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Tragic Disruptions and Subversive Discourse in Late Victorian Fiction: *Jude the Obscure,* *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* and *Heart of Darkness.*

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ABSTRACT

The main concern of this dissertation is a study of ideological subversion and containment in three late Victorian novels, i.e. in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This study shows how subversive thrusts are contained in three main scenes: social in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, cultural in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and economic and political in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Our purpose is thus to bring out the tragic disruptions resulting from such discursive clash in the light of three poetics: Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism and his theory of Modern Tragedy, and Michael Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism.

The theory of Cultural Materialism and that of Dialogism are mainly used to underpin discursive practices. Cultural Materialism helps us identify and assess the subversive strategies employed in these novels. The dialogues and events of the novels reveal the degree to which Victorian power is based on predation, deceit, and hypocrisy; however, this power is subject to undermining by dissident and subversive voices within Victorian society; yet this subversion is soon contained. The triumph of containment over the forces of subversion is more a mark of the late Victorian pessimism than a reinforcement of the Victorian power. The subversion-containment dialectic will show this at the level of themes, plot, and setting. Bakhtin's Dialogism will shed light on subversion at the level of language; in other words, the analysis of language in the light of Bakhtin's dialogism shows a subversive discourse which places the protagonists in a position of social antagonism to the Victorian power.

As for the theory of Modern Tragedy, it is used to bring out how the containment of subversion is effected. Through characterization, we shall show the conflict of the tragic protagonists (anti-heroes) with their society. In the last analysis, the subversion of social issues in *Jude the Obscure*, of aesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and of politics in *Heart of Darkness*—whose initial aim is to effect drastic social changes—result in a consolidation of the Establishment's values at the expense of the pioneers of progress. Their ultimate failure takes on tragic tones.

Key words: Victorianism, Cultural Materialism, Dialogism, Intertextuality, Modern Tragedy, Culture, Discourse, Ethics, Aesthetics, Art, Imperialism, Capitalism.

Résumé

L’objet de ce travail est l'étude—sur les plans idéologique et esthétique—de la subversion et de son endiguement tels que développés dans trois romans victoriens: *Jude the Obscure* de Thomas Hardy, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* d'Oscar Wilde et *Heart of Darkness* de Joseph Conrad. Cette étude analyse les poussées subversives et leur endiguement dans trois domaines principaux: social dans *Jude The Obscure*, culturel dans *The Picture of Dorian Gray* et politico-économique dans *Heart of Darkness*.

Notre but est donc d'analyser les bouleversements tragiques résultants de l’entrechoquement des discours durant l'ère victorienne à la lumière de trois poétiques suivantes: la théorie du Matérialisme Culturel et la théorie de la Tragédie Moderne, toutes deux, de Raymond Williams et la théorie du Dialogisme de Michael Bakhtin.

La théorie du Matérialisme Culturel ainsi que celle du Dialogisme sont principalement utilisées pour étudier les pratiques discursives. La théorie du Matérialisme Culturel, quant à elle, nous aide à identifier et analyser les stratégies mises en œuvre dans ces romans. C’est ainsi qu’est révélée l'étendue de la puissance victorienne dans sa capacité de prédation, de tromperie, et d’hypocrisie. Cependant, ce pouvoir est sapé à la base par des éléments dissidents et subversifs, qui sont, néanmoins, rapidement maîtrisés. Cette victoire de l’Establishment sur les forces de subversion, en fait, reflète plus le pessimisme de fin-de-règne que le renforcement du pouvoir socio-politique.

La dialectique subversion/endiguement apparaît au niveau des thèmes, de l'intrigue et du milieu. Par ailleurs, le dialogisme de Bakhtin met en relief la subversion au niveau langagier. En d'autres termes, l'analyse des langages des romans révèle un conflit discursif qui met les protagonistes dans une situation antagonique vis-à-vis du pouvoir victorien. La théorie de la tragédie moderne est utilisée pour expliquer les conséquences de l'endiguement de la subversion sur l’individu. A travers les personnages, nous montrons le nouveau type de conflit qui s’installe entre les protagonistes et la société dans laquelle ils vivent et où ils sont condamnés à mourir. En effet, la subversion de la normalité sociale dans *Jude the Obscure*, culturelle et esthétique dans *The Picture of Dorian Gray* et politico-économique dans *Heart of Darkness* entraine, du fait de son endiguement, des retombées tragiques.

Mots Clés : Victorianisme, Matérialisme Culturel, Dialogisme, Intertextualité, Tragédie Moderne, Discoure, Culture, Éthiques, Esthétiques, Art, Impérialisme, Capitalisme.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Hassina Haddouche.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father , SALEM, who was and will forever remain the heaven of my life. May God the Almighty have mercy on him and bless his soul.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The late Victorian writers inhabited a world which, despite its appearance of stability, was fragmented, where the ideologies of science, progress, imperialism, and above all civilization were being questioned, where discourse became increasingly dialogic rather than smugly monologic. It was a world where literature could no longer offer a vision of unity and happiness but rather one of breakdown: of social links, family ties and individual psyche. It was a world fraught with suffering and pessimism. To put it con**c**isely, we can say that tragic disruption and subversive discourse marked the late Victorian fiction. The latter is no longer regarded simply as a reaction against Romanticism, but rather as a rendition of a reality that was becoming more and more complex and problematic. The late Victorian writers came to this common awareness through different paths: Elizabeth Gaskell described in *North and South* appalling working conditions and industrial unrest, Samuel Butler in his *Erewhon* directed all the force of his satire against conventional morality and religiosity. Likewise, Thomas Hardy, influenced by the pessimism inaugurated by Arthur Schopenhauer and developed by Frederick Nietzsche, challenged the unfair social stratification stemming from the economic Malthusianism engendered by modern industrialism; and George Eliot, for her part, deliberately shocked her readers by her heightened mimetic realism that sensitised them to acute social problems in *Daniel Deronda*.

The late nineteenth-century novelists studied in this dissertation adopted the tragic mode to expose the economic, cultural, and social changes taking place around them. The novels under study, i.e. Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), articulate subversive visions with a high degree of clarity. They reflect the interest of writers in questions concerning the operating ideologies in an evolving capitalist society. They also have a historical importance in that they express a condemnation of the social, cultural and economic flaws of their time: religious intolerance, loss of faith, financial greed, social strife, chauvinism, and imperialism. Under such changing conditions, these writers developed a hybrid sort of genre: the tragic novel. In such novels, the common men, the proletarian Jude, the decadent dandy Dorian Gray, and the degraded imperialist Kurtz, now replace the dignified tragic heroes of the ancient tragedy. One aspect, which these writers chose to render, was the tragic implication of social and ethical subversion. We can say in this respect that these novels are exemplary aesthetic markers of the tragic moments in late Victorian fiction. By tragic moments, we mean the tragic disruptions that took place in society. Tragic disruptions refer to social, cultural, and economic decline and fragmentation. Socially

speaking, we focus on the disruption that takes place in family life. The breakdown of family, the isolation of the individual or his alienation are the signs of modern tragedy. In the early Victorian period, the notion of family was sacred and respected because it symbolised social unity, love, harmony, and the continuity of morality. However, towards the end of the period, the very foundation of the social order began to crumble.

Among the reasons why we have selected these three novels is the fact that their contexts offer a fertile ground for the exploration of the tragic disruptions that took place in the late Victorian society. I find a common pattern running through these writers and their works; each writer has used the novel as a platform from which to speak out his ideas: Thomas Hardy is very much interested in social issues; Oscar Wilde focuses on the artistic (aesthetic) side of life; and Joseph Conrad is much concerned with the moral and economic aspect.

Another reason is that they created, with tragic overtones, a mirror-image of the Europe of the time, an image summarised by Oscar Wilde in his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray:* "*The nineteenth-century dislike of realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass*"[1]. Realism (or more specifically Tragic Realism) as a mode of writing unmasked the hypocrisy of the 19th century European society at large. Oscar Wilde considered art a refuge whence he could express what was forbidden in society. The picture that Dorian Gray hides from sight (because it contains all his sins and deformities) is, symbolically, the same as that painted by the three novelists. For instance, Joseph Conrad depicts Africa as the place where the European man can indulge in whatever is forbidden by his own society, which is another way of saying that the western image of Africa resembles the portrait of Dorian Gray. The creation of such fictive worlds allowed a measure of critical assessment. In fact, these novels were an integral part of the public sphere rather than mere imaginative writings because they had a strong inclination to approach the notion of conflict as it was experienced then. They are not mere representations of late Victorian life but subversive discourses which put into question the celebrated Victorian ethos. The common pattern running in these novels is that of conflict: the conflict of classes, the conflict of the individual with his society, and the conflict within the individual himself.

Conflict in the late Victorian era is not as simple as it might be thought of. We say 'simple' because it is commonly viewed by critics that the origin of this conflict goes back to the individual's opposition to a soul-crushing, tyrannical society. In other words, it is often

[1]Oscar Wilde. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in Richard Aldington and Stanley Weintranb, Eds. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. London: Penguin Books, 1974.p.138.

viewed as a conflict between tradition and modernity, or between Victorian conservative ideas and the new emerging liberal (modern) ones. On the one hand, there was a strong need to preserve the same Victorian ideology, culture, and morality throughout the period of Queen Victoria's reign; on the other hand, the factor of change is a remarkable feature of all times, i.e. everything is bound to change. Therefore, the individual who lived in the late Victorian era could not cope with the conventions which obtained in the early Victorian era: his consciousness would have sharpened in the meantime and he would have tended to question rather than acquiesce to the doxa. As Claudia Nelson writes in her book *Family Ties in Victorian England*, "*it is useful to bear in mind that in many ways the families of the 1840s did not occupy the same world as those of the 1890s.*"[2] This is because the various changes that occurred at all levels in society gave way, in the arts, to what is called Victorian modernism (not modernity). On a more literary plane, Isobel Armstrong asserts that

> *Victorian modernism sees itself as new but it does not, like twentieth-century modernism, conceive itself in terms of a radical break with a past. Victorian modernism, as it emerges in its poetics, describes itself as belonging to a condition of crisis which has emerged directly from economic and cultural change.*[3]

From this context, we come to understand that Victorian modernism is the result of many changes, and among these, one crucial factor is the change taking place in economy and culture**.** From a Marxist point of view, N. P. Jacobson, in his article entitled "Marxism and Religious Naturalism", argues that the conflict between classes results in human estrangement and alienation: men who belong to the same relative position within the social process of production constitute a social class and are placed in a position of hostility towards men occupying a different position in relation to the productive forces. This difference in social classes creates alienation. More important still, the fact that the Victorian Establishment represented the unique source of law and order imparted life a one-sided direction; this is why "*[a]ll new theory is a challenge to prevailing norms*."[4] This form of habitual social behaviour (i.e. the habit of obeying the Victorian norms with no objection) engendered a loss of the dialogic sense in society and gave more space to the monologic sense, which is a deadening process. As Morson and Emerson put it: "*Because of mental habits, intellectual traditions,*

[2] Claudia Nelson. *Family Ties in Victorian England.* London, Westport: Preager, 2007.p.173.
[3] Isobel Armstrong. *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics.* London & New York: Routledge, 1993. p.3.
[4] N. P. Jacobson. "Marxism and Religious Naturalism", in *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (Apr., 1949.p.98

and centripetal cultural forces, we often lose a sense of the dialogic quality of an event. The live medium becomes dead."[5]

The reference to conflict in this transitional period deserves great attention. For every commentator who proclaimed that the Victorian ethos was at the root of England's strength and civilization, there was another who saw that this ethos was, in fact, destroying, damaging, fragmenting society and individual psyche, leading to tragic disruptions, creating a fertile ground for warring discourses, thus dehumanising Victorian (European) civilization. It is this paradox which will be the focal point of this work. The Victorian ideology was assumed to work for individual self-realisation, but what the late Victorian fiction shows is the contrary: all that we read is about the tragic fate of protagonists who initially had great expectations. Throughout the historical background and the analytical chapters, we shall seek to highlight the contradictions that lie at the heart of the Victorian culture and the extent to which people then were caught between the harsh reality of their day-to-day existence and the Victorian idealistic dream. In this connection, Claudia Nelson argues that the Victorian culture may contain **"***many mutually contradictory messages on the virtues or flaws of domestic existence***"**[6], which led people in the late 19th century to regard this subject with ambivalence and to be aware of "*the realities of daily life [which] often conflicted with widely accepted ideals*"[7]

The aim of this dissertation is twofold. First, the selection of three novels by three different writers aims at covering as many representative life scenes in the late Victorian period as possible. This will afford us an insight into the tensions building up in such life in three main spheres: social in *Jude the Obscure*; cultural, with particular emphasis on Decadence and Aestheticism, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray;* and finally, economic in *Heart of Darkness.* Another reason why we have selected these three novels is to show the weight of tragic disruptions in their specific contexts because through the social, cultural, and economic scenes we shall illuminate the human conflicts that fractured most the late Victorian society. We will show the individual (the protagonist) as a modern tragic hero who could neither escape nor accept his reality. The common man is shown as a tragic protagonist whose ordinariness should not blind us to his tragic stature. As Arthur Miller argues: "*a common*

[5] G. S. Morson and C. Emerson. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics.* Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.p.56. Cited in Tim Beasley-Murray. *Mikhail Bakhtin and Walter Benjamin : Experience and Form.* London and New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. p.160.
[6] Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914, Volumes 1& 2*. London : Green Wood Press, 2008. p.172.
[7] Ibid., p.172.

family man's situation can be as tragic as the dilemmas of royalty because he ties his definition of heroism to a notion of personal dignity that transcends social stature."[8]

The late Victorian fiction under study is written and set in the *fin de siècle* period when the forces of capitalism and materialism came to the fore, and technology made its greatest inroads into the lives of the common people. The impact of these forces can be visible in the lives of ordinary families. Thus, we shall dwell on family feuds in *Jude the Obscure* and see how they tragically exemplify larger social conflicts. The family in this novel is an emblematical social failure owing to its inability to maintain its foundation and its vocation. The deeper question is whether this break up is due to the family's own inadequacy or is caused by society's unrealistic standards of attainment. As we shall demonstrate, failure is partially attributed to the larger social forces that operate on people's lives. Naturally, the economic modes of production play a significant role in the creation of such forces.

These three novels have already been thoroughly scrutinised in books and in theses. However, they have not been studied together under the title of this thesis or analysed in accordance with our perspective. For instance, Jennifer D. Conary in her thesis entitled *Beautiful Lost Causes: Quixotic Reform and the Victorian Novel* (August, 2008) analyses Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in a chapter entitled, "A tragic Don Quixote: *Jude the Obscure* and the Tragedy of Reform". She deals with the tragic fate of Jude whose misery is caused not by individual sources of oppression, but by the general narrow worldview and intolerance of society.[9] She advances arguments in this respect without employing the theory of modern tragedy as we intend to do. Another view of the source of Jude's tragedy is Michiko Seimiya's. In her thesis *Darwinism in the Arts of Thomas Hardy* (November 2005), she demonstrates the impact of Darwinism in society through an analysis of *Jude the Obscure*; she argues that Jude is a loser in the struggle for the survival of the fittest.[10]

As for Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Michael B. Jasper's thesis entitled *A Double Monster Born Dead: The Degenerate and the Criminal in Victorian Britain* (1994) exposes the transition from Victorianism to Modernism through the character of Dorian Gray. The latter is portrayed as a criminal and a degenerate; and his tragic end is a Victorian

[8] Susan C.W.Abbotson. *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work.* New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2007. p.137.
[9] Jennifer D. Conary. *Beautiful Lost Causes: Quixotic Reform and the Victorian Novel.* Ph.D thesis. University of Southern California. August, 2008.
[10] Michiko Seimiya. *Darwinism in the Arts of Thomas Hardy.* Japan Women's University, November, 2005.

tragedy. Moreover, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is often studied as a "late Victorian Gothic"[11] where the themes of homosexuality and Aestheticism take a great portion of focus. However, what these critics fall short of is the relationship between Aestheticism and what is referred to as the Victorian tragedy.

Concerning theses on Joseph Conrad, Joanna Malynarczyk's thesis *One of Us or One of Them? Joseph Conrad's European Experience* (2006) includes a part entitled "The Problem of Language and Marlow's Imaginative Comprehension in *Heart of Darkness*". This part is an analysis of Conrad's use of speech and silence in the novel in order to oppose the Africans to the Europeans using Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone"[12]. However, we notice that our analysis of discourse in this novel in the light of Bakhtin's dialogism shall shed more light than is done in this thesis.

Second, and this is, in our view, what we consider the most important contribution of this dissertation, to the field of literary research, we attempt to approach our subject through three poetics: Raymond Williams's theories of cultural materialism and modern tragedy, and Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. We seek to implement them in a way that permits one theory to complete, highlight, and further what is expressed in a previous one. We must insist at this stage that our general focus will be on the notion of conflict as is experienced in late Victorian society. Following the cultural materialist view, we shall place this conflict in its socio-economic and historical context through an analysis of the constituent elements of the novel, i.e. plot, language, themes, characterization, and setting. In other words, we shall place the novels in a material, that is a socio-political or historical, context in order to show that though they are bound up with a repressive, dominant ideology, they also provide scope for dissidence and subversion. In subversion, we record the dissonant elements and the subversive voices in the late Victorian culture. This theory also offers an alternative subversive reading in the sense that it shows how the apparent coherence of the Victorian order is threatened from the inside by inner contradictions and by tensions which society seeks to hide. These dissident and dissonant elements constitute an oppositional formation which stands against the Victorian tradition since they are emergent elements which seek to overthrow the Victorian order through counter-hegemony.

[11] Cannon Schmitt. "The Gothic Romance in the Victorian Period", in Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914, Volumes 1& 2*. London: Green Wood Press, 2008.p.314.
[12] Joanna Malynarczyk. *One of Us or One of Them? Joseph Conrad's European Experience*. Ph.D thesis. University of Illinois, Chicago. 2006.

The concepts of hegemony and counter-hegemony are more highlighted in the light of Michael Bakhtin's discourse in the novel. Indeed, what Raymond Williams terms "*emergent*"[13], "*forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture*"[14], "*counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony*"[15], "*oppositional formation*"[16], and "*counter-culture*"[17] are identified as the constituents of heteroglossia which strive for social significance; in other words, they are "*fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel*"[18]. As the protagonists in the novels under study advance their subversive attitudes, their speeches aim at "*stratification and speech diversity*"[19] which disrupt the Victorian "*unitary and singular language*"[20]. Expressed in other terms, the protagonists' language constitutes a "*centrifugal force*"[21] whose task lies in the "*decentralization and disunification*"[22] of the "*centripetal force*"[23] of the Victorian discourse. In this respect, we come to notice that the subversive elements which question and threaten the Victorian hegemony and offer counter-hegemony from a Cultural Materialist point of view are the same elements (in Bakhtin's argument) which introduce heteroglossia in the novel in order to decentralize and disunify, thus to disrupt, the official Victorian discourse through a counter discourse. The result of this conflict between the forces of subversion and those of monolithic uniformisation takes an aesthetic form: the form of Modern Tragedy, as it leads to tragic disruptions, best read in the light of modern views of tragedy.

The forces of subversion expose social injustice, the stagnating power of institutions, indifference, man's inhumanity to man (as in *Jude the Obscure*), social decadence and degeneration (as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*), racism and exploitation (as in *Heart of Darkness*). However, these subversive forces are driven to a dead end by the force of containment. In this respect, we have to resort to Raymond William's theory of Modern Tragedy to help us grasp the forces of containment. This theory demonstrates, through characterization, that the protagonists of these novels are mainly anti-heroes, tragic heroes, or problematic heroes. These nonheroic passive protagonists are individuals who live in a world which witnesses various crises in society, and where they find themselves in conflict. Now

[13] Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.p.123.
[14] Ibid., p.113.
[15] Ibid., p.113.
[16] Ibid., p.114.
[17] Ibid., p.114.
[18] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008 (17th paper back print).p.263.
[19] Ibid., p.315.
[20] Ibid., p.315.
[21] Ibid., p.272.
[22] Ibid., p.272.
[23] Ibid., p.272.

that "*the social consciousness has changed*"[24], it is no longer possible for the individual to carry on living in society in total submission to conservative ideology.

The individual, in this sense, becomes a "*liberator*"[25] whose 'heroism' lies in his rebelling against laws. His tragedy is the tragedy of Naturalism which Williams defines as "*the tragedy of passive suffering, and the suffering is passive because man can only endure and can never really change his world.*"[26] In fact, though the tragic protagonists attempt to change the conditions of their living as they desire— either by subverting, questioning and offering oppositional alternatives—they do not enjoy their newly acquired status for the rest of their lives because they cannot escape the punishment meted out to them by Victorian society.

The subversion is followed by containment in the sense that while subversion in these novels is writ large in the tragic protagonists' actions, containment comes chiefly through reflection and dialogue. The concept of containment is perhaps better explained in the light of Greenblatt's "'Invisible Bullets' " where he explains the "subversion-containment" dialectics. In an article "Subversion and Containment in Orson Scott Card's *Xenocide*", Daniel K. Muhlestein explains Greenblatt's dialectics:

> *Many apparently orthodox cultural texts, […], plant the seeds of revolution. They describe something or do something which poses a potential threat to an important aspect of the culture of which they are a part—a threat to a dominant institution, perhaps, or to a prevailing ideology. In that sense they are subversive texts […]. At the same time, […], such texts work overtime to control the subversion they are creating, to lock it down, to contain it in the sense in which a prison contains a prisoner. They create a threat in order to destroy it, and in doing so they reinforce the very ideologies and institutions that they put at risk.*[27]

In the light of this quotation, we can interpret Jude's, Sue's, Dorian Gray's, and Kurtz's tragic ends in the sense that their subversion is contained as either a sign of the triumph of the forces of Victorianism or as a sign of their failure in Darwin's conception of "the survival of the fittest". The centrifugal force of Victorianism is the triumphant one because it needs to be so in order for it to be saved. In this context we find it interesting to ask how it is possible to survive in the conditions of late Victorian crisis. The Victorian containment of the subversive

[24] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Verso Editions, 1979.p.104.
[25] Ibid., p.104.
[26] Ibid., p.69.
[27] Daniel K. Muhlestein. "Subversion and Containment in Orson Scott Card's *Xenocide*", in *Literature and Belief*. Brigham Young University, 23.02.2003.p.90.

elements shows that society is always holding control over those who attempt to threaten its established order.

Many might object to the view that **t**he novel could be considered a modern tragedy. Such an objection may be based on the assumption that prose does not have the power of tragedy. Yet, the abandonment of verse in this context is not without some advantages: "*It is easier in prose to imitate the give and take of ordinary conversation, and to avoid the levelling effect of verse on characterization, since few poets have varied the verse to suit the speaker.*"[28] In contrast to poetic uses of language which tend toward a unified style and world-view, i.e. the poet's or a *persona's*, novelistic prose is best suited for capturing the vitality of language in dialogue: "*the word in living conversation is directly, blatantly oriented towards a future answer word, it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction*"[29]

Sidney Zink in his article entitled "The Novel as a Medium of Modern Tragedy" (1958), advances arguments in favour of tragedy in the novel rather than in the play form. He believes that we should expect the form of art to change with other changes in human affairs. In other words, we should not expect tragedy to remain in the space confined to it by the classics as theorised by Aristotle because art represents the way we feel and think here and now. Since we feel and think differently from one generation to another, the form and content of our thinking should change in such a way as to fit the spirit of the time.

Sidney Zink also argues that "*the modern tragic figure does not know what he thinks, or, if he does know, does not care whether others know. He is not worried about convincing others, but about convincing himself.*"[30]For this reason, the novel best fits the modern tragedy as it allows the reader to better know about the inner self of the tragic figure through his capacity to 'describe' his feelings and thoughts. It has a vast advantage in depicting such a figure; whereas, "*the stage imposes definite limits of viewpoint, movement, and variety of material, the novel can arrange almost at will*"[31] He also favours tragedy in prose form for other reasons; as he puts it:

> *Some of [the novel's] advantages over the play are obvious and positive. It has, first, more sheer space and time to work with. Second, it can take an unlimited scope and variety of perspectives on its materials. This enables it*

[28] Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, Malcolm Kelsall, and John Peck. *Gale Encyclopedia: Literature and Criticism*. Cardiff: University of Wales. (date of publication is unknown). p.372.
[29] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.280.
[30] Sidney Zink. "The Novel as a Medium of Modern Tragedy", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol.17,No.2. Dec., 1958.p.171.
[31] Ibid, p.170.

> *more easily to join such diverse elements as the dramatic and the intellectual. This union is not easy. It is not easy to draw philosophy from a vital organism; but Dostoevsky, Melville, and Joyce show us it can be done. Doubtless, what chiefly helps the novel to bring off this union is its lack of sensuous reality. […] The sensuous medium of the play , like that of the poem, is too obtrusive a vehicle for ideas.[…]t the novel can pass from the sensuous to the abstract without a feeling of discord . For it is the most abstract thoughts that attend the most intense suffering.* [32]

Moreover, the play is unable to show the most excruciating forms of pain as the novel does, because it relies only on the actor's physical or verbal expression of pain and mental suffering. Neither can it show 'the reflective solitude' where the pain really resides.

As far as content is concerned, the novel-as-tragedy also deals with new perspectives, different from those treated in the classical tragedies. It focuses on the common man rather than on kings, princes, and men in high places. It can also deal with a 'hero' from a spiritually and morally diseased and corrupt society. With such dramatists as Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg who made an unexpected revolution in the form and content of tragic drama, the tragedy is named 'modern' tragedy. In such plays as Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), *The Wilde Duck* (1884), and *Hedda Gabler* (1891), and Strindberg's *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1889), these dramatists strenuously assert the need to break through the naturalistically imposed pattern of life in order to win freedom.

Indeed, one important aspect which helped the novelists to embrace tragedy in the novel form is the rise of Naturalism, the cruder form of Realism. Naturalism is a term which refers to

> *A harsh form of realist fiction most often identified with works of novelists from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Emile Zola, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, and later Richard Wright […]. The naturalist writer frequently depicts a hero who is at the mercy of larger social forces, which represent a cruel, overmastering fate. And the forces of character often seem just as implacable as those of society. The Doctrine of Social Darwinism, which saw life as a brutal struggle for survival, had a strong influence on the naturalists.* [33]

The tragedy of naturalism, therefore, shows a tragic character who, for a time, subverts the conventions of his society, yet his subversive actions are contained, which eventually reinforce the power of these conventions, hence his inevitable downfall.

In order to fulfil the aim of this work, we shall divide this thesis into five chapters. The first chapter provides us with the most important ideas that dominated the late Victorian

[32] Ibid., pp.171-172.
[33] David Mikics. *A New Handbook of Literary Terms*. London: Yale University Press,2007.pp.200-201.

scene. The situations we will shed light on will clarify and support the analysis of the novels. Actually, emphasis will be put on the social, cultural, and the economic spheres. This chapter will prepare the reader for a fruitful study of the novels. It is a kind of intertextual play between literature and history. We will show that these novels are not "reflectors" of the reality of the late Victorian era but forms of concretized ideology of that period. We intend to show how the latent/covert or open/overt ideological clashes (resulting from social conflicts) will be 'translated' in fiction.

The second chapter is devoted to the presentation of the theories we intend to use for our purpose; these are Cultural Materialism, Michael Bakhtin's Dialogism, and finally the theory of modern tragedy.

The chapter that follows is an analysis of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure.* What we are concerned with exactly in this chapter is to show, in the light of the theories adopted, and through the constituent elements of the novel (themes, setting, characterization, and plot) Hardy's subversive discourse about social issues, and the resulting tragic disruptions at the social level. Emphasis will be put on the subversion of the social institution of marriage, the introduction of the 'New Woman' as a challenging alternative to the Victorian woman stereotype, and the concept of anti-family. The idea of marriage is dialogised through the voices of Jude and Sue. However, all attempts at subversion are soon contained by the forces of conservatism.

The fourth chapter concerns Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. We shall focus on Wilde's subversion of the Victorian domestic ideology. By parodying and satirising the Victorian conception of art, Wilde develops a counter-discourse which constitutes a challenge to the Victorian customs, values, morality, and domestic ideology. Both Dorian and Lord Henry Wotton dialogise the idea of art in society; however, Dorian's transgression of the laws of his society leads him to his tragic end. Reshaping the domestic into the aesthetic engenders tragic disruptions at the individual and cultural level. Dorian's subversive ideas on art and beauty are contained at the end, thus resulting in a tragic as a resolution of the conflict he endures.

The fifth chapter provides an analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* The main concern here is to demonstrate the subversive discourse of imperialism through the counter-discourse on European civilization in Africa. The subversion of the positive role of the British Empire in Africa destroys the authoritative Victorian discourse of humanitarianism and philanthropy; as such, the idea of imperialism as conceived in the Victorian unitary

language becomes stratified, decentralized, and dialogised. By parodying the noble task of imperialism, Conrad develops a counter-discourse which challenges the Victorian imperialist discourse. In the same perspective, this analysis uncovers tragic disruptions in the community of the colonising Europeans in Africa. However, Conrad(s attempts to uncover a horrifying Victorian reality through subversion ends in containment when Marlow decides to remain loyal to Kurtz, a sign of Conrad's loyalty to Britannia, the 'Britannia [which] rules the waves'.

In the conclusion of this dissertation, we intend to summarise the results of the investigation by focusing, in retrospect on the notions of subversion and tragedy. What is common to the three novels is the notion of subversive discourse and of the tragic disruptions that mark the end of every novel. The tragic dimension observed in the late Victorian period as well as late Victorian writings form a dialogue where many voices are recognised implicitly or explicitly; these voices are symptomatic of the hotly debated issues of culture, philosophy, economy, and politics that marked the period. This dialogue is left open here for further debates with other literary works: "*for Bakhtin, every utterance is not only a response to a previous utterance but anticipates a future response*"[34] and "*the process of making a text's meaning is one that will never end*" [35]; and as he himself noted, " *there can be no such thing as pure monologism. Everything is reacting to everything that has been said previously or may be said in the future*"[36].

[34] Tory Young. *Studying English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.p.51.
[35] Ibid., p.52.
[36] Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow , Eds. *A Dialogue of voices: feminist literary theory and Bakhtin*. London : University of Minnesota Press, 1994.p.x.

I:
Historical Background

INTRODUCTION

Literature, in our perspective in this work, is a social phenomenon. Considered as such, it cannot be studied independently of the social relations, the economic forms, and the political realities of the period in which it was written. The late Victorian era, which is our concern here, witnessed on the part of its literaté a general rejection of its established ethos. There was a revolt against morality, a questioning of the position of women and of the working class in society, a scrutinizing of the role of art, and of the nature of imperialism. The reason for such turmoil was that the late Victorian ethos had turned from the power of civilization to the civilization of power. As Holbrook Jackson writes about the eighteen-nineties:

> *Things were not what they seemed, and there were visions about. The Eighteen-Nineties were the decade of a thousand movements. People said it was a 'period of transition', and they were convinced that they were passing not only from one social system to another, but from one morality to another, one culture to another.* [37]

It is this period of 'transition' that this chapter purports to describe, focusing in particular on the economic, the social and cultural spheres, thus setting the scene of instability which the three novels under study will 'feed on'.

1. The Economic Scene.

The economic scene of the late Victorian era was characterized by many focal points that had a remarkable impact on both society and the individuals. In this section, we shall concentrate only on those 'events' which serve as a stepping stone for the analysis of the novels. Among these, we shall highlight the Victorian Depression resulting from the Second Industrial Revolution, social Darwinism, and the expansion of European imperialism as illustrated in the 'Scramble for Africa'. The word "imperialism" summarises the various changes that took place in this period:

> *It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a marked change of tempo occurred during the last third of the nineteenth century in several dimensions of European reality–in the functioning of its economic systems, the nature of the relationship between its sovereign states, the internal character of and the interaction between its social classes, and the political and cultural outlook of its masses. The word 'imperialism' sums up the nature of that transformation.*[38]

[37] Holbrook Jackson. *The Eighteen-Nineties*, in Malcolm Bradbury and James Mc Farlane, Eds. *Modernism: A Guide Study to European Literature, 1890-1930.* London: Penguin Books, 1991.p.183.
[38] Willie Thompson. *Global Expansion: Britain and its Empire, 1870–1914*. London: Pluto Press, 1999.p.ix.

A. The Rise of Capitalism and the Seeds of Imperialism

Contemporaries named the period from 1873 to 1896 the years of the Great Depression[39], a depression quite noticeable in agriculture, industry, and commerce. The chief cause of this depression was believed to be England's inability to adapt itself to changing economic circumstances such as the various developments in technology, raw material inputs, and price levels. It is these developments that economic historians call 'the Second Industrial Revolution'. The latter had many profound effects on European civilization. It made much of the old aristocracy irrelevant. By giving the new factory owners a sudden opportunity to amass wealth, it entitled them to new honours and, more importantly, to displace the aristocratic worldview and thus impose the bourgeois one instead.

The new middle-class values aimed at improving the different industries in order to expand wealth among the greatest number of people. The result was naturally a shift in attitude towards wealth. The industrialists considered themselves the creators of wealth. The capitalist mode of production imposed new values such as "*individual freedom in economic matters, an intractable inequality in the distribution of wealth, severe class differentiation, and brutal poverty for those without property*."[40] As a system of political economy, capitalism was viewed as "*a historically absolute force, which produce[d] …hierarchy and which impose[d] production in the form of profit*"[41] The negative side of this mode of production is its emphasis on the accumulation of wealth disregarding whether the way to do so was legitimate or not. The essence of capitalism is that "*it is the winner who continues to play the game and that society can turn a blind eye to moral concerns so long as the production line keeps rolling*."[42]

The selfish spirit of capitalism exceeded the boundaries of the Victorian society and spread overseas. As John Stuart Mill put it:

> *The exportation of labourers and capital from old to new countries, from a place where their productive power is less to a place where it is greater, increases by so much the aggregate produce of the labour and capital of the world. It adds to the joint wealth of the old and the new country.*[43]

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[39] L.C.B.Seaman. *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History 1837-1901.* London and New York : Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003.p.264.
[40] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. P.644.
[41] Ibid., p.111.
[42] Susan Abbotson. *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work.* New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2007. p.51.
[43] J. S. Mill. *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), p. 382, quoted in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Op.cit., p.1098.

Capitalism may contribute to the wealth of a country through overseas expansion, but this scheme does not apply to a colonized country because capitalism is accompanied by colonialism. J.S.Mill adds that "*Colonization, in the present state of the world, is the best affair of business, in which the capital of an old and wealthy country can engage*."[44] Colonization, at this level, took the form of imperialism. The colonial capitalists were imperialists who were viewed as heroes as L.C.B.Seaman argues, **"***[t]he heroes of late Victorian society were soldiers and empire-builders*.**"**[45] Before coming to that, Britain had to shape her identity as a centre of power thanks to the expanding discourse of **scientism**, notably Charles Darwin's.

B. Social Darwinism: the Social Thought of the Age of Imperialism.

In his book *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Eric Hobsawm dates the beginning of the Age of Empire to 1875. The focus of this new imperial power was on Africa mainly because "*it was large, comparatively close, and above all, defenceless*"[46]. It was also extremely rich in raw materials which came to feed, at low cost, British industry. The trading stations the British already had in Africa became insufficient compared to the increasing economic competition; this was why the British resorted to the acquisition of colonies as a safe source that would guarantee markets and raw materials. Other reasons lying behind the interest in colonial acquisition included "*simple Victorian curiosity, social Darwinism, the pursuit of profit, and the desire to spread Christianity*."[47]

The concept of Social Darwinism, in particular, has a strong connection with the policy of imperialism in the sense that the social life of the Age of Empire was characterised by "*competition, natural selection, struggle for existence, and survival of the most adaptive individuals.*"[48] It asserted that individuals or groups must compete with one another in order to survive, and that those best able to survive demonstrated their fitness by accumulating property, wealth, and social status. Poverty, according to this theory, proved an individual's or a group's unfitness. Darwin's theory legitimized and supported the policy of Capitalism because in Capitalism and its related and derived values was to be found the natural system of social and economic organization which ensured the progress of man. It also led man to

[44]Ibid., p.1098.
[45] Ibid., p.277.
[46] Carl Cavanagh Hodge. Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Age Imperialism, 1800-1914, Volumes 1& 2*. London: Greenwood Press, 2008. p.XIiii.
[47] Ibid., p.13. Carl Cavanagh Hodge adds that "[*c]olonies also promised to ensure domestic political stability at home in Europe by distracting the masses from chronically low wages and poor working conditions.*"
[48] Ibid., p.666. The work which influenced Darwin is T.R.Malthus's book *Essays on Population* (1798) which suggested to him the idea that "on the whole, the best fitted lived."

disbelieve the seemingly obvious truth that man's proper, natural and normal mode of behaviour was cooperation, harmony, and love.

The European imperialists adopted the tenets of social Darwinism as a necessary, not to say the best, way to ensure progress. This is what was happening in late 19th century society with the whole European world torn by "*wars over resources, competition in the world market, rising militarism and territorial expansionism, class struggle, social tensions, and antagonistic nationalisms.*"[49] Many Europeans supported and believed in the "noble" task of Imperialism. Indeed, they did not view it as mere exploitation. So powerful was the discourse of humanitarianism.

C. The Rhetoric of Western Civilization vs. Shocking Imperial Atrocities

To the public spirit of the late Victorian era, the assertion of a humanitarian basis of imperial action helped legitimize imperial governance and expansion. The call for "philanthropy" invented a moralistic Victorian tradition. In this respect, a humane self-image is an important aspect in the politics of Britain and its Empire in Africa. As Frank Prochaska asserts, "*no country on earth can lay claim to a greater philanthropic tradition than Britain.*"[50] Indeed, the Victorian society's altruistic attitude towards the poor was incarnated in the prevailing philanthropic discourse; as Frank Christianson puts it:

> *As a primary means through which middle-class society attempted to define its relationship to the poor and thereby establish a coherent or 'aggregate' sense of social identity for itself and its other, philanthropic discourse registers the different elements of this contest of values.* [51]

This philanthropist attitude was rife both at home and overseas. European interference in Africa was justified basically on grounds of philanthropy and altruism. For example, the objectives of the Belgian Congo reforms—the amelioration of material conditions—were achieved not through economic and social action but through intoxicating rhetoric. In order to fulfil the call to philanthropy, a particular persuasive discourse was needed at home. This is why there appeared discourses on patriotism, free trade, and human rights. Throughout the era, humanitarianism was invoked as moral justification for Empire. As Antoinette Burton has said of the late Victorian period, "*to be British meant to be superior in all regards; such*

[49] Ibid., p.666.
[50] Frank Prochaska. "Philanthropy", F.M.I.Thompson, Ed. *The Cambridge Social History of Britain: 1750-1950.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.p.357.
[51] Frank Christianson. *Philanthropy in British and American Fiction*. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2007.pp.09-10.

superiority was fundamental to national identity."[52] This was partly a national expression of the Victorian ideals of moral uplifting. This image of British identity was extended to the Empire as well. Bernard Porter asserts that Englishmen were "*used to thinking that their empire was based on a wider and higher morality than the morality of national self-interest, or power.*"[53] In addition, in the 19th century, the theory that "*the whole world was supposed to gain from British imperialism*"[54]enabled Britain to justify her overseas expansion. In this regard, discourses of British imperialism helped shape a national identity; as Andrew Thompson argues, "*by the 1890s, it was difficult to separate patriotism and imperialism*"[55]

The concept of "Eurocentrism" came to celebrate the western superiority in that it refers to the European belief that Europe was the supreme power and the centre of civilization in the world. Eurocentrism is defined in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2006) as follows:

> *Put simply, Eurocentrism is a way of thinking that privileges Europe (or, 'the West') as the centre of historical development, and posits European culture as superior to all others. […] Eurocentrism is a specifically modern construct that has emerged in complex relation to the formation of capitalism and imperialism.* [56]

Eurocentrism was also located in the Victorian ideology as part of its authoritative discourse because it formulated and solidified a series of stereotypes concerning the European image in the world. Among these received ideas, there was the belief that Europe rose as the supreme power and the centre of civilization in the world thanks to its innate efforts and superior abilities. This thought was embedded in the everyday life of the Europeans and in their common sense. The Eurocentric vision, moreover, refracted and reacted against any discourse that challenged the European dominance and superiority. In Bakhtin's thinking, it may be said that the Eurocentric discourse took the form of a monologue (not a dialogue) because one voice only (that of Europe) was heard, and that the other voices of the non-European nations were silenced or pejorised

Another discourse which helped Britain shape her national identity is that of slavery abolition. James Wolvin has pointed out that "*ignoring the fact that for almost two decades, the British had been the western world's pre-eminent slave traders, emancipation allowed the*

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[52] Antoinette Burton. *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*. Chapel Hill: the University of Carolina Press, 1994.p.40.
[53]Bernard Porter. *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*. New York: Longman, 1984. P.285-6.
[54] Ibid., p.286.
[55] Andrew Thompson. "The Language of Imperialism and the Meaning of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895-1914", in *The Journal of British Studies*. Vol. 36, No.2, 1997.p.155.
[56] *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms.* p.*75.*

British to congratulate themselves on their moral superiority in having ended slavery."[57] E.D.Morel asserted that the condition of the Congo state was different in the question of the abolition of slavery. He argued that the Congo inhabitants "*differ[ed] only from the condition of the plantation slaves previous to the abolition of the over-sea slave trade in that instead of being transported across the seas, they were enslaved in their own homes.*"[58] He added that the humanitarian treatment of the slaves was a fiction in the Congo. Similarly, Reverend Harris declared that the Congolese must be "*liberated … from the yoke of an intolerable slavery*"[59].

Throughout the Victorian era, Britain's role in ending the slave trade was frequently recalled. European interference in Africa was justified on grounds of Christianity, commerce, and civilization. These discourses were in turn integrated in the abolitionist narrative. Indeed, in the 1880s, the anti-slavery rhetoric was so much widespread that the *Manchester Guardian* suggested that "*the most useful […] measure that could at present be proposed would be to raise, by international subscription, an anti-slavery fund to be placed at the disposal of the King of the Belgians*" who "*for many years has been the great pioneer of civilization in the central regions where the [slave] traffic by land can best be intercepted.*"[60] By the end of the century, Britain reached its aim in being an imperial power. Its informal trading empire was replaced by forms of conquests which were justified by its cultural superiority. However, King Leopold II's "*mask of philanthropy*"[61] was soon ripped away, laying bare the violent reality of his rule. The atrocities committed in the Congo highlighted the dark side of the western imperialism and the hidden complicity of the Victorian Establishment.

The dark side of the imperial policy in Africa led many writers to question the rhetoric of imperialism. Joseph Conrad was one of such writers. Yet, at first, he used to believe in the rhetoric of Imperialism; but after his experience in the Congo, he realized that the thirst for wealth and power was behind all claims of progress and civilization. His novella *Heart of Darkness*, which we shall explore in this perspective, described what colonialism actually was in his days and thus contributed to giving an aesthetic shape to the tragedy of colonized Africa.

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[57] James Wolvin quoted in *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*.Op.cit., p.38.
[58] E.D.Morel. Draft of "The Case against the Congo State", London School of Economics and Political Science (MC), F4/2, (date unknown), quoted in Aidan Forth. The Politics of Philanthropy: The Congo Terror Regime and the British Public Sphere, 1884-1914. Master of Arts Thesis. Queen's University Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 2006.p.75.
[59] Reverend Harris quoted from a letter sent to the *Daily News*, April 3, 1911, MC, LSE, F4/10.quoted in ibid., p.76.
[60] *Manchester Guardian.* December 10, 1889, ASC, RH, G117, quoted in ibid., pp.77-78.
[61] Editorial from the Boston Transcript of June 10, 1904, ASC, RH, G216, vol.1, 29, quoted in ibid., p.78.

Even the Europeans who were sent to fulfil that civilizing mission were later on viewed as the savages of Europe. In 1899, Herbert Spencer denounced the whole British Empire claiming that "*the white savages of Europe [were] overrunning the dark savages everywhere[…].The European nations[were] vying with one another in political burglaries; and that Europe [had] entered upon an era of social cannibalism in which the stronger [were] devouring the weaker.*"[62] Herbert Spencer went further in his critique of the civilizing mission. Questioning the function of European culture, he pointed out that "*literature, journalism, and art [had] all been aiding in this process of rebarbarization"* and *"that rebarbarization went hand in hand with the movement towards imperialism."*[63] Paradoxically, 'the survival of the fittest' was turned against its promoters whose barbarity at home proved to be the counterpart of that endured by 'the niggers' abroad. And that domestic barbarity was soon to be debunked.

2. The Social life

The England of the 1830s was different from that of the early 1900s. The Industrial Revolution brought about drastic changes in social life and family. The focus of this part will be on the features that characterized the late Victorian family i.e. breakdown, suffering, social conflict, and alienation. We shall dwell on the new status of woman, i.e. the 'New Woman' of the 1890s, the institution of marriage, and other factors that had an impact on family change. The degree of change was so high that the reality of family in daily life often conflicted with widely received ideas in society. Before dealing with the situation of the family, we think it appropriate to mention some important Victorian thinkers whose voices were instrumental in the surge of social awareness.

A. Outstanding Social Victorian Critical Thinkers.

Among the 19th century thinkers who harshly criticised the Victorian society was Thomas Carlyle. He rejected Victorian morality saying that it was just a mask behind which the Victorian Establishment was hiding to ensure its power over the nonconformists. It was also such power that enabled it to create an imperial force overseas. "*Our 'superior morality'*", Carlyle wrote, *"[was] properly rather an 'inferior criminality', produced not by greater love of Virtue, but by greater perfection of Police; and of that far subtler and stronger Police, called Public Opinion.*"[64] The Imperial Victorian man proved to be a criminal rather than a civilizer as it was to be shown in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. There lied in him a kind

[62] "The Role of Fabianism in British Affairs". Op.cit., p. 17.
[63] Hena Maes-Jelink. *York Notes on Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.* Beirut: Longman, 1982. p.31.
[64] Ibid.,p.88.

of thirst for domination and power. Carlyle called it "*the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent"*[65]

The terms "Weakness" and "blind Discontent" have a deep meaning in the history of 19th century British society. 'Blind Discontent' refers to the Victorians' eager desire to acquire more and more wealth and property. Besides, the Victorian weakness lies in the will to power, domination and superiority. The early Victorians in particular worshipped power, but they exercised it in a negative way. For instance, Kurtz, a fictional representation of the power of imperialism, showed the tragic finality of such power. Raymond Williams explained the tragic situation that imperialized civilization engendered saying:

> *This indeed is the tragedy of the situation: that a genuine insight, a genuine vision should be dragged down by the very situation, the very structure of relationships, to which it was opposed, until a civilizing insight became in its operation barbarous, and a heroic purpose, a 'high vocation', found its final expression in a conception of human relationships which is only an idealised version of industrial class-society. The judgement, 'in all senses we worship and follow after Power', returns indeed as a mocking echo.*[66]

As an important figure in 19th century thought, Matthew Arnold shared Thomas Carlyle's view that the Victorian civilization was mechanistic. Wealth changed the mode of thinking of the Victorians. He wrote, "*Nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so rich."*[67] The idea of perfection is attentively discussed by Matthew Arnold in his book *Culture and Anarchy*. He believed that culture was "*a study of perfection*"[68] which was designed both for individuals and for society. He argued that perfection was possible to reach through the knowledge of "*the best which [had] been thought and said in the world"*[69] and through the reaction against conservative morality and mechanical thinking. His **nascent** and vigorous Liberal-humanism was to be taken up by committed social reformists.

B. New Images of Family and Marriage

The issue of family was a central one in late Victorianism. In her book *Family Ties in Victorian England* (2007), Claudia Nelson stated that the family was either protective or destructive**:**

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[65] Ibid.,p.90.
[66] Raymond Williams. *Culture and Society 1780-1950.* New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, Inc. ,1960. p.84.
[67] Ibid., p.124.
[68] Matthew Arnold. *Culture and Anarchy*.p.473, in Lionel Trilling, Ed. *The Portable Matthew Arnold*. New York: The Viking Press, 1949.p.
[69] Ibid., p.409.

> *On the one hand, many believed it to be the potential salvation of the nation, as the counterbalance to drives that threatened to become destructive when indulged in irresponsibly, such as the sexual urge and the desire for financial profit. On the other hand, others saw family as potentially destructive on its own account, an institution that often demanded endless sacrifice (particularly from women) and sometimes offered few rewards, or that perpetuated a cycle of criminality and destitution among the lower orders of society. Some considered family an intensely conservative and stabilizing force, whether the things that it perpetuated were good or bad; others deemed it the key to reform.*[70]

Among those who thought that family life was ripe for reform was John Stuart Mill whose Liberalism[71] radically questioned social institutions and marriage in particular. J.S. Mill's ideas heralded to a new philosophy of freedom, liberty, and emancipation.

Through his *The Subjection of Women***,** J.S. Mill showed the extent to which women, wives in particular, were marginalised, oppressed, and seen as inferior to men. Thomas Hardy owed much to this thinker, and he defended much of his ideas in his last novel *Jude the Obscure*. In his essay *On Liberty* (1859), J.S.Mill analysed the Victorian social behaviour and showed its tyranny. It was not easy to denounce the Victorian orthodoxy openly; the Victorians were very harsh and severe with anyone who went beyond the line of conventionality. Opposing the tyranny of his society, Mill argued that any person who possessed a tolerable amount of common sense should be able to choose how to lead his/her life. He, moreover, maintained that all human beings ought to speak freely and act freely as long as this freedom did not harm anyone. Mill thought that moral oppression had serious consequences on individuals and could go as far as causing a distortion to their personalities. Mill vehemently criticised the institution of marriage. According to him, marriage should be a voluntary contract. It should be a choice and not an obligation; otherwise, the individual would be more than a slave: "*Engagement by which a person should sell himself, or allow himself to be sold, as a slave, would be null and void*"[72]. If marriage made either the husband or wife unhappy, then the marriage should go, for human happiness was more important than social institutions.

George Bernard Shaw also advanced arguments against the Victorian institution of marriage. What he wanted exactly was to reform and improve this social institution. In his

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[70] Claudia Nelson. *Family Ties in Victorian England.* London, Westport: Preager, 2007. p.172.

[71] Liberalism tends to be critical of institutions, whether political or religious, which restrict individual liberty; it is marked by its faith in progress and human goodness and rationality; expresses itself in demands for freedom of expression, equality of opportunity and education for all; and is distinguished from more radical progressive movements by its insistence on gradual democratic reform rather than by direct revolutionary action. (Ref: p.118. *The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and its Contexts, 1500–2000*

[72] *On Liberty.* Op cit., p.95.

preface to *Getting Married*, he wrote, "*It may be assumed without argument that unions for the purpose of establishing a family will continue to be registered and regulated by the state…. There is therefore no question of abolishing marriage; but there is a very pressing question for improving its conditions.*"[73] According to him, many marriages failed because of the incompatibility between man and woman. This incompatibility goes back to the Victorian morality which forbade couples to know each other before marriage:

> *The majority of married couples never get to know one another at all: they get accustomed to having the same house, the same children, and the same income, which is quite a different matter… Thus we see that revolt against marriage is by no means only a revolt against its sordidness as a survival of sex slavery…*
> *The revolt is also against its sentimentality, its romance, its amorism, even against its enervating happiness.* [74]

Thus, the sexual ideology which dominated the late Victorian era comprised seeds of revolt. Jenni Calder's article entitled "Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction" makes it clear

> *that marriage was an economic transaction; that husbands exerted authority and wives submitted to it; that sex was a 'marital duty' to which women reluctantly consented. […] women were in no position economically or legally to advocate radical change in the marriage system*[75]

Contrasted with the myth of the family as secure and supportive, Calder depicts the middle class family as one where "*fathers terrorise and coerce their children; husbands enjoy breaking the wills of their wives.*"[76]

The idealistic image attributed to the Victorian marriage only masked the terrible reality preserved by many taboos. For this reason, to mend the situation of women, Shaw proposed woman's total emancipation through her economic freedom. If marriage frustrated her from dignity and liberty, then this marriage should have an end through divorce. The liberalized divorce laws of the late 1850s rarely made their presence felt in fiction, but round the last decades of the 19th century, there emerged a new kind of fiction called 'the New Woman Fiction' which supported anti-marriage claims and advocated divorce as solution to an unhappy married life.

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[73] George Bernard Shaw quoted by Jean-Claude Amalric. *Bernard Shaw: Du Réformateur Victorien au Prophète Edouardien*. Dipier . p. 245.
[74] Ibid., p. 246.
[75] Jenni Calder. "Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction", in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction.* Vol.32. No. 1. June, 1977. p.94.
[76] Ibid., p. 95.

C. The 'New woman'

From the 1880s, discussion of the role of woman in society became more radical with the emergence of the New Woman. The phrase 'New Woman' came into use in 1894, and it emerged as an alternative to the strict Victorian sex role stereotype.[77] It is a subversion to the Victorian accepted image of woman in society. Within the discourse of the 'New Woman', there certainly existed subversion, dissent, and reverse discourses. This discourse also pleaded for reform in marriage laws. In fiction, the New Woman is depicted as a fallen woman, a prostitute, or an intellectual woman whose liberal ideas transcend the female ideology of the period and question the institution of marriage. This is what we find in G.B. Shaw's plays such as *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Man and Superman*. Freedom and sexuality were two prominent aspects which were associated with the subversive feminine discourse whose main call was for liberation from Victorian models of repression. As James Eli Adams puts it, "*[t]he New Woman, a companion figure of decadence if not "the decadent," who was typically male, was variously associated with both ungoverned sexual appetite and an utter lack of desire*."[78]

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) received critical responses for its depiction of female sexuality.[79] Hardy created sexually compromised female characters starting with Fanny Robin in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) and ending with Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* (1895). His change in attitude and presentation of woman reveals miserable fates typically inflicted by so many writers on their fallen women characters: premature death (by murder, suicide, shame, disfiguring disease), circumscribed lives (dependence, emigration, abandonment), or banishment to the convent. For example, two of Hardy's fallen women, Eustacia Vye in *The Return of the Native* (1878) and Sue Bridehead suffered and died prematurely because they lacked the ruthlessness needed by women, especially those who married, to survive in a male- dominated world. But Hardy transcended the social conventions by elevating the status of his women protagonists to that of

[77] In his book *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman,* Angelique Richardson claims, "In the closing decades of the century the New Woman . . . rapidly came to dominate fiction, both as theme and writer". (Reference: *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.p.5)

[78] James Eli Adams. *A History of Victorian Literature.* United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. p.380.

[79] Among these responses, the novelist and critic Clementina Black reviewed *Tess* for the *Illustrated London News* on January 9,1892 as follows : "*Mr. Hardy's story is founded on a recognition of the ironic truth which we all know in our hearts, and are all forbidden to say aloud, that the richest kind of womanly nature, the most direct, sincere, and passionate, is the most liable to be caught in that sort of pitfall which social convention stamps as an irretrievable disgrace*." (R.G. Cox, Ed. *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1970. pp,186-87) Also the most famous dismissal of this novel came from the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, Mowbray Morris , who refused to serialize the work: "*Mr. Hardy has told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner*" (ibid. p. 219).

tragic heroines (as we shall see in our analysis of *Jude the Obscure*). Hardy's 'aestheticisation' of social failure exemplified the tremors which literature and the arts were shaking.

3. The Cultural Scene.

In this part, we shall deal with Decadence as a social critique which put emphasis on the struggle of the individual against an uncaring social world, and with Aestheticism as an artistic response to social change. In the English canon, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* became widely considered the most representative text of the English Decadent movement whose aesthetic criticism did not conceive of art solely for its own sake, but enhanced the role of art and beauty as an antidote to the problems of 'modern' society.

The early Victorians attributed a social function to art: they believed that art should teach a moral. However, this function was subverted towards the end of the century with the appearance of the doctrine of "Art for Art's Sake". The artistic scene of the 1890s, in fact, demanded that art should be "*extricated from moral, religious and ideological constraints*" and "*free of any obligatory relation to reality—such as the relation of imitation or reflection.*"[80] The Aesthetes of the 1890s, namely Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, believed that art could change one's perception of the world and affect one's view of reality. They were intent on developing a positive philosophy of art. Art, indeed, was not the classical notion of a mirror held up to life. Furthermore, in detaching art from its representational function, the Aesthetes were also detaching it from its moral aim. The Aesthetes wanted no moral task assigned to art. In other words, art existed for its own sake. Walter Pater, for instance, argued that the aim of art was "*[n]ot to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends*"[81] Pater's works, including *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (*1873),* were marked by

> *a withdrawal from social and political concerns, disillusionment with the consolations available in religion, and a rejection of the philistine and mechanical world which was the legacy of mainstream bourgeois thought and practice, in favour of an exaltation of art and of experience* [82]

A. Oscar Wilde's Aesthetic Beliefs

One Aesthete who powerfully satirized the morals and mores of the English society was Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). His only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) provoked a

[80] *Culture and Society 1780-1950.* Op.cit., p.170.
[81] Ibid., p.170.
[82] M.A.R. Habib *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present Day*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.p.498.

storm of critical protest. Through his witty epigrams, he subverted the moral principles of his bourgeois audience. He argued that "*there[was] no such thing as a moral or an immoral book*," and "*no artist [had] ethical sympathies*." In other words, art was independent of morality; rather, art was more important than morality. Wilde, in this respect, withdrew from the duty of imitating life and he redefined its function saying, "*it [was] the spectator, and not life, that art really mirror[ed]*" meaning that any work of art should not tell us about the author or even the world around him but about ourselves as spectators. Moreover, Wilde believed that art was set apart from reality, idealism, morality, and truth. Art for him was essentially an aesthetic rather than a moral notion.

Not surprisingly, Wilde's Aestheticism clashed with the mimetic and moralistic view of literature. Aesthetics for him dominated morals and realism. He believed that the artist was "*the creator of beautiful things*"[83] without any concern for morals or any accurate representation of reality. In *The Decay of Lying* **(**1889, rev.1891), Wilde declared that art should express nothing but beauty.

To describe the role of the artist, Wilde introduced the paradox of the 'sincere mask' as a key concept. In one of his epigrams, he said, "*[man was] least himself when he talk[ed] in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth*." This can mean that his incorporation of the philosophy of Aestheticism is a mask through which Dorian uncovers terrible realities in the late Victorian society. Kurtz also, in *Heart of Darkness*, reveals the truth of the white Victorian man by wearing the mask of civilization and imperialism. Kurtz does not only tell his truth, but he also behaves according to it. In this context, we may say that the late Victorians wore the mask of civilization and morality.

In his preface to his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde wrote, "*[the] nineteenth-century dislike of realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass*". In addition, in chapter 19 of his novel, the character Lord Henry said, "*The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its shame. That is all*". These two quotations deal indeed with the role of art and the reader's response. The reaction against Realism was due to the bitter and shameful reality a work of art showed, be it a book, a play, or a painting.

For Wilde, furthermore, art was created for personal enjoyment, not for moral or ethical purposes; thus, texts should not be invested with representing daily life at all. The moral middle-class domestic ideology still informed the family literary magazine and

[83] Oscar Wilde. *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* in Richard Aldington and Stanley Weintranb Eds. *The Portable Oscar Wilde.* London: Penguin Books, 1974.p. 138.

restricted the space of reading. In this context, there were many novels whose popularity and fame was due to their being subject to censorship; among these novels were Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Emil Zola's *Nana*, and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. [84]

B.Aestheticism as a Movement of Protest.

Aestheticism has been identified as an artistic movement or period, an ideology, a lifestyle, and a social identity. Writers and artists like John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, William Morris, Walter Pater, and Oscar Wilde in late 19th century England believed that Aestheticism was a kind of response, a movement of protest which reflected the late 19th century artist with some issues such as the vulgarization of values and the commercialization of art.[85] This kind of art can only flourish "*when removed from the roughness of the stereotyped world of actuality and the orthodoxy of philosophical systems and fixed points of view*."[86] In addition to this, J. McNeill Whistler wrote in his 'Ten o'clock' lecture (1885) that art is '*selfishly occupied with her own perfection only*' and has '*no desire to teach'*.

Still more important, the attraction of Aestheticism was rooted in the aesthete's radical isolation from humanity; in other words, the aesthete recognised that human intimacy would forever remain out of reach. To relate this point to our main theme that is modern tragedy, we share Raymond Williams's affirmation that the most characteristic feature of modern tragedy is "*the division between society and individual*". The late Victorian aesthete, then, was one who witnessed this division. Believing that social bonds—like the relationship between the members of a family—can never be formed, the aesthete lived in a state of virtual solitude. Furthermore, what oppressed the aesthete was the fact of remaining isolated in a chaotic and fragmented world that made no sense. When eventually the feeling of solitude and isolation became a burden for the aesthete, the latter looks for an alternative, one which can only be

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[84] In addition to this, the censorship on British art made it unable to compete with European or American artistic products (be it fiction, poetry, or drama). For this purpose, there emerged an advocate of the novel's liberation from domestic bourgeois ideology because it restricted the subjects that should be treated in novels. In this respect, Eliza Lynn Linton in her essay "Candour in English Fiction" (1890) argues, "*Of all the writers of fiction in Europe or America the English are the most restricted in their choice of subjects. [.. .] [T]he subjects lying to the hand of the British novelist are woefully limited, and the permissible area of the conflict between humanity and society is daily diminishing.*" Linton blames the 'British Matron' for this inability. She argues that the 'British Matron' "is the true censor of the Press, and exerts over fiction the repressive power she has tried to exert over Art. Things as they are – human nature as it is – the conflict always going on between law and passion, the individual and society – she will not have spoken of . . .[N]o one must touch the very fringes of uncertificated love under pain of the greater and the lesser excommunication . . . If a writer, disdaining the unwritten law, leaps the barriers set up by Mrs. Grundy and ventures into the forbidden Garden of Roses, he is boycotted by all respected libraries and the severer kind of booksellers." (Reference: Eliza Lynn Linton, "Candour in English Fiction," in *New Review* 2 (1890), p.10-11; quoted in Ann L. Ardis. *Modernism and Cultural Conflict.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p.49)

[85] Peter Childs, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Routledge, 2006. p.2.

[86] Ibid., p.2.

realized within the sphere of illusion, i.e. in and through art. The aesthete then departed from life as reality to life as illusion. Illusion thus substituted real life and allowed the aesthete to experience emotions that he was otherwise precluded from feeling. We understand here that there was a kind of detachment. Oscar Wilde, for instance, stressed this fact when he believed that to attempt to live life in the manner of the public was to engage in a losing battle: "*one is always wounded when one approaches [life]*"[87]

C.Decadence as a Social Critique.

The Decadent Movement, closely associated with the doctrines of Aestheticism, dealt with the art-and-life relationship and considered art more important than life. The unconventional views of the Aesthetes and of the Impressionists of the 1890s bought them into conflict with the defenders of religion and morality, as well as with the Victorian writers who believed that art had a moral and a civilizing function. Embracing the principles of the Decadent Movement was one way of expressing dissatisfaction with Victorianism. In the Preface to his collection of essays entitled *Decadence and the 1890s (*1980), Ian Fletcher talks about Decadence as the "age of transition" in literature, and as such, he situates it between the "*closing phase of the Victorian synthesis, [and] the opening phase in those tendencies we call for convenience 'modernism'*"[88] This collapsible moment is further seen as filled with "*evanescence, instability, failure, the enterprise of internalizing history and manifesting it as style, [and] a historical and personal sense of decline and fall*"[89]**.**

Arthur Symons, in his essay *The Decadent Movement in Literature* (1893), noted that the "heroes" of the Decadent literature were "anti-heroes" who lived only for art's sake, were occupied with personal liberty, were disinterested in money and in the socio-economic system as well as with questions of morality, were unable to love naturally, and valued the artificial (the anti- natural). Other characteristics that marked Decadent literature included its pointing to death (morbidness) and tyranny.

Moreover, in Decadent literature, decadent heroes do not conform to conventional patterns of Victorian thought and behaviour. Lust for unusual experience is what characterises Decadent heroes most. For instance, in G.S. Street's *The Autobiography of a Boy*, the Decadent hero Tubby is indifferent to all things. He says, "*I have never killed a man, and it*

[88] Ian Fletcher, ed. *Decadence and the 1890s*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980.p.7
[89] Ibid., p.8.

may be an experience- the lust for slaughter."[90]Decadents recognise that art and intellect are the supreme realities rather than the values of moral and ethical ideas. Jerome Hamilton Buckley carried on this idea and wrote that Decadent literature

> *was animated by a conscious will to the sordid, the artificial, the beauty to be found in the unnatural, and the representation of the cleanliness of unclean things. It is characterised by a self- conscious and weary contempt for social conventions such as truth and marriage, by an acceptance of beauty as a basis for life.*"[91]

In this respect, the role attributed to a work of art in Decadent literature was the supremacy of art over human life and nature, a central feature of Aestheticism.

Now that we have dealt with the terms of Decadence, Aestheticism, and 'Art for Art's Sake', we shall establish a relationship between them and the title of the thesis. The discourse of art as presented by the Aesthetes of the late Victorian era (and beauty as well) is a subversive one because it weakens and challenges the Victorian discourse of art (that art should teach morality). It also gives space to a new voice which foregrounds new ideas on the role of art in society. As concerns the tragic disruptions, Oscar Wilde, for instance, proposes a disruption of normative sexual identities which is a challenge that displaces bourgeois notions of the sexual identity. When the artist treats art as a separate element of life, a kind of fragmentation and alienation occurs between the class of the artists and the rest of society. And we should not forget Raymond Williams's saying that the most characteristic feature of modern tragedy is "*the division between society and individuall.*"[92] The individual in this case is the artist who is marginalised due to his artistic transgressions and his refusal to conform to the social norms of art and beauty.

[90]Ibid., p.373.
[91] *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present Day*. Op cit., p499.
[92] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Verso Editions, 1979.

II:
Theoretical Framework

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we shall appeal to three literary theories for the analysis of *Jude the Obscure, The Picture of Dorian Gray,* and *Heart of Darkness*: Raymond Williams's theory of cultural materialism and that of modern tragedy, in addition to Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Though these theories seem, at first sight, to be working in divergent directions, I think that there is a way of grouping them in such a way as to form one theoretical whole. To make things clear, we intend first of all to explain each theory separately. Then we shall show the way they complete each other and thus provide us with critical diversity in our analysis. In the theory of cultural materialism, we focus primarily on the subversion-containment dialectic which we shall explain later. By means of Bakhtin's theory, we shall show that this subversion has dialogical undertones. We intend to highlight the subversive discourse by focusing on the language of the conflicting 'parts' (or classes) to point out the subject of this conflict. In the theory of modern tragedy, we shall attempt to show the pessimistic triumph of containment over the forces of subversion. To make it clear, the protagonists, Jude, Sue, Dorian Gray, and Kurtz, are mainly anti-heroes who bring out subversive ideas and commit subversive actions under certain circumstances and transcend the laws of conventionality, but they all end in a tragic way.

To put it simply, our theoretical framework mainly bears on the notions of subversion and containment. We will seek to find elements of subversion, dissidence, and challenge symptomatic of the social conflict of this period. More specifically, our aim is to show the various factors—such as ideology and hegemony—which are behind the conflict of the individual with society; we will show the parties involved in this conflict and the different causes which lie behind it. Then we will highlight its discursive dimension focusing on Bakhtin's ideas of the dialogic nature of novelistic discourse, and shall finally view the outcome of this conflict as the denouement of modern tragedy. To get closer to the point I want to make, I will refer briefly to the protagonists (or more accurately, the anti-heroes) of the novels under study. All of Jude, Dorian Gray, and Kurtz are in conflict with their societies and within themselves. From a Marxist perspective, the conflicts they experience have to do with ideology, hegemony, and class struggle. Seen under Bakhtinian lenses, this conflict is a literary dialogue. In other words, the protagonists hold, willy-nilly, a dialogue with the opposing part, which displaces the Victorian indisputable discourse from its position of power. Instead of listening to one authoritative voice in society, we listen to a multiplicity of voices revealing diverse and often fluctuating meanings. To quote J.B. Thompson:

> *[…] the meaning of what is said—what is asserted in spoken or written discourse as well as that about which one speaks or writes—is infused with forms of power; different individuals or groups have a differential capacity to make a meaning stick. It is the fusion of meaning with power that lends language so freely to the operations of ideology. Relations of domination are sustained by a mobilization of meaning which legitimates, dissimulates or reifies an existing state of affairs; and meaning can be mobilized because it is an essentially open, shifting indeterminate phenomenon.*[93]

It is in the light of this dialogic interplay that we intend to bring out the power of the word. After Bakhtin, we know full well that the novels mime "*the tension between the individuals' sense of autonomy and the multiplicity of their interconnections within the social nexus that permits their discourse*."[94]

This specific novelistic aspect, as Bakhtin argues, puts the reader in a context which makes clear the ways in which the protagonists struggle to extricate themselves from hegemony. However, their carnivalesque 'costume' belittles them and makes them passive in face of the powers that be. This is why they meet the tragic fate of the anti-heroes of modern tragedy. Their being torn between their attachment to their roots and their modern aspirations make it difficult for them to find a balance between the two loyalties; this is why their end is death after long suffering and sickness (Jude), suicide (Dorian Gray), or madness and death (Kurtz). Presently, we shall explain the three theories in detail and show the way we intend to implement them for our novels and thus bring to the fore the tragic disruptions and the subversive discourse in the late Victorian fiction.

1. Raymond Williams's Theory of Cultural Materialism

The term 'Cultural Materialism' is coined by Raymond Williams in his *Marxism and Literature* (1977)**.** According to Williams, cultural materialism is a brand of literary criticism that places texts in a material, which is socio-political or historical, context in order to show that texts are bound up with a repressive, dominant ideology, yet also provide scope for dissidence and subversion. In other words, power "*is subject to undermining by dissident elements within a society.*"[95] Williams argues: "*It is true that in the structure of any social*

[93] J.B. Thompson. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology.* Cambridge: Polity, 1984.p.132, cited in Michael Gardiner. *The Dialogics of Critique: M.M.Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.p. 222.
[94] Terry Eagleton. "Ideology, Fiction, Narrative", in *Social Text*, No. 2. (Summer, 1979), p. 829.
[95] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. p.506

society, and especially in its class structure, there is always a social basis for elements of the social process that are alternative or oppositional to the dominant elements."[96]

In this context, we will seek to show the "emergent" strains within the Victorian society which offered oppositional or alternative views, beliefs, and practices. In Williams's own words: "*no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy and human intention*"[97]. In other words, the dominant culture is always under pressure from alternative cultures; and while literary texts seem to be instruments of a dominant socio-cultural order, they also demonstrate how the apparent coherence of that order is threatened from the inside, by inner contradictions and by tensions that it seeks to hide.

By "emergent", Williams means those "*new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [which] are continually being created*."[98] These emergent elements are in conflict with the dominant ones: while the emergent elements seek to have a foothold in society, the dominant social order excludes, represses, and punishes them. Through the study of themes, plot, characterization, we shall show that the emergent elements take the form of a rebellion against conventions, which is a fundamental characteristic of modern tragedy. In addition, we shall resort to the study of language and narrative in the light of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in order to shed more light on the conflict between the dissident and the dominant. As Williams puts it:

> *The relation between the styles of narrative and of directly represented speech is especially important in fictional conventions. One significant social distinction is between an integrity of style […] to the break or even formal contrast between narrated and spoken language (as in George Eliot and Hardy)*[99]

It is this contrast between the narrated (the author's) and the spoken language (the characters') that we shall scrutinize because this is where the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate is acted out.

Another point which important to consider in Williams's theory is the conception of counter-hegemony. Williams argues that the standards of any way of life, thus the relationships between individuals or between individuals and society, is not fixed; it is always subject to change. In this respect the social order is questioned and threatened in such a way as to bring about new meanings and values in society. It is in this context that we shall argue that late Victorian society is thoroughly being questioned and its dominance is threatened by the new ideas which were introduced either from the working class (as Jude and Sue do) or

[96] Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.p.124
[97] Ibid., p.125.
[98] Ibid., p.123.
[99] Ibid., p.178.

from the middle class (as we intend to see in the case of Dorian Gray) itself. New ideas, beliefs, values, and positions constitute a new cultural system which is an oppositional formation.[100] Williams explains that traditional values are often regarded as "*elements of the past which have now to be discarded*."[101] In a deep sense, however, the hegemonic basis of tradition is an active force which, though it undergoes a process of stratification and subversion, asserts its presence in society "*since it is tied to many practical continuities—families, places, institutions, a language—which are indeed directly experienced*."[102] It is not only through themes that we are going to show this aspect of subversion. Language also plays an important role in displaying the constant conflict between tradition and modernity. For this reason, we shall make use of Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism.

2. Michael Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogism

Bakhtin argues that the dialogical nature of language implies struggle and that the novel is the best literary form which represents and highlights this struggle: "*[t]he novel is the privileged arena where languages in conflict can meet, bringing together, in tension and dialogue, not only opposing characters, but also different historical ages, social levels, civilizations and other dawning realities of human life.*"[103] What Bakhtin says of Dostoevsky, that he "*…brought together ideas and worldviews, which in real life were absolutely estranged and deaf to one another, and forced them to quarrel*"[104], is applicable in our analysis, because Hardy, Wilde, and Conrad bring opposing worldviews and force them to quarrel as we shall demonstrate through the analysis of the language of the conflicting characters of the novels. The conflict we witness between the characters is a conflict between world views, as Bakhtin says "*a particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world*."[105] The novel genre for Bakhtin represents a very important element in life because the conflict it highlights is not a conflict of fictional characters; the matter transcends this area to mean life itself. For Bakhtin,

> *the novel is the representation of the life of the utterance, of discourse. It depicts the drama of discourses conflicting with discourses, of their struggle to assimilate, argue with, parody, stylise, corroborate, make conditional, report, frame, or deliberately ignore each other. The novel is the meta-linguistic genre par excellence. In its pages, we encounter the interaction of "languages" and*

[100] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit., p.114.
[101] Ibid., p.116.
[102] Ibid., p.116.
[103] L. Appignanesi and S. Maitland, Eds. *The Rushdie File*. London: Fourth Estate Books, 1989, p.245, qtd., in Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, Malcolm Kelsall, and John Peck. *Gale Encyclopedia: Literature and Criticism*. Cardiff: University of Wales.p.53.
[104] M. Bakhtin. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.p.91
[105] Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (1981). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008 (17th paper back print).p.333.

> *"speeches" of varied social groups; it is characterised by varied-speechedness. Like words in life, words in the novel are conscious of the "linguistic background" of the culture they assume, of the dialogue that has already considered the object they speak about, and of the possible future words that will take them as objects as well. The novel is thus the most thoroughly socio-historical genre because it is the most self-conscious of the hermeneutics of everyday social life.*[106]

The novels under study also share these characteristics. Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad try to render the drama of the official discourse conflicting with the unofficial, emergent, subversive discourse. They draw iconoclastic images of the Victorian life; images wherein they critique from within and without the culture they grew up with. Bakhtin's theory enables a better understanding of the subversive discourse in these works. Among the features which allow for dialogism there are intertextuality and appropriation. Both, indeed, contribute to stratify the official and the dominant language. In other words, the novelists' intertextual intentions and appropriation of a language other than the dominant one forms a threat to the dominant voice.

A. Intertextuality and Appropriation.

Knowledge is always formed from various discourses which pre-exist an individual's experience, as Don H. Bialostosky puts it, "*[o]ur discourse, in any case, is always subject to appropriation by others who do not share our precise standpoint*."[107] In this regard, we find out that a text is always made up of other texts. The novels under study are also texts where we hear the echo of other literary texts. This is done in order to undermine and subvert the fixed signification and the "closure" of the Victorian authoritative discourse and ideology. Because one way of showing their position against Victorian constraints is subverting and dismantling essentialist Victorian notions and displacing fixed identities, Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad resort to a linguistic-cum-ideological 'guerrilla'. We notice that there are implicit or explicit voices—expressed in the character's dialogues or implied in the narrative—which disrupt the tyranny of the unitary language. In this respect, we have to remind the readers that we are dealing with the concept of language as it is conceived by Bakhtin; and when the latter speaks of language, "he does not refer to diversity found in

[106] Prabhakara Jha. "Lukacs or Bakhtin? Some Preliminary Considerations toward a Sociology of the Novel", in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 18, No. 31. Jul. 30, 1983.p.41.
[107] Don H. Bialostosky. "Dialogics as an Art of Discourse in Literary Criticism", in *PMLA*. Vol. 101, No. 5. Oct., 1986.p.791.

different languages but to diversity found within one (national) language".[108] In order to bring to light this fact, we will resort to the concept of intertextuality.

The term intertextuality is popularised by Julia Kristeva. According to her formulation, she maintains that "any text is in fact an "intertext"—the site of an intersection of numberless other texts, and existing only through its relations to other texts."[109] This term also refers to the "multiple ways in which any one literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive. M.H.Abrams writes that the term intertextuality "*includes literary echoes and allusions as one of the many ways in which any text is interlinked with other texts*."[110]According to this definition, the three writers' use of intertextuality is apparent in two devices: literary echoes—open or covert citations—and allusions. Bakhtin calls these literary echoes, i.e. open or covert citations "*the appropriation of others' speech and writing*". The reason that lies behind this act is not simple imitation or mimicry but the provision of a specific kind of response to the issues daringly raised by these progressive writers.

In his theory, Bakhtin is basically concerned with language (or the nature of discourse) as a social phenomenon. He believes that "*every discourse, written or spoken, is an expression of ideology—that is, it expresses a view of the world, inevitably coloured by your social group or standing*"[111]. He considers words as powerful and active signs because they are included in the continuous class struggle in society. Since our case concerns the late Victorian society, we observe the same fact about the clash between the language of the ruling class and the subordinate classes:

> *Verbal signs are the arena of continuous class struggle: the ruling class will always try to narrow the meaning of words and make social signs 'uni-accentual', but in times of social unrest the vitality and basic 'multi-accentuality' of linguistic signs becomes apparent as various class interests clash and intersect upon the ground of language.* [112]

It is the multiplicity of these interacting languages as the multiplicity of social voices which produce a plenitude of meanings that Bakhtin calls 'heteroglossia'.

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[108] Hannele Dufva "Language, Thinking and Embodiment: Bakhtin, Whorf and Merleau-Ponty" in Finn Bostad, Craig Brandist, Lars Sigfred Evensen and Hege Charlotte Faber, eds. *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language and Culture: Meaning in Language, Art and New Media*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.p.140.
[109]M.H. Abrams. *A Glossary of Literary Terms/Seventh Edition*. United Kingdom: Heinle & Heinle, 1999.p.317.
[110] Ibid., p.10.
[111]Tory Young. *Studying English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp.50-51.
[112] Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2005. p.40.

B. Heteroglossia

The novel—as a literary genre, a social practice, or a mode of expression and utterance—longs for a kind of freedom through heteroglossia which bears on matters of real world practical concern**.** Heteroglossia, by definition, is

> *a way of conceiving the world as made up of a rolling mass of languages, each of which has its own distinct formal markers. These features are never purely formal, for each has associated with it a set of distinctive values and presuppositions*.[113]

The Victorian language, in fact, is full of diversity, which can be seen through heteroglossia. The point exactly is that towards the late Victorian period, the Victorian unified language witnessed a kind of subversion and distortion in the sense that it became no longer the unique language that is spoken or heard in society because the movements of change that happened at that time affected the linguistic field as well. This is why there is not one ideology or one expressed point of view: "*heteroglossia reflects the ideologies present, or the points of view held in the linguistic community*."[114]The term heteroglossia "*refers to the basic condition governing the production of meaning in all discourse. It asserts the way in which context defines the meaning of utterances, which are heteroglot in so far as they put in play a multiplicity of social voices and their individual expressions.*"[115]. Bakhtin's concept 'heteroglossia' and 'carnivalization' in particular are useful in our analysis because

> *[h]eteroglossia is in opposition to the centripetal, unifying, hierarchical forces of language in exactly the same manner that carnival resists social hierarchies and demonstrates that the established order is not the only imaginable form of society, as it claims to be.*[116]

C. Carnivalization

The device of carnivalization in the novels under study is a means used to show the hypocrisy of the Victorian society and to contest its authority. For Bakhtin, the genre of the novel is "*the prime example of 'carnivalised' literature, because, like the medieval carnival, it is a site where orthodoxies are contested, satirised and undermined; its varied voices – of narrator and characters – allow for dialogue*."[117] The narrative form of these novels is oriented towards an inversion of positions of structures of 'high' and 'low' through forms of

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[114] Hannele Dufva. "Language, Thinking and Embodiment: Bakhtin, Whorf and Merleau-Ponty" in Finn Bostad, Craig Brandist, Lars Sigfred Evensen and Hege Charlotte Faber, eds. *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language and Culture: Meaning in Language, Art and New Media*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.p.140.
[115] Peter Brooker, , Raman Selden, and Peter Widdowson. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory***.** United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2005. p.40.
[116] Thomas A. Schmitz. *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts: An Introduction.*UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007. p.73.
[117] *Studying English Literature.* Op.cit.,p.51.

parody so as to displace and to destabilise what is considered as sacred and taken seriously within order. In this way, carnivalization permits literary texts to hold a dialogue between opposites (structures of 'high' and 'low') and depicts them as mirror images of each other. In this respect, carnivalization permits the novel to be polyphonous because **"***its open relativistic structure hints at the fundamental principles of dialogism*"[118] Terry Eagleton, in the same context, argues that carnivalization has a primarily cathartic and a re-integrating function. He writes, **"***Carnival, after all, is a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off*"[119]

This conception highlights our reading of the novels where emphasis is to be put on the Victorian issues that are described upside down, where its values, morality, and principles are parodied, mocked, and shown as debased and devalued. Thomas Hardy's *Jude* carnivalises the institution of marriage by inverting its position in society and displacing its Victorian sacred meaning. In Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the Victorian didactic role attributed to art is parodied and carnivalised mainly through the picture of Dorian Gray, a picture which shows the Victorian society its hidden hypocrisy. In *Heart of Darkness*, the idea of imperialism as incarnated through the character of Kurtz is turned upside down to mean all but a civilising mission in Kipling's meaning. Therefore, we notice that these writers have a strong tendency to carnivalise what is generally and highly accepted and sacred in the Victorian doxa.

The section that follows is about the theory of modern tragedy. The correlation between the Bakhtinian theory and this theory shows that both are concerned with matters of the common man in an age of subversion and shifting of positions. Where dialogism disturbs the authority of the formal discourse, themes in modern tragedies also shift from the sublime to the ordinary, to issues which concern the common man. Dialogism permits the voice of the usually silenced (or the common man) to be heard. Therefore, we shall focus on how this common man articulates his plight. We want to relate his discourse to his tragic fate. Although he displaces and transgresses the Victorian official discourse and thus opens for us new vistas, he always meets with a tragic end, which gives a measure of the forces of containment pitted against him.

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[119] Terry Eagleton. *Walter Benjamin: Or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, London : Verso, 1981. p. 148, cited in Michael Gardiner. *The Dialogics of Critique: M.M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology*. New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.p.231.

3- The Theory of Modern Tragedy

The concept of tragedy as is experienced in the late Victorian era sounds more modern than classic. This is justified by the shift of tragedy from stage to the novel form and its new characteristics. Indeed, near the end of the 19th century, the conception of tragedy changed; and this change is expressed and reflected man's nature, role, and position in society. We have now a modern tragic hero called anti-hero or a problematic hero, a modern tragic flaw, a modern conflict, a modern theme, and a modern conception of death. This modernity originates, as we have seen earlier, in the subversion of conventional attitudes. The tragedy, incarnated by our problematic heroes, occurs at the moment when the friction between the locus of Conservatism and that of Liberalism reaches a breaking point; hence, the tragic disruptions.

A. Towards a Definition of Modern Tragedy in the Late Victorian Context

George Steiner's claim that *"[w]here the causes of disaster are temporal, where the conflict can be resolved through technical or social means, we may have serious drama, but not tragedy"*[120] reflects a modern view of life, one which allows for negotiation and compromise, and, therefore, reconciliation. This is why he believes that it is impossible for tragedy to take place in the modern world. Conversely, we may say that tragedy occurs when the causes of disaster are permanent. This is in fact the point of focus of our study of modern tragedy in the late Victorian era. Modern tragedy does exist; it is experienced by individuals in social life as characters do in fiction; as George Petros Katsaros puts it: *"A tragedy is no longer imagined as a fiction; the world instead is imagined as tragic"*[121].

If George Steiner does not view the modern world as worthy of tragic status, Raymond Williams does. Williams, whose *Modern Tragedy* is thought to have been his response to Steiner's *The Death of Tragedy*, rejects any limiting definition of tragedy other than that it involves loss, suffering, and alienation. For him, tragedy is by nature a means of interpreting the reality around us so that we have a conceptual framework to interpret human experience and is not limited to any particular historical period or metaphysical stance. When we say that a specific situation is a 'tragedy,' we offer an explanation, an interpretation of experience. The classic idea of fate or destiny as an element in tragedy is supplanted by the idea of social and economic forces controlling behaviour or in other cases merely limiting the possibility of

[120] George Steiner. *The Death of Tragedy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961. P.8.
[121] George Petros Katsaros. *Tragedy, Catharsis, and Reason: An Essay on the Idea of the Tragic*. PhD dissertation. Yale University. May, 2002. p.118.

individual choice. One of the aims of bourgeois tragedy[122], according to Williams is "*the admission of ordinary contemporary experience to tragic status.*"[123] The term 'bourgeois' is dropped and replaced by "*the important modern form of 'social tragedy'*"[124] Compared with conventional forms of tragedy, such as the Greek or the Renaissance tragedy, modern tragedy is the outcome of an "*experience of a social and secular kind*"[125]

According to Williams, the main concern of social (or modern) tragedy is not the questioning of some immanent commandment, but a critique, through words and deeds, of social normalcy:

> *Instead of showing a man judged by an absolute law, social tragedy has in large measure been concerned with the criticism of such laws, in the light of particular experience (as bourgeois drama, on a narrow base, had shared with Greek and Renaissance tragedy in showing). It has been liberal in the important sense that it represents a new stage of individualism.*[126]

B. Conflict in Modern Tragedy

The modern tragic conflict in the period we are concerned with lies between the absolute optimism of the Victorian Establishment in creating laws which control the behaviour of individuals in society to ensure progress and success, and the absolute pessimism of individuals who deny any possibility of progress under such severe, indifferent, and constraining laws. In other words, the modern tragic conflict in this period is between the individual and his society. More precisely, it expresses the clash between the conservative ideas—what Raymond calls the dominant or the residual—and the new emergent ones within society; i.e. the conflict lies between the **residual** or **dominant**, and the **emergent** ideas.[127]

According to Raymond Williams, what differentiates modern tragedy from its other types is its historical context:

> *Important tragedy seems to occur neither in periods of real stability, nor in periods of open decisive conflict. Its most common historical setting is the period preceding the substantial breakdown and transformation of an important culture. Its condition is the real tension between old and new:*

[122] The 18th century tragedy writers popularized the bourgeois or the domestic tragedy, a kind of tragedy which was written in prose where the tragic hero belonged to the middle class or the lower orders and suffered a number of social disasters. George Lillo's *The London Merchant* or *The History of George Barnwell* (1731) is an example of this tragedy.
[123] Raymond Williams. *The Long Revolution*. London: Pelican Books, 1961. p.292.
[124] Ibid., p.292.
[125] Ibid., p.292.
[126] Ibid., p.292.
[127] *Marxism and Literature.* Op.cit., p.123.

> *between received beliefs, embodied in institutions and responses; and newly and vividly experienced contradictions and possibilities.*[128]

Indeed, the late Victorian era is a period of conflict between a dominant and an emergent ideology. It is also a period of religious doubt, aesthetic 'decadence', and moral decline. The condition of the late Victorian tragedy is the tension between "old and new"; more accurately, between the dominant Victorian institutions and the individual's subversive response. Tragedy occurs when the powerful Victorian culture and tradition are confronted with an emergent culture spurred by individualism rather than communalism. The Victorian conservatism clashes with the new emerging culture which tends to be more or less Liberal; i.e. a culture that advocates mainly freedom from the Victorian orthodoxy. It is this conflict that, according to Raymond Williams, gives birth to the individual's isolation in his society.

This mood of quasi-schizophrenia is expressed in literature through the social problem novel which is concerned with the impact of change upon individuals and society. The social problem novelists resort to Naturalism in order to identify the ills that cause disorder. Thus, Naturalism was one mode of writing through which these novelists pen the tragic disruptions of their society. In other words, they write tragedies of naturalism; i.e. "*the tragedy of passive suffering, and the suffering is passive because man can only endure and can never really change his world."*[129]

Furthermore, if we investigate deeply the notion of tragedy in the late Victorian era, we naturally agree with Raymond Williams's affirmation that the most characteristic feature of modern tragedy is "*the division between society and individual*"[130]**.** The individual rejects all sorts of relations with his society such as familial relationships. The break between the individual and his society leads him ultimately to his isolation, itself another characteristic of modern tragedy.

Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad saw the tragic in the social, cultural, and political situations of their society, and this led them to write tragedies, not classic tragedies, but modern tragedies with common men and women as tragic protagonists. One drama theorist states: "*the theatre and all drama can be seen as a mirror in which society looks at itself. This also is a fact which has social and political implications […]"*[131] The

[128]Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. p.
[129] Ibid., p.69.
[130]*Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.
[131] Esslin. *An Anatomy of Drama*. p.103. in *Tragedy, Catharsis, and Reason: An Essay on the Idea of the Tragic*.Op.cit., p.73.

novels aim precisely at enlightening the public, to open the eyes of the readers to their true condition.

C. The Modern Tragic Hero

In order to demonstrate the new characteristics of the modern tragic hero, it seems relevant to remind the reader of the characteristics of the earlier tragic hero. Until the end of the 17th century when almost all tragedies were written in verse, the tragic hero was of high rank and his fate affected the state. Since the 18th century, many tragedies have been written in prose and represented middle-class or working-class heroes and heroines. [132] The protagonist of the bourgeois tragedy (or the *drame* in French) is not as great a tragic hero as Aristotle depicts him. He is only a pathetic figure who represents his diseased and fragmented society. The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen wrote modern tragedies in plays such as *A Doll's House* (1879), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *An Enemy of the People*; these were tragedies whose main concern was of a social or political significance. The protagonists of these tragedies are not heroic but antiheroic "*in that they manifest a character that is at an extreme from the dignity and courage of the protagonists in traditional dramas*"[133] M.H. Abrams defines the antihero as

> *The chief person in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero of a serious literary work. Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power, or heroism, the antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest.* [134]

According to Raymond Williams, "*The [modern] tragic hero is not a man caught in some universal pattern, but at odds with his society and its particular moral laws.*"[135] The 'heroism' of the modern tragic hero lies in his rebelling. As Williams argues:

> *The modern hero in social tragedy is characteristically a man who rebels against some law, in any of its possible forms: the heroism lies in the rebellion, and is vindicated even in defeat. In some work, further, the rebellion is generalized, in terms of alternative values and laws: the liberal hero as liberator.* [136]

The centre of interest in modern tragedy lies in the nature of conflict: it is between "*an individual with a particular society.* [137]

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[132] M. H. Abrams. *A Glossary of Literary Terms/ Seventh Edition*. United Kingdom **:** Heinle & Heinle, 1999. p.324.
[133] Ibid., p.324.
[134] Ibid., p.11.
[135] *The Long Revolution*. Op.cit., p.292.
[136] Ibid., p.293.
[137] Ibid., p.294.

Another dramatist who is also concerned with the common man as the central focus of modern tragedy is the American Arthur Miller. In his essay entitled "Tragedy and the Common Man", a month later followed by "The Nature of Tragedy" (1949), he formulates a theory of tragedy which fits modern society. He is much concerned with the tragic fate of the common man who, for him, can be a tragic figure just as kings and princes used to be in the classical tragedy:

> *The common man is as apt a subject for tragedy as kings were in the face of it. This ought to be obvious in the light of modern psychiatry which bases its analysis upon classic formulations, such as the Oedipus and Orestes complexes which enacted by royal beings, but which apply to everyone in similar emotional situations.* [138]

The modern tragic hero dares to challenge the validity of the social conventions and institutions that rule him and determine his fate. Miller says, "*From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his "rightful position" in his society.*" [139]

Miller also attributes to fear a meaning different from that which Aristotle gave it. According to him, fear is the consequence of the struggle between man and his unchangeable environment. He adds that the crux of a modern tragedy is in the obstacles which challenge the dignity of the protagonist. These very obstacles, he asserts, were never raised before. He comes to the conclusion that there is no tragedy if its author fears to touch the raw spots and the respected morality of his society or what are called tabooed issues. Indeed, there must be questions which disturb and shock society in order to 'colour' the spirit of modern tragedy. He writes: "*no tragedy can come about when its author fears to question absolutely every thing, when he regards any institution, habit, or custom as being ever lasting, immutable, or inevitable.*" [140] It is also important to consider Miller's view of what he calls the tragic right:

> *The tragic right is a condition of life, a condition in which the human personality is able to flower and realize itself. The wrong is the condition which suppresses man, perverts the flowing out of his love and creative instinct….* [141]

The living conditions in modern life do not fit man's aspiration to love and freedom; this is why he is always at odds with them.

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[138] Arthur Miller. "Tragedy and the Common Man", in www.google.com/tragedy-miller.html.
[139] Ibid.,
[140] Ibid.,
[141] Ibid.,

D. The Meaning of "the Tragic" in Modern Tragedy.

It is all too common today to hear of events referred to as tragic. However, what one person may deem tragic, another may simply label sad or pathetic. What distinguishes the term "tragic" from the terms "sad" or "pathetic" is that "tragic" is associated mainly with the inevitable. It must first be assumed that not all suffering is tragic. Walter Kaufmann, in his analysis of tragedy, discusses the distinction between the tragic and the merely pathetic. He points out that many scholars often assume that "inevitable" must be attached to the term "tragic." The assumption that all tragedy must be inevitable, then, appears to be a modern conception that is not related to the Greeks' understanding of tragedy. A genuinely tragic situation is when a catastrophe is inevitable whatever the hero decides to do: if he listens to the dominant voice of his society, his personal dreams meet a tragic end; and if he listens to his rebellious voice; the severe social laws punish him tragically. As Kaufmann puts it, "*[t]he tragedy that arouses these emotions most strongly is the most tragic*"[142]

The source of this tragic, according to Lucien Goldmann, "*naît de l'opposition radicale entre un monde d'êtres sans conscience authentique et sans grandeur humaine et le personnage tragique, dont la grandeur consiste précisément dans le refus de ce monde et de la vie*."[143] The individual's rejection of pre-ordained life often takes the shape of suicide.

E. Death in Modern Tragedy

Arthur Schopenhauer links the tragic with suicide: the individual takes leave of his life willingly after a long fight with his society. Death, in this respect, is a sacrificial act. Schopenhauer argues:

> *[…] dans la tragédie, nous voyons les natures les plus nobles renoncer, après de longs combats et de longues souffrances, aux buts poursuivis si ardemment jusque-là, sacrifier à jamais les jouissances de la vie, ou même se débarrasser volontairement et avec joie du fardeau de l'existence.*[144]

Death in this case could be avoided, but the hero opts for it to make an end to his suffering. Death, then, is related to the consciousness of the hero and perceived in a positive way since it is a 'triumph' for the hero. But his triumph is 'platonic' so to speak because his death can also signify the triumph of the forces of containment (the Establishment) over those of subversion (which he incarnates). It, eventually, serves to strengthen the forces of hegemony.

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[142] Walter Kaufmann. *Tragedy and Philosophy*. New York: Anchor Books, 1969.p. 363
[143] Quoted in Alain Couprie**.** *Lire la tragédie*. Paris: Dunod, 1998.p.196.
[144] Ibid., p.

Eventually, we draw attention to the fact that these three poetics, Cultural Materialism, Dialogism, and Modern Tragedy, will be used in this order to reach our aim in demonstrating the subversive discourse and the tragic disruptions. Starting with the theory of Cultural Materialism, we shall attempt to show that the novels under study are areas of a constant conflict between the forces of subversion and those of dominance. It is the subversive parties which challenge the apparently harmonious climate of society to reveal contradictory realities. The subversive characters in the novels also mark themselves as dissidents whose voice give ground to heteroglossia in the novel. This is why we intend to analyse discourse in the light of Bakhtin's dialogism. The latter highlights a conflict between the same parties but he terms them centripetal and centrifugal forces respectively. It is through the language of the characters that we are more informed about this conflict. At a time when the centrifugal force of the Victorian unitary language tries to remain the single voice heard in society, the centripetal force of heteroglossia (speech diversity) struggles to be significant in society by threatening and subverting it. Eventually, comes the theory of Modern Tragedy in order to show the containment of the forces of subversion and the tragic disruptions the latter have at the individual level in particular.

III

Victorian Manners:

Subversion and Containment

in Thomas Hardy's

Jude the Obscure

INTRODUCTION

Throughout his prose writing, Thomas Hardy shows an apparently growing preoccupation with social issues. This is one reason why we find that his novels combine personal interests and contemporary ideas. In *Jude the Obscure* (1895), he gets close to the heart of the matters that torment his society. We shall show that this novel is essentially a tale of tragic proportions when late Victorian England was in the grip of an ethos which Hardy condemned. The aim of this chapter is to show that the subversive discourse entails tragic disruptions in social relationships. In order to fulfil this aim, we shall resort essentially to three poetics: Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialism as well as his theory of modern tragedy, and Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and intertextuality, and finally the theory of modern tragedy.

The choice of Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialism is pertinent for the socio-historical contextualising of *Jude the Obscure*. This novel draws on important realities of late Victorian England, namely the new attitudes toward the institution of marriage, religion, education, sex, and women's new image. These new attitudes engendered social and individual conflicts. Therefore, we shall not only focus on class conflicts but also on individual conflicts, (like Jude's and Sue's) with their society, with other individuals, and within themselves. Cultural Materialism also allows us to read this novel as an important illustration of the working of the Victorian ideology since *Jude the Obscure* deals with attempts to reflect and reinforce, dislocate and reshape, and also reject and dislodge the dominant ideology.

In order to delve into the sense of this social conflict, we intend to use Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and intertextuality. We mean to establish a relationship between the notion of social conflict and dialogism. The parties that constitute this conflict are also those that hold a dialogue implicitly or explicitly. Intertextuality is important in its role of showing *Jude the Obscure* as a text where we hear the echo of other literary texts, namely John Stuart Mill's liberal writings. This is done in order to show Hardy's undermining and subversion of the fixed signification and the "closure" of the Victorian authoritative discourse of marriage.

The dialogic reading of this novel allows us to show the subversive discourse of marriage through the study of language as physically and morally represented in the characters of Jude, Sue, Arabella, and Phillotson. These characters, following Bakhtin's terminology, ideologues since they speak out their ideas and voice their respective points of view which, by clashing, generate conflict. These differing points of view will be identified

through Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia which basically means language diversity. In this perspective, we will show that the social heteroglossia is allowed to surge to the surface and break the hegemony of the Victorian official language. Language diversity in the marriage question creates conflicting situations which lead to tragic results.

In the light of the theory of modern tragedy, we shall show where Jude's tragedy lies focusing on his modern heroism and his tragic fate as a result of his subversive tendencies. His life is marked by the conflict between the ideal life he aspires for and the real life he actually leads. In other words, his idealism clashes with the stifling social reality. In the same line, we shall show how Sue's subversive attempts to break the laws of marriage are eventually contained after the murder-suicide tragic scene. The latter is also subject to the analysis of tragic disruptions.

1. Thomas Hardy's Subversion of the Victorian Perception of Marriage

In order to reveal the reality of late Victorian marriage which is characterised by instability, we shall need to explore the conditions in which Hardy reveals it. Hardy's debate on marriage in this novel brings to light hidden aspects of family life and shows the power which the late Victorian ideology and hegemony exercise on individuals especially through limiting their freedom. Since we are reading *Jude the Obscure* through Cultural Materialist lenses, we have to draw attention to the fact that ideology for Cultural Materialists takes on material and institutional forms such marriage in our case (other institutions include the university, the church, the school, the museum, etc.).[145] Before dealing with Hardy's subversive views of marriage in *Jude the Obscure*, we find it necessary to expose his personal opinion about marriage and its relation to Victorianism.

Hardy believes that rigid societal institutions contribute to individual tragedy. This belief is in his 1912 postscript to *Jude the Obscure*, he writes:

> *The marriage laws being used in great as the tragic machinery of the tale, and its general drift on the domestic side tending to show that, in Diderot's words, the civil law should be only the enunciation of the law of nature (a statement that requires some qualification, by the way), I have been charged since 1895 with a large responsibility in this country for the present "shop-soiled" condition of the marriage theme (as a learned writer characterised it the other day). I do not know. My opinion at that time, if I remember rightly, was that it is now, that a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties—being then essentially and morally no marriage—and it seemed a good foundation for the fable of tragedy.*[146]

[145] Hans Bertens. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Routledge. (date of publication is not stated) p.188.
[146] Quoted in William R. Goetz. "The Felicity and Infelicity of Marriage in *Jude the Obscure*", in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Vol.38, No.2. Sep., 1983. p.190.

The fact that he calls the laws of marriage a "machinery", with the sense crushing inevitability it implies, underlines, the tragic effect it has on the two spouses.

The theme of marriage is a pertinent one in this novel because it uncovers hidden realities about family life. Throughout it, Thomas Hardy deals with working-class social problems which are caused by rampant Industrialization. By exposing the various problems of the working-class, Hardy also criticizes the dominant Victorian ideology because, as Claudia Nelson puts it, "*even though at least 85 percent of the population was working-class, it was middle-class ideology that was dominant in Victorian society, because it was the middle class that controlled the presses, writing and producing most of the books and periodicals that voiced and shaped public opinion.*"[147] Thus it is the Victorian public opinion which Hardy alerts in *Jude the Obscure*.

The disharmony between the ideal life designed by the Victorian society (i.e. the middle-class ideology) and the real life led by the working-class contributes to several family problems. Hardy shows no single depiction of ideal Victorian family in his treatments of marriage and even re-marriage. All the unions prove to be failures: the marriage of Arabella Donn and Jude Fawley, and that of Sue Bridehead and Richard Phillotson, though legal, end in divorce. In addition, the illegal union of Sue and Jude, though resulting from joint personal decision normally conductive to happiness, ends in a tragic way. In this respect, we come to notice that marriage, whether legal or illegal, does not endure. Does this mean that Hardy simply has a pessimistic view of marriage? Or does he want to draw the reader's attention to the inability to stay happily married in late Victorian society? And if this is true, what are the reasons that lie behind this inability?

One way of answering these questions is to read *Jude the Obscure* from a Cultural Materialist point of view. This shows that the dominant Victorian ideology of marriage as secure is threatened from social factors that society seeks to conceal, to repress, or to disregard. This reading, according to Raymond Williams's theory, focuses on "*ideology, on the role of institutions, and on the possibilities for subversion*"[148]. What Hardy does in this novel is to give voice to subversive ideas of marriage—through Jude's and Sue's dissident ideas and deeds in particular. What Hardy questions and subverts is the Victorian ideology of marriage and the role of the institution of marriage in particular.

[147] Claudia Nelson. *Family Ties in Victorian England.* London, Westport: Preager, 2007.p.6.
[148] *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Op.cit.,p.175.

Hardy's depiction of a conflict between individuals, such as Jude and Sue, and social laws provides us with an image of a society where there is no common interest; as Raymond Williams says: "*Any common interest must include our own interest, but if we start from an abstracted social order we can be persuaded into courses which may actually harm a majority of us*."[149] In the Victorian culture, an individual's duty to society is always under control while his duty to himself is denied or repressed. Self-denial mars life and paves the way to alternative and oppositional views and practices to occur.

The institution of marriage itself represents an oppositional formation which stratifies the Victorian conception. These meanings are shown through the characters of Jude, Sue, and Arabella, who—each in his/her own way—represent an ideology (a set of beliefs about the suitable, if not the perfect, image of marriage, or of the relationship between man and woman). For Hardy, marriage should be a free choice rather than an obligation or a necessity. If a man and a woman have affinities and similar interests, they could be united by marriage in order to enjoy the physical pleasure of a relationship in a socially accepted way. In case they are utterly miserable with one another, the most practical course for Hardy is separation through divorce: as he is influenced by the Liberal thinker John Stuart Mill, he thinks that human happiness is more important than social institutions.

Throughout the novel, marriage is implicitly or explicitly presented through two distinct images which are representative, one of the Victorian Establishment, the other of the iconoclast Hardy. The latter puts emphasis on his private voice to show the reasons that lie behind his opposition to the Victorian view of marriage. In other words, the Victorian Establishment perceives marriage as the only acceptable way of a relationship between man and woman. However, Hardy provides us with three conceptions of marriage which are all destructive of the Victorian 'normal' family.

The plot of this novel is built in such a way as to present the dialogised theme of marriage. Hardy's idea of marriage is severed from the Victorian unitary language. The voices of Sue and Jude as advocates of emergent ideas definitely have a tone of dissidence. The social setting is presented as "*a battlefield where an omnipresent conservative ideology must constantly be challenged*."[150] From a Cultural Materialists standpoint, we are interested less in the way this novel reflects the late Victorian society than in the way it presents the Victorian culture in which it was written. In other words, our interest lies not merely in situating this

[149] Raymond Williams. *The Long Revolution*. London: Pelican Books, 1975.p.123.
[150] *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Op.cit.p.189.

novel in its context but more importantly in questioning the authority which lies in the background of the novel itself.[151] Hardy's emergent view of marriage, as will be shown in detail later on, constitutes a challenge to the Victorian culture owing to the power of the latter to shape the fate of individuals in accordance with its own mould.

The meaning of marriage as conceived by the Victorian ideology is thus altered. This brings us the consideration of "*the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony, which are real and persistent elements of practice*."[152] These concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony are incarnated in the subversive deeds and ideas of Jude and Sue. As Raymond Williams argues:

> *The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition, it is always dominant; it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society […] as forms which have had significant effect on the hegemonic process itself.*[153]

In *Jude the Obscure*, the conservative late Victorian perception of marriage no longer stems from a "*static hegemony*"[154]: we know that Sue and Jude, though for a limited period of time, destroy its power. This fact indicates that "*all power is fragile [and] subject to undermining by dissident elements within a society.*"[155] Marriage is presented as a hindrance to individual liberty as the legal unions of Arabella/Jude and of Sue/Phillotson are not the outcome of free decisions. Sue and Jude condemn the shackles of marriage. When Jude marries Arabella, he is not free to taking that decision; but rather obliged to do so in order to save Arabella's reputation. Likewise, Sue accepts Phillotson's proposal for marriage in order to save her own reputation. In this respect, we notice the power of hegemony on individuals like Sue and Jude who are obliged to obey the dominant rule. The feeling of being compelled to marry projects the instabilities on which these marriages are built. In Cultural Materialist thought, "*[those] instabilities register in literary works as dissidence and as dissonance*."[156] Jude and Sue represent a dissident presence in the social world of the late Victorian society because they advance arguments against the dominant laws of marriage. Their marital life is punctuated by moments of order and disorder. The plot consists of a dizzying double pattern of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. Jude marries, divorces, and then re-marries Arabella Donn. Sue Bridehead marries, divorces, and then re-marries Richard Phillotson. In the midst

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[151] Peter Childs and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Routledge, 2006.p.43.
[152] Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.p.113.
[153] Ibid., p.113.
[154] Ibid., p.113.
[155] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.p.506.
[156] Ibid., p.646.

of this double pattern of marriage and divorce, Jude and Sue, after divorcing their respecting spouses, live together without being legally married and bear children.

Hardy's subversive attitude is directed towards the Victorian social laws which transform such social institution as marriage—which is expected to solidify the Victorian tradition through the building of a family—into a barrier to one's liberty and an agent for tragic disruptions. "Family" is one means through which the Victorian tradition asserts its hegemonic power over individuals. In other words, "family" is a living tradition in the sense that it guarantees the continuity of social dominance. This is what Raymond Williams affirms when he says that tradition is "*an actively shaping force*"[157] because in practice it is "*the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits*."[158] Then if Hardy subverts the Victorian social institution of marriage it is for the sake of asserting his oppositional view and his iconoclastic attitude towards such a constraining dominance.

One reason why he rejects the institution of marriage as conceived by the Victorians is that he considers it a trap. This is made obvious through the conditions under which the marriage of Jude and Arabella take place. Jude is introduced to sexual life by a seductive woman, Arabella. He is blindly and easily seduced by her because he has never experienced the feeling of being physically attracted to a woman; and unlike the boys of his age, he has never been worried by sex affairs. To use Arabella's friends' words, Jude looks "*as if he had never seen a woman before in his born days.*"[159] His weakness in front of Arabella may be justified in two ways. First, since matters which concern sex are seen as taboo and considered as forbidden issues to discuss, Jude finds himself in front of a new sensation whose consequences he ignores. In this context, Hardy shows the danger which is engendered by silencing the discussion about sex and limiting the relationship between man and woman only to the relation of husband and wife. This is why Jude's knowledge about sexual issues is left blank. This leads us to the second reason: Arabella's will to have Jude as her husband may be understood as "the imperialism of the spirit" as it is really a new spiritual experience; or we may also call it a new romanticism, as Holbrook Jackson puts it:

> *It is a demand for wider ranges, newer emotional and spiritual territories, fresh woods and pastures new for the soul. If you will, it is a form of imperialism to the spirit, ambitious, arrogant, aggressive, waving the flag of human power over an ever wider and wider territory.* [160]

[157] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit., p.115
[158] Ibid., p.115.
[159] Thomas Hardy. *Jude the Obscure*. (1895) London: Penguin Books, 1995.p.47. Further references to this novel are from this edition and will be given parenthetically.
[160] Holbrook Jackson. *The Eighteen Nineties.* Hammondsworth, 1950.p.63, in Ted R.Spivey. "Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero", in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Vol.9, No.3. Dec., 1954. p.187.

Arabella finds a vacant space in Jude's spirit and exercises her power over him. When describing her, Hardy stresses her vulgar beauty and animal sexuality, "*she was a complete and substantial female animal. No more no less.*"(p.42)

The destruction of Jude's ambitions, then, begins with his relationship with Arabella. What he considers as "a bit of fun" ends in a marriage that should never have taken place. Arabella has already planned to "win" him as a husband. Indeed, she discuses this matter with her friends and tells them, "*I want him to more than care for me; I want him to have me—to marry me*" (p.56) Hardy, in this respect, shows us the dominant Victorian ideology in Arabella's words as regards the place of a man in a woman's life. She wants Jude to have her as a wife in order to take care of her, and this is how a man is traditionally meant to be. The verb "to have" confirms Hardy's view of marriage as a trap. Arabella's friends convince her that "*the usual country way of forcing a man to propose marriage is to conceive a child by him.*"[161] He finds it an obligation to marry Arabella because according to the Victorian social conventions he cannot abandon her. In this context, we notice that Jude is a victim at once of Arabella's trap and lie and of his society's rigid mores which both entangle him in a lifetime engagement because of a short-lived moment of joy.

Arabella is also a victim of society because the latter makes her well-being in life dependent on a man. However, Hardy does not seem to blame her for her lie because her purpose is to have a husband to secure her survival in society. She represents that category of women who are still dependent on men (as their husbands of course) because a woman, in the Victorian tradition, is dependent on man to support her in life. Arabella wants to secure her life, rather to survive, by "gaining a husband". It is the dominant law of nature, the Darwinian law of "the survival of the fittest". We come to notice that a part of Jude's tragedy is created through a combination of social pressure and mischance. The beginning of his destruction is called for by an unenlightened social law and a victimised woman.

Hardy wonders how a moment of weakness can be made official by a sacred union like marriage. In this respect, he denounces the holiness that it is nothing but a convenient social contract lacking the true qualities upon which a marriage should be based such as mutual love and compatibility. Arabella is for Jude a woman "*for whom he had no* respect" (p.49) because he has never meant her as a partner since he only feels that he is obliged to marry her. He says, "*of course I never dreamt six months ago, or even three, of marrying. Certainly we'll marry: we must!*" (p.66). Jude's utterance "*we must*" shows that he is not free in his choice. We hear in Jude's words John Stuart Mill's voice arguing that "*[the] human*

[161] Margaret Stonyk. *York Note on Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure.* London: Longman, 1995. p.14.

faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice. He who does anything because it is the custom makes no choice."[162]

Another reason why Hardy condemns this marriage is that Jude and Arabella are totally different and incompatible in terms of class and heritage. In the first part of the novel, Jude is shown as serious, ambitious, religious, intellectual and respectable. On the other hand, Arabella is bold, vulgar, and uncaring for education and religion. Hardy stresses this incompatibility when he says about Arabella's parents, "*they did not belong to his set of circle.*" (p.54) Yet society accepts their union which, in J.S. Mill's words, takes "*the way of obedience, that is, in a way prescribed […] by authority; and, therefore, by the necessary condition of the case*"[163]

Marriage, in this case, is deprived of its sacred image. Arabella's pursuit of a legitimate object, though through the use of a trick, causes pain and loss for Jude especially after the latter discovers that "*the alarm [Arabella] [has] raised [has] been without foundation*" (p.52), and "*the immediate reason of his marriage [has] proved to be non-existent*" (p.54), meaning that Arabella's pregnancy was simply a lie. Jude is unhappy because the marriage remains, though a fraud, is still binding:

> *Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable.* (p.81)

It is the social institution of marriage which Hardy stands against because the opposition of interests between Arabella and Jude lasts as long as "*the marriage remains*" (p.54). In this respect, Jude and Arabella's situation echoes J.S. Mill's views:

> *In many cases, an individual, in pursuing a legitimate object, necessarily and therefore legitimately causes pain or loss to others, or intercepts a good which they had a reasonable hope of obtaining. Such oppositions of interest between individuals often arise from bad social institutions, but are unavoidable while those institutions last; and some would be unavoidable under any institutions*.[164]

Through this marriage, Hardy undermines the romantic plot of marriage and uncovers one reality that society seeks to hide: he brings out how incompatible social laws are with human needs. As we have demonstrated, the social norms of marriage do not take into account whether Jude and Arabella are happy or whether they fit each other to live together.

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[162] John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty (*1859*)*. Canada: Batoche Books Limited, 2001.p.55.
[163] Ibid., p.58.
[164] Ibid.,p.86.

All society cares about is conformity with its laws, as J.S. Mill puts it "*even in what people do for pleasure, conformity is the first thing thought of*"[165] In this context, Hardy demonstrates how superficial the Victorian society is as it bestows importance on the relation between individuals and shows indifference to their happiness within such relation. Though he considers it a social necessity, Jude is fully aware that this marriage "*is a complete smashing*" (p.66) of his plans.

The second view of marriage in *Jude the Obscure* calls for an apology for divorce and free union. As opposed to Arabella's view of marriage, stands the argument of Sue who rejects "*stifling social convention*" and is interested in "*alternatives to marriage, including divorce and free love*"[166]. We think that Sue's liberal position as regards the dissolution of marriage can be explained in two ways. First, the influence of the liberal ideas of J.S. Mill on Hardy is revealed through the character of Sue mainly in her way of dressing and her daring liberal views. Second, her intellectualism and emancipated views lead some critics to depict her as a "New Woman" belonging to the "New Woman Movement". She is described as "*the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year—the woman of the feminist movement –the slight, pale 'bachelor' girl—the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing.*"[167]

What Hardy, indeed, does through the character of Sue (as is portrayed before the suicide) is to present the image of an emergent woman in the late Victorian society. As we notice, Sue is not a typical Victorian woman; she is neither submissive nor dependent on man as Arabella is; she expresses her views freely and acts upon them. She tends to be liberal rather than conventional and conservative. She considers marriage unnecessary in a woman's life when she tells Jude: "*Fewer women like marriage than you suppose, only they enter into it for the dignity it is assumed to confer, and the social advantages it gains them sometimes—a dignity and an advantage that I am quite willing to do without.*"(p.309). In spite of this belief, she is caught under a marriage (with Phillotson) which is not intended nor chosen freely. This marriage is meant primarily to save Sue's reputation and Phillotson's job and secondly to punish Jude morally because he does not inform Sue about his earlier marriage with Arabella. It seems to be more of an escape than a conventional marriage. It is also an unsuccessful one because of Sue's nature as "*a phantasmal, bodiless creature, one who […] has so little animal passion in [her], that [she] can act upon reason in the matter*" (pp.308-

[165] Ibid., p.57.
[166] Dale Kramer, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p.170.
[167] Ibid., p.171.

309), which makes things difficult for Phillotson. The latter summarises his unbearable life with Sue when he says:

> *with her unconquerable aversion to myself as a husband, even though she may like me as a friend, 'tis too much to bear longer. She has conscientiously struggled against it, but to no purpose. I cannot bear it—I cannot! I can't answer her arguments—she has read ten times as much as I. Her intellect sparkles like diamonds, while mine smoulders like brown paper… She's one too many for me!* (p.274)

Since both Sue and Phillotson realize that there is no harmony in their legal union, they agree to leave each other after discussing the ideas of marriage and divorce. In this union in particular, we think that Hardy draws more attention to the question of divorce than marriage because most of Sue's arguments seem to spring from J.S. Mill's chapter entitled "Of Individuality, as one of the Elements of Well-Being", arguments which she advances to assert her individuality as opposed to Victorian domestic laws; she is not ready to suffer "*from the very rules that produce comfort in others!*" (p.266). This is why she argues that "*domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified* "(p.266). By classification of temperament, Sue refers to two principal arguments by J.S. Mill; the first is that "*different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development; and can no more exist healthily in the same moral*"[168], and the second concerns his "*appropriate region of human liberty*"**[169]**. As an important engagement which involves personal and not social relations, marriage—in Sue's counter-argument—"*should require nothing more than the declared will of either party to dissolve it*"**[170]** if it is perceived as adultery as Sue does: "*For a man and woman to live on intimate terms when one feels as I do is adultery, in any circumstances, however legal.*" (p.266)

The part with which Sue holds conflict is with the Victorian social laws. For instance, when her husband Phillotson tells her "*you vowed to love me*" (p.266), Sue ridicules this marriage-law of vowing saying "*It is as culpable to bind yourself to love always as to believe a creed always, and as silly as to vow always to like a particular food or drink!*" (p.266). If

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[168] *On Liberty*. Op.cit., p.63.

[169]Ibid., p.15. Mill explains what he means as "*appropriate region of human liberty*" as follows: "This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, **first,** the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. […] **Secondly**, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow: without impediment from our fellow creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. **Thirdly**, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived."(Reference: ibid., pp.15-16).

[170] Ibid., p.95.

she rejects this conventional law, it is because it makes her miserable rather than happy. As she says "*What is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances […] if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin*?"(p.266). Here again, she definitely refers to Mill's argument which goes as follows: "*let not society pretend that it needs […] the power to issue commands and enforce obedience in the personal concerns of individuals, in which, on all principles of justice and policy, the decision ought to rest with those who are to abide the consequences.*"[171] Since it is Sue who abides the consequences of this marriage, she argues that she has the right to dissolve it because her wretchedness is felt only at the personal, and not at the social, level. This is why she demands to live away from Phillotson: "*Why can't we agree to free each other? We made the compact, and surely we can cancel it—not legally of course; but we can morally*" (p.266). Sue, moreover, considers her union with Phillotson a private and personal affair which does not concern society; as goes Mill's view in this context: "*The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.*"[172] This can be understood when she says to Phillotson, "*what will it matter to anybody that you relieved me from constraint for a little while*?" (p.266), where the word "anybody" refers to society as a whole. Her dialogue with Phillotson on the subject of divorce mirrors her intellectualism. Indeed, her plea to him to set her free is nearly a lecture from J.S. Mill's chapter about women's emancipation in his book *On Liberty.* She literally quotes from Chapter Three of *On Liberty*. The sentence is: "*He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation.*"[173] (p.267) She does so in order to defend her right to happiness.

Sue's cancellation of her marriage is another subversive aspect in this novel because it challenges the Victorian morality concerning the allowed union of man and woman. However, before Phillotson accepts her request of separation, he allows her to live separately in a room by her own. Sue jumps out of the window when Phillotson enters her room by accident. It is this incident which leads the marriage-disunion to its climax and brings Phillotson to allow Sue to live freely with Jude. Phillotson who once strongly refused to grant

[171] Ibid., p.76.
[172] Ibid., p.13. When we read Sue's liberal arguments about the freedom of an individual in society, we feel that we are reading from J.S. Mill's book *On Liberty*, maybe because of the influence of Mill's Liberalism on Hardy, or because such ideas best interpret the late Victorian society. Other arguments which call for liberty include the following (from *On Liberty* always): "*A person should be free to do as he likes in his own concerns*" (p.96); "*It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others, individuality should assert itself.*" (p.53).
[173] ibid., p.55.

Sue divorce now accepts to do so, because he realises that there is no hope to have Sue as his wife at a time when "*she is another man's except in name and law*." (p.301) He admits that he can neither defend his act religiously nor harmonize it with the doctrines he was brought up with. He knows that according to social doctrine and religion, "*the only course that can possibly be regarded as right and proper and honourable in him is to refuse it, and put her virtuously under lock and key, and murder her lover perhaps.*" (p.275) But he does not act upon this doctrine as he questions its value; he asks: "*is that essentially right, and proper, and honourable, or is it contemptibly mean and selfish?*" (p.275) His decision to free Sue from the bond of marriage is build on his personal (individual) views rather than on social principles; as he says, "*I simply am going to act by instinct, and let principles take care of themselves*" (p.275). Phillotson's behaviour is also a subversive one because he dares liberate Sue from the constraints of a marriage which does not only mean misery for both of them, but it also uncovers a cruelty which lies behind the Victorian doctrines of marriage. This is what Phillotson implies when he says to Gillingham, "*I wouldn't be cruel to her in the name of the law*." (p.281).

Sue prefers to live as a lover with Jude than a wife who conforms to the Victorian social order. She disrupts this order by entering an illegal union with Jude. This union is built on the failure of her conventional unsuccessful marriage. Being shocked and ruined by their first marital experiences, Sue and Jude avoid legal marriage: both are convinced that marriage is a destructive social institution that will put an end to their love. Thus we come to see soul-crushing as institutionalized. When Jude proposes marriage, Sue answers, "*I have just the same dread lest an iron contract should extinguish your tenderness for me, and mine for you, as it did between our unfortunate parents.*" (p.307)

The idea of a second marriage terrifies Sue and Jude and makes them afraid of the conditions of a legal marriage. It should be noticed in this context that both Sue and Jude turned to lead an unconventional life only after they had noticed the hypocrisy of the Victorian social laws that have been indifferent to their happiness and needs. The supposed happiness that these laws promised proved to be illusions. Sue wonders, "*Jude, do you think that when you must have me with you by law, we shall be so happy as we are? […] don't you dread the attitude that insensibly arises out of a legal obligation?*" (p.323) Sue and Jude, therefore, come to realize, in a moment of illumination, that the cause of their suffering is the legalised institution of marriage. All that matters to Sue is her happiness with Jude; she says, "*If we are happy as we are, what does it matter to anybody?*" (p.342).

Though there is the factor of heredity which prevents the marriage from being successful, we think that Hardy incorporates it in the novel to, somehow, escape censorship; in other words, he wants to mislead the reader so as not to focus attention on the Victorian orthodoxy as the only source of a marriage-failure and decline. Hardy argues that some atavism stands against the success of the marriage. Jude's aunt, Drusilla, expresses this when she says to Jude:

> *The Fawleys were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us. There's sommat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound. That's why you ought to have hearkened to me, and not ha' married*. (p.82)

This sense of doom can also be interpreted in terms of Hardy's pessimism. David Cecil says, "*Since the world he looked at seemed so full of pain and disappointment, then, he argued pain and disappointment were outstanding characteristics of human existence.*"[174] Hardy's views are indeed drawn from his deterministic philosophy of life. The individual, for him, behaves according to external and internal forces over which he has no control. This is why Hardy says, "*the universe [is] a huge impersonal mechanism […] indifferent to the feeling of mortals.*"[175]

The theme of marriage and divorce in the late Victorian context, eventually, uncovers a hidden reality about the real life individuals like Sue, Jude, and Phillotson lead. If Hardy subverts the Victorian conception of marriage through these characters it is because the Victorian marriage-laws are indifferent to their happiness. As we have shown, no one of these characters leads a happy marriage. It is true that these marriages conform to social conventionality, but, in Hardy's view, marriage for the sake of conformity does not last. From a Cultural Materialist point of view, Hardy's intention to deal with subversive themes grants importance to this novel because instead of showing it as a literary product which is an organic unity and which supports the Victorian dominant order, he shows it (this novel) as *"[a field] of force, [a place] of dissension and shifting interests, [an occasion] for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses*"[176]

The subversive themes of marriage and divorce alike also allow for dialogism in this novel because the parties which are in conflict as regards the question of marriage and divorce are the same parties which hold a dialogue where different views are dialogised and opposed. As people socially fluctuating between the working class and the lower middle class, Sue,

[174] David Cecil. *Hardy the Novelist.* London: Constable and Company, 1965. p.20.
[175] *Jude the Obscure.* Op.cit., p.24.
[176] Habib, M.A.R. *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present Day*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.p.763.

Jude, and Phillotson are subordinated to the dominant middle and upper classes. As dissenters, they can be viewed as embodying centripetal forces which strive for social significance and recognition.

2. Dialogism and the Marriage Question.

Communication between individuals, as Hardy shows, shifts away from a one-way scheme to a diverse one, thereby attaining a multidimensional give-and-take over such social issues as that of marriage. It is in this context that the Bakhtinian dialogism becomes highly relevant because it registers the shift from monologism (one voice stating one dominant ideology, thus having a one way thought) to dialogism (many voices uttering new ideas other than the dominant one). As concerns the marriage question, the presence of dialogism in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* delineates a revolt against the system that has produced it, i.e. the hegemonic social system. Hardy gives voice to subversive ideas. The dialogic discourse of marriage can be viewed in a Bakhtinian perspective as a manifestation of a subversive practice because it is the forces of subversion which create stratified and emergent voices whose function is mainly to threaten the unitary voice of the dominant social order. The application of a Bakhtinian perspective facilitates the hearing of other voices (voices that are marginalised, alienated, or oppressed in society) and suggests a redefinition of individual social relations. The ideologues of the counter-hegemony of marriage are Jude and Sue. It is through them that Hardy advances his anti-marriage views. The use of Bakhtin's dialogism, thus, gives space and offers ground for these voices to emerge and speak their dissonance. In this novel, the Victorian society

> *speaks in all its voices, in all the languages and styles of the era. Literary language is not represented in the novel as a unitary, completely finished-off and undisputable language—it is represented precisely as a living mix of varied and opposing voices, developing and renewing itself.*[177]

Approaching the theme of marriage through Bakhtinian lenses suggests that the counter-discourse of marriage does not only sustain but also constitutes a permanent dialogic feature of the prevailing and still dominating monologue of the Victorian ideology. However, we have to draw attention to the fact that this counter-discourse of marriage as voiced by dissonant voices—Sue's and Jude's—does not replace the Victorian traditional view of marriage, but will continue to interpellate society.

We may say that Hardy's counter-discourse of marriage "*generates a truth strong enough to challenge the meaning which orthodoxy and authority intend it to deliver and*

[177] Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. (17th paperback printing).p.49.

whose very embodiment carries the risk of a subversion in the first place."[178] This is what we Sue's and Jude's relationship as seen from the Victorian perspective and as these protagonists. We notice the official language of society which limits this relationship to mutual interest and cousinship and forbids a legal tie which unites them as wife and husband. This is evident in the narrator's voice:

> *there were crushing reasons why [Jude] should not and could not think of {Sue] in any other [way than in a family way]. The first reason was that he was married, and it would be wrong. The second was that they were cousins. It was not well for cousins to fall in love even when circumstances seemed to favour the passion. The third: even were he free, in a family like his own where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror*. (p.107)

It is the second reason, as is stated above, which both Jude and Sue challenge. Their arguments against the socially accepted norms of marriage generate their society's indifference to their happiness and its deafness to their interests since all that matters to society is to conform with conventions. This feeling of indifference urges these frustrated protagonists to redefine the notion of "self interest" according to their own needs. In this context, we may ask which is important: the individual's happiness or conformity with social norms? One answer to this question is provided by Sue. The intertextual relationship between Hardy's novel and J.S. Mill's book *On Liberty* allows the entry of heteroglossia into the novel because Mill's liberal ideas support Sue's arguments; and we have thus a double-voiced discourse: the Liberal discourse of Sue who advances arguments to assert her individuality against social hegemony, and the liberal discourse of Mill who calls for the questioning of authority and subverting its power. Mill's most important belief is that human happiness is more important than social institutions. Moreover, the embedding of Mill's book in this novel serves as a means for the stratification the Victorian authorial power on individuals.

We may argue that Sue's use of J.S. Mill's liberal ideas about individual liberty aims hopefully at 'breaking' the linguistic unitary of the Victorian official discourse of divorce. The intertextual link between *Jude the Obscure* and J.S. Mill's liberalism, furthermore, paves the way for the opening up the closure of the Victorian authoritative discourse. In other words, Sue's discourse proves an opportunity to challenge and subvert the rigid social laws. The dialogue between the idea of marriage and the idea of human happiness in the light of liberalism gives Sue an opportunity to 'talk back' to the authoritative laws of marriage. In

[178] Graham Pechey. *Mikhail Bakhtin: the Word in the World*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.p.118.

spite of the restraints put on the institution of marriage, Sue dares break them by expressing her individual view and acting upon it.

As a defender of her individual rights, Sue can be named, in Bakhtinian terms, an "*ideologue*"[179] who does not only speak out the ideas of liberalism but also presents the "New Woman" image. In other words, Sue is an ideologue of liberal marriage-laws and the "New Woman". As Bakhtin puts it, "*the speaking person in the novel is always, to one degree or another, an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes*"[180] She also personifies part of the heteroglossia present in the novel because her subversive attitude towards the Victorian laws generate the centripetal force in her counter-discourse of marriage. For instance, when she says to Phillotson: "*I don't want to be respectable! To produce "Human development in its richest diversity" (to quote your Humboldt) is to my mind far above respectability*" (p.268), she directly opposes the criteria of respectability as meant in the Victorian sense. Instead, she prefers to be unrespectable but happy and free rather than respectable and miserable. The Victorian culture expects women to show acceptance as well as commitment to the established social order. Culture, with the aid of Church, insists on the fact that women are subservient to male.[181] However, Sue does not belong to this category of subservient submissive women. Sue is utterly different; if she is not so deeply affected by her children's death, she would not convert. Her intellectualism ranks her higher tan the typical Victorian woman. This is what we notice when she says,

> *my life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in me. I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed with them—one or two of them particularly—almost as one of their own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught to feel—to be on their guard against attacks on their virtue*. (p.177)

Her being a learned also strikes Jude who realizes how different she is from Arabella. About her intellectual background, Sue says

> *I don't know Latin and Greek, though I know the grammars of those tongues. But I know most of the Greek and Latin classics through translations, and other books too. I read Lemprière, Catullus, Martial, Juvenal, Lucian, Beaumont and Fletcher, Boccaccio, Scarron, De Brantôme, Sterne, De Foe, Smollett, Fielding, Shakespeare, the Bible, and other such*. (p.177)

[179] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.333.
[180] Ibid., p.333.
[181] Julie Rivkin, and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.p.1018.

We note that the Bible is listed at the end; this, in our opinion, may mean that religion is the last thing she is interested in.

Part of her material side of life is revealed in her being trained in a Training College. But still she needs love, just as Jude does; as the narrator puts it, "*it [is] also obvious that man could not live by work alone; that the particular man Jude at any rate, wanted something to love*." (p.116) Late Victorian society focuses much more on the material side of life than the spiritual one, which engenders self-denial. Sue objects to such a view and liberates her strong desire of being free from such laws which limit one's life. The existing ideas which society "*posits as the only [and] the most ordinary reality*"[182]

The characterization of Sue from her appearance in the novel till the death of her children is coloured with the "New Woman" image. The discourse she voices is peculiar to a "New Woman"; it is a discourse which pleads for reform in marriage laws. Sue is strong in going against societal conventions, yet she becomes weak when she needs this strength; she is a new feminist character, yet the sense of tragedy in her life destroys her new emergent feminist ideas and takes on the traditional guilt placed on woman. This is evident when she blames herself for all that views as wrong in Jude's life; as she says to Jude "*don't reproach yourself with being what you are not. If anybody is to blame it is I*" (p.410). She seems to be the Eve holding the apple. Throughout her subversive position, she breaks free from the Victorian female traditions. There are many instances in the novel which show Sue as a modern rather than a traditional woman, as when she walks "*into the country with a book in her hand*" (p.86), when she is described as "*cold-natured—sexless*" (p.136). The narrator says more about her when he says:

> *Her being able to talk learnedly showed that she was mistress of herself again; and before they parted she had almost regained her vivacious glance, her reciprocity of tone, her gay manner, and her second-thought attitude of critical largeness towards others of her age and sex*. (p.153)

Jude, for his part also participates in forming the counter-discourse of marriage when he accepts to live freely with Sue. His subversive position towards marriage is shown in his deeds as well as in his words. In Bakhtin's terms, he is an ideologue since he advances arguments against what is socially accepted and acts according to the liberal meaning of marriage which operates agaist the Victorian conception of marriage. Being forbidden to study in the university of Christminster, Jude opts for theological studies to become a priest.

[182] George Luckacs. *The Theory of the Novel*. Anna Bostock. London: Merlin Press, 1988.p.98.

However, the presence of Sue in his life changes all his conventional views. It is under Sue's influence that he changes his conventional ideas because he realizes that he cannot become a priest to serve God as he considers Sue most important than anything else in the world. On one occasion, he tells Sue, "*my doctrines and I begin to part company […] I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more! Let them go! Let me help you* " (p.256) He considers happiness more important than conformity to social institutions; this is what he tells Sue:" *your happiness is more to me than anything*" (p.285). This is why he does not oblige Sue to legalize their union in church though he shows his readiness whenever Sue wants to. Even when Sue turns conventional, Jude remains iconoclastic in his views. When he notices that Christianity is behind Sue's new 'conversion', he hates religion more than ever; as he says to Sue:

> *You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond—whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of, if they could have known you—should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity—damn glad—if it's going to ruin you in this way!* (p.419)

Jude's expression of his hatred of Christianity is a way creating heteroglossia in the novel because the idea of Christianity as providing happiness and security is 'decentered' by him. In his view, the religious idea of punishing God for sending his punishment on Sue because of her unconventionality is absurd. He considers it "immoral" (p.423) to convert for moral reasons and to go back to her husband, and thus crawl back into the fields of convention.

Furthermore, religion supports the Victorian monologic discourse on marriage, and as such it reinforces the dominant cultural laws. The Victorian monologue of marriage is framed in such a way as to render it "natural" in society so that every individual will act upon it without any objection against it. Hardy shows that the ruling class exercises its power through what Antonio Gramsci calls the "Ideological State Apparatuses" by which he refers to institutions like cultural institutions, as is the Church in this respect.

From the different discourses of marriage, we come to notice Hardy's use of the language of Sue and Jude as a means through which he could open the closure of the Victorian language. Their subversive presentations of the idea of marriage are, in Raymond Williams's terms, "*oppositional formations*" which in Bakhtin's terms form "*the pressure of growing heteroglossia*"[183] Sue's and Jude's oppositional language is also a centrifugal force

[183]ibid., p.270.

whose main function is to disunify and to decentralize the Victorian official discourse which, in Bakhtin's words, "*gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization*."**[184]** The efforts of Sue and Jude to liberate their repressed desires are soon contained. The tragic end of the children marks a turning point in the lives of the two characters.

3. Tragic Social Disruptions and Containment of Subversion

In his article entitled "The Essence of Tragedy", Horace M. Kallen states that "*tragedy is the conflict between the typical and the individual, the former being good, the latter evil*."[185] This is the essence of the tragedy we understand in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*: Jude's and Sue's individual desires clash with the typical Victorian social order, which makes this amenable subject to tragedy. In the light of Raymond Williams's *Modern Tragedy*, we shall explain the tragic fate of Jude, Sue, and Little Father Time as well as the tragic disruptions their subversive attitude engenders.

Williams argues that "*society is identified as convention, and convention as the enemy of desire, [and that] the condition of desire, unconsciously, is that it is always forbidden*."**[186]** In this perspective, the conventional society where Jude lives constitutes his enemy because the condition of Jude's desires is forbidden. What Jude desires is to study at the University of Christminster and to live with the woman he loves in a free union. These thwarted individual aspirations are not only the seeds of Jude's tragic end and of Sue's repentance but also instances of modern heroism because Jude's and Sue's rebelliousness is deliberate; as Williams puts it: "*The heroism was not in the nobility of suffering, as the limits were reached. It was now, unambiguously, in the aspiration itself. What was demanded was self-fulfilment, and any such process was a general liberation*."**[187]**

Jude's and Sue's iconoclastic stance, as shown in their counter-discourse of marriage, are construed as a revolution but rather as "*individual liberator*,"**[188]** because they act on their own and for their own reasons to overcome the social barriers. They liberate through their deeds what society represses and through their speeches what society silences and considers taboo. This kind of liberation towards self fulfilment is the source of various tragic disruptions. In Williams's words, "*the whole point in self-fulfilment is that it challenges, to*

[184] Ibid., p.271.
[185] Horace M. Kallen. "The Essence of Tragedy", in *International Journal of Ethics.* Vol.22, No.2. Jan., 1912.p.183.
[186] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Verso Editions, 1979.p.94.
[187] Ibid., p.95.
[188] Ibid., p.95.

the death, the existing compromise order."[189] This can be perceived in Jude's dislocated life whose beginning and end are marked by the trap-like marriage with Arabella, a marriage, at the end of the novel, he strongly loathes: "*If there is anything more degrading, immoral, unnatural, than another in my life, it is this meretricious contract with Arabella which has been called doing the right thing!*" (p.466). Besides, his free union with Sue engenders other dire consequences mainly the tragic end of the children.

The scene where Sue and Jude struggle to find lodgings suggests the Victorian society's cruel treatment of such misfits. They are turned out every time their illegal union is known. Homelessness in one's own society is, indeed, one of the themes of Modern Tragedy. Worse than this is the fact that no one wants the presence of children in their lodgings, which leaves a deep impression on Little Father Time.

Though still a child, Little Father Time witnesses man's inhumanity to man in a society which is supposed to care for children because the latter, whatever the circumstances, are innocent and have nothing to do with the deeds of the parents. The image he gets about society is a bleak one. This leads him to kill his siblings and then commits suicide. When we hear him saying

> *'Tis because of us children, too, isn't it, that you can't get a lodging? […] Then if children make so much trouble, why do people have them? […] I wish I hadn't been born! […] I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to 'em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about! […]If we children was [sic] gone there'd be no trouble at all!* (pp.398-399).

Jude attempts to find some explanation to justify Little Father Time's act of murder. He considers it a reaction (a kind of response) to the hostile society. It is also a new idea, which is just a little before hand, in the late Victorian context; as Jude says:

> *The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us—boys of a sort unknown in the last generation—the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live. He's an advanced man, the doctor: but he can give no consolation to—* (402).

Referring to this child as a doctor means that he could lay his hands on the "sickness" of society, but could not cure it: as society does accept no new remedy besides its own. This child cannot live in such a society and cannot change the way things go, thus all that remains for him is to take leave of his life.

[189] Ibid., p.96.

In his article "Father Time's Suicide: Note in *Jude the Obscure*", Walter K. Gordon interprets Little Father Time's note "*Done because we are too menny*" (p.401) (a note he leaves before committing suicide to justify his action) in the light of Hardy's main concern in writing this novel.[190] The meaning he attributes to "*too menny*" is "*like men*"[191]; the meaning of the note, thus, becomes "Done because we are too like men" which signifies that children are also like men in the sense that they also have their portion in the tragic disruptions that take place in Jude's family. As Walter K. Gordon puts it:

> *the entire note suggests one of Hardy's firm convictions—that tragedy and grief are the lot of both children and adults because of their participation in a common humanity and that even the innocence of the children is no protection against the inexorable forces responsible for unmerited misery in the human condition.*[192]

We cannot limit the meaning of this tragic scene to the sense that tragedy touches adults and children alike. We can extend it to suggest that Hardy wants to sharpen the Victorian decay and human misery in the sense that not only adults like Sue and Jude, but even children, like Little Father Time, are aware of the Victorian society's inhumanity. What we propose is another interpretation in the light of Williams's chapter entitled "Tragic Resignation and Sacrifice" in his book *Modern Tragedy*. The question we start from is: can we read this suicide as an act of sacrifice? In other words, is it "*a death under pressure*"[193]? Williams links sacrifice to tragedy when he argues that

> *The rhythm of tragedy, it is said, is the rhythm of sacrifice. A man is disintegrated by suffering, and is led to his death, but the action is more than personal, and others are made whole as he is broken.*[194]

The loss of the children's lives, in the light of this quotation, takes the shape of a sacrifice. Since he realizes that the problem of homelessness may be solved were Sue living without children, he sacrifices his life so that Sue and Jude find a lodging. But then again is Little Father Time's sacrificing of his life "*a chosen or a forced destiny*"?[195] To answer this question, we have to look for the whole pattern of sacrifice; we have to understand whether he

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[190] Here is Hardy's letter where he explains his intention to write a novel of contrasts: "*Of course the book is all contrasts—or was meant to be in its original conception. Alas, what a miserable accomplishment it is, when I compare it with what I meant to make it!—e.g. Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude's reading the Greek Testament; Christminster academical, Christminster in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the pagan, Sue the Saint; marriage, no marriage; etc., etc.*" (Reference: *The Life of Thomas Hardy*. New York, 1962.pp.272-273, quoted in Walter K. Gordon. "Father Time's Suicide: Note in *Jude the Obscure*", in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Vol. 22, No. 3. Dec., 1967.p.298.)

[191] Walter K. Gordon. "Father Time's Suicide: Note in *Jude the Obscure*", in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Vol. 22, No. 3. Dec., 1967.p.298.

[192] Ibid., p.299.

[193] Ibid., p.157.

[194] Ibid., p.156.

[195] Ibid., p.158.

dies for a cause or for private (i.e. individual) reasons. The life of this child is a series of miserable events: he is carelessly left by his real mother (Arabella); he is snubbed at school by his classmates; his father is seriously ill and has lost his job; and what makes things worse is his struggle with Sue to find accommodation: "*The failure to find another lodging, and the lack of room in this house for his father, had made a deep impression on the boy—a brooding undemonstrative horror seemed to have seized him.*" (p.397) Thus, Little Father Time's share of the responsibility for homelessness leads him to a painful ending which shows us that Hardy is, consequently, blaming society rather than Sue and Jude who accepted Little Father Time as their son.

Hardy shows how Arabella's impulse to deny responsibility for Little Father Time, when left ungoverned, generates tragic disruptions on the individual and the family: by the individual, we mean the tragic death of the child; and by family, we mean the breakdown of Jude's union with Sue; the children died, Sue left Jude to return to her first husband Phillotson, and Jude is trapped again by his first wife Arabella. Denial of responsibility, therefore, is the primary source, if any, of Little Father Time's tragic end.

The child's murder and suicide can also interpreted as a dignified exist whose meaning is gain rather than loss; this is what we can infer from Arthur Miller's "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949): "we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing - his sense of personal dignity."[196] Perceiving a threat to his "sense of personal dignity"[197], Little Father Time commits suicide to save himself and his siblings from further trouble as he feels a sense of rejection (beginning by his mother when she left him for Jude, and ending with the man who refused the presence of children in the lodging he was in with Sue):

> *The boy burst out weeping. "Oh you don't care, you don't care!" he cried in bitter reproach. "How ever could you, Mother, be so wicked and cruel as this, when you needn't have done it till we was better off, and Father well! To bring us all into more trouble! No room for us, and father a-forced to go away, and we turned out to-morrow; and yet you be going to have another of us soon!* (p.399)

Hardy seems to convey to the Victorian reader one hidden aspect of Victorian reality: that the laws of society are indifferent even to innocent children. This awareness is one thing one gains from tragedy. To quote Arthur Miller again, "*one learns to see the frailty of human*

[196] Arthur Miller. "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949), quoted in Christopher Bigsby T*he Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 (sixth Printing, first published in 1997) p.63.
[197] Ibid.p.99.

beings with pity and fear rather than to deem them angels or villains."[198] This means that the Victorian reader will, from then on, hopefully realise the omnipresence of tragedy in its very-in just- social fabric.

Another point which is essential in shaping the tragic dimension of the novel is the study of containment. In the novel, the narrator says, "*principles which could be subverted by feeling in one direction were liable to the same catastrophe in another. The instincts which had allowed [Jude] to give Sue her liberty now enabled him to regard her as none the worse for her life with [him]*." (p.428) It is on the ground of this claim that we understand the kind of containment in Sue's and Jude's relationship. The narrator, indeed, indicates that their acts of subversion and transgression of their social principles of marriage lead them to catastrophes such as the children's death, the dissolution of their family tie, Sue's conversion to conformity, and Jude's tragic end. We draw attention to the fact that though both of Sue and Jude are nonconformist protagonists, it is only Sue whose actions are contained. Jude, however, remains unconventional and dies as such.

Sue's subversive language and behaviour is contained after the death of the children because she believes that the tragic scene of suicide and murder is intended by God to punish her for her iconoclastic stance; she believes that her babies "*died to bring home to [her] the error of [her] views*" (p.433). Now truth dawns upon her: "*My babies have been taken from me to show me this! Arabella's child killing mine was a judgement—the right slaying the wrong.*" (p.419) What makes the force of containment so powerful is Sue's capacity to transcend the loss of her children, and turns into a sort of blessing in disguise: "*My children—are dead—and it is right that they should be! I am glad—almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live! Their death was the first stage of my purification. That's why they have not died in vain!*" (p.435).

Her terrible *mea culpa* suggests the triumph of Christianity over the forces of Agnosticism or the omnipotence of religion. Jude's remonstration with the penitent Sue at the end of the novel also makes it clear that the battle they have fought together is lost, as she says, "*I have thought that we have been selfish, careless, even impious, in our courses, you and I. Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road*." (p.412) The tragic death of the children converts her to conventionality in such a way as to 'contain' all her intellectual emancipation; she believes that self-sacrifice rather than self-emancipation is what should govern people; her repentance and her sense of guilt is a sign of containment: "*we ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty*! *But I have*

[198] Ibid., p.114.

always striven to do what has pleased me. I well deserved the scourging I have got! *I wish something would take the evil right out of me, and all my monstrous errors, and all my sinful ways*!" (p.412) When she informs Jude that she intends to go back to Phillotson, he bitterly vents his anger against her:

> *After converting me to your views on so many things, to find you suddenly turn to the right-about like this—for no reason whatever, confounding all you have formerly said through sentiment merely! […]How you argued that marriage was only a clumsy contract— which it is—how you showed all the objections to it—all the absurdities! […]You threw off old husks of prejudices, and taught me to do it; and now you go back upon yourself. […] can this be the girl who brought the pagan deities into this most Christian city?—who mimicked Miss Fontover when she crushed them with her heel?—quoted Gibbon, and Shelley, and Mill? Where are dear Apollo, and dear Venus now!* (pp.420-421)

Jude tries to find some explanation for her *volte-face* but he only comes up with: "*perhaps the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as ours! Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers!*" (p.421), which gives an indication of his own alienation.

We can interpret Sue's situation after the death of her children by naming it "death in life", an idea explained by Adrian Poole as follows:

> *The idea of a 'living death' looks like a modern complement to the old belief in ghosts, the haunters, the revenants, the undead. It's a vision of death-in-life, a life so drained of meaning, value, purpose, and joy that it seems like death, being dead before you are dead. It's a version of hell on earth, more inert, more soundproof, more blank than others. In the modern era it tends to be focused in images of imprisonment, silence, and madness*.[199]

Sue, thus, resembles more a ghost than a real woman. Her conventional behaviour and her language show that she is dead though she is still alive. All she does is backed by an imposed ideological meaning in which she is subordinated not voluntarily but unwillingly; she behaves as such because society wants that in a predetermined social order. She feels that she must divest her mind and soul of any remembrance of her unconventional life whatever, and she must do this willingly and gladly, for such are the demands of God. She also forces herself to play the role of a wife. What makes the sense of irony in all she does is her awareness and her consciousness that down deep in her heart she utterly refuses her conventional acts, but she must do that to redeem herself. The word "must" is recurrent in her speech. There is always this sense of obligation which she expresses. For instance, she says "*I must practise myself in my household duties. I've shamefully neglected them*!" (p.359), "*I am going to make my conscience right on my duty to Richard—by doing a penance—the ultimate thing. I must*!" (ibid.), "*I must be more just to him*" (ibid.). The meaning of social duty is felt to be imposed

[199] Adrian Poole. *Tragedy: A very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 2005.p.39.

on her sharply when she decides to perform her wifely duty; she says, "*I must do it—I must! I must drink to the dregs*!" (p.361) This is an affirmation of her death in life since she is deprived from the will of doing as one wants. Thus her subversive liberal echoes of J.S Mill are contained through her behaviour within a predetermined order of things. She is bereft of her intellectual power. For Sue, this situation is hell on earth; this reverberates in her dialogue with Phillotson. When she expresses her happiness that her children are dead, she appears as motionless: "I am glad—almost glad I mean—that they are dead, Richard. It blots out all that life of mine!" (p.362)

Jude's progress is different from Sue's. In the light of Williams's *Modern Tragedy*, Jude stands as a modern tragic hero. Jude is heroic because he strives to be free from the stifling social order and to make his mark in society (being educated), despite the odds which are set against him. His 'modern heroism' lies in his opposition to social laws. In other words, Jude's conflict, as we have already shown through the study of the subversive discourse on marriage, is rooted in the social institution of marriage (through which he is trapped twice by Arabella) and the cultural institution of education (the university). Jude finds it cruel on the part of this educational institution to refuse him as a student just because he is from the working class. Even his alternative career as a theologian is thwarted twice by Arabella and Sue owing to the weakness he feels for women and for liquor. Jude's desire to be a student at the university of Christminster and to live with the woman he loves "*fails, or is broken, but it is never denied*"[200] in fact, unlike Sue who renounces her desire to lead an emancipated life as an intellectual, Jude does not give up his fight against society in order not to be destroyed, but he eventually ends by his own self-destruction. He thus conforms with Williams's theory, "*What happens, […], is that the hero defines an opposing world, full of lies and compromises and dead positions, only to find, as he struggles against it, that as a man he belongs to this world, and has its destructive inheritance in himself.*"[201] Jude also struggles against himself. His desire for a forbidden relationship "*when all that is known of relationship is restricting*"[202] comes to a dead end when he realizes that "*the search for warmth and light has ended in cold and darkness*." [203]

In her thesis "Tragic Realism in the novels of Thomas Hardy and Chinua Achebe" (1999), Zohra Ezziat analyses the tragic dimension of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in the light

[200] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.99.
[201] Ibid., p.98.
[202] Ibid., p.101.
[203] Ibid., p.101.

of George Luckacs's *The Theory of the Novel*. She argues that Jude is a "*problematic hero*"[204] because his aims never coincide with what society demands, and that they are narrower or larger than necessary. Other characteristics of the problematic hero include his life "*in disharmony with the outside world*"[205], loneliness, and isolation. We think that Williams's theory of *Modern Tragedy* sheds more light on Jude's situation as a modern tragic figure. His tragedy is a liberal one. As a tragic protagonist, he is both tragic and liberal; this is why we have a liberal tragedy. As Williams puts it, "*the structure is liberal in its emphasis on the surpassing individual, and tragic in its ultimate recognition of defeat or the limits of victory*"[206] As a "*surpassing individual*", Jude behaves in such a way as to challenge society in order to liberate himself from its constraints.

Jude's tragedy, in Williams's words, "*is the conflict between an individual and the forces that destroy him.*"[207] At the beginning of the novel, Jude is introduced as a crazy boy for books; this is why he desires to further his studies at the university of Christminster. He believes that "*every man has some little power in some one direction,*" (p.364) and his power is centred in his intellectualism. However, such power is denied because he belongs to the working class; as the Master of Christminster university tells him,

> *Sir,—I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do. Yours faithfully,*
>
> *T. Tetuphenay.*
> *To Mr. J. Fawley, Stone-mason*. (p.140)

To remain in his own sphere and to stick to his trade are for Jude a denial of his capacities and a repression of his desire to be educated. Though Jude realises that it is unfair from the university official to answer his application negatively, he can do nothing to change his fate because society considers that "*It was next to impossible that a man [like Jude] reading on his own system, however widely and thoroughly, even over the prolonged period of ten years, should be able to compete with those who had passed their lives under trained teachers and had worked to ordained lines*." (p.138) In other words, the working-class Jude cannot compete with the educated upper-class members. He acknowledges the limits of his efforts when he says,

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[204] Zohra Ezziat. "Tragic Realism in the novels of Thomas Hardy and Chinua Achebe." University of Algiers, 1999.p.112.
[205] Ibid., p.110
[206] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.87.
[207] Ibid., p.87.

> *I felt I could do one thing if I had the opportunity. I could accumulate ideas, and impart them to others. I wonder if the founders had such as I in their minds—a fellow good for nothing else but that particular thing? … I hear that soon there is going to be a better chance for such helpless students as I was. There are schemes afoot for making the university less exclusive, and extending its influence. I don't know much about it. And it is too late, too late for me! Ah—and for how many worthier ones before me*! (p.364)

Jude struggles to educate himself over the course of ten years, yet the cultural institution of education (university) destroys his efforts and his dreams. His yearning for a Christminster education to become a bishop or a kind of a religious man end in disappointment. Through the university of Christminster, Hardy condemns the educational system of his age when education witnessed changes due to industrial changes on society

> *Their institutions challenged by the social and economic forces of industrialism, the Victorians saw education as a means as both social control and individual betterment. The two themes existed side by side; social control was emphasized in the education of the lower classes, individual betterment in that of the middle-classes, but in both cases the second theme was discernible. Thus, the lower classes were taught primarily to know their place, and were given only the rudiments of literacy, but it was possible, through self-improvement or, later in the century, through further schooling for bright lower-class students to improve their position in society*.[208]

The effects of social hierarchy and socio-economics kept Jude out of Christminster. Because he belongs to the working class, "*those buildings and their associations and privileges were not for him. […] He saw that his destiny lay not with these, but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied*" (p.139). Jude's individual efforts to learn are already a victory; but such a victory is not only limited but also not recognized by the social laws. The authoritative voice of the Master destroys Jude's aspiration. It is in this sense that we come to notice part of Jude's tragedy. The other part of his tragedy, as we have shown in the analysis of themes, lies in his repressed desire to live freely with Sue. The stifling laws of marriage prohibit Sue's and Jude's relationships on the ground that it is not good for cousins to marry; yet such laws oblige Jude to marry Arabella, and also oblige Sue to accept Phillotson's proposal of marriage to save her reputation. Jude notices that there is a lack of order in the way things operate in society. He becomes aware that what is good for him is not good for society and vice-versa; therefore, there is not a common desire between the needs of the individual and those of society, as Williams puts it.

[208] Joan J Burstyn. *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984.p.11.

Even after the death of his children, he does not turn conventional as Sue does. He loses all sense of belief in life. He ends his life in a terrible sense of pessimism. After Sue leaves him, he tells Arabella that he has only two wishes: to see Sue and then to die. In fact, after he meets Sue for the last time and makes his last attempt to convince her to run away with him, Sue refuses. Then he opts for a slow death. He remains in bed till he takes leave of his life. His final words are overwhelmed with Schopenhauer's meaning of pessimism. He expresses that it is better for one to be dead than to lead an unjust life where social order represses one's individuality:

> *"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived." "Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein." "Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? … For now should I have lain still and been quiet. I should have slept: then had I been at rest!" "There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor… The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?"* (p.484)

We hope that the analysis of this novel in the light of the three poetics makes Hardy's subversive attitude clearer. The theory of Cultural Materialism has demonstrated that the Victorian ideology of marriage was questioned by individuals who were eventually repressed and silenced. Subversion as expressed in the behaviour and the language of Sue and Jude mainly shows that Establishment is always subject to threats from dissident and dissonant elements. The analysis of language has shown the clash of arguments and counter-arguments in the Victorian discourse of marriage and divorce. The analysis of discourse in the light of Bakhtin's dialogism has uncovered the role of heteroglossia the task of decentering the Victorian unitary language. These subversive efforts, however, are short-lived, as social authority (as represented by church, school, and law) eventually makes use of its power of containment to triumphantly re-establish the *status quo*.

In this chapter, Hardy's concern is with the working class and the lower middle class in their fight against the upper class ideology. To know more about this upper-class ideology, we should now move to the next chapter which provides an analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* Here again, there is much ideological confrontation. However, the difference with this novel is that its protagonist belongs to the Aristocracy, i.e. the very source of the Victorian social order. A number of questions come to mind in this respect; for instance, how can an aristocratic man, who is supposed to defend his class interests and values, turn against his class? What are the reasons that lie behind such a subversion? And

does he succeed or fail in his attempts? This is what the following chapter will endeavour to find out.

IV

Victorian Ethics and Aesthetics: Subversion and Containment in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the light of Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism and his theory of Modern Tragedy, and also of Michael Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism. Unlike the previous chapter which is concerned with the characters' social life, here we are mainly concerned with the characters' artistic life. By artistic life, we mean the relationship between the characters' lives and art. The latter is highlighted by the painter Basil Hallward and his painting of Dorian's portrait, the actress Sibyl Vane and her representation of theatre, the musician and aesthete Dorian Gray, and the dandy Lord Henry and his Aesthetic theories about life and beauty.

The theory of Cultural Materialism aims at bringing out the dissident and the subversive constituents in this novel and at showing how they challenge the dominant ideology. From a Cultural Materialist point of view, Aestheticism was an emergent cultural form which expressed dissonance in Victorian society. Analysing the novel in these terms allows us to expose the fractures and disruptions within the conservative ideology. Oscar Wilde chooses to express his new and revolutionary ideas through the doctrine of Aestheticism which constitutes a counter-hegemony to the Victorian social order. Thus we have a conflict between the emergent Aestheticism[209] and the dominant Victorianism. This discursive conflict will be examined through the analysis of language in the light of Bakhtin's Dialogism. Indeed, what Raymond Williams refers to as the clash between tradition and "*oppositional formation*"[210] is referred to as the conflict between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces according to Bakhtin.

We shall argue in this respect that the language of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has, in Bakhtin's terms, two poles: on the one hand, there is the language of the Victorian official discourse which is the expression of the centripetal forces whose ultimate function is to keep the Victorian dominant language a unitary language in order to serve the Victorian project of ideological unification and centralization; on the other hand, there is the language of Aestheticism which stands as a counter-discourse. As a centrifugal force, this language—articulated in the words of Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton—functions to disunify and to decentralise the Victorian ideological unity. Dialogism in this novel works toward dis-crowning the Victorian discourse, and thus its culture. Via Wilde's use of the principles and

[209] Why do we consider Aestheticism emergent? In Williams's classification of cultural ideas as either residual, dominant, or emergent, Aestheticism is neither residual nor dominant; it is emergent because it fits Williams's definition when he says: "*by 'emergent' I mean, […], that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships are continually being created*"(*Marxism and Literature*,p.123). Aestheticism is a socio-cultural attitude formed in opposition to traditional Victorian values. Indeed, Dorian Gray's preoccupation with the freedom of the soul plays the role of subverting Victorianism in that it represents new spaces which threaten the Victorian Establishment.

[210]Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.p.114.

values of Aestheticism, the Victorian culture undergoes a process of "*dialogization*"[211] in that Wilde makes us aware of the "*competing definitions*"[212] of the Victorian values and assumptions. More concretely, the conflict is that of the individual with the social laws; we mean the conflict between individual passions/desires and ideological reason.

The result of the struggle between the two competing forces (the centripetal and the centrifugal) will be shown basically through Raymond Williams's theory of Modern Tragedy and other modern views of tragedy. The usefulness of this theory lies in its conception of the problematic hero. We shall show what makes of Dorian Gray a modern tragic hero (or an anti-hero and how forces of the subversion are checked and contained by the Victorian authority. Still more important, this theory sheds light on the containment of Dorian's sins. Dorian Gray lives according to the principles of Aestheticism as a manifestation of his longing for a different reality, yet he dies without coming any closer to his desired goal. Does this containment refer to the triumph of the Victorian authority over individuals who transgress social taboos or does it mean that the doctrine of Aestheticism is not powerful enough to survive in the prevailing social order? In other words, is this containment a sign of the Victorian Establishment's ability to ideologically tame and dis-empower all those who attempt to create principles and values other than the Victorian ones?

1. Oscar Wilde's Subversion of the Victorian Conception of Ethics and Aesthetics

Oscar Wilde's subversive task is done purposefully to challenge the dominant Victorian ideology. Unlike Thomas Hardy who has advanced oppositional formations on the marriage question, Wilde's manner of subversion is remarkable in rejecting, redefining, and stratifying the established Victorian conceptions of ethics and aesthetics. He rethinks the relationship between the individual and the social, and he establishes a new personality for the individual and fills him with the philosophy of Aestheticism. What Wilde basically subverts is the Victorian preoccupation with materialism not only by ignoring the spiritual life of individuals in society but also restricting it through morality, religion, and stifling social laws. Wilde's theory of Aestheticism seeks to liberate the individual from all sorts of Victorian repression in order to reach self-development; a sense of self-development which is totally different from the Victorian conception. The Victorian emphasis upon moral content as the supreme criterion of great art is challenged by Wilde through the introduction of Aestheticism as a new way of life.

[211] Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M.Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. (17th paperback printing, 1st edition 1981). p.427.
[212] Ibid., p.427.

Wilde "*wrote for a middle-class audience with pretensions to the upper-middle class or aristocracy. […] His audience was as middle-class as he was*"[213] As an iconoclast, Wilde protests against the Victorian intensive preoccupation with materialism and its repression of spiritualism. In other words, what Wilde conceives as undesirable is the substitution of spiritualism by the world of work and politics. To make things clear, by materialism, we mean the greed for money and wealth which render an individual a machine-like seeking only the material side of life. What about his spiritual life? What about the life of his soul? What about his own ideas, emotions, feelings and desires? These questions lead us to another important question: does Victorian society give importance to such a reality as the life of the soul? Does perfection lie only in the material side of life? How is perfection really achieved? It is not that such questions have not been raised before, but in the late 19th century, they assumed a new significance because of the general call for freedom in all scenes of life. The individual then is more aware of what is going on around him. All these questions emerge in the themes of this novel. Wilde's primary aim of subverting the Victorian ideology is done, thus, for the sake of change; a change which, in his own point of view, is possible through leading an "aesthetic" life, one which disregards Victorian morality and social concerns. Wilde's preoccupation with issues of art, the artist, and criticism are important elements in the course of change. Wilde is concerned with a society that is in need of a change to get rid of the injustices and inequalities that are the effect of Capitalism and Industrialism. The only way to enjoy life in such a society is through art. Wilde debases the bourgeois artistic taste and advances the philosophy of Aestheticism which celebrates beauty, pleasure, and joy and rejects all moral concerns.

In the chapter entitled "The Creative Mind", of *The Long Revolution*, Raymond Williams argues that any way of living is always subject to change:

> *We 'see' in certain ways—that is, we interpret sensory information according to certain rules—as a way of living. But these ways—these rules and interpretations—are, as a whole, neither fixed nor constant. We can learn new rules and new interpretations, as a result of which we shall literally see in new ways*.[214]

It is on this theoretical basis that it is possible for us to interpret Dorian Gray's shift from a moral respectable Victorian man to an immoral "*bad, corrupt, and shameful*"[215] man. Realising that the Victorian social rules are not fixed, Dorian Gray alters them by learning new ways and new interpretations which constitute a different reality. According to Raymond

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[213] Frederick S. Roden. *Palgrave Advances in Oscar Wilde Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.p.104.
[214] Raymond Williams. *The Long Revolution*. London: Penguin Books, 1975.p.34.
[215] Oscar Wilde. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), in Richard Aldington and Weinthaub Stanley, Eds. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.p.313. All subsequent references are from this source and will be put between brackets.

Williams, "*there is not only variation between cultures, but the individuals who bear these particular cultural rules are capable of altering and extending them, bringing in new or modified rules by which an extended or different reality can be experienced.*"[216] Such a different reality which is experienced results from the individual's need to freedom from the social constrains. As Lord Henry explains, if there must be a change it is because of "*self-denial*" (p.159)**.** The excessive focus on the material side of life denies the spiritual life; this is why aesthetes like Wilde extricate art "*from the material practices, social relations and ideological meanings in which it is always caught up*"[217]

Wilde's arguments against the Victorian Establishment justify the "*Cultural Materialist argument that texts are not simple registers of social power. Rather, they must necessarily harbor dissident, fractious energies that undermine the sense of cohesive certainty that ruling elites seek to impose on a culture*."[218] At a time when aristocratic class seeks to impose a moral task of art, Wilde's novel seeks to subvert such a task by redefining its ideological beliefs because, as Terry Eagleton puts it, "*an ideology is never a simple reflection of a ruling class's ideas; on the contrary, it is always a complex phenomenon, which may incorporate conflicting, even contradictory, views of the world*."[219] The clash between the Victorian world view and the Wildean one represent a conflict between the Victorian tradition and the Victorian modernity as is incarnated in the philosophy of Aestheticism.

Among the dissidents which subvert the Victorian domesticity, sins have a significant role in the philosophy of Aestheticism because they may be transformed into "*elements of a new civilisation, more marvellous and more splendid than any that has gone before*."[220] Lord Henry encourages sinful acts in various instances. For example, he says to Basil Hallward, "*the costume of our day is detestable. It is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only color-element left in modern life*." In this respect, Lord Henry attributes to sin a new meaning. He links it with life and progress. Wilde tells us more about the new meaning of sin when he says:

> *What is termed Sin is an essential element of progress. Without it the world would stagnate, or grow old, or become colourless. By its curiosity, Sin increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of*

[216] *The Long Revolution*. Op.cit.,p.34.
[217] Terry Eagleton. *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983). United Kingdom: Blackwell publishing, 1996 (2nd edition).p.19.
[218] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.p.743.
[219]Terry Eagleton. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. (1979).2002.p.6.
[220] Ibid., p.75.

> *individualism, it saves us from monotony of type. In its rejection of the current notions about morality, it is one with the higher ethics*.[221]

Before the introduction of the ideas of Aestheticism, Wilde points out the problem with the Victorian tradition through the speech of Lord Henry. His alternative views and beliefs constitute a threat to the dominant social order. As an irreverent character, he is the first in the novel to express unconventional, iconoclastic, and challenging views. His position as a dissenter is rendered clear when he attacks the upper class ideology of his age. When he says that "*it is only the sacred things that are worth touching*" (p.197), he directs his critical speech to the upper class ideology which limits the freedom of the individual. Further, when he speaks about the question of influence, he considers it bad. He relates the individual's status of stagnation to the bad Victorian influence meaning that the dominant ideas which govern him do not fit such an age; it is time to get rid of them. He argues that the individual in society is not free to behave according to his own beliefs or to think his natural thoughts. When he says that "*People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self,*" (p.158) he points out that the dominant social order shapes one's life in such a way as to serve only the social needs and to ignore the duty that one owes to one's self. He implies that man should be courageous to face such a dilemma because the aim of life is "*to realize one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for*." (p.158) He also implies that the social laws are selfish in that they ignore or repress one's desires. One is always obliged to behave and think according to what society considers as good and allowed. Lord Henry says:

> *There is no such thing as good influence. […]All influence is immoral, immoral from the scientific point of view.[…] Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him*. (p.158)

Lord Henry also attacks religion and considers it a barrier for man's progress when he says that "*in the Church, [successful men] don't think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen*" (p.142). The role of religion is also discarded and subverted by Dorian Gray. This is shown when he writes "*a passionate letter to the girl he loved imploring her forgiveness and accusing himself of madness*." (p.246) As an artistic form, this letter has been covered "*with wild words of sorrow, and wilder words of pain*" (p.247), and as such it substitutes the religious man in church to whom Dorian is supposed to confess his cruelty and sin towards Sibyl Vane. This is why Dorian thinks that

[221] Ibid., p.75.

"*there is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution*." (p.247). Indeed, after having finished writing the letter, Dorian feels that he has been forgiven. This feeling is enough for him to believe that he is forgiven; there is no need for a priest to do so. Dorian's letter is critical and creative: critical of religion as it suggests that a priest is not the only person we resort to in order to confess sins; it is equally creative and emergent in the sense that it is a new artistic way to implore forgiveness. It is in this sense that Wilde argues in his essay "The Critic as Artist" that "*the employment of a new material is a critical as well as a creative element*."[222] As a new material, this letter subverts the role of a priest. In so doing, Dorian is self-helped; he decentres the role of religion in consoling individuals and centres it in art. When he speaks about "*la consolation des arts*" (p.263), he states his oppositional attitude towards those who find consolation in religion. Writing this letter consoles him because it gives reality to his feelings towards Sibyl Vane; as he says, "*it is simply expression, […], that gives reality to things*." (p.260) Wilde, in this respect, gives voice to self-development in that Dorian's individual expression of self-reproach is a triumph over the role of religious men in reproaching sinners. Besides, through Lord Henry's voice, Wilde argues that "*nothing makes one so vain as being told that one is a sinner*" (p.254) meaning that one's reputation as a sinner in the eyes of society is negative because it will only let him commit more sins.

Just like religion, morality is also to be discarded from life for it plays its part in self-denial: "*the terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion,—these are the two things that govern us*."(p.158) Instead of answering the demands or religion and morality, Lord Henry proposes to return to the Hellenic ideal to liberate the soul from the material world; he says,

> *I believe that if one man were to live his life out fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream,—I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal, — to something finer, richer, than the Hellenic ideal, it may be*. (p.159)

The doctrine of Hellenism is what Wilde, through the voice of Lord Henry, proposes as an "*oppositional formation*"[223] which not only subverts the Victorian Establishment but is also an "emergent" idea which puts forward "*new meanings and values*"[224]. It is concerned with the revision of moral standards in such a way as to, in Williams's words again, have

[222] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist" (1890), in Aldington Richard and Stanley Weinthaub, Eds. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.p.94.
[223] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit., p.114.
[224] Ibid.,p.123.

"*significance because [it] represents areas of human experience, aspiration, and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognize*."[225]

By Hellenism, Wilde refers to the idea that "*aesthetics are higher than ethics.*"[226] "A new hedonism,—that is what our century wants," says Lord Henry to Dorian Gray. Wilde's aesthetic existence/experimentation is intended to show that an individual needs freedom to liberate his desires because, as Lord Henry says, the rigidness of the Victorian social laws result in self-denial: "*The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us.*" (p.159) Lord Henry, in this respect, inserts, what Williams calls, not only as a way to redefine the Victorian ideology but also to threaten and to question its dominance; this is why he says to Dorian Gray: "*The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it [because if you] resist it, your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made unlawful.*" (p.159)

Lord Henry depicts the Hellenic ideal of self-fulfilment as what society is really in need of. The Hedonic ideal as expressed by Walter Pater in "Marius the Epicurean" does not mean to seek pleasure for the sake of pleasure but rather for the sake of "*a general completeness of life*"[227], one which requires "*Insight, Liberty of soul, freedom from all partial and misrepresentative doctrine which does but relieve one element of our experience at the cost of another, freedom of all embarrassment alike of regret for the past and of calculation on the future*"[228] To shed more light on the concept of Hedonism[229], our task is not to accept Pater's definition as a gratuitous argument which justifies Lord Henry's and Dorian Gray's Hedonistic criterion, but to question the very position of Hedonism in the novel. The question we ask in this context is whether Hedonism is really a theory about morals which substitutes the Victorian morality as a law of pleasure or it is just a way through which one can escape the harsh Victorian reality. In his article "Hedonism", Joseph E. Canavan argues that

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[225] Ibid., p.125.
[226] "The Critic as Artist", in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*.Op.cit.,p.135.
[227] Walter Pater. "Marius the Epicurean", quoted by Joseph E. Canavan. "Hedonism," in *An Irish Quarterly Review*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Mar., 1912.p.73
[228] Ibid., p.73.
[229] The theoretical basis of Hedonism is pleasure seeking disregarding all social and moral concerns. A.R. Lacey identifies Hedonism by classifying it into different categories: "*Psychological hedonism has three main forms: That everyone desires only his own Pleasure or happiness. That everyone necessarily aims only to maximize his own pleasure. That everyone always acts on his strongest desire. The term also sometimes applies to the theory that only pleasant thoughts can motivate actions. The three main senses can also (and the third properly speaking should) be called psychological egoism*." (Reference: A.R. Lacey. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. (1976). London: Routledge, 1996.p.133)

> *Hedonism must mean one of two things. It must either be a pure theory, not professing to touch the real issues of life, the day-dream of a leisurely class who have time and opportunity to dabble in philosophical speculations, or, it can be a moral system, that is, it can be held too firmly by men who are looking for a solution of the many practical problems with which they are continually confronted.*[230]

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, both meanings of Hedonism are expressed. The first meaning is incarnated in Lord Henry's character. His attitude towards Hedonism is simply a pose, a pure theory and "*an intellectual charade*"[231] which he does not take seriously; in other words, his Hedonistic beliefs remain at the level of thought and speculation since it is not him who acts upon them but he urges Dorian Gray to do so. We notice this when Basil Hallward says to him, "*you never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose*." (p.144) But he urges Dorian Gray to live freely when he tells him:

> *Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. [...] A new Hedonism—that is what our century wants. You might be its visible symbol. With your personality there is nothing you could not do. The world belongs to you for a season.* (p.164).

Viewed from Cultural Materialist lenses, New Hedonism "*takes on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms*"[232] "*which [has] significant effect on the hegemonic process itself.*"[233] Wilde intensifies the need to live one's life fully and to pursue a great variety of experiences disregarding the constraining morality and the stifling Victorian values.

As for Dorian Gray, the second meaning of Hedonism fits him because he seriously takes it into consideration as a moral system which provides solutions of the practical problems Lord Henry states.[234] It has a real significance throughout Dorian Gray's life; it is "*a pleasure which transports [him] out of [himself], until [he] almost forgets that life has any miseries.*"[235] The first impact of Hedonism on Dorian Gray's life is evident after Sibyl Vane's

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[230] Joseph E. Canavan. "Hedonism," in *An Irish Quarterly Review*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Mar., 1912.p.76.
[231] Ibid., p.76.
[232] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit., p.114.
[233] Ibid., p.113.
[234] The social problems which an individual faces and which mar his life are basically demonstrated through the character of Lord Henry. In many instances, his Hedonistic (Aesthetic) beliefs and values go hand in hand with the social problems. i.e. every time he speaks about a social problem, he offers a Hedonistic solution. For example, for the problem of self-denial he proposes self-development not through resisting temptation but through yielding to it. (p.153) He believes that self-denial of thoughts, feelings, and dreams resulting from fear of "*monstrous and unlawful*" social laws (p.159) prevent individuals from living "life fully and completely". The needs of the soul, which are pleasure, joy, happiness, love, harmony, are denied in the Victorian society because man behaves as a machine to secure the materialistic side of life. Under the Capitalist mode of production, an individual's desires and interests are in Life not in Art, which is destructive to culture. Under this circumstance, an individual's temperament becomes stereotyped to one common and permanent fatal mood. Weakness of will is the ultimate result. Thus when Lord Henry advances a new philosophy of life, he wants to escape the negative effects not only of Capitalism but of an age which represses Individualism. Lord Henry's Aestheticism is a form of Liberal thought which calls to liberate all that society forbids, represses, or marginalises.
[235] Ibid., p.75.

death. He managed **to detach** himself from bearing the responsibility of her death. He aestheticises her death when he considers her suicide a "*tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty*" (p.252) so as not to blame himself. He also manages to detach himself from the sense of guilt when Lord Henry encourages him to view Sibyl Vane as a literary tragic figure. As an aesthete, Lord Henry urges Dorian to view life through the lenses of art in order to escape the feelings of sadness and guilt. This is what we notice when he says to Dorian,

> *No, she will never come to life. She has played her last part. But you must think of that lonely death in the tawdry dressing-room simply as a strange lurid fragment from some Jacobean tragedy, as a wonderful scene from Webster, or Ford, or Cyril Tourneur. The girl never really lived, and so she has never really died. To you at least she was always a dream, a phantom that flitted through Shakespeare's plays and left them lovelier for its presence, a reed through which Shakespeare's music sounded richer and more full of joy.* (p.255)

Dorian accepts such an interpretation when he says to Lord Henry, "*it [Sibyl Vane's death] has been a marvellous experience. That is all. I wonder if life has still in store for me anything as marvellous*."(p.256) This means that he has really made his decision in pursuing a Hedonistic life. By this incident, he feels that it is time to decide for his choice; he opts for "*Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins,—he [is] to have all these things. The portrait [is] to bear the burden of his shame: that was all*." (p.258)

"*Every moral theory, if adopted uncompromisingly, develops a peculiar type, a character. If it is genuine, it must be practical*,"[236] Canavan argues. This is what we notice in Dorian Gray's characterization. The construction of this male identity subverts the typical Victorian one. Unlike Lord Henry for whom Hedonism is a pose, Dorian Gray's Hedonism is practical. It leads him to develop a Hedonistic type, an Aesthete, a dandy *persona*. It is a new masculine identity which is in itself a subversive aspect in that it is, morally speaking, an oppositional formation and a new kind of relationship as compared with the Victorian conception of male identity. One of its subversive manifestations as a newly emergent male identity in the upper class is its displacement of the male-female relationship to male-male relationship, disrupting by such the moral standards set on gender relationships. In other words, one of dandyism's aspects of novelness is to seek friendship with men. In the novel, we come across this matter via two ways: all male relationships are built on unusual love relationship, and the discourse on woman is de-privileged. The first man who shows love

[236] "Hedonism" Op.cit., p.76.

feelings for another man is Basil Hallward. When he expresses his affection to Dorian Gray, the reader feels that it is as if he is in love with a woman, not a man. For instance, he says:

> *I saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious instinct of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. […] I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. […] we would have spoken to each other without any introduction. Dorian told me so afterwards. He, too, felt that we were destined to know each other. […].[I see Dorian Gray] every day. I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him. Of course sometimes it is only for a few minutes. But a few minutes with somebody one worships mean a great deal. […] I do worship him He is absolutely necessary to me. […] if you only knew what Dorian Gray is to me!* (pp.146, 147,149)

It is in the portrait of Dorian Gray that Basil Hallward puts all these love-feelings. This is why he refuses to exhibit it. He knows that it is a love that dares not speak its name because it is sexually deviant; he also knows that "*the world might guess it*" (p.151) These passionate feelings are affirmed on two occasions. First, after Dorian announces his intention to be engaged to marry Sibyl Vane, Basil Hallward feels sad; indeed, "*a strange sense of loss [comes] over him. He [feels] that Dorian Gray [will] never again be to him all that he had been in the past*." (p.229) Second, there comes a time when he himself tells Dorian Gray about his secret feelings:

> *It is quite true that I have worshipped you with far more romance of feeling than a man usually gives to a friend. Somehow, I had never loved a woman. […] From the moment I met you, your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I quite admit that I adored you madly, extravagantly, absurdly. I was jealous of every one to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I was with you. When I was away from you, you were still present in my art. You are made to be worshipped*. (pp.267-268).

Basil Hallward is not the only man who admires, "worships", or falls victim of Dorian's fascination. This is what we notice when he asks Dorian, "*why is your friendship so fatal to young men*?" (p.309) He mentions the names of young men and women whose lives Dorian ruins with his fatal beauty; the men are: Duke of Berwick, Lord Cawdor, Sir Henry Ashton, Adrian Singleton, Lord Kent's only son, the young Duke of Perth, Lady Gwendolen (Lord Henry's sister), and Lord Gloucester's wife.

Dorian's relationships are more established with men than with women. He shows an interest in the male sphere; even his relationships with women are not durable and end tragically (as is the case of Sibyl Vane and Hetty). Wilde's decision to place the dandy in such an important role represents, in our view, an innate desire to break down the Victorian

masculine stereotype which he personally finds stifling, and it also questions the position of woman. In this perspective, does the Wildean homosexual politics—as incarnated in the dandy *persona*—imply misogyny, or is it simply an affirmation of sexual deviance with no intention to subvert woman's position in society? Answering this question involves an analysis of woman's image as represented through characterization and language. In our opinion, when he replaces the male-female by a male-male relationship, Wilde's intention is not to advance misogynist arguments. To the contrary, Wilde's positioning of the dandy requires a deep look into the motivations of the characters, Lord Henry in particular. As an Aesthete, Lord Henry celebrates the unnatural, the immoral, and encourages the forbidden. As such, the male-male love is just one case which puts the doctrine of Aestheticism in practice. It is not possible to speak about a successful male-female relationship at a time when sexual deviance is preferred.

The discourse which accompanies woman's image in this novel is decentered and disrupted in the language of Lord Henry. Indeed, each time his speech includes woman, he belittles her role. When he speaks about his married life, he says, "*[…] I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary to both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing*." (p.143) Moreover, he believes that "*no woman is a genius: women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. They represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as we men represent the triumph of mind over morals.*" (p.192) He also argues that woman has no significant role in man's life in that "*the only way a woman can ever reform a man is by boring him so completely that he loses all possible interest in life. If you had married this girl you would have been wretched*." (p.251). He sharpens his aesthetic ideas and extends them to console Dorian Gray after the death of Sibyl Vane. So as not to blame himself for being cruel with her, Dorian is told that "*women appreciate cruelty more than anything else. They have wonderfully primitive instincts. We have emancipated them, but they remain slaves looking for their masters, all the same. They love being dominated*." (p.254)

Furthermore, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, dandyism is defined as "*an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty.*" (p.285) As dandies, Lord Henry and Dorian Gray subvert the Victorian standards of beauty which is found in submission for religion, morality, and ideology, and they advance a new definition. Indeed, beauty is to be found in the unnatural and the forbidden, in crimes, sins, and hypocrisy. For instance, though Dorian commits many sinful acts, he is always delighted to carry on his deeds. He does not feel guilty at all. This feeling of pleasure is sharpened when he observes his portrait: "*the very sharpness*

of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul." (p.283) The dandy is often placed "*at the center of debates about the history of the homosexual in the West, the history of modern culture, and the role of the queer in constructions of modern identity*."[237] This modern identity is often related to an aestheticised world, one which retreats from socio-political and economic concerns.

The "*notion of dandyism as a protest against modern industrial capitalism*"[238] is shown in the character of Dorian Gray in such a way as he withdraws himself from all kinds of social activity. When he is introduced at the beginning of the novel, we know that he is a philanthropist; but under the influence of Lord Henry, he devotes his life to the study of music, perfume, literature, and going to theatre. As the narrator says,

> *in his search for sensations that would be at once new and delightful, and possess that element of strangeness that is so essential to romance, he would often adopt certain modes of thought that he knew to be really alien to his nature, abandon himself to their subtle influences, and then, having, as it were, caught their color and satisfied his intellectual curiosity, leave them with that curious indifference that is not incompatible with a real ardor of temperament, […]*(p.280)

Raymond Williams views that the relationship between the dominant social order and the excluded social (human) area is by no means a contradictory one, and what matters about emergent culture is to find "*new forms or adaptations of form.*"[239] Wilde's dissident Aestheticism is a new adapted form and a subversive cultural practice which employs dandyism as an instance of what Williams calls "*the liberal conscience against society*"[240]; in other words, it is a revolt against the established order and against the moral theory of Utilitarianism. As a decadent novel, *The picture of Dorian Gray* presents a particular kind of everyday life, one which is at odds with middle-class domestic ideology.

As a dandy-aesthete, moreover, Dorian rejects the ethos of work and respectability that define middle-class masculinity. He never enters, finds, or even contemplates a profession, never marries, never has children, and never establishes a proper middle-class home; his relationships with women often end tragically; rather, he lives a life of extravagance and luxury, eschewing everything that the middle-class values.

The emergence of the asexual dandy as an alternative to the strict Victorian sex role stereotypes questions and stratifies identity in late Victorian decadent society. In fact, the personality of Dorian Gray is split into two: the body and the soul, or the outside/appearance

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[237] Elisa Glick. "The Dialectics of Dandyism," in *Cultural Critique*. No. 48, Spring, 2001.p.129.
[238] Ibid., p.131.
[239] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit., p.126.
[240] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Verso Editions, 1979.p.101.

and the inside reality. The conflict lies in the fact that the apparent respectability of Dorian's life is threatened from his inside, by the inner contradictions and tensions that Dorian seeks to conceal behind the mask of beauty. What is said of Dorian is also applicable to his society. Dorian is a decadent protagonist who represents a decadent social class. This class tries to hide the contradictions which its members embody and endure behind the mask of art and respectability. What Wilde warns against, in this context, is the danger of deceitful appearance by denouncing the shallowness and hypocrisy of the Victorian. However, such a behaviour is doomed to fail tragically because, as Stephen Greenblatt puts it, "*an attempt to stabilize the order of things may turn out to subvert it*"[241] and "*subversiveness is the very product of that power*"[242]. This means that while Dorian attempts to stabilize the order of things in his society—through his outward morality and respectability—this attempt turns out to be a subversive force which unveils his hypocrisy. In this context, Wilde suggests that the ultimate goal of liberating the soul from the Victorian constraints should not be done excessively but harmoniously. In other words, to achieve self-perfection, there should be harmony between the needs of Ethics and those of Aesthetics.

In her article entitled "The Dialectics of Dandyism," Elisa Glick argues that "*the dandy emerges out of the historical contradictions of capitalism—in particular, the opposition between outward appearance and inner essence*."[243] Dorian's outward appearance is fascinating. Even when he commits sinful acts, people do not believe such rumours about him; as Basil explains to him:

> *Of course you have your position, and your wealth, and all that kind of thing. But position and wealth are not everything. Mind you, I don't believe these rumors at all. At least, I can't believe them when I see you. Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk of secret vices. There are no such things as secret vices. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even.* (p.308)

Basil Hallward speaks from a Victorian perspective to show that society does not allow such a person with a bad reputation to escape punishment. He is sure that if Dorian were as destructive as his reputation goes, he would have changed physically; but since Dorian is still beautiful, Basil cannot believe what he has heard. However, Basil doubts the reality of Dorian's soul, a reality which he discovers the moment he sees the portrait. He discovers the reality of Dorian's soul, that it is corrupt, bad, and sinful.

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[241] *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Op.cit.,p.182.
[242] Stephen Greenblatt. 'Resonance and Wonder' (1990), p.75, quoted in Hans Bertens. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Routledge. p.182.
[243] The Dialectics of Dandyism". Op.cit., p.129.

If we think of masculinity as being constrained by traditional domestic ideology, Dorian's characterization shows no sign of this kind. He frees himself from social obligations in that he is no longer the philanthropist he used to be. He also frees himself from morality and religion. He is also a dandy in his mannerisms and fastidious dress. The narrator describes him on one occasion saying,

> *[he] dressed himself with even more than his usual attention, giving a good deal of care to the selection of his necktie and scarf-pin, and changing his rings more than once. He spent a long time over breakfast, tasting the various dishes, talking to his valet about some new liveries that he was thinking of getting made for the servants at Selby*. (p.323)

Wilde presents Dorian as "*a privileged figure in the development of modern cultural forms*."[244] We notice this in the narrator's speech, "*[Dorian] sought to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles and find in the spiritualizing of the senses its highest realization*." (p.285)

In this respect, Wilde's theory of Hedonism claims to be positive and healthier than traditional Victorian Ethical views which preach self-sacrifice and self-denial. Wilde believes that one should not deny himself; rather one should experience as much as he can in order to develop. He believes that self-development is the development of one's intellectual, emotional and sensory powers. His promotion of Hedonism involves the celebration of beauty and joy and the frenzied pursuit of pleasure. This means, in fact, turning one's life into art, thus escaping the hypocritical and brutal or painful reality.

The theme of 'life through art' is a dominant one. Indeed, the first character whose life is turned into a work of art is Dorian Gray. Life to Dorian is "*the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation*" (p.100). Dorian does not reach this conclusion alone; it is Lord Henry who influences him with his Aesthetic doctrine. The latter is happy that he has successfully inspired Dorian's sense of beauty and curiosity. Still more important, he turns him into the aesthetic "*type of what the age is searching for*" (p.165). He is also quite satisfied that Dorian has never carved a statue or painted a picture, and has simply turned his own life into art because carving a stature and painting a picture reveals interest in life not in art, which again means a materialization of life.

One reason behind Dorian's leading of a life through art is, in our view, to prove Wilde's claim—in his preface to the novel—that "*all art is quite useless*" (p.139), which means that if there is a reason for one's existence it is for self-development not for social services. Dorian's attempt to turn his life into a work of art involves his rejection of ethics; as Wilde puts it, "*No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an*

[244] Ibid., p.130.

unpardonable mannerism of style." (p.139). when Sybil Vane died, Dorian had no ethical sympathy for her. In Wilde's view, Dorian is an artist in the sense that he paints his life according to the principles of Aestheticism and colours it with the ideals of New Hedonism. Thus, as an artist, Dorian has no ethics. There is no place for morality in his life; all he wants is the pursuit of new experiments which will fill him with joy and pleasure. Through the 'aestheticized' life of Dorian, Wilde implies that real art takes no part in moulding the social or moral aspects of society, nor should it. However, Dorian exaggerates in so doing because he loses all meaning of Ethics, sympathy in particular. Furthermore, the Aesthetic view of art (that it should be divorced from social, moral, and ideological imperatives) is not only reducible to art; it also concerns life itself. In this respect, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is an unconventional novel which foregrounds the philosophy of Aestheticism; yet Wilde also extends his Aesthetics to life itself, as is shown through the life of Dorian Gray.

Unlike Thomas Hardy who views life pessimistically, as not worth living, for the reasons we have provided in the previous chapter, Oscar Wilde believes that life is bearable with all its painful and tragic situations only when it is viewed as art. He means that an individual has to detach himself from life and its concerns. In his essay entitled "The Critic as Artist", he confirms this idea saying:

> *We might make ourselves spiritual by detaching ourselves from action, and become perfect by the rejection of energy. It has often seemed to me that Browning felt something of this. Shakespeare hurls Hamlet into active life, and makes him realize his mission by effort. Browning might have given us a Hamlet who would have realized his mission by thought. Incident and event were to him unreal or unmeaning. He made the soul the protagonist of life's tragedy, and looked on action as the one undramatic element of a play. […] He at least is safe. He has discovered how to live.*[245]

Living in a hostile and hypocritical society, Wilde, as the quotation above implies, has "discovered" a way of leading life without enduring its tragedies. Treating life as a work of art, where individuals are conceived as characters performing their roles, is a new way of escaping reality. Dorian, indeed, does not make a distinction between moral and immoral acts; all he looks for is acts which generate pleasure. In so doing, he embodies Wilde's doctrine.

The wilful replacement of life by art in this novel reaches a point of absurd artificiality, a characteristic of Decadent art, when Wilde shows Dorian in love with Sibyl Vane, a woman who is more like an incorporeal personification of art than a real woman. This

[245] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist", in Richard Aldington and Stanley Weintranb Ed. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. London: Penguin Books, 1974. pp.107-108.

is what we notice in Mrs. Vane's relationship with her daughter. When Sibyl Vane says to her mother, "*I am so happy! And you must be happy too,*" (p.206) Mrs.Vane replies, "*Happy! I am only happy, Sibyl, when I see you act. You must not think of anything but your acting. Mr. Isaacs has been very good to us, and we owe him money.*" (ibid) This reply is important to consider because it reveals a disruption in family relationships. This mother is not able to share her daughter's happiness, and she restricts it in the role of actress. She does not view Sibyl as a "daughter" but as an actress whose role in life is only to act in order to secure money for their lodging. This family suffers from social problems to which society is indifferent. As a mode of production, Capitalism created poverty and homelessness, and rendered life difficult for the working class. The Vane family is one example which illustrates how painful life is under such conditions. Sibyl Vane is stereotyped in such a way as to be only an actress; thus it is her self-denial which mars her life. She lives only to be an actress, and the life of her family in the house of Mr. Isaacs (to whom they owe "*fifty pounds …a very large sum*" (p.207)) depends on her life as an actress. As long as she is an actress, she can survive; but if she thinks she can get married to Dorian, she may leave acting. It is in this context that we realize the effect of materialism on family relationships and on life in general.

It is not only Mrs. Vane who perceives the importance of Sibyl's life as an actress. Dorian also relates Sibyl to Art not to life. When he speaks about her, he always refers to her acting. He does not see her as a woman. This is what we observe in his dialogue with Lord Henry:

> "*Tonight she is Imogen,*" *[Dorian] answered,* "*and tomorrow night she will be Juliet.*"
> *"When is she Sibyl Vane? " [Asked Lord Henry]*
> "*Never.*"
> "*I congratulate you.*"
> "*She is all the great heroines of the world in one. She is more than an individual.*"(p.200)

Dorian tells Basil that he has seen her "in every age and in every costume" (p.196), and he finds her superior to ordinary women who are never fascinating because "*they are limited to their century. No glamour ever transfigures them*" (ibid). Sibyl is also an embodiment of Dorian's aesthetic imagination, as he describes her, "*I have been right, Basil, haven't I, to take my love out of poetry, and to find my wife in Shakespeare's plays? Lips that Shakespeare taught to speak have whispered their secret in my ear*" (pp.224-225). What affirms Dorian's 'aestheticized' view of Sibyl Vane is when he asks Lord Henry about the secret to make Sibyl love him not for the sake of mutual love but "*to make Romeo jealous*" (p.200) and to let "*the dead lovers of the world hear [their] laughter, and grow sad*" (ibid). Such a way of

conceiving things is also noticed in Lord Henry's speech about Sibyl Vane. After her death, he views her less than a real woman; he says to Dorian: "*mourn for Ophelia, if you like. Put ashes on your head because Cordelia was strangled. Cry out against Heaven because the daughter of Brabantio died. But don't waste your tears over Sibyl Vane. She was less real than they are*." (p.255)

This new mode of existence which is an attempt to turn life into art and to pursue new experiences and new sensations also includes evil, crime, and sin. Sin, in particular, seems to have a significant role in the philosophy of Hedonism as it may be transformed into an "*[element] of a new civilisation, more marvellous and more splendid than any that has gone before*."[246] Lord Henry encourages sinful acts in various instances. For example, he says to Basil Hallward, "*the costume of our day is detestable. It is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only colour-element left in modern life*." In this respect, Lord Henry attributes to sin a new meaning. He links it with life and progress. As Wilde writes:

> *What is termed Sin is an essential element of progress. Without it the world would stagnate, or grow old, or become colourless. By its curiosity Sin increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of individualism, it saves us from monotony of type. In its rejection of the current notions about morality, it is one with the higher ethics*. (p.75)

The same idea is explicated in his essay "The Critic as Artist": "*Ethics, like natural selection, make existence possible. Aesthetics, like sexual selection, make life lovely and wonderful, fill it with new forms, and give it progress, and variety and change*."[247] Wilde professes that the defence of the forbidden is an important characteristic of individualism. Explicating the purpose of his novel, Wilde says that it

> *deals with the exception and the individual. Good people, belonging as they do to the normal, and so, commonplace, type are artistically uninteresting. Bad people are, from the point of view of art, fascinating studies. They represent colour, variety, and strangeness. Good people exasperate one's reason; bad people stir one's imagination.*[248]

Dorian Gray is among the bad people who stir one's imagination. Lord Henry transforms him to a sinful man. Aestheticism is shown as a mask through which he uncovers the sordid truth to demonstrate "*how the apparent coherence of that order is threatened from the inside, by inner contradictions and by tensions that [society] seeks to hide*."[249] The hypocrisy of Dorian

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[246] Oscar Wilde quoted by Jim Manis, Ed. *Intentions* by Oscar Wilde. Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics Series, 2006.p.75.
[247] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist", in Jim Manis, Ed. *Intentions* by Oscar Wilde. Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classics Series, 2006.p.122.
[248] *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. Op.cit.,p.05.
[249] *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Op.cit., p.185.

is shown after he embraces the ideas of Aestheticism. The wish he makes to keep his physical beauty renders the portrait a living reminder of his sins and corruptions.

Dorian Gray's physical beauty also introduces another emergent and subversive theme in late Victorian society: "the love that dare not speak its name." The discourse which accompanies and highlights this theme is evidenced by Basil Hallward. It is subversive because it stratifies and displaces the traditional Victorian assumption of a romantic relationship between man and woman. What we observe in this novel is the characterization of Basil Hallward's feelings towards Dorian Gray.

Wilde's emergent ideas, thus, confirm Raymond Williams's argument that "*the dominant culture is never more than one player in the cultural field, even if it is by far the most powerful. There are always residual and emergent strains within a culture that offer alternatives to what Gramsci called the hegemony*."[250] In other words:

> *the dominant culture is always under pressure from alternative views and beliefs. So while cultural materialist analyses of literary texts bring to light how these texts are (inevitably conservative) instruments of a dominant socio-cultural order, they also demonstrate how the apparent coherence of that order is threatened from the inside, by inner contradictions and by tensions that it seeks to hide.*[251]

In the light of these quotations, we understand that Wilde's Aestheticism is the dissident element which subverts the dominant Victorian culture, by revising its ibeology and introducing a new mode of life. This is evident when the narrator says, "

> *It appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic*. (p.286)

This dominant characteristic of beauty dominates Dorian's life. He finds beauty in Sibyl Vane's death, in ruining his friends' lives, in being treated as a respectable man when he is a sinful, in killing Basil Hallward and destroying his corpse. Beauty here is to be found in immoral acts. It is one of the principles of New Hedonism which is

> *to re-create life, and to save it from harsh, uncomely Puritanism that is having […] its curious revival. It [is] to have its service of the intellect, certainly; it [is] never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience. Its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. Of the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to know nothing.* (p.286)

[250] Ibid., p.182
[251] Ibid.,p.182.

Aestheticism, in this respect, shapes a new culture, an alternative culture whose ideas show that the Victorian culture is not the only one in society. Dorian's life is full of such aestheticised existence. He does not live to serve society; he lives for his own pleasure.

Wilde's subversion of the dominant Victorian ideology through the principles of Aestheticism is signalled through the aesthetic life Dorian leads and the beliefs Lord Henry expresses. From a Cultural Materialist point of view, Aestheticism is an emergent aspect in the late Victorian society because its doctrines threaten the dominant Victorian ideology. Through Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism, we shall analyse the language of the characters in order to investigate the conflict between Aestheticism and Victorianism.

2. Dialogism of Art and Beauty

By ranking Aesthetics higher than Victorian Ethics, Wilde attempts to decentre and to decentralize the Victorian unitary language which states that Ethics is more important than Aesthetics. The Victorian official discourse which privileges the ethical and the didactic role of art is stratified in this novel. In his essay "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin argues that

> *The novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language—that is, that refuses to acknowledge its own language as the sole verbal and semantic center of the ideological world*.[252]

This is the same perception of language we find in Wilde's novel especially as regards the notions of art, beauty, and love. Indeed, these three concepts, as are displayed in this novel, create conflicting opinions. They are also "dialogised" in that they form multiple levels of meaning which make the novel polyphonic. The triangular relationship between Basil Hallward, Dorian Gray, and Lord Henry Wotton is of an utmost importance as concerns the truth of Ethics and Aesthetics. The subject matter of the dialogues of these three characters deals mostly with the aim of one's existence; the meaning and the significance of art, beauty, pleasure, love, influence, and sin; morality, immorality, self-denial, and self-development. These issues, indeed, are the most debatable; they unravel the Victorian discourse in such a way as to show that the latter is subject to change and that individuals are in need to go beyond the prevailing Victorian standards of Ethics and Aesthetics. In this respect, Wilde's incorporation of the emergent Aestheticism constitutes a centripetal force whose aim is to subvert, question, and unravel the Victorian ethos. This is a way to say that an individual should be allowed to "experiment" another possible truth as long as the dominant one does not serve progress.

[252] Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (1981). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. (17th paper back print) p.366.

With reference to the novel, we notice that the plot itself is organised in such a way as to expose "*social languages and ideologies, the exhibiting and experiencing of such languages: the experience of a discourse, a world view and an ideologically based act.*"[253] Lord Henry exposes his social language in the light of the philosophy of Aestheticism, but he does not experience it himself, as Basil tells him, "*you never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose.*"(p.144) Lord Henry's discourse calls for self-development—that is the realization of one's nature perfectly—through the pursuit of new sensations. The exhibition and the experience of Lord Henry's philosophy of New Hedonism are demonstrated by Dorian Gray. Lord Henry, in fact, makes of Dorian an "*experimental method*" (p.205) to answer the question Wilde asked in the novel: "*Was the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or was the body really in the soul*?" (p.204)

Wilde's theme of duplicity also is intended to dialogize the idea of art and beauty. Dorian is outwardly beautiful, young, and charming; yet inwardly he is sinful, old, and corrupt. He is careless in his social interactions and intellectual interests, while he is extremely consistent in appearance. This is what he reveals when he says, "*I love beautiful things that one can touch and handle*." (ch.vii) In this way, Wilde refers to the Victorian society which he esteems to be superficially and apparently ideal while decadent and corrupt essentially. Wilde's social commentaries in the novel spring from this theme of duplicity. Because Dorian looks beautiful, people in his society believe that he is good. Goodness in this sense is related to beauty, not any beauty but a superficial one. In this context, Wilde believes that it is socially wrong to judge individuals on account of their superficial beauty because it is such a judgment which leads Dorian to further his sinful acts. People in society tend more to believe what they see rather than what they hear. As a member of the late Victorian society, Basil Hallward proves this traditional social behaviour when he says to Dorian "*Mind you, I don't believe these rumors at all. At least, I can't believe them when I see you […] with your pure, bright, innocent face, and your marvellous untroubled youth,—I can't believe anything against you*." (194-195). Thus we deduce that the social response to Dorian's behaviour is one of Wilde's ways to highlight the superficiality of the late Victorian society. He also sheds light on the split between soul and body, between essence and appearance; a split which engenders an ugly reality and a false ideality; as Basil puts it: "*[the] harmony of soul and body,—how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is bestial, an ideality that is void*."

[253] Ibid., p.365.

The conflict between Basil Hallward and Lord Henry at the beginning of the novel over Dorian Gray is about how to best preserve one's good status in the public eye. While Basil contends that bad influence makes one lose public respect, Lord Henry argues that "*all influence is immoral*". Basil Hallward's warning of Lord Henry to leave Dorian Gray alone is done as a way through which he can preserve his new way of painting as suggested to him by the beautiful character of Dorian. The new art Basil discovers represents a refuge to escape reality. This is what we notice when he says to Lord Henry:

> *He has a simple and a beautiful nature…. Don't spoil him for me. Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. … Don't take away from me the one person that makes life absolutely lovely to me, and that gives to my art whatever wonder or charm it possesses***.** (p.155)

Lord Henry's opinion about how to preserve a good status in society stands opposite Basil's because Lord Henry believes that "*pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about*" (ibid). The presence of the theory of "New Hedonism", as presented through Lord Henry, in late Victorian era indicates that "*the dominant culture is never more than one player in the cultural field, even if it is by far the most powerful. There are always residual and emergent strains within a culture that offer alternatives to what Gramsci called the hegemony*."[254] The doctrines of "New Hedonism" whose main statement refers to the pursuit of pleasure as life's greatest aim , as uttered by Lord Henry and practiced by Dorian, are a new way through which one can escape the harsh and painful Victorian realities. Dorian escapes punishment and avoids the feelings of suffering of the death of Sibyl Vane by putting into practice the philosophy of Aestheticism. He even thinks that he reaches self-development and self-improvement in his pursuit of new sensations. This is what he says to Basil Hallward:

> *To become the spectator of one's own life, as Harry says, is to escape the suffering of life. I know you are surprised at my talking to you like this. You have not realized how I have developed. I was a school-boy when you knew me. I am a man now. I have new passions, new thoughts, new ideas. I am different, but you must not like me less.*

Throughout this experimental method, Dorian Gray does not only liberate his repressed desires but also witnesses a conflict within himself. This is why we argue that the dialogical nature of Wilde's novel implies struggle between the principles of Aestheticism and those of Victorianism. As emergent, thus new, ideas, Wilde's Aestheticism forms a counter-hegemony. The reason why Wilde incorporates such challenging ideas stem from his belief that the Victorian ideals are false ones. This is what he expresses through the voices of Lord Henry and Dorian Gray; voices which permit heteroglossia to enter the novel. Wilde's

[254] Hans Bertens. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. Routledge. (place and date of publication are unknown).p.185.

oppositional views as regards the notions of art and beauty create a conflict between aesthetic views and the Victorian cultural system.

The conflict we witness between Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, and Lord Henry Wotton is a conflict between world views, as Bakhtin says "*a particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world*."[255] The novel genre for Bakhtin represents a very important element in life because the conflict it highlights is not a conflict of fictional characters; the matter transcends this area to mean life itself. For Bakhtin, "*the novel is the representation of the life of the utterance, of discourse. It depicts the drama of discourses conflicting with discourses, of their struggle to assimilate, argue with, parody, stylise, corroborate, make conditional, report, frame, or deliberately ignore each other.*"[256]

Dorian Gray's mode of life, in particular, is subject to conflicting views. He himself witnesses this conflict and he expresses it on many occasions. He is aware of the impact of Lord Henry's philosophy of Aestheticism, but he cannot withdraw from it. His discourse, in particular, represents the drama of the Aesthetic and Victorian cultural system. The Aesthetic discourse either parodies or deliberately ignores the Victorian official discourse. For instance, among the significant discursive conflicts in the novel is that between Dorian Gray and Basil Hallward.

Bakhtin sees the hero of a dialogic novel as "*a receptor of many points of view, who takes a restless, argumentative position toward the world, and is not a self-enclosed social type*."[257] This is applicable for Dorian Gray because he receives many points of view concerning beauty as an aesthetic value from Lord Henry; points of view which alter his aristocratic beliefs and values but also which create a conflict within himself. For instance, as an Aesthete, Dorian detaches himself from real life, which is only ugly, and finds a kind of artistic beauty in the art of Sibyl Vane (as a heroine in Shakespearean plays). When she acts badly, he deserts her and treats her cruelly saying to her, "*Without your art, you are nothing*." (p.237)

Though Dorian manages to detach himself from the consequences of Sibyl Vane's death, his cruelty and indifference towards Sibyl Vane is shown through the portrait for "*every sin that he [commits], a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness*." (p.242) It is at this moment that he decides to reform his cruel behaviour towards Sibyl Vane; as the narrator says,

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[255] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M.Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.333.
[256] Prabhakara Jha. "Lukacs or Bakhtin? Some Preliminary Considerations toward a Sociology of the Novel", in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 18, No. 31 (Jul. 30, 1983).p.41.
[257] Ann Rosalind Jones. "Inside the Outsider: Nashe's Unfortunate Traveller and Bakhtin's Polyphonic Novel", in *ELH*. Vol. 50, No. 1. Spring, 1983. p.69.

> *He would resist temptation. He would not see Lord Henry any more,—would not, at any rate, listen to those subtle poisonous theories that in Basil Hallward's garden had first stirred within him the passion for impossible things. He would go back to Sibyl Vane, make her amends, marry her, try to love her again. Yes, it was his duty to do so. […] it was better to let Lord Henry in, and to explain to him the new life he was going to lead, to quarrel with him if it became necessary to quarrel, to part if parting was inevitable.* (pp.242,247)

Dorian Gray is not satisfied with what he has done to Sibyl Vane, this is why we notice his conflicting ideas of Victorianism and Aestheticism; he refers to Aestheticism as a poisonous theory and refuses to listen to Lord Henry: "*I know what conscience is, to begin with. It is not what you have told me it was. It is the divinest thing in us. […] I want to be good. I can't bear the idea of my soul being hideous*." (p.248) Lord Henry considers this idea "*a very charming artistic basis for ethics*." (p.248) Dorian's conflicting ideas, however, do not last long because the centrifugal force of Lord Henry's Aestheticism interfere to save Dorian from blaming himself. As Wilde believes, "*No artist has ethical sympathy. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style*."(p.139)

In this context, Lord Henry convinces Dorian that Sibyl Vane's death is an accident in which he "*must not get [himself] mixed up*." (p.249) He transforms this tragic accident to "*a wonderful ending to a wonderful play*" (p.252). The language used here is a means to overcome the sense of suffering and pain. This language shows Dorian's detachment from life by assuming the pose of a spectator, as Lord Henry explains to him:

> *Sometimes, a tragedy that has artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthralls us. In the present case, what is it that has really happened? Some one has killed herself for love of you.* (p.252)

With his witticism, thus, Lord Henry manages to displace Dorian from an active agent of Sibyl Vane's tragedy to a passive spectator who is pleased by such an experience. His social voice contributes to silence Dorian's ethical sympathy. In this perspective, one feature which characterises the language of Lord Henry is what Bakhtin calls "*refraction*"[258] He calls for an Aesthetic perception not only of art but of life itself by means of refracting (rejecting or parodying) the Victorian ideology. His subversive discourse on ethical and aesthetic issues forms a centrifugal force which Dorian Gray holds against the prevailing ideology. As an incorporated language, Aestheticism forms a "socio-ideological belief system,"[259] which is

[258] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.432.
[259] Ibid.,p.311.

utilised to refract Dorian's ethical sympathies so as to detach himself from moral concerns. A reading of Aestheticism from the Bakhtinian lenses classes it in the rank of a centrifugal linguistic force whose task is to unmask the Victorian belief system and to destroy it "*as something false, hypocritical, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, and inadequate to reality.*"[260] This is, in fact, what Lord Henry means by the ideal of New Hedonism which celebrates an aesthetic life (as we have shown previously).

In Bakhtin's argument, furthermore, "*the novel is the maximally complete register of all social voices of the era.*"**[261]** In our opinion, the position of Wilde himself is ambiguous. Lord Henry cannot be taken simply as Wilde's mouthpiece; in the same line, Dorian and Basil Hallward reveal aspects of Wilde's psyche. His voice is not heard in one specific character but in three characters, as Richard Aldington writes: "*Lord Henry Wotton is Wilde as he hoped to remain, Dorian Gray as he feared he might become*"**[262]** The same idea is written by Richard Ellmann who quotes Wilde saying: "*Basil Hallward is what I think I am, Lord Henry what the world thinks me, Dorian is what I would like to be in other ages perhaps*"**[263]** Wilde has a critical tendency towards the Victorian ethos. His critiques are illustrated mainly through Lord Henry and Dorian Gray. Since he considers the critic as artist, so we can also consider these two characters as artists. Their dialogues express Wilde's opposing critical views. This is what we notice in the dialogues between the three characters: Lord Henry, Dorian Gray, and Basil Hallward. "*the characters in the dialogue are masks, objectifications of different intellectual possibilities present in Wilde himself.*"[264] Thus Wilde is not to be identified with Lord Henry, Dorian Gray, or Basil Hallward. Rather, these three characters are masks for modes of thought attractive to Wilde.

Lord Henry, the true voice of cynicism, plays an important role in registering Wilde's subversive discursive position towards the late Victorian social standards. When he says that one's aim in society is self-fulfilment, he marks a reorientation of the Victorian conception of one's aim in life (i.e. to serve society). Lord Henry's voice is significant because, as Basil Hallward tells him, he never says a moral thing. His immorality thus transgresses the moral social laws and constitutes what Bakhtin's terms "*novelness*", a "*novelness [which] invades privileged discourse" and shows that "boundaries between [one's language and another's*

[260]Ibid., p.311.
[261] Ibid.,p.430.
[262] Richard Aldington and Stanley Weintraub, Eds. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.p.32.
[263] Richard Ellmann. *Oscar Wilde*. London: Penguin Books, 1987.p.301.
[264]Herbert Sussman. "Criticism as Art: Form in Oscar Wilde's Critical Writings", in *Studies in Philology*. Vol. 70, No. 1. Jan., 1973.pp.111-112.

language] are violated"[265] Lord Henry's dissent is initiated in his speech with Dorian Gray at the beginning of the novel. His presentation of the philosophy of Aestheticism or the ideals of New Hedonism represents instances of his counter-discourse which strive for social significance. The latter is given a social space through what Lord Henry considers as "*scientific experiment*." (p...), he makes life a scene where he experiments his Hedonistic ideas, and of course Dorian Gray is the object of such a task; as the narrator says, "*it [is] clear to him that the experimental method [is] the only method by which one could arrive at any scientific analysis of the passions; and certainly Dorian Gray [is] a subject made to his hand, and seem[s] to promise rich and fruitful results*." (p.205)

The publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* allows Wilde to parody the various domestic models that made up the ideal Victorian home, and it permits him to enter into the middle-class discourse of the family literary magazine to subvert it. According to Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism, Wilde's subversion of the Victorian domestic ideology has dialogical undertones. In his "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin writes

> *when an aesthete undertakes to write a novel, his aestheticism is not revealed in the novel's formal construction, but exclusively in the fact that in the novel there is represented a speaking person who happens to be an ideologue for aestheticism, who exposes convictions that then are subjected in the novel to contest. Of such a sort is Oscar Wilde's* <u>*The Picture of Dorian Gray*</u> [266]

Lord Henry criticises the ailment of modern civilization in forbidding adequate fulfilment of instinctual impulses and bodily sensations:

> *But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, for desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful.* (p.20).

From this quotation, Lord Henry explains that it is the "*monstrous laws*" of the self-criticising soul or the internalised cultural prohibitions that make us afraid of our desires. Thus Wilde stresses his critical view that civilization in the Victorian society is involved with repression of the individual's desires. Dorian's rethinks civilization and believes that "*Society, civilized society at least, [...] feels instinctively that manners are of more importance than morals, and the highest respectability is of less value in its opinion than the possession of a good chef*."

[265] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit.,p.431.
[266] Ibid.,p.333.

(p.182) This idea of considering manners as more important than morals stratifies the Victorian belief system which favours morals over aesthetics because it denies the beauty of the soul and focuses on the superficial beauty; as Basil Hallward expresses it, "*with an evening coat and a white tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stock-broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized*." (p.145) In this respect, if the language of Aestheticism de-centres the Victorian unitary language, as far as ethics and aesthetics are concerned, it is to show its limits and to liberate it. In the later part of the novel, especially when Dorian becomes dominated by the "passion of sin" or the fervour for deviance against societal and cultural restrictions, he seems to follow the irresistible call of his unconscious. At such moments, as indicated in the above quotation, Dorian Gray loses his freedom of will. If Dorian keeps his conscience it is "*to give rebellion its fascination, and disobedience its charm*" (p.146).

Another form of discourse which is found in this novel is the discourse of the dandy, which is a counter-discourse to the official discourse of domestic codes. The decadence of Dorian Gray is a decadence of influence where the multiplicity of personalities lead to an evacuation, and eventual destruction, of a model of unitary and stable subjectivity. Holbrook Jackson offers a list of the chief characteristics of Decadence which are, "*perversity, artificiality, egoism, and curiosity*."[267] Dorian misidentifies himself with the Victorian society, which is a sign of iconoclastic individualism. Dorian's aesthetic individualism opposes the domestic dominant ideology of his society in that he represents a subversive male identity. He refracts the Victorian privileged male identity which favours materialism. He centres his life in the search for new sensations, in fact, "*no theory of life seem[s] to him to be of any importance compared with life itself. He [feels] keenly conscious of how barren all intellectual speculation is when separated from action and experiment. He [knows] that the senses, no less than the soul, have their mysteries to reveal*." (p.160) For instance, in his study of perfumes, he realises that there is no mood of the mind that has not its counterpart in the sensuous life. The pursuit of these moods colours Dorian's life and violates "*the socio-ideological cultural horizons*"[268] in the sense that Dorian's aesthetic existence violates the Victorian mode of life.

As a dandy and as an aesthete, Dorian Gray is an ideologue of Aestheticism. His words are "*ideologemes*" which advance arguments against the Victorian hegemony. His speech and acts reveal his subversive aesthetic ideas which introduce diversity of opinions about the nature of art and the artist. To Wilde, "*man was a being with myriad lives and*

[267] Holbrook Jackson. *The Eighteen Nineties* (1913). Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950 .p.62.
[268] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit.,p.299.

myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion"(p.183) Dorian's wild desire to know everything about life paves the way to heteroglot view points and creates a conflict between his subversive views and those of the dominant social system. This conflict is noticed in the dialogues between Dorian Gray and Lord Henry or Dorian Gray and Basil Hallward.

For instance, when Basil Hallward attempts to help Dorian clean his reputation, his voice sounds Victorian. This phase introduces a clash between Victorian morality, law, and religion, and the new aesthetic views about beauty, youth, and pleasure. The bourgeois ideology denies many repressed impulses and punishes severely those who transgress its laws. Social punishment and restraining laws, however, do not indicate that the repressed desires have gone away; rather, they remain in the unconscious. In the case of Dorian Gray, it produces a split individual who leads a double life. This is why the Victorian domestic ideology is threatened by these very impulses that it seeks to repress. For this reason, Dorian Gray is afraid that someone will discover the shameful secret of his life. Though Basil calls him to repent, he feels that it is too late to do that.

Basil's dialogue near the end of the novel represents the social voice, the religious voice in particular, in the sense that it attempts to redeem Dorian's sins. When Basil discovers the hidden reality of Dorian Gray, he tries to save him from a tragic end and social punishment. This is evidenced when he says to him:

> *Pray, Dorian, pray. […] What is it that one was taught to say in one's boyhood? 'Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities.' Let us say that together. The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also.* (p.317)

However, Dorian replies that these words mean nothing to him; and when "*the mad passion of a hunted animal stir[s] within him*" (p.317), he stabs Basil to death and orders his friend Allen Campbell to destroy Basil's corps so that no one would discover his crime. Killing Basil is an attempt to silence and get rid of the Victorian religious discourse. Basil's attempt to redeem Dorian's life, as a way of getting things under control, is an attempt to re-centre and re-unify the Victorian discourse. However, Dorian remains haunted by another voice. It is that of the picture. It is true that it does not speak, but Dorian can read its expressions "*like the painting of a sorrow, a face without a heart*" (p.381). The picture is more vivid than himself because, as he thinks, "art has a soul, but man has not" (p.381). Indeed, it is this picture which reveals him the reality of his corrupt and rotten soul. He discovers that the meaning of beauty does not only lie on the superficial level. Once again, he refuses repentance and decides to destroy the painting as he has destroyed the painter Basil. But this time, destruction falls on him

instead of the picture; thus he could not silence the "voice" of the picture as it is the voice of truth.

The iconoclastic discourse is achieved through linguistic and ideological subversions as we have already shown in the instances of subversion of morality, of moral laws, of the ideological views, and of other matters in society. The discourse of aestheticism (which represents the ideas of aestheticism) in this novel constitutes a challenge to the dominant Victorian discourse because it subverts it and displaces its hegemony since its basis is questioned. Dorian's, as well as Lord Henry's, subversive counter-discourse constitutes an alternative system through which the dominant discourse is destabilized. This confirms the cultural materialist assumption that "*all power is fragile [and] subject to undermining by dissident elements within a society*". Thus the subversive counter-discourse defines well Wilde's efforts to construct his mode of aestheticism which misidentifies itself from the Victorian mode, and to formulate a crucial difference against the established Victorian identity. Thus Wilde breaks the closeness of the Victorian discourse of morality and of the morality attributed to art. Indeed, by writing a novel about the decadent Victorian society, Wilde breaks one Victorian literary convention. The result of the conflict between Aestheticism and Victorianism is to be shown in the light of Raymond Williams's modern tragedy as follows.

3. Containing Subversion and Tragic Ethical /Aesthetic Disruptions

Now that we have shown the conflict between the dominant Victorianism and the emergent Aestheticism, we shall show the different tragic disruptions, question Dorian's status as a modern tragic hero and whether he can be identified as an "*homme fatale*", and point out the containment of subversive aspects.

Oscar Wilde proposes a disruption of normative sexual identities which is a challenge that displaces bourgeois notions of the sexual identity. When the artist treats art as a separate element of life, a kind of fragmentation and alienation occurs between the class of the artists and the rest of society. In this respect, it is worth to remember that Raymond Williams says that the most characteristic feature of modern tragedy is "*the division between society and the individual*"[269] The individual in this case is the artist who is marginalised due to his artistic transgressions and his refusal to "*accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience*."[270]

[269] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*.p.
[270] *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms.* Op.cit., p.2.

The modern tragedy we refer to here is that of Dorian Gray. He is a tragic protagonist whose definition fits that of Raymond Williams who says that "*[t]he tragic hero is not a man caught in some universal pattern, but at odds with his society and its particular moral laws*."[271] Dorian Gray is at odds with the material world which shapes his fate and makes him behave according to its laws. He gives up his job as a philanthropist as he does not want to be among the people who "*imagine that money is everything*." (p.175) Dorian refuses self-denial; he wants to be the master of his own life, as he says, "*It is only shallow people who require years to get rid of an emotion. A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure. I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them.*" (p.263) As an artist-rebel, Wilde is known for his celebration of the socially forbidden as shown through the character of Dorian who makes "*sin so marvellous and evil so full of wonder*." (p.186) Lord Henry fills him "*with a wild desire to know everything about life*" (p.55) However, Dorian's excessive belief in the doctrine of Aestheticism leads him to his tragic end. His life is full of moments when he witnesses a terrible clash between his desire to free himself from Victorian social laws and his excessive acceptance of the ideal of New Hedonism. He believes strongly in the idea of self-development; a sense of progress which he argues should be different from the prevailing one, as Lord Henry explains, "*whatever was good enough for our fathers is not good enough for us. In art, as in politics, les grands pères ont toujours tort. "* (p.195)

One of the main concerns of Wilde in this novel is with morality, though he claimed that art should not treat moral issues. His reference to morality does not aim at supporting it but to show its limits and to subvert it. Dorian's dandyism and aesthetic existence make of him a tragic hero who transgresses the moral laws of his society and leads a life which is fascinated with sin, crime, and evil. The tragedy, incarnated by Dorian, occurs at the moment when the friction between the focus of society's conservatism and his Liberalism reaches a breaking point; hence, the tragic disruptions. In the following analysis, we shall present many instances which qualify Dorian Gray as a modern tragic hero:

> *The modern hero in social tragedy, is characteristically a man who rebels against some law, in any of its possible forms: the heroism lies in the rebellion, and is vindicated even in defeat. In some work, further, the rebellion is generalized, in terms of alternative values and laws: the liberal hero as liberator.* [272]

The modern heroism of Dorian Gray is shown through his rebellion against the criterion of art as assumed by Victorian society. Under the influence of Aestheticism, he

[271] Raymond Williams. *The Long Revolution*. London: Pelican Books, 1961.p.292.
[272] Ibid., p.293.

believes that art should be separated from life, thus the artist is also to be separated from life and becomes a critic. In his essay "The Critic as Artist", Wilde argues that "*we might make ourselves spiritual by detaching ourselves from action, and become perfect by the rejection of energy.*"[273] In this respect, Wilde claims that thought should be separated from action because it is "*degraded by its constant association with practice.*"[274] The reality of tragic disruptions is presented through Dorian Gray's different relationships. For instance, he is fatal to all those he knows except to Lord Henry because the latter's Aestheticism is simply a pose. As we have stated before, Dorian contributes to ruin the lives of his friends, to lead Sibyl Vane and Alan Campbell to commit suicide, and to kill his friend Basil Hallward. The first remarkable tragic disruption is shown in the relationship of Dorian with Sibyl Vane.

As a Shakespearean figure, Sibyl Vane represents a fine art for Dorian because it is an art which is delightful to consider; this is what he says about her acting: "*She is simply a born artist. I sat in the dingy box absolutely enthralled. I forgot that I was in London and in the nineteenth century. I was away with my love in a forest that no man had ever seen.*" (p.224) We should remind the reader of Wilde's claim in the preface of this novel that "*the artist is the creator of beautiful things*" and that "*to reveal art and to conceal the artist is art's aim.*" (p.138) These two principles of Aestheticism are represented by Sibyl Vane before she loves Dorian Gray. In Dorian's opinion, Sibyl Vane is an artist who creates beautiful scenes to appreciate, "*she has not merely art, consummate art instinct, in her, but she has personality also; and it is personalities, not principles, that move the age.*" (p.201) She also fulfils art's aim in that she reveals her artistic capacities in performing different Shakespearean heroines; when she expresses love, she does not reveal herself but the Shakespearean character. Consequently, Dorian loves Sibyl Vane the actress, not the real woman. However, the night when she fails to act as marvellously as she used to, Dorian leaves her and displaces her from a "*genius*" (p.201) to "*a third-rate actress with a pretty face.*"(p.237) and from "*a great artist*" to "*merely a commonplace, mediocre actress*" (p.233) It is Dorian's aestheticised view of life which makes him behave inhumanly with Sibyl Vane. Both of these characters' view of love in life and art interact and clash with each other. As a successful actress, Sibyl Vane represents beauty and pleasure for Dorian; but "*without [her] art, [she is] nothing*" (p.237) She also stirs his imagination and curiosity in that he goes to see her act every night. He is interested in her because she is a Hedonistic model about which Lord Henry spoke once.

[273]Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist," in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. Op.cit., p.107.
[274] Ibid., p.108.

As a Hedonistic figure, she gives "*form to every feeling, expression to every thought, and reality to every dream*" [275](p.159) Feeling, thought, and dream are to Dorian new materials through which he manifests his critical spirit. In "The Critic as Artist," the interlocutor Gilbert expresses this idea saying, "*For who is the true critic but he who bears within himself the dreams, and ideas, and feelings of myriad generations, and to whom no form of thought is alien, no emotional impulse obscure*?"[276] When Sibyl Vane shifts from the sphere of art to the sphere of life, she commits suicide. Lord Henry explains her tragic end saying, "*The moment she touched actual life, she marred it, and it marred her, and so she passed away*." (p.255), while Dorian says, "*she acted badly because she has known the reality of love. When she knew its unreality, she died*." (p.262) Both these explanations refer to the clash between art and life; Sibyl Vane's life could have been saved, probably, if she really lived as an actress. This is why Wilde asserts that art should be separated from the concerns of life. Sibyl Vane's feeling of love, in this context, is a tragic sentiment because when she liberates it from the prison of theatre it brings tragedy down on her; as Horace M. Kallen states it, "*the tragic sentiment has been liberated, and will attach itself to any excellence of life whatever, involved in disharmony and going down to destruction*."[277] As a Victorian ethical value, love—that should unite Sibyl Vane and Dorian—is shown as a destructive value because Dorian Gray stratifies its meaning and aestheticises it. For him, love is found only in art, not in life; this is what we notice when he says to Lord Henry, "*I don't think I am likely to marry, Harry. I am too much in love […] with an actress*." (pp191-192) He is in love with "an actress", why didn't he say "with a woman called Sibyl Vane"? This, again, proves that when she ceases to be an actress, from Dorian's point of view, he ceases to love her; as he tells her:

> *You have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect. I loved you because you were wonderful, because you had genius and intellect, because you realized the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid*. (pp.236-237)

Dorian's search for beauty is an escape from reality; this is why when he sees an ugly side in Sibyl Vane, he dismisses her as quickly as he falls in love. One of Lord Henry's secrets of life is "*to cure the soul by means of the senses*" (p.162) This is what Dorian Gray seeks to do when he goes to every night to see Dorian Gray acting. He wants to cure his soul by means of two senses in this context: sight and hearing; as he says: "*she was the loveliest thing I have*

[275] Sibyl Vane gives a beautiful form to the feeling of love which is expressed by the different heroines she acts like; she also gives expression to the different thought which accompany the plot of the play; equally, she gives reality to Lord Henry's typical Hedonistic figure and fulfils Dorian's aim in providing a new mood of beauty and joy.

[276] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist," in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. Op.cit., p.107.

[277] Horace M. Kallen. "The Essence of Tragedy," in International Journal of Ethics. Vol.22, No.2. jan., 1912.p.194.

ever seen in my life, […] that beauty could fill [my] eyes with tears.[…] I have seen her in every age and in every costume. […] And her voice—I never heard such a voice. […] you know how a voice can stir one" (p.195-196) However, when Dorian sees her as a real woman and hears her voice that is an echo of the life he sought to run from, he rejects her. His experience to cure his soul ends at this moment because his spirit ceases to be in harmony with Sibyl Vane's art. This is what Wilde claims in his essay:

> *Life! Life! Don't let us go to life for our fulfilment or our experience. It is a thing narrowed by circumstances, incoherent in its utterance, and without that fine correspondence of form and spirit which is the only thing that can satisfy the artistic and critical temperament.*[278]

Dorian also considers Sibyl Vane's death a kind of beauty: "*It has all the terrible beauty of a great tragedy, a tragedy in which I took part, but by which I have not been wounded*." (p.252) But is there really beauty in tragedy?! What is it that Dorian sees as beautiful in Sibyl Vane's tragic death? Does the word beauty have a new meaning other than the one which is commonly known? It is Lord Henry who provides an answer to this question when he says,

> *Sometimes, however, a tragedy that has artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. […] In the present case, what is it that has really happened? Some one has killed herself for love of you. I wish I had ever had such an experience. It would have made me in love with love for the rest of my life. […] You are more fortunate than I am. I assure you, Dorian, that not one of the women I have known would have done for me what Sibyl Vane did for you*. (pp.252-253)

What is beautiful in Sibyl Vane's tragedy is that she died for such a noble feeling as love; this is why Dorian Gray thinks of her "*as a wonderful tragic figure sent on to the world's stage to show the supreme reality of love*." (p.257) Sibyl Vane, thus, represented beauty in her life and even in her death. Wilde refers to ugly meanings which are found in beautiful things and to beautiful meanings which are found in beautiful things. (p.138) But he says nothing about beautiful meanings which are found in beautiful things. In our view, the beauty which is associated with her death is a beautiful meaning which is found in an ugly thing as tragedy.

Dorian and Sibyl Vane cannot exist in the same world. They are not made one for the other; they are destructive to each other. Through Raymond Williams's theory of modern tragedy, the death of Sibyl Vane lies in her aspiration to free herself from the artistic life she used to lead; as Williams puts it, "*aspiration is absolute, but occurs, paradoxically, within a*

[278] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist," in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. Op.cit., p.101.

situation of man on the run from himself"[279] Dorian runs from reality to art, while Sibyl Vane runs from herself (as an actress) in art to herself in reality; both are disappointed however. The difference in their situations is that Sibyl Vane ends her life in suicide while Dorian Gray transcends this tragedy by detaching himself as a spectator, not an actor. As Wilde says, "*one is always wounded when one approaches [life]*."[280] As an artist, Sibyl Vane approaches life when she puts too much of herself in her art; which is not to be done by an artist from Aestheticism's point of view: "*an artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them*" (pp.151-152)

There is also a sense of tragedy in the conflicting arguments of Sibyl Vane (the real woman, not the actress) and the Aesthete Dorian. "*One or the other must be the victim of the tragic conflict, […] a battle which both cannot survive*."[281] For Sibyl Vane, art is a reflection of reality, but for Dorian it is a beautiful refuge from life's pains. What we find as tragic in this context is the intensified sense of alienation of the individual. The critic as artist does not only alienate his art from the social concerns, but he also alienates himself when he takes life as an artistic scene. In this context, the individual deadens voluntarily his feelings in an attempt to escape life's tragedies: "*To become the spectator of one's own life, as Harry says, is to escape the suffering of life*." (p.263) In our opinion, Dorian Gray's Aestheticism does not constitute a refuge from the constraining morality which limits his freedom. In other words, as a spectator, Dorian Gray managed to escape from the suffering of life (as he has done when Sibyl Vane died), but what about his conscience? Was it possible for him to escape the haunting feelings and "*the terrible pleasure of a double life*"? (p.337)

Dorian's tragic impact on his friends is not a result of his embracing the philosophy of Aestheticism but of his excessive use of it as a radical theory of life, which results in degeneration and decadence instead of progress. This is shown, for instance, in his engagement in sexually deviant acts. Such acts correspond to a Decadent aesthetic doctrine and reflect a Decadent fascination for moral and sexual decay. Jean Pierrot explains the Decadent fascination with sexual deviance as an embracing of the "abnormal" within the so called "natural" world of sexuality:

> *Although it was impossible to reject sex absolutely, condemned though it was by its alliance with nature, at least one could continue to express contempt for nature by indulging in perversions of it. [. . .] Since the artificial alone has any value on the esthetic plane, and since morality condemns it, then once 'vice' has been chosen why not pursue it to its extremes?* [282]

[279] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.95.
[280] Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist," in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. Op.cit., p.95.
[281] Ibid., p.195.
[282] Jean Pierrot. *The Decadent Imagination, 1880-1990*. Trans. Derek Coltman. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1981. pp.133-134.

Dorian seeks new and strange experiences to satisfy his intense curiosity which is pursued to its extreme. What Dorian aspires to is a new life, a life of the soul. He loves beautiful artefacts such as brocades, green bronzes, lacquer-work, and carved ivories. He leads a life of "*wanton luxury and gorgeous splendour*" (p.110). His taste for wild joy and even wilder sins becomes more extravagant when he commits murder (he kills his friend Basil) in a moment of furious rage. This moment is a turning point in his life because after this event he becomes entirely absorbed by the deterioration of his soul. The monstrous expression of his portrait highlights his sinful side. It reflects a dark side of the apparently rich and wealthy Dorian.

Indeed, the death of Basil Hallward is important to consider not only because it signals tragedy but because it refers to the tragic result of killing a friend. When confronted with the horror of the portrait, Basil could not believe that Dorian is really sinful and corrupt; he could not believe that the portrait reflects Dorian's wrongdoings. His attempt to convince Dorian that it is not late to redeem his soul ends in his tragic death. When he says, "*What a lesson! What an awful lesson*!" (p.317), Basil points to the tragic result of a hedonistic life which rejects morality, and he urges Dorian to pray to clean his soul from sins. He explains to him that the prayer of his repentance will be answered in the same way as his prayer to remain young is done, yet Dorian believes that it is too late to do that because the religious words of prayers—" *Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities. […] Though your sins be as scarlet, yet I will make them as white as snow*" (p.317)—mean nothing to him. Basil notices then that Dorian's life as a moral man is tragically disrupted as he refuses to kneel down to pray. Dorian believes that it is Basil who is first to blame for his corrupt life because Basil met him, flattered him, and taught him to be vain of his good looks by painting a portrait that revealed to him the wonder of beauty. The horrible face in the canvas is the reality of Dorian's soul. Dorian kills Basil not only because he has discovered the secret of his terrible soul but also because he is the first to blame as he is the one who led him to worship beauty. In a way, if Basil had not painted the portrait, Dorian would not have been introduced to the Aesthetic world. Thus he blames the painter for what has become of him. Therefore, by killing him, Dorian makes justice for his soul. Seen from the lenses of modern tragedy, Basil's death signifies the triumph of Aestheticism over that of Victorianism because the voice of Basil signifies the call of religion to confess. Since Dorian hates all that is convention, because convention is an enemy in Williams's terms, he kills Basil to silence and to get rid of the authoritative voice (as Basil represents mainly the reality principle) However, the portrait remains as more evidence against him. But we have to admit that it is

not only Basil who is to blame for Dorian's degeneration. Lord Henry's theories of life and pleasure also played a significant role in shaping Dorian's tragic fate.

For instance, one external influence Dorian receives from Lord Henry is the contaminating yellow book whose poisonous influence pushes him further and further into Hedonism and moral decline. Dorian's yearning for strong and further passions is further intensified by this strange yellow book which Lord Henry puts into his hands. While reading it, it seems to Dorian that "*the sins of the world are passing in a dumb show before him*" (p.97). The Parisian hero of this yellow book, we are told, spent his life trying to experience in the 19th century all the passions and modes of thought in the past, and to experience personally "*the various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving for their mere artificiality those renunciations that men have unwisely called virtue, as much as those natural rebellions that wise men still call sin*" (pp.97-98). Here Wilde challenges traditional definitions of good and evil. He finds that what has been commonly regarded as virtuous is called simply unnatural "renunciation" or cultural repression, and what has been conceived as sinful are "natural rebellion" of the heart. This is why Dorian Gray can be regarded as a surpassing individual who goes beyond social conventions to excessively embrace the ideals of New Hedonism. Through his critique and rejection of traditional moral values, Wilde implies that morality of a certain society or community is constructed through continuous interplay of assertion and subversion, stability and destabilization; thus it is time for the Victorian society to get rid of its worthless values as they no longer fit the needs of individuals. But again if there is an alternative mode of life, the individual should be careful in matters of ethics and aesthetics. When late Victorian society privileges material life over the spiritual one, the result is self-denial and stagnation. On the other hand, when individuals, like Dorian, favour spiritual life over the material one, the result is self-destruction. There should be a balance between them because if one of them is privileged over the other, there would be tragic results, as shown through Dorian's life.

Dorian suffers from the dilemma of a double personality when he claims "*Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him*", the feature which makes of him a problematic hero. He is problematic because his aspirations and desires never coincide with what his conventional society proposes. His desires are larger than necessary, which makes of his a surpassing individual as Williams argues. He is unable to lead a moral life, as morality means stagnation and self-denial; and he is bored with the life he leads because the portrait is the evidence which keeps reminding him that his soul is corrupt and sinful. Though he reaches his goal in his pursuit of new sensations, he is haunted by the portrait which "was *the mask of his shame [which] showed him the real degradation of his life*" (p.297) Indeed, just like a Faustian

figure, he sells his soul to the devil in order to enjoy eternal youth and beauty. He is continuously encouraged by Lord Henry to pursue various sensuous experiences and instinctual satisfactions; on the other hand, he is warned by Basil that his end would be tragic if he carried on his sinful life. Dorian's personality, in Williams's modern tragic view, is shaped within and beyond the similarly defining aristocratic status. Within him, we find the characteristics of an upper-class man (his manners, way of dressing, public respectability, etc.); and beyond this social status, we find his "*exploring energies of life*."[283] Williams argues that "*the tension of the general action, between the exploring energies of life and all that is known of order is repeated in the hero himself, between the individual man and the social role. In these tensions, this particular tragedy is formed*."[284]

Dorian's tragedy, furthermore, "*negotiates the real contradictions of its own time, between human desire and the now social limits set on it*."[285] Dorian is made aware that his social task as a philanthropist would result in his self-denial at a time one's aim in life is self-development. This is why his choice of a Hedonistic life is a manifestation against all that society controls. By his adoption for the philosophy of Hedonism, he frees himself from the constraints of life. Though he leads a double life in that he is publicly respectable and privately loathsome for himself, he could not bear the fact of having a corrupt soul, as the narrator says, "*he would sit in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and himself, but filled, at other times, with that pride of rebellion that is half the fascination of sin, and smiling, with secret pleasure, at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own*." (p.298) In the novel, the narrator also states that "*it is his beauty that has ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he has prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain His Beauty had been to him but a mask, his youth but a mockery*."(p.387) Indeed, Dorian's beauty is a mask of his sins, a mask with which he hides his corrupt soul. The narrator refers to some lines in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to describe: "*Like the painting of a sorrow /A face without a heart*" (p.381) Dorian represents a face without a heart because he discards himself from all human feelings; as an aesthete, he has no ethical sympathy; as Lord Henry states, "if man treats life artistically, his brain is his heart." (p.381) This is why, in our opinion, when Dorian died, the knife was found in his heart. It is in his heart that his hedonistic ideas reside. He made his heart a centre of rebellious aesthetic ideas, not of ethical values.

Dorian is not a typically Victorian man. He is a degenerate. He is forced into betraying his nature as a Victorian since his society sticks to its ideology and morality as

[283] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.90.
[284] Ibid., p.90.
[285] Ibid., p.94.

signs of Puritanism which put limits to progress. Dorian disrupts the ideological system through his social distinction. Wilde's novel displays the idea of fatality which plays an important role in disrupting the Victorian ideology. Right from the beginning of the novel, Basil Hallward signals the danger of fatality when he says to Lord Henry, "*There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction*" (p.06). By physical distinction, he means beauty and refers, in this context, to Dorian Gray's beauty; and by intellectual distinction, he implies the doctrine of Aestheticism. Thus, being physically and intellectually distinct from others in society paves the way to tragic disruptions.

First, Dorian Gray's physical appearance is fatal in that it has very undesirable effects on all those who accompany him. His relies on his physical beauty and uses it as an agent of destruction. A question that can arise in this context is why didn't Wilde choose a feminine character to represent the idea of beauty as fatal? Is there any pertinent reason behind his option for a male character to transmit the message of beauty? In the previous novel, Jude is shown as weak in front of Arabella and Sue. Arabella is known for her physical attractiveness while Sue is physically and intellectually attractive. They both contribute to Jude's ruin. Theses feminine characters are fatal to Jude in that they shape their tragic destiny as we have shown in the previous chapter. The idea of fatality in Wilde's novel is expressed through the character of Dorian. His physical beauty attracts men and women alike, but the relationship he establishes with them ends tragically[286]. This is why Basil Hallward wonders, "*Why is your friendship so fatal to young men?*" (p.309)

Second, intellectual distinction is also fatal. We can, in this respect, establish a relationship between the idea of intellectual distinction in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Wilde's novel. We have shown that Sue's education and intellectualism contributed to her tragic fate. Her belief in her emergent ideas about marriage and family life led her to reject the

[286] Basil Hallward asks Dorian about the fatality of his relationship with men and women alike, as the following quotation shows: "Why is it, Dorian, that a man like the Duke of Berwick leaves the room of a club when you enter it? Why is it that so many gentlemen in London will neither go to your house nor invite you to theirs? You used to be a friend of Lord Cawdor. I met him at dinner last week. Your name happened to come up in conversation, in connection with the miniatures you have lent to the exhibition at the Dudley. Cawdor curled his lip, and said that you might have the most artistic tastes, but that you were a man whom no pure-minded girl should be allowed to know, and whom no chaste woman should sit in the same room with.[…] There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton, and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him? Dorian, Dorian, your reputation is infamous. I know you and Harry are great friends. I say nothing about that now, but surely you need not have made his sister's name a byword. When you met Lady Gwendolen, not a breath of scandal had ever touched her. Is there a single decent woman in London now who would drive with her in the Park? Why, even her children are not allowed to live with her. Then there are other stories,—stories that you have been seen creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slinking in disguise into the foulest dens in London." (p.309-310). All these ruined relationships, in fact, imply homosexuality, or "the love that dare not speak its name".

Victorian ideology on marriage. In the same way, Dorian's aesthetic and hedonistic ideas make him reject the middle class ideology, he says:

> *I know how people chatter in England. The middle classes air their moral prejudices over their gross dinner-tables, and whisper about what they call the profligacies of their betters in order to try and pretend that they are in smart society, and on intimate terms with the people they slander. In this country, it is enough for a man to have distinction and brains for every common tongue to wag against him. And what sort of lives do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite.* (pp.309-310)

Ironically, when Dorian questions the real life of the middle class, he also refers to himself because he belongs to the same class.

In the end, Dorian realises that being physically or intellectually distinct is not really a successful way to escape reality because there is always the memory of his sins. If he managed to escape social punishment of his sins by killing Basil Hallward and ordering Alan Campbell to destroy his corpse, Dorian could not escape the memory of these horrifying deeds, as the narrator goes:

> *It had given him pleasure once to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it*. (p.390)

Besides, he "*was never to confess, […] to give himself up and be put to death*." (p.389) What really is trouble in Dorian's life is "*the living death of his soul*" (p.388). Adrian Poole tells us more about the idea of life-in-death:

> *The idea of a 'living death' looks like a modern complement to the old belief in ghosts, the haunters, the revenants, the undead. It's a vision of death-in-life, a life so drained of meaning, value, purpose, and joy that it seems like death, being dead before you are dead. It's a version of hell on earth, more inert, more soundproof, more blank than others. In the modern era it tends to be focused in images of imprisonment, silence, and madness*.[287]

The portrait is, thus, a ghost which terrifies Dorian; it signifies the death of his soul while still alive; he is dead before he is really dead. It makes him live in hell on earth since it is an imprisonment of his soul. In his attempt to destroy the portrait with the knife he has used to kill Basil, Dorian seeks to free his soul from this imprisonment in order to redeem himself. He thinks that his repentance, punishment, and forgiveness will be done once he destroys the portrait. Eventually, he is found dead on the ground. It was not till the servants examined the rings in his hands that they noticed who he was, because he returned to his natural state as an

[287] Adrian Poole. *Tragedy: A very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 2005.p.39.

ugly loathsome man. His death, in fact, is debatable. If we consider the portrait as the representative of the reality of Dorian's sins, we register here the Victorian authority which finds Dorian guilty, thus punishment is brought upon him. As such we have the triumph of the power of Victorianism over that of Aestheticism. But here again we have to mention that Dorian's Aesthetic power could have saved him from a tragic end—as is the case with Lord Henry—if he did not manifest it excessively.

Committing suicide, moreover, is a characteristic feature in Decadent arts. He does so, in our view, because he can not go on living with two separate identities or with two conflicting personalities. He can not confess his sins, and he does not want to repent. The only way to get rid of this conflict is the disappearance of one of the two conflicting sides. Now that he has killed Basil, he silenced the voice of reality which kept reminding him of his sins, there remains his portrait. However, it is Dorian whom we notice dead in an attempt to destroy the picture. The return of the picture to its original image, and the transformation of Dorian from a charming beautiful man to an ugly one indicate the return of things to their order. May be we notice here the containment of Dorian's subversive acts as a sign of the triumph of the dominant ideology.

Eventually, Oscar Wilde's incorporation of the philosophy of Aestheticism—which is, in the novel, theorised by Lord Henry and practised by Dorian—can be read as a new way which emancipates what the Victorian society represses. In this respect, Wilde believes that "*what one shouldn't do nevertheless <u>had</u> to be done, in order to explore new possibilities in self-consciousness*"[288] The subversive acts and speeches of Dorian Gray, as shown, are grounded on this claim. However, the ensuing new rules and interpretations are not gratuitous; they are obvious signs of subversion. Aestheticism, in Raymond Williams's terms, constitutes *"counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony, which are real and persistent elements of practice*."[289] In other words, what Wilde aims at is freeing individuals, like Dorian Gray, from ethical obligations by having him assume the pose of a dandy whose way of life exemplifies the discursive principles of Aestheticism. Wilde expounds in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* many of his serious aesthetic views such as the celebration of beauty and joy, acceptance of pleasure, laughter, and desire, emphasis on self-development, and the attempt to treat life in the spirit of art. Dorian Gray's aesthetic experiences and his desire to taste various sensations create conflicting points of views between the centripetal force of Victorian

[288] Stanley Weinthaub, Ed. *The Portable Oscar Wilde*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.p.04.
[289] *Marxism and Literature*. Op.cit.,p.113.

morality and the centrifugal force of Aestheticism, which leads him to transgress the laws of the Victorian morality and to meet his downfall.

In this chapter, Wilde provides us with the life of a Victorian man in the Victorian society. We have seen the impact of the dominant Victorianism and the emergent Aestheticism. The next chapter, which is an analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, provides us with the life of a Victorian character outside the Victorian society. What we want to find out exactly is the kind of life Kurtz leads far from the control of the Victorian society. The central theme will be the impact of imperialism on the rhetoric of civilization. The kind of imperialism we find in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is what Holbrook Jackson calls "the imperialism of the spirit". Since there is self-denial in the Victorian society, the spiritual side of individuals is "empty". When Lord Henry exercises his philosophy of Aestheticism, he "imperialises" and occupies a free territory in Dorian's soul; however the result is not civilization but degeneration. Kurtz, as a different imperial man, also meets a tragic end, but does it resemble the fates of Jude and Dorian? If Jude and Dorian meet a tragic end because of their rebellion against the dominant social laws, does Kurtz also rebel against such laws in the colony? This, and other subject-matters, is what we are going to investigate in the following chapter.

V:
Victorian Imperialism:
Subversion and Containment
in Joseph Conrad's
Heart of Darkness.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we shall analyze Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in the light of the three theories we have selected in order to reach the following aims. First, to show the subversive discourse of imperialism; second, to pinpoint the tragic disruptions resulting from the policy of imperialism both on the colonizer and the colonized.

In the light of Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialism, we shall argue that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is not only a literary avatar of imperial ideology, but also the site where the apparent coherence of the Victorian order is threatened by inner contradictions and tensions. By contradictions we mean the reality that lies behind "the white Man's Burden"; i.e. "*to civilize the world, and enlighten non-European peoples to the superiority of British culture*."[290] However, these ideals stand in stark contrast to the brutal reality. Even if the allusion is to the Belgian Congo, the indictment is valid for the British Empire as well.

In fact, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* shows one picture of many instances of this brutal reality. It is worth to compare this picture to that of Dorian Gray in the sense that both pictures are two sides of the same coin. The truth which Dorian Gray discovers in his picture leads to his destruction; in the same way, the truth which Kurtz discovers before his death—and which is summed up in "*the horror, the horror*"—drives him mad and leads him to his undignified death. The process we want to highlight is that discursive confrontation (fraught with tragic undertones) involving both the empire and its opponents. Our analysis of *Heart of Darkness* will reveal the subversive perspective through Marlow's perversion of the West's image of itself. The civilizational, positive, moral, and philanthropic connotations of imperialism as well as its patriotic claims are questioned through what Marlow shows us (or hides from our sight), and what he tells us (or deliberately ignores).

The subversive project and the contradictions that lie at the heart of imperialism will also be enhanced through the study of language in the light of Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism or double voiced discourse which, Bakhtin observes, "*serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intentions of the author*."[291] The dialogic reading of this novel will provide us with different voices speculating on the idea of imperialism with a view to showing its social reality. "*Social reality*", Bakhtin insists, "*is not only heterogeneous but*

[290] Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914, Volumes 1& 2.* London: Green Wood Press, 2008.p.215.
[291] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin.* Michael Holquist, Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Trans. (1981). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. (17th paper back print). p.324.

contradictory, it is ever present within the novel because its languages are the only languages available to the novel."[292]

Beside its being a 'dialogic novel', *Heart of Darkness* is also, as will be shown, a modern tragedy. Raymond Williams's belief that the most characteristic feature of modern tragedy is "*the division between society and individual*" is embodied in the character of Kurtz. In this context, we shall focus on three main elements: Kurtz as a modern tragic hero, his tragic flaw, and his death.

1.Dissidence and Dissonance in *Heart of Darkness*: Subverting Moral Values

In her *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire* (2010), Mary Ellen Snodgrass argues that the late 19th century is a remarkable date which registers "*the slow collapse of imperialism in Europe, South and central Africa*"[293]. Reading *Heart of Darkness* in the light of Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism provides us with a subversive image of Victorian (European) imperialism; an image which reveals the slow collapse or even the death of an ideal. It is the attitude of European superiority which is contested; for in order to justify, maintain, and expand British imperialism, an attitude of superiority is adopted. As Edward Said notes, imperialism and colonialism are "*supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination*."[294] To speak about dissidence and dissonance is to speak about possibilities of alternatives to the dominant forms of imperialism whose ideology Conrad shows as a system of illusions and false ideals; as Raymond Williams believes: "*no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention*."[295] The image of the policy of imperialism as a civilizational mission is outflanked and subverted. Unlike the context of the two previous novels (*Jude the Obscure* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*), in this novella there is no battle of ideologies (the ideology of the colonizer and that of the colonized).

While criticizing the behaviour of the European characters, Marlow observes that the values which the Europeans have lost are recognised in the behaviour of the natives. For

[292] Maria Shevtsova. "Dialogism in the Novel and Bakhtin's Theory of Culture", in *New Literary History*. Vol. 23, No.3. Summer, 1992. p.754.
[293] Mary Ellen Snodgrass. *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2010.p.9.
[294] Edward W. Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.p.9.
[295] Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.p.125.

instance, in the scene where the manager asks Marlow whether the black men will attack, Marlow answers:

> *I did not think they would attack, for several obvious reasons. The thick fog was one…. But what made the idea of attack inconceivable to me was the nature of the noise—of the cries we had heard. They had not the fierce character boding immediate hostile intention*. (p.87).

Marlow observes that danger is not expected from the natives but from the Europeans themselves when they do not uphold their values: "*The danger, if any, I expounded, was from our proximity to a great human passion let loose*." (p.87-88). This impression or rather judgment is justified when Marlow says that "*it was Kurtz who had ordered the attack to be made on the steamer*." (p.131). We come to notice then that while the Europeans repeatedly displace their savage impulses onto the African natives, the latter prove to be superior to them. In this perspective, Conrad transfers the European moral values to the non-Europeans, and he points out that the African natives not only keep such values but also teach them. The restrained behaviour of the natives subverts the Victorian belief according to which the Europeans go to Africa in order to bring law, order, and civilization. In *Heart of Darkness*, instead of seeing the white civilizing the black, we come to see a white man beating pitilessly a black man saying; "'*Serve him right. Transgression— punishment—bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That's the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future*." (p.50)

For Conrad, "*morality is an empty signifier, a semiotic vacuity that dominant political powers can strategically manipulate in order to justify crimes against humanity*."[296] This is what we notice in the novel when Marlow refers to "*the great demoralization of the land*" (p.33). The behaviour of Kurtz, who is supposed to be an agent of enlightenment and civilization in Africa, shows no sign of morality; if he were behaving on grounds of morality, it would be to justify his crimes. The scene where Marlow describes "*heads drying on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz's windows*" (p.121) is interpreted as a "*savage sight*" (ibid) because it has no relation to morality. Kurtz's disciple justifies the presence of such heads as "*the heads of rebels*" (ibid), but Marlow "*shocked him excessively by laughing*" and saying "*Rebels! What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers—and these were rebels*." (ibid) Marlow is not convinced that these heads are really heads of rebels because as he contends "*[those] rebellious heads looked very subdued to me on their sticks*."(ibid). Kurtz's lack of morality and restraint is clearly shown by the Russian who says to Marlow:

[296] Michael Lackey. "The Moral Conditions for Genocide in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*", in *College Literature* 32.1. Winter, 2005, p.21.

> *I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him— some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he knew of this deficiency himself I can't say.* (p.120)

By subverting morality, which is a system or a set of moral beliefs, Conrad also subverts religion, i.e. the Christian tradition, because of the strong relationship between them. Matters of religion have been largely used as a justification for European colonial expansion. As Michael Lackey puts it, "*since the British control the God-concept, they can ontologize themselves as Chosen People and Africans as sub-humans*."[297] It is also this idea which Conrad subverts through his criticism of the pilgrims. This is well illustrated by the critical voice of Marlow. After the death of Kurtz, one "*red-haired pilgrim*" says, "'*Say! We must have made a glorious slaughter of them in the bush. Eh? What do you think? Say?*'" (p.106) Instead of teaching the Christian tradition, this pilgrim indulges in slaughtering the natives. After this comment, Marlow names this pilgrim a "*bloodthirsty little gingerly beggar*." (p.106) Another characteristic which is strange in the behaviour of the pilgrims is their possession of arms, though their religious task precludes that; as Marlow says, "*Some of the pilgrims behind the stretcher carried his arms— two shot-guns, a heavy rifle, and a light revolver*" (p.124). In another instance, Marlow sharpens his criticism against the pilgrims when he says, "*The pilgrims looked upon me with disfavour. I was, so to speak, numbered with the dead. It is strange how I accepted this unforeseen partnership, this choice of nightmares forced upon me in the tenebrous land invaded by these mean and greedy phantoms.*" (p.142).

When Conrad deals with the critical statements which regard the place of morality in the African land, he does that according to his conception of goodness. He is morally convinced that killing is bad, just as Marlow believes that colonial expansion under the name of imperialism and civilization is bad when he says, "*the conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.*" (p.10) At the end of section one in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow makes us, just like him, "*curious to see whether this man [Kurtz], who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there*." (p.61) The narrative which follows this expression of curiosity is followed by a disappointing answer because it

[297] Ibid., p.28.

demonstrates that Kurtz is equipped with no moral ideas at all. Instead, "*many powers of darkness claimed him for their own*" (p.100) and he "*had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land*" (p.100) By "*the devils of the land*", Marlow explains that they are "*the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire*" (pp.29-30) which he has seen. Not only Marlow but also the manager testifies that Kurtz is a devil; this is what we notice when the latter says: "*[c]lear this poor devil out of the country, and don't bother sending more of that sort. I had rather be alone than have the kind of men you can dispose of with me*."(p.63)

Furthermore, Kurtz displays his loss of religion when "*he judged it necessary to inform [the manager that] he feared neither God nor devil, let alone any mere man.*" (p.56). His attitude towards the natives is built on his belief that he is a "*supernatural being*" who approaches the natives "*with the might of a deity*" (p.103). Eventually, through what Kurtz does and says, and what others say about him, we can argue that he is an anti-hero as we shall explain further in this chapter. Maybe the only situation where Marlow attributes to the term "moral" a positive connotation is when he refers to the last words of Kurtz— "the horror! The horror!"—"*as a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions*" (p.148). The utterance of these words is a moral victory for Kurtz because in spite of the many "*dead acts of civilization*" (p.104) he commits, he is able to recognise that the Euro-imperialist methods he was following led him to his downfall, madness, and death. The acknowledgment is itself the only victory which Kurtz reaches. When he says, '*Live rightly, die, die …*' he realises that when one lives rightly, he dies "rightly", as he would have finished his sentence.

The degree of openness to alternate systems of values which Kurtz displays is also shown in the attitudes of the other European characters, such as the pilgrims, who are also involved in the question of morality as well. One point to draw attention to is that morality is not considered even between the European themselves. With "*the great demoralization of the land*" (p.33), Marlow asserts that morality has no role to play in this land; in fact, "*[t]o tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their [the Europeans] desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it*" (p.60). Back in Brussels, Marlow still feels and sees the bleakness of the European moral standards in the faces of people in the streets: "[t]*hey were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence*" (p.148).

Keeping in mind Conrad's distrust of certainties and his sceptical turn of mind[298], one should stress that questioning and quest are aspects of knowledge and truth seeking. In his "*special regard for…the unprivileged of this earth*", Conrad is guided by a moral orientation which is derived both from his European "frameworks" and the interaction (the dialogue) between these frameworks. Consequently, rather than being like his contemporaries, such as Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard, who encourage and support the European imperial policy in Africa, he questions the basis on which morality and European ethos are built, especially in a colonial context. The very presence of themes like racism, exploitation, and colonialism instead of civilization are intended by Conrad to be marks of dissidence and dissonance which displace and parody the European civilizing pretence. In his journey to Africa, Marlow describes different scenes where we only notice signs of European decadence and degeneration. The natives are silenced, thus they cannot express the reality of the imperial venture in their land, a venture marked by racism, exploitation and injustice. The analysis of language, in the light of Bakhtin's discourse, will unravel light on the hidden task of imperialism. It is undeniable that the language of the natives does not mark its presence in the novel in order to subvert the refined language of the civilizing mission, but we notice that the voice of Marlow implies instances of dis-unifying and decentralizing the Victorian unitary language presenting imperialism as a civilizing mission.

2. Imperialism Dialogised.

Bakhtin argues that the dialogical nature of language implies struggle and that the novel is the best literary form which represents and highlights this conflict: "*[t]he novel is the privileged arena where languages in conflict can meet, bringing together, in tension and dialogue, not only opposing characters, but also different historical ages, social levels, civilizations and other dawning realities of human life*."[299] Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is precisely a site where the discourse of civilization is opposed to that of barbarism. Social levels are also in conflict as is obvious in the languages of superiority and inferiority; as for the reality of human life, this novel shows that human barbarism and savage brutality are performed by the European.

European imperialists justified the exploitation of Africa and Africans by constructing an ideological model based on the civilization/savagery model or light/dark model which

[298] In a letter to Galsworthy, Conrad emphasised that scepticism for him was "the agent of truth [and] the way of art and salvation"

[299] L. Appignanesi and S. Maitland, Eds. *The Rushdie File.* London: Fourth Estate Books, 1989, p.245, quoted in Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, Malcolm Kelsall, and John Peck *Gale Encyclopedia: Literature and Criticism*. Cardiff: University of Wales.p.53.

privileged everything associated with Europe over everything associated with Africa. However, the rhetoric of this model is not privileged in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* We have to draw attention to the fact that the theme of imperialism and its civilizing rhetoric was not only presented by imperialists. In other words, imperialists were not the only ones to promote relationships as extended by the light/dark model. Even those who did not support such a model raised their voice to attack its hypocrisy and to unveil its terrible reality.[300] Conrad visited many colonial ports, the Congo station was one which provided him with the colonial conditions in the colonies. His fictional work, *Heart of Darkness,* questions European assumptions of white superiority.

Though he is accused by Chinua Achebe of being "*a thoroughgoing racist*"[301] whose work "*constitutes a document of high European racism to be rejected and purged of all cultural currency*"[302], Conrad can be read as an anti-imperialist. The reason why, probably, Conrad is believed to be a racist is his ambivalent narrative structure. The reader cannot clearly read Conrad's ideas against the European assumption of imperialism. Achebe agrees that *Heart of Darkness* reverberates with anti-imperialist arguments, as will be shown through the discourse of Marlow, but he does not find it enough from Conrad to be named an anti-imperialist, as does Mary Ellen Snodgrass in her *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire* (2010) when she classifies *Heart of Darkness* among the masterworks that the proponents of anti-imperialism produced.[303] Here is Achebe's argument:

> *Some people imagine that what I mean is, Don't read Conrad. Good heavens, no! I teach Conrad. I teach Heart of Darkness. I have a course on Heart of Darkness in which what I'm saying is, Look at the way this man handles Africans. Do you recognize humanity there? People will tell you he was opposed to imperialism. But it's not enough to say, I'm opposed to imperialism. Or, I'm opposed to these people—these poor people—being treated like this. Especially since he goes on straight away to call them "dogs standing on their hind legs." That kind of thing. Animal imagery throughout. He didn't see anything wrong with it.*[304]

[300] Among those who registered their voices as attacks against the atrocities of the imperial missionaries, Edmund Morel criticised King Leopold's political system in Congo. In fact, he was a Congo reform leader. He criticised Leoplod and his agents for the way they conducted the model of light over darkness. Even though E. Morel himself used phrases which highlighted the positive role of the missionaries, phrases like "angels of light" and "torchlight of truth" when talking about the white man's duty in Africa, he accuses Leopold and his agents of racism and inhumanity.

[301] Chinua Achebe. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness." Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays, 1965-1987. London: Heinemann, 1988.p.8.

[302] Tony C. Brown. "Cultural Psychosis on the Frontier: The Work of the Darkness in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," in *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 32, 2000.p.2.

[303] *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire*. Op.cit., p.viii.

[304] Anonymous writer. An Interview with Chinua Achebe. The Art of Fiction N° 139. *The Paris Review*, 2007.p.12.

What Achebe is concerned with is man's inhumanity to man, meaning that if Conrad was really an anti-imperialist, he would have defended the right of the black man without "animalizing" him. We think that this is the perfect view of anti-imperialism. However, this does not mean that anti-imperialist views are totally absent in the novel. It remains a relative question in the sense that, *because* he *is* an African, Achebe is affected deeply by Conrad's racist portrayals of the Africans. It is true that there indications of anti-imperialism, but they are stated ambivalently; as such, they also mark a sign of an oppositional view as regards the ideology which supports imperialism. On one level, if we consider Marlow as Conrad's mouthpiece, which is not generally agreed on, we consider Conrad's position towards imperialism as liberal because he attacks only the excesses of imperialism. A Liberal Imperialist is defined as

> *A faction within Britain's Liberal Party in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Liberal Imperialists were notable for their lack of enthusiasm for Irish Home Rule, for their defense [sic] of free trade within the British Empire, and for their support for moderate social reform.*[305]

Evidently, "*free trade within the British Empire*" and the "*support for moderate social reform*" are what characterises the liberal imperialist view in *Heart of Darkness*. As Carl Cavanagh Hodge notes, "*A free trade policy [is] the logical product of naval dominance,*"[306] and that it was during "*the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 […] [that] the delegates of 13 European countries […] declared the Congo and Niger Rivers open to free trade*"[307] This is why we observe that ivory-trade in the Congo Station is the centre of the economic policy. Kurtz is even able to kill for ivory, as one European character explains to Marlow:

> *He [Kurtz] wanted to shoot me, too, one day […]I had a small lot of ivory the chief of that village near my house gave me. You see I used to shoot game for them. Well, he wanted it, and wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot me unless I gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased*. (pp.80-81)

This free trade also suffers from "*unfair competition*" (p.46) between the Europeans themselves because of the greed for wealth. As for the "*support for moderate social reform*", it sounds as hegemony in the white man's voice, "*Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing*." (p.47) The position of a liberal imperialist establishes a relationship between

[305] Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914, Volumes 1& 2*. London: Green Wood Press, 2008.p.418.
[306] Ibid.,p.xi.
[307] Ibid.,p. xlvii.

liberalism and imperialism, a relationship which is ambiguous because "*on the one hand, liberalism present[s] powerful arguments for colonial self-government. On the other, some liberals contest the suitability for self-government of what they [see] as irrational or inferior peoples or cultures*."[308] The description of the natives as "savages" "ignorant" and "brutes" makes the question of their self-government impossible, this is why Marlow's attitude toward imperialism evokes ambivalent sentiments regarding the logic of civilization which excludes any non-Western value system in the colonies. Raymond Williams remarks on the colonial project in general: "*It is a world of darkness of many kinds that this voyage explores, but among these kinds—the reminder is still critically necessary—is the reality of colonial exploitation, the ambiguity of the 'civilizing mission' into Africa*."[309]

On the other level, we should not ignore the role of the anonymous narrator. If Conrad creates him, there certainly lies a reason behind that. The fact of having two narrators in *Heart of Darkness* allows heteroglossia to enter the narrative structure in order to dialogize the idea of imperialism: to show whether it is a work of civilization or an alternative image of colonialism.

The fact that Marlow reports European atrocities wherever he goes in the Congo Stations indicates his awareness of the white man's brutality, as when he speaks about the Roman empire, which makes him aware of the colonial system both in the present and the past; but when he says that what redeems the imperial mission is "*an idea at the back of it*" (p.10)—referring to civilization—he means that he excuses the white man's barbarism for the sake of civilization. He, thus, does not attack the idea of imperialism radically but liberally. In other words, Marlow is against the means of imperialism but not against its end. Conrad explained in a letter to his publisher William Blackwood that he was against the "*inefficiency*" and "*selfishness*" of certain imperialists rather than the "*civilizing work*" itself.[310] Taken in this sense, Conrad's position towards imperialism is liberal in that he is only annoyed by the West's perverted image in Africa.

This liberal critique of imperialism can be displayed in Bakhtinian lenses. The term heteroglossia "*refers to the basic condition governing the production of meaning in all*

[308] Ibid.,p.421. Cavanaugh argues also that "Most ideological liberals were anti-imperialists, and anti-imperialism was strongest on the radical, which is to say radically liberal, wing of the Liberal Party" (ibid., p.421)

[309] Raymond Williams. *The English Novel: from Dickens to Lawrence. London:* Chatto and Windus, 1970; Paladin, 1974)p.117.

[310] Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, Eds. *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad. Volume II*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (Date of publication is unknown).p.139-140, in http://www.virtuose.scd.univ-paris3.fr.

discourse. It asserts the way in which context defines the meaning of utterances, which are heteroglot in so far as they put in play a multiplicity of social voices and their individual expressions."[311] In this respect, we understand that the condition under which Marlow lives asserts the way in which context defines the meaning of his utterance. We notice that the narrative structure in *Heart of Darkness* is an exposition of Conrad's anti-imperialist views, but these views are in themselves different. Though they are not overtly exposed in the text, the multi-layered narration is an indication of the presence of different points of views as regards the reality of imperialism as a civilizing mission. One reality of human life which Conrad shows is that the real and only darkness is that which lies at the heart of the white man. The kind of conflict which is found here is between the individual and himself, and also between the individual and his society. This is how we interpret Marlow's and Kurtz's characters respectively.

The legitimacy of "the Scramble for Africa" is not questioned by those who had interest in the exploitation of Africa. But, to Conrad, attacking imperialism means subverting the light/dark model. Through Marlow's as well as the anonymous narrator's voices, Conrad employs two critical perspectives towards imperialism. First, we have the voice of Marlow that adopts a liberal critique against imperialism; second, we have the anonymous narrator's voice which holds a radical critic of imperialism.

To begin with the character of Marlow, though a European man, we notice that he is a character with two different utterances and two voices; in other words, he occupies a dual position. This is what Bakhtin refers to as an "*internal stratification [which is] present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence*"[312] In other words, Marlow represents the liberal critique of imperialism in the sense that he attacks the ideology of imperialism from "the inside", meaning that he reproduces it in order to undercut and subvert it. In the following instances from Conrad's text of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow's seemingly anti-imperialist views of imperialism are considered as a liberal critique of imperialism.

Despite the silencing of the natives, there flourishes a stratifying voice, i.e. the voice of Marlow. What happens, in our view, is that "*instead of following each other and being pronounced by different mouths, the discourse and counter-discourse are superimposed one on the other and merge into a single utterance and a single mouth.*"[313] As a European,

[311] Peter Brooker, , Raman Selden, and Peter Widdowson. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory***.** United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2005. p.40.
[312] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit.,p.263.
[313]Craig Brandist. *The Bakhtin Circle*. London: Pluto Press, 2002.p. 102.

Marlow is supposed to report positively the rhetoric of imperialism in the Congo Station; however, signs of anti-imperialist views reverberate in his language. His arguments for or against imperialism are formulated according to the image of Kurtz. For instance, he shows his fascination when he reads an extract of Kurtz's report which is written for the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs"; it goes as follows in Marlow's voice:

> *we whites, from the point of view of development, we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings—we approach them with the might of a deity,' and so on and so on. 'By the simple exercise of our will, we can exert a power for good practically unbounded*". (p.72).

The question we ask in this context is: why is Marlow fascinated by these lines exactly**?** Why is it that of all that is written in the report (of which we know nothing about of course) he chooses only these lines to express his admiration for Kurtz, the writer of these lines? In our view, the choice of these lines shows that Marlow supports the idea of imperialism as presented by Kurtz. To refer to the white man as a supernatural being ranks the European man in a superior class than the natives'. However, when Marlow gets closer to the reality of things in Africa, he changes his view of Kurtz saying that Kurtz is no idle of him.

In this perspective, the central dialogue Marlow holds with the other characters is conducted by his **two voices** speaking in counterpoint: one voice which echoes the Victorian/European Establishment's praising its noble task in Africa; and the other voice, the dissident one**,** which denounces imperialism's means and goals as symptoms of the West's moral decline. In the novella, there are instances which indicate that Marlow is not a typical Victorian/European man who supports the imperial ideology. For instance, the first narrator says about Marlow that "*the worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class*." (p.6). The meaning of class here probably refers to the Victorian middle class. If Marlow does not represent his class, he probably advances arguments which, in Williams's terms, are either alternatives, "*oppositional formation[s]*", or ideological subversions. We feel the need to know more about Marlow so as to understand his two voices speaking in counterpoint. The anonymous narrator informs us that Marlow longs to discover the secret of a whole continent, and "*generally he finds the secret not worth knowing*."(p.6) The question we are curious to answer is what makes this secret not worth knowing?

We can answer this question through the analysis of Marlow's narrative in the novel. One distinguishing feature of the stylistics of a novel (and which, in our case, allows for Marlow's presence of two voices) is, in Bakhtin's terms, "*the movement of the theme through*

different languages and speech types"[314]. The central theme with which we are concerned is the theme of European civilization in Africa as is incarnated in the project of Imperialism. At the beginning of the novel, we hear the typical Victorian voice of civilization in Marlow's aunt's when she talks about "*weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways.*" (p.21) This is the voice of hegemony; the voice of the ruling-class which justifies the presence of European missions in Africa. However, this utterance is opposed by Marlow's subversive voice when he says that "*[the] conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much*."(p.10) We notice from this assertion that Marlow strives to find social significance for his implied position against the rhetoric of the civilizing mission. This kind of discourse may also be "*a factor stratifying language, introducing heteroglossia into it*."[315] In other words, we can consider Marlow's statement as a subversive one, which introduces the element of heteroglossia in this novella. Thus his image of conquest (imperialism) is a new image of imperialism, one which contradicts that assigned by the Victorian official discourse.

If we analyse this assertion, we come to notice that it contains oppositional attitudes towards the real image of imperialism in Africa. First, "the conquest of the earth" tends more to have a negative connotation than a positive one because when we say conquest we refer mainly to violently taking complete control over a certain country, and this often leads to imposing the conqueror's ideology. Second, when Marlow says "mostly means", the word "mostly" implies that there are other definitions related to the "conquest of the earth", but the one he will exemplify and illustrate during his journey. It is this meaning which probably most represents the European image of imperialism. Third, Marlow's belief that the conquest of the earth "*is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much*" implies an oppositional view held against such explorers as Cecil Rhodes, Dr. Livingston, or Savorgnan de Brazza, who were viewed as heroes of Europe and recorded their journeys to Africa in the form of romance. In fact, what Marlow does in his journey to the Congo Inner Station is 'looking too much' into this conquest, and thus be entitled to express views which oppose the Victorian 'Ideal'.

Before he actually sets out for Africa, Marlow begins to notice changes in himself. For instance, he has a "*queer feeling*" that he is "*an impostor*". He also likens himself to the African natives when he says, "*Being hungry, you know, and kept on my feet too. I was*

[314] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.263.
[315] Ibid., p.333.

getting savage." (p.43). We have to draw attention to the fact that "*the mere presence of linguistic diversity does not make for a polyphonic novel; 'what matters is the dialogic angle at which these styles and dialects are juxtaposed or counter posed in the work'*".[316] Thus the sharpened presence of juxtaposition, counter position, and contradiction in *Heart of Darkness* allows for dialogism. The official policy of imperialism as viewed by the Victorian (the European) society has only one task to fulfil, and that is to civilize the savage Africans. The theme of imperialism is dialogised in the sense that its unitary Victorian meaning is decentred. The central meaning of Victorian imperialism shifts from that of civilizing to that of 'rationalizing', exploiting, and dispossessing. The language used to present Kurtz as "a first-class agent, […] a very remarkable person" (p.35) at the beginning of the novel changes to reveal him as a "bad, very bad" (p.118) man as the incarnation of greed. It is on the basis of what Kurtz does and says, and what others say about him that Marlow builds and rebuilds his changing impressions of Kurtz. Marlow is told that Kurtz is a remarkable man and grows curious to meet him; however, Kurtz's report which advises the extermination of 'the brutes' and his murdering of the natives lead Marlow to conclude that Kurtz is "*no idle of [him]*" (p.121). This is what we notice when he says:

> *I had turned to the wilderness really, not to Mr. Kurtz, who, I was ready to admit, was as good as buried. And for a moment it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets. I felt an intolerable weight oppressing my breast, the smell of the damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption,…* (p.130)

What makes Marlow admit that Kurtz is "*as good as buried*" is his knowledge that the life of Kurtz in Africa did bring nothing but the ruin and destruction of many innocent lives. In our view, the suggestion that Kurtz would be better buried implies the need to bury at the same time his society's unspeakable vices as secrets.

Unlike the traditional conflict which we find in the plot of the novel, that is a conflict between opposing characters, the one we find in this novel resides in one character: Marlow. His conflicting positions in *Heart of Darkness* still give rise to diverse and contradictory interpretations; which proves nothing other than the "*immanent contradiction*"[317] of imperialism. The conflict which Conrad embodies is that of world-views; as Bakhtin says "*a particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world*."[318] In this

[316]Michael Bakhtin. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. P.182, quoted in Simon Dentith. *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 1995.P.45.
[317] Benita Parry, *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers*. p.39.
[318] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M.Bakhtin*. Op.cit.,p.132.

perspective, we can argue that Conrad's language in this novella has a multidimensional view of the world; this multidimensionality refers basically to the language of the dispossessed and that of the dis-possessor. As Gene M. Moore claims,

> *Conrad is a figure of the crossroads, determined to portray and explore the conflicting loyalties and multiple identities of those who, like him, have been denied their cultural birthright. Conrad writes with the passionate irony of an exile, from the necessarily false passion of a cultural colonist who speaks, in a language not quite his own, for both the dispossessed and their dispossessors.*[319]

Marlow is aware of the official discourse of imperialism which is one which supports colonial expansion and the 'civilizing mission'. Being influenced by Darwin's evolutionary ideas, many Europeans believed that "*humanity developed from 'barbarism' to 'civilization', and [that] progress was inevitable and universal.*"[320] It was this idea—that other cultures were far behind the European on the ladder of progress—that supported the ideology of imperialism. However, after he leaves Europe with this assumption, Marlow witnesses another reality which is totally different from the one he set forth with. His voyage into the Congo stations offers him ample opportunity to observe and ruminate about the human condition. Marlow's report of what he sees during his journey to Africa unveils scenes and practices which contradict the Victorian received opinions about civilization and savagery.

The official discourse of European humanitarianism is 'dis-crowned' and de-constructed by the upholder of civilization himself, i.e. Kurtz, when he writes in a racist tone "*Exterminate all the brutes*" (p.103) as the final utterance to his report on the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs". This unmasking confirms Bakhtin's belief that "*every discourse, written or spoken, is an expression of ideology—that is, it expresses a view of the world, inevitably coloured by your social group or standing*."[321] This statement is also important because, as Bakhtin argues, "*the action and individual act of a character in a novel are essential in order to expose—as well as to test—his ideological position, his discourse*."[322] If we test Kurtz's ideological position, we notice that it has a de-humanizing rather than a civilizing purpose. Kurtz's concluding statement is extracted from a discourse which is inevitably coloured by his social Victorian grouping, an expression of the European superiority and African inferiority. Since "*a particular language in a novel is always a*

[319]Gene M. Moore. "Conrad's Influence", in J.H.Stape, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p.223.
[320]Andrea White. "Conrad and Imperialism", in J.H.Stape, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.p.186.
[321]Tory Young. *Studying English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.pp.50-51.
[322] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M.Bakhtin*. Op.cit., p.334.

particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance"[323], we can consider Kurtz's statement as one world-view in the language of the representative of European perspectives which strives to impose its social significance in Africa. A counter view to this one is expressed when Conrad reverses this position through Marlow's language which describes scenes where Kurtz is said to be an agent of ruin rather than of civilization and progress.

Furthermore**,** Conrad displaces and reverses the place of darkness that is attributed to Africa and locates it in Europe through the counter discourse of civilization. This is how the light/dark model is subverted. He employs a stylistic strategy: he uses parody to fulfil that aim. His narrative generates a truth strong enough to challenge the meaning which the Victorian orthodoxy intends to deliver and whose very embodiment carries subversion in the first place. Parody as an agent of subversion is everywhere in this novel. In fact, Conrad seems to overthrow the monopoly of imperialism by a parody of the civilizing mission. Nash refers to parody as a "*discourse of allusion*"[324]. The discourse of parody is capable of echoing some other discourses. It has also a corrosive function which enables it to undermine an entire discourse.

What is being parodied in Conrad's novel is the idealization of the Victorian ethos and of its imperial mission. Through the narrative structure, Imperial heroism is idealised through the discourse of civilization which is displayed by the reference to the Roman Empire. The most pertinent example of parody is in the portrayal of Kurtz. His introduction in the novel as a hero of the European civilizing mission, and the subsequent reference to his misdeeds in negative terms indicates that the civilizing mission is just a plan written on paper, just as Conrad refers to Kurtz as a voice: "*Kurtz discoursed. A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart*." (p.142) This implies that the voice of the rhetoric of Europe is one which hides the barren darkness of Europe. We hear of voices speaking and celebrating the civilizing mission in Africa but what we see is totally different. The sound and the sight are two senses which Conrad juxtaposes in order to reveal a reality. According to Bakhtin, "*In folk grotesque, madness is a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official "truth*."[325] The device of carnivalization in *Heart of Darkness* is a means used to show

[323] Ibid., p.333.
[324] Paul Simpson. *On the Discourse of Satire*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003. p.119.

the hypocrisy of the Victorian society and to contest its authority. For Bakhtin, the genre of the novel is "*the prime example of 'carnivalised' literature, because, like the medieval carnival, it is a site where orthodoxies are contested, satirised and undermined; its varied voices – of narrator and characters – allow for dialogue*."[326] The narrative form of this novel is oriented towards an inversion of positions of structures of 'high' and 'low' through forms of parody so as to displace and to destabilise what is considered as sacred and taken seriously within order. The superiority of the white man over the black man is reversed in the character of Kurtz. Towards the end of the novel, he no longer appears as a remarkable man because of his sinful acts of murder and torture. The man who is supposed to bring light to Africa is himself suffering from the dark side of inhumanity. This is why Conrad implies that the true site of darkness, and the most important one to consider, lies in the white man's heart.

Conrad's employment of madness is crucial. Kurtz, whom all Europe has contributed to make, is parodied and shown as an anti-hero who fails to transmit the ideal image of his society, his actions are described as monstrous passions, and he died suffering from madness. Before his death, Marlow describes him as follows:

> *I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived—a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night,…*

Marlow's critical voice performs a perversion of the West's ideal-image of itself as the true seat of civilization and of Africa as the seat of darkness. For instance, when describing the behaviour of the whites and of the natives, Marlow observes that the natives, unlike the whites and in spite of harsh conditions in which they live, behave in a restrained manner. Speaking about a black man and his fellows, Marlow says that they "*must be very hungry: that they must have been growing increasingly hungry for at least this month past.*"(p.82). Then Marlow wonders and says, "*Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us—they were thirty to five—and have a good tuck-in for once, amazes me now when I think of it.*"(p.84). Later on, Marlow identifies them as fellow human beings when he says, "*Yes; I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity. Restraint!*"(pp.84-85). From this situation, Marlow draws our attention to two important things: first, the restraint of the natives despite their suffering as Marlow says "*It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonour, and the perdition of one's soul—than this kind of prolonged hunger*."(p.85) These black men prove that they are not cannibals. Second, the

[326] Young, Tory. *Studying English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. p.51.

situation of "*growing increasingly hungry*" demonstrates that the whites are not interested in the well-being of the natives; all that matters for them is exploitation.

Marlow, as we suggested earlier, attacks the means but not the ends of imperialism; he condemns the "*flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly*" rather than the civilizing ideals that led this devil to Africa. The anonymous narrator's critique, however, is radical since it challenges the ideals which rationalize western progress in general and imperialism in particular. As he retells Marlow's tale, the narrator utters some comments which the ideology Marlow reproduces through his speech is racist. He seems to suggest that whites are no better than blacks; therefore, the white invasion of Africa cannot be justified on the grounds of white superiority. For instance, he comments on Marlow's failure to act against the colonization efforts in general or to question its legitimacy without any ambivalent tendency. As a captain of a river steamer, Marlow—in the anonymous narrator's point of view—seems to participate in the colonial brutality. It seems that Marlow prevents interaction with the Europeans' atrocities, thus when he prevents such ugliness, we feel that he participates in it just like the other Europeans in order to serve their interests. His participation in the exploitation of Africa goes beyond his duties as a ship's captain, however, for, as Benita Parry notes, he uses imagery that privileges light over darkness, white over black, civilization over savagery, and superiority over inferiority, in an attempt to legitimate the colonization of Africa by Europeans. According to Parry, such an imagery is traditional in Western culture:

> *It is a commonplace that in western thought, the contrast between black and white has for centuries stood for good, true, pure, and beautiful as opposed to the evil, ignorant, corrupt, and atrocious. When the actions of modern imperialism brought the white world into organised confrontations with the other continents, the existing accretions of dark and black were thickened and extended to establish an equivalence between 'primitive', 'barbaric', or 'savage' societies and moral perversity, and by inference between black people living amidst jungle, forest and wilderness and a condition of aboriginal depravity.*[327]

As a radical critic, the anonymous narrator does not see things Marlow's way. Not surprisingly, Marlow does not recognize that he is , in a sense, "blinded" by ideology. In fact, like most people, he is not conscious of participating in any ideology at all. He is aware, however, of the difference between what he "sees" and what others see, as his interruptions of his own language suggest. "Do you see him? He asks his listeners, referring to Kurtz: "Do you see the story?" Do you see anything?" (p.82) He is frustrated, even angry, with those who

[327]Benita Parry. Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers. London: Macmillan, 1983. p.5.

don't share his world-view. As his interruptions and comments show, the narrator opposes not only Marlow's interpretation of his African adventure but the ideological model which impose a unitary world-view. It is this multi-layered narrative which displays language diversity.

The white men's greed makes them blind to the needs of the natives: "*as long as there was a piece of paper written over in accordance with some farcical law or other made down the river, it didn't enter anybody's head to trouble how they would live*."(p.82). This is another instance of the Europeans' selfishness. Selfishness according to Ibsen's conception of modern tragedy is a feature of the tragic protagonist because it has tragic consequences for himself and for those around him.

3. Tragic Disruptions in the Colonial Encounter

An analysis of the characterization of Kurtz reveals a connection between his egocentrism and the tragic outcome of the story. The modern tragedy in this novel is that of the egoistic character, Kurtz, who places himself above other people, and thus fails to see the consequences which such behaviour can bring. We have seen that Kurtz's egoism manifests itself through brutal acts and racist pronouncements. His self-centred ways are seen most clearly in his accumulation of ivory as well as in his desire for more power over those around him. In his physical portrayal of Kurtz, Conrad—in Marlow's critical voice—highlights a feature which is symboli**c** of Europe's "*appetite for more ivory*" (p.118): "*I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind*."(p.153) The sense of acquisitiveness is also expressed by another European man when he says, "*when one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages—hate them to the death*."(p.36) Marlow observes that egoism is a destructive feature of one's personality. It disrupts the relationship between the Europeans themselves, which is a sign which destabilizes the European ideal of morality and superiority. It leads the Europeans to hate one another because of their strong selfish desire to possess ivory. Marlow stresses that none of the European ideals come to be realised:

> *There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it, of course. It was as unreal as everything else—as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account.*…(p.47).

Marlow claims that Kurtz "*had stepped over the edge*" (p.147). This claim is important to consider because it refers to the nature of Kurtz's tragedy. In our opinion, it is a liberal tragedy. In Raymond Williams's definition, "*at the centre of liberal tragedy is a single situation: that of a man at the height of his powers and the limits of his strength, at once aspiring and being defeated, releasing and destroyed by his own energies*."[328] Williams explains that the structure of this tragedy is both 'liberal' and 'tragic': liberal because it emphasises on "*the surpassing individual*"[329], and tragic because of its sense of "*ultimate defeat or the limits of victory*."[330] It is this sense of tragedy that we find in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It shows Kurtz at the height of his powers (his power to speak so eloquently that the natives worship him as their deity, and his embodiment of the European social, cultural, economic, and political power since all Europe has contributed to his making), and the limits of his strength are shown towards the end of the novel where he is shown as ill and weak. Though he aspires to greatness, he is shown as a "*surpassing individual*" who is being defeated and destroyed by his own aspiration because such an aspiration is made larger than it deserves and it is made unlawfully. Kurtz goes beyond his right to possess ivory; his selfishness drives him to his self-destruction. There is a passage in the novel which reveals that though Kurtz is a talented man, his strength is limited:

> *'Mr. Kurtz's knowledge of unexplored regions must have been necessarily extensive and peculiar— owing to his great abilities and to the deplorable circumstances in which he had been placed: therefore—' I assured him Mr. Kurtz's knowledge, however extensive, did not bear upon the problems of commerce or administration*. (p.150)

As a tragic protagonist, Kurtz is a "*surpassing individual*" not only in that he "*had stepped over the edge*" (p.147), but more importantly, he behaves contrary to his ideal image. As readers, we do not expect him to behave in a barbaric way, especially that his reputation as a remarkable gifted man whom all Europe contributed to make places him in the ranks of European heroes. It is hardly surprising that the heroic reputation of Kurtz proves to be an illusion. What comes to mind in this context is Lord Henry's claim that "*one should never do anything that one cannot talk about*" (p.379). In Kurtz's context, the way of talking about him and the way his deeds are shown to us are completely different. In this perspective, the edge Kurtz stepped over is that of his society and its particular moral laws since he does not act as a European civilized man; and it is this action which makes of him an anti-hero. The modern 'heroism' of Kurtz, in the light of Williams's *Modern Tragedy*, lies partly in his transgression

[328] Raymond Williams. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Verso Editions, 1961.p.87.
[329] Ibid., p.87.
[330] Ibid., p.87.

of the Victorian social laws. When we say that Kurtz is a modern tragic hero, we also mean that he is an anti-hero because there is nothing heroic about him; there are only non-heroic realities about him. His 'anti-heroism' lies in his misrepresentation of the ideals of imperialism. As an imperial man in Africa, he is supposed to fulfil his duty in "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways." (p.21). Unlike Jude and Dorian Gray who are modern tragic heroes (seen from the lenses of the theory Modern Tragedy), Kurtz is different from them. Jude and Dorian Gray are conflicting characters in the sense that they are in conflict with their Victorian society. As a representative of the working class, Jude rebels against the ideological social order whose laws of marriage and education ruin his life. Dorian Gray also rebels against the ideology of the upper-class, to which he belongs, because the Victorian culture is an agent of repression rather than of development. The question we ask here is whether there is a conflict between Kurtz and the ideology he represents in Africa. As an imperial man, Kurtz represents the middle class. So what is it that makes him change "*from professed idealist to predator*"[331]?

In our opinion, there are two distinct forces behind Kurtz's tragedy: the European economic force which is embodied in Capitalism; second, the African material sources, like ivory, which Europeans sought to possess. Written in the *fin-de-siècle*, *Heart of Darkness* is set at a time when forces of capitalism and materialism were so active and made their significance apparent in everyday life. It also depicts the impact of these forces on the lives of the Europeans, Kurtz in particular, and the natives as well. Europeans, in this novel, are depicted as being not only too selfish in their attitudes towards the natives but also racist, as we have shown earlier. Capitalism is also a system which does not take into account the principles of morality since all that matters is the accumulation of wealth. Thus we view that economics plays an important role in the creation of such racist relationship. Conrad, thus, views business matters at odds with conventional morality, with humanity threatened by the pressures of ownership.

All theses issues are reflected in the dilemma of Kurtz. He is caught between two forces: his status as a European civilized man, he is supposed to behave in a civilized way towards the natives; on the other hand, his greed for ivory as a source for economic power makes him focus attention only on accumulating ivory disregarding his conventional morality. In this case, Conrad refers to the problems a European man in a conscienceless capitalist social system is confronted with. As an ideologue of imperialism and civilization, Kurtz is a

[331]Gerald Levin. "Victorian Kurtz", in *Journal of Modern Literature*. Vol. 7, No. 3. Sep., 1979.p. 433.

believer in Europe's ideas of material success and therein lies his tragedy, for he goes mad and then dies for greed of materialism. He meets a dead end in pursuit of ivory. His downfall and final defeat illustrate not only the failure of a man but also the failure of a way of life. Still more important, in Williams's frame of thought, Kurtz can be placed among the individuals who "*suffer for what they are and naturally desire, rather than for what they try to do*"[332] Kurtz's suffering does not spring from his duty to civilize but from what he is: a selfish man who is driven by a strong desire to possess everything even at the expense of others' rights. Further, the fate of Kurtz resembles the fate of Arthur Miller's protagonist, Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* (1949). Both Kurtz and Willy Loman are modern tragic heroes, but we have to draw attention to the fact that their sense of the tragic is different from that of Jude and Dorian Gray. Jude and Dorian Gray bring tragedy down on themselves by directly opposing the Victorian social order since they consider it "*a false system, […], destructive and evil. […] It is still seen as a false and alterable society, but merely to live in it is enough to become its victim*"[333] Thus they are victims of a social order which is but a lie; a system which represses individual desires. Contrary to this, Kurtz's desire to be wealthy is supported by the economic system (i.e. Capitalism) in which the class of merchants, traders, and imperial men believed. In *Modern Tragedy*, Williams comments on the tragic end of Willy Loman saying that

> *In Death of a Salesman, the victim is not the nonconformist, the heroic but defeated liberator; he is, rather, the conformist, the type of society itself. Willy Loman is a man who from selling things has passed to selling himself, and has become, in effect, a commodity which like other commodities will at a certain point be discarded by the laws of the economy.*[334]

In the same way, we can argue that Kurtz's tragedy is linked to his belief in Capitalism. Kurtz is heroic in the sense that he is believed to be the messenger of civilization, but he is also a defeated liberator in the sense that he frees himself from the Victorian constraints by manifesting what European society represses. This is what the manager expresses when he says, "*Anything—anything can be done in this country. That's what I say; nobody here, you understand, here, can endanger your position. And why? You stand the climate—you outlast them all. The danger is in Europe; but there before I left I took care to*—?" (p.46) It is the lack of social control, then, that leads Europeans to liberate their repressed desires. His acts of murder and racism are images of his barbarism rather than civilization. Besides, he epitomises the struggle middle-class men like him face when they are outside their native society. Kurtz is the type of late Victorian society in that he represents the imperial mission under

[332] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit.,p.104.
[333] Ibid., p.104.
[334] Ibid., p.104.

capitalism. As an imperialist, he represents an imperial foundation on which European industry relies. He figures the import of capital. The selfishness of this economic system shifts to reach Kurtz's soul. Kurtz conforms to the egoistic laws of Capitalism. By so doing, he brings tragedy down on himself not by opposing these tyrannical laws but by believing and accepting to live under their conditions. He becomes a living manifester of exploitation, racism, and despotism. He surrenders body and soul for the sake of profit.

What draws our attention as far as desire is concerned, is the notion of desire as expressed by Jude and Dorian Gray. Though they all meet a tragic end, the experience of their desires and aspirations is different in its aim. Jude's and Dorian Gray's aspiration aim at liberating themselves from the ideological and cultural system which deny their individuality. As for Kurtz's aspiration, it does not lie in his rebellion against his social laws but in embracing them to fulfil his noble task. However, what is tragic in Kurtz's aspiration is his representation of the Victorian social order but through egoistic ways. He, consequently, misrepresents the imperial ideology which supports the civilizing mission. He affirms his social status as a racist rather than a civilized man. His reputation as being civilized is a mask he wears to legitimate his presence in the Congo Station. His superiority is an agent of the land's as well as of his own destruction.

Unlike Jude and Dorian Gray who question their social laws and advance other oppositional cultural forms, Kurtz does not question the validity of these laws. The one who questions the ideology of imperialism is Marlow as we have seen. This is why we remark that Kurtz meets a tragic end, whereas Marlow is saved from such a tragedy. This is obvious when Marlow says, "*[Kurtz] ha[s] stepped over the edge, while I ha[s] been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot.*" (p.147). this idea is also explained by Arthur Miller.

Following his argument, in modern tragedy, the dramatist must show not only why characters' lives "*are ending in sadness, but how they might have avoided their end*"[335], Marlow could have the same tragic end as Kurtz; but since he is not driven by the wild material desire of possessing ivory, and he does not behave in the same way as Kurtz, he could mark a difference which saved him from tragedy, as he says, "*[Kurtz] had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference*" (p.147). Marlow also remarks that Kurtz misuses his European morality and values; at a time he is in need of them, he compresses them and goes beyond the limits of his social laws: "*all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that*

[335] Arthur Miller. "The Nature of Tragedy" (1949), in Ibid., p.254.

inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible." (P.147-8) Kurtz's cry "the horror" is "*an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions*." (p.148)

As an incarnation of the white man's burden, Kurtz's task is to civilize. As we notice in the novel, Kurtz is not in his European society but in the African one. It is in this context that the second force behind Kurtz's destruction lies: it is the perception of Africa as a source of power. Since Kurtz brings new ideas to "investigate" in the Congo station, this means that his ideology is an oppositional formation as regards that of the natives. From the point of view of the Africans, Kurtz's culture and ideology constitute a challenge and a threat to their social order, however inferior it may be viewed by Europeans. The European hegemonic tendencies towards the African natives are, in the natives' view, emergent. To link this idea to the situation of Kurtz, we argue that what Williams refers to as "*tragedy, for us, has been mainly the conflict between an individual and the forces that destroy him*" makes the conflict shift from his European to the African society. This means that Kurtz is in conflict with the African society. His "plan" of civilization clashes with his personal desire of wealth. The conqueror Kurtz becomes conquered by the force he sought to defeat.

We think it necessary to have an idea about how success is interpreted in this novel. May be Kurtz is a successful man, but he is not a civilized one. The movement of success is separated from the movement of civilization. His success is made at the cost of his loss of his own morality. It is his desire for wealth that runs his life. Conrad shows Kurtz's life being poisoned by his desire to be rich through the accumulation of ivory. His failure generates a sense of guilt which is revealed in his final words: "*the horror! The horror!*" Words which are no more than the pronouncement of "*a judgment upon the adventures of his soul on this earth*."(p.146) Marlow, on the other hand, though not having the same status as Kurtz, does not allow greed for material to ruin his life for he is not an egotistical man. In this perspective, Conrad implies that the relationship that exists between England and its colonies is destructive. The colonial power, as is embodied in Kurtz, has narcissistic demands. There cannot be fruitful results in the colonies as far as greed for wealth and the civilizing task do not reside in the same man. Ambivalence best explains this matter because "*the colonial relationship is always ambivalent, it generates the seeds of its own destruction. This is controversial because it implies that the colonial relationship is going to be disrupted,*

regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonized."[336] We notice here that the very seeds of Kurtz's tragic downfall are, to a great extent, within himself. Via Kurtz, Conrad refers to the imperial greed and to the European empire's destruction. His ambivalence makes of him a problematic hero. That "*ambivalence 'decentres' authority from its position of power*," is true in the case of Kurtz because his personal desire which is incarnated in his greed for wealth and his noble task of civilization form of him a conflicting individual and an "*icon of outlandish greed*"[337] decentres his authorial position. He unsettles the colonial dominance by the coexistence of two opposing attitudes within himself. Williams argues,

> *we find, […], a personality within and beyond the similarly defining status, and the conflict that can result from this coexistence is often one of the sources of the tragedy. Thus the tension of the general action, between the exploring energies of life and all that is known of order, is repeated in the hero himself, between the individual man and the social role. In these tensions, this particular tragedy was formed*.[338]

Being alone in the wilderness, Kurtz does not behave as a civilised man, and he does nothing to civilise the natives. As Williams argues: "*[t]he modern hero in social tragedy, is characteristically a man who rebels against some law, in any of its possible forms: the heroism lies in the rebellion, and is vindicated even in defeat.*"[339] Kurtz seems to act freely and brings tragedy upon his head with the decisions he makes, especially those related to violence and brutality with the natives. As the manager tells Marlow:

> *Mr. Kurtz's methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him—some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence.*(p.119-120).

Kurtz's free decisions seem to reveal free choices which are taken freely far from the constraints of his society. The colonial environment in which Kurtz finds himself is different from home; there is no policeman to control his behaviour. The humanitarian side of the ethos of Empire can no longer hold him in check.

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[336] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, Eds. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. (1998) London and New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001.p.13.
[337] Mary Ellen Snodgrass. *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2010. p.135.
[338] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit.,p.90.
[339] Ibid., p.293.

Kurtz goes beyond what is necessary and crosses the 'red line' law and order. As an example, Marlow attempts to help Kurtz to go out of the wilderness; however, Kurtz "*would say yes, and then he would remain; go off on another ivory hunt*" (p.117). Kurtz's destructive behaviour creates victims (the natives). His egocentrism causes him to view himself as a "*supernatural*" being (p.103) and to approach the natives as "*with the might of a deity*" (ibid). His conceit is obvious when he assumes to be a sort of **Nietzschean Superman** *avant la lettre*. The natives are to him merely a resource for advancing his own plans, and anyone who gets in the way is doomed. An example of this is the "*savage sight*" (p.121) of "*those heads drying on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz's windows*" (p.121.)

Kurtz's egoism contributes greatly to the modern tragic quality of the work. His self-centeredness plays a significant part in bringing about the ruin of the district and the misery and suffering of the natives (hunger, exploitation, death, slaughtering, etc.) His egoism leads him to lose his mind. As such he is no longer the "*remarkable man*" he used to be. Early in the work, when introducing Kurtz to Marlow, the Company's chief accountant says "*[h]e is a very remarkable person*" (p.35). Later on, Marlow subverts and displaces the positive meaning of "remarkable" when he says, "*rather remarkable in the ruinous aspect of the place*" (p.118-19). Kurtz's social downfall is first noted by the manager of the company when he says "*he WAS [remarkable]"* (p.129), meaning that he no longer is. Among Marlow's utterances concerning the dark side of Kurtz, the one which most probably expresses Kurtz's subverted image is "*a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night*" (p.153).

Kurtz himself, however, has not been immune to his own actions. It is a double ruin he is guilty of: the ruin of his soul and the ruin of the district he is running; and it is in this respect that the tragic disruptions reach the colonizer and the colonized. At the level of the colonizer, we can say that Kurtz's selfish attitudes in the Inner Station are not contained by his society, not because he is far from it now, but because the ideology of imperialism supports his deeds but lead him to a deadlock. Kurtz's misdeeds are contained by the wilderness itself. Kurtz dominates the wilderness through his trade of ivory, but this dominance does not last long because the wilderness plays a rebellious role which refuses any more intrusion. As an intruder, Kurtz enters Africa as a remarkable man but dies mad and alone. His fascination with ivory increased his sense of greed for more wealth. However, such a fascination turns against him until he becomes mad. Unbeknown to him, his egoism has made a victim of himself. "*Humility and selflessness, the absence of selfishness, is considered*

a virtue,"[340] but selfishness is a vice. He dies a solitary man in the Congo Station. Marlow speaks about the triumph of the wilderness just after the death of Kurtz; he says "*It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush which, it seemed to me, I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul*." (p.153) Another sign of Kurtz's containment is the speech of the black boy (the manager's boy) who announces his death saying "*in a tone of scathing contempt: ''Mistah Kurtz—he dead.*'" (p.145) This scene marks a shift in positions: the silenced native now speaks after the voice of authority and eloquence is silenced. It is thus a triumph for the natives to speak after the tragic death of Kurtz. His tragic end is described in terms of grotesqueness:

> *The shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham, whose fate it was to be buried presently in the mould of primeval earth. But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power*.(p.142).

Kurtz's selfish attitudes reflect his aspiration towards progress, but as Raymond Williams argues, "*aspiration itself is only a disguise for cruelty*"[341], which means that even the humanitarian discourse of imperialism is brought to a dead end since all it identifies, through Kurtz, is betrayal of one's ideals, torture, colonialism, and racism. The latter identify the Victorian society as a "*false society*"[342]. Being one of its important members, Kurtz does not subvert his society by advancing oppositional alternatives because he is under no social control. Maybe his unique act of subversion springs from his own nature as a selfish man in the sense that instead of fulfilling acts of civilization as is intended by society, he performs barbarous actions. But this cannot be interpreted as an intended subversion because, though it questions and threatens the imperial system, its narrative structure is an exposition of Conrad's views of the behaviour of the white man in Africa. Conrad records a white man's life far from social control. Being alone in the wilderness is an opportunity for him to indicate that his is a false assumption and a false idealism. Europe's claims of superiority are contained through Kurtz's tragic end. If we compare the beginning and the end of the novel, we feel that Conrad foreshadows the end of imperialism through the character of Kurtz because his energy at the beginning of the novel is consumed by his greed for ivory. Instead of fulfilling the "white man's burden", he answers his selfish desires.

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[340] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.p.1019.
[341] *Modern Tragedy*. Op.cit., p.105.
[342] Ibid., p.105.

Marlow's description of the soul of Kurtz as a "*soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power*" indicates the hollowness of the European civilizing; this is why we link the tragedy of Kurtz as an imperializer to the tragedy of the whole Victorian Empire since Kurtz can be construed, in Bakhtin's terms, as the ideologue of imperialism. His tragedy is also that of the irreparable loss of human relationships (or still worse, it is man's inhumanity to man in the name of civilization) for the sake of material gain. More tragic yet is that Kurtz does not learn from the earlier Europeans who went to Africa, those whom Marlow spoke about at the beginning of the narrative.

Following Arthur Miller's argument, in tragedy, the dramatist must show not only why characters' lives "*are ending in sadness, but how they might have avoided their end*"[343], Marlow could have the same tragic end as Kurtz; but since he is not driven by the wild material desire of possessing ivory, and he does not behave in the same way as Kurtz, he could mark a difference which saved him from tragedy, as he says, "*[Kurtz] had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference*" (p.147). Marlow also remarks that Kurtz misuses his European morality and values; at a time he is in need of them, he compresses them and goes beyond the limits of his social laws: "*all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible*." (P.147-8) Kurtz's cry "the horror" is "*an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions*." (p.148).

As a remarkable man whom all Europe has contributed to make, Kurtz is tragically destroyed by his excessive selfishness which is itself derived from his false idealism. His tragedy can also be named a "*tragedy of idealism, whose chief protagonist[t] is of heroic proportions and about whom there is a quality of greatness*.**"**[344] The nightmare of his tragic end is paradoxically lightened by his final awareness of its horror. It is something to face the savagery within himself to which he had succumbed.[345] In other words, paradoxically, it is the horror of his wrong deeds that enlightens him about his innate savagery.

As a feature of modern tragedy, we should also mention the illusion of realism. It is illustrated through the combination of realistic details with symbolic elements, which together

[343]Arthur Miller. "The Nature of Tragedy" (1949), in Ibid., p.254.
[344] Sverre Arestad. "Ibsen's Concept of Tragedy", in *PMLA*. Vol. 74, No. 3. Jun., 1959.p.286.
[345] Leonard F. Dean. "Tragic Pattern in Conrad's "*the Heart of Darkness* ", in *College English*. Vol. 6, No. 2 Nov., 1944.p.102**.**

generate meaning. For instance, Marlow's use of the term "fog", in his descriptions of the physical setting, is an illusion of the white man's civilizing task; he says, "*When the sun rose there was a white fog, very warm and clammy, and more blinding than the night*." (p.79) We may ask here how can there be a white fog which is more blinding than night at sunrise? This means that the landscape provides more than just a physical setting; it comes to symbolise the spiritual darkness of Europe. We find the same meaning in Marlow's statement "*I looked into the fog. How long would it last? It was the most hopeless lookout.*" (p.87) What Marlow seems to question here is the presence of the Europeans in Africa, because there is no hope to be derived from their presence there. Moreover, the blank space on the map which Marlow saw in his childhood "*had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery […]. It had become a place of darkness*." (p.12)The word 'darkness', here again, symbolises the dark side of Europe. This novella indeed goes beyond re-creating reality; it produces the illusion of reality, but an illusion which takes on a symbolic import.

Eventually, Conrad reshapes and reverses the myth of the European superiority so as to serve his purpose. He ridicules Kurtz, the hero of Europe, and deprives him of his eloquence so as to make him inferior to the man whom all Europe had contributed to make. The contradiction between Europe's words and deeds leads Conrad to realize the imperialistic destructiveness that lingers "*beneath the surface of Western ideals*". *Heart of Darkness* is based on his Congo diary which chronicled the acts of savage brutality performed by civilized men. The discovery of the brutal nature of the white man led to develop Conrad's pessimistic view of the world. Conrad does not accept the European truth as self-evidently true.

Marlow is appalled by the brutal actions which are performed by Kurtz, the civilized European, against the supposed rebellious savage natives. In this perspective, Conrad (and Marlow too) re-evaluates his attitudes concerning the European human nature after witnessing acts of torture and murder performed by civilized men in the name of European imperialism. It is this message of the brutal nature of humankind, the European in particular, that Conrad wishes to share with the readers of *Heart of Darkness*.

The usefulness of the Bakhtinian theory for dealing with the ambiguities of *Heart of Darkness* becomes clear as soon as one recognizes that savagery and civilization in Conrad's novel, comprising opposing worldviews as they do, represent ideologically saturated languages, in the Bakhtinian sense of the word, of a sort which is capable of entering into a dialogic relationship. Rather than reading for a stable direction in the novella's critique, one that privileges the term of civilization over that of savagery, the Bakhtinian theory makes it

possible to see the thrust of the novel's critique as bidirectional, and as thereby questioning the value of embracing the term of civilization and the worldview or ideology it represents as "natural". The dialogic confrontation of different worldviews about civilization and savagery makes it possible to question the value of the Victorian ideology which was granted an unquestioned authority. As we have shown, the discourse of parody subverted the authority given to the imperial mission and weakened the power of the European missionaries as spreaders of civilization in the dark places of the earth. The discourse of parody as is witnessed in Marlow's utterances displaced darkness from the heart of Africa to the heart of Europe. We also note that there is a contradiction in the imperial 'civilising mission': the cultural conversion designed to raise the African peoples up to the level of British civilisation, while reality shows images of barbarism and destruction

The tragic dimension in this novel is shown via two levels. First, at the level of the natives when they are shown enduring a passive sufferance; we say passive because they only suffer without being able to change their situation. They are slaves in their own land. The images of exploitation, racism, segregation, slaughter, murder, starvation are all indicators of the tragedy brought down on the natives by the Europeans who are supposed to be civilizers. Second, there is the tragedy of Kurtz. We cannot name a specific cause to his tragedy because he is victim of his idealism—an idealism which is proved to be empty and shallow—and of the shallow ideology of imperialism which celebrates the discourse of humanitarianism and civilization. Instead, the images Conrad portrays are those of inhumanity and barbarism. In this perspective, Kurtz's tragedy is also the tragedy of Empire. The seeds of imperial ruin are planted by such men as Kurtz. The conflict between Kurtz and the other European characters in the novel highlight the hideous contradiction of Victorian society. Kurtz behaves as an individual looking only for his interests; this is why his sinful deeds are contained at the end of the narrative. The demoralizing task of ivory trading, as shown in his story, introduces the damaged imperial conscience. The lack of harmony which characterizes his relationship with the people around him makes evident the assertion of his individualism. His being outside the control of society leads him to liberate his repressed self. He disrupts social relationships in favour of material gain.

General Conclusion

Throughout this study, we have examined different instances of subversion, dissidence, dissonance, and tragic disruptions. Opting for three different sites, which are the social, the cultural, and the politico-economic, we hope that we have shed light on the literary treatment of some problems which the late Victorian society was facing. The choice of literary theory was made in such a way as to establish a relationship between the three fields of practice.

Through the theory of Cultural Materialism, we have attempted to highlight the late Victorian crisis of modernity which is demonstrated in the conflict between the Victorian tradition and the new emergent ideas. The latter are manifested as alternatives or oppositional formations against the bourgeois obsession with materialism. Socially speaking, we have sought to show the problems of the working class as shaped in the fate of Jude. As he shows in *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy draws the disruptive desires and actions of his main protagonist, Jude, trapped in rigid social doctrines. Throughout this analysis, we have attempted to argue that, though society may have felt ill-at-ease when the book was published, Hardy did not produce any obscene writings.

Hardy stood accused of being at once irrelevantly eccentric and directly dangerous to the community. But, in fact, he merely sought to explore a key element of human existence largely overlooked in previous literature: the tragic disruptions resulting from domestic family strife and sexuality. That much of society was not adequately prepared to have the topics of sex and personal desire addressed in such a detailed and introspective manner emphasizes the revolutionary nature of the authors' text. With the questioning of marriage, religion, and education, Hardy condemns all aspects of conventional social control and order. The failure of the three marriages, which form the hub of the book, the hypocrisy of the church, the society's cold indifference, and the implosion of Jude's family—including the tragic death of the children—constitute a negative and loathsome image of the late Victorian Establishment. The choice of Hardy's protagonist as a working-class man to show the different problems he faces does not mean that the working class is the only class which faces social problems. The upper-class also has a part to share in the late Victorian crisis; this is why we have opted for a novel which prefigures the dilemma of an aristocratic man.

Culturally, then, we have dealt with Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a novel which deals with ethics and aesthetics as displayed by the aristocratic Dorian Gray. This novel is a text of political power rooted in the politics of Aestheticism. In a Cultural Materialist world-view, Aestheticism is an emergent cultural system which aims at subverting

the Victorian conception of Art and Beauty. The artist uses the power of Aestheticism to reveal the Victorian decadence. It is also a means for a new way of life, one which threatens the harmony which should be maintained between canonical Ethics and Aesthetics. However, the doctrines of Aestheticism together with the decadent social mode do not fulfil its aim in subverting completely the powers of the tyrannical society. Wilde's message, in our view, is not mainly to show a corrupt man in search of new sensation to escape an ugly society, but also to show that what society represses manifests itself in acts of deviance and urges individuals to lead a double life. However, the fate of the working-class man Jude and the upper-class man Dorian Gray in their own society is no better than the fate of the middle-class man Kurtz who lives outside his society (in the colony).

Heart of Darkness is based on Conrad's experience in the Congo, an experience which had a remarkable impact on him. His novella *Heart of Darkness* is the literary transposition of this experience and uncovers hidden realities and truths about European civilization and human existence itself. Through Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism, we have shown that this novella is a literary form which apparently seems to support and legitimise the European imperial policy in Africa. Through the European discourse of humanitarianism and civilization, it reflects the imperialist policy in bringing progress to the dark places of the earth. However, the narrative which ensures this legitimacy strives for "plausibility", and as such is open to counter-narratives and becomes a site for subversion.

The twin theme of civilization and savagery which, on the surface, complies with the strength of white vs. black soon gives ground to a counter-narrative which unveils the duplicities of European imperialism. Belonging to a class-divided society, the Victorian Kurtz embodies the instabilities on which the European discourses of civilization and humanitarianism—which he represents—are built. Such instabilities are registered as manifestations of dissidence and dissonance.

Furthermore, in the light of the same theory, we have shown that the imperial ideology—which feeds essentially on the Victorian social order behind Kurtz's deeds—tries to maintain itself in the new circumstances of Africa without losing its grip and power. However, it is subject to subversion because its hidden aims are unveiled. This ideology is proved to be a repressive and a brutal one. This is what Marlow witnesses in his journey into Africa. This is why his discourse is one of parodying. All these themes in fact are also analysed in the light of Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. The conflict which, from the cultural materialist point of view, is depicted between the dominant and the emergent cultural

system is highlighted as the conflict between the centripetal (dominant) and the centrifugal (emergent) social forces.

The use of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* gives us an account of the novel's emergent capacity for registering the discordances and fragmentations of the late 19th century European culture. Rather than presenting the reader with a realistic and coherent chronicle of shattered lives, Hardy focuses on individual consciousness and on shifting patterns of narrative discourse. The ensuing composite vision of tragedy is composed of tragic disruptions which constitute the modern tragic insight. Furthermore, the polyphonic tone of the narrative allows Hardy to discuss the themes of marriage in such a way as to break the closure of the Victorian "sacred" discourse of marriage.

As for Oscar Wilde's novel, it highlights a conflict between Victorian assumptions of ethical and aesthetic values. While society privileges ethics over aesthetics, Wilde longs for a new mode of life, the New Hedonism which states that the aim of one's existence is self-development through the individual experience. Experience, in this context, is subverted in that it is no longer a task to demonstrate what is wrong and what is good to adopt. Dorian Gray's aestheticises his life through aestheticising experience for the sake of experience. The discourse of art and beauty, thus, is dialogised in such a way as to stratify the Victorian unitary language. The discourse of the dandy and the critic as artist, as shown through Lord Henry and Dorian Gray, contribute to create conflicting views to form a polyphonic novel.

In the same way as social issues and cultural matters are dialogised in these two previous novels, the last novel, which is Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the notion of imperialism is also dialogised. Contrary to the critics who argue that *Heart of Darkness* is an instrument which supports the ideology of imperialism in Africa, and a literary work which sharpens the racist view, the use of the theory of cultural materialism demonstrates how the harmony and the coherence of the Victorian order in Africa are threatened from inside (Kurtz) by the contradictions it seeks to hide. These contradictions are best demonstrated through the ambivalent discourse of Marlow.

The analysis of the narrative discourse in *Heart of Darkness* shows a hidden polemic against the rhetoric of civilization. What Bakhtin terms the hybrid nature of the novelistic discourse is what characterizes the narrative discourse of Marlow. The voice of Marlow combines two different and conflicting utterances. As a European man in the colonial Congo, Marlow's utterances should be (logically) oriented to describe and to demonstrate the positive outcome of the European civilizing mission. However, we notice simultaneously other utterances—by the same Marlow—concerning the same subject. These utterances represent

the counter-discourse of civilization. We have shown that Marlow's discourse on imperialism as a civilizing mission, though ambivalently expressed, displays signs of anti-imperialism which we have termed liberal critique of imperialism. As for the radical critique of imperialism, it is, though explicitly expressed, demonstrated in the anonymous narrator's discourse.

Marlow's counter-discourse takes the form of parody, thus, to displace the positive role of imperialism, as well as to displace Kurtz from his stature: from that of remarkable heroism to monstrous barbarism. Through this parody, Marlow touches the raw spots of the imperial reality. We have resorted to what Bakhtin terms 'hidden dialogicality', in which a second discourse (we mean here the counter-discourse of civilization which should be uttered by the Africans) is absent because the Africans are silenced in the novel, but its presence is felt throughout the comments of Marlow. The discourse of the latter reads like a transcribed dialogue in which the voice of the natives is edited out. Marlow, thus, appears to be responding to and engaging with the Africans, but the latter are absent. Instead of being uttered by different voices (European and African), the discourse and counter-discourse merge into one single mouth, Marlow's. The new utterance which results from the merging of these discourses expresses a brutal European reality.

The result of all these conflicting view—either socially, culturally, of politically, and economically—have been shown through the theory of modern tragedy. The choice of a modern tragic dimension is an aesthetic form of the end of the conflicts. In *Jude the Obscure*, we have demonstrated that the tragedy of Jude lies basically in his unconventionality. As a surpassing individual and a liberator of desire, Jude meets a tragic end. His modern tragic status lies in his transgression of the sacred laws of marriage. Moreover, Sue's attempts to subvert the social laws of marriage and to question the status of divorce end in containment. She, therefore, leads a death in life. The power of this novel lies in the fact that, even two centuries later, the social issues which are discussed in this novel are still relevant here and now. This novel, indeed, gives a thought-provoking look at our most basic social issues.

Similarly, Dorian Gray's liberation of his repressed desires and aspiration by embracing the ideals of Aestheticism end tragically. But before that, he causes the ruin of many innocent individuals like Sibyl Vane, Basil Hallwards, and Alan Campbell, as well as his mle friends. Being tormented by his portrait which his real corrupt self, Dorian commits suicide because his power to maintain his identity is disrupted. This novel may be used as a stepping-stone in further studies on the quest of identity in the 20th century.

The egoism of Kurtz is the flaw which leads him to his tragic end. Through the theory of Modern Tragedy, we notice that Kurtz's stepping over the edges of his society makes of him a parody of the Kiplingian hero. We have also shown that the socio-political environment plays a role in the type of tragic protagonist the work presents. Though Jude, Dorian Gray, and Kurtz are protagonists who are victims of their social environment, they are also held responsible for their own actions and are, therefore, at heart torn apart by warring loyalties. They are unable to transcend their alienation; hence their undignified tragic fall.

Eventually, we can say that the subversive discourses of Hardy, Wilde, and Conrad paved the way for other authors to examine issues of the same kind using different methods and perspectives. These novels can also be dialogically read with 20th century literature in order to see whether the same problematic still obtains in the new century.

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ملخص البحث

الاهتمام الرئيسي لهذه الأطروحة هو دراسة الاضطرابات المأساوية و الخطاب الهدام في أواخر الرواية الفيكتورية. يتعلق الأمر برواية "جود الغامض" لتوماس هاردي، رواية "صورة دوريان غراي" لاوسكار وايلد، و رواية "قلب الظلام" لجوزيف كونراد. تتجلى هذه الدراسة التحليلية في ثلاثة مشاهد أساسية المشهد الاجتماعي في رواية "جود الغامض" المشهد الثقافي و الجمالي في رواية "صورة دوريان غراي" المشهد السياسي في رواية "قلب الظلام".لهذا الغرض نلجأ لاستعمال ثلاث نظريات: نظرية المادية الثقافية لريموند وليامس' نظرية النقاش و التحاور لميخائيل بختين' و نظرية التراجيديا الحديثة لريموند وليامس.

نظرية المادية الثقافية تهدف إلى إبراز العناصر المساهمة في محاولة إسقاط النظام الإيديولوجي السائد في الحكم باعتباره نظاما تعسفيا و جائرا لا يرقى إلى متطلبات الفرد. فتمرد الفرد على قوانين المجتمع يخلق صراعا بينهما، و يفسح المجال لظهور أفكار جديدة معادية يتبناها الفرد كإيديولوجية بديلة و مضادة للإيديولوجية السائدة في المجتمع. وهذا ما يبرزه الروائيون من خلال المواضيع التي يتطرقون إليها، مواضيع من شأنها إظهار الصراع الطبقي و التناقض البارز بين الإيديولوجية "المثالية" للطبقة الحاكمة و الواقع المرير الذي يعيشه الفرد. بطبيعة الأمر، هذه التناقضات و التوترات تتضح أكثر من خلال الدراسة التحليلية اللغوية على ضوء نظرية ميخائيل بختين التي تعنى بالخطاب.

من خلال تحليل لغة الشخصيات' يظهر لنا الدور الفعال الذي يقوم به الفرد لكسر الحاجز اللغوي الفيكتوري من خلال التعددية اللغوية التي تثري الرواية بأصوات جديدة مناهضة للفكر الفيكتوري الجائر. و عليه فإن الصراع على المستوى اللغوي يبدو جليا بين لغة السلطة الفيكتورية المتشددة والمحافظة و لغة الفرد الرافضة لهذه السلطة و الهادفة لإرساء قوانين جديدة تخدم بالدرجة الأولى مصلحة الفرد، لأن هذه الأخيرة أهم من الالتزام بقوانين تقمع حرية الفرد.

نتيجة ومنتهى هذا الصراع تبرزه نظرية التراجيديا الحديثة لريموند وليامس. تمرد الشخصيات من اجل تجسيد أفكارها المنافية للسلطة يلقى نهاية مأساوية نتيجة الصراع بين القوة الفيكتورية و القوى الفردية النابذة لها. إلى جانب هذا، هذه النظرية تسلط الضوء على الدراسة التحليلية لأبطال الروايات بحيث تبرز المفهوم الحديث للبطولة الذي يكمن في جرأتهم على التمرد ضد قوانين المجتمع الفيكتوري و متابعة مسيرة حياتهم وفق نمط مضاد للإيديولوجية الفيكتورية. القراءة التحليلية لهذه النهاية المأساوية تدل على الهيمنة القوية للسلطة الفيكتورية، ولهذا فإن فشل الفرد في تجسيد رؤيته الجديدة تدل على مدى تجذر القوة الفيكتورية بقدرتها على الحفاظ على تقاليدها.

من اجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف، ارتأينا أن تنقسم هذه الأطروحة إلى خمسة فصول. الفصل الأول يتطرق إلى الخلفية التاريخية للمجتمع الفيكتوري في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر،هذه الخلفية تشكل أبعاد الروايات المختلفة و الذي يرتكز عليه مضمون الروايات. الفصل الثاني يتناول بالتفصيل كل نظرية من النظريات الثلاثة المقترحة لتحليل موضوع هذه الأطروحة. الفصل الموالي يتمركز حول رواية "جود الغامض" لتوماس هاردي حيث يتناول قضايا اجتماعية تخص العائلة،الزواج،الدين،التعليم،و حرية الفرد في المجتمع . الفصل الرابع يخص تحليل رواية "صورة دوريان غراي" لاوسكار وايلد من حيث القيمة الفنية و الجمالية في أواخر المجتمع الفيكتوري. أما الفصل الخامس و الأخير يتطرق لموضوع الامبريالية و الحضارة في المستعمرات الانجليزية من خلال رواية "قلب الظلام" لجوزيف كونراد. في الخاتمة، نلخص أهم النقاط في التحليل و النقاش و نفتح المجال أمام أفاق جديدة للبحث العلمي لإثراء هذا الموضوع.

<u>الكلمات الدالة</u>: الفيكتورية، المادية الثقافية، النقاش و التحاور،التناص، التراجيديا الحديثة ،الخطاب، الأخلاق،الجماليات، الفن ، الامبريالية، الرأسمالية.