to being constructed as a caricature of the stereotypical wife of in the patriarchal society. While Del lacks to understand the sudden change of her best friend, Naomi's new focus on marriage seems to be her strategy for attaining a profitable, "high" social status.

For the attainment of this status she is willing to repress her individual incentives and is even willing to marry Scott Geoghagen, a man she introduces to Del as somebody "who is not a great genius or anything" (Munro 254). On the other hand, Naomi's contempt for feminist rebellions at her new state of development becomes obvious when she makes derisive remarks about Fern Dogherty, Ada's border and closest friend in Jubilee. Naomi's calls Fern Dogherty "just a joke". Fern Dogherty, whose primary goal in life is repeatedly described as "having a good time" (Munro 200) and who remains unmarried within *Lives of Girls and Women* as she is unwilling to take a subordinate position to men, has become the counter draft to Naomi.

4. Conclusion

Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* is in accordance with most of the genre's conventions described in the introductory chapter of this work. Interiority (Moretti 4) was found to play a central part in the story. By analysis of verb appearance it was confirmed that the share of mental verbs in comparison to activity verbs is over average throughout the whole story. The ratio of mental verbs and activity verbs was taken as a measurement for the degree of internal focalization. While internal focalization was found to be especially high in the third chapter "Princess Ida" as well as in the eighth chapter "Epilogue: The Photographer", external focalization was considerably higher in the first chapter "The Flats Road" and the fifth chapter "Changes and Ceremonies". "The Flats Road" shows a protagonist who is still at the very beginning of her character development. Therefore, this chapter probably rather contains conventions of children literature genre, as Del's perspective narrates the events throughout the whole Bildungsroman. "Changes and Ceremonies", on the other hand, depicts a stagnation of Del's character development, as this chapter prioritizes a romantic notion of love. Character development in general was proven to be especially high in chapters that depict Del as a character with difficulties to understand the events around her. In these chapters Del was usually portrayed as a character with a profundly high level of inner dissatisfaction, another convention of the Bildungsroman (Munro 4f).

Del's inner dissatisfaction often initiated episodes of discernible character development. These passages correlated with a higher share of FIT, which Toolan describes as more immeadiate than the distant NRTA mode (122). Furthermore, the protagonist Del was found to take the distinctive development of a Bildungsroman character that starts with a naive perspective (Swales 98) and experiences character development by committing mistakes (Jacobs 15). Only the ending of *Lives of Girls and Women* lies in contrast to Bildungsroman conventions as Del apparently has not succeeded in acquiring maturity, the lucid notion of personal limitations that cannot be overcome but which do not prevent her from leading a fulfilling life (Jacobs 66). The impression of the satisfied and calm Del at the end of the last regular chapter "Baptizing" becomes revoked in "Epilogue: The Photographer", which proves that Del's inner dissatisfaction persists further. Moreover, the narrative situation in Lives of Girls and Women was clarified by the analysis of proleptic comments, in which the extradiegetic Del emphasises her existence next to the intradiegetic story character Del. In contrast to the parallels between *Lives of Girls and Women* and the Bildungsroman conventions, however, contrasts were also established. Social mobility, a central Bildungsroman convention (Moretti 4f.) in *Lives of Girls and Women* were discernible in only seven, mainly minor aged, characters. This construction suggests a rather rigid wealth gap between the "low" and "high" social classes. While male characters in the *Lives of Girls and Women* are usually depicted as responsible for their own economic situation, female characters have to rely on marriage as a means to social rise.

The story thereby suggests a predominance of patriarchal conventions theming a necessary subordination of female characters to male characters. The instance that the characters who defines this norms strongest, Del's mother Ada, is depicted as frail and psychologically battered at the end of *Lives of Girls and Women* suggests a hidden critic on the patriarchal systems as well as a slight resignation, a scepticism to be able to overcome them.

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Appendices

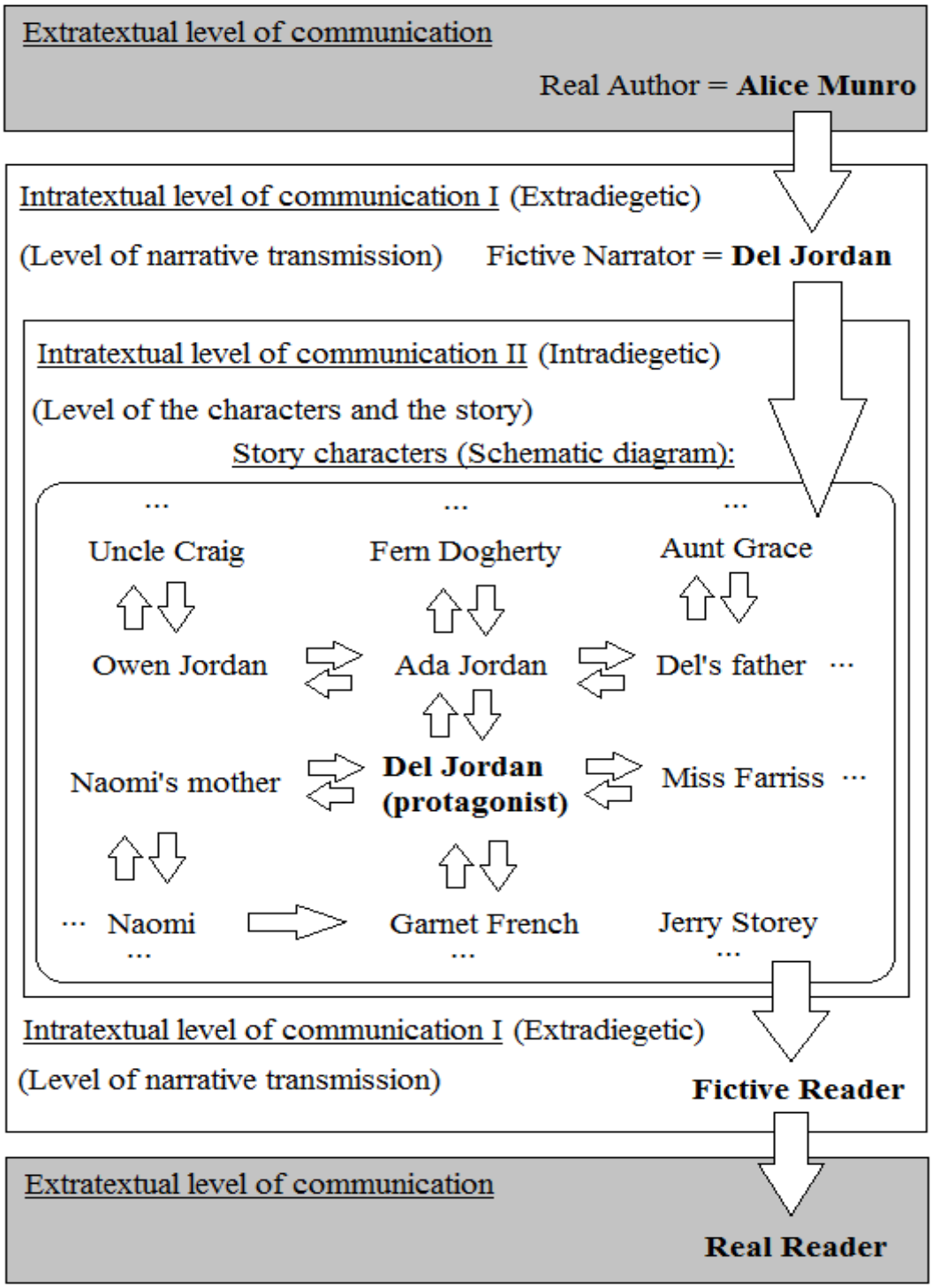

Figure 2: Communication model of *Lives of Girls and Women* based on Nünning (104 [edited])

Passage	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
1	NR	FIT	NR/FIT	IT	FIT	IT	FIT	FIT
Place (p.; l.)	3; 6-8	35; 11-12	72; 11-16	103; 16-18	129; 1-4	160; 25-26	196f; 21-5	268; 16-17
2	NR	IT	NR/ SOC	NR	NR	NR	NR	FIT
Place (p.; l.)	4; 15-16	36; 1-3	74; 15-23	106; 9-11	131; 11	163; 19-20	198; 11-13	270; 12-17
3	NR	NR	FIT	NR	NR	NR	NR	FIT
Place (p.; l.)	7; 4-5	37; 24	75; 18-19	114; 27-29	132; 16-17	166; 14-15	200; 12-13	274; 10-12
4	NR	NR	NR/ FIT	IT	NR/ IT	NR/ SOC	NR/ SOC	FIT
Place (p.; l.)	8; 5	43; 2-3	76; 8	115; 18-19	138; 30-32	168; 13-20	201; 22-27	275; 15-23
5	NR	FIT	NR/SOC	NR	NR	NR	FIT	FIT
Place (p.; l.)	10; 14-15	44; 25	79; 2-13	119; 15-16	146; 8	169; 7-12	207; 24-28	276; 14-26
6	NR	FIT	FIT	FIT	NR	FIT	NR/ FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	12; 4	45; 15-18	84; 15-16	120; 14-18	148; 24	170; 2-11	208; 3-4	/
7	NR	NR	FIT	FIT	NR	FIT	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	19; 26	48; 18	90; 22	121; 25-30	149; 12-14	173; 27-29	211; 15-18	/
8	IT	NR	FIT	FIT/ DT	FIT	NR	NR	/
Place (p.; l.)	21; 5-6	49; 8-9	93; 22-24	122; 10-20	152; 22-26	175; 26-27	215; 19-21	/
9	FIT	NR	FIT	FDT	NR	NR	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	27; 19-21	50; 17	96; 27-28	128; 28-29	155; 20-22	177; 28-29	221; 28-32	/
10	NR/FIT	FIT	IT	/	/	FIT	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	31; 14-15	51; 21-25	97; 4-9	/	/	179; 3-8	223; 22-26	/
11	/	FIT	/	/	/	FIT	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	58; 10	/	/	/	180; 23-29	224; 27-33	/
12	/	FIT	/	/	/	FIT	NR	/
Place	/	64f; 28-5	/	/	/	187; 20-23	235; 21-22	/
13	/	IT	/	/	/	FIT	NR	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	70; 16-18	/	/	/	190; 4-5	240; 7-8	/
14	/	/	/	/	/	/	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	241; 17-20	/
15	/	/	/	/	/	/	NR	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	242; 11-13	/
16	/	/	/	/	/	/	NR	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	244; 25-26	/
17	/	/	/	/	/	/	IT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	250; 26-28	/
18	/	/	/	/	/	/	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	252; 15	/
19	/	/	/	/	/	/	DT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	253; 24-26	/
20	/	/	/	/	/	/	NR	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	261; 5-7	/
21	/	/	/	/	/	/	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	262; 6-11	/
22	/	/	/	/	/	/	FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	263; 21-24	/
23	/	/	/	/	/	/	NR/ FIT	/
Place (p.; l.)	/	/	/	/	/	/	264; 21-27	/
Sum	10	13	10	9	9	13	23	5

Table 1: Analysed thought modes in *Lives of Girls and Women* assorted by page number and line (NRTA was abbreviated to NR for legibility)

Character	Profession/Role	Social status	Character	Profession/Role	Social status
Margaret Bond	Jubilee celebrity	very high	Mrs. Sheriff	Anglican belief	low
Dorothy Guest	Jubilee celebrity	very high	Beulah Bowes	student	low
Pat Mundy	Jubilee celebrity	very high	(Italian girl 1)	student	low
(Poet)	Jubilee celebrity	very high	Dulie Fatherst.	student	low
Aunt Helen	very wealthy	very high	Mrs. Halloway	intradieg. lev. 2	low
Mrs. Storey	widow	very high	Caroline Hallo.	intradieg. lev. 2	low
Mrs. Coutts	lawyer's wife	high	(Farm woman)	farmer	low
Mrs. Best	manager's wife	high	Caddie McQuag	low earner	very low
Mrs. Comber	doctor's wife	high	Betty	low earner	very low
Marjory Coutts	student	high	(Chainway girl)	low earner	very low
Gwen Mundy	student	high	(Black woman)	Baptist singer	very low
Mrs. Wallis	doctor's wife	high	(Black woman)	Baptist singer	very low
Aunt Grace	housewife	high (→ low)	(Church girl)	Baptist	very low
Aunt Elspeth	housewife	high (→ low)	Irene Pollox	"lunatic"	very low
Aunt Moira	prob. housewife	high	Mrs. McQuade	brothel-keeper	very low
Ruth McQueen	Del's cousin	high	Madeleine	"lunatic"	very low
Mary Agnes O.	Del's cousin	high	Peggy	prostitute	very low
Mrs. Rush	teacher	high	(Prostitute)	prostitute	very low
Nile Maddison	wife (Bill M.)	high	Lila French	impoverished	very low
Mrs. Forbes	teacher	high	Phylis French	impoverished	very low
(Naomi's mother)	nurse	high	Thelma French	impoverished	very low
Elinor Farris	teacher	high	Mrs. French	impoverished	very low
Molly	trainee	high	Mrs. Plim	bootlegger	very low
Carla	trainee	high	(Italian girl 2)	impoverished	very low
(Bennys teach.)	teacher	high	Mrs. Sheriff jn.	suicide	very low
(Ada's mother)	teacher	high	Violet Toombs	student	very low
Mrs. Cha. sen.	landlady	high	Mrs. Stevenson	?	?
Naomi	student/ trainee	high	Mrs. Poole sen.	?	?
Bella Phippen	librarian	medium	(Craig's mother)	?	?
Alma Cody	student	medium	(Grace's mother)	?	?
June Gannett	student	medium	Mrs. Wales	?	?
Louise	student	medium	Mrs. Dog. sen.	?	?
Doris McIver	student	medium	Callie Madd.	?	?
Mrs. Seeley	widow	medium	Mrs. Fraleigh	?	?
Mrs. Monk	butcher's wife	medium	(Jewish wife)	?	?
Gloria Monk	student	medium	Mrs. Otis	?	?
(School girl)	student	medium	Etta Otis	?	?
(Dry Cleaner)	dry cleaner	medium	Lorraine Otis	?	?
Del Jordan	protagonist	medium	Mrs. Townley	?	?
Thora Willoug.	ticket seller	low	Donna Carling	?	?
Ada Jordan	Del's mother	low	Margaret Fral.	?	?
Fern Dogherty	Ada's boarder	low	Diane	infant	?

Table 2: Character constellation of female characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* (assorted by estimated social status in Jubilee/ characters without given name in brackets)

Character	Profession/Role	Social status	Character	Profession/Role	Social status
Uncle Craig	entrepreneur	very high	(Tractor man)	farmer	low
Mr. McKenna	headmaster	very high	(Black man 1)	Baptist singer	very low
(Supreme Judge)	Jubilee celebrity	very high	(Black man2)	Baptist singer	very low
(Archaeologist)	Jubilee celebrity	very high	(revivalist)	Baptist	very low
Pierce Murray	air force	very high	(Baptist min. 1)	Baptist	very low
(Helen's husb.)	very wealthy	very high	(Baptist min. 2)	Baptist	very low
Jerry Storey	student	very high	Bobby Hallow.	intradieg. lev. 2	very low
Mr. Best	manager	high	Garnet French	Baptist minister	very low
Dr. Comber	doctor	high	(Sheriff boy)	drunkard	very low
Mr. Coutts	lawyer	high	(Italian man)	criminal	very low
Mr. Mundy	store proprietor	high	Mitch Plim	bootlegger	very low
Murray Heal	student	high	Frankie Hall	"lunatic"	very low
George Klein	student	high	Ivan Walpole	impoverished	very low
Mr. Dr. Phippen	dentist	high	Orrin Walpole	impoverished	very low
Clive	insuran. broker	high	Boyd French	impoverished	very low
(Lawyer)	lawyer	high	Mr. French	impoverished	very low
(Preacher)	preacher	high	(Old man 3)	impoverished	very low
(License fellow)	public official	high	(Del's great-grf)	?	?
Mr. Buchanan	teacher	high	Mr. Poole sen.	?	?
Mr. Fokus	genealogist	high	Mason Howey	?	?
Bill Morrison	estate agent	high	(Direction man)	?	?
Mr. McLaughl.	minister	high	(Direction man)	?	?
(Anglican min.)	minister	high	(Bicycle boy)	?	?
Mr. Boyce	teacher	high	(Craig's father)	?	?
Dale Mc Laugh.	student	high	Jenkin	?	?
Art Chamberl.	veteran	high	(man (records))	?	?
(Psychiatrist)	psychiatrist	high	(man (records))	?	?
Bert Matthews	inspector	high	Maitland Kerr	?	?
Bob Oliphant	wealthy	high	(Unknown man)	?	?
Louie Hall	repairer	medium	(Old man 1)	?	?
Charlie Buckle	butcher	medium	(Old man 2)	?	?
(Ada's brother 1)	ferryman	medium	(Ada's father)	?	?
(Mailman)	mailman	medium	Mr. Rush	?	?
Dutch Monk	butcher	medium	(Seley Nephew)	?	?
(Grocery boy)	retailer	medium	(Ada's ex-boyf.)	?	(medium?)
(Albino boy)	student	medium	Mr. Sheriff	?	?
(albino's father)	retailer	medium	(Former P. Pp.)	?	?
Mr. McIver	miller	medium	(Jewish husb.)	?	?
Fergus Colby	retailer	medium	(Chinese man)	?	?
(Dry cleaner)	dry cleaner	medium	Carl Otis	?	?
Frank Wales	student/ worker	medium	George Otis	?	?
Owen Jordan	Del's brother	low	Mark Otis	?	?
Craig's father	farmer	low	Lois Otis	?	?
(Austrian man]	low earner	low	Lee Wickert	?	?
(Photograher)	intradieg. lev. 2	low	(Dancer)	?	?
Benny Poole	farmer	low	(Papercup man)	?	?
(Del's father)	Del's father	low	(Driver)	?	?
Mr. Stevenson	farmer	low	Thomas Hedley	?	?
Pork Childs	farmer	low	Edward Hedley	?	?
(Sleigh farmer)	farmer	low	Alex Heldley	?	?
(Naomi's father)	strong believer	low	[Mr. Storey]	deceased	?

Table 2: Character constellation of male characters in *Lives of Girls and Women* (assorted by estimated social status in Jubilee/ characters without given name in brackets)

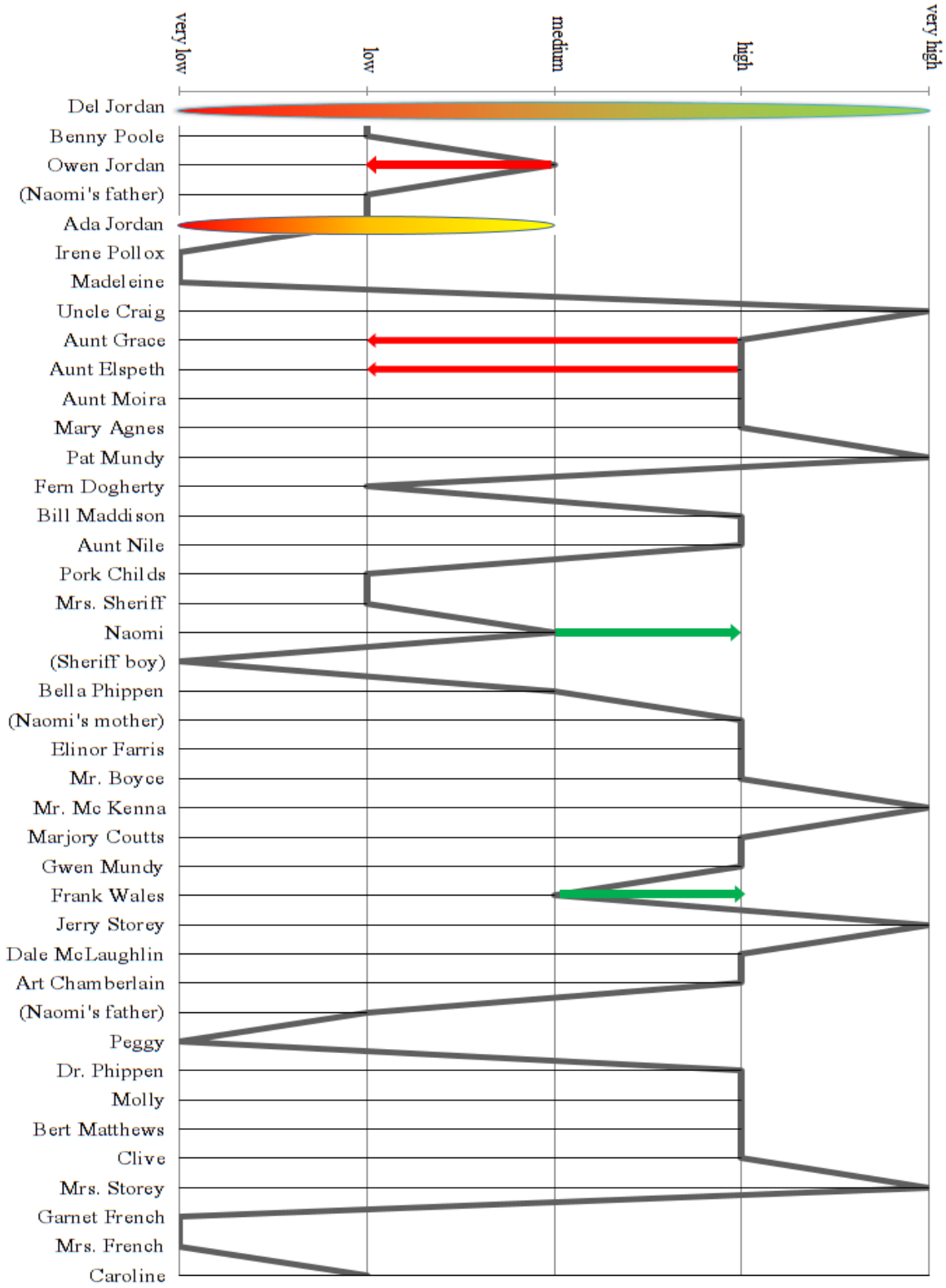

Figure 2: Social location and social mobility of Del Jordan and 40 primary characters chosen by degree of influence on Del's character development (sorted by first appearance in *Lives of Girls and Women*)

I hereby declare that I,

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wrote the enclosed Bachelor thesis

Constructions of femininity in Alice Munro's

Bildungsroman *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971)

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28.01.2019

Erstgutachten zur Bachelorarbeit von Name zum Thema „Constructions of Femininity in Alice Munro's Bildungsroman *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971)"

Der Verfasser hat zum Abschluss seines Studiums eine englischsprachige Bachelorarbeit zum Thema „Constructions of Femininity in Alice Munro's Bildungsroman *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971)" vorgelegt, die den Anforderungen auf gehoben gute Weise entspricht.

Die **Stärke** der Arbeit liegt in der originellen Methode, die der Verf. zur Analyse entwickelt und gut nachvollziehbar mit sehr guten Ergebnissen anwendet. Er benutzt strukturalistisch-narratologische Kategorien und Termini, die er sicher beherrscht. Bereits die Gliederung bezeugt die Fähigkeit des Verf. zu strukturiertem Arbeiten und klarem Formulieren. Das prägt besonders die ersten beiden Drittel der Arbeit und macht sie insgesamt zu einer gewinnbringenden Lektüre. Ergänzt wird dies durch ausführliche tabellarische Anhänge sowie graphische Visualisierungen der statistischen Befunde, die nicht nur vom Fleiß des Verf. zeugen, sondern belegen, dass er den größeren Zusammenhang des Textes aus dessen Details zu rekonstruieren in der Lage ist.
In der **Einleitung** benennt der Verf. sein strukturorientiertes Anliegen: „The aim of this paper will be to analyse the contrasts and parallels between Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* and the central conventions of the Bildungsroman genre." (1) Er konzentriert sich im Folgenden auf die Fokalisierung und die Figurenentwicklung und stellt zum Titel der Arbeit passend die folgende These auf: „The entirety of these contrasts and parallels suggests that Munro purposefully chose the Bildungsroman genre in order to construct an image of middle-class femininity in the Canadian 1970s." (2)
Im **2. Kapitel** beschreibt der Verf. kurz und knapp seine Methode und definiert anhand selbst recherchierter einschlägiger Texte (Toolan) seine zentralen Begriffe. Für den Bildungsroman verwendet er passend vor allem Moretti (1987) und Jacobs (2005), denen er die Genrekonventionen entnimmt, die er in den folgenden Kapiteln durch detaillierte Strukturanalysen mit dem Roman korreliert. Besonders gut gelingt ihm im **3. Kapitel** das Unterkapitel **3.1.**, das sich den Parallelen zwischen Munros Text und Moretti widmet. Der Verf. führt die Leser sehr gut durch seinen Text, in dem er jedem Unterkapitel ein Anliegen voranstellt und anschließend die Ergebnisse sichert. Während die statistische

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Auswertung der Fokalisierungsinstanzen, Verbarten und Charakterisierungstechniken die innengeleitete Darstellungsform des Genres bestätigt, kommt der Verf. hinsichtlich des letzten Romankapitels zu dem Schluss, dass der Text ein wesentliches Kriterium nicht bedient, die Reife der Protagonistin (19).

Die **Schwäche** der Arbeit zeigt sich in abnehmend guter Leserführung und zunehmender Schwammigkeit des Ausdrucks vor allem im **Kapitel 3.2.**, das den Geschlechterkonstruktionen im Zusammenhang mit sozialer Mobilität gewidmet ist und sich an bestimmten Verben und Adverbien (14ff) sowie zahlreich verwendeten Anführungszeichen festmachen lässt (22ff). Sie belegen das wachsende Unbehagen des Verf., der mit diesem Kapitel die strukturalistische Analyse mit soziologischer Interpretation verbindet, um die soziale Zugehörigkeit der Romanfiguren herauszuarbeiten und zu bewerten. Hier macht sich die fehlende Sekundärliteratur zu Munro ebenso bemerkbar wie die unzureichenden Kenntnisse zur Sozialstruktur der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft Kanadas in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, die der Text fiktional verarbeitet. Statt die verschiedenen bürgerlichen Schichten klar zu benennen und z.B. einen Ladenbesitzer als untere Mittelklasse einzuordnen, zählt er ihn zu den „professions" (22), und weicht ansonsten auf ungenaue, weil maßstablose Angaben wie „very/high" oder „very/low" aus (22ff). Dennoch gelingen ihm auch hier wieder gute, weil statistisch fundierte Aussagen (20f, 24f), die schließlich mit Bezug auf Gender und soziale Mobilität die Zusammenfassung im **4. Kapitel** prägen (31).

Die **Bibliographie** ist mit einer Seite sehr kurz, aber für die Art der Analyse zielführend. Es fehlt der auf S. 8 zitierte Text von Genette. Das **Englische** der äußerlich den Vorgaben des MLA Stylesheet entsprechenden und sauber angefertigten Arbeit ist gut zu lesen. Es enthält einige Rechtschreib- und Grammatikfehler, die mit fortschreitender Seitenzahl zunehmen (8ff, 10f) und folgende Bereiche betreffen: Präpositionen, Artikel, Konditionalsätze (22, 27), die Verwendung von „own" (27). Stilistisch bewegt sich der Text von klaren, eindeutig formulierten Aussagen hin zu schwammigen Bewertungen, die sich über sehr häufige Verwendung von „seem" (z. B. je drei Mal S. 25, 28, aber auch 17, 20, 26f) oder „probably" (14, 20, zwei Mal S. 26) verraten. Auch die Wortwahl ist oft inkorrekt (z.B. 18, 21), was jedoch den guten Gesamteindruck nicht stört.

Die Arbeit wird mit der Gesamtnote **1,7 (gut)** bewertet.

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Philosophische Fakultät

Englisches Seminar – British Studies

WiSe 2019/20

Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Hannah Pardey

Bachelor Thesis:

Narrative Strategies in James Joyce's Short Story "The Dead" (1914)

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

James Joyce's modernist text 'The Dead' (1914) is a late addition to his short story collection *Dubliners*. It widely classified as a short story. However, when consulting various scholarly texts on a definition of the short story, it becomes apparent that a precise definition of this literary genre proofs to be difficult. The *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* suggests four criteria to define the genre: Focus on a single, paradigmatic event or pattern of events, primacy of one human agent, a modulated tension, at every point, between suspended outcome and imminent closure, and a length longer than anecdotes but shorter than a novella (Lohafer 528). Especially the latter criterion is highly controversial among literary scholars. Prose argued that a short story is "a work of fiction of a certain length, a length with apparently no minimum" (Prose 3). He continues: "After a certain point (to be on the safe side, let's say seventy or eighty pages, though one short-story theoretician has argued that Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'- not one word more or less- defines the outer limits of the form) the extended short story begins to impinge on novella territory" (Prose 3). Yet, the orientation on Conrad's text appears to be arbitrary. Perhaps, the length should not be determined by merely counting the words of a text but by other criteria.

Current-García and Patrick compare Irving's, Poe's, and Hawthorne's varying aims when composing a short story: "Irving wanted to entertain and amuse; Poe, to achieve 'a totality of effect'; Hawthorne, 'to open up an intercourse with the world" (Current-García and Patrick 3). Poe continues to claim "that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting" (Poe 7). His thoughts on the length of the short story, or tale as he named it, present a reasonable argumentation to cap the scope of a short story so it can be read in one sitting. However, the leisure time that individuals can spend on one sitting is again highly subjective and varies over the cause of time, from culture to culture, and from class to class. At this point in time and from my specific point of view, as a member of the professional middle-class in twenty-first-century Germany, I argue that James Joyce's 'The Dead' can be read in one sitting and is, therefore, considered as a short story. Furthermore, this paper draws upon Lohafer's definition of the genre of the short story.

'The Dead' is considered as one of the most extended representatives of the genre of the short story. More evidently, it is by far the longest story in the container of *Dubliners*. This structural difference alone sets the fifteenth story apart from the rest of the collection. As

form carries meaning, one can anticipate more differences between ‘The Dead’ and the rest of the collection. Joyce himself was the first to mention the paradigm of ‘paralysis’ when commenting on the production of *Dubliners* in one of his letters: “My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because hat city seemed to me the centre of paralysis” (Joyce 134). Considering these two statements, one can conclude that applying the paradigm of ‘paralysis’ to ‘The Dead’ results in different findings than with the other short stories in *Dubliners*.

This Bachelor Thesis applies Barthes’s five narrative codes, as a structuralist approach, to James Joyce’s ‘The Dead’ to identify a network of intertextual connections. These connections allow to access and make sense of the text. Furthermore, it supports Mann’s statement that “as with many short story cycles, the book’s final meaning is complicated by its last story, which (in this case) is much longer than the other stories. ‘The Dead’… serves to challenge whatever sense we have made of the book thus far” (Mann 38). More specifically, this paper argues that ‘The Dead’ challenges the concept of ‘paralysis’ through the means of the dynamic character constellation and the theme of ‘camaraderie’. To this end, the paradigm of ‘paralysis’ is applied to the text in order to identify instances of the phenomenon. Finally, it investigates how ‘The Dead’ utilises the larger container of genre conventions of short stories to create effects through varying degrees of meeting these conventions.

Following this introduction, this paper defines all abstract concepts used during the argumentation. The analysis will commence by divinding ‘The Dead’ into fifteen parts. The content of each part is briefly described to apply narrative codes to them. Afterwards, this paper investigates the character constellation of two sets of characters and compares them to each other. The findings are then interpreted regarding structures in ‘The Dead’, *Dubliners*, and the genre conventions. Finally, the conclusion summarises the central findings.

2. Theory and Method

Structuralism is based on the assumption that nothing can be understood without relating it to a larger structure (Barry 40). Saussure coined the terms ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ to apply this belief to the system of languages and propositions. ‘Langue’ describes the structure and rules of a given language. ‘Parole’ refers to a proposition in that given language made by an

executive individual (Saussure 13). A ‘parole’ can, thereby, not be understood without the larger structure of the ‘langue’. Scholes abstracted this line of thought in regard to the field of literary studies: “The critic who ‘recovers’ the meaning of any given work always does so by establishing a relation between the work and some system of ideas outside” (Scholes 9). In terms of literary works, an isolated piece of literature like ‘The Dead’ is defined as a ‘parole’ and has to be regarded in the larger context of its ‘langue’ to be made sense of. In this case, the ‘langue’ are the genre conventions of the Anglo-American short story. Furthermore, the analysis of the text also relates it to “a network of intertextual connections” (Barry 50). These intertextual connections are parallels, contrasts, and patterns on the level of plot, structure, and character constellation. After identifying these structures, they have to be compared to structures in other short stories in the larger container of Joyce’s *Dubliners*.

Roland Barthes defined “five particular codes, five related but different sets of rules that govern the production and perception of any given text” his book *S/Z* (Puckett 244). This paper utilises those codes to analyse the text by placing the isolated short story in the larger context of this system of codes. Kent Puckett cites Barthes in his book *Narrative Theory: A Critical Introduction* when defining the five codes:

1. “The hermeneutic code involves ‘all the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution’” (Puckett 245).
2. “The proairetic code is the code of action: actions ‘can fall into various sequences which should be indicated merely by listing them.’ For Barthes, actions … are events that involve some kind of movement or change and that must in that case open and close” (Puckett 245).
3. “The semic code is the code of ‘meanings’, the level at which significances, suggestions, senses, themes gather ‘like motes of dust’ on the surface of the narrative; … That a given character is ‘old’ or ‘musical’ or ‘feminine’ might or might not matter to the plot, but it will ‘tell’ us something about the values contained in or evoked by a whole narrative” (Puckett 245).
4. “The symbolic code is the code of mostly antithetical relations that underwrite and organise and highlight the cultural significance of events and things in a narrative” (Puckett 245).

5. “The cultural code activates ‘references to a science or body of knowledge; in drawing attention to [the cultural code], we merely indicate the type of knowledge … referred to, without going so far as to construct (or reconstruct) the culture they express. The cultural code is the code of allusion, the code that links the discourse of a particular narrative to other discourses” (Puckett 245).

Brodrick formulated the underlying definition for ‘paralysis’ in this paper: “Characters find themselves forever unable (or unwilling) to move, and even institutions such as the church and the government represent a ‘paralysis’ of sorts in their inflexibility and their outdated mode of thinking” (Brodrick 13). Like many other stories in *Dubliners*, ‘The Dead’ concludes with an epiphany to resolve the prior created suspension. The epiphany is just one of the numerous experimental, modernist techniques employed in *Dubliners* but of central importance to the short story’s effect. Susan Garland Mann argues that this moment of insight or understanding toward which the entire story moves has a cognitive effect: “Although external situations do not seem to improve in *Dubliners*, some protagonists develop in the sense that they achieve a degree of self-awareness” (Mann 25). The ‘movement’ in section 4.2 refers to win and loss of social reputation among the dramatis personae. ‘Rise’ corresponds with increase in reputation, and ‘decline’ with loss in reputation.

3. Story and Discourse through Barthes’s five narrative codes

A (Joyce 138-141): Lily welcomes guests. Gabriel and Gretta Conroy arrive. Gabriel and Lily talk about their delay, the weather, Lily’s educational career, her love life, and Christmas. Gabriel reconsiders his pending speech.

Hermeneutic Code: The first enigma is the question to why the text emphasises that “*even* (emphasis added) some of Mary Jane’s pupils” (Joyce 138) come to the annual dance. This snare can be approached by either considering Mary Jane or her pupils as the reason for the emphasis. When assuming Mary Jane as the reason, she would, for some other reason, not be entitled to invite her students. Assuming her pupils to be the reason, on the other hand, poses the question of how they differ from the rest of the guests. In either way, Mary Jane and her pupils are differentiated from her aunts and the other guests, respectively. The text then reveals that Mary Jane is their orphaned niece, encouraging the first line of thought and raising the question of the nature of their relation. However, the text then identifies her as the “main prop

of the household" (Joyce 138), terminating the first line of thought. Shortly afterwards, the suspended answer to the second line of thought reveals her pupils to belong "to the better-classes" (Joyce 138). This specification identifies the other guests as members of some class below Mary Jane's pupil and explains the initial question.

Semantic Code: The first imagery occurs in the form of a personification. "The wheezy hall-door bell clanged again" signals a large number of guests and thereby the dimension of the event (Joyce 138). The text, however, utilises the location of the event to introduce the theme of 'death' and to characterise its inhabitants. 'Death' in conjunction with 'dark' evokes a sinister atmosphere, contrasting the "splendid style" of the event (Joyce 138). Moreover, the death of their brother Pat also foreshadows Gretta's secret by drawing attention to the impact of death. In this instance, Kate and Julia had to move from their former home to the "dark gaunt house on Usher's Island" (Joyce 138). This *gaunt* house introduced 'decay', as a sub-theme of 'death', and starts to characterises Kate and Julia to be doting. Gabriel is covered by snow upon entering, and it takes him some time to rid himself of the inconvenience as "he stood on the mat, scraping the snow from his galoshes …" and "continued scraping his feet vigorously" (Joyce 139). This passage connotes the cold, discomforting nature of 'snow'. Yet, as the text repeats 'snow' as an echo throughout the story, this connotation changes in some passages governed by the adjacent field of words.

Cultural Code: In his arrogance, Gabriel presumes that most of the guests have never read Robert Browning's works as most readers consider them challenging (Joyce 168).

Symbolic Code: The text mediates the antithetical terms 'death' and 'life' through the construction of two different characters. Kate and Julia lose their brother through "death" but gain new life by taking their niece to "live" with them (Joyce 138). This antithesis foreshadows the opposition between Gabriel and Michael.

B (141-143): Kate, Julia, Gabriel, and Gretta talk about their goloshes and anger Gabriel by mocking him for his solicitude. Kate arbitrates by changing the subject and Julia announces Freddy's arrival.

Symbolic Code: The text mediates between the antithetical terms 'jolly' and 'dreadful' by utilising irony in Gabriel's response: "Very jolly it was" (Joyce 141). The contrast between 'a jolly ride' and Gabriel initiating his response with the proposition that they would not repeat last year's ride home creates irony. Furthermore, the east wind blowing and the rattling cab

windows emphasise their discomfort. Gretta's dreadful cold foreshadows Michael Fury's death through the cold.

Semantic Code: The word 'Goloshes' is repeated and referred to ten times during the short passage about Gabriel's solicitude, emphasising the importance. Goloshes connote protection from external sources. In this instance, Gabriel tries to coerce Gretta to wear them to protect her from the cold of which she is fond as "she'd walk home in the snow if she were let" (Joyce 141). This is another foreshadowing to Gabriel's desire for his secret life with her. He attempts to possess her by isolating her from her origins, distinguishing between her and "her people" (Joyce 148). However, he ultimately fails to isolate her from the cold, which symbolises her attraction to the memory of Michael Fury, which she "had locked in her heart for so many years." (Joyce 176)

C (143-144): The waltz ends. Kate orders Julia to give refreshments to some guests. She also tells Gabriel to keep an eye on Freddy and prevent him from coming upstairs if necessary. Julia and the caretaker prepare the table. Mr Browne talks to Kate, but she leaves before he finishes talking. Mr Browne distributes drinks and pours himself a glass of whisky. He tells some jokes to which the ladies laugh at first. Shortly afterwards, they feel uncomfortable because of Mr Browne's obscene humour.

Proairetic Code: Gabriel recognises Freddy Malin's laugh and went down as Kate requested. However, the narrator continues to describe the events that take place upstairs, thereby creating suspense. Descending the stairs to meet Freddy implies a further narrative action involving interaction between Freddy and Gabriel. This snare poses the question to whether Aunt Kate's apprehension will come true and if so whether Gabriel will expel him from the event.

Semantic Code: The text refrains from employing hypernymy by using umbrella terms such as 'cutlery', or 'tableware'. Instead, the hyponyms "dishes and plates, and glasses and bundles of knives and forks and spoons" are itemised in conjunction with the frequent use of 'and' to create the imagery of a bountiful table (Joyce 143). This imagery supports the description of the event "gone off in splendid style as long as anyone could remember" and continues with the detailed imagery of the supper (Joyce 138).

D (144-146): A woman announces quadrilles. Kate and Mary Jane organize pairs. Young men ask women to dance. The piano plays. Freddy enters the room while telling Gabriel

a story. He is greeted by Julia and greets the aunts in turn. Then he sports Mr Browne and walks over to him to repeat the story he told Gabriel. Browne tries to sober him up.

Semantic Code: Many of the images in 'The Dead' belong to the semantic field of 'military' terms. This motif echoes numerous times throughout the story. Mary Jane leading "her recruits quickly from the room" connotes discipline among the guests (Joyce 145). This discipline is also portrayed in the theme of 'repetition'. The annual dance had gone off year after year and the guests perform the same memorised steps while dancing time and again. Furthermore, they all know the procedure of the event as they all patiently await Gabriel's speech: "One of his neighbours nudged him and whispered something to him upon which he allowed his glass to be filled. Gradually as the last glasses were being filled, the conversation ceased" (Joyce 158-159). However, those motifs do also connote 'paralysis'. As the guests are trapped in a repetitive scheme, and 'military' connotes strict obedience.

Cultural Code: Quadrilles are a specific version of English country dances, originating in 17th-century military parades. Thereby, quadrilles also belong to the motif of the 'military'. Additionally, lancers are a variant of quadrilles. After the guests finished the quadrilles, "lancers were arranged" in the very next passage, representing repetition once more (Joyce 157).

E: Mary Jane is playing her Academy piece. Some guests leave the room. Gabriel resents the music and thinks about his aunts' and mother's past, her lack of musical talent, her efforts to maintain the family's respectable public image, his brother's position as senior curate and his degree from the Royal University, her opposition to his marriage, and Gretta's origin. Mary Jane finishes her piece. The guests return and applaud her.

Semantic Code and Cultural Code: An Academy piece is the final exam at a college of music and has, therefore, to display a wide range of masterly musicianship. However, such a composition is artificially difficult. Gabriel and the four young men perceive the music as unbearable because of its academic nature. In contrast to Mary Jane, Gabriel is sensible for a suitable level of pompous style. He revises his speech, adjusting it to his assumed educationally inferior audience. The Academy piece connotes intelligence and diligence, but in this context and through the construction of Gabriel's character also arrogance. The motif of 'arrogance' transitions into the epiphany at the end of the story.

Symbolic Code: The description of Mary Jane's play presents another antithesis of 'redemption vs imprecation': "Her hands racing along the key-board or lifted from it at the

pauses like those of a priestess in momentary imprecation" (Joyce 146). In the context of *Dubliners,* priests are associated with the act of confession and atonement. The priest in 'The Sisters' is driven into insanity through his subjugation to the church. He sits "in the dark in his confession-box, wide-awake and laughing-like softly to himself" because he believes that he has to atone for a mistake (Joyce 10). In 'Grace', Mr Cunningham intends to "make a new man of him [Mr Kernan]" by convincing him to "make a retreat" (Joyce 121; Joyce 133). Even Father Purdon's money-tainted sermon preaches to "find this and this wrong. But, with God's grace, I will rectify this and this" (Joyce 137). The comparison of Mary Jane's play to a priest who imprecates someone creates the antithesis by contrasting the mentioned associations with priests. This differing connotation of priests opposed to the rest of *Dubliners* challenges the church's restrictive influence and, thereby, 'paralysis'.

F (147-149): Lancers are arranged. Gabriel is partnered with Mrs Ivors. She scolds him for writing for *The Daily Express* and his cosmopolitan attitude but invites him and his wife to an excursion to the Aran Isles. Gabriel thinks about the reasons for his writing and their careers. At first, he reacts reserved to the accusations but becomes fiercely, eventually.

Cultural Code: The text constructs Miss Ivors as a symbol for the Gaelic revival. The Gaelic revival was a movement to promote the use of Irish language and culture, opposing the Anglicisation of Ireland. She is described as *not* wearing a low-cut bodice to emphasise her rebellious nature and wears a brooch bearing an Irish device. She advocates engaging with her "own land" and culture (Joyce 147-149). She has a grudge against Gabriel because he writes for *The Daily Express,* which was founded by the English Sir Arthur Pearson and is, therefore, a symbol for the ongoing Anglicisation.

Semantic Code: The Psychonarration of Gabriel describes a wage of fifteen shillings he receives for his reviews as a "paltry cheque" (Joyce 148). In sharp contrast to this, Farrington pawns his watch in desperation for six shillings in 'Counterparts'. Gabriel's 'paltry' cheque alongside with many other images such as the "heavy chandelier", as well as the presence of "better-class" ladies and the setting of the story distinguishes 'The Dead' from the rest of *Dubliners* in terms of financial agency (Joyce 146).

G (149-151): Lancers are over. Gabriel moves to a remote corner and talks to Mrs Malins. She tells him about her crossing and her enjoyable life in Glasgow with her daughter. Gabriel's thoughts wander in the meantime. He thinks about his argument with Miss Ivors.

Gretta approaches Gabriel to convey Kate's request for him to carve the goose. He tells her they are not accepting Miss Ivors's invitation to the west of Ireland, which makes her leave in anger. He then walks over to a window to revise the heading of his speech once again: "Irish hospitality, sad memories, the Three Graces, Paris, the quotation from Browning." (Joyce 151)

Symbolic Code: Gabriel is occupied inside with his promise to carve the goose, but longs to be outside: "Gabriel's warm trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window. How cool it must be outside" How pleasant it would be to walk out alone" (Joyce 151). This passage contains two antitheses: Inside/outside and warm/cold. The first introduces Gabriel's longing for escape and foreshadows his epiphany. His trembling fingers create the second antithesis. He would be shivering outside in the cold, but this is contrasted with his trembling fingers while he is inside the warm house, reversing the paradigm and supporting his wish to escape his 'hostile' environment.

Hermeneutic Code: The free indirect discourse about Gabriel's thoughts explicitly poses a question about Miss Ivors: Whether she genuinely appreciate his review despite being so strongly biased by her ideology. However, this enigma is not solved, and Gabriel persuades himself of her ill will. He spontaneously composes a new passage for his speech to retaliate against Miss Ivors for her insolence. He gets obsessed to a point at which he reveals his real opinion of his aunts: "What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old women?" (Joyce 151) This hints another reason for the foreshadowed epiphany.

H (151-153): Mr Browne escorts Julia to the piano. Aunt Julia sings one of her own songs. Everyone applauds her. Freddy compliments her and rebukes Mr Browne for trying to take advantage of the situation. Kate expresses her irritation with how the church replaced Julia with some boys. Mary Jane tries to soothe Aunt Kate and ends the conversation.

Semantic Code and Hermeneutic Code: Aunt Julia's singing is compared to the imagery of "swift and secure flight" (Joyce 152). This imagery conveys excitement and pleasure and presents a sharp contrast to Mary Jane's unbearable Academy piece full of rules. The audience's loud applause, alongside Freddy's and Gabriel's explicit mentioning of this year's outstanding performance, raises the question of the reason for her significant improvement. Julia's parting with the choir constitutes a crucial change. However, this enigma is an equivocation because Kate describes Julia's engagement with the choir as "slaving" while Julia happily remembers these days and resisted her sister's advice to leave the choir (Joyce 153). Therefore, her parting

with the choir could be and not be the solution to the enigma. However, her parting with the choir is simultaneously her parting with the church. The boy in 'The Sisters' experiences a liberating sensation after the death of the priest who tried to manipulate him into pursuing an ecclesiastical office: "I felt even annoyed at discovering in myself a sensation of freedom at discovering in myself a sensation of freedom" (Joyce 5). Despite his subconscious aversion for the institution, he defends the priest against his relatives' hostility. Considering these parallel structures reveals Aunt Julia's parting with the church as the liberating change that caused the significant improvement of her singing. Gabriel's preference for an emotional song over one full of rules and Julia's improvement after parting with the church further challenge 'paralysis'.

Cultural Code: Aunt Julia was expelled from the choir due to a papal rescript, issued on 22nd November 1903. This rescript, by Pope Pius X, classified the church's choir as a "real liturgical office" (Joyce 173). Women were not allowed to pursue such an office and were replaced by boys in the process, restricting their agency.

I (153-154): Mary Jane and Gretta try to persuade Miss Ivors to stay, but she refuses their proposal. Gabriel offers to see her home upon which Miss Ivors leaves alone.

Semantic Code and Cultural Code: Miss Ivors is the only character to leave the ongoing event, thereby violating cultural norms and insulting the hostess: "I am afraid you didn't enjoy yourself at all, said Mary Jane *hopelessly* (emphasis added) … Mary Jane gazed after her, a *moody puzzled expression* (emphasis added) on her face" (Joyce 154). She does not only leave but "broke away from them", emphasising the forceful nature of the act and the necessity to do so (Joyce 154). In contrast to Gabriel, who only fantasises about his escape, Miss Ivors succeeds to escape from social pressure.

J (154-159): The dinner starts. Gabriel carves the goose while Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia, and Lily serve the food to the guests who demand Kate and Julia to have a seat as well. Freddy makes Kate sit down. Mr Bartell D'Arcy, Freddy Malins, Mr Browne, Mary Jane, and Aunt Kate converse about various opera singers. Freddy and Mr Browne argue. Gretta and Mary Jane serve pudding. The topic of conversation shifts to the hospitality and practices of the monks of Mount Melleray. The conversation ceases as all glasses are being filled.

Semantic Code: The second instance of the use of hyponymy is more extensive than the first. All the dishes are itemised and presented with rich imagery. This extensive listing of the dishes contributes to creating a hospitable atmosphere, thereby contrasting the hostile

atmosphere perceived by Gabriel. To this end, the images contradict each other. On the one hand, images create a comfortable environment: “On a *bed* (emphasis added) of creased paper strewn *with springs* (emphasis added) of parsley, lay a great ham” (Joyce 155). Mr Browne’s suggestion that the monks could sleep in “comfortable spring bed[s]” retrospectively reinforces the effect of this image (Joyce 158). On the other hand, some images connote the semantic field of ‘war’ with the comparisons to “rival ends” and “sentries”, as well as the pudding being “replenished” (Joyce 155). Additionally, “ministers of jelly” refers to the church, an institution which exerts a subconscious restriction of agency on characters such as Aunt Julia. These references to hostility within the hospitable atmosphere constitute a portion of Gabriel’s subliminal uncomfortableness.

‘Death’, as a recurring theme in ‘The Dead’, is represented in the monks’ habit of sleeping in their coffins. Outstandingly, the covert narrator also transmits this theme in the description of the ongoing event: “As the subject had grown lugubrious it was *buried* (emphasis added) in a silence” (Joyce 158). The text also utilises the topic to emphasise the submissiveness to institutions. Kate does not cast doubt on the monks’ bizarre behaviour because “the rule of the order” is sufficient reason for her not to question it (Joyce 158). When Mr Browne impugns her reasoning, she simply “repeated that it was the rule, that was all” (Joyce 158). Mrs Malins approves Aunt Kate’s attitude by characterising the monks as pious for obeying the rules. Characters that break with the apparently established norms of the society are sanctioned: Freddy is almost excluded from the event by Aunt Kate for misbehaving, Mr Browne is ignored because of his obscene humour, and Miss Ivors is disfavoured by Mary Jane for “discourteously” leaving early without apparent reason (Joyce 160). However, the monks who simply submit to the church are presented as mere living dead by the text. Applying the paradigm of ‘paralysis’ to *Dubliners* results in numerous cases of characters with severely restricted agency due to submission to institutions or daily routine.

K (159-162): The conversations cease, and Gabriel stands up. He gives a speech about: Irish hospitality in comparison to other nations, the new generation’s attitude and qualities, memories of the deceased, the past and the present, friendship, the hostesses, and the prize for the best hostess. He then toasts to their health and the audience response by singing for Kate, Julia, and Mary Jane. Only Freddy does not sing along. The guests repeat the acclamation several times.

Proairetic Code and Cultural Code: Mr Bartell refuses Julia's invitation to fill his glass but changes his mind upon being whispered something to by another guest. The text does not explicitly reveal what he said and how he was able to convince Mr Bartell. Deciphering the implicit solution to the enigma requires cultural knowledge of "modern nations[']" customs (Joyce 160). Filling the glasses of every guest while the conversation ceased suggests an immediately following action. One member of the company stands up and holds a monologue to which the rest listens quietly. With the closing line, he invites everyone to drink in celebration of the hostesses. Everyone accepts his proposal. The crucial required knowledge is that in this cultural context drinking to someone's health is an act of appreciation. With the cultural code in consideration, the guest's proposition points out the imminent necessity of a full glass to Mr Bartell D'Arcy. The inferred proposition defines the structure for the whole story part 'K' as a speech and a subsequent toast are imperative to follow. Yet, Mr Bartell's unknowingness creates another enigma. All the other guests let their glass be filled in preparation for the pending event of which they know due to the annual dance's repetitive nature. The text, thereby, creates distance between Mr Bartell and the rest of the company and the effect of the enigma continues in story part 'M'.

Semantic Code: Gabriel's speech continues to present numerous themes that were previously introduced. 'Repetition' is apparent in the imagery of the circle and the two-time use of "recur" (Joyce 159; Joyce 160). His subliminal perception of hostility within the hospitality is expressed through his rhetoric interjection: "Or perhaps, I had better say, the victims – of the hospitality of certain good ladies" (Joyce 159). The theme of 'memories' and the dimension of its significance for the story is already introduced on the very first page of 'The Dead': "It had gone off in splendid style *as long as anyone could remember* (emphasis added)" (Joyce 138). The text foreshadows the nature of Gretta's secret by Gabriel warning his audience: "There are always in gatherings such as this sadder thoughts … thoughts of the past, of youth, of changes, of absent faces that we miss here to-night" (Joyce 160). The secret's impact on her is also prognosticated in the speech: "And were we to brood upon them always we could not find the heart to go on bravely with our work among the living" (Joyce 160). Investigating this passage under the paradigm of 'paralysis' identifies 'lingering on the past' as another factor which restricts its subjects' agency. Gabriel's conscious engagement with a paralysing factor marks a fundamental difference between 'The Dead' and the other short stories in *Dubliners*. The closing passage in 'Eveline' illustrates other character's unconscious subjection to 'paralysis' most explicitly. In contrast to Gabriel, the protagonist displays absolute

‘paralysis’ in the face of ‘past’ and ‘routine’ and surrenders herself to the third paralysing factor ‘religion’ in her desperation.

Cultural Code: ‘Paris’ is a vague allusion which requires to take the following sentence into account (Joyce 161). The allusion refers to a character in Greek mythology who was delegated to award the Apple of Discord to the most beautiful out of three goddesses. He appointed Aphrodite, who in return, promised the most beautiful woman to him. Parallel to Paris, Gabriel bears the burden to “award the prize” to one of the three hostesses (Joyce 161). However, he refuses to choose between them and, thereby, denies himself the reward. This parallel is another foreshadowing instance to Gretta’s secret.

L (162-165): Mr Browne and Freddy are outside trying to call two cabs. Kate and Mary Jane gossip about Mr Browne. The latter enters and tells them about Freddy’s efforts. Gabriel puts on his coat. They notice the sound of the piano. Gabriel tells them a story about his late grandfather and his horse. Mary Jane opens the hall-door to let Freddy in. Mr Browne and Freddy help Mrs Malins into the cab. Mr Browne, Freddy, Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia, and Mary Jane give directions to the cabman. Mr Browne, Freddy, and Mrs Malins leave in the cab.

Semantic Code: The story proceeds to lead up to the revelation of Michael Fury’s death by repeating the motif ‘death of cold’ immediately at the beginning of the third part (Joyce 162). Furthermore, it contrasts Gabriel’s inverted perception of the outside and the inside, emphasising his wish to escape. The imagery “laid on here like the gas”, meaning ‘being consistently present’, portrays Kate’s annoyance with Mr Browne (Joyce 162). ‘Repetition/routine’ is repeated in the embedded narrative through the horse’s compulsion to walk around King Billy’s statue as a result from the habit to walk “round and round” in the mill (Joyce 163). Additionally, the motif ‘circle’ is repeated by Gabriel imitating the horse.

Proairetic Code: Mr Browne informs Aunt Kate and Mary Jane that Freddy is outside calling for a cab. His exertions have two possible outcomes: Either he will get a cab or not. Gabriel’s story prolongs the outcome. After Gabriel finishes his story, Freddy informs the others that he got one cab, thereby, giving the suspended answer. Requesting a cab further implies someone to employ the cabman’s service. However, there is no suspense between this question and the revelation of the characters taking the cab.

Cultural Code: King Billy’s statue alludes to William III, who won the Battle of the Boyne against James II. The later was deposed because of his opposition to the Scottish and

English parliament which resisted his demand to repeal the anti-Catholic acts. Numerous members of the Catholic Irish upper-class were dispossessed of their lands, and Irish Catholics from all classes experienced rigorous restrictions in the public sphere as a result of the anti-Catholic acts. Accordingly, the statue is a symbol for the suppression of Irish Catholics under the Penal Laws. Applying the paradigm of 'paralysis' to the motif of running circles around King Billy's statue creates a strong notion of restricted agency, and thus 'paralysis', due to the economic combination of imagery and symbol.

M (165- 167): Gabriel watches Gretta listening to the song. Mary Jane identifies Mr Bartell D' Arcy as the singer. The singing stops as Mary Jane is about to ascend the staircase. Mr Bartell D'Arcy, Miss O'Callaghan, and Gretta descend the staircase. Mary Jane, Miss O'Callaghan, and Aunt Kate accuse Mr D'Arcy of having lied about his impaired voice. Mr D'Arcy rejects the accusation and puts on his overcoat. Julia, Kate, and Mary Jane approve of Mr D'Arcy's excuse for his impaired voice. Gabriel watches Gretta. Gretta asks Mr D'Arcy about the name of the song he was singing. Goodbye is said several times.

Semantic Code: The enigma of Mr D'Arcy's unknowingness in story part 'K' creates distance between him and the other guests. This distance is taken up when he withdraws from the company to sing his song. He is so remote from the other characters that his voice is "made plaintive by distance" (Joyce 165). Upon being detected, he stops his singing at once and reacts testily. Gabriel assumes his song to be "in the old Irish tonality" which connotes the Gaelic revival and identifies Mr D'Arcy as a supporter of the movement (Joyce 165). However, Miss Ivors fell into disfavour after standing up for 'her own country', and Gabriel expressed his resentment with the idea: "O, to tell you the truth, retorted Gabriel suddenly, I´m sick of my own country, sick of it!" (Joyce 149) Mr D'Arcy's unknowingness of the pending speech indicates that he was only recently invited to attend the annual dance. Several guests try to avoid attracting negative attention by pretending to be something they are not. Gabriel acquired his reputation as his aunts' 'saviour' and "favourite nephew", despite thinking of them as "only two ignorant old women" (Joyce 141; Joyce 151). The four young men left upon hearing Mary Jane's tune but clapped "most vigorous[ly]" once she finished (Joyce 147). Furthermore, the text accuses the majority of the guests of such behaviour. Since the text constructs the four young men to be unnamed, they are representatively for any other person of the company. 'Four' functions to allude to a considerable number of guests.

Despite the risk of falling into disfavour, Mr D'Arcy longs so vehemently for his secret, private life that he sings his song clandestinely. His longing foreshadows Gabriel's longing for his secret life with Gretta which, in turn, leads up to the peripeteia. It results from his desire to possess Gretta. Gabriel is mesmerised with the sight of her listening to the song and imagines to paint that very moment. 'Painting something' connotes to capture a moment and preserve it. Just like a painter, Gabriel desires to isolate and possess her Gretta. He attempts to severe her roots by meticulously disassociating her from her family: "She's from Connacht, isn't she? Her people are, said Gabriel shortly" (Joyce 148). Additionally, the narrator refers to Gretta exclusively as 'his wife' to emphasise their relation. Gabriel wants Gretta to be just that: his wife. He defines their relation when fantasising about their secret life: Their children, *his writing, her household cares* (emphasis added) had not quenched his soul or hers" (Joyce 168).

Hermeneutic Code: The narrator's description of the scene briefly conceals Gretta's identity. The text employs the words 'dark' and 'shadow' to construct the scene to be obscure, thereby presenting Gretta as an anonymous silhouette. The third-person narrator' description of the scene and Gabriel's perception of the scene, as the focalizer, blend into each other in this passage. "A woman was standing … in the shadows also" is still part of the description since 'also' links it to the description of Gabriel who "was in a dark part of the hall" (Joyce 165). At this point, narration shifts to focalisation. Despite not being in the right angle to see the woman's face, Gabriel recognises the shape of her skirt and immediately identifies the woman as Gretta. The fact that Gabriel is able to reveal her identity ostensibly renders the narrator's effort to conceal it futile. However, the revelation happens only in the sentence after Gabriel's perception and is, thus, slightly postponed. The brief enigma about the woman's identity creates an effect of alienation between Gabriel and Gretta. This alienation translates into distance between these two characters, which foreshadows Gretta's secret and the peripeteia.

N (167-170): Gabriel, Gretta, Mr D'Arcy, and Miss O'Callaghan walk along the quay. Gabriel remembers past moments with Gretta. They take a cab and converse briefly. Gabriel pays the cabman and leaves together with Gretta. They enter a hotel. The receptionist shows them to their room and asks them when he should wake them in the morning. Gabriel answers and shuts the door.

Semantic Code: The flashback to some moments of Gabriel's and Gretta's secret life contains several terms that connote different seasons. "Twittering birds" and the "sunny web of curtains" refer to spring and summer while "glove" and "very cold" resemble fall and winter

(Joyce 168). Additionally, these distinct memories in the free indirect discourse blend into each other in order to create the notion of an elaborated past as a couple. This notion amplifies the effect of the peripeteia by emphasising the extensive period of time Gretta preserved the memory of Michael Fury and kept it secret from Gabriel.

Symbolic Code: The texts contrasts the antithetical terms ‘protection’ and ‘assault’ in Gabriel’s confused desire for his wife. In his fascination with her, “he longed to defend her against something and then to be alone with her” because she seems “so frail” to him (Joyce 168). His wish for the quest to protect her and earn her as a reward, as well as the display of psychological aspects of his love are structures from the subgenre of medieval romance. However, his role as the ‘protector’ soon changes to the of the ‘assailant’ when his “desire to seize her” almost overwhelms him. In the free indirect discourse, he figures that “to take her as she was would be brutal” but is unable to banish the idea from his mind (Joyce 171). Instead, he has to focus in order to “restrain himself from breaking out into *brutal* (emphasis added) language” and “longed to cry to her from his souls, to *crush* her body against his, to *overmaster* her” (Joyce 171). Gabriel is so concentrated that he fails to notice how Gretta advances towards him, emphasising the intensity of mental resources he has to muster to control his urge. His desire is satisfied at once when Gretta shows affection towards him on her own accord. However, his good fortune turns into a disillusioning realisation just after his lust was satisfied, constituting the peripeteia.

O (170-175): Gabriel asks Gretta whether she was feeling all right. They talk about Freddy’s Christmas-card shop and that he returned his loan to Gabriel. Gabriel tries to retrain his desire for her. Gretta kisses Gabriel. She bursts into tears when Gabriel asks her about what was on her mind. She tells him about Michael Fury, their past affection, and his death. Gabriel gets angry and feels ashamed of himself. Gabriel tries to comfort Gretta. She falls asleep.

Semantic Code: Story part ‘O’ commences by proceeding to foreshadow the embedded narrative about Michael Fury and Gabriel’s epiphany. The text implies the circumstances of Michael’s death when “a ghostly light” illuminates the room, and when Gabriel asks Gretta whether she feels “ill or weak” (Joyce 170; Joyce 171). Furthermore, the text foreshadows the epiphany without the necessity to elaborate. It refrains from presenting a detailed description of the mirror, which triggers the epiphany, but utilises two attributive adjectives to subtly draw attention to the “large swinging mirror” (Joyce 170). A mirror connotes ‘reflexion’ and thereby emphasises Gabriel’s thought process. The epiphany happens in three parts. The first is

constituted by the psychonarration of Gabriel's implicit self-realisation when he observes himself in the mirror. On the one hand, "his glimmering gilt-rimmed eye-glasses" connote his intellectual capacities (Joyce 172). On the other hand, they symbolise the façade he tries to maintain throughout the story. He resorts to this façade so routinely that even he is alienated from himself, as his own "expression always puzzled him when he saw it in a mirror" (Joyce 172).

The second part of the epiphany presents his explicit self-realisation in free indirect discourse. Words like 'ludicrous', 'pennyboy', 'clownish', 'pitiable', and 'fatuous' characterise free indirect discourse as they mark subjectivity by representing his agitation. Furthermore, the word 'vulgarians' is part of his language repertoire as he used 'vulgar people' before. The peripeteia triggers the second part. Just when Gabriel is confident that his desire for Gretta's affection is satisfied, she reveals her absorption with Michael Fury. Realising the foolishness of his egocentrism, Gabriel becomes aware of his aversion to his façade and his obsession for his reputation. This façade and obsession constitute his 'paralysis' as they severely reduce his agency. He barely dares to answer Miss Ivor's accusations and proclaim his opinion because "he could not risk a grandiose phrase with her" (Joyce 148). Furthermore, he suppresses his passion for poetry by refraining from incorporating some citations from Robert Browning because "he *feared* (emphasis added) they would be above the heads of his hearers" and that "he would only make himself ridiculous by quoting poetry to them which they could not understand" (Joyce 141). His passion for literature is emphasised in free indirect discourse when he states that "the books he received for review were almost more welcome than the paltry cheque" (Joyce 148). The third part is another free indirect discourse. The question "From what had it proceeded?" signals a partial shift from the narrator towards Gabriel's consciousness. He specifies all instances that contributed to causing his agitation. Unlike all other short stories in *Dubliners*, 'The Dead' presents a change in the main character's conscious after having the epiphany. Gabriel decided that "the time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" (Joyce 176). Before the epiphany, he refuses Miss Ivor's invitation and isolates Gretta from her origins. After the epiphany, however, he displays the opposite intention and is aware of his aversion to his façade. Applying the paradigm of 'paralysis' to this contrast identifies Gabriel as the only character of the collection to potentially defy 'paralysis'. However, the text does not include flashforwards to confirm his momentary intentions through actions.

4. Movement in the character constellation

4.1 Gabriel, Freddy, Mr Browne

Two sets consisting of three characters each are to be regarded in terms of character development in 'The Dead'. Gabriel Conroy, Freddy Malins, and Mr Browne form the first set. These characters are linked to another through comparisons, parallels, and contrasts. Gabriel assumes a special role because his character development continues after Freddy's and Mr Browne's last appearance to constitute most of the third part of the story. The set's underlying pattern is a contrast between Freddy's social rise and Mr Browne's social decline while Gabriel alternates between rising and declining. This alternation, again, is patterned by private and public interactions. Gabriel's private conversations always end in him being ashamed, agitated, or nervous, which can also be derived by him avoiding eye contact. He then tries to compensate for the decline through fleeing into the public sphere by adjusting his clothing (Joyce 140-142) or rehearsing his speech (Joyce 151). Opposed to that, Gabriel thrives in public interaction. He is well aware of these capabilities and enjoys the positive responses he receives by manipulating the audience while carving the goose and giving his speech. Mr Conroy is the first character of this set to be introduced by implicit characterisation through psycho-narration of Kate and Julia Morkan. The text uses the special occasion of such a delicate social event to link Kate's and Julia's anxious mood towards the evening with the Conroy's delayed arrival to characterise Gabriel right from the beginning as the impatiently awaited saviour. Simultaneously, the delay functions as the first connecting instance of Freddy and Gabriel when the psycho-narration mentions that Freddy is also delayed. The connection continues by mediating the contrast between the hopefully awaited Gabriel and the dreadfully awaited Freddy into the Misses Morkan's equated interest: "And that was what brought them every two minutes to the bannisters to ask Lily had Gabriel or Freddy come" (Joyce 139). Furthermore, the text constructs the connection between these two characters by describing Freddy's appearance to be "of Gabriel's size and build" (Joyce 145). However, the very next sentence ensures to keep the characters distinct by utilising the diactic pair 'Up/Down' by contrasting the colour in Freddy's face with Gabriel's. While "the high colour of his [Gabriel's] cheeks pushed upwards *even* (emphasis added) to his forehead" (Joyce140), Freddy's "face was (…) touched with colour *only* (emphasis added) at the thick hanging lobes of his ears" (Joyce 145).

Lily is the first instance of Gabriel's decline as the conversation ends abruptly with him avoiding to look at her, flicking lustre into his shoes, and pulling down his waistcoat (Joyce

140). He even feels the need to buy himself out of the situation by tossing Lily a coin. Only by arranging his cuffs and his tie and rehearsing his speech, he can dispel the gloom from the conversation. The following conversation with his aunts and wife can be regarded as a mixture of private and public interaction because more than two interlocutors are involved. However, the number of characters constituting the public sphere is still limited at this point in the story. During the cause of the story, Gabriel's status recovers through his aunts' affection and affirmation of everything he says, but also again compromised by his wife's jokes on Gabriel's behalf upon which he reacts by "patting his tie reassuringly" (Joyce 142). This conversation ends with Kate restoring Gabriel's status by requesting his aid in overseeing Freddy Malins.

Another private conversation occurs in the second part of the story when Gabriel is paired with Miss Ivors. She cross-examines him and goes as far as to insult him. Gabriel responses only reserved and again tries to escape by resorting to his abilities to participate in public life by "taking part in the dance with great energy" (Joyce 149). Shortly after that, Mrs Conroy conveys Aunt Kate's request to carve the goose Gabriel, thereby reinstating his status. Gabriel offends his wife immediately afterwards by reacting coldly and impudent to Gretta's joy about Molly's offer to visit Galway. According to the pattern, Mr Conroy copes with failing a private interaction by rehearsing his speech. Miss Ivors's rejection of Gabriel's offer to see her home represents his last decline in the second part. Immediately afterwards, Aunt Kate calls desperately for Gabriel to carve the goose, again reinstating his status. Gabriel's "sudden animation" and taking "his seat boldly at the head of the table" indicate what the next sentence explicitly states: "He felt quite at ease now for he was an expert carver and liked nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well-laden table" (Joyce 155). This repetition emphasises his honed social skills when acting in the public sphere. He manipulates the audience by carving second helpings without serving himself until the audience starts protesting. This gains him their attention and recognition. Gabriel goes further by satisfying the audience only for the moment by taking a long draught of stout and continues to carve. As no further response comes on its own accord, he decides to address his audience to attract their attention once again in which he succeeds. At that moment, Gabriel is so complacent to bid his audience to "kindly forget my existence, ladies and gentlemen, for a few minutes" (Joyce 156). This form of addressing will be repeated five times during his speech and connects Gabriel to Mr Browne through assuming the role of a showman just as Mr Browne did after Julia's singing. The forced responses to his speech represent Gabriel's last rise during the second part. Right at the start, he admits to being "afraid my poor powers as a speaker are all too inadequate" (Joyce 159).

The audience immediately responses by displaying their faith in Gabriel's abilities. Besides, he states to give the speech every year, to be a teacher, and to be a literary critique to a renowned newspaper. Additionally, his speech is well-structured. He uses 'ladies and gentlemen' five times to begin a new topic and implements several rhetoric interjections. To top his speech of, Gabriel repeats that his poor powers are not adequate to award this year's prize to one of the hostesses but instead chooses to honour all "Three Graces of the Dublin musical world" (Joyce 161). Combining this statement and the rhetoric devices displayed with Gabriel's vanity about his distinguished education proofs his deliberate manipulation of the audience to satisfy his greed for recognition and need to compensate for the failures in his private sphere.

In contrast to Gabriel, Freddy Malins starts at the very bottom of the social reputation. Kate and Julia "would not wish for worlds that any of Mary Jane's pupil should see him under the influence" and even ask their favourite nephew to deny him access to the social event (Joyce 139). Furthermore, the Misses Morkan do not rush down immediately to welcome Freddy as they did with Gabriel but greet him only when he comes to them on his own accord. However, Freddy Malins's first appearance is accompanied by applause, foreshadowing his character development (Joyce 143). The majority of his development derives from contrasting him and Mr Browne. His second appearance implicitly confirms Aunt Kate's apprehension. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the text contains exclusively implicit allusions to Freddy's alcoholism: "Gabriel could be seen piloting Freddy Malins across the landing"; "he was laughing heartily in a high key at a story which he had been telling Gabriel"; he "crossed the room on rather shaky legs"; "and his poor mother made him take the pledge on New Year's Eve" (Joyce 145). The explicit depiction of Mr Browne's drinking behaviour contrasts the implicit allusions and connects these two characters. While Kate and Julia try everything to keep the drunkard Freddy away from Mary Jane's pupil from the better-class, they readily consign them to Mr Browne's custody. Ironically, the latter misbehaves under the influence by telling them inappropriate stories and violating their personal space by leaning "forward a little too confidentially" (Joyce 144).

Freddy's social rise begins in his interaction with Mr Browne during which the latter pours out for himself another glass of whisky, making his face wrinkle with mirth. The social rise happens subliminally since it is not constituted by any of Freddy's actions, but by what the text omits: In contrast to Mr Browne, Freddy is not taking a drink (Joyce 146). Alcohol and Mr Browne, however, are connected on several occasions. He attempts to land a joke alluding to

alcohol, drinks two times and jokingly insists that he needs alcohol (Joyce 144). His "face was once more wrinkling with mirth" as he "poured out himself another glass of whisky", before adding another allusion to alcohol to Mary Jane's excuse for Kate's frankness (Joyce 146; Joyce 153). The contrast between these two characters continues after aunt Julia is greeted with loud applause after singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*. Mr Browne tries to take advantage of the situation and attempts to seize the spotlight for himself by advertising Julia as his latest discovery "in the manner of a showman" (Joyce 152). Freddy reacts disgruntled to Browne's egocentric behaviour and denies him any recognition. This display of righteousness contributes to Freddy's social rise. Additionally, the responses to Julia's musical act can be compared with the responses to Mary Jane's Academic piece before. Freddy's enthusiastic praising is similar to the four young men whose applause was the most vigorous despite them leaving the room for the duration of the song. Their obvious hypocrisy is contrasting Freddy's genuine admiration which is created through the limited variety of repeated words and the use of dots to reinforce the psycho-narration stating that words are failing him: "That's the truth. Upon my word and honour that's the truth. I never heard your voice sound so fresh and so … so clear and fresh" (Joyce 152).

The next passage of matter stands out from Freddy's linear rising character progression. It differs from the rest in that both, Freddy and Mr Browne, fail in this context, marking the intersection of their respective inverted linear character developments. Both characters break with the etiquette of avoiding quarrels. The Morkans are desperately trying to settle the dispute when Mr Browne expresses his irritation with Freddy's previous interference with his plans and Freddy publicly accuses him of being a racist (Joyce 156). The next instance connects the three characters one again. Starting with an implicit characterisation of Gabriel never eating sweets and preferring celery, the text ties Gabriel to Freddy by making them the only characters that eat the celery and goes on to connect Freddy to Mr Browne by repeating the proposition of being "under doctor's care" (Joyce 158). While Freddy is genuinely under the doctor's care and seemingly follows his advice, Mr Browne uses the lie about following "the doctor's orders" to justify his drinking behaviour (Joyce 144). The song following Gabriel's well-received speech is another opportunity for Mr Browne to capitalise on someone else's work by assuming the leading role. Freddy, however, is the only guest who refuses to affirm Gabriel's hypocritical speech by not singing along. Gabriel plasters the hostesses with praises while the text already reveald his real opinion of his aunts when Gabriel rehearsed his speech. The reason Freddy refrains from singing along is that he sees through all the hypocrisy and lies. This thesis

statement is supported by taking into factor Freddy's objection to Mr Browne's attempt of capitalising on Julia's song, comparing his genuine praises to the fake applause of the four young men, and uncovering his alcoholism as his way of escaping the insincere society. The text makes the characters "turn towards one another, as if in melodious conference, while they sang with emphasis: *Unless he tells a lie, unless he tells a lie*" (Joyce 162). This implicitly accuses all of the characters except Freddy to be liars. Comparing this pattern to the corpus of *Dubliners* supports this line of argumentation. Many of the short stories present alcohol as a means of escaping reality. In 'After the Race', Jimmy Doyle drinks alcohol to suppress his conscious social inferiority to his friends while the main characters of 'A Little Cloud', 'Counterparts', and 'Grace' use alcohol to escape their monotonous and frustrating life. But Freddy appreciates other characters' efforts like Julia's outstanding performance which is why he ensures that the other guests praise the hostesses' hospitality by "acting as officer with his fork on high" (Joyce 162).

Mr Browne's and Freddy's initial positions reach their inverted positions in the third part of the story. This is signalled by the respective circumstances of the repeated proposition "Now isn't he [Freddy] a terrible fellow" and "Well, isn't Freddy terrible?" (Joyce 145: Joyce 165) Accompanying the first instance, Kate is displeased with Freddy's condition and pities "his poor mother", while the semic code paints a gloomy atmosphere in describing Gabriel's dark brows (Joyce 145). The circumstances accompanying the second instance, however, are of the opposite nature. Kate's attitude towards Freddy and the atmosphere are represented by everybody's genuine laughter that contrasts the many occasions of feigned behaviour in the second part of the story. All instances of such behaviour can be classified as feigned behaviour because the text describes the character's displayed behaviour as well as their ulterior thoughts. The four young gentlemen want to attract positive attention by expressing their appreciation for Mary Jane even though they "had gone away quietly" for the duration of the song (Joyce 146-147). Gabriel does not want to attract negative attention by quarrelling with Ms Ivors and attempts to "cover his agitation by taking part in the dance with great energy" despite being irritated because "she had no right to call him a West Briton before people, even in a joke" (Joyce 149-150). The text contrasts the initial gloomy atmosphere with this atmosphere of enjoyment in the third part of the story to emphasise Freddy's inverted position. Furthermore, while Kate pitied Mrs Malins for her unpresentable son, the text creates Freddy as a considerate son. This contrast is created by drawing attention to their mother-son-relationship by referring to Freddy as "her son" (Joyce 164). Additionally, this relationship is apparent throughout the

whole text for the narrator consistently uses his first name and his surname. The text continues by emphasising the "long time" Freddy spends to settle his mother comfortably and the semic code of "the great danger" Freddy puts himself in by reporting to his mother about the situation (Joyce 164). The level of agency once more contrasts Mr Browne and Freddy on two occasions. Firstly, while Mr Browne comes in to inform Kate, Julia, Mary Jane, and Gabriel that Freddy is trying to reach a cab, Freddy is actively outside to complete the task under great "exertions" (Joyce 164). Secondly, Freddy actively settles his mother on the seat while Mr Browne passively helps him with advice (Joyce 164). This difference in agency was already introduced when Freddy captured Kate and "plumed her down on her chair" while Mr Browne only passively begged them to sit down (Joyce 156).

Mr Browne's inverted position is further created by the text's presentation of him as the 'unwelcome guest' in the third part, while Freddy was presented as such in the first part by Kate wishing to exclude him from the event (Joyce 143). Kate's abrupt leaving while he still talks to her, despite her obsessive attempts to please all the guests foreshadows her meaning of him (Joyce 143). She gossips about how "he [Mr Browne] had been laid on here like the gas … all during Christmas" (Joyce 162). Taking into account another passage in which Mr Browne candidly admits that he would exploit the monks' hospitality (Joyce 158) contributes to the depiction of him as the 'unwelcome guest'. Finally, Gabriel spells this exact situation out when he talks to Gretta: "It's a pity he [Freddy] wouldn't keep away from that Browne, because he's not a bad fellow at heart." (Joyce 171) The imagery of them having their heads out of the opposite sides of the cab and directing the cabman differently illustrates the opposition between Mr Browne and Freddy (Joyce 164)

4.2 Kate, Julia, Mary Jane

The second set's character constellation is not as dynamic as the first set's. It is rather static because their interrelationship is constructed at the beginning and merely reconfirmed throughout the cause of the story. The text introduces Kate and Julia together. It initially puts them on par with another by presenting them exercising the same activities and utilising the plural when mentioning the "*Misses* (emphasis added) Morkan's annual dance" (Joyce 138). However, this is the only passage which constructs them as equals. Shortly after introducing the two hostesses, the text presents Mary Jane as their orphaned niece and "main prop of the

household" (Joyce 138). This has two effects: Firstly, the text connects Mary Jane as an indispensable member of the family to the previously introduced duo. Secondly, the subsequent introduction and family relationship create distance between Mary Jane and her aunts. The construction and use of her name reinforce the latter effect. Mary Jane is the only character besides Freddy Malins to whom the narrator consistently refers to by using a name comprised of two units. It is highly probable that her full name is Mary Jane Morkan, but the surname is not used in the text. As explained before, the text utilises Freddy's name to create a close relationship with his mother. Mary's name, on the other hand, is used to create distance between her and her aunts. However, a psychonarration of Lily in which describes them as "her three mistresses" relativises this distance (Joyce 139). The next distinction is between Kate and Julia. After being initially equivalent, the text reveals that solely aunt Kate is in charge. Lily, the caretaker's daughter, announces the Conroy's arrival only to Kate: "Miss Kate, here's Mrs Conroy" (Joyce 139). Additionally, the explicit description of the two characters is constructed in the same structure as the implicit one. It commences with their shared trait of being "two small plainly dressed old women" but then continues to contrast them against each other (Joyce 141). Julia is characterised as vigorous but senile (Joyce 141). Her sister is constructed as the very opposite: feeble but sane (Joyce 138; Joyce 141). This constellation persists throughout the story and is repeated on several occasions.

The division of tasks represents Kate's superiority. While Julia is in charge of preparing the table, Kate oversees the event, assisting with the housework only during the dinner. Her compulsion to control the situation is exemplified when she asks Gabriel to manage Freddy and immediately reacts to Julia's gaze by enquiring what worried her (Joyce 143; Joyce 145). Aunt Kate manages the annual dance by ordering Julia and Mary Jane around. She demands Julia to serve refreshments to their guests and reacts "almost testily" when Julia acts on her own accord, calling her name three times in each of the two short passages (Joyce 143). Shortly after this, she commands Mary Jane to assemble pairs for the quadrilles (Joyce 144). Moreover, Julia and Mary Jane are each at one point compared to the caretaker and his daughter, clearly constructing them as inferior to Kate: "Aunt Julia and the caretaker were straightening a large cloth" (Joyce 143). "Mary Jane ran to open it [the hall-door]" (Joyce 164). The latter citation strongly compares Mary Jane to Lily by paralleling her running and the very first and second sentence of the story: "Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally *run* (emphasis added) off her feet. Hardy had she brought one gentleman into the little pantry … she had to scamper along the bare *hallway* to let in another guest" (Joyce 138). Mary Jane is again compared to Lily in another

instance by giving a back answer: “Well, isn’t it for the honour of God, Aunt Kate? Asked Mary Jane, *twisting round on the piano-stool and smiling* (emphasis added)” (Joyce 153). A psychonarration of Lily mentions Kate’s response to back answers: “They were fussy, that was all. But the only thing they would not stand was back answers” (Joyce 139). Giving back answers, thereby compares Mary Jane to Lily. This also confirms the distance between Mary Jane and her aunts by contrasting her to Kate and Julia who meticulously attempt to avoid all disputes. Later on, Mary Jane brings up another controversial topic and is urged to drop the subject by Kate, reconfirming the character constellation (Joyce 167). Yet, Gabriel’ speech in which he awards the prize to all three of them and their mutual effort to divert the topic when Mr Bartell refuses to sing relativise this distance between Mary Jane and her aunts (Joyce 166).

Furthermore, the construction of Lily, Gabriel, Gretta, and Mr Browne accentuate Kate’s elevated position. All of these characters address Kate solely despite Julia being nearby. This is emphasised by addressing her by name in particular: “Here I am as right as the mail, Aunt Kate!” (Joyce 139) Don’t you remember, Aunt Kate, what a cold Gretta got out of it?” (Joyce 142) Don’t mind him, Aunt Kate, she said” (Joyce 142). The text repeatedly presents Julia as the senile counterpart to Kate. The first instance occurs during the first part of the story. Gretta, Kate, and Julia enjoy themselves over Gabriel’s solicitude represented through the goloshes. Despite appreciating everyone’s amusement, “the smile soon faded from Aunt Julia’s face”, and she has to enquire about the definition of goloshes (Joyce 142). Their reception of Gabriel’s speech follows the same pattern. Julia, again, does not comprehend the meaning but enjoys the merry atmosphere: “Aunt Julia did not understand but she looked up, smiling, at Gabriel” (Joyce 161). The third presentation of her mental inferiority is the most significant when reading it in combination with another passage. Kate’s anxious inquiry about the reason for Julia’s apparent concern is answered by Julia who “turned to her sister and said, simply, as if the question had surprised her: ‘It is only Freddy, Kate, and Gabriel with him’” (Joyce 145). This is the only passage to retrospectively exclude a character being initially included in a proposition in a prior sentence. Lily’s psychonarration about her ‘three mistresses’ clearly identifies Kate Morkan, Julia Morkan, and Mary Jane as the subjects referred to by the pronoun ‘they’: “*They* (emphasis added) would not wish for worlds that any of Mary Jane’s pupils should see him under the influence” (Joyce 139). ‘They’ is first used right after ‘her three mistresses’ and continuously throughout the passage: “Of course *they* (emphasis added) had good reason to be fussy on such a night … Besides *they* (emphasis added) were dreadfully afraid …” (Joyce

139). The passage concludes in: “And that was what brought *them* (emphasis added) every two minutes to the banisters to ask Lily had Gabriel or Freddy come” (Joyce 139). When considering the passage in isolation, ‘they’ would include all three characters. However, considering the passage in question results in excluding Julia from *them* as she is not anxious about Freddy. This ambiguity reinforces the static nature of the character constellation since Julia is retrospectively never presented as a thoughtful character, but constructed as senile and intellectually inferior altogether.

While the text constructed this set of character’s constellation by hitherto implicit means, it ultimately spells it out. Gabriel concludes his speech by extolling his aunts and Mary Jane. Moreover, these praises for the three characters are encapsulated in one noticeably long sentence, representing the ‘Three Graces’ connectedness. However, the structure of the sentence explicitly confirms the implicit characterisation. Kate is not only addressed first, as she has been throughout the text but also as “chief hostess” which confirms the implicit characterisation of her being in charge (Joyce 161). Julia is not even granted the title of a ‘hostess’. Instead, she is described as Kate’s sister, signalling their closeness but also her poor mental capabilities. “Last but not least”, but mentioned last once again like on the very first page, Mary Jane is described as “hostess” and “the best of nieces” (Joyce 161). The slight distance between Mary Jane and her aunts is again thematised by bringing up their family relationships. On the other hand, she is connected to Kate through the title of ‘hostess’, being placed below her. Kate and Mary Jane are both wary to avoid conflicts among the guests. Each of them prevents two arguments: Kate diverts the topic “with brisk tact” when Gabriel got slightly angered, and she asks everyone to cease urging Mr Barell to sing for them. (Joyce 142; Joyce 166) Mary Jane “intervenes pacifically” to Kate’s agitation and directs the conversation to a suitable topic (Joyce 153; Joyce 156). Evidently, Mary Jane is almost as dedicated to the cause as Kate, the only difference being her provoking two of the arguments herself. The first by giving a back answer to Kate and the second by raising the subject of Mr Bartell’s voice once again. Her career is prosperous as she is the “main prop of the household for she had the organ in Haddington Road” and teaches pupils belonging “to the better-class families” (Joyce 138). Nonetheless, Gabriel does not glance at her after the finale of his speech, but only regards his aunts. This is explained by paralleling the passage to a description made in ‘Grace’: “The arc of his social rise intersected the arc of his friend’s decline but Mr Kernan’s decline was mitigated by the fact that certain of those friends who had known him at his highest point of success still esteemed him as a character” (Joyce 120). Though Aunt Kate is now “too feeble

to go about much", her social decline is mitigated by her apparent former success (Joyce 138). Quite the opposite applies to Mary Jane: Her aunt's past still overshadows her professional success. Gabriel is only keen to see his aunts' reception of his speech (Joyce 161).

In summary, the text constructs Kate to be in charge, Mary Jane to be the junior hostess, and Julia to be the senile assistant to Kate. This character constellation remains static throughout the story.

5. Comparison of Structures: 'The Dead', *Dubliners*, short story conventions

The structure of the plot in 'The Dead' varies from most of the other short stories in *Dubliners* by containing an additional last part dedicated to the story's impact on the private sphere. While this last part of the story (starting with the last passage on page 167) does belong to a pattern of events which can consist of 'arriving at the annual dance', 'partaking in the annual dance', and 'leaving the annual dance to spend the night at a hotel', it differs tremendously from the rest of the story which addresses the public sphere. Moreover, the story up until the last passage on page 167 is outlined by Gabriel undressing his coat on page 139 and Mr Bartell D'Arcy putting on his coat on page 167, representing the guests' arrival and departure. This framing device creates a symmetrical beginning and ending for the part of the text that addresses the public sphere and emphasises the structural asymmetry of the story as a whole. Alongside Little Chandler in 'A Little Cloud' and Farrington in 'Counterparts', 'The Dead' describes Gabriel's coping with the frustrating, prior events. In contrast to the former two characters, however, Gabriel is unable to wreak his anger on his wife, despite intending to do so: "He tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation but his voice when he spoke was humble and indifferent" (Joyce 173). This noticeable difference on the level of character constellation between 'The Dead' and the other stories translates into resistance to the paradigm of 'paralysis' in *Dubliners* through a less self-impairing behaviour of the characters. Gabriel is not the only character to

realises his aversion to the social norms and pretentiousness effective in his social environment through an epiphany. He is, however, the only character to resist his urges for violent or offensive behaviour. Additionally, he even suggests a plan that is contradictory to his previous behaviour of separating Gretta from her past: “The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward” (Joyce 176).

‘The Dead’ is an unusually long short story, counting 15.952 words. As argued above, the last part stands out from the rest of the story and spans roughly a fourth of the text. *Dubliners*’ fifteenth short story would still be comparatively long if the last part was removed. The reason for the considerable word count is the construction of the extensive dramatis personae consisting of Gabriel, Gretta, Kate, Julia, Mary Jane, Lily, Freddy, Mrs Malins, Mr Browne, Mr D’Achy, Miss Ivors, Miss Furlong, Miss Daly, Miss Power, Miss Higgins, the caretaker, four young men, Miss O’Callaghan, a cabman, and the porter. Gabriel is the protagonist of the story, yet, there is no primacy of one character during the public sphere events in ‘The Dead’, even though Gabriel is the only character whose consciousness is narrated on several occasions. However, Gabriel is undoubtedly the predominant character and focalizer during the last part about Gabriel’s and Gretta’s private sphere. The text constructs most of the characters to have depth opposed to representing mere ‘props’ around the protagonist (Joyce 138). The manifold, complex interactions between the various characters introduce that depth by gradually revealing their background information.

Consequently, like ‘Grace’ and ‘Ivy Day in the Committee Room’ which also focus on several characters, ‘The Dead’ creates an atmosphere of companionship, rather than isolation, by constructing all these characters alongside Gabriel. Additionally, the text addresses the theme of ‘camaraderie’ in Gabriel’s speech, which also manifests on the plot level. Freddy Malins’s reputation as a notorious drunkard drastically improves throughout the story until he becomes a welcome guest. Despite eventually revealing their annoyance with Mr Browne, Kate and Julia entrust him with the sensitive task to tend to Mary Jane’s pupils and welcome him during all Christmas-time. Finally, Gabriel comforts Gretta even after being offended and deeply hurt by her affection for Michael Furey. The theme of ‘camaraderie’ defies ‘paralysis’ by giving characters more agency through the influence of their companions. The institution ‘church’ drastically reduces Aunt Julia’s agency by expelling her from the choir. Furthermore, the church’s influence penetrates even the private aspects of their lives. Imagery like the ‘two little minsters of jelly’ at the table symbolises that subliminal influence (Joyce 154). Mrs Malins

even idealises the monks for their piousness, who are basically living corpses. Nevertheless, many characters support and encourage Julia when she intends to perform one of her own songs and restore her musical agency by providing an alternative stage for her. Moreover, she thrives after having escaped the choir's restrictive influence.

To support the conception of numerous characters with depth, the text creates enigmas for the various characters. This results in modulated tension between suspended outcome and imminent closure at every point of the story. Investigating the text under the paradigm of the hermeneutic code has already revealed exemplary enigmas. Some of them are revealed shortly after the enigma arises. For example, Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia desperately await their favourite nephew's arrival, which poses the question for his function at the annual event. Only two pages later, the text reveals his first purpose: to give a speech. Other solutions to enigmas are suspended throughout the majority of the text. Whether Freddy Malins ruins the annual dance or not can only be answered after the dance concluded. Some enigmas are not solved at all. Miss Ivors abruptly leaves without giving a satisfactory reason. Finally, the enigma of Gretta's past is gradually developed throughout the story and revealed at the end.

A single cognitive effect unfolds for Gabriel through the economic, cumulative effect of meaningful imagery rather than linear logic of goal-directed action. This leads to a deepening of his perception rather than to a resolution of problems. Imagery and character constellation are the prevalent means in 'The Dead' to narrate the story. The text contrasts the hospital atmosphere created through the description of the plentiful dishes with the wish to escape to the cold outside and subverts this atmosphere with a restrictive mood through the themes of 'military' and 'religion'. Additionally, the text creates Gabriel's discomfort with his habitus through his alternating character development. He fails in every private interaction and has to retreat into the public sphere and hide behind his façade to recover. Imagery and character development both foreshadow Gabriel's epiphany. Furthermore, the peripeteia also translates into the epiphany. Gabriel's efforts to possess Gretta, his mother's opposition to their marriage, the narrator continually referring to Gretta as 'his wife', imagery like the balcony scene or the painter, and the subtly created distance between them foreshadow the epiphany.

6. Conclusion

‘The Dead’ holistically defies ‘paralysis’ on several structural levels. These levels are intertwined and interact with each other. ‘Paralysis’ means that characters are unwilling or unable to move, and institutions amplify this paradigm. On the level of character constellation, Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia, and Mary Jane are constructed to represent ‘paralysis’ through their static relationships. Gabriel, Freddy, and Mr Browne, however, display the very opposite. Freddy Malins’s reputation continuously improves, while Mr Browne’s declines. Gabriel’s reputation, on the other hand, alternates between rising in public and declining in private interactions. The dynamic structure of their character constellation is equalled only by the narrator’s description of Mr Kernan’s and Mr Power’s social reputation in ‘Grace’. Such social movements are the exact opposite of ‘paralysis’ and, therefore, defy it. Julia thrives after parting with the restrictive influence of the church and the other guests prefere her song over Mary Jane’s academic piece full of rules. Furthermore, the theme of ‘cameraderie’ offers Julia an alternative stage to sing after being outcast from the choir. This alternative stage is constituted by the guests. The last part of ‘The Dead’, starting on page 167 addresses the protagonist’s private sphere, just like ‘Counterparts’ and ‘A Little Cloud’ do. The difference is how they cope with their frustrating public life. Farrington and Little Chandler succumb to their urges and wreck their anger on their families. Gabriel, on the other hand, is unable to yield to his urges. Instead, he utilises the cognitive effect of his epiphany to change his past behaviour and supports Gretta, rather than victimising her. His willingness to change also defies ‘paralysis’.

His epiphany is build up throughout the whole cause of the story. Gabriel is unable to enjoy the hospital atmosphere created by the description of the plentiful food but longs to escape into the cold. The significance of his longing becomes apparent when the text reveals that cold was the reason for Michael Furey’s death. Furthermore, he fails in every private interaction and, thereupon, retreats into the public sphere and hides behind his façade. The epiphany is triggered through the peripeteia, which in turn is also foreshadowed throughout most of the story. Just when Gabriel is overjoyed with Gretta’s tender affection, she shatters his satisfaction by admitting to thinking about her former lover. Through his epiphany, he realises his pretentiousness and pointlessness of his façade, which restricted his agency. Consequently, he intends to change his behaviour and embrace Gretta’s past by journeying westward.

Considering the genre conventions of the short story, Joyce’s ‘The Dead’ is an outstanding long work of literature, despite the economic, meaningful use of imagery.

Accordingly, the semic and the symbolic code are the predominant means of the text to narrate the story. The effects of this deviation from the structure of other stories in *Dubliners* are the asymmetrical last part, addressing the private sphere, and the complex creation of numerous characters with depth to enable the theme of 'camaraderie'. Characters are able to defy 'paralysis' because they receive agency and willingness to use it through 'camaraderie'. Additionally, Mr Browne challenges the paralysing influence of the church when he scrutinises the 'pious' monk's behaviour of unreflectively obeying the order's rules. Furthermore, the institution's restrictive influence is disclosed by Aunt Julia's outstanding musical performance after having left the church choir. Finally, the text utilises the extensive dramatis personae to create various enigmas for many of the characters. Some of these enigmas are solved rather fast, and some are maintained throughout most of the story to create modulated tension at every point through suspense.

To conclude, 'The Dead' can be classified as a short story, as it meets the employed criteria of the genre to varying degrees and creates effects by doing so. 'Paralysis' is defied through several different means which constitutes a significant contrast to the other short stories in *Dubliners*. As Mann argued, 'The Dead' challenges the restrictive atmosphere which the collection has evoked thus far.

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Erstgutachten zur Bachelorarbeit von Name (Matr.-Nr) zum Thema „Narrative Strategies in James Joyce's Short Story 'The Dead' (1914)"

Der Verfasser hat zum Abschluss seines Studiums eine englischsprachige Bachelorarbeit zum Thema „Narrative Strategies in James Joyce's Short Story 'The Dead' (1914)" vorgelegt, die die Anforderungen gut erfüllt. Der Verf. erschließt sich den sehr häufig untersuchten Text auf eine ungewöhnliche bis eigenwillige Weise, die jedoch – vom Ende der Arbeit her betrachtet – gute Ergebnisse zeitigt. Er kennt nicht nur die gewählte Short Story ausgezeichnet, sondern auch die anderen Geschichten des berühmten Kurzgeschichtenzyklus von Joyce, was es ihm gestattet, immer wieder Parallelen zu ziehen und diese vertiefend in sein Argument einzubinden.

Der Verf. verzichtet auf die übliche Darstellung des Forschungsstandes zu Joyces *Dubliners* und beginnt seine **Introduction** stattdessen mit einem Definitionsversuch zum Genre der Short Story, leider ohne Verweis auf die Neuerungen des Modernismus, und leitet daraus eine elementare Frage ab. Er beantwortet diese sogleich und erwähnt sie folglich bis zum Ende nur selten (22, 27f, 30): „The Dead" ist trotz ihrer Länge eine Short Story (1).

Die Arbeit ist von einem strukturalistischen Grundansatz geprägt, den der Verf. im **2. Kapitel** kurz erläutert. Er beschreibt die fünf Erzählcodes von Roland Barthes, die er jedoch nicht aus Barthes' *S/Z* (1970) selbst entnimmt (wie es akademisch korrekt wäre), sondern aus der Sekundärliteratur. Hier fehlt die kritische Betrachtung der schon von Barthes nicht begründeten, sondern nur gesetzten Prinzipien ebenso wie deren Kontextualisierung. Übergangslos definiert der Verf. schließlich mit Paralyse und Epiphanie zwei zentrale Konzepte von Joyce (4), von denen er sich – wie seine These sagt – vor allem mit ersterem auseinandersetzen möchte (2).

Das **3. Kapitel** präsentiert sich in einer – für nicht *S/Z*-Kundige – irritierenden Struktur: auf über 13 Seiten wird die Short Story „The Dead" in einzelne Sequenzen zerlegt, die von A bis O nummeriert aufeinanderfolgen, ohne dass die Leser darauf vorbereitet würden, was sie zu erwarten haben und wie sich das Dargestellte zur Hauptthese der Bachelorarbeit verhält. So wird weder klar, wie die einzelnen Sequenzen festgelegt wurden noch woher die historischen, kulturellen und literaturwissenschaftlichen Wissensbestände stammen, die der Verf. für den semantischen, kulturellen (8, 10, 12f) und symbolischen Code (15)

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mit Gewinn aufruft. Die offenbar von Barthes entlehnte Kommentar-Methode fragmentiert statt zu binden, hat aber den Vorteil, die Leser auf die sprachlichen Details der Wort- und Satzebene zu lenken. Die kurzen Analysesequenzen bergen viele zutreffende Beobachtungen zum Text, die der Verf. mit den korrekten fachwissenschaftlichen Begriffen fasst (5ff). Er zeigt ein gutes Gespür für Einzelerscheinungen (z.B. 10, 13) und bemüht sich, diese sinnfällig zu machen, indem er größere Zusammenhänge aufzeigt, wie Vorausdeutungen, Distanzierungstechniken und (mehrdeutige) Motivketten. Immer wieder verweist er richtig auf den Konstruktcharakter des Textes, tut dies aber bis zum Ende etwas ermüdend vor allem mit den beiden Verben „construct" und „create". Auf der thematischen Ebene arbeitet der Verf. auf das ihn beschäftigende Paralyse-Motiv hin (11ff). Ohne es zu sagen, übernimmt er von Barthes dessen Suche nach sogenannten Rätseln, die der Text zur Spannungsgestaltung in Figuren anlegt und nur nach und nach oder auch gar nicht auflöst (14f). Der aus der Dramenanalyse stammende Begriff der Peripetie wird ohne Erklärung verwendet (15ff), wobei sich nicht erschließt, welchen Mehrwert er hier hat. Sehr schön ist hingegen die dreiteilige Analyse der Epiphanie des Protagonisten (16f), mit der der Verf. nachweist, dass diese Figur die einzige der *Dubliners* ist, die der Paralyse potentiell widerstehen kann (17).
Ohne Übergang und Thesenbezug, d.h. ohne die Leser angemessen zu führen, wendet sich das **4. Kapitel** der Figurenentwicklung zu, die der Verf. nach dem strukturalistischen Prinzip der Musterbildung vornimmt, indem er Parallelen und Kontraste aufzeigt. Die Begrifflichkeit ist mit „rise" und „decline" bezogen auf die Sphären des Privaten (womit der Verf. das Innere einer Figur meint) und des Öffentlichen (dem Familien- und Freundeskreis) unglücklich (besser eignen sich z.B. „failure" und „success"). Die Interpretationen selbst sind jedoch einleuchtend und differenziert. Der Verf. konzentriert sich in den beiden Unterkapiteln jeweils auf drei Männer- und drei Frauenfiguren und beschreibt, gut vergleichend, deren dynamische bzw. statische Konstellation. Er widmet dabei seine Aufmerksamkeit anschaulich den Darstellungstechniken sowie deren Funktionen im Text (23, 28) und hegt auf diese Weise den in der Joyce-Rezeption überstrapazierten Paralyse-Begriff erfolgreich ein. Das 10seitige Kapitel liest sich kurzweilig, arbeitet mit gut ausgewählten Zitaten und bietet sogar kurze Zusammenfassungen (19, 23, 26).
Im **5. Kapitel** bemüht sich der Verf. darum, seine verschiedenen Anliegen zu verbinden und eine Gesamtsicht auf „The Dead" zu entwickeln, die er in deren Widerstand gegen die Paralyse verortet (27f). Diese findet er im deutlich größeren Handlungsspielraum vor allem der Hauptfigur, dem (neben dem großen Figurenensemble) auch die Länge der Geschichte geschuldet ist, gestützt vom Motiv der „camaraderie" (28). Dieses Kapitel ist argumentativ uneben, enthält aber wieder sehr treffende Interpretationen (28f). Die folgende **Conclusion** zieht die Befunde der Arbeit gut zusammen, wofür der Verf. gleich zu Beginn seine strukturalistische Denkungsart wirkungsvoll zur Geltung bringt (29). Sie endet mit einem – unnötig - bestätigenden Zitat aus der Sekundärliteratur.

Die Arbeit ist sauber gestaltet, hätte jedoch gründlicher Korrektur gelesen werden müssen, denn sie enthält sehr viele orthografische (z.B. einfache statt doppelte Anführungszeichen bei Short Story-Titeln, „Fury" statt „Furey", fehlende oder überzählige Worte bzw. Buchstaben „to severe", 14; 17, 23, 27, 29)

und grammatische Fehler (Adverb/Adjektiv-Unterscheidung, Präpositionen). Stilistisch präsentiert sich die Arbeit in einem eigenartigen Kontrast von idiomatischem Englisch einerseits und ungeschickten Formulierungen („container“, 1ff; 20) bis falschen Kollokationen (15, 21) andererseits (s. Beispielseite 20), wie „he is a critique“ (19), „hospital atmosphere“ (29f), „the whole cause of the story“ (30). Die sehr knappe **Bibliographie** entspricht den Vorgaben des MLA Stylesheet, enthält aber weder Roland Barthes noch genügend Sekundärliteratur zu Joyces *Dubliners*.

Die Arbeit wird mit der Gesamtnote **2,3 (gut)** bewertet.

Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch