

A COMPARATIVE NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HOMER'S *THE ODYSSEY* AND JOSEPH
CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS*

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ABSTRACT

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As Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* includes a lot of details about western colonialism in Africa, it is usually studied from a postcolonial perspective. In addition to showing the colonial activities and their effects, the novel also lays bare women's marginalization in the western society. This thesis is a comparative narratological analysis of the representation of women in both Homer's *The Odyssey* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. There are many similarities between these two works in terms of "story," "text," and "narration". In both of these texts, men are the protagonists but women are on the periphery of these men's stories. In addition to this, while male protagonists go through different adventures, female characters stay still and they are located in their houses. The narrators also give limited information about female characters. However, unlike Homer, Conrad creates some ironic situations to criticize such hierarchical portrayals of women. He makes use of Homer's ancient epic both in the construction of his plot and characterization to show the ongoing marginalization of women in patriarchal western societies.

Keywords: *The Odyssey*, *Heart of Darkness*, Women, Patriarchy, Narratology

ÖZ

HOMEROS'UN *ODYSSEIA* VE JOSEPH CONRAD'IN *HEART OF DARKNESS* ADLI ESERLERİNDE KADIN TEMSİLİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANLATIBİLİMSEL ANALİZİ

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Joseph Conrad'ın *Heart of Darkness* eseri Afrika'daki batı sömürgeciliği ile ilgili birçok detay içermesi dolayısıyla sıklıkla postkolonyal bir perspektiften incelenir. Roman, sömürge faaliyetlerini ve etkilerini göstermenin yanı sıra, batı toplumunda kadının ötekileştirmesini de gözler önüne serer. Bu tez Homeros'un *Odyseia* ve Joseph Conrad'ın *Heart of Darkness* adlı eserlerinde yer alan kadın temsilinin karşılaştırmalı anlatıbilimsel bir analizidir. Bu iki eser arasında “hikaye”, “metin” ve “anlatım” öğeleri açısından birçok benzerlik vardır. Her iki eserde de erkekler ana karakter iken kadınlar bu erkeklerin hikayelerinin dışında kalır. Buna ek olarak, ana karakter olan erkekler farklı maceralar yaşarken, kadın karakterler hiçbir macera yaşamaz ve evlerinin sınırları içerisinde temsil edilirler. Ayrıca anlatıcılar da kadın karakterler hakkında sınırlı miktarda bilgi verirler. Fakat, Homeros'un aksine, Conrad kadınların bu şekilde hiyerarşik temsilini eleştirmek adına bazı ironik durumlar ortaya koyar. Conrad, hem hikaye hem de karakter oluşumunda, Homeros'un antik epiğinden ataerkil batı toplumlarında kadınların süregelen ötekileştirilmesini göstermek için faydalanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *The Odyssey*, *Heart of Darkness*, Kadın, Ataerkillik, Anlatıbilim

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In patriarchal societies women have a secondary place in social, political life and cultural spheres of life. This study aims to compare the positioning of female characters in two canonical works of Western literature: Homer's *The Odyssey* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In both texts, the roles given to male and female characters are quite the same. For this reason, this thesis argues that one of the reasons why Conrad makes use of Homer's ancient epic both in the construction of his plot and characterization is to show the ongoing marginalization of women in patriarchal western societies. Yet, it will also be argued that like Homer, Conrad, too, participates in the marginalization of women by attributing heroic characteristics only to the male protagonist and giving more textual place to male characters.

This chapter contains a literature review on comparative studies of *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* as well as on studies of the representation of women in both texts. In addition, gender roles in Homer's time and Conrad's approach to the woman question will be briefly discussed to explore these two writers' position in relation to gender inequality. As the analytical chapters will be structured around three basic aspects of narrative fiction, which are distinguished by Rimmon-Kenan in *Narrative Fiction* as "story," "text" and "narration," these categories will be briefly explained in the methodology section of this chapter.

1.1 A Literature Review on Comparative Studies of *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*

In his fictional works, Joseph Conrad frequently makes direct references to Greek mythology and ancient Greek literature. For instance, in *Falk* (1903), the protagonist himself is reminiscent of a specific mythological figure. The narrator describes Falk, who marries the woman the narrator loves and who is not loved by other people around him, as follows: "It seems absurd to compare a tugboat skipper to a

centaur: but he reminded me somehow of an engraving in a little book I had as a boy, which represented centaurs at a stream” (92). According to Greek mythology, a centaur is a half man and half horse who lives on fringes of forests and is fond of women (Bonney 151). In *The Secret Agent* (1907), Conrad refers to many mythological figures and stories, as well. The beer-hall is named “Silenus.” Ossipon, one of the anarchists, says to the professor, who is another anarchist, “Come and drink some beer with me at the Silenus” (255). In Greek mythology, Silenus is an “elderly male nature spirit [who is the] caretaker of Dionysus” (Cyrino 224). As Dionysus is known as the God of delirium and alcohol, Conrad names the beer-hall Silenus. Additionally, again in *The Secret Agent*, Conrad resembles Winnie to Penelope and Mr. Verloc to Odysseus: “And across the length of the table covered with brown oilcloth Winnie, his wife, talked evenly at him the wifely talk, as artfully adapted, no doubt, to the circumstances of this return as the talk of Penelope to the return of the wandering Odysseus” (158). The author resembles the adventurer husband to Odysseus and the waiting wife to Penelope. Similarly, in *Under Western Eyes* the narrator who falls in love with Miss Haldin likens her to Medusa whose beauty bewitches men. “I did not imagine that a number of the *Standard* could have the effect of Medusa's head. Her face went stony in a moment – her eyes – her limbs” (111). Moreover, the authority figures such as police and politicians, who are trying to solve a crime, are resembled to the Gods in Mount Olympus in the ancient Greek mythology.

But at the time of M. de P—'s murder . . . Councillor Mikulin . . . exercised a wide influence as the . . . right-hand man of his . . . friend, General T---. One can imagine them talking over the case of Mr. Razumov, with the full sense of their unbounded power over all the lives in Russia ... like two Olympians glancing at a worm. (306)

Such references to ancient Greek mythology make it clear that Conrad had an interest in Greek mythology and made use of ancient stories while creating his plot, characterization and symbols in his works.

There are direct references to Greek mythology also in *Heart of Darkness*. At the beginning of the novella, the narrator mentions a ship, which is named Erebus. Erebus is “a personification of darkness in Greek mythology” (*Merriam Webster Online*). The narrator also mentions that this ship “never returned” (*HD* 2305). Its

name is suggestive of what happens to it; it is lost in the darkness. Additionally, the western trader Kurtz is resembled to Zeus. "Some of the pilgrims behind the stretcher carried his arms-- two shot-guns, a heavy rifle, and a light revolver-carbine-- the thunderbolts of that pitiful Jupiter" (*HD* 2349). Kurtz is a "pitiful" God because he has lost all his "restraint" and has started to kill his own men like Zeus, who sometimes punishes rebellious human beings.

Besides these explicit references to Greek mythology, Conrad makes use of the ancient Greek epic, *The Odyssey* in *Heart of Darkness*; there are many similarities between these two works in terms of plot, characterization and narration. Some critics touch upon Conrad's dialogue with Homer's text; they argue, for example, that these two works resemble each other with regard to the journey symbolism. According to Cedric Watts, the journey in *Heart of Darkness* is a "psychological odyssey" (45) and he finds a significant parallelism between *Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in this respect: both Odysseus and Marlow come across difficulties throughout their journeys; and these make them discover themselves. For this reason, their journey is not only a physical process but also a psychological one. They become more mature at the end of their journeys. Mark Turner also argues, "The actual journey in the travel narrative and the metaphoric journey of self-discovery become intertwined, as in *The Odyssey* or *Heart of Darkness*" (245).

Cedric Watts also points to a parallelism between these two works in terms of form. He argues that "few prominent features of 'Heart of Darkness' could not be traced back through the nineteenth century into the distant past. Its ... oblique narrative convention ... could be traced [in] the inset narratives of the Homeric epics" (47-8). Watts resembles the frame narrative structure of *Heart of Darkness* to *Odyssey*'s narrative. In both of these works, the main story is located within another one and there are two narrators. However, like some other critics such as Peter Edgerly Firchow and Lillian Feder, Watts is more interested in the parallelisms between Conrad's novella and *The Aeneid*. He points out the allusions in *Heart of Darkness* to the ancient Roman epic and holds that "Marlow's nightmarish journey is explicitly likened to . . . *The Aeneid*, particularly Book VI, in which Aeneas, the legendary imperialist, travels through the underworld" (Watts 48). According to Watts, Marlow's journey into the darkness and his discovery of the limits of the

human mind there resemble Aeneas' journey to the underworld as Marlow also states that he feels as if he is in an inferno when he is in Congo.

As different from the debates on the journey motif and the narrative structure, Christopher Miller directs the reader's attention to the Africa in *The Odyssey* and its similarities to the representation of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*. Miller mentions

Still, the most modern Michelin map of Africa bears this caveat . . . "In Africa distances can rarely be given with absolute accuracy". The same problem will face the navigator in *Heart of Darkness*: the lack of an all-determining principle . . . [Marlow says] 'Sometimes I would pick out a tree a little way ahead to measure our progress towards Kurtz by, but I lost it invariably before we got abreast'. (23)

Africa is represented as a distant labyrinth in *Heart of Darkness*; an entirely different world from the West. Miller argues that "The problem begins at the beginning of Western literature, in Homer's *Odyssey*, where an object called Ethiopia is established" (23). He mentions a part in *The Odyssey* in which Africans are mentioned as follows: "Poseidon had gone to remote Ethiopian / people, far from us men, cut off from each other- / some where the God Huperion [the God of sun] sets and some where / he rises" (1.22-24). In this part, it is told that Ethiopia is far away from Europe. Under these conditions, the Ethiopians should have a different life style from the Ithacans or Europeans in general. They are also defined as "cut off from each other" which means that Ethiopia is a huge land. Miller holds that Homer "defines Ethiopia's first condition of possibility as distance, difference" (24), which, according to Miller, is a perspective that has been commonly adopted in the representation of Africa in Western literature since then.

However significant, these comparative studies do not explore the political rationale behind the employment of ancient plots, structures and characterization by a modern writer. Does Conrad use them only to embellish his story or might he have some other concerns such as drawing attention to some unchanged hierarchies in western societies? In both works, the protagonists are male, whereas the female characters are silent beauty objects and the rebellious men are dehumanized. This study aims to explore these issues to argue that one of Conrad's major social concerns in *Heart of Darkness* might be to show that the western patriarchal ideology has not changed much for centuries.

1.2 A Literature Review on Studies of the Representation of Women in *The Odyssey*

There are different critical perspectives on the gender roles in *The Odyssey*. While Mary Lefkowitz argues that the female characters in *The Odyssey* are represented in a positive way, Nancy Felson, Laura Slatkin and Helené Whittaker state they are shown as either passive figures or as potentially dangerous to male dominated society.

Penelope's representation is the most debated issue among the critics who discuss the female characters' roles in Homer's text. For instance Mary Lefkowitz thinks that Penelope is drawn as quite a clever lady as she plays tricks on her suitors. In her book, *Women in Greek Myth*, Lefkowitz argues "Penelope uses her particular intelligence to remain faithful to her husband" (63). According to the critic, Penelope is represented by Homer as an intelligent woman who can handle her problems in her own way. Lefkowitz acknowledges, however, that "Penelope does not question [Odysseus's] right to tell her what to do, or seek to persuade him not to set out again for new battles and journeys" (64). In that sense Penelope is a passive viewer of her own life. However, Lefkowitz also indicates that this is not Penelope's fault; she cannot react because these battles and journeys define "[Odysseus's] importance in the world, and to her, because she counts on him (in a society without police and law courts) to protect her against their many enemies" (64). Lefkowitz suggests that a woman needed a man to be protected in the ancient Greek society, which had no other forms of protection for its citizens. Yet, if the women had not been rendered so fragile in the patriarchal Greek society, there would have been no need for her to be protected by a man in the first place. This shows that the problem is not the lack of police or law courts but the patriarchal system of thought.

As opposed to Lefkowitz, who thinks that Penelope does her best under her social conditions, Nancy Felson and Laura Slatkin argue that the epic emphasizes the idea that a woman can do nothing without a man. They think that "The poem asks [:] How will the patriarchal domestic economy [i.e. the economy which is in the king's power only] work, or not work, when the patriarch is gone, perhaps never to return? Will it survive?" (103-4). In *The Odyssey*, they argue, it is shown that a woman cannot manage to govern a country or she cannot get rid of her enemies without a

man. Felson and Slatkin remind us that “certain male speakers [in *The Odyssey*] . . . invoke the divided world by ordering a woman to go into the house and take up her own weaving and to leave to men such activities as warfare, story-telling, escort or the bow” (105). For instance, Telemachus wants his mother Penelope to go back to her room and not to interfere with male business (1.365). Athena’s disguise is another example of the gender roles in ancient Greek society; she is not disguised as a lady but as “Mentes, lord of the Taphians” to be listened to by other men (1.105). Women are marginalized and made to stay within both psychological and physical limits. In addition, Felson and Slatkin state that women are frequently shown as potential dangers in *The Odyssey*: “the poem introduces two wives, Helen¹ and Clytemnestra², who highlight the challenges and choices Penelope faces by modelling the fundamental question: ‘Could [Penelope] turn out to be like either of them?’” (108). Helen and Clytemnestra are known for their adultery. The frequent references to these adulterous women show the Greek society’s perspective on them. For instance, when Odysseus cheats on Penelope, this is not shown as adultery and nothing catastrophic happens afterwards. However, when a woman cheats on her husband, there usually occurs either a war or a murder. The women who do not repress their sexuality are viewed as the cause of evil or a calamity.

Similarly, Helené Whittaker asserts that “there is a perceptible although weak current of misogyny running through *The Odyssey* . . . In several passages of *The Odyssey*, derogatory remarks are made about women in general; they are referred to as fickle, lying, and not to be trusted as well as vicious” (39). In addition, Whittaker analyzes the gender roles in *The Odyssey* and holds that “Success as a warrior adds to a man's status. The warlike qualities of Odysseus are emphasised” (30). Whittaker argues that the male protagonist is shown as an extremely strong person. Then, she continues with an analysis of the female representation in *The Odyssey* and draws attention to women’s work in the house: “It is also seen that the proper sphere of activity of men can vary according to context, being here concerned with song, weaponry, and war, while a woman's sphere of activity is limited to weaving and

¹ Helen cheats on Menelaus with Paris, which causes the Trojan War.

² Aegisthus and Clytemnestra begin a love affair, which incites them to kill Clytemnestra’s husband Agamemnon.

spinning” (32). Female life includes many limitations; women’s most common activity is weaving; however, men can move freely from one place to another.

Although there are analyses of the female representation in *The Odyssey*, they are not attentive to the narratological aspects of the text. For instance, whether or not the textual space given to the female characters is enough for them to express themselves and whether or not they are given the chance to express themselves are some of the questions that are not discussed by the critics. In this thesis, it will be shown that the female characters in *The Odyssey* hardly ever become focalizers and their voice is almost unheard, i.e. it will be laid bare that female characters’ point of view remains mostly unknown.

1.3 A Literature Review on Studies of the Representation of Women in *Heart of Darkness*

The representation of women in *Heart of Darkness* is not examined much by the critics because the most debated issues on Joseph Conrad’s work are racism and colonialism. There are two major critics focusing on the representation of women whose views are opposite of each other. While Nina Pelikan Straus claims that Joseph Conrad’s portrayal of female characters in the novel is sexist, Ruth Nadelhaft thinks that Conrad lays bare Marlow’s bigotry; therefore, it is the character not the author himself who is sexist.

Nina Pelikan Straus does not only complain about the problems in the representation of the female characters in the book but also about the lack of feminist criticism on *Heart of Darkness*. She exemplifies this through the Intended’s situation:

The Intended is . . . thrice voided or erased: her name is never spoken by Kurtz, by Marlow, or by Conrad; and it is determined that it will never be spoken by Conrad's commentators. The erasure of the Intended represents a final stage in the development of the brutally sexist conventions of high art. (134)

Straus aims to draw our attention to an issue which is not debated much; i.e. women in *Heart of Darkness*. She argues that Conrad uses Marlow as an agent to spread his own thoughts and he thinks women should have a secondary position in society:

Marlow speaks in *Heart of Darkness* to other men, and although he speaks about women, there is no indication that women might be included among his hearers, nor that his existence depends upon his "hanging together" with a "humanity" that includes the second sex. The contextuality of Conrad's tale, the deliberate use of a frame to include readers as hearers, suggests the secret nature of what is being told, a secrecy in which Conrad seems to join Marlow. (124)

Straus argues that the female characters are accepted to the male community in the novel neither as heroes nor as listeners. She also adds that it is not Marlow who creates this characterization; the author himself also approves of the representation of women as secondary figures. Moreover, Straus does not only equate Marlow with Conrad but she also adds that even the male critics of the novel resemble them:

Male heroism and plenitude depend on female cowardice and emptiness . . . Because the female figure's psychic penury is so valuable in asserting the heroism of the Strong Poet and the Strong Poet's character, the male commentator (who serves both) is filled with pleasure—a pleasure so therapeutic that it subverts his capacity to discover on what terms Marlow is a hero or a coward. (135)

According to Straus the dualistic point of view is everywhere; it is even in the male commentators' minds. The male commentators, she thinks, only focus on the male characters; they analyze the work not by looking at the female but the male characters. However, Straus analyzes *Heart of Darkness* without making a distinction between Marlow and the implied author. Though her arguments in relation to Marlow can be true, it should be questioned whether or not Conrad, or rather, the implied author agrees with Marlow. The representation of women in *Heart of Darkness* is a disputed issue. As Farn holds,

Critics . . . have disputed whether Conrad tries to expose that society keeps women, or anyway Victorian leisure-class women, 'out of it' and that Marlow withholds Kurtz's secret from the Intended to preserve masculine territory, or whether the author takes these exclusions for granted as much as his narrator does. (26)

First, it should be examined whether it is the author or the narrator who excludes women from the story. For instance, according to Armağan Erdoğan, "while depicting the system of values, ideas and activities of the masculine world in his fiction, Conrad is also the critique of this world which he portrayed vividly" (57). Straus has no certain textual proof to argue that Conrad is a sexist writer. Actually,

another critic, Ruth Nadelhaft argues that Conrad foregrounds the irony of Marlow's situation: Marlow ignores the two knitting ladies in the company's office in England. Then he claims that women have no place in men's world (*HD* 2353). However, Nadelhaft reminds us that "these enigmatic women are in the work world" (96). Through similar examples from Conrad's text, Nadelhaft makes the reader realize that it is not women but Marlow himself who has a narrow perspective as he ignores women though they are in every area of life. Nadelhaft emphasizes that the female characters are created by Conrad for different purposes: first, to show that the narrator is parochial. Then, through this narrator and ironic situations, to criticize the society which disregards women's role in life.

The critics' comments show the ambivalence in *Heart of Darkness*. Some critics consider Conrad a sexist writer; however, some others claim that he aims to show the stereotyped thoughts in order to criticize them. This thesis aims to engage in this debate by making a narratological reading of the text, i.e. by paying attention specifically to the representation of the female perspective and the female characters' voice.

1.4 Homer and Gender Roles in Homer's Time

In his age, Homer was criticized as well as praised. Robert Hunter informs that "It was Plato who was to argue that Homer himself should be displaced from his enthroned cultural authority" (246). Plato did not want the public to be educated through Homer's works "because he is a mere 'imitator' with no 'knowledge' of what he describes" (Hunter 247). Plato criticizes Homer for imitating the Greek life without creativity. In the end "Homer [was] banished from the ideal state" (Hunter 247). On the other hand, "Socrates ascribes to the poets' admirers the view that this poet has been the educator of Greece" (Hunter 247). According to Hunter, not only in the modern world but also in the ancient Greek society "through Homer one learned Greek and Greekness" (246). In fact, Homer's works "educate" his readers in a certain way: These works are loaded with gender hierarchies.

In her book *Women in Greek Myth*, Mary Lefkowitz discusses the women's position both in Greek myths and in Greek society. She gives examples from

Homer's *Iliad* in which it is mentioned that Agamemnon should sacrifice one of his children for the Gods. To save her brother Achilles, Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia says "It is better for one man to live than ten thousand women" (Homer qtd. in Lefkowitz 98). Lefkowitz comments "These lines could be taken as evidence of Greek misogyny, but it is important to remember that Iphigenia is using all possible arguments to persuade her mother" (98). As Lefkowitz suggests, one cannot be sure of the author's perspective, especially when there is not much evidence of that society's life style, as in the case of ancient Greeks. To find out whether one man is more important than ten thousand women in a Greek society, non-fictional documents should also be consulted.

Besides studies on Homer's works, there is historical and sociological research which indicates that the society Homer lived in was a patriarchal one. In his article "Homer's Society", for instance, Robin Osborne states "Painted clay coffins show groups of women involved in ritual lamentation" (208). These coffins show that women, rather than men, are foregrounded as emotional beings by the ancient Greeks. In one of the chapters of his book *The Greeks*, Paul Cartledge touches upon the hierarchical gender differences in ancient Greek society. However, he adds some reservations:

First, all the sources upon whom I shall draw here were themselves male. Even where a female character in an Athenian tragedy speaks with almost violently feminine authenticity, it must be remembered that the words were written by a male playwright and the character impersonated by a male actor before a largely or wholly male audience. (80)

Cartledge emphasizes how limited the information one can get about ancient Greek women, which, however, gives clues about their place in society. It seems that they did not have much access to the means to let their voice heard.

Many historians also write from a patriarchal perspective, which, as Cartledge suggests, makes history "his-story" (81). This type of history-writing includes only what men do.

It is what has conventionally been taken to be the appropriate subject-matter of history is precisely his-story, the story of what men have done or had done to them. Herodotus . . . is an exception to this rule, but only a partial

exception. Although he has dozens of references to women . . . , women rarely feature in the main storyline. (Cartledge 81)

Paul Cartledge continues his analysis by summarizing the ancient Greek historians' studies. He mentions Aristotle's teleology³:

[C]ompleteness in Aristotelian teleology also embraces gender ... But are 'masculine' and 'feminine' equipollent for Aristotle? Emphatically not: Aristotle's teleology is as sexist as it is normative. For women, according to his 'Generation of Animals', are both 'opposite' and inferior to men, indeed are a sort of freak nature. (Cartledge 82)

Aristotle observes nature to claim that women are inferior to men; however, he sometimes finds out some examples which challenge his own argument. For instance, he analyzes that in some spider species "the female had the preposterous temerity to eat her mate"; yet, he argues that this example is just an exception (Cartledge 84). Aristotle also comments on who should be the ruler of the house: "The male-husband, according to Aristotle, because ruling requires the exercise of reason, and in that department women are congenitally inferior to men [b]ecause the ratiocinative capacity ... of the[m] is ... 'inauthoritative'" (Cartledge 84). Similar to the ancient coffins which display women as merely emotional creatures, Aristotle also underlines that while men are reasonable, women are emotional. The research suggests that women had no chance to prove themselves in Homer's time because the male society members had spoken for them and had characterized them in a certain way. In fact all these studies prove that "although [women] can reason intellectually ... thanks to their inferior social status, their reasoning lacks authority over their menfolk" (Cartledge 85).

1.5 Joseph Conrad, Politics and the Woman Question

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is one of the most-debated literary works mainly because of the ambivalences in the representation of African and female characters. Some critics argue that he reflects animalistic portraits of Africans and he favours western colonization. Some others claim that his female characters are voiceless,

³ Teleology: "Causality in which the effect is explained by an end (Greek, telos) to be realized ... Aristotle [declares] that a full explanation of anything must consider its final cause -the purpose for which the thing exists or was produced" (*Merriam Webster Online*).

therefore Conrad is sexist. However, it should be asked whether he favours a side or he merely aims to reflect the existing situation or he does a combination of both. This ambivalence makes him a very controversial writer.

Though making a biographical reading is not enough to solve the problem, reading Conrad's works in consideration of his life may still be useful. John G. Peters summarizes Conrad's views on politics as follows:

Woven within the fabric of the politics of these works are the lives of individuals, and Conrad's sympathies always lie with the individuals. As a result, he consistently rejects politics, whether revolutionary or conservative, because he sees all politics as treating individuals as means rather than ends. (5-6)

It can be said that Conrad does not favor one side over another, only that individuals are more important for him than the political parties. For this reason he does not try to spread a political view through his works. His material is the individual only. For instance, by choosing a first person narrator for his *Heart of Darkness*, he shows that his major aim is to reflect the perspective because Conrad "emphasized the subjectivity of human experience" (White qtd. in Peters 13-4). The novel reflects Marlow's reactions to his own experiences.

Peters informs that in his essay "Geography and Some Explorers", which was published in 1924, "Conrad described European imperialism in Africa as 'the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration'" (30). Then Peters comments: "Even Achebe⁴ could not have made the point more scathingly" (30). Conrad was a man who fought for the Africans' rights in Congo. In *The Morning Post* in October 1904, he wrote:

It is an extraordinary thing that the conscience of Europe, which seventy years ago has put down the slave trade on humanitarian grounds[,] tolerates the Congo State to day. It is as if the moral clock had been put back many hours [...]. [In the Congo,] ruthless, systematic cruelty towards the blacks is the basis of administration. (qtd. in Peters 30)

⁴ The novelist and critic Chinua Achebe is well-known for his critique of Conrad as a "thoroughgoing racist" writer (267).

Conrad criticized the continuation of slavery in Congo. He found those activities, which were charged by King Leopold II of Belgium, immoral. The king⁵'s authority was accepted also by the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and some other European countries. Disseminated through *The Morning Post*, Conrad's words initiated a campaign to stop racism in Africa.

The campaign helped to bring about reforms that improved the treatment of Africans there; and the campaigners' goal of seeing control transferred from King Leopold [who was Belgium's king] to the Belgian parliament was achieved in 1908. Thus Conrad had played a significant part in an important anti-racist campaign. (Peters 30)

Conrad's reaction to racist activities challenges the opposing views of the critics who blame him for being a racist writer just by analyzing Marlow's point of view. However, when the novel is analyzed narratologically, it becomes explicit that one cannot easily put the blame only on Conrad, who is interested in the individual's perspective.

Whether Conrad's novella reflects his sexist attitude to women or not is another debate among the critics as his female characters in *Heart of Darkness* are nearly invisible and voiceless. According to John G. Peters, if there is a person who should be blamed for being sexist, that is Marlow not Conrad because the story is told by Marlow. Conrad is just a mediator between the reader and the character as the distinct individual. Peters thinks that what Conrad actually did for the cause of women's rights is strong enough to give an end to these discussions:

⁵ Robert Hampson describes King Leopold's interest in colonialism as follows:

In 1864, the twenty-nine year old Leopold had set off to tour the British colonies of India, Ceylon and Burma, and the Dutch colonies in Indonesia. He was particularly interested in the 'Dutch system', as described by Money, involved 'a monopoly trading concession given to a private company, one of whose major shareholders was the Dutch king' (Hochschild 37); it also depended upon forced labour. As Hochschild describes him, Leopold's main interests were colonies and profits: Money showed the two could be combined. (58)

Conrad was a supporter of female suffrage. In 1910, he signed an open letter to the British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. It advocated votes for women. Conrad's signature appeared alongside that of May Sinclair, Sarah Grand, and other radicals and feminists. A copy of that letter was published in *The Times*. So, in a period when it was politically incorrect or controversial to do so, Conrad was courageous enough to join a campaign for women's voting rights; and that was eight years before women were first permitted to vote at British general elections. (31)

Though his female characters have almost no voice in *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad helped women to gain voice in real life. It should be explored more carefully, therefore, to what extent and to what ends women are silenced in Conrad's novella.

1.6 Methodology

In this thesis Rimmon-Kenan's book *Narrative Fiction* will be consulted to make a comparative narratological study of Homer's *The Odyssey* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Rimmon-Kenan draws on Gérard Genette to make her categorization of narrative fiction: "In the spirit of Genette's distinction between '*histoire*', '*recit*' and '*narration*', I shall label these aspects 'story', 'text' and 'narration' respectively" (3). In the "story" chapter, the characters' role in the story will be analyzed. The chapter on "text" will focus on the characters' textual representations. Then in the "narration" chapter the ways in which the stories are narrated will be explored.

According to Rimmon-Kenan, "story" includes the events which are "abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events" (3). The aim of this chapter is to show the similarities between the stories of Homer's *The Odyssey* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; while the male characters, Odysseus and Marlow, undergo adventures such as building a ship or fighting against dangerous enemies, the female characters such as Penelope and the Intended have peripheral roles in these men's stories.

Rimmon-Kenan explains that "whereas 'story' is a succession of events, 'text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling [;] the text is what we read" (3). The chapter on "text" will first focus on similarities between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in relation to the duration of characters' partaking in the story and in relation to the representation of the characters, and then will focus on the similarities and differences between the two texts in terms of focalization. The aim is

to show that male characters are foregrounded in both texts. Questions such as “Whose point of view is reflected?” “Does the reader know the female characters’ or the marginalized male characters’ point of view?” will be answered in this chapter. It will be shown that the representation of the characters can change according to the focalizer’s identity.

According to Rimmon-Kenan “since the text is a spoken or written discourse, it implies someone who speaks or writes it. The act or process of production is the third aspect – ‘narration’” (3). In the chapter on *narration* the narrators’ and the narratees’ identity, the narrators’ perceptibility and the characters’ voice will be examined to reveal that, in both texts, while the narrator speaks out for everyone, the female characters are not given a chance to speak. However, it will also be shown that there are some differences between these two texts in terms of the implied authors’ attitude to the narrators, which is revealed through irony.

1.7 Aim of the Study

In this narratological study, the representation of women in Homer’s *The Odyssey* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* will be explored in the light of the distinction Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan makes between “story,” “text” and “narration” in *Narrative Fiction* (3). The rationale behind the decision to compare Conrad’s novel with *The Odyssey* is that these texts have been studied in a comparative manner before; yet, none of these studies focused on each narrative aspect, which are listed above, to explore the similarities and differences between the two texts in terms of the representation of women. In both of these texts, men are shown as capable heroes but women are represented as silent and immobile figures who are on the periphery of these men’s stories; however, unlike Homer, Conrad creates some ironic situations to criticize such hierarchical portrayals of women. He makes use of Homer’s ancient epic both in the construction of his plot and characterization to show the ongoing marginalization of women in patriarchal western societies. Yet, at the same time, like Homer, Conrad, too, participates in the marginalization of women by attributing heroic characteristics only to the male protagonist and giving more textual place to male characters. Throughout this study, the most-debated questions about Conrad, such as whether he can be labeled merely as a racist and/or a sexist

writer or he aims to reflect the ongoing gender hierarchies to criticize the western patriarchal society, are aimed to be answered.

CHAPTER 2

2. AN ANALYSIS OF “STORY” IN *THE ODYSSEY* AND *HEART OF DARKNESS*

“Story” means “the narrated events and participants in abstraction from the text” (Rimmon-Kenan 6). This definition participates in a theoretical discussion on the possibility of abstracting “story” from “form”: some critics think that the events and characters in a novel, for instance, are not integral to it, in that the same story can be transferred to another text while some others think the opposite way. In relation to this subject, Claude Bremond argues that

the subject of a tale may serve as an argument for a ballet, that of a novel may be carried over to the stage or to the screen, a movie may be told to those who have not seen it. It is words one reads, it is images one sees, it is gestures one deciphers, but through them it is a story one follows; and it may be the same story. (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 7)

According to Bremond, the same story can be told through many different media. Algirdas Julien Greimas agrees with him and adds that changing the language of a story does not change the meaning of the text, either. For this reason, he acknowledges Bremond’s argument as it

amounted to recognizing and accepting the necessity of a fundamental distinction between two levels of representation and analysis: an *apparent* level of narration, at which the manifestations of narration are subject to the specific exigencies of the linguistic substances through which they are expressed, and an *immanent level*, constituting a sort of common structural trunk, at which narrativity is situated and organized prior to its manifestations. A common semiotic level is thus distinct from the linguistic level and is logically prior to it, whatever the language chosen for manifestation. (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 7)

Greimas points out that the changes in the linguistic level do not affect the semiotic level because the meaning does not change though the language changes: “narrativity” precedes its linguistic manifestation. Some other critics, however, think in the opposite way. Rimmon-Kenan explains the argument that these critics put

forward as follows: “stories — the claim is — are in some subtle ways style-, language-, and medium-dependent. This is forcefully stated by Todorov” (8). Todorov argues that “Meaning does not exist before being articulated and perceived . . . ; there do not exist two utterances of identical meaning if their articulation has followed a different course” (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 8). According to Todorov, if the medium or articulation changes, the story changes, as well. For this reason, he analyzes “story” as a fixed part of the narrative. As a response to this argument, Rimmon-Kenan asserts that “Still, as with so-called natural language, users cannot produce or decipher stories without some (implicit) competence in respect of narrative structure, i.e. in something which survives paraphrase or ‘translation’. This competence is acquired by extensive practice in reading and telling stories” (8). Rimmon-Kenan underlines that the readers would also need competence to understand the narrative structure of a work even if its language is their natural language; however, the story is understood in each different condition, i.e. whether it is translated or paraphrased or the reader lacks competence because, she says, the story is the same story which “survives” under different conditions. Yet she also adds that: “In this predicament, the preliminary assumption that story-structure or narrativity is isolatable must be made at least as a working hypothesis. This, however, does not amount to granting any undisputed priority, whether logical or ontological, to story over text” (8). In other words, claiming that “story” survives by itself does not mean that “story” is more important than “text”; each narrative element plays an equally significant role.

Rimmon-Kenan examines “story” under two sub-headings: events and characters. She defines “story” as the “narrated events and participants in . . . the text. As such, it is a part of a larger construct . . . ‘reconstructed’ . . . world . . . , i.e. the fictional ‘reality’ in which the characters of the story are supposed to be living and in which its events are supposed to take place” (6). In the examination of “story”, events, i.e. what happens, and characters, i.e. the actors of these events should be analyzed in depth. Characters and their relationship with one another may reveal aspects of a text that are not only about characters themselves. Who are major and minor characters? According to what criteria are these shaped? Questions such as

these may reveal much about the general outlook of the narrator and/or of the implied author in some situations.

The character's relations with his mother can subsequently be combined with similar generalization about his relations with his wife, his boss, his friends, to form a higher category labelled 'X's relations with people'. This category in turn can be combined with other aspects of the same order of generalization, e.g. X's worldview, manner of speech, actions. These, of course, are not only aspects of character but also potential constituents of non-character constructs, such as the work's ideology, style, action. (Rimmon-Kenan 38)

As it is suggested by Rimmon-Kenan, the characters' behaviour may give us clues, for instance, about the ideology that informs a text; their characteristics do not only reflect the characters' own point of view but they also reflect the things that are not specifically about those characters. In the following parts, first, the events and then the characters in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* will be examined. This comparative analysis of events and characters in these works reveal that they are both narrated from a patriarchal perspective as the male characters are foregrounded most of the time. There are slight differences between these two works in terms of the degree of female participation in the story but the similarities suggest that Homer's epic may have informed Conrad's representation of women in *Heart of Darkness*. Yet, as it will be explored fully in the upcoming chapters on "text" and "narration," some of these parallelisms seem to be tools Conrad uses critically to emphasize women's ongoing marginalization by patriarchal structures since Homer's time.

2.1 Events

To put it simply, an "event" is what happens. Rimmon-Kenan explains the term as follows: "when something happens, the situation usually changes. An event, then, may be said to be a change from one state of affairs to another" (15). In this section, these changes will be examined to reveal which characters have a place in the story, i.e. which characters' affairs "change from one state to another" as Rimmon-Kenan defines it, and which characters don't have a place in it. Events can be divided into two major groups. Some events help the story's unfolding. They are called "kernels". Rimmon-Kenan defines the term as follows: "those that advance the

action by opening an alternative” (16). She exemplifies this term by saying that “If a telephone rings, a character can either answer it or not; an alternative is opened and the event is therefore a kernel”. The text is enriched through “kernels” because they create an alternative which in the end help the situation change and the action continue. However, there are some events which do not create changes in the plot; these events are called “catalysts”. They “expand, amplify, maintain or delay the former” (16). Again, using the example of the ringing of the phone, Rimmon-Kenan exemplifies the “catalysts” as follows: “But between the ringing of the phone and the answer (or the decision not to answer), the character may scratch his head, light a cigarette, curse, etc. These are catalysts – they do not open an alternative but ‘accompany’ the kernel in various ways” (16). The “catalysts” do not contribute to the unfolding of the plot, they just “accompany” the events that advance the action as Rimmon-Kenan puts it. Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the events in which the male characters take place are “kernels”; however, the female characters’ activities usually fall into the category of “catalysts”.

“Events” are also categorized as those constituting the “main” and “subsidiary” story-lines. To put it simply, the main story is the one in which the protagonists take roles and the subsidiary story-line is the one participated in by the minor characters. In *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*, it is seen that again the events surrounding the male protagonists establish the “main-story-line”; however, the events that include the female characters belong to the “subsidiary story-line” most of the time because “catalysts” have nothing or very little to do with the unfolding of the “main story-line”.

2.1.1 The Kernels in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*

In *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* both of the protagonists set out on a journey and they accomplish it by learning many things related to human nature. The story in both texts is almost the same: the male hero travels, fights and tells his story to the others at the end; i.e. the events in which the male protagonists take place are “kernels” because their experiences create the story itself. The main story line in both texts is constituted by the actions of the protagonists, Odysseus and Marlow, who

start a journey during which they go through a lot of difficulties that are both physical and psychological. In their book *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin argue that Hollywood movies are characterized by a patriarchal role distribution:

Narrative is driven by action, and if patriarchal ideology asserts that men are doers (while women are the ‘done-unto’), then narrative [works] are inevitably going to focus on men . . . The action-adventure [work] similarly centers on male protagonists becoming mythic masculine heroes through amazing journeys or quests. (251)

Benshoff and Griffin’s observation in relation to Hollywood narratives also applies to *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*. The narrative is always driven by the male characters’ action since the story centers on their quests. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus summarizes these difficulties early in the narrative by saying “My troubles are countless” (9.15) and continues by telling about how the Goddess Kalupso keeps him in her cave and how he and his Akhaian friends fight against a tribe called Kikones etc.:

Kalupso, a shining Goddess, kept me a long time / back in her hollow cave: she wanted *me* as her husband. Kirke had held me back in her hall in the same way . . . I’ll tell you my long way home with all of its troubles. / Zeus weighed me with hardship after I left Troy. / Winds drove me from Troy to Kikones’ coastline / at Ismaros. There I killed some men and looted the city / . . . / Kikones . . . called to their neighbors . . . far more people and warlike . . . Kikones forced us back and killed more Akhaians / . . . / We others escaped. (9.29-61)

Odysseus underlines how hard his journey has been; the situation he is in changes all the time: he comes across not one but many obstacles like living with Kalupso for a long time or witnessing his friends’ death in Kikones’ land. One of the crewmen warns Odysseus about the dangers caused by “Nature”. This also explains how hard this journey is. He says to Odysseus

night gives birth to the harshest winds and can ruin / a ship. How could a man escape from his steep doom / if chancy gusts or a sea-storm suddenly came on, / Southwind, the wrong-minded Westwind –those that most often / dismember ships –whatever the will of the strong Gods. (12.286-290)

Odysseus’s crew member warns him that if they continue with their journey at night, they will all die because of winds. His warning contributes to the overall emphasis in

the story on the difficulty of their journey as the crew has to fight not only against the enemies but also against nature. These examples show that the events Odysseus participate in are what Rimmon-Kenan calls “kernels” because both his journey and the plot develop through his fight against his enemies and nature.

Like Odysseus, Marlow also underlines that he has experienced a lot of difficulties. They are so hard that he says to his audience, in a way quite reminiscent of Odysseus, “I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me” (*HD* 2307). Though Kurtz is the central figure whom both Marlow wants to reach and his audience wants to learn about, *how* Marlow reaches him emerges as another major subject throughout the novel. “To understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there,” says Marlow to his listeners, “what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me -- and into my thoughts” (*HD* 2307). Marlow touches upon the fact that his experiences are not only physical ones; he meets someone who changes his opinions. Yet, he also underlines that this was also a physical adventure as he experiences “the farthest point of navigation” (*HD* 2307). Before the journey, Marlow is an ordinary inexperienced worker; however, he becomes a wise captain afterwards. This also shows that his “state changes” in Rimmon-Kenan’s terms; this makes the events he participates in “kernels”.

As in *The Odyssey*, after a summary, the protagonist, Marlow begins to tell his story. First, he mentions how nature plays tricks on him in his journey along the African coast when he tries to reach Kurtz; “all along the formless coast bordered by dangerous surf, as if Nature herself had tried to ward off intruders; in and out of rivers, streams of death in life, whose banks were rotting into mud, whose waters, thickened into slime, invaded the contorted mangroves, that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair” (*HD* 2313). Odysseus, too, fights against natural obstacles. Poseidon, the God of Sea, favors the Trojans in the Trojan War and when Troy is taken by the Greeks, Poseidon gets furious and tries to prevent Odysseus’s journey home. Moreover, in *Heart of Darkness*, Nature’s “N” is capitalized like a reference to God. In that sense, both Odysseus and Marlow fight

against “Poseidon” throughout their stories. Marlow also tells about other difficulties caused by nature by referring to another crew. He utters: “I heard the men in that lonely ship were dying of fever at the rate of three a day” (*HD* 2313). Marlow’s utterance is explicative enough to understand the danger he fights against throughout his journey; there is also a probability of being sick. Marlow does not only fight against obstacles caused by the sea but also fights against the difficulties caused by nature in general.

Marlow also mentions how the Africans’ attack in Congo terrifies the crew: “‘Will they attack?’ whispered an awed voice. ‘We will be all butchered in this fog,’ murmured another. The faces twitched with the strain, the hands trembled slightly, the eyes forgot to wink” (*HD* 2333). Marlow and his crew undergo an attack under the fog which makes the journey more and more difficult as there is always a possibility of another attack. Both Odysseus and Marlow experience, first, the human beings’ helplessness against nature, then come across attacks which makes them feel defenceless. All of these events are examples of “kernels” because they “advance” the action by “opening alternatives”: the heroes fight back and thereby develop mentally and physically.

The resolution parts of both texts lay bare the protagonists’ power. Both of the heroes achieve their aims in the end. Odysseus can return to his home, beat the mob of suitors pillaging his land and restore peace; similarly, Marlow achieves to find Kurtz to bring him back to Europe which means that these characters’ status changes and thereby the main story line unfolds. At the end of his journey, Odysseus reaches his home in Ithaca. However, he finds out that there are many suitors who want to marry his wife, Penelopeia. Odysseus has to beat them, too. He regains Penelopeia by becoming the champion of the arrow competition organized so that she could be “rightfully” owned by the winner:

all from the chair that [Odysseus] sat in, / and shot it straight. He missed each one of the axes, / all those helms: he’d guided the bronze-weighted arrow / beyond them and out. He turned to Telemakhos saying, / “The stranger who sits in your hall, Telemakhos, brings no / shame to the test. / I missed no mark, my labor was not long / stringing the bow and my strength has hardly been shaken”. (21.420-426)

Odysseus is a successful archer who can throw the bronze-weighted arrow which nobody else can. Odysseus also achieves in getting rid of the suitors after the arrow competition. It is narrated that “Odysseus aimed and struck [one of the suitors’] throat with an arrow, /the point went straight through the soft neck and the young man / slumped to one side. The goblet fell from his stricken / hand and mortal blood came fast from his nostrils” (22.15-18). When Odysseus beats the suitors, he gains his authority back in his kingdom. These acts make his status change, i.e. the event he partakes in – beating the suitors – is another example of “kernel”. Odysseus speaks out:

You dogs, you never thought I’d return to my own house / from Trojan country. So you wasted my household . . . / and lawlessly craved my wife while I was alive still, / dreading no God who rules broadly in heaven/ and thinking no man in times to come would be outraged. / Now for you all the lines of death have been tightened. (22. 35-41)

Odysseus declares his success against the suitors. He becomes the king again by beating all his enemies.

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow also reaches his aim and a psychological maturity in the end. His mission is to get Kurtz back to his homeland. Marlow completes his mission by making Kurtz depart from Africa though he dies on the ship. This departure changes everything in Kurtz’s tribe in Africa because Kurtz was like the king of his tribe. In addition to this, he was working for himself though he was officially sent by a Belgian company as an ivory trader. When he leaves Congo, the tribe becomes a Belgian colony again. These changes make these events kernels as in the case of Odysseus.

Odysseus’s and Marlow’s journeys are psychological journeys as well as physical ones; as their experiences cause changes in their personalities, they can be called “kernels”, too. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus learns that one should not trust blindly anyone whom s/he does not know very well. While passing Kuklops’s land, Odysseus comes across Kuklops (Poseidon’s giant son). Odysseus’s friends suggest that they should pass Kuklops’ inn without stopping by; however, Odysseus says “I wanted to see the man. Would he offer me guest-gifts?” (9.228). Offering gifts to the guests is a cultural practice Odysseus is familiar with. Thus, he

naively expects everybody to act in a similar way and says in a kindly manner “We ourselves approach your knees and we face you . . . / we hope you’ll offer us presents / or otherwise treat us kindly: that’s lawful for strangers” (9.266-269). However, Kuklops does not want to help them and utters “How foolish you are, strange man” (9.273). Then, “[Kuklops] stood up fast and lunged at my men with his two hands, / grappled two of them, struck them hard on the dirt floor / like puppies and splattered their brains” (9.288-90). Kuklops attacks these men and behaves like a mad person. Through this experience, Odysseus learns that he makes a mistake by thinking that everyone is kind or generous like him. His encounter with Kuklops also teaches him his own “lowliness”. In fact, Odysseus experiences the same thing throughout his journey as Michael Clarke suggests:

The Odyssey moves below and beyond the glamour of heroism to a more fundamental level of the human condition, where the hero succeeds only by accepting the inevitability of his lowliness . . . [It moves] on a deeper and more universal level, on which the miseries and exaltations of heroic experience become a device for exploring the universal realities of man’s struggle for self-validation under the immortal and carefree gods. (89-90)

Kuklops’s attack teaches Odysseus that he should not take things for granted in his encounters with strangers and he also learns how painful it is not being able to fight against difficulties only by himself as he could not save his friends. Odysseus loses his friends throughout his journey because of monsters such as Kharubdis or Lotus Eaters. After Kuklops eats his friends, Odysseus asserts “We cried out loudly to Zeus, holding our hands up, / watching his brutal work. But our spirits were helpless” (9.294-5). This assertion reveals how desperate Odysseus feels and how he learns about his limits as a human being throughout his journey.

Besides his mission, Marlow, too, achieves a psychological development like Odysseus. Marlow learns to see “truth” as an ideological (mis)representation which also helps him become politically more critical in matters regarding European colonialism. For instance, he realizes that though Africans are represented as “uncivilized” in colonialist discourses, the western colonizers could be more vulgar than them. Marlow gains a critical insight into the aims of colonialism. He witnesses white people punish the native people harshly. Marlow describes the harsh punishments as follows:

Black figures strolled about listlessly, pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing; steam ascended in the moonlight, the beaten nigger groaned somewhere. 'What a row the brute makes!' said the indefatigable man with the moustaches, appearing near us. 'Serve him right. Transgression -- punishment -- bang! Pitiless' . . . The pilgrims could be seen in knots gesticulating, discussing. Several had still their staves in their hands. I verily believe they took these sticks to bed with them. Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through that dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart -- its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life. The hurt nigger moaned feebly somewhere near by, and then fetched a deep sigh that made me mend my pace away from there. (*HD* 2322)

At the beginning of his journey, the native people were “raw matter” (*HD* 2314) for Marlow, i.e. “unshaped” or “uncivilized” who need to be “shaped” or “civilized”; however, by the end of his journey, his perspective on colonialism and slavery carried out under the name of “civilization” changes. Marlow is worried about these natives who are beaten severely by the white people. He also makes fun of the white people by saying they probably sleep with their sticks. His pity for the black people and his mockery of white people show that his opinions about colonialism have changed.

About his journey, Marlow underlines the importance of its psychological benefits:

I suppose Mr. Kurtz is dead . . . by this time. For the moment that was the dominant thought. There was a sense of extreme disappointment, as though I had found out I had been striving after something altogether without a substance. I couldn't have been more disgusted if I had travelled all this way for the sole purpose of talking with Mr. Kurtz. (*HD* 2339)

Marlow wants to speak with Kurtz desperately, i.e. he wants to reach him not because of his mission but because of his psychological needs, which makes his journey a psychological one as well. From his encounter with Kurtz, Marlow finds out that the human mind has no limits; he discovers that if one lives without social rules, s/he becomes “uncivilized”. This discovery is based on his meeting with Kurtz. Kurtz treats his tribe as if he was their God: Even Marlow calls him the “pitiful Jupiter” (*HD* 2349); this suggests that Kurtz is a man who acts as if he is God, i.e. he defies God. Kurtz also ignores the western company's aims in Africa by looking only for his own profits. Before Kurtz came to Africa, he was a proponent of the

“civilizing mission” of imperialism; i.e. his aim was not only getting profits but also spreading the western / “civilized” way of life. “Colonialism is the extension of a country’s rule to lands beyond its own borders. These ‘new’ lands established by the parent country are called colonies . . . In settler colonies, the native populations and their cultures often are displaced or, sometimes, eliminated” (Kozlowski 1). Kurtz’s ideology at the beginning of the novel is not different from what is defined above. His earlier article, which he writes when he arrives in Africa, is indicative of this. “He began with the argument that we whites, from the point 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’” (*HD* 2341). Before he got used to the African way of life, Kurtz thinks that whites are culturally better than the African natives so they need the help of the whites to be developed. However, his perspective changes in that he comes to exercise solely “the might of a deity” on the natives without any sense of so-called “mission” to “civilize” them when he discovers that he has a limitless power over the Africans. He thinks he himself can become their governor and this tribe can be his own kingdom; however, this, in return, creates a monster out of him. The Russian, who is both a trader and Kurtz’s companion, tells how the natives fear and adore Kurtz. “[The natives] would not stir till Mr. Kurtz gave the word . . . The camps of these people surrounded the place, and the chiefs came every day to see him. They would crawl” (*HD* 2347). Kurtz defies anyone and especially the authorities who have charged him with the control of the ivories there. Instead of continuing his job, he establishes his own kingdom because no one controls him. Marlow makes his listeners imagine Kurtz’s situation:

You can't understand. How could you? -- with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums -- how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude -- utter solitude without a policeman -- by the way of silence -- utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? (*HD* 2340)

Living away from a “civilized” society with its institutions of social control – and here the ways in which the civilized society are described suggest that it is a Western society – makes Kurtz, according to Marlow, an “uncivilized” man. Marlow sees

something in Kurtz's land; however, he cannot understand what it is. He describes: "These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic. . . . They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house" (*HD* 2347). Then Marlow learns that they are "the heads of rebels" (*HD* 2347). Marlow is disgusted by this scene and he wishes those heads to look at the opposite side perhaps because it is hard to face the reality that without any moral boundaries one can turn into a monster. Marlow asserts that "In fact, the manager said afterwards that Kurtz's methods had ruined the district . . . [These heads] only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him" (*HD* 2347).

At the beginning, Marlow says "when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration" (*HD* 2308). Marlow wants to wander everywhere and "lose himself" through these experiences. In fact, losing himself means becoming experienced in Marlow's terms as his only mission is to "explore". Then, the extradiegetic narrator describes Marlow through these words: "He was the only man of us who still 'followed the sea.' The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class. He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life" (*HD* 2305-6). Marlow is described as being different from the other sailors. This description makes Marlow resemble Odysseus more as he is also quite different from other warriors and sailors; Marlow is not only a sailor but also a wanderer. The adventures make him more mature at the end and he achieves to have some experience to be listened by his friends; i.e. he experiences a lot of things which help create a story. Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the stories are all about the male protagonists' success which is both physical and psychological. Their stories constitute the main story-line and the events that they practise are consistently "kernels" in Rimmon-Kenan's terms.

2.1.2 The Catalysts in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*

The discussion about the events in relation to female characters can be divided into two: "catalysts" and "indirect kernels". The "catalysts" have no

connection with the main story-line and never create changes in the plot; one typical example of this is women's doing housework that is not related to the male protagonist's adventures. The term "indirect kernels", on the other hand, might be used to refer to events with indirect effects on the unfolding of the story; these kind of events in which female characters take role are rare but they are not non-existent. However, it should be underlined that the female characters participate in the male protagonist's story only if they help the male protagonist reach his aims.

In Homer's and Conrad's works, the female characters are mostly associated with "catalysts" in Rimmon-Kenan's terms: the events they participate in do not lead to changes in the unfolding of the main story line most of the time. The women are not assigned public roles. The events associated with the female characters are to do with domestic issues rather than wars or the events that concern the entire society. These events do not cause the female characters to develop psychologically, either. While the central male characters' adventures constitute the main story line, the female characters' stories remain peripheral.

Some sociological studies show that "If Greek women -in history or in literature- ever had an opportunity to govern, it was only for a brief period, in order to cope with a particular problem or emergency . . . They can take independent action, . . . in an emergency, but then must retire when the problem is solved" (Lefkowitz 87). The ancient Greek women had no governmental roles under normal circumstances; this is reflected also in Homer's *The Odyssey*. Odysseus's wife Penelopeia, for instance, has no role in the governance of Odysseus's kingdom. Her role in the story is in accordance with this most of the time. The crucial events like governing a country or dealing with political issues are shown as occurring in the "male world" only. Sarah Pomeroy holds that

Penelopeia's suitors originally sought to marry her and succeed to Odysseus's place as king. However, when Telemakhos matured the suitors' intent changed: they began to speak of either taking Penelopeia back to their own palaces or challenging Telemakhos directly to assert his right to his father's title and possessions. (23)

As Pomeroy states, the ruler of the kingdom would be either the suitors or Telemakhos but that would not be Penelopeia because of her sex. Telemakhos's

advice to Penelopeia also reveals much about both the patriarchal society and the patriarchal structure behind the story. He says “Rather go to your room and care for your own work, / loom and spindle. Tell your handmaids to manage their own tasks. We men will care for the talk here, all of us, mainly myself – I rule in my own house” (1.365-369). Penelopeia is made to go to her room and not interfere with “the male world”. Helene Whittaker too, refers to the same incident and holds that “Telemakhos, . . . prevents Penelopeia from being present at and watching the contest by again telling her that she should attend to her weaving and spinning since weaponry is the concern of men only” (31). Telemakhos’s speech and behaviour show that governing and public speaking are men’s responsibilities that only men can open an alternative both in life and in the male-centered story. Penelopeia has no social responsibility in Odysseus’s kingdom because she is forced to stay within her room’s boundaries; this means that her contribution to the plot is also limited as she cannot defeat the suitors as a ruler, i.e. most of her acts are “catalysts” such as crying or begging to the Gods “in her room”, which will be analyzed in the following chapter.

A common activity that is performed by female characters in the epic is washing clothes, which is also a “catalyst” since it does not help the plot unfold. For instance, king Alkinoos’s daughter Nausicaa’s servants are shown as doing the laundry by the sea: “Handmaids joined [Nausicaa] ... / Soon as they washed and rinsed all of the dirt out, / they spread each garment in turn right there on the / seashore, / where waves most often had washed pebbles on dry land” (6.93-96). Nausicaa and her maids are on the periphery of the story as well as society because their activity has no connection with the “crucial” adventures of the male protagonist. While the male characters are either protagonists or the antagonists, the female characters are on the periphery; they either knit or do the laundry. In ancient times “The duties of women revolve[d] around the household . . . Women were also in charge of bathing and anointing men . . . Polycaste, Nestor’s virginal young daughter, bathed Telemakhos and massaged him with olive oil, and Helen relates that at Troy she herself had bathed and anointed the disguised Odysseus” (Pomeroy 30). Women were considered “servants” of men both in real life and in the works of literature of the patriarchal ancient Greek society.

In *The Odyssey* Helen is another female character whose only function in the story is to help men. She is like the man who scratches his head when the telephone rings in Rimmon-Kenan's example of "catalysts". When Telemakhos visits Menelaos, Telemakhos and his men are sorrowful about Odysseus and their country's situation. Menelaos's wife, Helen, helps these miserable men forget their sorrow by giving them a medicine in secret:

Helen, daughter of Zeus, now thought of a new plan. / She promptly tossed a drug in the wine they were drinking, / dulling their pain and anger. They all forgot about evil. / Whoever swallows the drug she placed in the wine-bowl / lets no tear fall from his cheeks for a whole day, / not if his mother and father both were to die there. (4.219-24)

Helen helps the male guests forget their sorrow by adding a drug into their drinks. The female character's role is reduced to an obedient servant. Moreover, she plans how to achieve her aim. While the male characters plan what to do to protect Odysseus's son and wife, she plans how to help these men. She is outside the main story-line. The female characters have secondary place in the patriarchal narrative; this is achieved also by showing them as servants of the male protagonists who deal with important issues in life.

On the other hand, some events that the female characters take part in can be named as "indirect kernels" as they affect indirectly the main story's direction. For instance, Penelopeia's knitting helps Odysseus regain her. She reveals her intention to gain time as follows:

standing a huge loom in the hall for her weaving, a broad and beautiful web, she spoke . . . shortly: 'Young men, my suitors, Young men, my suitors now that godlike Odysseus died, you are anxious to marry. But wait till I finish this work. Don't let my yarn be useless and wasted. The shroud's a war-chief, Laertes, after a deadly portion cuts him down – remorseless death is the matter. May no Akhaian blame me now in this country because he lies unshrouded after he gained wealth'. (2.95-102)

Throughout the story, this is one of the rare moments when Penelopeia acts. She pretends to knit a shroud for Laertes but she rips it every night because she has promised to marry one of the suitors when her work ends. This is an event that leads to changes in the plot and here we can see Penelopeia act on her own and with a significant consequence. It influences the development of the main story line: by her

act which makes the suitors “wait until she finishes her work”, Penelopeia delays her marriage to one of the suitors, as a consequence of which, Odysseus gains time in his struggle to return to his formal state in the kingdom. However, it should also be remembered that the “indirect kernel” Penelopeia participates in takes up a very small textual space in the epic, which is based on the male protagonist’s adventures.

Another female character whose act has an effect on Odysseus’s journey is Kirke. On the one hand, it would be really hard for Odysseus to accomplish his journey without her help; this increases her importance in the story. But, on the other hand, Kirke, like other female characters both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, is not an active doer but just a helper; in both texts, the female characters do not start a journey but help the male protagonists to do so. For instance, Kirke helps Odysseus in many different ways. Before Odysseus continues his journey, Kirke warns him about the creatures that he will come across. She asserts

‘First you’ll approach the Seirenes⁶, those who can spellbind / ... / Whoever goes there and mindlessly hears the Seirenes’ / voices, his wife and little children will never / stand beside him to welcome him back home. / All the Seirenes’ clear-toned singing will charm him. / They sit in a meadow with massive bone-heaps around them / of rotting men, the skin shrunk on their bodies. / Drive on past them! Soften some honey-sweet beeswax / and stop your men’s ears: none of the others / must listen’. (12.39-49)

Kirke advises Odysseus to be cautious against the Seirenes when his ship is about to enter the land of the Seirenes where they lure the people through their beautiful songs to come closer to them. “Warned by Kirke, Odysseus stuffed the ears of his crew with wax, and then has them bind him to the mast of the ship” (Cyrino 209). Thus, Odysseus and his crew are not affected by the Seirenes’ voice and do not become their slaves. Kirke’s act can be labelled as an “indirect kernel” because her help contributes to the continuation of Odysseus’s journey. Yet, all the events in which the major actors are female figures contribute eventually to the story of the male protagonist, i.e., while the major story is the male character’s journey, the female character only helps the man.

⁶ In the chapter on “narration” Seirenes will be examined in relation to their “voice”.

The women in Conrad's late nineteenth-century novel are not different at all from their counterparts in Homer's epic in terms of their roles in the story. In the chapter on "narration" it will be examined that Conrad's text seems to be critical of the marginalization of women as opposed to Homer's text. However, in relation to the "story", it can be said that in both texts, the female characters occupy a secondary position most of the time: as actors in a male-centred story, the female characters in *Heart of Darkness* take role in events that are outside the main story-line. For instance, Marlow comes across two ladies in the company's office before he starts his journey. First of all, similar to Homer's Penelopeia, Conrad also portrays these ladies while knitting; however, differently from Penelopeia, their act has nothing to do with the general plot line. Conrad seems to foreground women's lack of participation in the male world in Homer's epic by marginalizing women, on purpose, further from the main-story line. Marlow narrates:

Two women, one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs, knitting black wool. The slim one got up and walked straight at me-- still knitting with downcast eyes--and only just as I began to think of getting out of her way, as you would for a somnambulist, stood still, and looked up. (*HD* 2309)

Though these knitting ladies' portrayal resembles Penelopeia, their performance in the story is different. They stay on the subsidiary story-line though they have a role in male-centered world of business. This ironical positioning will be discussed later on in the narration chapter. As Homer's work reflects patriarchal values, Conrad makes use of some elements from his epic, *The Odyssey* and applies them to his own novel to show that throughout the centuries the female portrayal or position has not changed. This means that the women have almost no place in the patriarchal social life, and can even be said that their social situation has become worse. Thus, Conrad reflects the gender roles in the western societies by creating two silent knitting ladies which resemble Penelopeia who does not speak much throughout the epic and who only knits. Though the narrator in *The Odyssey* underlines the importance of Penelopeia's work, Marlow does not foreground the significance of these ladies; the image is the same but the perspectives are not. The difference between the narrators in these works will be dealt with in the chapter on "narration" as indicated earlier.

An African female servant in *Heart of Darkness* is also shown as dealing with an action which does not help unfold the story. Marlow mentions an officer whose clothes are smart and clean: “His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character. He had been out nearly three years; and, later, I could not help asking him how he managed to sport such linen” (*HD* 2316). Marlow wonders how this officer achieves to clean and dry his shirts in this proper way; the officer’s answer reveals the gender roles in a patriarchal society. The officer explains how he has made an African woman do his laundry. “He had just the faintest blush, and said modestly, ‘I’ve been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult’” (*HD* 2316). A male colonizer “teaches” an African woman how to do the laundry, which indicates the conflation of gender and racial hierarchies. The African woman is marginalized twice: both because of her sex and her race. Like educating a child or training an animal, the western man “teaches” the African woman about how to do the laundry and he underlines that it was a difficult task. In fact, she is made to do laundry in his way, i.e. she is “civilized” according to the officer. By showing this kind of an officer who “teaches doing the laundry” to the Africans, the implied author shows the colonizers’ perspective. Later on, in the chapter on “narration”, the implied author and the narrator’s views on colonization will be held. But to turn to the female characters’ role in the story, the two works have resemblances in terms of the role that is given to the female character. The only role assigned for this African woman in this story is doing the white male officer’s laundry which is similar to Nausicaa’s female servants who do the laundry in *The Odyssey*. So, it can be held that the implied author also participates in the gender-related discriminatory attitude: “The roles for which women were destined were silent ones: motherhood and homemaking, tasks relegated to the obscurity of a domesticity that did not count and was not considered worth recounting” (Duby and Perrot ix). The domestic roles make women live within the boundary of their houses. While male characters deal with political issues throughout the novel, the female characters’ activities are domestic works. Similar to knitting, showing women as doing the laundry is another motive used by both Homer and Conrad, yet with a difference: Conrad’s text seems to be partly critical of this marginalization which shows itself in the examination of the “narration”. In the “story”, it can be realized that the women are limited and if

they act, this is also within the limits patriarchy draws for them as in the case of Penelopeia, who struggles to stop the suitors only through her loom within her house.

The only female character who participates in an “indirect kernel” in *Heart of Darkness* is Marlow’s aunt. As in *The Odyssey*, in *Heart of Darkness* one of the main issues is the male protagonist’s journey in relation to which Marlow mentions only few female characters who have no important roles at all. Marlow’s aunt is important as she helps Marlow to start his journey as does Kirke in Odysseus’s story. Marlow needs somebody to persuade the office to send him to Africa as a worker. He uses his aunt as a mediator to start his journey and wants her to make a favour for him; his aunt says: “I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with” (HD 2308). Marlow concludes the story to his sailor friends by saying “She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy. ‘I got my appointment-of course; and I got it very quick’” (HD 2308). Marlow gets his job in Congo through his aunt’s help; her act can be thought as an “indirect kernel” which helps Marlow start those adventures but Marlow does not let her receive more attention by silencing her⁷. The reader is never again told about the aunt because she is on the subsidiary story-line. Nothing is known about her. As a female character her role is a minor one; she has no place in an adventurous male story like most of the female characters in *The Odyssey*. The “indirect kernels” can be thought of as events that indirectly help unfold the plot such as female help in both works. However, as being different from *The Odyssey* in *Heart of Darkness* the aunt’s effort is undervalued by the narrator which will be analyzed in the chapter on “narration”. In both works, women are at the periphery; they have no roles related to the social problems. Their lives are within the boundaries of their houses. Thus, the events that the female characters are involved in are either unimportant details of the story or limited by patriarchy as in the case of Penelopeia. The male characters’ stories, however, constitute the main story-line; and, women have almost no function in these stories which makes them stay on the subsidiary story-line most of the time. The female

⁷ This will be analyzed further in the chapter on “narration”.

characters' actions change almost nothing in the progress of the stories; for this reason, the events that they take roles in are mostly "catalysts".

2.1.3 The Events Partaken by Male Antagonists

Female characters' role in both texts resembles another marginalized group's function in the story. The rebellious male characters are also positioned on the peripheries of the story about the hero's success in surviving a difficult journey both physically and psychologically. However, as being different from the female characters, the disorderly male characters' actions are "kernels" because they are active antagonists of the story whose actions cause changes in the plot. The marginalized male characters' role is creating disorder in the society which is expected to be solved by the protagonist. In *Narrative Fiction*, Rimmon-Kenan explains:

[A. J.] Greimas puts into play two kinds of opposed semes (the 'seme' being the minimal unit of sense): contradictories and contraries. Contradictories (A v. not-A) are created when one seme (or – in logic – one proposition) negates the other, so that they cannot both be true and they cannot both be false. They are mutually exclusive and exhaustive (e.g. 'white' v. 'non-white'). (12)

In keeping with Algirdas Julien Greimas' observation, in both texts, protagonists negate their enemies; they cannot both be right or wrong. This means that one group is the right and the other is the wrong one. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus has to fight against the suitors who want to marry his wife. Telemakhos cries "they jam our house: they slaughter our sheep here / everyday, our fattened goats and our cattle. / They revel and gulp down glowing wine with abandon. / So much is lost already because there is no man - / the man Odysseus was – to keep this blight from my / household" (2.55-59). The suitors give harm to Odysseus's kingdom and family. They exploit Odysseus's food and drink. Moreover, they disturb the family members and servants. When Odysseus finishes his difficult journey, he has to fight also against the suitors who emerge as the major antagonists of the story.

Similar to Homer's work, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, there are male characters who create social disorder. For instance, Marlow goes to Africa to take Kurtz back to Europe because of his illness and his useless activities in Congo. Since

Kurtz seems to have lost his control, he has to be stopped as he kills the native people who do not obey him. However, some of the natives there adore him and they do not want him to go so they react: they attack Marlow and his crew. This event in which the African men act is a “kernel” because it makes the crew attack back. Marlow asks the Russian, who is a trader and Kurtz’s companion there, in Africa, “Why did [these Natives] attack us?” and the Russian replies “They don’t want [Kurtz] to go” (*HD* 2344). This answer reveals that according to the Russian, these Africans do not control themselves; they threaten one if s/he does something they do not want. This answer reveals that as they become the major threat for Marlow, he will behave accordingly from now on; i.e. these marginalized male characters’ acts are “kernels” as they cause a change in the story.

The writers create tension in the story through the disorderly male characters. Without them, Penelopeia and Telemakhos would not need Odysseus. Marlow would not have any story to tell. The story moves as a consequence of the events partaken by the antagonists. This means that the marginalized male characters actions are “kernels”; yet unlike the male protagonists they do not have stories of their own.

2.2 Characters

Characters are as important as the events in the structure of the story as they are the participants in these events. There are some theoretical discussions in relation to the term “character”. One of them is about the entity of the character. Roland Barthes suggests that “‘What is obsolescent in today’s novel . . . is not the novelistic, it is the character; what can no longer be written is the Proper Name’” (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 29). According to Barthes analyzing a character as if it is a living being is out of date. Hélène Cixous also has a similar suggestion. “[She] questions not only the stability but also the unity of the self. The ‘I’, according to her, is ‘always more than one, diverse, capable of being all those it will at one time be, a group acting together’” (Rimmon-Kenan 30). According to Cixous, a person does not have one but many different selves; however, the notion of character does not reflect this multiplicity of the “I”. Rimmon-Kenan explains that “If the self is a . . . ‘group acting together’, the concept of character changes or disappears, the ‘old stable ego’

disintegrates” (30). In brief, “Character . . . is pronounced ‘dead’ by many modern writers” (Rimmon-Kenan 30).

Another discussion about the term character can be summarized through Rimmon-Kenan’s question: are the characters “people or words?” (31). Some of the critics support the idea that characters can be analyzed like real human beings, whereas some others oppose this idea. Marvin Mudrick explains the two different notions about this subject as follows:

“The ‘purist’ argument . . . points out that characters do not exist at all except insofar as they are a part of the images and events which bear and move them . . . The ‘realistic’ argument . . . insists that characters acquire, in the course of an action, a kind of independence from the events in which they live, and that they can be usefully discussed at some distance from their context”. (151)

This means that “the so-called ‘realistic’ argument sees characters as imitations of people and tends to treat them . . . as if they were our neighbours or friends, whilst also abstracting them from the verbal texture of the work under consideration” (Rimmon-Kenan 32). The “purist” argument, on the other hand, holds that characters are only words that help create a story. Rimmon-Kenan aims to conflate the two perspectives: “Is it possible to see characters ‘at once as persons and as parts of a design?’” and argues “In the text characters are nodes in the verbal design; in the story they are- by definition- non (or pre-) verbal abstractions, constructs. Although these constructs are by no means human beings in the literal sense of the word, they are partly modelled on the reader’s conception of people and in this they are person-like” (33). Rimmon-Kenan underlines that though characters are just words, they are designed according to the reader’s understanding, which inevitably makes characters resemble real human beings in a way.

One of the most debated subjects about the concept of character is E. M. Forster’s categorization of characters. Forster puts forward that there are two types of characters: one is “flat” and the other is “round”. “Flat characters are analogous to ‘humours’, caricatures, types . . . They are constructed around a single idea or quality and therefore can be expressed in one sentence. Furthermore, such characters do not develop in the course of the action” (Rimmon-Kenan 40). Round characters, on the other hand, “are defined by contrastive implication, namely those that are not flat.

Not being flat involves having more than one quality and developing in the course of the action” (Rimmon-Kenan 40). However, some critics think that Forster’s categorization cannot be applied to each and every work. Rimmon-Kenan suggests that “Forster’s distinction . . . suffers from a few weaknesses: . . . The term ‘flat’ suggests something two-dimensional, devoid of depth and ‘life’, while in fact many flat characters, like those of Dickens, are not only felt as very much ‘alive’ but also create the impression of depth” (40). As opposed to Forster, Rimmon-Kenan underlines that some “flat” characters are not that simple. It is not always the case that a character which does not change much throughout the work has one characteristic only. For Rimmon-Kenan, there are also some other weaknesses in Forster’s terms:

Although these criteria often co-exist, there are fictional characters which are complex but undeveloping (e.g. Joyce’s Bloom) and others which are simple but developing (e.g. the allegorical Everyman). Moreover, the lack of development can be presented as arrested development resulting from some psychic trauma, as in the case of Miss Havisham in Dickens’s *Great Expectation*, thus endowing a static character with complexity. (41)

As Rimmon-Kenan suggests, E. M. Forster’s categorization of a character can be challenged easily because this kind of a categorization ignores the character’s lifelikeness. David Gorman also mentions this problem about Forster’s terms and holds that: “the problem with these definitions . . . is that they conflate two different criteria” (168). Gorman exemplifies the situation by saying that some characters “with complicated personalities . . . stay the same throughout a narrative” or some others “exhibit few personality traits but . . . also change” (169). Like Rimmon-Kenan, Gorman, too, underlines that characters cannot be easily categorized as in the way in which Forster does. Gorman suggests instead two different terms for “flat” and “round”:

Forster’s criteria, though logically distinct, are not unconnected. While major characters can be complex, dynamic, or both, minor characters, introduced for contrast or other kinds of support, must be, precisely, “flat” . . . Like other background elements, they must be static in order to provide a fixed ground against which to perceive the main characters, as well as simple, so as not to distract from the main action. The terminology would probably be improved by calling characters who play this role in narrative “schematic” rather than “flat,” and those in the contrasting class “full” rather than “round”. (169)

David Gorman states that Forster may be right by claiming that some characters are shown as static to make the reader realize the difference between them and the main characters; however, he suggests that the chosen terms are problematic: rather than “flat”, we can use “schematic” and instead of “round” we can say “full”; these will help make a more accurate criticism because some characters, the “schematic ones, are “schematized” to make the reader focus on the major / “full” characters. Rimmon-Kenan also suggests that “In a given narrative, a character may perform more than one role (e.g. Magwitch in *Great Expectations* first appears as villain, later as donor and helper) and conversely, a role may be fulfilled by more than one character (e.g. there is more than one villain in *Great Expectations*)” (34). The characters cannot be categorized as simple and complex ones. Rimmon-Kenan points out that “instead of subordinating character to action or the other way round, it may be possible to consider the two as interdependent” (35).

Besides these problems, the term “character” should also be defined before moving on to the analysis of the characters in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*. According to Barthes, “the Name” is the most important thing that the character has:

Character is an adjective, an attribute, a predicate ... Sarrasine is the sum, the point of convergence, of: *turbulence, artistic gift, independence, excess, femininity, ugliness, composite nature, impiety, love of whittling, will, etc.* What gives the illusion that the sum is supplemented by a precious remainder (something like *individuality*, in that, qualitative and ineffable, it may escape the vulgar bookkeeping of compositional characters) is the Proper Name, the difference completed by what is *proper* to it. The proper name enables the person to exist outside the semes, whose sum nonetheless constitutes it entirely. As soon as a Name exists (even a pronoun to flow toward and fasten onto), the semes become predicates, inductors of truth, and the Name becomes a subject. (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 39)

According to Barthes, what makes the character an individual is its name. In keeping with Barthes, Rimmon-Kenan holds that the basic principle constituting a character is “cohesion”: “The main principles of cohesion . . . are repetition, similarity, contrast, and implication” (39). These features make a character more life-like because also in real life individuals repeat certain behaviours or their behaviours sometimes contradict one another. Rimmon-Kenan analyzes these items step by step; she defines repetition as follows: “The repetition of the same behaviour ‘invites’

labelling it as a character-trait” (39). Then, she gives examples from William Faulkner’s short story called “A Rose for Emily”: “the heroine’s repeated Sunday rides with Homer Baron suggest both her defiance of the townspeople and her stubbornness” are examples of repetition (39). Similarities are also helpful to create a character profile as in the case of Emily, again: “Similarities of behaviour on different occasions, like Emily’s refusal to admit the death of her father and her preservation of her ex-lover’s corpse, also give rise to a generalization, in this case her clinging to people who robbed her of her life (as the townspeople interpret it), or her necrophilia (39-40). As for “contrast” Rimmon-Kenan holds that “Contrast is not less conducive to generalization than similarity, as when a character’s ambivalence toward his mother emerges from the tension between his frequent visits to her and his equally frequent quarrels with her” (40). The example shows that there is a contrast between the two actions of the character: he visits her mother but in the meantime he cannot get on well with her. The unbalanced behaviour also helps the character seem more life-like as all individuals have some inconsistent behaviour. The last item playing a role in the creation of cohesion is “implication”. James Garvey pinpoints three types of implication:

- (1) ‘a set of physical attributes implies a psychological AP (Attributive Proposition)’, e.g. X bites his fingernails → X is nervous;
- (2) ‘a set of psychological attributions implies a further psychological AP’, e.g. X hates his father and loves his mother → X has an Oedipus complex;
- (3) ‘a set of psychological and physical attributes implies a psychological AP’, e.g. X sees a snake, X becomes fearful → X is afraid of snakes. (74-5)

As Garvey suggests, certain behaviours of the characters can imply personality traits. To summarize, it can be held that repetition, similarity, contrast and implication “contribute to the cohesion of various traits around the proper name, on which the effect we call ‘character’ depends” (Rimmon-Kenan 40). The “figures” which do not have these features cannot create the effect of character; they can be labeled at most “schematic” characters. Rimmon-Kenan suggests that “Characters who do not develop are often minor, serving some function beyond themselves (e.g. representing the social *milieu* in which the major character acts). At the opposite pole there are fully developed characters” (41). According to this argument, it can be said that the function “schematic” characters in the text is to foreground the “full” characters. In

The Odyssey and in *Heart of Darkness*, the female figures and marginalized male figures can be grouped as “schematic” characters which serve to foreground the “full” characters / the male protagonists.

Rimmon-Kenan states that “[Vladimir] Propp subordinates characters to ‘spheres of action’ within which their performance can be categorized according to [some] general roles: the villain, the donor, the helper [,] . . . the hero and the false hero” (34). These roles are found out by analyzing the character’s actions throughout the work. “Indirect action” is one of the things that help create a character profile. Rimmon-Kenan defines it as follows: “A presentation is indirect when rather than mentioning a trait, it displays and exemplifies it in various ways” (61). There are three types of acts that reveal the character’s personality. One of them is “act of commission”, “i.e. something performed by the character” (Rimmon-Kenan 61-2). The other one is the “act of omission” which is “something which the character should, but does not do” (Rimmon-Kenan 62). And the last one is the “contemplated act”. The term is defined by Rimmon-Kenan as follows: “an unrealized plan or intention of the character” (62). Throughout the work, whereas the male protagonists carry out “acts of commission” and sometimes “contemplated acts”, the female characters’ acts are mostly “acts of omission”. The marginalized characters’ acts are also “acts of commission” most of the time; however, they are just figures which are created to foreground the good features of the male protagonists because “the similarity or contrast between [two characters’] behaviour emphasizes traits characteristic of both” (Rimmon-Kenan 70).

2.2.1 Male Characters

Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the important public roles are given to the male characters. Moreover, they are cohesive characters in Rimmon-Kenan’s terms, the first sign of which is the “implication”. The major role that is assigned to male characters is the adventurer. Both Odysseus and Marlow are known through the difficult experiences they come across; however, this is not the only thing that makes them adventurers. What makes them so is also their wish to start these journeys which becomes an “implication” for their being adventurers. Both of these characters want to start a journey by their own freewill though they know that

they will undergo many hardships. Agamemnon reminds Amphimedon, who is king Menelaos's son and a suitor, of their talk with Odysseus: "Don't you remember the day I walked in your household / with godlike Menelaos? We encouraged Odysseus / to join us and sail for Troy on our strong-decked vessels. / . . . / We barely prevailed on Odysseus, wrecker of cities" (24.115-119). The reader learns that Odysseus does not have to go to the Trojan War; he accepts his friends' offer willingly. This makes him an adventurer who takes risks and who has no fear. Similarly, Marlow also starts his difficult journey to Africa by his own will. He utters:

there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map . . . I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there' . . . But there was in it one river especially . . . Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river . . . I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water -- steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? (*HD* 2308)

Marlow is also an adventurer; he just puts his finger on a place on the map, and then he decides to go there. He has no specific reason other than exploring those "blank spaces on the earth" as an adventurer.

Other roles that are given to male characters are being the leader and enduring heroes both of which are characterized by masculinity. These features resemble each other; in Rimmon-Kenan's terms, these are "similarities" which help make a generalization that the protagonists in both works are embodiments of manly authority. For example, the male protagonists in both texts are characterized by their loyalty to their men, which contributes to their position as leaders and heroes. When Odysseus's friend, Elpenor, is about to die, he wants Odysseus to do something for him:

'Build me a marker, a mound on the shore of the gray sea / recalling a sorry man, so men in the future will know me. / Make that end for me. Plant my oar in the death-mound: / when I was alive I used it to row with my shipmates.' / After he spoke that way I answered by saying, / 'I'll do it, my sorry man. I'll make you a good end'. (11.74-80)

Odysseus, loyal to his friend, keeps his promise:

When newborn Dawn came on with her rose-fingered daylight, / I sent a few of my men to the household of Kirke / to carry back a body: Elpenor had died

there. We hurried and chopped up wood. Where headland pushed out /
farthest to sea we mourned and buried him, shedding our big tears. (12.8-12)

Odysseus does everything his dead friend wanted. This relationship shows how strong their bond is. This is an example of what Rimmon-Kenan calls an “act of commission”.

Very similar to Odysseus’s friend, in *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz also asks a favor from Marlow when he is about to die. Marlow remembers: “One morning [Mr. Kurtz] gave me a packet of papers and a photograph -- the lot tied together with a shoe-string. ‘Keep this for me,’ he said. ‘This noxious fool’ (meaning the manager) ‘is capable of prying into my boxes when I am not looking’” (*HD* 2356). Kurtz asks Marlow to hide his belongings from the people who have an eye on them. As a sign of his loyalty and their male bond, Marlow does what Kurtz wants. He asserts:

I kept the bundle of papers given me by Kurtz . . . A clean-shaved man, with an official manner and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, called on me one day and made inquiries, at first circuitous, afterwards suavely pressing, about what he was pleased to denominate certain 'documents.' I was not surprised, because I had had two rows with the manager on the subject out there. I had refused to give up the smallest scrap out of that package, and I took the same attitude with the spectacled man. (*HD* 2358)

Similar to Odysseus, Marlow shows his loyal personality and does not give away Kurtz’s belongings. This “act of commission” is an indicator of the male bond between Marlow and Kurtz. In this case, Odysseus’s and Marlow’s acts become the sign of their masculinity as well as their loyalty.

The protagonists also have an authority over other people. For instance, Odysseus is a king. Telemakhos has great grief because of his lack of father who is a strong king. “Godlike Telemakhos . . . / had sat by a crowd of suitors, sad in his own heart. / He’d pictured a good man, his father: what if he came home / now and scattered the suitors through all of the palace, / gaining esteem again and the rule of his own house?” (1.113-117). Though Telemakhos is a strong young man, he needs Odysseus because Odysseus knows what to do in any situation. Particularly, he knows how to rule. Marlow is also given the role of the leader in *Heart of Darkness*. He informs “I was going to take charge of a . . . river-steamboat” (*HD* 2311). He becomes the captain of a steamboat. “I started the lame engine ahead . . . The current

was more rapid now, the steamer seemed at her last gasp, the stern-wheel flopped languidly, and I caught myself listening on tiptoe for the next beat of the boat, for in sober truth I expected the wretched thing to give up every moment . . . But we still crawled” (*HD* 2332). Marlow has the control of the ship and the crew; he knows what to do and he is careful enough to direct a steamboat.

Besides being leaders, the male protagonists in both texts are enduring heroes. Though Odysseus and Marlow come across hard situations, they never give up; they endure difficulties all the time. According to Rimmon-Kenan “The repetition of the same behaviour ‘invites’ labelling it as a character-trait” (39). And, in both texts, there is more than one occasion which underlines the masculinity of the protagonists. Besides leadership, endurance is a feature that makes these heroes masculine: “From a very early age, [in patriarchal societies] boys are taught what is appropriate for their gender and what is not. They are taught to suppress their emotions (‘boys don’t cry’) and endure hardship without complaint (‘take it like a man’)” (Benshoff and Griffin 250). Both Odysseus and Marlow behave “manly”. For instance, both of the heroes lose their companions on their journeys. Some of Odysseus’s friends are eaten by Kharubdis, a sea monster. He also mentions Skulla, who is another monster disturbing them. He utters:

Every time [Kharubdis] sucked in more of the salt sea, / everything whirled inside her, both of the high crags / loudly echoed and ground was bared at the bottom, / a dark blue sand. We all were seized by a pale green / fear as we watched that monster, dreading our own end. / Just then Skulla snatched six men from the hollow / ship - the strongest hands, the best of my war-friends, / I saw their hands and feet rising above me / high in the air. Their voices came to me calling / my name for the last time, their hearts in anguish. (12.240-250)

His friends die in front of Odysseus because of the attacks and he cannot do anything to prevent this. What he can only do is to “take it like a man” and rescue himself and his other friends. Just like him, Marlow has to face his helmsman’s death by a spear.

He says:

my feet felt so very warm and wet that I had to look down. The man had rolled on his back and stared straight up at me; both his hands clutched that cane. It was the shaft of a spear that, either thrown or lunged through the opening, had caught him in the side, just below the ribs; the blade had gone in

out of sight, after making a frightful gash; my shoes were full; a pool of blood lay very still. (*HD* 2338)

Marlow is shocked by the Africans' attack. Just like Odysseus, he cannot do anything to protect his companion. His helmsman is killed by Kurtz's supporters. Marlow says "He died without uttering a sound, without moving a limb, without twitching a muscle" (*HD* 2338). Both Odysseus and Marlow experience a deep agony when they witness their friends' death in a terrible way. However, they endure this situation and do not lose their faith in success; this is an implication of their "manliness".

The journeys of Odysseus and Marlow have other resemblances; both characters continue with their journeys by their own efforts. This effort makes them enduring heroes, too. Both of these characters need a vehicle to continue with their difficult journeys. Odysseus builds his ship by himself.

He cut down trees. He worked at a fast pace, / felling twenty in all. He trimmed them with ax-blows, / scraped them with care and cut them straight to a string-line. / ... / He bored and fitted all the planks to each other, / using wooden nails and slabs for the joining. / The way a man skilled in carpentry rounds out / the broad keel of a ship designed as a freighter, / Odysseus worked on the wide raft in the same way. / He set down deck-planks, closely fitted with braces, / and made some long strakes. So ended the raft-work. / Now he set in a mast and fitted a yardarm. / He made a steer-oar, too, in order to sail straight. (5.243-255)

The enduring hero finds out what to do to return home. He cuts the trees, gives shape to them like a carpenter and puts a yardarm and a steer. This effort makes him a perfect hero who endures everything. Even having no vehicle to continue with his journey cannot stop him; he does everything to achieve his aim. Similar to what Odysseus does, Marlow also repairs his ship by his own effort. He describes what has happened as follows: "I asked myself what I was to do there, now my boat was lost. As a matter of fact, I had plenty to do in fishing my command out of the river. I had to set about it the very next day. That, and the repairs when I brought the pieces to the station, took some months" (*HD* 2318). Though his boat becomes a wreck, Marlow does not give up. First, he waits for the equipment to be brought from other stations. He says "What I really wanted was rivets, by heaven! Rivets. To get on with the work -- to stop the hole" (*HD* 2324). Then, Marlow repairs it himself like

Odysseus who builds his own ship. He does everything to move his steamboat throughout the story and thus shows that he is an enduring captain.

Being able to control themselves and using their minds are some other features that belong to the male characters both in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*, which again strengthen their heroic character profile. In fact, controlling one's feelings is a feature that belongs only to the male protagonists because, as it will be analyzed in detail in the following parts, female characters and disorderly male characters fail to control their feelings. In both texts, as a consequence, there emerges a gendered hierarchy between "mind" and "emotion".

Both male protagonists demonstrate that they can control their feelings. For instance, Odysseus, warned by Kalupso, knows that he will be allured by Seirenes' songs because they have such a beautiful voice that almost all sailors are trapped by them. While Odysseus takes some precautions such as tying himself and closing his friends' ears, he wants his crew to be alert and says "Then if I plead and command you all to untie me, / lash me with still more lines harder to hold me" (12.163-4). And he tells what he feels when they go past the Seirenes' island: "They raised that beautiful song and my spirit was longing / to hear much more. I told my men to untie me, / nodding my brows. But most men kept to their rowing. / Perimedes rose with Eurulokhos quickly / and lashed me with still more line, harder and tighter" (12.192-196). Odysseus's precautions help him save himself from being trapped by Seirenes. In fact, this scene also lays bare how the dangerous allure of the unreasonable, things that one's "spirit" "longs" to be exposed to, are given a female identity. According to Helené Cixous,

Theory of culture, theory of society, symbolic systems in general -art, religion, family, language, - it is all developed while bringing the same schemes to light. And the movement whereby each opposition is set up to make sense is the movement through which the couple is destroyed. A universal battlefield. Each time, a war is let loose. Death is always at work. (64)

The binary oppositions that inform "symbolic systems in general" are hierarchical and gendered at the same time; that is, each opposition is coded as a gendered one. The man/woman binary informs all the others. "Activity/Passivity . . . Culture/Nature

. . . Father/Mother . . . Thought has always worked through oppositions” (Cixous 63). Cixous’ explanation also throws light on the reason why the male protagonists in both works suppress their desire:

each story, each myth says to her: “There is no place for your desire in our affairs of State” . . . For us men, who are made to succeed, to climb the social ladder, temptation that encourages us, drives us and feeds our ambitions is good. But carrying it out is dangerous . . . You women represent the eternal threat, the anticulture for us. We don’t stay in your houses . . . We wander . . . Don’t make us . . . soft and feminine (67)

In “each story, each myth” men escape women as they believe that women make them lose their social positions. Patriarchal stories make men believe that they will become “soft and feminine” if they do not stop their desires. Then it can be said that these acts of male protagonists can be regarded as “contemplated acts” in Rimmon-Kenan’s words. They try to suppress their feelings which seems to be motivated by their desire not to resemble the “other.”

Marlow is also characterized as a rational man who can control his desires. Marlow sees Native Africans dance and he wants to dance like them as he explains in the following excerpt. He claims “You wonder I didn’t go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no -- I didn’t. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, be hanged! I had no time” (*HD* 2330). Marlow underlines that “fine sentiments” disappeared for him at that moment as he admires the Natives’ dance; however, he finds excuses not to join them, indeed just because of the “fine sentiments”. He argues that he has no time to dance although the dance lasts only a couple of minutes. Like Odysseus, Marlow, too, manages to suppress his desire and does not yield to the allure of the “howl and dance”.

Another feature that makes Odysseus and Marlow heroic/manly (and thereby unlike women who are characterised as emotional) characters is their intelligence. Odysseus’s victory over Kuklops is a result of Odysseus’s practical mind. Odysseus deceives Kuklops by offering him wine:

Soon as [Kuklops] briskly ended his chores in the cavern / again he clutched two men to make them his dinner. / I spoke to the Kuklops now, standing beside him, / my hands lifting an ivy-wood bowl of the dark wine. ‘Kuklops! Drink my wine now that you’ve eaten / my men’s flesh. See what a fine

vintage was hiding / aboard our ship. I brought you this gift and was hoping / you'd pity and send us home. (9.343-350)

Odysseus makes Kuklops drunk and then blinds him. Thus Kuklops cannot see the men who escape from his cave. However, he waits for Odysseus and his friends at the gate. For this reason, Odysseus wants his friends to hide beneath Kuklops's animals: "In the pain he felt along the backs of the whole flock / standing before him, foolishly failing to guess that / a man was tied beneath each ram at the breast-fleece" (9.441-3). Odysseus manages to deceive Kuklops and save his friends through his intelligence.

Similar to Odysseus, Marlow is also represented as an intelligent character. He hears the manager's speech and learns that he hates Kurtz; however, the manager pretends to like Kurtz to hide his hatred. For this reason, when the weather is foggy, the manager says "I would be desolated if anything should happen to Mr. Kurtz before we came up" (*HD* 2335). Though the manager speaks like this, Marlow knows his true intention, i.e. he knows that the manager speaks like that just to hide his real thoughts about Kurtz. Marlow explains what he thinks about the manager by saying "[The manager] was just the kind of man who would wish to preserve appearances. That was his restraint". Marlow is clever enough to understand the manager's intention. He is also clever enough to protect the ship. Marlow knows what to do at sea. He says, "Of course I made no move. I had no mind for a smash-up. You couldn't imagine a more deadly place for a shipwreck. Whether we drowned at once or not, we were sure to perish speedily in one way or another" (*HD* 2335). Marlow does not move although the manager wants him to move because he knows that the ship will have an accident if it moves in that kind of weather. However, the manager continues to "preserve his appearance": "I authorize you to take all the risks" (*HD* 2335). Marlow replies: "I refuse to take any". Marlow informs his listeners: "[this] was just the answer he expected, though its tone might have surprised him" (*HD* 2335). Marlow is capable enough to understand the manager's intention and to act by himself. In both works, the male protagonists are portrayed as intelligent characters.

In the light of Rimmon-Kenan's conceptualization of "cohesion", the male protagonists in both works can be thought as cohesive characters as they repeat their actions, there are similarities between them and some of their actions are implications of their personality. There is, however, one significant difference between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*, and it has to do with their generic features. As pointed out earlier, one aspect that may contribute to the portrayal of a character is a discrepancy between the character's actions. Interestingly, all Odysseus's actions are consistent, which can be explained in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualization of the epic and epic hero. Bakhtin states that: "the epic . . . is as closed as a circle; inside it everything is finished, already over. There is no place in the epic world for any openendedness, indecision, indeterminacy" (Bakhtin 16). As Bakhtin suggests, an epic does not include any indeterminacy. Homer's epic *The Odyssey* does not include any contradictions in the portrayal of the protagonist. On the other hand, in *Heart of Darkness*, it can be followed that the work exemplifies Rimmon-Kenan's notion of "cohesion" of a "character" also through contrasts. For instance, on the one hand, Marlow thinks that "black" people cannot be "white" western people's relatives; he asserts: "what thrilled you [as the white western people] was just the thought of [these black people's] humanity -- like yours -- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough" (*HD* 2330). Marlow draws a parallel between the black people and a wild animal by describing them as having a "wild and passionate roar" because "roaring" is something only an animal does and passion is the opposite of reason which animals lack. He, obviously, says that he does not believe the idea of kinship between black and white people; however, he also resembles Kurtz to his black helmsman in the following paragraphs. Marlow and his crew are attacked by the natives and his helmsman dies because he leaves his place to open the shutters to shoot the natives. Marlow says: "Poor fool! If he had only left that shutter alone. He had no restraint, no restraint -- just like Kurtz" (*HD* 2342). Marlow resembles his black helmsman to Kurtz who is a white westerner though he does not believe that black and white people have a kinship. This shows that Marlow's thoughts are not consistent; and, this makes him a more lifelike character because like Rimmon-Kenan and Hélène Cixous underline, there are many different selves in one person.

According to Bakhtin, “The individual in the high distanced genres is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image. As such he is a fully finished and completed being” (34). For instance, Odysseus’s psychological progress is not in the foreground because in an epic a character is represented as a “fully finished being” unlike many other “full” novel characters. However, he experiences and learns a lot of things throughout his journey. This makes him closer to a full character rather than the schematic one.

As opposed to the female characters located within domestic spheres, the male protagonists experience many adventures. Experiencing new things is one of the elements that make the protagonists become more lifelike or more “full” in David Gorman’s words. As opposed to an epic, in a novel, “the hero should not be portrayed as an already completed and unchanging person but as one who is evolving and developing, a person who learns from life” (Bakhtin 10). Marlow is a “full” character who changes in the course of the action. Marlow gets more mature at the end of his difficult experience. He summarizes his feelings by saying

yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me -- and into my thoughts. (*HD* 2307)

Marlow learns a lot of things related to human nature from his encounter with Kurtz. Though Marlow has completed the journey, he remembers the things that happened in Congo. When he talks about his visit to Kurtz’s fiancée, he says “while I waited [in front of the door, Kurtz] seemed to stare at me out of the glassy panel -- stare with that wide and immense stare embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe. I seemed to hear the whispered cry, ‘The horror! The horror!’” (*HD* 2360). After witnessing the horrifying situation of a man such as Kurtz, Marlow cannot remain the same person. He has learned through Kurtz’s situation that there is a primitive/savage side in all human beings and that only “civilization” help us suppress it. This is also the attitude of the implied author; in that in Conrad’s text “civilization mission” that informed European imperialism from the 18th century on

is not problematized. In relation to this subject, Ian Watt mentions Freud's theories and asserts:

Freud's observations had forced him to a position which dramatically undermined the accepted psychological foundations of the social and moral order, since man was shown to be unconsciously dominated, not by reason or benevolence or duty, but by the omnivorous and ultimately unappeasable appetites of the id; and so, . . . Freud wondered whether any secular mechanism could ever replace religion in controlling the aggressive drives which led to war and hatred of civilization. [Freud and Conrad] shared not only the same dark view of man's innate constitution and the same conviction that culture was based on repression or restraint, but a similar sense that the destructive tendencies of man which their vision emphasized must be controlled as far as possible, partly by promoting a greater understanding of the inherent darkness of the self, and partly by supporting the modest counter truths on which civilization depends. (80)

It can be suggested that, through Kurtz's experiences and Kurtz's last word, "horror", Marlow learns that the "id" has to be "repressed" in order to be "civilized". For this reason, as a developing person, Marlow is a "full" character as opposed to a marginalized character. Like Odysseus, the other feature that makes Marlow a "full" character is his personality. He has not one but many different qualities. On the one hand, genre differences make Odysseus and Marlow different types of characters but on the other hand, both of these characters are described as being adventurers, leaders and enduring heroes which means that they are not the prototype of one characteristic only.

One of the major characters in *Heart of Darkness* is Kurtz, an officer of a western colonizer company in Africa. Kurtz can also be examined as a "character" as his personality is laid bare in detail as opposed to female characters in *Heart of Darkness*. The elements of cohesion, i.e. repetition, similarity, contrast and implication can also be seen in Kurtz's characterization. For instance, he repeatedly cries in a terrified manner: 'Oh, but I will wring your heart yet!' (*HD* 2356) and "He cried out twice . . . : 'The horror! The horror!'" (*HD* 2356). These repetitive rebellious cries contribute to portrayal of the character; they make it clear that he is in a miserable situation. Moreover, there are some similarities, too in his behaviour. Women are beautiful objects for him. For instance, he has a lover in each place he settles: one is his Intended and the other one is his African mistress. Another feature

that helps create a “character” profile is the contrast between his reactions. For instance, before Kurtz comes to Africa, he had colonialist “ideals” such as “civilizing” Africans and killing anyone who does not obey the rules; Kurtz orders: “Exterminate all the brutes!” However, it is quite surprising that, Kurtz ignores all of these ideals as Marlow suggests: “The curious part was that he had apparently forgotten all about that valuable postscriptum” (*HD* 2341). When Kurtz establishes his own kingdom in Congo and when he gets his own profits, he gives up all his colonialist “ideals” both because he discovers his “uncivilized” self and becomes like one of the “uncivilized” natives there and because he piles the ivories only for himself which makes him be like a king, as well. The last item that makes Kurtz a “character” is “implication”. There are some scenes that make one think that Kurtz is unhappy with his life in Congo. When Marlow brings him to the ship, Kurtz looks at Africa and says: “Close the shutter ... I can't bear to look at this” (*HD* 2356). Kurtz sentences are “implications” of his unhappiness. He discovers the emptiness of his life so he rejects looking at nature as it is the only owner of everything. In relation to his behaviour, Susan E. Lorsch asserts:

Kurtz's anguish derives from his realization of the emptiness of the world around him as well as from his awareness of his own personal hollowness . . . Kurtz cannot bare to gaze at the natural world that insists that life has no intrinsic meanings, no intrinsic values. And he cannot quite accept the finality of that verdict. (110-1)

As Lorsch explains, Kurtz's rejection to see the nature is an “implication” of his discovery of the essence of life. Repetition, similarity, contrast and implication are the items that help create a picture of Kurtz as a “character”. He is one of the major characters in *Heart of Darkness* not only because Marlow talks about him most of the time but because of his acts. The male protagonists of both texts are more lifelike than the marginalized “characters”.

2.2.2 Female Figures

The female figures in both texts cannot be considered “characters” as they have no “cohesion” in Rimmon-Kenan's words. Or, they may be called “schematic” characters which are created for the purpose of foregrounding the “full” characters in

David Gorman's terms. These characters are simple and do not change throughout the story.

Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness* the female characters are only "schematic" characters; they are not lifelike but typical. Penelopeia waits for her husband for twenty years and the Intended informs that she will mourn because of her fiancé's death forever, i.e. she will be Kurtz's woman forever. Penelopeia and Odysseus's first encounter after his return home exemplifies Penelopeia's role in the story. The narrator informs that "The woman gazed at her welcome husband the same way, not letting her white arms ease at all from his neck yet" (23.239-240). Yet, interestingly, although Penelopeia is portrayed as the desiring and gazing subject rather than as an object of male desire, she is still portrayed only in relation to her husband. After Penelopeia learns that her husband has come back home, her sexuality is foregrounded because her only role in the work is to be Odysseus's wife. Then the narrator continues "[Everyone] went to sleep themselves in the shadowy great hall / After the pair had taken pleasure in loving / they spoke to each other" (23.299-301). Again there is a reference to sexuality in relation to the female character. However, as being different from *Heart of Darkness*, Odysseus and Penelopeia speak with each other which will be analyzed in the chapter on "narration" in detail. Throughout the work, Penelopeia has no other function besides missing Odysseus, struggling to be loyal to him and meeting him. She is represented in this story only through Odysseus. She is a type character which has no other feature besides her one specific role.

The female figures are characterized as objects of beauty in both texts. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, as well as in many other stories of Greek Gods and Goddesses, Aphrodite is represented through her erotic beauty. Aphrodite's physical beauty is often described in detail:

she has flashing eyes, a brightsmile, glittering gold jewelry, and a rosy glow radiates from her lovely neck and breasts. She is often depicted with one of her main attributes, a mirror, so she can check on her appearance. The most powerful way to extol the beauty of a mortal woman is to compare her to Aphrodite. The goddess embodies erotic beauty that is used to attract and seduce—you might call it "beauty enhanced for a purpose"—so she rules

over bodily adornment, such as clothing, jewelry, make-up, and perfume.
(Cyrino 85)

In *The Odyssey* the representation of Aphrodite lays bare the situation of women in patriarchal societies. It is told that Ares was “craving the love of gorgeously crowned [Aphrodite]” (8.288). Aphrodite is characterized through her accessories. Then, it is mentioned that “They dressed [Aphrodite] in lovely clothes, a marvel to look at” (8.366). Aphrodite is dressed up for others’ glance. Thus, she is the one who is looked at, not the gazer. The female character is characterized as an object; she is the object of beauty. Aphrodite is married to Hephaistos. Hephaistos talks about her and says “[Zeus’s] daughter’s a beauty, yes, but her love is without faith” (8.320). Instead of just informing the Gods about Aphrodite’s betrayal, Hephaistos underlines Aphrodite’s beauty first of all. She comes to the foreground through her appearance; her beautiful eyes, body or adornments are described.

The poets delight in describing [Aphrodite’s] golden jewels and lovely gowns . . . ‘On her immortal head / . . . placed a crown / . . . / beautiful and in gold, / and in the pierced lobes of her ears / they placed / flowers of copper / and precious gold. / On her delicate neck / and her silver-white breasts / they arranged necklaces of gold’ (Downing 196)

Aphrodite’s ornaments show how women become desirable objects for man. The man becomes the gazer and the woman becomes the gazed one. Laura Mulvey holds that “In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*” (19). Aphrodite has no individuality; she becomes a representation of the ideal woman. As Cyrino suggests, women are compared to her when their beauty is described. This also shows that the Goddess is a beautiful object only.

Aphrodite betrays Hephaistos with Ares. In *The Odyssey*, the narrator says that “[Ares] called her name / . . . / ‘Now my love, let’s enjoy ourselves on the bed here!’ / . . . / He spoke that way and she thought: how welcome to lie down!” (8.291-5). Aphrodite is represented as a person who is easily convinced by men and who does not think in depth. This also decreases her subjectivity and makes her a man’s object again.

Historical examples from ancient Greek life also lay bare the objectification of women in society. For instance, “after the fall of Troy, the women of the Trojan royal family were allotted as special prizes to the heroes of Greek army” (Pomeroy 26). Women were reduced to beautiful toys with which men passed their time. Penelopeia’s words are also explanatory to understand the situation. She cries “If Artemis, beautifully braided, struck me and helped me / go under the hateful earth with the face of Odysseus, / then I might never delight the mind of a lesser man” (20.80-2). Penelopeia knows that in her patriarchal society a woman is not allowed to become a subject but becomes an object of another man. She even wants to die to remain as Odysseus’s wife forever and not to be a play doll for another man.

Similar to Penelopeia, Kurtz’s fiancée has also no feature except to be Kurtz’s future wife in *Heart of Darkness*. For instance, Marlow underlines Kurtz’s words; “My intended, my station, my career, my ideas” and Marlow adds “these were the subjects for the occasional utterances of elevated sentiments” (*HD* 2355). Kurtz’s “intended” is one of the objects Kurtz has. In her analysis of the patriarchal structure of Hollywood movies, Laura Mulvey states that the female character generally “falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property” (21). This also applies to *Heart of Darkness*. The Intended has no individuality at all. Kurtz counts what belongs to him; his fiancée is just one of those “properties”. And for the story, she stands as a peripheral figure again. Based on Joseph Ewen’s arguments, Rimmon-Kenan makes a detailed analysis of this kind of characters:

At one pole on the axis of *complexity* [Joseph Ewen] locates characters constructed around a single trait or around one dominant trait along with a few secondary ones. Allegorical figures, caricatures, and types belong to this pole. In the first, the proper name represents the single trait around which the character is constructed (Pride, Sin). (41)

Conrad’s female character has no name either. Kurtz’s fiancée is named as the Intended which is indicative of her function in the story: “In allegories, the name represents the main trait(s) of a character: Pride, Lust, Goodman . . . But even non-allegorical texts often have recourse to a semantic parallelism between name and trait. Mrs. Newsome in James’s *The Ambassadors* (1903) represents the new world” (Rimmon-Kenan 68). Like an allegorical text, in *Heart of Darkness*, the female

character's name suggests that she has no other role in the text other than being Kurtz's "intended".

Rather than stressing similarity, analogy can also emphasize contrast between name and trait, frequently creating an ironic effect. This is the case when Razumov, son of reason (from a Polish root), is shown in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911) to be governed by unconscious motives much more frequently than by reason, often precisely when he prides himself on his rationality. (Rimmon-Kenan 69)

Not only in *Under Western Eyes* but also in *Heart of Darkness*, the names are used for ironic reasons. Though she is named "the Intended", Kurtz gives up his promise and betrays her.

The Intended has no individual thoughts or ideals but only speaks about Kurtz or his thoughts and ideals. She shows her admiration to him by saying: "his greatness," "his generous mind" or "his noble mind" (*HD* 2361). She thinks that his death is a "loss to . . . the world" (*HD* 2361). She also approves of his imperialist ideals by saying: "what vast plans he had . . . Something must remain. His words, at least, have not died" (*HD* 2362). She only talks about Kurtz and nothing else. Kurtz's Intended, located in Europe, symbolizes the European colonialist perspective. She stands for the "ideals" Kurtz intended to carry out in Africa. Michael Greaney suggests that

[Kurtz's] Intended symbolizes his unfulfilled intentions, unrealized potential, ruined ambitions –all enormous promise in politics, commerce, and art so extravagantly squandered. The Kurtz who crawls on all fours through the jungle, whose deathbed ramblings haunt Marlow's downstream voyage, seems incommensurate with the Kurtz who commanded the veneration of an entire Congolese community, and posthumously dominates Marlow's imagination. (72)

This is also connected to Marlow's lie about Kurtz to the Intended at the end of the story: Marlow is quite confused because of Kurtz's old ideals and his recent situation so he may want to hold on to the European colonialist "ideals" as a means of avoiding an end like Kurtz's. Marlow lies to the Intended, perhaps, because he wants her to continue her faith in those ideals because he, himself, too, continues to believe in them. These show that the Intended takes place in Marlow's narrative mainly for a symbolic purpose.

Kurtz's mistress is also named merely as "the African mistress". The African girl is named only through the male character. She is introduced to the reader as Kurtz's mistress or his native queen. The female figures are not individuals because they do not have names in *Heart of Darkness* and they have no features or cohesion in Rimmon-Kenan's terms to help portray them as character in both works. As Hélène Cixous claims, "I", i.e. the unity of self, includes many acts. She argues that the one-featured characters are not lifelike as one person has more than one characteristic. Female figures in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* are schematic or side characters whose function is to foreground the male protagonist. They have only few qualities and these qualities do not help them become "full" characters.

Furthermore, similar to Aphrodite's description, these female characters are also in the foreground only through their beauty. For instance, Marlow describes Kurtz's African mistress in the following way:

She . . . draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck . . . She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. (*HD* 2349)

As in the description of Aphrodite, Kurtz's mistress' appearance is in the foreground. Like Aphrodite, the African mistress has a lot of ornaments. She is decorated like an object as well. Her hair and body are described in detail. She is the savage and magnificent lady of Kurtz. Like Penelopeia, the Intended is also betrayed as a consequence of the man's encounter with an exotic lover on his journey. Like Kirke or Kalupso in *The Odyssey*, who are different from ordinary women, the African lady is depicted as different from western women. She is like any other "object" in Africa.

Kurtz's Intended's first description is also based on her appearance. Marlow describes what he feels when he looks at her picture when he tidies up Kurtz's belongings:

Thus I was left at last with a slim packet of letters and the girl's portrait. She struck me as beautiful-- I mean she had a beautiful expression. I know that the sunlight can be made to lie, too, yet one felt that no manipulation of light and pose could have conveyed the delicate shade of truthfulness upon those features . . . I concluded I would go and give her back her portrait and those

letters myself. Curiosity? Yes; and also some other feeling perhaps. (*HD* 2359)

Marlow is affected by the Intended's beauty. She is only a framed picture for Marlow which means that she is just a beautiful object for him. He decides to bring Kurtz's belongings to her because he wants to see this beauty with his own eyes.

In both texts, there is a shared way of constructing female "characters," which is through environmental props: "A character's physical surrounding (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class) are also often used as trait-connoting metonymies. As with external appearance, the relation of contiguity is frequently supplemented by that of causality" (Rimmon-Kenan 66). Both Penelopeia, in *The Odyssey*, and Kurtz's Intended, in *Heart of Darkness*, are shown within their houses' boundaries while one's husband and the other's fiancé go far away and experience dangerous adventures. For instance, Penelopeia is worried about her husband and also about her son who goes after his father. However, she is immobile; her characterization is established through environmental props. Her house is frequently represented as having a "shadowy great hall" (4.768). The darkness is used to establish the character's identity. In addition to the darkness, her house is used to represent her immobility. When her son goes to find his father, the narrator talks about her reaction and says: "She could not bear to sit though her chairs were many. / Instead she sat on the floor of her richly crafted / room and moaned wretchedly" (4.717-719). Though she feels buried under, she cannot go out; she goes to her balcony when she feels sad. Her son is more active than her. Telemakhos goes beyond the seas to search for his father. Penelopeia's characterization is completed through her unchanging limited environment. The thoughts of some Greek philosophers also show why the female character is shown within the boundaries in Homer's epic: "Thucydides . . . declares that the best woman is she about whom there is the least talk among persons outside regarding either censure or commendation, feeling that the name of the good woman, like her person, ought to be shut up indoors and never go out" (Pantel 1). The Greek historian Thucydides's idea reflects the sociological facts of a patriarchal life style. The woman who stays within the boundaries of her house and who vanishes from the

society is regarded as the ideal woman. *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* reflect the same idea by representing women within the limits of their own domestic or limited lives.

Very similar to Penelopeia's representation within the house in *Odyssey*, in *Heart of Darkness* the male characters deal with important issues outside the house while the women are frequently represented within the house. For instance, the Intended never goes out. Marlow visits Kurtz's fiancée and says: "She . . . murmured, 'I had heard you were coming' . . . The room seemed to have grown darker, as if all the sad light of the cloudy evening had taken refuge on her forehead . . . But while we were still shaking hands, such a look of awful desolation came upon her face" (*HD* 2360). The room tells much about the Intended's psychological situation; it is dark and lifeless like her. Moreover, Marlow and the Intended do not meet anywhere in London but at her house. The female character points out that she had heard about Marlow's idea of visiting her. She does not go out of her house but the male character visits her. While the male characters' world is full of travels, forests, encounters with natives etc., the only thing around the female character is her dark room where there is a terrible desolation. Through this physical choice, it is underlined that women are the opposite of men. The female character has a limited world which also makes her have a limited world view. Lutwack underlines that "On the simplest level of allegorical characterization, the place inhabited by a person or being –castle, cave, forest- is merely a sign representing the type of person he is and his function in the story" (69). Kurtz's Intended is represented in a house in London which is far away from Africa and the big ocean. This physical distance is a symbolic one, too, through which it is underlined that the female character has no place in men's story.

Female figures are also characterized as fragile and emotional which also make the female characters' acts "acts of omission" as they do not act to recover but they stay still and mourn. In fact, in *The Odyssey*, there are scenes in which Odysseus or Menelaos and Telemakhos are shown as crying; however, that is not "mourning". For instance, Menelaos and Telemakhos remember Odysseus and cry when Telemakhos visits Menelaos. Menelaos's speech affects everyone: "His words were

making them all want to be mournful. / The daughter of Zeus was crying – Helen of Argos. / Telemakhos wept, and Atreus’s son Menelaos” (4.183-5). However, after this event, they do not stay still but act to find Odysseus. Penelopeia on the other hand, “Arrived upstairs in her room with the women, her hand maids / she wept for Odysseus, the man she loved” (1.362-3). Penelopeia longs for her husband for twenty years. This makes her become more sorrowful day by day. In the following pages, she is described as follows: “A spirit-destroying grief surrounded the woman. / She could not bear to sit though her chairs were many. / Instead she sat on the floor of her richly crafted / room and moaned wretchedly. All of her handmaids, / younger and older help in the house, were crying around her” (4.716-720). Penelopeia is in such a sorrow that she cannot even sit on a chair but throws herself down on to the floor. Throughout the text, there are repetitive examples of Penelopeia’s emotional moments. However, it is not only Penelopeia that is represented as a mourning lady. Her maids are also represented in the same way. Being emotional is a feature not only attributed to Penelopeia but also to most of the female characters in the text. For instance, Odysseus’ mother is represented as a mourner, too. She expresses her feelings in the underworld as she is already dead because of her grief as follows:

not from the sharp-eyed Archer there in our great hall, / aiming her gentle arrows in order to kill me. / No long sickness came on, the kind that will often / take the soul from the body, wasting and loathsome. / Instead I longed for you, my shining Odysseus, / . . . That longing stole me from sweet life. (11. 198-203)

The mother appears in the text once; and the only thing the reader learns about her is that she was so sorrowful that she died because of her grief for her son. The female characters in *The Odyssey* are characterized as weak and incapable of fighting against difficulties.

In ancient Greek literature there are some specific character types. For instance, while a male character is mostly represented as a strong or heroic figure, a female character is often represented through her tears.

At times [women] might play minor roles, but they rarely took the leading parts, and when they did their weaknesses were all too apparent. Generally they were subjects, ready to hail conquerors and to weep when heroes went

down to defeat. No tragedy was complete without a chorus of women in tears.
(Duby and Perrot ix)

Duby and Perrot mention the ancient Greek life and literature; they underline that women are generally minor characters. Moreover, in the tragedies, there are always female mourners⁸.

This is similar to Joseph Conrad's novel. Both in *The Odyssey* and in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the mourning female figures appear. According to Gisela Ecker, "mourning in the western world has long been a task assigned predominantly to women" (203). Ecker underlines that not men but women are shown as weeping for the lost one. Ecker adds that

Literature most frequently finds images, narratives, and patterns of action to express and negotiate hidden cultural values. In the case of mourning, mythology . . . provides abundant images that also serve as role models that bring out gendered performances . . . Hecuba, Niobe, and Artemisia would be just a few canonical classical examples of female mourning. (203)

According to the critic, literature includes many gendered images which shape the society accordingly. Ecker also argues that Greek mythology also includes such gendered examples as it is also the patriarchal society's product. Even on the ancient Greek vases, one can know who is male or female only by looking at who laments.

On the vases women may occasionally be recognized by the depiction of breasts, but they are, on the whole, much more readily identifiable in their various attitudes of lamentation – the classical gestures of female grief with both hands raised, or performing the ritual funerary dances, or beating their heads and tearing their hair. Contemporaneous Attic Geometric vases from Ceramicus show mourning women lacerating their foreheads and cheeks until they are bloody. (Pomeroy 44)

In Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, too, both of the major female characters are examples of this mourning female figure; one is Kurtz's Intended and the other one is Kurtz's mistress. These two women are in deep sorrow because Kurtz is gone. Marlow visits Kurtz's fiancée and tells his listeners what she does: "She came forward, all in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk.

⁸ It should also be acknowledged that Medea "who kills her children to get revenge on their father" is quite different from the other women in ancient Greek myths as she never cries (Lefkowitz).

She was in mourning. It was more than a year since his death, more than a year since the news came; she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever” (*HD* 2360). The fiancée wears black which symbolizes that she is in mourning as Marlow underlines. Kurtz’ fiancée mourns since Kurtz’s death, which was one year ago.

Another mourning lady is Kurtz’s African lover. She looks at the ship, which takes Kurtz away, in agony. Marlow sees her and describes what she does as follows: “She put out her arms as if after a retreating figure, stretching them back and with clasped pale hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window. Never see him! I saw him clearly enough then. I shall see this eloquent phantom as long as I live” (*HD* 2362). Reminiscent of the mourning female figures on ancient Greek vases, the African woman performs “the classical gestures of female grief”. Marlow says that he will never forget this “tragic” and painful lady (*HD* 2362). Moreover, it is said that the African lady looks at Kurtz when the light fades away which symbolically means that Kurtz was her light. He was her only hope; she lost her hope and life together with Kurtz. The same representation is used in Marlow’s description of the Intended. Her room is dark because of dusk. Symbolically, she also lost her light like the African mistress. Moreover, in the narrative, the female characters belong to the dark as it is the men’s story. The reader knows everything about the male characters but the female characters’ stories are unknown. They remain in the dark, too.

2.2.3 The Other / Disorderly Male Figures

As indicated earlier, the contrasts between two characters usually function as a tool of character construction. Female figures are weak but male protagonists are strong enough to challenge many difficulties in both works. The marginalized male figures’ positioning is quite similar to that of the female figures. They are also characterized in a contrasting way to the male protagonists. While the male protagonists obey social norms and can control themselves in any situation, the marginalized male figures are always rude and immoral. This is why Odysseus and Marlow are represented as proper society members; however, the marginalized male figures are represented more like animals. To sum up, as Rimmon-Kenan says, some

characters' roles are to underline the contrast between themselves and the other character. To examine the marginalized characters' position is also important because it is parallel to that of the female characters. As discussed earlier, names or the ways in which characters are addressed may be revealing in some respects. This also holds true in relation to the disorderly male figures in both texts. The suitors are addressed merely as "Penelopeia's suitors" and the Africans are represented only as the "natives" in Africa. That they are named as a group rather than individually suggests that their major trait is being the "other" or being different from the major characters. Erich Gruen explains how the idea of the "other" is established as follows: "Negative images, misrepresentations, and stereotypes" creates the idea of "the Other," "thereby [they create] marginalization, subordination, and exclusion" of the "Other" and "creation of the opposite [serves] as a means to establish identity, distinctiveness, and superiority" (2).

Similar to the female figures' position, the disorderly men are also portrayed as simple beings; they are the villains when seen through the narrators' perspectives. They have no other feature. This means that they are not like a "character" at all because the only thing that is known about them is their being enemies of the male protagonists. There is a specific ideology behind the choice of the marginalized male characters. They are the ones who want to change the dominant system in society; this means that the ones who challenge the authorities are the potential evildoers in both texts.

In *The Odyssey*, the suitors are the disorderly male characters who are not shown as individuals but as a group who behave in the same manner. The pronouns that are used for these men are explicative about their position in each text. Instead of "I" or "we", the marginalized characters are described as "they" in both works. Telemakhos complains about the suitors that invade his house as follows: "Instead they jam our house: they slaughter our sheep here / every day, our fattened goats and our cattle. / They revel and gulp down glowing wine with abandon. / So much is lost already because there is no man- / the man Odysseus was – to keep this blight from my household" (2.55-59). Even this small excerpt reveals that as opposed to Odysseus who has a "name", the suitors have no individuality. They are represented

as a group. The suitors come and settle down in Odysseus's house. They disturb the family to make Penelopeia accept their proposals.

They are also greedy; they abuse the family's resources. Besides being greedy, the suitors are quite cruel. For instance, Antinoos is furious about Telemakhos's struggles to find Odysseus: "Look at this! Great big work, Telemakhos proudly ending his travels / . . . / Come on then, give me a race-fast ship and twenty companions / to look out closely and ambush the man as he enters / the channel of rock-strewn Samos and Ithaka Island. / Then he'll be sad he sailed because of his father" (4.663-672). Antinoos plans to kill Telemakhos just because his search for his father. The suitors try to demolish Odysseus's kingdom by marrying his wife and killing his son. They want to have a new kingdom of their own; however, they try to achieve this through destructive patterns.

Their actions show that they are greedy and immoral people. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, the suitors abuse all of Odysseus's resources. They even sleep with his servants. One of the suitors say they wait for an answer from Penelopeia and threatens Telemakhos as follows: "So long will men devour your goods and resources, / long as her thoughts hold back" (2.123-4). The suitors declare that they will continue to "devour" Odysseus's resources. As an addition to their immoral image, they behave in a rude manner to anyone else which the following part of the story exemplifies. Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar and comes back to his home. However, the suitors treat rudely even a man whom they have just met. Antinoos says "What Power brought this woe, spoiling a good meal? / Stay off there in the center, away from my table, / or soon you'll go to an Egypt and Kupros that sting you / for being a brash old man, a beggar without shame" (17.445-65). Antinoos thinks that this beggar is not convenient for sitting at his table so he insults him. This rude behaviour in fact shows what kind of a personality the suitors have. Rimmon-Kenan underlines that "what one character says about another may characterize not only the one spoken about but also the one who speaks" (64). Antinoos speaks to lay bare a beggar's lowliness; however, his speech lays bare his own corruption. Though the beggar is just a guest, and not even Antinoos's guest, he sends the beggar away. The suitor behaves in such a way that he even forgets what

he himself does; he is a beggar in a different sense. Odysseus's disguise is symbolic: by an excuse, all of the suitors become beggars; they abuse all of the resources that do not belong to them. Moreover, one of the suitors also attacks the beggar when the beggar Odysseus says "If only Odysseus came to the land of his fathers!" (18.384). The suitor, Eurumakhos, gets angry.

Eurumakhos, heartily angered, / glared at him darkly, the words with a feathery swiftness, / 'You dirt, I'll cause you trouble soon for your talking / to plenty of men so brashly and looking so fearless / now and then heart-strong. Does wine have your head? Or you / always think this way, tossing out words like an old fool'. / . . . / He spoke that way and took up a stool but Odysseus crouched. 18.387-395

Eurumakhos attacks the beggar as he speaks about Odysseus. This behaviour supports the immoral image of the suitors, too. They are repetitively shown as immoral or rude to underline their "otherness".

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, the disorderly male figures' major characteristics are being greedy and aggressive according to the narrator, Marlow; however, as being different from *The Odyssey*, in between lines, it is revealed that the implied author does not agree with Marlow⁹, who describes the Africans as follows: "As he weighed sixteen stone I had no end of rows with the carriers. They jibbed, ran away, sneaked off with their loads in the night -- quite a mutiny" (*HD* 2318). The African porters are described not as individuals but as a group behaving in the same manner. They steal the things they are supposed to carry; they are greedy people. Quite similar to the suitors, the Africans are also aggressive people who throw sticks to Marlow and his crew as they are charged with bringing Africans' king, Kurtz, back to his homeland. Marlow describes the event as follows: "Sticks, little sticks, were flying about -- thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot-house . . . Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at!" (*HD* 2337). The Africans do not hesitate to kill people to achieve their own aim. They want their own system to continue there; however, if Marlow and his crew take Kurtz back, the Africans would be left without their king. Both the suitors in *The Odyssey* and the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* are shown as

⁹ The implied author's perspective will be analyzed in the chapter on "narration".

destroying the ongoing system in immoral ways. These characters have no other feature besides that. They do not change throughout the works either. In this case, it can be claimed that both the female characters and the disorderly male characters are “schematic” characters which are just types not individuals. The narrators aim to make the reader feel drawn to the “full” male protagonists by creating marginalized figures which are not lifelike. Moreover, again in *Heart of Darkness*, the “other” remains nameless which is a suggestion again that the marginalized men are viewed not as individuals who have a name and a unity of self but as types who cannot even be regarded as “characters” at all. Interestingly, in *The Odyssey*, the narrator does not mention Ethiopian people as individuals, either. As it is mentioned earlier in the “Introduction” chapter, there are “references in *The Odyssey* [which] show Ethiopia as almost a catchall for remoteness” (Miller 24). In *The Odyssey*, the narrator describes Ethiopian people as follows: “Poseidon had gone to remote Ethiopian / people, far from us men / . . . / Accepting rams and bulls burned by the hundred, / Poseidon sat and enjoyed the feast there” (1.22-26). Though Homer’s text includes nothing in relation to racism, it gives Ethiopian people a group identity. In addition to that, it exemplifies the binary opposition on which symbolic language is built as Cixous mentions in that Africans are introduced as people, far from “us” / the “other” because Homer mentions them merely as a group but not as individuals. It also shows Africa like an earthly paradise as Christopher Miller suggests: “The other important aspect of Homer’s Ethiopia is the ‘delight’ it provides” (24). The Ethiopians are shown as “perfect in religion” and give delight even to Poseidon, the sea god (24). In this case, it can be argued that though Homer does not express something negative in relation to black people, he shows them as “different” or as “the other”.

Furthermore, in both texts, the disorderly men are dehumanized. They are represented as cannibals. In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus’s enemy Kuklops is a “man-eater”. Odysseus tells about his terrifying meeting with Kuklops: “[Kuklops] stood up fast and lunged at my men with his two hands, / grappled two of them, struck them hard on the dirt floor / like puppies and splattered their brains / . . . / Then he tore them apart to make them his dinner” (9.288-291). Kuklops eats some of Odysseus’s friends; he is a cannibal.

Also in *Heart of Darkness*, the native Africans are depicted by the narrator as cannibals. Marlow says “more than once [the steamboat] had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows -cannibals- in their place. They were men one could work with . . . And, after all, they did not eat each other before my face” (*HD* 2329). The Africans are not like “us”. The same feature is underlined again to otherize the Africans. One of the Africans dies on the ship and the other ones decide to eat him; Marlow has to do something to prevent that. Marlow says: “‘Aha!’ I said, just for good fellowship’s sake” (*HD* 2333). As a “civilized” man, Marlow greets the African man; however, the African man’s reaction is quite different from Marlow: “‘Catch [dead man],’ [the African man] snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth – ‘catch ‘im. Give ‘im to us.’ ‘To you, eh?’ I asked; ‘what would you do with them?’ ‘Eat ‘im!’ he said curtly” (*HD* 2333). The narrator reminds the Africans’ cannibalism for a few times throughout the text. When seen through Marlow’s perspective, Africans in *Heart of Darkness* are not “proper” human beings. This dehumanized representation of the antagonists creates a recognizable contrast between the male protagonists and the male marginalized characters.

The “otherness” of the marginalized male characters is also foregrounded by the narrators who use animalistic imagery in their descriptions. The suitors are represented through these sentences: They “laughed as though their mouths belonged to some others. / Then their meat was a bloody mess” (20.347-49). The suitors, for instance, are described more like wild creatures rather than human beings. Their meat is full of blood, which is reminiscent of uncooked animal food.

In *Heart of Darkness*, the marginalized men are described in a similar way. The following excerpt illustrates the differences in the representations of the white and black people. Marlow says that he received his job because the company’s captain is killed “in a scuffle with the natives” (*HD* 2308-9). Then he continues to tell what happened as follows:

I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens ...
Fresleven . . . thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went

ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick . . . Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs . . . but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly . . . till some man -I was told the chief's son- in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades. (*HD* 2308-9)

The details are only about the white man. It is told that the white person beats the African man because of his pride. He has to do that. Moreover, he is known as a good man. He is represented as a good man though he beats an African man harshly. However, the African is represented like a different creature whose jab “of course” “went quite easy” between the white man’s shoulder-blades. The African man is represented like a monster or an animal which is really strong. He does not help them stop fighting but kills the man because he lacks control.

Additionally, very similar to the female representation, the environmental props are used in the characterization of marginalized male characters, too. And when the texts are examined through this perspective, it is seen that the marginalized male characters are also associated with darkness as in the case of the female characters. In *The Odyssey*, Theoklumenos shouts at the suitors because of their corrupt behaviour:

Promptly the godlike man Theoklumenos asked [the suitors], ‘You wretched men . . . / Night’s shrouding your heads and faces, yes and your low knees. / . . . / These beautiful walls and panels are spattered with bloodstains, / ghosts crowd the door way and crowd the courtyard, / rushing to Erebos under the gloom. The sunlight’s / dead in the sky and a baleful darkness has closed in’. (20.350-58)

The bloodstains on the clean walls are the “trait-connoting metonymies” in the text (Rimmon-Kenan 66). The suitors are represented as the evil doers who violate Penelopeia and Odysseus’s life. The lack of sunlight also represents the suitors’ being evil. Moreover, the darkness symbolizes their marginalization as well as their being evil doers. This is reminiscent of the representation of Penelopeia; as it is mentioned before, her room is also represented as gloomy. In this case, the darkness also shows the marginalization of these characters in the text because their stories are not told in depth; they are always in darkness. Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, the

Africans are represented as dehumanized figures in darkness. Marlow says “I glanced back. We were within thirty yards from the nearest fire. A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns - - antelope horns, I think -- on its head. Some sorcerer, some witch-man, no doubt: it looked fiendlike enough” (*HD* 2353). The African man is represented as a figure who wears horns like an animal. Moreover, Marlow underlines that he was like a fiend. The African man is represented obviously as the other. And, the darkness in this man’s representation is also remarkable because it is not only this African man but most of the female characters (the knitting ladies, the native mistress and the Intended) are also identified with darkness. In addition to the physical darkness, their stories are also left in the dark.

To conclude, in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the “story” mostly depends on the male protagonists’ acts; yet, in some occasions the female characters, too, help unfold the action in *The Odyssey*. In addition to this, “characters” whose actions are repetitive, similar, contrastive or implications of his/her feelings or thoughts are the male characters in both works although some generic features prevent the characters in *The Odyssey* from seeming lifelike enough. The parallels between the texts suggest that Homer’s text may have informed the ways in which female figures are represented in *Heart of Darkness*. As it will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters, however, there are instances of a critical attitude towards women’s social and textual marginalization in Conrad’s work.

CHAPTER 3

3. AN ANALYSIS OF “TEXT” IN *THE ODYSSEY* AND *HEART OF DARKNESS*

In the preceding chapter, the events and the characters in the story were analyzed; in this chapter on “text,” the emphasis will fall upon the representation of events and characters. Rimmon-Kenan defines the term “text” as a “spoken or written discourse which undertakes . . . [the] telling” (3) of events. As Rimmon-Kenan puts it, “all the items of the narrative content are filtered through some prism or perspective” (3). The “story” includes who does what; the “text”, however, deals with the question of how. An analysis of the text time dedicated to characters and of the perspectives that the events and characters are seen through reveals the marginalization of both female and disorderly male figures in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*.

3.1 Time

Rimmon-Kenan underlines the importance of time as follows: “while the treatment of time may undergo various changes, time itself is indispensable to both story and text. To eliminate it (if this were possible) would be to eliminate all narrative fiction” (58). Rimmon-Kenan makes a distinction between two types of time, which are “story-time” and “text-time”: “The peculiarity of verbal narrative is that in it time is constitutive both of the means of representation (language) and of the object represented (the incidents of the story). Thus time in narrative fiction can be defined as the relations of chronology between story and text” (Rimmon-Kenan 44). She holds that time is the main part of the story as it tells about what happens “at that time” and also of the text as it lays bare how “that specific time period” is reflected in it. Rimmon-Kenan defines story-time as follows: “story-time, conceived of as a linear succession of events, is no more than a conventional, pragmatically convenient construct” (44). While story-time is temporal, “text-time . . . is a spatial, not a temporal, dimension” (44). She continues to explain “time” by adhering to Genette’s discussion on story-time and text-time. There are three tools which help us

study the relationship between story-time and text-time; they are “order,” “duration” and “frequency”:

Statements about order would answer the question ‘when?’ in terms like: first, second, last; before, after, etc. Statements about duration would answer the question ‘how long?’ in terms like: an hour, a year; long, short; from x till y, etc. Statements about frequency would answer the question ‘how often?’ in terms like: x times a minute, a month, a page. It is under these headings that Genette sets out to examine the relations between story-time and text-time. Under order Genette discusses the relations between the succession of events in the story and their linear disposition in the text. Under duration he examines the relations between the time the events are supposed to have taken to occur and the amount of text devoted to their narration. Under frequency he looks at the relations between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated in the text. (46)

“Order” is the sequence of the events in relation to time. Flashbacks and foreshadowings are some items it includes. “Frequency” shows how many times an event is told. For instance, repetitive works tell more than once what happened. In this chapter, “duration” will be analyzed as it helps show how female characters and disorderly male characters are marginalized also by the limits of the text-time. First of all, Rimmon-Kenan underlines the difficulty of measuring the duration:

[Order and frequency] can be quite easily transposed from the time of the story, regardless of the conventional nature of this time, to the linearity (space) of the text. It is not awkward to say that episode A comes after episode B in the linear disposition of the text or that episode C is told twice in the text But it is much more difficult to describe in parallel terms the duration of the text and that of the story, for the simple reason that there is no way of measuring text-duration. (51-2)

Then, Rimmon-Kenan explains that it is difficult to measure “duration” because it is not the time but the text which is measured in the analysis of “duration”. She underlines that

The relations in question are, in fact, not between two ‘durations’ but between duration in the story (measured in minutes, hours, days, months, years) and the length of text devoted to it (in lines and pages), i.e. a temporal/spatial relationship. The measure yielded by this relation in general is pace (or speed). (52)

She exemplifies the analysis of duration as follows: “Constancy of pace in narrative is the unchanged ratio between story-duration and textual length, e.g. when each year in the life of a character is treated in one page throughout the text” (52-3).

Most of the time there is no “unchanged ratio between story-duration and textual length”; instead, there are instances of “acceleration” and “deceleration”. She explains that “the effect of acceleration is produced by devoting a short segment of the text to a long period of the story, relative to the ‘norm’ established for this text. The effect of deceleration is produced by the opposite procedure, namely devoting a long segment of the text to a short period of the story” (53). In relation to acceleration and deceleration, Rimmon-Kenan warns that “acceleration and deceleration are often evaluated by the reader as indicators of importance and centrality. Ordinarily, the more important events or conversations are given in detail (i.e. decelerated), whereas the less important ones are compressed (i.e. accelerated). But this is not always the case” (56). In this part of this chapter, it will be examined whether or not it is the case in Homer’s and Conrad’s works.

3.1.1 Male Characters

Both in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*, the male characters’ acts are given large textual space. In other words, the text-time dedicated for their acts is not accelerated. Male protagonists appear in “scenes” rather than being mentioned in “summaries”. Rimmon-Kenan says that “what characterizes a scene is the quantity of narrative information” (54). The details make the scene more lifelike than the marginalized characters’ portrayals; it can also be said that only the male protagonists participate in “scenes”. Rimmon-Kenan explains the difference between “summary” and “scene” as follows:

In summary, the pace is accelerated through a textual ‘condensation’ or ‘compression’ of a given story-period into a relatively short statement of its main features. The degree of condensation can, of course, vary from summary to summary, producing multiple degrees of acceleration. (53)

Rimmon-Kenan suggests that the time is accelerated in summary; however, in a scene, “story-duration and text-duration are conventionally considered identical” (54). And she adds that detailed narration and especially dialogues are scenic. For

instance in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus talks about what he sees when he and his friends arrive in Kuklops' land in detail:

When newborn Dawn came on with her rose-fingered daylight, / we all were amazed at the place. We roamed through the island / and Nymphs, the daughters of Zeus who carries the great shield, / flushed out mountain goats, a meal for my war-friends. / Quickly we took out arching bows and our long-tipped / spears from the ships. We formed three groups and we let fly: / a God soon gave us our kills, raising our spirits. / Twelve black ships had followed me: each was allotted / nine goats. For mine alone there were ten goats. / So now we ate and drank all day until sundown, / feasting on honey-sweet wine and plenty of goat-meat. / The good red wine was not all gone from our vessels: / enough remained since everyone topped off the wine-urns / after we first captured the Kikones' holy city. (9.152-165)

The description has a lot of information which makes it a "scene". There are a lot of details about the male protagonist's life. For instance, Odysseus's fight against Kuklops is described almost in one entire chapter. Moreover, in *The Odyssey*, the reader even learns what the male protagonist eats for dinner. Odysseus informs the audience about how he passed his time in Kirke's house: "We sat and enjoyed [Kirke's] wine with plenty of good meat" (10.468). The male character has such a large textual "duration" that even the details of his food and drinks are shared with the reader though they do not change the plot.

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, "deceleration" is used in the parts in which the male protagonist participates. Acts which do not cause any events to unfold are narrated in long segments in the text. For instance, Marlow tells the narratees about his first visit to the company's office before he goes to Congo: "In about forty-five seconds I found myself again in the waiting-room with the compassionate secretary, who, full of desolation and sympathy, made me sign some document. I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets" (HD 2310). Marlow mentions the little details of his life. He tells how many seconds he wasted to reach the waiting-room. Then, he continues with a description of the scenery he comes across in Africa: "I watched the coast . . . The edge of a colossal jungle, so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, ran straight, like a ruled line, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist" (HD 2312). The narrative is full of little details from Marlow's life. Rimmon-Kenan underlines that "The relations in question are, in fact, not between two

'durations' but between duration in the story (measured in minutes, hours, days, months, years) and the length of text devoted to it (in lines and pages), i.e. a temporal/spatial relationship" (52). The textual space devoted to male protagonists is much larger than that spared to women or marginalized male characters.

In addition to that, the text includes descriptive pauses. Rimmon-Kenan defines this term in relation to "duration": "the minimum speed is manifested as a descriptive pause, where some segment of the text corresponds to zero story duration . . . Such a pause in the middle of the narrative can . . . interrupt the action" (53). The descriptive pauses also show how male protagonists' experiences are decelerated in terms of duration, i.e. every detail of their acts is given a space in the text. For instance, to repair his ship, Marlow needs rivets and tells "We shall have rivets!" to one of the mechanics. However, he does not give the details at once though the reader may wonder how Marlow will continue his journey. Instead, he just speaks about the mechanic's reaction, his own joy and the nature:

[The mechanic] scrambled to his feet exclaiming, 'No! Rivets!' as though he couldn't believe his ears. Then in a low voice, 'You ... eh?' I don't know why we behaved like lunatics. I put my finger to the side of my nose and nodded mysteriously. 'Good for you!' he cried, snapped his fingers above his head, lifting one foot. I tried a jig. We capered on the iron deck. We stopped, and the silence driven away by the stamping of our feet flowed back again from the recesses of the land. The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. (*HD* 2325)

In the text, there is more space devoted for the narration of the surroundings of the male protagonist than the space given to the marginalized characters' life and thoughts.

3.1.2 Female Figures

The text time given to the female characters is much more accelerated. Whereas the single day of major male characters or the scenery that they come across is described in lengthy passages, a year-long period in the life of female characters is narrated only by a few sentences. When the duration of female characters' textual

time is examined, it is realized that even what they do throughout years is a mystery both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*. Female figures do not appear in “scenes” in Rimmon-Kenan’s terms. Penelopeia’s twenty years are summarized through this passage which appears more than once in the text:

For three years now – it’s close to the fourth year- / the lady goes on spiting hearts in the chests of Akhaians / . . . / standing a huge loom in the hall for her weaving, / a broad and beautiful web, she spoke to us shortly: / ‘Young men, my suitors, now that godlike Odysseus / died, you’re anxious to marry. But wait till I finish / this work. (2.89-98)

Except her weaving to distract the suitors’ attention, nothing is known about Penelopeia. How she raised her son or how she managed to govern the country without Odysseus are some of the questions which have no answers at all. However, when her position is compared to the Intended in *Heart of Darkness*, Penelopeia has more textual space than her because the Intended’s one year is summarized by only few sentences. Marlow visits Kurtz’s fiancée a year after his death. He tells about her situation as follows: “But while we were still shaking hands, such a look of awful desolation came upon her face that I perceived she was one of those creatures that are not the playthings of Time . . . I saw her sorrow in the very moment of his death” (*HD* 2360). The Intended is still in mourning even one full year after Kurtz’s death. Nothing has changed in her life for years. Before this incident, she was waiting in her house for several years for her fiancé’s arrival. Now she does not move and mourns for her loss passively.

The Intended’s whole life is summarized in a couple of sentences. This missing part may be left by the author on purpose to lay bare how the male narrator erases the parts that are about the female characters. Rimmon-Kenan says that “sometimes the effect of shock or irony is produced by summing up briefly the most central event and rendering trivial events in detail” (56). There are, at least, some details about what Penelopeia does when she mourns. For instance, she knits because of a specific reason. However, when the Intended is analyzed, it is seen that she has no agenda at all. She is completely out of action. While the Intended’s whole life is summarized in a couple of sentences, “deceleration” is used even in the narration of not-so important events Marlow participates in such as watching the scenery or

walking in the office. Remarkably, both texts accelerate only in relation to marginalized characters.

3.1.3 Disorderly Male Figures

As in the narration of the activities related to female figures, the marginalized male figures' activities are also summarized. Though the male protagonists and disorderly male characters undergo some experiences concurrently, the disorderly male characters' experiences are narrated in an accelerated way. For instance, while ten years in Odysseus's life is told in detail and creates the epic itself, the corresponding time period in the suitors' lives is summarized through a couple of sentences; they just try to allure Penelopeia throughout the text. The suitors speak:

But not before then, surely, will sons of Akhaians / end their rough courting.
No one anyhow scares us, / not Telemakhos there, for all of his high talk. /
And you, old man, we hardly listen to omens / you mouth which don't come
true. They make you more hated. / So his goods will crassly be eaten without
our / ever paying, long as the lady stalls the Akhaians / in marriage. We go on
waiting all of our days here, / wrangling over her worth. (2.197-205)

The suitors summarize what they expect their future lives will be like with this small passage. The lack of information creates an unreasonable picture; they are represented as people who only beg for a woman's love but do nothing besides that. While they are begging for Penelopeia, they stay at her house and they consume all her sources. Telemakhos complains: "They slaughter our sheep here / everyday . . . / They revel and gulp down glowing wine with abandon" (1.55-7). What the Suitors do throughout the years are summarized through these passages in the text. This shows that the disorderly male characters' text-time is also accelerated as in the case of the female characters. The positioning of disorderly male characters in *Heart of Darkness* also exemplifies that while the male protagonist's actions are decelerated, the Africans are marginalized again as a consequence of the employment of acceleration in their representation. For instance, one of the questions in the reader's mind might be the reason behind some of the Africans' admiration for Kurtz. However, there is not much information about that because what these characters experience throughout these years is summarized only through the following excerpt. Marlow asks the Russian: "Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?" Then, he continues to narrate:

[The Russian] fidgeted a little. 'They adored him,' he said. The tone of these words was so extraordinary that I looked at him searchingly. It was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance to speak of Kurtz. The man filled his life, occupied his thoughts, swayed his emotions. 'What can you expect?' he burst out; 'he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know -- and they had never seen anything like it'. (*HD* 2346)

Though this paragraph aims to inform the reader about the reason behind some of the Africans' love for Kurtz, Marlow tells more about how he feels or how he looks at the Russian than the information he gives. And, the reasons behind the marginalized men's admiration for Kurtz remain vague though it is one of the most gripping questions in the novel. That is to say, the situation of the marginalized men is quite similar to that of the women; both of these groups' lives are just summarized, i.e. represented through acceleration.

3.2 Focalization

In her analysis of "text", Rimmon-Kenan underlines that "all the items of the narrative content are filtered through some prism or perspective ('focalizer')" (3). There is a story told by the narrator; however, one of the important aspects of that story is the perspective. Rimmon-Kenan states that "The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism', 'perspective', 'angle of vision', verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his. Following Genette (1972), I call this mediation 'focalization'" (72). She underlines that "In itself, focalization is non-verbal; however, like everything else in the text, it is expressed by language. The overall language of a text is that of the narrator, but focalization can 'colour' it in a way which makes it appear as a transposition of the perceptions of a separate agent" (Rimmon-Kenan 84). Moreover, Rimmon-Kenan also touches upon an important detail that the focalizer can also be the narrator, as in the case of *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*. She states: "If the focalizer is a character . . . his acts of perception are part of the story. If he is the narrator, focalization is just one of many rhetorical strategies at his disposal" (Rimmon-Kenan 86). Rimmon-Kenan underlines that the narrator can use focalization to support his/her own view.

The rest of this chapter will study both *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in the light of Rimmon-Kenan's discussion on "focalization" in order to show that there

are some similarities between the two texts, such as foregrounding the patriarchal perspective, as well as differences in terms of focalization on the part of female figures. Additionally, the analysis of “focalization” will also help lay bare that the text is mostly narrated from the male protagonists’ perspective.

Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness* the role of focalization is never assigned to the marginalized character. The male protagonists and the ones who are on their side, however, act as focalizers. Women as well as disorderly men are only viewed; they are not allowed to share their own perspective with the reader. “[F]ocalization has both a subject and an object. The subject (‘the focalizer’) is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (‘the focalized’) is what the focalizer perceives” (Rimmon-Kenan 75). The marginalized characters become the “objects” in both texts as they are only viewed but cannot view.

In relation to “the ideological facet” of focalization, Rimmon-Kenan underlines that “the ‘norms’ are presented through a single dominant perspective, that of the narrator-focalizer . . . Put differently, the ideology of the narrator-focalizer is usually taken as authoritative, and all other ideologies in the text are evaluated from this ‘higher’ position” (83). Through an authoritative external narrator, the reader can learn about others’ perspective. In this case, the other focalizers are evaluated by the narrator. When the narrator becomes the focalizer, his own perspective is always in the foreground; thus, the text is written through his/her ideology. As the focalization reflects the perspective behind the text, it increases the importance of how the focalizers perceive the events. Besides being not allowed to reflect their own perspective, in both texts the female and the disorderly male characters are perceived as the “other” by the male protagonists and the people who share their point of view.

First of all, the other characters’ opinions about the male protagonists are also important to lay bare the difference between the representation of the protagonists and that of the peripheral figures. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus is focalized by Athena, the Goddess of wisdom. She describes Odysseus through these words: “Both of us know well / how you’re shrewd, the best by far among all men / with words and plans” (13.296-8). Athena praises Odysseus’ intelligence. She also

underlines how he is different from other people. Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is also shown as somebody who has distinct features by one of his narratees on the ship: “The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class. He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life” (*HD* 2305-6). Marlow is represented as a distinguished and brave man who sets out on journeys again and again. Even the “worst that could be said of” Marlow is not negative (*HD* 2305). However, when the female characters and marginalized characters are examined, there is almost no positive view about them voiced by the characters around them. In both texts, while the focalizers who comment on the male protagonists underline that they are perfect, the marginalized characters are either not mentioned or mentioned in negative terms.

There are some small differences between the two texts in terms of focalization. In *The Odyssey*, the female figures sometimes become focalizers, i.e. they have more place in the text than the ones in *Heart of Darkness* even if this is not completely enough to lay bare their full perspective in comparison with the male characters. For instance, Odysseus comes back to his house in disguise; however, he is shown as being afraid of his servant because he thinks she may realize his real identity. His anxiety is described as follows: “suddenly thinking the scar: what if she grasped him / there and saw it? His work would be out in the open!” (19.390-1). The focalizer, Odysseus, is afraid of a woman’s intelligence. This kind of a perspective does not appear in *Heart of Darkness*. Then, the female servant, Eurukleia, becomes the focalizer: “She came close, she started to wash her master and promptly / saw the scar –from a boar’s white tusk in the old days” (19.392-3). The maid understands that this beggar is Odysseus. However, Eurukleia becomes a focalizer only in relation to her master. The reader does not know anything else about her; therefore, she is a focalizer but a restricted one. Eurukleia “has spent her life in the service of Laertes’ family; . . . she is closely connected with their fate, she loves them and shares their interests and feelings” (Auerbach 17). All Eurukleia says throughout the text is only about her master and his family. “But she has no life of her own, no feelings of her own; she has only the life and feelings of her master . . . Thus we become conscious of the fact that in the Homeric poems life is enacted only among

the ruling class – others only appear” (Auerbach 18). Eurukleia is marginalized not only because she is a woman but because she is also a servant.

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness* the female characters never act as focalizers and are represented by the male focalizer as mere shadows rather than individuals. For instance, after Kurtz’s death, Marlow visits the Intended and comments about her as he is the one who “sees” her. Most importantly, while the female characters are shown in great agony, the male character pities them as the gazer and the narrator. Marlow makes resemblances between two mourning figures, the Intended and the African mistress. He thinks “I shall see [the Intended, forever], too, a tragic and familiar Shade, resembling in this gesture another one, tragic also, and bedecked with powerless charms, stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal stream, the stream of darkness” (*HD* 2362). Marlow equates the two female mourning ladies with one another; they are “tragic and familiar shades” who have different skin colours. He underlines the African mistress’ “brown” arms.

Marlow constructs Kurtz’s Intended as distinctly separate from Africa and as a foil to the African woman on the riverbank. Marlow’s repeated descriptions of the Intended as ‘white’ clearly differ from his descriptions of the dark African woman on the riverbank. For Marlow, the Intended becomes the feminine embodiment of Europe. (Schwarz 133)

The two women are familiar for Marlow because he does not “view” them as separate individuals; they are just the representatives of women who are from different parts of the world. What is told in that scene is focalized by Marlow; this is how he sees these two women. The reader is not provided with a view of anything that is seen/focalized by the female characters but only by the male authority figures. The narrative is based on the male characters’ adventure and written from a male perspective.

When seen through the eyes of the male focalizers, women in *Heart of Darkness* appear as unintelligent figures; however, in *The Odyssey* there are instances in which women are shown as planning or thinking about something though they themselves never act as focalizers. For example, Penelopeia’s intelligence is foregrounded by a male focalizer. Agamemnon states “Happy son of

Laertes, widely resourceful Odysseus, / blessed with the marvellous, upright woman you married, / what goodness of mind in faultless Penelopeia” (24.192-4). Penelopeia is praised by different male focalizers; however, the reader does not learn anything about Penelopeia’s perspective but a male focalizer’s only. This is reminiscent of Rimmon-Kenan’s example of William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily”. As the story is told by an outsider’s perspective, the inside of Emily’s house can be described only when Emily is dead. Similarly, Penelopeia is described only by the male focalizers and her perspective; therefore, what she sees or experiences always remain unknown.

In *Heart of Darkness*, the female characters are represented by the male focalizer, too; however, in this text, women are described in a negative way. For instance, according to Marlow, the Intended seems not to be questioning anything. He looks at her picture and says: “She seemed ready to listen without mental reservation, without suspicion, without a thought for herself” (*HD* 2359). The focalizer here is Marlow and it is his view that the Intended does not question anything. Interestingly, Marlow makes this comment just by looking at her picture without knowing anything about her. Marlow reflects the dualistic patriarchal view; men are reasonable and women are what men are not.

Women are shown by the male focalizers as being like distinct species who are out of the male world. In both texts, the focalizers have a patriarchal ideology. The focalizers both in *The Odyssey*, who are Odysseus, his son and his friends, and in *Heart of Darkness*, who are Marlow and Kurtz, voice patriarchal points of view. The focalizers make explicit comments about women and their roles which reflect the hierarchical relationship that they assume to be natural between men and women. They share the ideology that “maternal and wifely work -caring for and nurturing the interests of others- . . . is women’s work and inferior, while the activities of economic production and political decision-making are men’s work and superior” (Bowden and Mummery 18). The male focalizers’ comments show that, in their eyes, women are not distinct individuals. They make generalizations about women. For instance, Odysseus chooses to hide his arrival from Penelopeia. Telemakhos, knowing this, has to ally her and make her go away. However, he does not say

“trust me” etc. to convince her. He just orders her: “go to your room yourself. / Look to your own work, / loom and spindle now. / Order to your handmaids / to do their jobs. / All us men have the great bow / to care for, and mainly myself: I rule in the household” (21.350-3). Telemakhos’s behaviour lays bare his perspective, too. He assumes superiority over his mother, which is a sign of women’s position in patriarchal societies. While Penelopeia can only give orders to her maids, her son can give orders even to his mother. Odysseus hides his arrival also from Laertes; however, throughout the book he is insulted by nobody or nobody gives order to him. Telemakhos also underlines again and again that he is the ruler of the house. His suggestion is not necessary at that moment. However, it shows his perspective as a focalizer; he thinks that he is superior to his mother just because of his sex. The female members of patriarchal society are treated as if they are not human beings but another species.

The same attitude appears also in *Heart of Darkness*. According to Marlow, women are inferior to men; for this reason, they do not belong in the male world. He tells that he asks for his aunt’s help to get a job; however, his sentences reflect how he is prejudiced against women. He utters: “Then--would you believe it?--I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work-- to get a job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me” (*HD* 2308). First of all, to define how he was willing to have that job Marlow says “I even asked for a woman’s help”. Marlow underlines that he “tried women”; his sentence shows that women are like different species for him. Through this statement, it can be said that Marlow has a patriarchal view; he thinks men are superior to women¹⁰.

Marlow goes through many experiences such as a troublesome journey or meeting Kurtz who has discovered his mind’s limits. While Marlow is thinking about these issues, one of the knitting ladies comes to his mind. He talks about how that makes him feel: “The knitting old woman with the cat obtruded herself upon my memory as a most improper person to be sitting at the other end of such an affair” (*HD* 2353). Marlow underlines the insignificance of the knitting ladies in his

¹⁰ In the chapter on “narration”, the implied author’s view in relation to the superiority of men will be discussed.

adventurous discovery. He thinks women have no connection with the male business. Marlow tries to show himself as doing crucial things by showing the women as inferior to himself. On the other hand, the implied author's view in relation to Marlow's perspective will be discussed in the chapter on "narration".

Besides being shown like shadows or different species, male focalizers' comments on female characters also reveal that women are seen through some stereotypical images in patriarchal societies: "Medusa", for instance, is referred to in both texts. Medusa is mentioned by others both in Greek mythology and in *The Odyssey* but she herself does not say anything. "The classical myth presents Medusa as a beautiful young woman . . . who is raped by Poseidon in Athena's temple. Jealous of Medusa's beauty and enraged by the sexual desecration of her temple, Athena subsequently turns Medusa's hair into a mass of snakes, curses her with a petrifying stare" (Jerinic 367). Athena is the masculine Goddess of war; she makes Medusa turn men into stones if they look at her: "Athena seems to believe that (traditional) male roles are somehow superior to (traditional) female roles" (Higgs and Smith 47). Higgs and Smith argue that, though Athena is a Goddess, she prefers to be masculine because she feels stronger while she is man-like. Since Athena cannot stand her sexuality, she behaves strictly to beautiful women like Medusa. In literature, the Medusa myth has frequently been alluded to by many different writers: "Literary representations of Medusa focused on the conquering of her monstrosity by a virtuous hero, explained Joan Coldwell. Romanticism cultivated this motif by seizing upon the Medusa as the 'embodiment of the dark lady, the contaminated and irresistible beauty whose name was Death' writes Judith Suther" (Jerinic 367). The female character is used just as a figure to underline male superiority or to show how the woman is dangerous. In both cases, the female character is shown as the other who should be kept under strict control.

Helen Cixous rewrites the male-oriented Medusa myth in her article "The Laugh of the Medusa". She warns the reader; "the future must no longer be determined by the past" (Cixous 256). What Cixous means is that the conventions create prejudices in society; both men and women shape their ideology accordingly. For instance, Marlow fools the Intended about Kurtz's real identity; he thinks his

male friends can understand Kurtz's discovery of the unconscious desires within himself but not a woman. He chooses to silence her through telling lies.

Cixous adds "there are no grounds for establishing a discourse, but rather an arid millennial ground to break . . . and to foresee the unforeseeable" (Cixous 256). The women may not have a new discourse of their own but they can break the old conventions because "the repression . . . has kept [women] in the 'dark'" (Cixous 256). Cixous starts destroying the conventions by deconstructing the Medusa myth. The Medusa myth is a product of the patriarchal society; the woman is punished just because she is beautiful. This shows that beauty is a danger for male society because it makes women seduce men. The myth shows the suppressive power of man on the woman as Medusa is made to lose her beauty. Cixous does not look at from a patriarchal point of view and offers "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing" (Cixous 260). Cixous implies that the male-centred point of view creates prejudices about women by categorizing them. The man is warned that women are potential seductresses who are able to ruin a man's life through their beauty. However, Cixous warns the reader to escape these categorizations. "Hatred: a heritage, again, a reminder a duping subservience to the phallus" (262). The patriarchal norms make society members think through oppositions and hate each other.

The same dualistic perspective and hatred make the male characters in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness* see women as potential dangers. Odysseus is afraid of Medusa. Odysseus as the focalizer says "I was clutched by a green fear. / Would high-born Persephoneia send me the Gorgo, / that dreaded monster's head . . . / [Then] I hurried back to the ship" (11.633-6). The legendary hero, Odysseus, is afraid of a female figure because women can become dangerous according to the patriarchal myths like Medusa myth.

In addition, the frequent references to Helen's adultery underline the assumed moral inferiority of women and the dangerous situations that they may cause. The story of the Trojan War underlines the fascinating power of women; the war occurs because of beautiful Helen's escape from her husband for another man: "Certainly there is no cause to blame Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans if they endure lengthy

hardships for such a woman. In her face she is amazingly like the immortal goddesses” (Pomeroy 16). Helen is so beautiful that one should not blame the warriors for fighting to get her back. Odysseus’s swineherd Eumaios as the focalizer says “Let Helen’s family wholly / die for she loosened the knees of thousands of soldiers. / My master went there, honoring great Agamemnon / battling Trojans at Ilion, known for its horses” (14.68-71). Eumaios blames Helen for thousands of soldiers’ death though she did not kill anyone personally.

The focalizers think women are unreliable. In *Heart of Darkness*, one of the focalizers is Kurtz, whose point of view is reflected among other things through his painting: the blindfolded female figure. Marlow describes the painting as follows: “Then I noticed a small sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch. The background was somber- almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torch-light on the face was sinister” (*HD* 2321). Kurtz, as a male character prefers to silence a woman both by painting her. Thus he creates an object out of her and by closing her eyes.

Through this painting, Kurtz achieves to silence the woman; she cannot even “speak” through her eyes. Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin summarize John Berger’s ideas on the “power of gaze”: “[According to Berger, some] paintings do not portray women realistically, as complex and individualistic human beings. Rather, the paintings transform actual women into objects, devoid of . . . subjectivity” (230). In this case the male painter reduces the female’s position to a visual object only. “By not looking back directly, the women in the paintings . . . grant all the ‘power of the gaze’ to the male painter” (Benshoff and Griffin 230). In addition to this, the female eyes are important also in Greek mythology because of the beautiful Medusa, whose eyes turn men into stones. By painting a woman whose eyes are blindfolded, Kurtz also protects the viewers from the same “danger”.

Women are objectified by the “male gaze” in both works. Laura Mulvey explains the term under this title: “Woman as image, man as bearer of the look” (19). Women become objects through men’s look. Mulvey argues that “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female

figure, which is styled accordingly” (19). Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness* male protagonists’ masculine image is strengthened through the male gaze because, as Mulvey explains, this activates the male characters while deactivating the female ones. For instance, though Odysseus is loyal to his male friends, he is not loyal to his wife. The narrator repeats that Odysseus wants to reach his home but Kalupso, the nymph who falls in love with Odysseus, stops him. Odysseus does not have to compliment Kalupso on her beauty to continue his journey. Nevertheless, Odysseus tells her: “My thought-full Penelopeia, / beside you, is not so tall or striking to look at” (5.216-7). Odysseus compares his wife’s beauty with Kalupso’s beauty. In this case, he objectifies both of these ladies through his male gaze. He becomes the subject as he objectifies the other.

Like Odysseus, Marlow also objectifies the female character through his gaze. For instance, he looks at the Intended’s picture. He says “She struck me as beautiful” (*HD* 2359). The Intended is a literal object in this scene as she is just a picture. In addition to that, Marlow’s description makes her an object, too. The female character is the gazed one; however, the male character is the one who looks at, i.e. “the doer” is the male and “the done” is the female character in Mulvey’s terms. After seeing the Intended’s picture, Marlow cannot help visiting her, too. He wants to “see” her in real. Besides that, Marlow also wants to meet her because she is also the symbol of Kurtz’s imperialist ideals. Marlow “sees” the Intended as Kurtz’s old imperialist ideals; she is quite the same with Kurtz’s old documents given by Kurtz to Marlow. The examples lay bare that the reader can only learn about what the male characters perceive; the female characters in both texts are “focalized”. They cannot become the focalizer / the doer / the subject. However, it should also be noted that it is Conrad who chooses a male focalizer. That is to say, if the marginalization stems from a structural/textual design, then the one who is responsible for this cannot be Marlow. This means, though the chapter on “narration” will help show the implied author’s negative perspective against the objectification of women, by assigning the role of focalization only to the male protagonist, Conrad, too, participates in the objectification of the female characters.

As for the disorderly male characters, in neither text do they act as focalizers. In this respect, there is a parallelism between the way they are represented in the text and the female figures. For example, in *The Odyssey*, the Kuklops is represented either through Odysseus's perspective or that of his crew; however, the text does not offer any clues about the Kuklops's side of the story: we do not know anything about how he may feel, for instance, when visited unexpectedly by Odysseus and his crew. Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, at the beginning of Kurtz's settlement in Africa, he writes down that the Africans are brutes and his mission is to "civilize" them. Marlow also describes Africans as either rude or cannibals; they are frequently represented by him as aggressive people but the Natives' perspective remains unknown. Though their land is invaded by Europeans, their opinion about this situation is not rendered visible for the reader throughout the novel.

In both texts, the marginalized characters are mentioned as the ones who need to be punished. This idea is supported by different focalizers that do not belong to the marginalized group such as Mentor and Odysseus or Marlow and Kurtz. In *The Odyssey*, Mentor states that the suitors, who are also Odysseus's people, need to be "punished" as they are disloyal to their king. "Let no king holding a scepter be willingly gracious / or kind ever, knowing and caring for justice. Let him hard" (2.230-2). Mentor's suggestion is made real by Odysseus in the following chapters. "Now godlike Odysseus, left behind in the great hall, / planned with Athene's help to murder the suitors. He spoke to Telemakhos -words with a feathery swiftness- / 'Telemakhos, all of the War-God's tools must be taken / well inside. Then calmly lie to the suitors / after they miss the weapons'" (19.1-6). The suitors should be punished according to Odysseus, too; he just decides how to do this. The reader can read what the protagonist or his supporters think about the antagonists; however, it remains unknown what the antagonists think about these events. They may revolt against the polity besides longing to marry Penelopeia.

In *Heart of Darkness* too, the marginalized male characters are looked only through the central male characters' perspective who also think that they need to be "civilized" and punished if necessary. Marlow narrates Kurtz's opinion about the Africans: "Mr. Kurtz began with the argument that we whites, from the point 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,'" (*HD* 2341). Kurtz's argument is an example of how imperialist ideology makes people think through binaries. Kurtz thinks westerners are superior and black people are inferior. Kurtz even thinks that the Africans should be killed if they resist being "civilized". He asserts: "Exterminate all the brutes!" (*HD* 2341). Though Marlow tries to show himself out of the picture, he also admires Kurtz's ideas. Marlow comments that "The peroration was magnificent . . . It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm" (*HD* 2341). Marlow approves of Kurtz's opinion; he even admires Kurtz's words. Chinua Achebe criticizes this kind of perspective:

It is the desire . . . in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest . . . Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which better than any other work that I know displays that Western desire and need which I have just referred to . . . *Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. (262)

As Achebe underlines, Africa and Africans are represented as the opposite of Europe and Europeans, as an "uncivilized" world. However, this representation reflects the Africa in the *narrator's* mind who creates a compelling narrative by silencing the marginalized people's voice, which will be examined thoroughly in the chapter on "narration". Yet, it should be added that though the reader learns that Kurtz and Marlow think the Africans are "uncivilized", it remains unknown what notions the Africans have for the white people. The white invasion of their own land just for ivory and some other raw materials may make the Africans think that the white people are brutes, too. However, no African perspective is allowed in Marlow's narrative or in the extradiegetic narrative in which it is embedded.

Later on Kurtz's attitude changes towards Africans. He becomes like one of "them" which causes Marlow to define both Kurtz and his helmsman as lacking "restraint" (*HD* 2347). On the other hand, Marlow does not change his attitude towards the Africans. They are "the other" for him throughout the work. Even

towards the end of his story, Marlow shows that Africans are aggressive or odd for him. When the Africans bury Kurtz's dead body, Marlow utters: "then they very nearly buried me" (*HD* 2357). Marlow reflects that according to his view, Africans are "different" enough to do anything; they can even bury someone alive. B. S. Korde, whose attitude is in line with that of the implied author, explains the difference between these two characters' perspectives through "darkness" and "light," which he associates with Africa and the West/"civilized" world, respectively.

There is a fundamental difference between Kurtz's interface with forces of darkness and that of Marlow's interface with them and the difference is that Kurtz has had a complete fall into the "bottom of the precipice where the sun never shines", but Marlow has been able to maintain his balance and prevent himself from falling into it because Marlow has some light left in him due to which he could withstand the forces of darkness. (189)

As Korde puts it, Marlow still looks at the world as a "civilized" man as "he has some light left in him"; however, Kurtz falls into the "heart of darkness" which means he is "Africanized".

The general view about the marginalized characters is that they are "different". Like the female characters, the marginalized male characters are perceived as a different species. It is easy to represent a character as being different from the other in *The Odyssey* because, as Beissinger explains, an epic may include supernatural elements: "The most ancient epics are those that include mythic and supernatural content" (390). For instance, one of Odysseus's enemies is Kuklops who is Poseidon's child and who has one eye and a huge body. The reader is conditioned to readily accept that he is different. Charles Rowan Beye exemplifies the supernatural elements in *The Odyssey* through examples: "Odysseus meets with nymphs, witches, and other fairytale creatures on his travels" (58). Beye also mentions how Athena, the Goddess, helps Odysseus: "All the while he is helped by a mature woman who has supernatural powers" (148).

Because of its generic feature, it is often obvious who is the "dehumanized other" in *The Odyssey*. However, as Marlow suggests that he tells a "real" story, it is difficult for him to "dehumanize" the Other. Yet, it should also be pointed out that Marlow does not portray one side as totally superior or the other totally inferior. He

underlines some mistakes made by the western colonizers. For instance, he mentions how some officers die because of a lack of precaution:

We pounded along, stopped, landed soldiers; went on, landed custom-house clerks to levy toll in what looked like a God-forsaken wilderness, with a tin shed and a flag-pole lost in it; landed more soldiers -- to take care of the custom-house clerks, presumably. Some, I heard, got drowned in the surf; but whether they did or not, nobody seemed particularly to care. They were just flung out there, and on we went. (*HD* 2312)

It is found out that some soldiers help protect the clerks but there are no precautions to save these soldiers' lives. Moreover, through Marlow's focalization, the reader also learns how the westerners force other people to give some money under the name of tax. Marlow continues to criticize colonizers by saying that they are not sincere in their imperialist aims and says:

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. (*HD* 2320)

Marlow criticizes the western activities in Africa; he thinks the only reason behind these activities is greed. However, though Marlow shows colonizers' faults, he does not treat them as another species. Yet, when his descriptions of the African people are analyzed, it is seen that in his eyes they are a different kind of species very much like women.

Both in *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the marginalized figures are focalized in a way in which their difference from the central male characters is emphasized. Though they are represented negatively most of the time, some passages, in both texts, reveal that the focalizer has an admiration for the "other", too. First of all, the negative representations lay bare that the marginalized men are often shown as unintelligent. In *The Odyssey*, Athena disguised as Mentor says, "So now slight the thoughts and plans of the suitors. / They're such fools, lacking fairness and good sense" (2.281). Similar to the suitors' representation, Kuklops is shown as a fool who is easily deceived by Odysseus and made drunk as mentioned earlier in the chapter on "story". On the other hand, Odysseus, repetitively, mentions

Kuklops's strength as if he admires him. He describes Kuklops as follows: "He raised a huge and heavy door-stone and set it / in place. The hard labor of twenty-two four-wheeled / wagons could not raise that stone from the cave floor. / That's how huge a boulder he'd placed at the doorway" (9.240-244). Odysseus is shocked because of Kuklops's strength; then, he addresses him as a "great man" (9.269). He underlines Kuklops's "greatness" and tells what happens to his friends by mentioning Kuklops's power again: "[Kuklops] stood up fast and lunged at my men with his two hands, / . . . / He ate like a mountain-fed lion" (9.288-292). Odysseus draws attention to Kuklops's huge shape and mentions how he lifts the huge stone once again: "he lifted the huge door-stone with ease and replaced it / the way a man might simply cover a quiver" (9.313-314). All of Odysseus's repetitive descriptions of Kuklops's strength reveal that though he hates this creature because he eats his friends and imprisons them, he admires his huge body and strength.

Much like the suitors, the Africans are perceived as unintelligent in *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow describes his helmsman as follows: "That fool-helmsman, his hands on the spokes, was lifting his knees high, stamping his feet, champing his mouth, like a reined-in horse" (*HD* 2337). The helmsman is resembled to a horse which has no independent mind at all. Marlow thinks that Africans are more like animals than human beings. Tim James suggests that "Marlow finds difficulty in recognising the humanity of the Africans" (111). Marlow describes the Africans as follows: "they faced the river, stamped their feet, nodded their horned heads, swayed their scarlet bodies; they shook towards the fierce river-demon a bunch of black feathers, a mangy skin with a pendent tail -- something that looked a dried gourd" (*HD* 2354). Marlow also uses the word "grotesque" for Africans:

You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks -- these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. (*HD* 2312)

The idea of having grotesque images is in the foreground throughout the work in order to underline the "other's" being different from the central male characters. However, Marlow also seems to admire the physical beauty and strength of Africans.

He underlines that Africans have muscle, vitality and energy of movement which are not ugly as their “grotesque” faces. This attitude seems to be quite ambivalent. In fact, ambivalence is a common feature of modernist novels in general as “modernists try to disrupt and fragment the picture of modern life” (Selden 92). Besides this, Conrad’s ambivalent representation of Africans can also be explained in the light of Homi K. Bhabha’s notion of “ambivalence”. The postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha has coined terms such as “mimicry”, “hybridity” and “ambivalence” to describe the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized people. Bhabha asserts that colonial discourse is dependent “on the concept of ‘fixity’ in the ideological construction of otherness” (370). The easiest way to repress the admiration or fear of “the other” is to create fixed stereotypes. However, Bhabha underlines that

[f]ixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated. (370)

Bhabha lays bare the colonizer’s anxiety by questioning the use of stereotypes repeatedly; if they are fixed, there is no need to underline their fixity again and again. He asserts that “It is this process of ambivalence, central to the stereotype” (370). He also states “‘otherness’ . . . is at once an object of desire and derision” (371). Bhabha observes that “[t]here can be no subject in equipoise” (Horwitz 331). He asserts: “‘The very structure of human subjectivity’ involves ‘contradictions and ambivalences’ rather than ‘unity’” (Horwitz 331). This also explains why Marlow is ambivalent toward the African natives. Though he is disturbed both by the Natives’ life style, including cannibalism, and their “grotesque” faces, he also admires their strong bodies. This is also similar to the representation of female characters in both works. Women are attractive but threatening at the same time according to the men. That’s why there are references to Medusa and Helen in *The Odyssey* and for the same reason Kurtz represents the woman blindfolded as she is at the same time a threatening figure like Medusa. The marginalized characters are both admirable and frightening according to central male characters’ perspective.

Similar to women who are represented as emotional beings, that is, as figures which lack restraint, the antagonists are also viewed as people unable to control themselves or act “properly”. For instance, a suitor throws meat to Odysseus; “He stopped and picked up an ox-hoof that lay in a basket / let it fly with a powerful hand. Odysseus dodged it, / moving his head aside and [it] slammed at the hard wall” (20.299-303). Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow watches the Natives and describes them to his narratees: “More than once [the steamboat] had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows -cannibals- in their place” (*HD* 2329). Marlow complains more than once that the Africans are people who cannot act in a “proper” way, i.e. they are cannibals. Though the subject matter is not about the Africans’ cannibalism, Marlow frequently mentions this because he focalizes on them through a specific point of view. He observes that “there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage” (*HD* 2330). The Africans are perceived by Marlow as people who, without any restraint, shout and behave in a strange manner. As opposed to the reasonable male protagonists, the disorderly male characters are shown as unable to keep their feelings under control very much like the female characters. This also shows that the text is established through binary oppositions. He resembles his and his friends’ situation to “sane men [who are] before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse” (*HD* 2330). As the Africans’ point of view is unknown, the reader knows the Africans only through Marlow’s focalization. However, it may also be possible that the Africans might be celebrating one of their cultural festivals when Marlow sees them. Marlow also mentions his helmsman as a person who cannot control himself. He utters “Poor fool! If he had only left that shutter alone. He had no restraint, no restraint” (*HD* 2342). Marlow repeats again and again that the Africans are unrestrained.

To conclude, the “texts” of *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* include more detail about the male protagonists than the marginalized characters as the differences between their textual representations in terms of duration indicate. Furthermore, the texts are mostly constructed through male characters’ perspective: neither the female

characters nor the marginalized male characters are allowed to show their perspectives. These resemblances between these two texts show that the patriarchal male perspective has not changed much throughout the centuries. The marginalized characters' life stories are summarized in a couple of sentences, i.e. by using "acceleration" while male protagonists' experiences are told through "deceleration". Also, women are still portrayed as stereotypically fragile or dangerous figures or the marginalized men remain as people who cannot control themselves. The chapter on "narration" will help show who makes these choices, the narrator or the implied author or both? Is Odysseus, a perfect hero in the epic, also so for the implied author? Or, does the implied author reveal that he is imperfect? Is Marlow a reliable narrator? Does the implied author also think that women have no relation with the "male world" as Marlow suggests? The answers will in turn reveal whether the implied authors approve of the narrators' view or criticize them.

CHAPTER 4

4. AN ANALYSIS OF “NARRATION” IN *THE ODYSSEY* AND *HEART OF DARKNESS*

“Narration” can be defined briefly as the “act or process of production” (Rimmon-Kenan 3). Up to this point, the characters’ roles, their representation or their perspectives have been analyzed. It has been also shown that some characters’ perspectives are shown but some others’ are not reflected. However, a question has been left unanswered; who makes this decision: This is the major question that will be answered in this chapter. Rimmon-Kenan explains that

Narration can be considered as both real and fictional. In the empirical world, the author is the agent responsible for the production of the narrative and for its communication. The empirical process of communication, however, is less relevant to the poetics of narrative fiction than its counterpart within the text. Within the text, communication involves a fictional narrator transmitting a narrative to a fictional narratee. (3-4)

That is to say there is both an implied author and a narrator of a fictional work. In this chapter, the narrator’s and the narratee’s identity, the narrator’s perceptibility and the characters’ voices will be examined to reveal that in both texts while the narrators speak, the female characters are given almost no chance to show their perspective. In addition to this, it will also be discussed that there are differences between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in relation to the implied authors’ points of view about the narrator and his story. This difference between two works indicates that while the implied author of *Heart of Darkness* is critical, to some extent, of the patriarchal perspective which is based on binary oppositions, the implied author in *The Odyssey* approves of this ideology.

4.1 Levels and Voices

4.1.1 Typology of the Narrators

The narrator is the authoritative figure in a fictional work because “even when a narrative text presents passages of pure dialogue . . . or forgotten letters and

diaries, there is in addition to the speakers or writers of this discourse a ‘higher’ narrational authority responsible for ‘quoting’ the dialogue or ‘transcribing’ the written records” (Rimmon-Kenan 89). The narrative structure of *The Odyssey* and *The Heart of Darkness* resemble each other; both of them have a frame structure. That is to say, there is a story within a story in both works. In some parts of *The Odyssey* and in *Heart of Darkness*, the stories are told by the intra-diegetic narrators: “[Genette asserts that] if the narrator is also a diegetic character in the first narrative told by the extradiegetic narrator, then he is a second-degree, or intradiegetic narrator. Example [is] Marlow in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” (95). Moreover, Odysseus and Marlow are also homodiegetic narrators. Rimmon-Kenan defines this term as follows: “[The narrator] who takes part in [the story], at least in some manifestation of his ‘self’, is ‘homodiegetic’” (96). In *The Odyssey* the stories between Book 9 and Book 12 are told by Odysseus himself. “What should I tell you first or last in my story?”, Odysseus asks and then tells his own story (9.14). In *Heart of Darkness*, the extradiegetic narrator explains: “‘I don’t want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,’ [Marlow] began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would like best to hear” (*HD* 2307). Through this explanation, Marlow is introduced as a story teller. Both Odysseus and Marlow are intradiegetic narrators. Intradiegetic narrators, especially when they are also homodiegetic, are on the whole more fallible than extradiegetic ones, because they also appear as characters in their own stories. Looking at the following aspects of the texts may help figure out if such a narrator is reliable: the identity of the narrators and the narratees, the aim of the narration and the implied author’s attitude to the narrator.

4.1.1.a Identity of the Narrators

The intradiegetic narrators in both works are male protagonists whose value systems are deeply informed by patriarchal hierarchies. The female and marginalized male characters’ lack of voice is an indicator of this situation, which will be mentioned later on in the “Aim of the Narration” part; however, before that the Lacanian theory can be helpful to analyze these narrators as the protectors of social norms. According to Lacan, a baby undergoes three stages until s/he becomes a

society member. Firstly, there is the imaginary order where the baby supposes that s/he is unified with his/her benefactor/mother; s/he lacks nothing. There is no need for language in this stage. The child is happy for being together with the mother because in this preverbal stage, the child only needs her to feed and care for him/her. At this stage, the child is not aware of separateness so s/he supposes that s/he has everything. However, in the mirror stage, the child understands that s/he is a separate being; s/he is not unified with his/her mother: "This phase of the experience, in other words, indicates an initial confusion between self and the other" (Dor 96). As the child understands this separation, s/he yearns for what s/he lacks. "Lacan says . . . this sense of lack will continue to plague us for the rest of our lives" (Bressler 153). However, the child sees that there is the Father which forces him to repress his/her desire.

When the child represses the *desire to be* in favor of the *desire to have*, he must from then on engage his desire in the realm of objects that are substitutes for the object he has lost. To accomplish this, desire must become speech in the form of a *demand*. But in becoming demand, desire gets more and more lost in the signifying chain of discourse. Indeed, we can say that desire moves from object to object, always referring to an indefinite series of substitutes and at the same time to an indefinite series of signifiers that symbolize these substitute objects . . . Desire remains forever unsatisfied. (Dor 118)

While the child learns language, s/he enters society; however, even this does not help him/her to compensate for the loss. According to Lacan, to become an ideal individual in society, s/he should repress this lack. In the last stage, the symbolic stage, the child learns the social norms through language. The father figure becomes important in this stage because the child realizes that the father is stronger than the mother. In Lacanian terms, the father has the 'phallus' which is the transcendental signified; "ultimate symbol of power" (Bressler 155). This representative of power "enforces cultural rules by threatening to castrate" (Bressler 154). This means that society threatens to isolate the individual if s/he does not obey. In the symbolic order, a healthy child should identify himself with the father and his rules which establish the patriarchal order. For this reason, according to Lacan, the child should repress the lack of the mother not to be isolated from society. Both Odysseus and Marlow can use the Father's tool properly. When Odysseus is in the king Alkinoos's palace,

they organize a festival in which a poet tells stories of the legendary warriors. Odysseus praises the poet because only language can help the ongoing system's continuation. "Demodokos, truly I praise you higher than all men, / whether the Muse taught you, Zeus's child, or Apollo. / You surely sang of the Akhaians' doom in the right way - / how much they struggled and smarted, all that they suffered" (8.487-490). Then Odysseus wants the poet to talk about the Trojan War to make his own fame passed down from generation to generation. "But change the song, come on now, sing of the wooden / horse made by Epeios with help from Athene / . . . / In fact if you tell this tale all in the right way, / I'll soon proclaim your gift myself to the whole world, / saying the Gods freely gave you a God's voice" (8.492-8). Odysseus's request from the poet is a sign of his knowledge about the power of language. By the help of the poet's song the audience learns about Akhaians' victory; thus, the Akhaians fame increases. Odysseus's attention to the poet shows his attention to the language, too. In Lacanian terms, Odysseus is a symbolic Father who struggles to preserve language and thereby the patriarchal social system.

In the same way as Odysseus, Marlow also struggles to preserve language even under difficult conditions. He finds a book when he looks inside a hut in the jungle. He says, "by the door I picked up a book . . . I handled this amazing antiquity with the greatest possible tenderness, lest it should dissolve in my hands" (*HD* 2331). Marlow is surprised by seeing a book in this jungle; it symbolizes "the civilization" he misses so he handles it with "tenderness". His reaction is a sign of the value he gives to the language / the civilization / the Father in Lacanian terms. He does not throw the book away but preserves it cautiously. Marlow gives the book to the Russian man. He tells what happens as follows: "I gave him Towson's book"¹¹. He

¹¹ In relation to this book, Owen Knowles holds that

Conrad associated the name of J. T. Towson with a manual of seamanship actually written by Nicholas Tinmouth. The former published two volumes of navigation tables and a specialized manual on the deviation of the compass in the iron ships but did not author a handbook on points of seamanship. On the other hand, Tinmouth's *An Inquiry Relative to Various Important Points of Seamanship, Considered as a branch of Practical Science* has several

made as though he would kiss me, but restrained himself. ‘The only book I had left, and I thought I had lost it,’ he said, looking at it ecstatically” (*HD* 2344). Based on Lacan’s argument about “the Father’s” relationship with the language, it can be said that Marlow is a preserver of the social norms established by “the Father” as he struggles to protect the book which is on seamanship, i.e. tells nothing about women but men like Akhaians’ tale of victory told by Odysseus’s request. Both Marlow and Odysseus help preserve the Father’s tool; the language.

In addition to preserving language, the narrators in both works use language quite well. For instance, Odysseus convinces Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alkinoos, to help him survive only through his rhetoric. Odysseus begs: “I clasp your knees, my lady. Are you divine or human? / If you’re a Goddess holding the breadth of the heavens, / I’d say Artemis, yes, the daughter of great Zeus: / in looks and height and form you two are a close match” (6.149-152). Odysseus, first, flatters Nausicaa and then mentions how miserable he is: “But hard pain beset me. / Yesterday, after twenty days, I escaped from the wine-dark / sea” (6.169-171). Odysseus achieves to persuade Nausicaa to help him only through his language.

Marlow’s ability to use language is also praised by one of his narratees who is the extradiegetic narrator at the same time. He describes Marlow’s stories as follows:

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical . . . , and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (*HD* 2306)

The narrator underlines that Marlow’s stories are different from other sailors’ stories he has heard. Marlow’s stories help him and his friends learn about a different world and a different vision because while others think that the meaning is within the shell, he thinks it is outside. Thus, Marlow is introduced as a knowledgeable man who

similarities to the *Inquiry* mentioned by Marlow, including a first chapter concerned with the relative strengths of various ‘chains and tackle’. (450)

knows what he should speak about and how to tell it. Similar to Odysseus, Marlow can also use language well.

4.1.1.b Aim of the Narration

The aim of the narration can also be helpful to understand the narrator's perspective. Both Odysseus and Marlow start their narrations to explain the reasons that bring them to where they are now, i.e. their narrations have an explicative function. Rimmon-Kenan explains this term as follows: "the hypodiegetic level offers an explanation of the diegetic level, answering some such questions as 'What were the events leading to the present situation?' [For instance, it may] explain how [somebody] lost his innocence" (93). Similarly, Odysseus's and Marlow's narrations answer the same question. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, King Alkinoos asks about the events that make Odysseus grieve too much; he insists "Tell me why you weep" (8.577). The narration has an explicative function which is based on the male character's adventures only. Alkinoos wants to know each adventure Odysseus has gone through:

Come on then, answer me, tell me the truth now: / where have you wandered?
What were the places you went to? / Which men were there, what cities or
people who lived well? / Tell us of both – the wilder sort, the cruel and unfair,
/ and those who were mindful of Gods and kindly with strangers. Tell me why
you weep too, heartily grieving / to hear of Troy, the deaths of Danaans and
Argives. (8.572-578)

The things Alkinoos wonders about are mostly about the male character and the things that are told by Odysseus is also the same. Alkinoos uses the word "you" three times in this small excerpt. This means that the focus is only on Odysseus. To sum up, the narration's aim is telling about the male hero's adventures only.

In Marlow's case, the situation is also the same. Throughout the story, Marlow explains how he has become the person who he is now. He states "yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap" (2307). Marlow narrates his adventures to be able to show "the effect of it" on him. Even in this one sentence, he uses the word "I" for four times.

4.1.1.c The Voice

The narrator is the “‘narrative voice’ or ‘speaker’ of a text” but “the implied author is – in opposition and by definition – voiceless and silent” (Rimmon-Kenan 88). However, there are also characters; their speech is also informative as it reflects their position in the narration. In the section called “Speech Representation,” “how” the characters’ speech is narrated will be analyzed; does the narrator summarize their speech or does he use dialogue? However, in this part, “what” the characters’ speech reflects about their position will be examined. Both in Homer’s *The Odyssey* and in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* there is nearly no female voice but their cries or murmurs. Penelopeia reacts against the suitors in the form of “cries”. The Intended’s voice, on the other hand, is always low. Remarkably, the marginalized male characters’ voice is described as “yelling”. In this part it will be analyzed how the narrators foreground their own perspectives as well as their own voices.

Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot assert that “From the antiquity to the present the absence of concrete, detailed information about women stands in sharp contrast to the profusion of discourse and imagery. Women are more likely to be ‘represented’ than to be described or to have their stories told” (x). There are mostly representations of women by men; it can be said that women are left speechless most of the time. The female characters are left voiceless in these two works, too. For instance in both works, the female characters are associated with silence. In *The Odyssey*, Penelopeia is described as follows: “She lost all speech for a while. Both of her eyelids / welled with tears, her voice was forceful but stopped short” (4.704-5). She is speechless. She cannot express her emotions with words, i.e. through the Father’s tool in Lacanian terms. Similar to Penelopeia, in *Heart of Darkness* the Intended is also represented as a silent woman. “‘You knew him well,’ she murmured, after a moment of mourning silence” (*HD* 2360). The silent moments are underlined when Marlow tells his narratees what he speaks with the Intended. He associates this silence with her mourning again and again throughout this conversation.

The female characters in *The Odyssey* speak more than the female characters in *Heart of Darkness*; however this does not mean that they are heard by a fellow human being. For instance, Penelopeia speaks to beg to the Gods: “She placed barley grains in a basket and called on Athene: / ‘Hear me . . . ’” (4.761). The female

character's voice is not heard by anyone else; she seems to utter some words just to relieve herself rather than to communicate. In some parts of the epic the female characters' voice is considered "dangerous" by the male protagonist. For instance, the Seirenes' are defined as follows: "the Seirenes, those who can spellbind / every seaman who sails too close to their singing" (12.39-40). It is told that the Seirenes can be dangerous if they are heard. Their voice exemplifies what Kristeva calls "semiotic". As opposed to Lacan, Kristeva argues that the person does not have to suppress his/her desire for "mother" or for the pre-oedipal stage. "Instead of holding to the dualistic thinking of the West, Kristeva is showing how the poles of these dichotomies are intertwined" (McAfee 17). Instead of binary oppositions such as mother/woman and father/man, she proposes harmony. She claims that the desire to return to the pre-oedipal stage cannot be erased; for this reason, trying to repress it causes psychological traumas.

Desire will be seen as an always already accomplished subjugation of the subject to lack: it will serve to demonstrate only the development of the signifier, never the heterogeneous process that questions the psychosomatic orders. From these reflections a certain subject emerges: the subject, precisely, of desire who lives at the expense of his drives, ever in search of a lacking object. (Oliver 33)

The subject always lacks the pre-oedipal bliss but the Law of Father orders him/her to erase it totally. However, Kristeva's semiotics "allows us to speak of the real" which is the union of the baby and the mother (Kristeva qtd. in Oliver 39). Kristeva thinks that one should be free to speak out what s/he feels because repression causes problems. Language is the society's tool; the society values or the gender roles are imposed on the child through language in symbolic order in Lacanian terms. Kristeva names the pre-oedipal stage as 'chora'. It is "characterized by a continuous flow of fluidity or rhythm" (Bressler 179). She argues that by "entering Lacanian symbolic order, both males and females are separated from chora and repress the feelings of fluidity and rhythm" (Bressler 179). According to Kristeva, "symbolic" wants to suppress the "semiotic" but "semiotic" always finds a way of threatening the "symbolic": Odysseus's reaction to the Seirenes seems to be illustrative of this struggle between the two orders. Odysseus protects his crew by putting wax into their ears. Moreover, though the audience hears the Seirenes singing, it can still be

said that the Seirenes are silenced by the implied author, too as he creates a certain image of these women beforehand and conditions the audience accordingly. These female characters let out their voice in *The Odyssey*; however, they are shown as dangerous.

Moreover, there is an existential urge in the female characters' speech in *The Odyssey*. According to Sartre, a person feels that she/he exists in this world only when s/he receives a reaction from the other person. He claims "in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me" (286). The word "look" has a metaphoric meaning here; being seen or listened to by another person makes the person feel she/he exists. Sartre also asserts that "the being-for-itself of my consciousness –and consequently its being in general- depends on the Other. As I appear to the Other, so I am" (261). That is to say, a person feels alive only when s/he has a communication with the other. For instance, Penelopeia is described by the extra-diegetic narrator as follows: "Penelopeia told . . . heavily sobbing, / 'Hear it, my friends, how Zeus on Olumpos gave me / anguish beyond all women born and raised alongside me'" (4.721-23). Penelopeia wants to be heard; she says "hear me". She wants to make her being recognized by others to feel alive in Sartreian words. However, her voice is not heard in the "male world"; her audience is only her maids. The Seirenes have an existential urge, too. The Seirenes say "Here, well-known Odysseus, lofty pride of Akhaians! / Stop your ship: hear the two of us singing" (12.184-5). The Seirenes' only wish is to be heard; because they are on an island in which there is no one except themselves, which is not enough to make them feel that they exist. So, although the female characters in *The Odyssey* have some "voice", their "speech" only reflects their desperate situation, especially when it is analyzed from a Sartreian point of view. To conclude, in *The Odyssey*, the female characters are almost voiceless. If they speak, their speech is either unheard or it is expressive of an urge for being heard which has no importance in the unfolding of the story at all.

In *Heart of Darkness*, the female characters either just murmur or they are not given voice. For instance, Marlow says: "[the Intended] murmured, 'I had heard you were coming'" (HD 2360). She is repeatedly murmuring; Marlow says, "[the

Intended] said suddenly very low, ‘He died as he lived’” (*HD* 2362). The Intended’s voice is quite low; she either cannot be heard easily or Marlow creates this kind of an image for her to reduce her effect on reader. Marlow underlines that Kurtz’s lover speaks with a very low voice. She is rendered voiceless much like Penelopeia.

Moreover, besides the Intended’s murmurs, throughout the novel, the female voice is nearly unheard. When Marlow goes to the company’s office, the thin knitting lady directs Marlow to the room without speaking. Marlow asserts that “she turned round without a word and preceded me into a waiting-room” (*HD* 2311). The lady does not say anything to Marlow. Moreover, Mr. Kurtz’s African mistress speaks no word throughout the novel, either. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot state that “what did women say? . . . They spoke through others, that is through men, who portrayed them . . . in the novel” (xiii). Like Duby and Perrot’s argument, the reader does not know what the African girl really feels; there is only Marlow’s representation of this lady as a mourning figure. The reader knows her through Marlow’s representation of her, which consists of only a few sentences.

Similar to female characters, the marginalized characters are also not given voice. Their voice is represented as “noise” in both works. In *The Odyssey*, the suitors are described as follows: “Suitors made new noise in the shadowy great hall, / Each of them praying to lie in bed with [Penelopeia] close by” (1.365-6). The suitors are represented like animals which cannot speak but shout instead. They make “some noise” to gain Penelopeia. If they speak, they speak loudly: “All the suitors were yelling / throughout the hall” (21.360-1). The suitors are repeatedly shown while they are yelling. Kuklops is also almost speechless. He is described by Odysseus as follows: “‘Strangers - who are you’ . . . / He spoke that way and all our spirits were broken, / afraid of his heavy voice and oversize body” (9.252-57). The narrator draws attention to Kuklops’s voice to underline his animalistic features. As opposed to Odysseus whose voice is heard all the time throughout the epic and who is known as speaking well, the suitors and Kuklops remain voiceless.

Similarly, the African voice is silenced by the narrator and it is represented as noise in *Heart of Darkness*. The Africans want to prevent Marlow and his crew from taking Kurtz back to Europe. They do not speak but Marlow describes their voice as

follows: “a cry, a very loud cry, as of infinite desolation, soared slowly in the opaque air. It ceased. A complaining clamour, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears” (*HD* 2333). Africans’ voice is described by Marlow and the effect of this voice on Marlow and his crew is articulated but what these men actually say remains missing. Similarly, in the following paragraph Marlow states: “they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany” (*HD* 2354). In this paragraph, Marlow mentions what African speech is like but the content of this speech remains unknown again. He just states that the African speech does not resemble human language. It is more like a “satanic” rite. This means that like the suitors or Kuklops’s speeches in *The Odyssey*, the Africans’ voice in *Heart of Darkness* is just noise for the narrator. The marginalized male characters remain voiceless in both works.

4.1.2 Reliability

4.1.2.a Identity of the Narratees

Rimmon-Kenan defines “the narratee” as follows: “the narratee is the agent which is at the very least implicitly addressed by the narrator” (90). The narratee, as Rimmon-Kenan states, is the implied listener. The narratee, is important also to examine the narrator’s identity closer because questioning the narrator’s reliability and the narratee’s identity also reveals some information about the narrator: Gerald Prince argues that “the relations that a narrator-character establishes with his narratee reveal ... much ... about his character” (103). There are differences between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in terms of narratee. While anyone can become Odysseus’s listener, in Marlow’s case, the situation changes; neither the native Africans nor the female characters act as Marlow’s listeners.

In *The Odyssey*, the king as well as ordinary men and women can listen to Odysseus’s story, which increases the reliability of Odysseus as a narrator because when King Alkinoos, king of Phaeacians, requests Odysseus to tell his story, Odysseus replies “Lordly Alkinoos, praised by all of your people, / it’s clearly a beautiful thing to hear out a singer, / a man like this, resembling the Gods with his own voice. / . . . / But now your heart is moved to ask of my troubles / and griefs . . .

/ But first I'll tell you my name" (8.2-16). Then, Odysseus tells his own story; he is listened to by the king and other people who join King's feast such as the poet or the musician. His listeners are not chosen people. Moreover, Odysseus tells what he has lived through throughout his journey also to his wife. The extra-diegetic narrator informs: "Odysseus told [Penelopeia] all of the hardship / he'd brought on men and all the anguish he'd suffered. / He told it all, she gladly listened and no sleep / fell on her eyelids before he told her the whole tale" (23.306-309). It is underlined that every tiny detail is told by Odysseus to Penelopeia. Anyone can be Odysseus's narratee; he does not think that his story is impossible to be understood by some people. This may contribute to his reliability as a narrator because this shows that he does not change his narration according to his listeners.

As opposed to Odysseus, Marlow chooses a specific group of people as his narratees which decreases his reliability as this suggests that he may modify his narrative according to his audience. For instance, what he tells his chosen male audience about Kurtz's last words is different from what he tells to the Intended. He asserts that Mr. Kurtz's last words are "horror" (*HD* 2356) when he tells the story to his male companions but when he speaks to the Intended he says that the last words are her name (*HD* 2362). This situation also shows that Marlow can lie easily and, moreover, he does not want to tell details of his story to a woman. Kenneth Rosen also states that "Marlow's . . . narrative is a . . . ritual . . . by monologue before an anonymous but high male court: the Director of Companies, the Lawyer, the Accountant, and so forth" (89). Interestingly these narratees have a privileged place in society. The extradiegetic narrator introduces the narratees to the reader: "The Lawyer . . . had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones . . . The director, satisfied the anchor had good hold, made his way aft and sat down amongst us" (*HD* 2304). First of all, as opposed to the female characters, these men are represented as active members of society. The Lawyer is introduced as a man who has worked for years; he represents respect. The accountant has brought a box of dominoes; he is the source of the entertainment in this male group. And the director is shown as busy with the ship; he represents hard work in this community which means that Marlow's

narratees are not like the Intended who is domestic and has no connection with the world. Marlow also does not want to break his connections with these men so he tells his story accordingly; he shapes his narrative in some points. When he speaks about his helmsman, he says “Perhaps you will think it passing strange this regret for a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back -- a help -- an instrument” (*HD* 2342). Though missing a person is quite normal, missing an African can be thought as strange or even eccentric by Marlow's narratees. For this reason, Marlow makes it more understandable for his Western male audience by saying that he misses him because that African man is an instrument for him: he misses him like he misses a broken or lost tool. As Korkut states, “Marlow's relationship with his narratees may reveal much about Marlow's character and aims as narrator in *Heart of Darkness*” (129). Marlow's speech with the Intended shows his patriarchal view, too. Marlow asserts “I was on the point of crying at her” (*HD* 2362). His sentence reveals that he has already decided that telling the truths about Kurtz to the Intended is something ridiculous. He stops himself from telling the truth to her which shows that he thinks a lady is not qualified enough to be a truthful narratee. He also tells his narratees that he is surprised at her ignorance: “I was on the point of crying at her, ‘Don't you hear them?’ The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. ‘The horror! The horror!’” (*HD* 2362). Rather than telling the truth to the Intended, Marlow prefers to blame her for not understanding it. He may want to receive his fellow male narratees' approval by showing a lady as ignorant. Nil Korkut suggests that

what Marlow wants to do in *Heart of Darkness* is to communicate some important truths to his audience. In this sense, the narrative situation in *Heart of Darkness* may be said to suit the definition Rimmon-Kenan provides in her study on narrative fiction. She explains that the term narration suggests ‘a *communication* process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addresser to addressee’. (131)

As Korkut underlines, Marlow wants give a message to his audience; however, he does not want to give this message to anyone but only to a group of privileged and

sophisticated male members of society. In this case, this is not a full “communication process” but a limited one.

4.1.2.b Perceptibility

The perceptibility is another item which helps define whether the narrator has a full knowledge of what s/he tells or s/he just makes generalizations about the characters he talks about. In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus tells his audience about the experiences he himself has been through which means that he has a full knowledge of his narrative. His narrative is a “temporal summary” (Rimmon-Kenan 98). Rimmon-Kenan defines this narrative type as follows: “Summary presupposes a desire to account for time-passage, to satisfy questions in a narratee’s mind about what has happened in the interval. [It implies] the presence of a narrator as well as his notion of what should be told in detail” (99). Odysseus can tell about the events to summarize what has happened in the interval until he comes to Alkinoos’s palace as he has a full knowledge of these events. He starts by saying “I am Odysseus, Laertes’ son, known for my wily / ways among men . . . / I live on clear-view Ithaka” (9.18-22). Odysseus continues to tell about his adventures in the same manner he tells his name.

However, the way in which Marlow narrates his story casts a shadow on his narrative’s accuracy. For instance, he sometimes says that he cannot remember the events truly: “The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember, you know” (*HD* 2341). Moreover, as opposed to Odysseus, some of what Marlow tells throughout his narration is a report of what he hears from others. His narrative is about Kurtz, who has changed his life; however, Marlow at the beginning did not know much about Kurtz. Marlow asks “Tell me, pray . . . who is this Mr. Kurtz?” (*HD* 2321). The brickmaker replies “He is a prodigy . . . He is an emissary of pity and science and progress” (*HD* 2321). Then Marlow eavesdrops to learn about Kurtz: “One evening as I was lying flat on the deck of my steamboat, I heard voices approaching -- and there were the nephew and the uncle strolling along the bank.” (*HD* 2326). Then Marlow continues by quoting the nephew and uncle’s speech to help his narratees learn about Kurtz:

‘How did that ivory come all this way?’ growled the elder man, who seemed very vexed. The other explained that it had come with a fleet of canoes in charge of an English half-caste clerk Kurtz had with him; that Kurtz had apparently intended to return himself, the station being by that time bare of goods and stores, but after coming three hundred miles, had suddenly decided to go back, which he started to do alone in a small dugout with four paddlers, leaving the half-caste to continue down the river with the ivory. (*HD* 2327)

Marlow learns about Kurtz’s personal aims in the Inner Station by eavesdropping. The details of Kurtz’s activities are told not by Marlow but by the Russian officer there, in the Inner Station. He makes the Russian speak by saying: “To speak plainly, [Kurtz] raided the country”. Then the Russian starts to speak: “‘Not alone, surely!’ He muttered something about the villages round that lake” (*HD* 2346). Marlow forces the Russian to tell more and more: “‘Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?’ I suggested. He fidgeted a little. ‘They adored him,’ he said. The tone of these words was so extraordinary that I looked at him searchingly” (*HD* 2346). Marlow’s words are indicative of his intention to find out about Kurtz as much as he can with the help of people acquainted with him. He learns, for example, that Kurtz is a musician from Kurtz’s cousin only after his death. Marlow states that “another fellow, calling himself Kurtz's cousin, appeared two days later, and was anxious to hear all the details about his dear relative's last moments. Incidentally he gave me to understand that Kurtz had been essentially a great musician” (*HD* 2358). Marlow’s statement reveals that what constitutes his knowledge about Kurtz is partial and rests on random incidents.

As opposed to Odysseus, whose story rests on first-hand experience, Marlow’s story frequently relies on others’ experiences. These examples show that Marlow’s narrative is “commentary” according to Rimmon-Kenan’s classification of a narrator’s perceptibility (99). Rimmon-Kenan says that “Interpretations often provide information not only about their direct object but also about the interpreter” (100). All his comments lay bare the narrator’s own identity. For instance, after misleading the Intended about Kurtz’s last words, Marlow hears that the Intended says “I knew it--I was sure!” (*HD* 2362). The Intended believes wholeheartedly that her name was Kurtz’s last word. Then Marlow repeats her words “She knew. She was sure” (*HD* 2362). He, by this repetition, foregrounds in a slightly mocking way,

her naiveté, which is telling of a hierarchy he establishes between himself and the Intended.

According to Rimmon-Kenan “The third type of commentary, *generalization* is not restricted to a specific character, event, or situation but extends the significance of the particular case in a way which purportedly applies to a group, a society or humanity at large” (100). Rimmon-Kenan explains that “The text can direct and control the reader’s comprehension and attitudes by positioning certain items before others” (121). For instance, “the primary effect” or “the recency effect” is one of them. The “information and attitudes presented at an early stage of the text tend to encourage the reader to interpret everything in their light”; this is called “primary effect” (Rimmon-Kenan 121). “Texts can encourage the reader's tendency to comply with the primacy effect by constantly reinforcing the initial impressions, but on the whole they induce the reader to modify or replace the original conjectures”; this is called “the recency effect” (Rimmon-Kenan 121). Whether it is “primary” or “recency”, these items prove that the reader can be manipulated through some methods. This may be one of the reasons why Marlow makes a lot of comments or generalizations throughout his narrative. About women, Marlow asserts:

‘Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it- completely. They - the women I mean - are out of it - should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it. You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr. Kurtz saying, 'My Intended.' You would have perceived directly then how completely she was out of it. (HD 2353)

Marlow emphasizes that women are far away from men’s active world. Women’s lives are expected to be within the boundary of their houses. Even pronouncing their names within the adventurous world of Africa seems irrelevant to him. “Marlow assert[s] that women can take no part in the quest for the truth” (Moser, 113). These comments reveal Marlow’s allegiance to the patriarchal world view. He ignores both his aunt’s achievements in “his manly world” and the knitting ladies who work in this world, too. Marlow does not reflect the truth as it is but tries to affect the narratee’s thoughts through his comments. He becomes a domineering narrator. Yet as it will be discussed soon, the distance between Marlow and the implied author

suggests that, the implied reader is encouraged to listen to Marlow more critically than his narratees.

Marlow not only makes general comments on women but also comments on the characteristics of native Africans. For instance, he stereotypes these people by saying “fine fellows -cannibals- in their place” (*HD* 2348). Moreover, when Marlow hears the Africans’ shouting, he also generalizes that Africans are like mad people. Marlow defines the white people through the pronoun “we” and he utters: “We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse” (*HD* 2348). Marlow generalizes that the Africans resemble mad people.

4.1.2.c The Implied Author

Rimmon-Kenan defines the implied author’s role as follows: “the implied author is the governing consciousness of the work as a whole, the source of the norms embodied in the work” (87-8). The most important difference is that the implied author is not the real author or the narrator (Rimmon-Kenan 88). The implied author is different from the real author because the writer’s ideas at the time she/he has written that specific work can be different from what she/he thinks now. Furthermore, “Unlike the narrator, the implied author can *tell* us nothing. He, or better, *it* has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn” (Chatman 148). Unlike the narrator, the implied author is a construct assembled by the reader. Sometimes there is no correspondence between the stand points of the implied author and that of the narrator as in the case of *Heart of Darkness*. In this case, the ironic situations in the text decrease the narrator’s reliability and the reader’s trust to the narrator in return. Homer’s and Conrad’s works have some similarities but also some differences in terms of the narration, which will help show that while Homer’s text uncritically reflects the patriarchal values of his society, Conrad’s text, due to the distance between the implied author and the narrator, approaches these values more critically.

In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus is always praised, not only by the characters around him, including the Gods, but also by the extradiegetic narrator: “Zeus-born Odysseus also rose, a looter of cities / . . . / great-hearted Odysseus / . . . / He looks like a deathless God” (8.3-14). Odysseus, resembling a God, is the perfect hero of all times according to anyone including the implied author as nothing challenges this idea throughout the work. However, in *Heart of Darkness*, it is shown that though Marlow tries to be seen as an “enlightened” man, he lacks something. The extradiegetic narrator describes Marlow through these words: “with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower” (*HD* 2307). Owen Knowles informs that “the most sacred symbol in Buddhism, the lotus flower (which Marlow is . . . described as lacking), variously signifies emergence into light from darkness, paradisiacal beauty, purity and spiritual grace” (439). Though Marlow tells about his experiences that teach a lot of things about human nature, it is implied that Marlow is not a Buddha as he has no lotus flower which symbolizes enlightenment. Conrad shows that Marlow’s appearance may resemble Buddha but he is a fake one as he has no lotus. This lack indicates that Marlow hasn’t progressed much. Veysel Atayman also underlines the same feature: he argues that Conrad’s work is based on a journey theme like Homer’s *The Odyssey* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: however, as opposed to these epics, Marlow does not come back triumphant. According to Atayman, Marlow is not enlightened and he does not reach the source of life or abundance like Buddha because the lotus flower is the symbol of all of these in Buddhist culture (242). The imperfection of Marlow is also implied in the fire scene. When he goes to Africa, he witnesses a fire break out in a shed full of fabric and beads. Marlow watches the fire but, interestingly, he does nothing to help stop it. Marlow narrates:

One evening a grass shed full of calico, cotton prints, beads, and I don't know what else, burst into a blaze so suddenly that you would have thought the earth had opened to let an avenging fire consume all that trash. I was smoking my pipe quietly by my dismantled steamer, and saw them all cutting capers in the light, with their arms lifted high, when the stout man with moustaches came tearing down to the river, a tin pail in his hand, assured me that everybody was 'behaving splendidly, splendidly,' dipped about a quart of water and tore back again. I noticed there was a hole in the bottom of his pail. (*HD* 2320)

Marlow reminds nature's power through this "avenging" fire over the beads or clothes done by people. The hole under the bucket also reveals the Africans' desperate situation against nature. The details of this event are learned through Marlow's "observations". That is to say Marlow "watches" the fire and tells every detail to his listeners. However, it is quite dramatic that he just watches the fire but does nothing to help stop it. Additionally he does not warn the stout man about his bucket though he assures Marlow that he will help stop this fire. This paragraph is both the sign of Marlow's personality and the voice of the implied author because what seems ordinary to Marlow, i.e. watching the fire next to you as if looking at beautiful scenery, might be unsettling for the reader; this decreases the trust for Marlow as the narrator as well as a character. Marlow continues by saying "A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly" (*HD* 2320). He does not help the African man though he witnesses that he is beaten. Another example also proves Marlow's shallowness. Marlow says "Some [officers], I heard, got drowned in the surf; but whether they did or not, nobody seemed particularly to care. They were just flung out there, and on we went" (*HD* 2312). Marlow just hears these drownings and goes on. He might have prevented the future drownings if he were a sensitive man; however, his "lack of information" about this subject, though he is this story's narrator, shows that he does not take any precautions, either. In fact these repetitions may make the reader feel alienated from the story. Thus, s/he may begin to analyze the narrator from a distanced point of view:

Alienation effect [is] produced in drama when the theatrical illusion is broken in ways that make the audience perceive the drama as a product of theatrical techniques rather than something 'real'. [Its] purpose [is] to 'estrangle' realist theatrical conventions and the bourgeois ideology . . . such conventions support. The term is also used to describe the equivalent effect in other literary forms. (Montgomery and Duran 342-3)

Conrad also uses a similar technique which helps him make the reader criticize the narrator and his narrative which, in general, is based on a western male point of view in general.

Both *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* are informed by a patriarchal world view; however, while the narrator's story is not challenged in Homer's text, Conrad

presents ironic situations that invite the reader to question the character- narrator's world view. In *The Odyssey* there is no discrepancy between Odysseus's representation of the female or marginalized male characters and that of the extradiegetic narrator, which suggests that, the implied author's opinions correspond to what the narrator thinks. For instance, what Odysseus tells about Kalupso has already been told by the extradiegetic narrator before. Odysseus says "Taking me in there, / she fed me and loved me warmly, yes and she told me / she'd make me deathless . . . / The Goddess never changed the heart in my own chest" (7.255-8). He says that Kalupso keeps him in her cave because she loves him. This has been already told by the extradiegetic narrator earlier in the text: "A queenly Nymph, goddess-like, shining Kalupso, / kept the man in a hollow cave. She wanted a husband" (1.14-15). This concord between the extradiegetic narrator and Odysseus shows itself several times throughout the work. This correspondence indicates that the text as a whole is not structured to cast a shadow on the reliability of the narrator.

However, in *Heart of Darkness* what Marlow tells or does is sometimes challenged by the implied author. These differences will help show the difference between the intradiegetic narrator's and the implied author's perspectives. For instance, as opposed to Marlow, who praises Kurtz, the implied author reflects that in Africa, Kurtz becomes much more "dangerous" than any female character in the text though he pictures a lady, who is regarded as "sinister" also by Marlow, as blindfolded so that she cannot affect men like Medusa does (*HD* 2321). Moreover, although Marlow underlines all the time that the Africans are "cannibals" (*HD* 2329) and attributes animalistic characteristics to them throughout his narration, the reader is never presented with a scene in which cannibalism takes place. Interestingly, Marlow questions "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" (*HD* 2334). Marlow is surprised that the Natives do not eat the men around them though they are really starving. He cannot understand the situation. This discrepancy between what Marlow assumes about Africans and what actually happens may make the reader think that the Natives are not that animalistic despite Marlow's previous descriptions. In this case, it can be held that the implied

author's point of view is different from the narrator which in return may make the reader question the situation to find the right perspective.

As opposed to *The Odyssey*, in *Heart of Darkness*, there are many ironical situations which help the implied author show his attitude towards his narrator and the people who share the same ideology with him. For instance, though Marlow finds a job through his aunt's help, which means he achieves to enter "the male world" through his aunt's connections, he claims that women have no connection with "men's world": "It's queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there has never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset" (*HD* 2311). According to Marlow, the female perspective is too narrow which prevents them from entering from what he calls "the male world". However, if his aunt were "out of touch with the truth", Marlow would not have experienced what he speaks about as she helps him to find this job. She is the one who achieves what Marlow couldn't do. Ruth Nadelhaft also asserts that the aunt's situation is undervalued by Marlow; however, "his aunt was not out of touch but was rather in the current issues of her country" (97). Nadelhaft also states that "those women who were allowed into the narrative serve very specific and compelling purposes. They remind us, by their brief and unsettling presences, how limited Marlow's vision is, how dependent he is upon the presence of women throughout his journey. To some extent, they save the life of the narrative" (100). As Nadelhaft suggests, the female characters seem to be constructed for specific purposes. For instance, Marlow's reaction against his aunt's achievement in the "male world" is a sign of Marlow's own narrow perspective. Moreover, one reason why the beautiful Intended takes a role in this story might be to help the implied author show the male "gaze" which objectifies women: Marlow's desire to see Kurtz's fiancée is also the reflection of the male gaze because he just wants to see her beauty in reality after seeing her picture, as mentioned earlier in the chapter on "text" (*HD* 2359). These ironical situations about the female characters prove Nadelhaft's argument; Conrad has a specific purpose for creating these characters. Through them and through a narrow-minded patriarchal narrator like Marlow, the implied author makes the reader question, to some extent, the patriarchal ideology.

The discrepancy between the implied author and Marlow with regard to women is paralleled in the ways in which Africans are represented. While Marlow blames Africans throughout his story for being aggressive, he also talks about the “insanity” in the Europeans’ bombing the empty African lands in vain.

It appears the French had one of their wars going on thereabouts. Her ensign dropped limp like a rag; the muzzles of the long six-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull; the greasy, slimy swell swung her up lazily and let her down, swaying her thin masts. In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech -- and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of natives -- he called them enemies! -- hidden out of sight somewhere. (HD 2312-3)

This awareness, however, does not make any changes in his discriminatory attitude to Africans, which again, suggests a critical distance between the implied author and Marlow. Marlow mentions white people’s moral deficiency as well as the Africans’; however, he never shows the white westerners as aggressive people except Kurtz, who has already become an African. The French crew bombs the empty ground which shows their strong desire to own that place and how the Westerners become aggressive too when they want to own something. Moreover, the implied author also reveals a critical attitude by showing the contrast between western wealth and African famine. Marlow describes the white officer, who has an African maid, as mentioned earlier in the chapter on “text”, as follows: “His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character” (HD 2316). As opposed to the white officer’s neat and perfect appearance, in the following paragraph the Africans are described as follows: “Strings of dusty niggers with splay feet arrived and departed” (HD 2316). While the white officer owns perfect clothes, the Africans do not even have shoes and are all dirty. Marlow just reflects what he sees around him; however, the design belongs to the implied author who puts the paragraphs in a sequential way to show the contrast between the white westerners and the Africans. Such a design aims to make the reader question the ideology which makes white people own everything but give nothing. This selfish activity in Africa is criticized by the implied

author to help the reader see that African people are treated like animals by the colonizers who actually only think about their own benefits like animals. These examples show that the implied author has a different perspective from Marlow because Marlow only represents the situations but does not position himself on the side of the Africans or does not question the Western invasion in Africa; however, the implied author criticizes the western activity there through showing ironical situations¹². In *The Odyssey*, however, the narrator's opinion always corresponds to the implied author's perspective; there are no ironical situations which decrease the trust in the narrator. In this case, it can be said that Homer does not criticize the patriarchal society which is based on binaries; however, Conrad criticizes, to some extent, the inequality in the patriarchal Eurocentric societies which marginalizes women as well as the colonized.

4.2 Speech Representation

Rimmon-Kenan holds that there are different types of speech representation in narrative fiction. She explains speech representation by referencing Plato as follows:

In the third book of Plato's *Republic* Socrates posits a distinction between two ways of rendering speech: diegesis and mimesis. The characteristic feature of diegesis is that 'the poet himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking'. In mimesis, on the other hand, the poet tries to create the illusion that it is not he who speaks. (107).

As Rimmon-Kenan underlines, in some texts the narrator acts as the single speaker as opposed to the one who does not interfere in the speeches of characters. Rimmon-Kenan explains the difference between diegesis and mimesis as follows: "Thus dialogue, monologue, direct speech in general would be mimetic, whereas indirect speech would be diegetic (a conclusion supported by the subsequent conversion of a Homeric scene of pure dialogue into diegesis)" (107). "Mimesis can be defined as "to represent or 'imitate' reality" (Rimmon-Kenan 107). On the other hand, "'Diegesis', [refers] to the indirect rendering of speech" (Rimmon-Kenan 107). In

¹² However, this does not mean that Conrad's text is critical of imperialism as an idea; but only of some brutal and blind commercial practices.

this case, it can be said that while “mimetic” narration “shows” the events, “diegetic” representation “tells” what happens. Rimmon-Kenan also explains that

‘Showing’ is the supposedly direct presentation of events and conversations, the narrator seeming to disappear (as in drama) and the reader being left to draw his own conclusions from what he 'sees' and 'hears'. ‘Telling’, on the other hand, is a presentation mediated by the narrator who, instead of directly and dramatically exhibiting events and conversations, talks about them, sums them up, etc. (108)

Rimmon-Kenan underlines that “diegetic” narration tends to be more compelling than “mimetic” narration because everything is summarized and talked about; nothing is left to be questioned by the reader.

In relation to “mimesis”, Rimmon-Kenan mentions Gérard Genette’s comment: “no text of narrative fiction can show or imitate the action it conveys, since all such texts are made of language” (109). Genette argues that language cannot show an action; however, Rimmon-Kenan explains how narrative works create “the illusion of mimesis” as follows: “Compare ‘John was angry with his wife’ with ‘John looked at his wife, his eyebrows pursed, . . . his fists clenched . . .’ The second account is more ‘dramatic’, more vivid because it gives more detailed information, reduces the narrator’s role to that of a ‘camera’” (109). In mimetic representation, the narrator is like a “camera” as Rimmon-Kenan calls it; s/he records what s/he sees.

There are differences between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in terms of speech representation. In *The Odyssey*, the narration is mimetic; the narrative is full of dialogues, monologues and detailed descriptions. “Direct discourse” is one of the tools that are used to make the work more mimetic. Rimmon-Kenan defines this term as follows: “A ‘quotation’ of a monologue or a dialogue. This creates the illusion of ‘pure’ mimesis” (111). In relation to *The Odyssey*, it can be said that almost the whole work is narrated through “direct discourse”. The dialogues have an important place in the work. For instance, Odysseus and Kirke’s first encounter is not told but shown through dialogue. Kirke turns Odysseus’s men into pigs and Odysseus comes to help them. Odysseus reflects the dialogue between them like a camera:

She stopped and I drew the sharp sword from its thigh-sheath / . . . / She yelled wildly and stopped to clasp me at both knees, / wailing and begging, the words with a feathery swiftness, / ‘What man are you, where is your city, who are your parents? / I’m seized by amazement: you drank my drug and were not charmed. / No one, no other man, has taken this drug and withstood it / after he sent it past the wall of his front teeth / . . . / Both of us quickly / should go to my bed together! Loving each other’ / . . . / But after she spoke that way I answered by asking, / ‘Goddess Kirke, how can you ask me for kindness / after you changed my men into pigs. (10.321-338)

Kirke, affected by his strength, offers Odysseus to be her lover; however, Odysseus questions her as she has turned his men into pigs. In fact, this scene lays bare that Odysseus does not foreground himself as the narrator but foregrounds the events; he helps his audience visualize the events because he does not comment on what happens or Kirke’s words. Instead of this he directly reports what Kirke says and does. The audience can visualize Kirke while she begs Odysseus or Odysseus while he draws his sword. Another lifelike scene in *The Odyssey* is Odysseus’s mimetic narrative of his encounter with Poseidon’s son Kuklops. Odysseus and his men go to Kuklops’s cave but he is not a hospitable person. Odysseus offers him wine. Odysseus narrates:

Then as the wine went round in the brain of the Kuklops, / I gave him a kindly answer at last to his question. / ‘Kuklops, you asked for my well-known name and I’ll tell you. / But give me the stranger’s present, just as you promised. / My name is No-one: No-one’s the name they have called me – my Mother and Father, and all the rest of my war-friends.’ / ‘I spoke that way but he answered cruelly and swiftly, ‘I’ll dine on No-one myself the last of his war-friends, / the rest go first – there’s a gift for a stranger’. (9.362-370)

Odysseus does not summarize the speech. In contrast to this, he shows it, revealing his attitude to Kuklops by the adverb “cruelly”, like a camera through a dialogue. He does not just say: “He said he would eat me” but gives Kuklops’s speech in quotation marks, just as it is. It should also be added that the characters speak in an epic because in an epic the narrative is more mimetic than diegetic. “For Plato, poetry and painting, epic and tragedy are essentially the same in their imitation of the real . . . It is, Aristotle argues, ‘the imitation that makes the poet’ . . . The objects that poetry depicts, [Aristotle] writes, are ‘men in action’ . . . Poets . . . imitate the voice of the character . . . in epic” (Potolsky 35-6). An epic includes dialogues or details because these make it seem more real; the poet imitates everything around him, including the

voice of a character. This generic feature also creates the difference between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*.

The monologues are also important in *The Odyssey* as they contribute to mimesis. For instance, in the following excerpt, Penelopeia is shown as begging for help from the Gods as her husband has disappeared and her son has decided to find him because of the suitors who disturb them: “Hear me, unfailing daughter of Zeus who carries the great shield! / If often shrewd Odysseus ever burned in your honor / the fat-rich thighs of heifers or ewes in our great hall, / remember them now. Save the son I have so loved! / Guard him against the crimes of overproud suitors” (4.762-766). Penelopeia begs Zeus to help her family. This monologue helps the narrative seem more lifelike. Moreover, the narrator’s role becomes closer to that of a camera: he does not foreground his voice to manipulate the reader to believe his “ideas,” but encourages readers to interpret what happens on their own. Odysseus is also shown by the extradiegetic narrator while speaking to himself about how to survive:

long-suffering, godlike Odysseus pondered. / Vexed and annoyed, he told his great-hearted spirit, / ‘ . . . Some deathless God may have woven / another trap. [Kalupso] told me, ‘Abandon your raft here.’ / I won’t obey, not yet. I saw with my own eyes / the land she said I’d escape to now and it’s far off. / I’ll do this, though, because it strikes me better: / long as the wood holds out where I tightly joined it, / I’ll stay right here. (5.354-361)

Odysseus thinks what to do to survive; he thinks whether he should do what he wants to do or pay attention to Kalupso’s warning about God’s traps. In fact, his monologue exemplifies how a person thinks aloud when s/he is in a difficult situation. Moreover, it also lays bare the mimetic narrative as the extradiegetic narrator “shows” what happens rather than summarizing or “telling” it.

The narrator in mimetic works also gives detailed information; i.e. s/he shows the “reality” like a camera. For instance, in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus as the narrator tells each and every detail about Kuklops’s appearance and behaviour when he blinds him:

[Kuklops] screamed outrageously now, the cave-stone echoed around us, / we scattered in dread as the Kuklops pulled at the hot shaft. / It came from his eye soaked with plenty of warm blood. / His hand flung it away from him. / Smarting and maddened, / he called out wildly for Kuklops, those who were

living /around him in caves on windy crags of the mountains. / They heard his cry, they hurried from this way and that way. / Standing around his cave they asked him what ailed him. / ‘How are you hurt, Poluphemos, yelling so loudly. (9.395-403)

Odysseus tells what happens to Kuklops in detail as if he is a camera that records what happens. The listeners can even hear how Kuklops screams or how his neighbours run to help him. Odysseus’s description of the underworld is also a mimetic one; he gives detailed information about the world of dead people which makes the reader feel like wandering through Hades’s world together with Odysseus:

So I saw Minos, a shining son of the great Zeus, / holding a scepter of gold, sitting and judging / the dead. Around that lord, pleading for fairness, they sat or stood by Aides’ house with its wide gates. / Next I saw the titanic shape of Orion / herding animals down through an asphodel meadow, / beasts he'd killed himself in the lonely mountains / wielding an all-bronze club unbroken forever. / I saw Tituos too, a son of the well-known Gaia. / He lay spread out – nine hundred feet on the ground there! / Vultures squatted on either side raking his liver, / beaks in his guts. / His hands kept failing to stop them. / He'd misused Leto, Zeus's beautiful woman / going to Putho once through a lovely place, Panopeus. / Yes and I saw Tantalos suffering strong pain, / standing in water that rose to his chin but no higher. / He looked so thirsty he longed to drink but he could not: / each time the old man stooped, wanting to drink it, / the water drained as if swallowed, making the ground look / black at his feet, some Power drying it all up” (11.568-587).

Odysseus mentions each and every detail that he captures: First he mentions Zeus’s son Minos while he judges the dead people, then he sees the giant Orion and the miserable Tituos who is eaten by vultures. Odysseus gives a lot of details such as the suffering of Tantalos whose punishment is not being able to reach water though he is quite thirsty. These details create the illusion that there is no narrator. The reader may feel that she/he is in the story on her/his own.

As opposed to the mimetic narrative in *The Odyssey*, in *Heart of Darkness* the narrative is mostly an example of diegesis in most of the parts. “Summary” can be seen also in *Heart of Darkness* as it is close to diegesis but “less ‘purely’ diegetic” (Rimmon-Kenan 110). Rimmon-Kenan defines it as follows: “Summary which to some degree represents, not merely mentions, a speech event in that it names the topics of conversation” and she exemplifies it through an excerpt from John Dos Passos’s *Nineteen-Nineteen*: “He stayed till late in the evening telling them about

miraculous conversions of unbelievers, extreme unction on the firing line, a vision of the young Christ he'd seen walking among the wounded in a dressingstation during a gas attack" (110). Passos's narrator summarizes instead of using dialogue. Rimmon-Kenan's following explanations are useful to explain the difference between the direct and indirect speech. She underlines that in direct discourse, the narrative is established through dialogues as in the example: "He said: 'I love her' but in indirect discourse the narrative is like the following example: "He said that he *loved* her" (113). In *Heart of Darkness*, there are also dialogues besides the indirect discourse; however, most of the time Marlow prefers summarizing what happens instead of "showing" the events. For instance, Marlow does not give much place to Kurtz's own voice which might have enabled the reader to hear the reason behind Kurtz's behaviour directly from him. He just summarizes that "Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things" (*HD* 2355). First Marlow mentions Kurtz according to his own perspective and then lets him speak a little. Kurtz says: "You show them you have in you something that is really profitable, and then there will be no limits to the recognition of your ability . . . Of course you must take care of the motives -- right motives -- always" (*HD* 2355). In fact, from Kurtz's sentences, the reader cannot reach any conclusion about his childish manners as he talks like a wise man. It is Marlow who imposes the reader to think in a certain way by not using direct speech but preferring summaries. In fact, Marlow's attitude as the compelling narrator is also shown by his self-revelation. He utters: "I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced" (*HD* 2330). He underlines that he has "a voice" which cannot be silenced. He silences any "noise" that suppresses his own voice which his diegetic narrative also shows.

Marlow's representation of women's and Africans' speech shows that he chooses to silence them which also shows that there is a parallelism between the representation of all the marginalized characters. For instance, he summarizes his dialogue with his aunt as well as her thoughts. His aunt mentions Marlow to her friends which the reader learns from "Marlow": "In the course of these coincidences it became quite plain to me I had been represented to the wife of the high dignitary,

and goodness knows to how many more people besides, as an exceptional and gifted creature -- a piece of good fortune for the Company -- a man you don't get hold of every day" (*HD* 2311). Marlow does not give his aunt's speech in quotation marks, i.e. he does not say that "my aunt said 'I have mentioned you to my friends'". Instead of this Marlow summarizes everything she tells him which the following excerpt also shows:

Good heavens! and I was going to take charge of a two-penny-half-penny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital -- you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug, got carried off her feet. She talked about 'weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways,' till, upon my word, she made me quite uncomfortable. I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit. (*HD* 2311)

Marlow says "my aunt made me feel uncomfortable"; however, the reader does not know how. Marlow only says why she made him feel like that. Another dialogue between Marlow and his aunt is also just summarized. Marlow visits her before he goes to Africa. He does not give his aunt's advice in quotation marks but silences her by saying: "I got embraced, told to wear flannel, be sure to write often, and so on -- and I left" (*HD* 2311-2). As a compelling narrator, he uses the phrase "and so on" to summarize her sentences which makes her speech also lose importance. The intradiegetic narrator does not give any place to the Intended's speech, either. The reader is informed that "She was in mourning" (*HD* 2360). She does not say so but the narrator summarizes her situation. Marlow always uses words like "seem" or "as though" as in the following examples. Marlow understands from the Intended's manners that she will mourn forever; he utters "she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever" (*HD* 2360). Interestingly, the intradiegetic narrator also tells what the female character plans to tell. He says that "She carried her sorrowful head as though she were proud of that sorrow, as though she would say, 'I -- I alone know how to mourn for him as he deserves.'" (*HD* 2360). Marlow, as the narrator, gives a summary of what the Intended means by her body language. In this case, it is not certain whether she will mourn forever or not. This is just Marlow's prediction. He also summarizes what she "really" says; Marlow informs that "the girl

talked, easing her pain in the certitude of my sympathy; she talked as thirsty men drink. I had heard that her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people” (*HD* 2361). Though she talks as “thirsty men drink”, the reader hears nothing. Marlow claims that he “heard” what she said; however, the reader does not because Marlow prefers to summarize her speech instead of letting her speak as in the case of his aunt. Marlow’s narrative is more diegetic than mimetic; he does not show what happens most of the time; he prefers telling it. For this reason, there are more summaries than dialogues in his narrative.

Similarly, the disorderly male characters’ speech is also summarized by the narrator; the reader cannot hear their voice, either. For instance, Marlow describes how Africans across the river as follows: “[The boat] was paddled by black fellows . . . They shouted, sang” (*HD* 2312). It remains unknown what they shout or sing. In the fire scene, too, an African man, who is accused of causing the fire, shouts because he is beaten severely. However, it is unknown what he says. Marlow summarizes that “A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly” (*HD* 2320). The African man may be shouting because of pain or he may be denying causing the fire and trying to prove his innocence. However, the narrator prefers summarizing this situation rather than giving place to the character’s speech. The implied author reveals a critical attitude towards this marginalization throughout the text; however, it should also be noted that, the overall design of the text does not help the marginalized characters gain voice, either.

To conclude, the chapter on “narration” shows that the characters and narrators in a text are actually the tools of the implied author to lay bare its own perspective which sometimes includes a message or a criticism. There are some differences between Homer’s and Conrad’s works in terms of the distance between the implied author and the intradiegetic narrator. In *The Odyssey*, the implied author seems to have the same ideology with his protagonist and the narrator Odysseus as there are no discrepancies in the text. Odysseus is not portrayed critically. However, in *Heart of Darkness*, the implied author seems to criticize Marlow and the people like him, who share the same western patriarchal perspective based on binary

oppositions, by indicating through ironic situations which reveal that the intradiegetic narrator is not entirely reliable.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

As pointed out by scholars such as Cedric Watts and Mark Turner, and in the preceding analytical chapters, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* enters into a dialogue with Homer's *The Odyssey*. In this study, I focused on the representation of female figures in each text with regard to three major aspects of narrative fiction – story, text, narration – to explore the gender politics informing Conrad's engagement with an ancient text like *The Odyssey* in the construction of these figures. The analysis of female figures was accompanied by an analysis of the representation of male protagonists to point out the significant differences between these characters and female figures in terms of their positioning in story, text and narration as well as by an analysis of disorderly male figures which, like women, emerge as peripheral figures in terms of their marginalized textual locations. The main argument of this thesis is that in both of these texts, central male characters / protagonists are shown as capable heroes but women as well as disorderly men / antagonists are represented as silent and immobile figures who are on the periphery of these men's stories; however, unlike Homer, Conrad creates some ironic situations to criticize such hierarchical portrayals of women and disorderly male figures. It can be held that he makes use of Homer's ancient epic both in the construction of his plot and characterization to show the ongoing marginalization of women in patriarchal western societies, which, in an interesting way, is articulated to the critique of colonial hierarchies between white men and Africans. Yet, at the same time, like Homer, Conrad, too, participates in the marginalization of women and disorderly men by attributing heroic characteristics only to the male protagonist and giving more textual place to central male characters. This study reveals that Conrad cannot be labeled merely as a racist and/or a sexist writer since he aims to reflect the

ongoing gender hierarchies and racism to criticize, to some extent, the western patriarchal society and colonialist practices.

In the chapter on “story”, it is revealed that the major story is about one man’s physical and psychological journey and the adventures he has gone through. The female characters are on the periphery of the story most of the time. In addition to that, except for the male protagonists, all of the characters are “types”; they are not “full” or “lifelike” characters. A “character” is constructed from similar, repetitive, contrastive and implicative acts. However, the marginalized characters have only one dominant feature, which makes them “types” instead of characters. In addition to that, while male protagonists are shown as masculine heroes who are capable of doing anything, the female characters are represented as fragile figures or beautiful objects, i.e. they are what men are not. They are shown as objects because they are represented most of the time as “passive” figures as opposed to active “heroes”; that’s why their acts are called “act of omission”. The environmental props also support their characterization; in both works women are associated with darkness and with the house, which suggests restriction. Interestingly, the marginalized male characters’ representation is similar to that of female characters: they are also shown as what male protagonists are not. Marginalized male characters are portrayed as animalistic figures most of the time and they are also associated with darkness, in both works, like female characters.

The chapter on “text” reveals that both in *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*, the male characters have larger textual space. In both texts, for instance, the narration of the male protagonists’ trivial acts takes much more space than that of the marginalized figures’ one entire year. Moreover, in this chapter, the analysis of the focalization shows that the perspective of marginalized characters is also left in the dark. The focalizers are only the male protagonists or the male characters who support them.

Resting merely on the similarities between *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness* in terms of the representation of female figures in “story” and “text”, one can argue that they both marginalize women and thereby reproduce patriarchal values. Yet, the chapter on “narration” argues that Conrad seems to make use of

Homer's *The Odyssey* to approach critically some patriarchal stereotypes. That is to say, this chapter helps understand the implied author's view. In Homer's work the narrator and implied author are in harmony; in other words, the overall design of the text supports the narrator's perspective which is based on patriarchal binaries. However, in *Heart of Darkness* there are ironic scenes which reveal the disagreement between the narrator and the implied author in terms of the positioning of the women and that of the marginalized men. Thus, the analysis of the distinction between the implied author and the intradiegetic narrator reveals that Conrad makes use of the ancient Greek epic to show the ongoing textual and social marginalization of women in the West. Yet, this does not mean that he wrote a feminist or a postcolonialist text which foregrounds the marginalized people's perspective. Conrad, himself, is responsible for the design of the text which has no female or African focalizer or a hero or heroine though he, partially, criticizes the intradiegetic narrator who has a Eurocentric and a patriarchal perspective.

This study is limited to *The Odyssey* and *Heart of Darkness*. What can be a possible topic for further research is a similar study of Conrad's other works of fiction such as *Under Western Eyes* and *The Secret Agent* to explore the politics informing Conrad's employment of Greek myths in these novels. For instance, in his *Under Western Eyes*, there are traces of Greek myths: the protagonists Razumov and Haldin resemble Apollo and Dionysus in Greek myths. Razumov's name means reason and he tries to be reasonable like Apollo. He cannot meet his lover like Apollo who cannot meet Daphne. On the other hand, Haldin, the revolutionist, is described as in trance like Dionysus. Moreover, Haldin is not loved by the governors like Dionysus who is not loved by most of the Olympian Gods. As for *The Secret Agent*, Stevie, for instance, the mentally disabled brother of Winnie, resembles Icarus in Greek mythology. Icarus does not obey his father's rules; Stevie also cannot be a proper member of society in terms of the Father in Lacanian terms. Both of them become victims in the end. Moreover, Winnie is described as fatal by the revolutionist Ossipon; i.e. the lady becomes Medusa again. Conrad also makes a resemblance between Ossipon and Apollo or he resembles a cabman to Silenus, the tutor of Dionysus. The reasons behind these resemblances can be explored as a research subject, too.

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Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: