



# Peripheries of Narration and Spatial Poetics in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*

## Wilkie Collins'in *Aytaş*ı Adlı Romanında Anlatının Sınır Çizgileri ve Uzamsal Yazınbilim

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores narratological aspects and tools that are employed in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* within the framework of a postcolonial narratology. Postcolonial narratology directs its attention to the representation of the peripheral and the marginalized within the scope of narratorial investigation. There will be some considerations regarding the representation of focal and voiceless characters, the function of the implied author, authorial audience as well as multiple narrators or representing voices. The deployment of multilocality in *The Moonstone* brings forth the issue of marginalization predicated on colonizer/colonized relationships. Spatial poetics in the novel functions in a way in which despite the myriad of settings that constitute the story, narrative discourse privileges some places while putting the others into the peripheries. The concept of space in the narrative proves to be active, fluid and purposeful rather than being passive, static or innocent as in the status of a background setting. Alongside temporal-spatial aspects, narratological presentation of the characters also plays a fundamental role in relation to power dynamics and the issue of representation. In the same vein, it is manifest that not only the description of space and characters but also the placement of multiple narrators and authorial audience concurrently contribute to the treatment of imperial ideologies. As part of the implied author's scheme, the narrators' act of narration is flawed and ideologically loaded rather than consistent or neutral. All these narratological clues in the novel attest to the idea that narration is always a discursive act.

**Keywords:** Multilocality, narratology, spatial poetics, unreliable narrator, Wilkie Collins

### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, postkolonyal anlatıbilim çerçevesinde, Wilkie Collins'in romanında varolan anlatıbilimsel yönleri ve araçları, temsil edilme konusuna odaklanarak keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Postkolonyal anlatıbilim, anlatısal inceleme kapsamında dikkatini perifer ve ötekileştirilmiş olana yönelterek anlatının iç ve dış sınırlarını sorgular. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmada odak merkezinde yer alan karakterlerin temsil edilmesi ile, çoklu anlatıcılar veya temsilci seslerin yanısıra zımnı yazarın ve yazarsal okuyucunun işlevleri hakkında bazı görüşlere yer verilecektir. *Aytaş*'nda çoklu-yerelliğe yer verilmesi, sömürgeci/sömürgeleşmiş arasındaki ilişkileri temel alan marjinalleşme konusunu öne çıkarmaktadır. Romanda, uzamsal yazınbilim doğrultusunda yerlerin çokluğuna



rağmen, anlatı söylemi bunların bir kısmına öncelik vererek diğerlerini dış sınırlara yerleştirmektedir. Anlatıda uzam kavramı, hikayenin arka planını oluşturan yer unsuru gibi pasif, durağan ya da hilesiz olmaktan ziyade aktif, akışkan ve bir amaca yöneliktir. Anlatının zamansal-uzamsal yönlerinin yanısıra, karakterlerin anlatıbilimsel sunumları da temsil konusu ve güç dinamikleri açısından son derece önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Benzer şekilde, açıkça görülmektedir ki, yalnızca mekan ve karakterlerin betimlemesi değil, aynı zamanda çoklu anlatıcılar ile yazarsal okuyucuların yerleşimi de *Aytası*'ndaki emperyal ideolojilerin işlenmesine ortak katkı sağlamaktadır. Anlatıcılar, zımnî yazarın tasarısı kapsamında, yaptıkları anlatım işinde tutarlı veya tarafsız olmaktan ziyade kusurlu ve ideolojik olarak konumlanmışlardır. Romandaki tüm bu anlatıbilimsel göstergeler anlatının daima söylemsel bir iş olduğunun kanıtıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uzamsal yazınbilim, anlatıbilim, güvenilmez anlatıcı, çoklu-yerellik, Wilkie Collins

## Introduction

Postcolonial narratologies have the potential to bring what is conventionally underrepresented or entirely ignored in narratological studies to the fore, and it has shifted attention from temporal to spatial approaches in narrative studies. While a temporal approach may enable sufficient tools for analysing the analeptic/proleptic time-shifts in *The Moonstone*, as in any other work of fiction, thematic or ideological concerns of the novel can be elaborated more efficiently by focusing on space politics that is an integral element of the interpretation of the novel. Drawing attention to “Bakhtin’s insistence in the 1920s and 1930s on *topos* as coconstituent of narrative along with *chronos*”, Susan Stanford Friedman claims that “prominent narrative theorists from Paul Ricoeur and Gerard Genette to Peter Brooks mute or altogether delete considerations of space in their analysis of narrative discourse and narrative as a mode of human cognition” (2005, p. 192-3). In conventional narrative studies, then, space is often regarded as either “the ‘description’ that interrupts the flow of temporality or as the ‘setting’ that functions as static background for the plot, or as the ‘scene’ in which the narrative events unfold in time” (Friedman, 2005, p. 192-3). On the other hand, fortunately space has gained an eminent place in postcolonial narratology as a geopolitical dimension, hence an active, dynamic and meaning-generating participant of narrative discourse. From this vantage point, the narrative analysis of the novel under scrutiny here is based on spatial poetics rather than temporal considerations.

Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1848), set in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, revolves around the mysterious loss of a precious yellow gem, which gives the novel its title. The moonstone has been captured by John Herncastle during his assignment as part of the British Army in India, and brought to Lady Verinder’s country estate in Yorkshire. The diamond has been given to Lady Verinder’s daughter, Rachel Verinder, on her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, only to be stolen at the night of the party. Even though the thief of the stone is not discovered until the very end, the arrival of three Brahmin priests makes them the main suspect of the crime. As a generic convention of the detective novel, most characters take their turn in narration to give their own account of the events surrounding the loss of the moonstone until the denouement in which it turns out that the crime has been committed under the influence of opium by an unexpected character.

Collins’s preoccupation with form has become a focal point in the novel’s critical reception as this is commonly regarded as the author’s major contribution to the English

novel. In this sense, formal aspects of *The Moonstone* have received critical attention, especially in terms of its narrative discourse. Collins makes use of multiple narrators that often conflict with each other in their account of the disappearance of the precious stone from Lady Verinder's house. Adrian S. Wisnicky (2007) sees the novel's power as an outcome of the plot and multiple-narrator structure (p. 36-7). Much of the narration by the "detectives" or "Subject Who Knows" tends to be misleading, which renders the narrator(s) unreliable (p. 39). Winifred Hughes (2005) also focuses on unreliability by differentiating between the omniscient narrator of Victorian realist fiction and eruption of the narrative authority in the sensation novel of the same era: Collins's "strategic deployment of multiple, sometimes conflicting first-person narrators [...] undermined the whole notion of omniscience or any single trustworthy interpretation of events" (p. 269). Yet, the reason for the unreliability of the narrator(s) must also be given attention in order to have a deeper insight into the postcolonial politics in the novel.

Although some critics delve into colonial themes and ideas in the novel, their investigation lacks a thorough analysis of the interplay between imperial ideologies and the employment of certain narrative tools either to conceal or reveal them. These critics suggest a position of "invasion-scare" or "reverse colonization" in the novel in which "the presence of the Indians foregrounds suppressed British fear" as they "activate a form of imperialist panic" and "undermine Britain's hitherto self-contained and secure national identity" (Wisnicky, 2007, pp. 46-47). In a similar criticism of the novel, Cannon Schmitt (2005) argues that "*The Moonstone* moots the question of the effects of empire at home" (p. 18). Focusing on "the function of empire in the production of wealth", the critic pinpoints the material value attached to the jewel, despising its spiritual value for the Indian natives: "A synecdoche for all imperial commodities, the Moonstone's overwhelming beauty is matched only by the overwhelming disturbance of English domestic life to which it gives rise" (p. 18). Anette Cozzi (2010) also points at the issue of reverse colonization which may occur due to knowledgeable, hence dominating position of the foreigner: "Roles have reversed; it is now the Englishman who is something of a simpleton and the inscrutable foreigner who is not only complex and knowing [...] but also threatening to dominate his self-proclaimed masters" (p. 117). In these approaches, the effect of the colonial over the home is foregrounded, leaving the hidden colonial ideologies implicit in certain narrative elements of the novel uncovered.

As shown in the preceding paragraphs that refer to diverse approaches to *The Moonstone*, there has been little or no recourse to narratological models which require

more complication in terms of considering the role of characterization, narrators and the implied author as well as the authorial audience to furnish the imperial theme of the narrative. Therefore, in order to read the novel with a different light, this paper aims to explore spatial aspects and narrative tools that are in use in Collins's work with reference to the postcolonial narratological considerations intermingled with rhetorical approaches at times. In the scope of this study, thus, spatial transpositions will be analysed with the purpose of relating these processes to colonizer/colonized relationships. Furthermore, such classical devices as narrator and point of view will be restructured in tune with the postcolonial concerns of the analysis. There will also be some in-depth considerations in the representation of focal and voiceless characters, function of the implied author, authorial audience as well as multiple narrators or representing voices.

### **A Postcolonial Narratological Approach to *The Moonstone***

Drawing on spatial perspectives of narratology and bringing the multiplicity of places in *The Moonstone* under focus can enable certain underrepresented aspects of the novel to be featured. To this end, there will be a reading of the novel here by adopting a postcolonial viewpoint, whereby revealing narrative clues as to the representation of the idea of empire in both the main text and the peripheral sections like the prologue as well as the epilogue. In Gerald Prince (2005)'s sketch of postcolonial narratology, which requires "wearing a set of postcolonial lenses to look at narrative", the focus of examination is the correspondence between such postcolonial matters as hybridity, power relations, otherness, diversity and their narratological representation in a text (p. 373). Through appropriating such a postcolonial perspective, the aim is thus to revise and add to extant tools and conceptions of classical narratology. In fact, postcolonial narratology foregrounds what is underemphasized in other narratologies, and hence contributes to the intensification of such studies with the help of spatial poetics or the investigation of space as an integral element of narratological analysis. Prince brings up this emphasis on topicality in postcolonial narratology, suggesting "narratologists consider whether space is explicitly mentioned and described, prominent or not, stable or changing, perceiver-dependent or on the contrary, autonomous, characterized by its position or by its constituents" (p. 375). In line with these theories, it can be claimed that the multitopicality is an indispensable narratological tool that incorporates postcolonial concepts into the thematic aspects of the sensation/detective novel, which conventionally tends to focus on mysteriousness and the evasive nature

of truth and perceptions. Thus, analysis of geopolitics and topicality in Collins's novel is essential for a true appreciation of its main concerns.

The deployment of multitopicality in *The Moonstone* brings forth the issue of marginalization in relation to colonialism. There are a multitude of spaces in the novel that is set in such distant places as Yorkshire, London, Frizinghall and some Indian cities. However, not the multiplicity itself but the dominance of ideologies attached to each and every place is noteworthy. The reception of the moonstone's theft by the characters is first accentuated by Gabriel Betteredge, the house steward in service to Lady Verinder, as he is asked by Franklin Blake, Lady Verinder's nephew, to give a full account of the details regarding the diamond's disappearance from the house. Thus, Betteredge functions as one of the main voices in the narrative, representing the dominating position spatially. Betteredge's understanding of the whole incident regarding the loss of the precious moonstone is almost summarized in a single statement: "If it was right, here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond" (Collins, 1982, p. 32). *Here* deictically marks the main setting as England, signalling the other as *devilish*, as something to disturb the peacefulness of their *house* (emphasis added). Moreover, he self-interrogates: "Who ever heard the like of it – in the nineteen century, mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution?" (p. 33). The country centralized in the narrative is a site of progress, reason, blessings, and constitution, thus powerful enough (at least for the narrator) to cope with such nonsensical disturbances brought about by the other. This main narrating voice can, then, be considered as the mouthpiece of the idea of Englishness. In this partial positioning, England is regarded as the "home" country, which is characterized as the home of orderliness and the centralized power, and which presupposes a self-justified role to take its civilization to distant territories. In this sense, there is a power dimension implicit in the deictic use of *here* and *there*.

Multitopicality is a significant element of the narrative that gives clues into the colonial idea of boundary-crossing. Prince maintains: "Given the boundaries, crossings, transfers, dispersions, marginalizations, decks and holds, fields and jungles, created by or related to colonialism, [postcolonial narratology] might pay particular attention to the extent of multitopicality – here (and here and here) as opposed to there (and there and there) or to somewhere, everywhere, nowhere" (p. 375). This can be clearly seen in the colonial enterprises of Colonel John Herncastle, a soldier who has fought for the English army in India in 1799. Colonel Herncastle crosses boundaries to explore the

remote regions to see whether he can do well there (as they are too strict for *him* in his own country's army) since he is himself as isolated, outcast as the other. To ensure his acceptance in his home country, he goes to India "to try a little active service", and the result is "a matter of bravery" through which he regains his reputation "at the taking of Seringapatam" (Collins, 1982, p. 29). Here and there dichotomy is manifest in this overwhelming ideology: invading (*taking* is another deictic word) the territories of the other is a matter of courage, honour at the expense of depriving the colonial other of its own land. It is this positioning along with the colonial discourse that is revealed in this part in relation to the character of Herncastle, whose actions are paradoxically celebrated at home (in England) and criticized by the implied author who depicts him as a dishonest, self-seeking man who is trying to take advantage of the diamond to harm Lady Verinder and her family. He is portrayed as dishonourable since he has stolen something that is regarded as sacred by the Indians, and uses this precious stone as a means of malicious deed in the belief that it will bring misfortune to Lady Verinder's daughter, Rachel.

Prince (2005) further calls attention in postcolonial narratological studies to "the degree of heterotopicality, to the kinds of mixtures, and inconsistencies, of gaps, breaches, and cracks within spaces or between them, to the nature of frames or limits, and to spatial alignments along such semantic axes such as natural and artificial, familiar or strange, independent or colonized, rhizomatic, cybernetic, chaotic" (p. 375). There are some narrative elements that function to underline the geographical distinctions. When Rachel Verinder, the main character of the novel and another representing voice of the mainstream ideology, receives the diamond as her birthday present, she is "delighted" to learn that she is safe in England, but in danger in India as the new owner of the precious stone (Collins, 1982, p. 63). Why does she feel delighted in the face of danger? Is it because she knows that she belongs in this civilized and safe country, and because she has no plans of visiting more uncivilized, perilous parts of the world, so is away from danger? The answer can be found in Mieke Bal (1997)'s conceptualization of the inner/outer space distinction: "Both inner and outer space function [...] as a frame. Their opposition gives both spaces their meaning" (p. 134). This explicates Rachel's senses of inner and outer space, both of which are imbued with meaning for her, culminating in her sense of security as she assumes an inner position. In fact, such minor clues as to the characterization of the places in the narrative manifest how multitemporality functions.

In *The Moonstone*, spatial poetics work so well that despite the myriad of settings that constitute the story, narrative discourse functions as privileging some places while putting the others into the peripheries. This is in line with Said (1994)'s idea of "contrapuntal reading", in which he emphasizes the diversified perception of places in the British novel where "we have [...] a slowly built up picture with England – socially, politically, morally charted and differentiated in immensely fine detail – at the center and a series of overseas territories connected to it at the peripheries" (p. 74). GoGwilt (2000) also states that in Collins's most novels, "the social space of the English country house provides a prime location for plotting troubled family legacies" (p. 62). This is also the case with *The Moonstone*, whose main events take place in the Verinder estate located in Yorkshire. Colonial territories of India remain not only out of focus in the story but also outside the borders of the mainstream narrative section of the novel as they are merely visible in the prologue and the epilogue. In a parallel way, Levine (2008) suggests: "Sensation novels are usually not set in exotic places or distant times: they are of the moment, this England, these country estates, these towns, although the exotic on occasion erupts into the familiar landscape, almost becoming a figure for what lies beneath the surface of the respectable world" (p. 108). This structural marginalization of space in the novel indicates the overall ideological representation of the colonial. Both the prologue and the epilogue set in India are almost the same length, considerably shorter than the main text whose setting is England, which is another manifestation of the colonial discourse in the novel. Similarly, what is taking place in India, the theft, at the outset causes disorder in the course of the narrative, which is, however, resolved in England in the epilogue. This shows that peace and order are restored in both countries at denouement in parallel with the implications of colonial idea in which English rationality is key to civilization.

According to Said's claim as regards the notion of "abroad", it is a place "felt vaguely and ineptly out to be there, or exotic and strange, or in some way or other 'ours' to control, to trade in 'freely,' or to suppress when the natives were energized into overt military or political resistance" (1994, p. 74). This is what Colonel Herncastle does; he takes an active participation in the invasion of Seringapatam, and then takes possession of the sacred jewel for reasons of his own fancy. For Cozzi (2010), India is "a place where England's surfeit of second sons can find a purpose and a home, where the unknown can reinvent themselves and the fallen rise again" (p. 107). As in Herncastle's case, the foreign terrain is in the disposal of the English gentleman to actualize himself. There is another character, Mr Luker, whose trade is moneylending and obtaining "oriental



treasures" (Collins, 1982, p. 272). This also reveals the imperial's clear authority on the colonial goods. The colonized territory is interminably seen as a source of wealth, and this ideology is reflected in the way places are narrated. Levine (2008) suggests that "[t]he mystery to be solved in sensation novels is likely to be about efforts to acquire money" (p. 116). These material-motivations on the part of the main characters are reflected through spatial politics by introducing the colony as a territory of obtaining monetary value.

The primacy of temporality over spatial dimensions in narratological study is pointed out by Susan Stanford Friedman (2005) in her argument of spatial poetics:

[S]pace is not passive, static, or empty; it is not, as it is in so much narrative theory, the (back)-ground upon which events unfold in time. Instead, in tune with current geographical theories about space as socially constructed sites that are produced in history and change over time, the concept of narrative as a spatial trajectory posits space as active, mobile, and "full". (p. 195)

Her conception of how space constitutes a narrative is in fact traceable in *The Moonstone*, which makes use of the spatial dynamics to such an effective level that the setting is in no way "passive, static, or empty" in the novel. Each and every place configures an active participation in the social and political construction of meaning in relation to certain geographical terrains. Constant moves from a city to another in the novel allow a progression in the narrative itself, as well. Every move signals the revelations of further details and findings with regard to the loss of the diamond; hence it is indispensable for the narrative progression to take place. However, the significance of the space is not only ontological; it is not that shift of space is solely needed narratologically to provide the background for actions and complications in the story to be handled through these shifts. On the other hand, change of setting from the central (England) to the marginal (India) in *The Moonstone* signifies more than a simple spatial or transformative practice. What is in question here is the exploitation of bordering lines between home and the distant setting in order to underline their contrast. For Friedman (2005), "all stories require borders and border crossings, that is, some form of intercultural contact zones, understanding 'culture' in its broadest sense" (p. 196). In this respect, this act of border crossing in the novel is more of an intercultural problem that needs attention. The transposition of the precious gem from India to England represents its

unequal reception in these two different cultures: what is spiritually significant in the oriental society is received as an object or possession that promises a wealth and has a capital significance in England. The fact that the moonstone is precious is perceived quite distinctively either as a spiritual or economic value by its Indian and British followers.

Spatial aspect is seen as essential to the narrative as temporal structures as reflected in the Bakhtinian term "chronotope", a concept that implies that time becomes visible only in and through narrative space. Friedman (2005) calls for a need for an interactively temporal-spatial approach to narratology: "We need a *topochronic* narrative poetics, one that foregrounds *topos* in an effort to restore an interactive analysis of time with space in narrative discourse" (p. 194). This concept of chronotope must be taken as an indispensable tool in the narratological analysis of *The Moonstone* to view the interrelationship between time and space as well as their incorporation into the colonial theme. In the course of the narrative, the relationship between time and space differs depending on whether India or England is at the center of narrative discourse. Prince (2005) talks about "heterochronology" and "multichronology" that are of use in postcolonial approaches to temporal analyses of narratives, and brings attention to diversified nature of time: "straight, cyclical, or looping, regressive as opposed to progressive, flowing irregularly instead of regularly, subjective rather than objective, characterized by duration or by date, [...] close or distant from deictic focuses" (p. 375). All these binaries underscore the contradictory relationship between England and its colony in the novel: as indicated in one part of each pair, time associated with India is cyclical, looping, regressive, flowing irregularly, subjective, characterized by duration and distant from deictic focuses while temporal regularity of England (as straight, progressive, regular, objective, marked-by-date, in close deictic position) is also apparent in its cultural order and regularity. The contrast between temporal organization of the prologue where the main events take place in India and that of the main body of the narrative that recounts the pursuit of the moonstone in England is noteworthy. This initial part of the narrative that contextualizes the history and the significance of the moonstone is marked by frequent time/space shifts: ellipses of generations-laps, oscillation between places where a set of the most ancient stories of the Yellow Diamond (Moonstone) take place, and a range of narratives relating the Storming of the Seringapatam and the theft of the famous stone by John Herncastle. The prologue has a circular, shifting and irregular pattern of temporal order whereas the nature of time in the main narrative is linear, regular and demarcated by precise dates. In this respect,

the portrayal of time in both sections is closely linked with different perceptions of time by the British and its colonies. Delineating time in diversified ways in relation to different societies gives rise to the marginalization of the colonial as strange, chaotic, and ambiguous just like their temporal enactment in the narrative.

Alongside temporal-spatial aspects in narratives that incite a power display between the subjects and objects of representation, narratological presentation of characters also plays a fundamental part in relation to these power dynamics. As issues of hybridity, otherness, and diversity are integral to postcolonial approaches to narrative studies, paying attention to the positioning of characters as central or secondary, as voiced or muted, as representing or represented is of utter importance in this narratological study. Prince (2005) views this preoccupation with characters as another aim of postcolonial narratology:

[A] postcolonial narratology would aim to account for the kind of characters inhabiting these spatial and temporal settings and to supply instruments for the exploration and description of their significance, their complexity, the stability of their designation and identity, or the actantial slots they occupy and the actantial functions they fulfill. In addition, it would allow for the study of their perceptions, their utterances, thoughts, and feelings, their motivations, their interactions [...] particularly pertinent features like (formerly and newly) colonizing or colonized, race or ethnicity, otherness and hybridity, collaboration, (forced) assimilation, resistance, or ambivalence, and, obviously, linguistic and narrative capacity. (p. 375-6)

Character analysis, as in this description, pertains not only to an in-depth depiction of characters and their external realities but also to their interrelationship with each other in terms of the hierarchy in their narrative roles as well as in their linguistic representation. The characters in *The Moonstone* are pictured in a way that makes all these features explicit in the narrative. Primacy of British characters is central to the narrative that is structured through their *vision* and their *voice*. On the other hand, their Indian counterparts are never granted a part in the narrative to account for their own thoughts, their motives, and their own story.

The predominant point of view throughout the narrative is Western vision, and those who are underrepresented are the three Indian priests whose focalization is

never available to the audience. The indigenous character can neither focalize nor speak in the narrative space. According to Fludernik (2008), “the natives function as flat characters and never acquire the scope of agency, articulation, and intellectual or emotional expression that are necessary for a protagonist” (p. 269). Apart from the fact that the protagonists are British, the little boy accompanying three Indians obtains the sympathy of their secret observers (Betteredge’s daughter and another maid girl) for the very fact that he is English, “pretty and delicate-looking” (Collins, 1982, p. 17). On the contrary, the Indians are exotic, far from being fathomable; they play “extraordinary tricks” (p. 17). One of their extraordinariness lies in their capability for fortune-telling: they make the little boy look into the future by pouring “some black stuff, like ink, into the palm of the boy’s hand”, then “touching the boy’s head, and making signs over it in the air” (p. 18). What they want to get out of this “catechism” is to foretell Blake’s arrival at Rachel’s house together with the diamond. For the rational Western narrator/character, this magic-work does not make any sense: “not only that the Indians had been lurking about after the Diamond, but also that they were actually foolish enough to believe in their own magic” (p. 47). They act oddly; they speak unintelligibly in their own language; they play magic; even implicitly they manipulate the little English boy, and most of all, they are on some intrigue plans. In one of the few places where they make an appearance in the narrative, they are turned into a scapegoat.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983) distinguishes two types of textual representation of characters: “direct definition” and “indirect representation” (p. 59). Throughout the narrative, the Indian priests are referred to as “jugglers,” “rogues,” and “vagabonds” and these nouns uttered to designate them fit into direct definition, for which Rimmon-Kenan asserts: “Definition is akin to generalization and conceptualization. It is also both explicit and supra-temporal. Consequently, its dominance in a given text is liable to produce a rational, authoritative and static impression” (1983, p. 60). Therefore, this definitive form of character narration gives an authoritative power to its articulator. They are more of a stereotype rather than characters as Mr Murthwaite, who has insightful knowledge about Indian culture due to his frequent visits to this country, explains three Indian priests’ potential for murder: “In the country those men came from, they care just as much about killing a man, as you care about emptying the ashes out of your pipe” (Collins, 1982, p. 70). A definitive approach to these minor characters generates generalizations, rendering them as static and stereotypical bodies that lack any kind of depth. Apart from direct definition, indirect representation

of the Indians functions in the same way by turning them into stereotypes. A character is displayed or exemplified, rather than defined, in four different ways: action, speech, external appearance and environment (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p. 61-6). These are all employed as narrative strategies to serve the purpose of estranging these characters; their actions are narrated to display them as chaotic and ambiguous; likewise, their speech entails mysterious elements, and their physical appearance is already marginalized as dark and oriental. Their environment, as discussed in relation to the idea of space, finds little expression in the narrative, but whenever it comes into view, its exotic nature is manifest just as the characters inhabiting it.

Throughout the novel, the main narrator, Betteredge makes a number of references to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, another novel with indirect references to colonial subject matter. Betteredge treats the work as his bible to which he can consult whenever he has a conflict: "I have found it my friend in need in all the necessities of this mortal life. When my spirits are bad –*Robinson Crusoe*. When I want advice –*Robinson Crusoe*" (Collins, 1982, p. 9). His admiration of the book is to an extreme extent; he has worn out six copies, and receives the seventh by his lady as a present. He writes: "The man who doesn't believe in *Robinson Crusoe*, after *that*, is a man with a screw loose in his understanding, or a man lost in the mist of his own self-conceit!" (p. 71). Implicit in Betteredge's obsessive attachment to the other colonial novel is his support of the consolidated idea of British imperialism in Defoe's work. In fact, there are several affinities between the two works of fiction: first, the invasion of a distant territory, then overtaking possessions there. Robinson's making Friday his servant (literally owning him by giving him a name not of his own native culture), and his approach to money are reminiscent of Collins's main characters' materialistic attitude towards the sacred jewel. In Defoe's novel, only available vision is Robinson's; like the Indians we never see through the man Friday's focal position. In a similar manner, when Robinson encounters for the first time with someone's footprint on the shore, he tries to rationalize, ending up with the conclusion that it is the Devil: "Sometimes I fancied it must be the Devil; and reason joined in with me upon this supposition. [...] Satan should take human shape upon him in such a place" (Defoe, 1994, p. 153). Not only the footprints, but also the native islanders mean nothing beyond the Devil for him: "I was fearful of seeing them as of seeing the Devil himself" (p. 164). Although his initial reaction to the other is of fear, he then takes control of everything on the island. Likewise, the moonstone is named the Devil/the devilish Indian diamond due to its unknown and mysterious nature; however, like Robinson's island, it is ultimately overtaken and made known. This

intertextual reference to colonial enterprise in a way helps legitimize the occupation of the other's land as well as free trade of things and people.

Not only characterization but also the intended audience is part of investigation of postcolonial narratology, which aims to put the question of the authorial reader into a political vantage point. This consideration is in alignment with Said (1994)'s claim that Western writers primarily had a Western audience in their head until the mid-twentieth century (p. 66). This is also what seems to be the case in *The Moonstone*, where the implied author considers a reader inclined to view the loss of the diamond with a partial perspective, demanding its recovery for the sake of Rachel's wellbeing as well as Franklin Blake's acquittal. Taking side with the central characters, and psychologically distancing themselves from the three strange Indians, the audience is politically positioned in the colonizer's side. As the implied author is voiceless and only discernible via his narrator, Betteredge's audience must be envisioned. His idea of his audience evinces that the implied reader is acculturated, civilized and ideally Western: "I have of appealing gentle reader" (Collins, 1982, p. 29). His occasional direct addresses to his audience are actually an attempt to align them with his own point of view. He frequently focuses on the commonalities between himself and his reader: "*Nota bene*: I am an average good Christian, when you don't push my Christianity too far. And all the rest of you –which is a great comfort –are, in this respect, much the same as I am" (p. 156). As this is seen as a British story, not Indian, the implied reader cannot resist adopting the centrally-oriented standpoint as well as the desire to perceive the moonstone as an object of fortune, ignoring its religious value for the other culture. In conclusion, people from colonies are merely present in the narrative solely as characters, not as the implied audience.

The dominant voice that consolidates the authority in *The Moonstone* is embodied in the use of multiple narrators, none of whom are members of the non-western society. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) points out that "the norms of the text" is mostly determined by the dominant narrator and focalizer: "[T]he ideology of the narrator-focalizer is usually taken as authoritative, and all other ideologies in the text are evaluated from this 'higher' position" (p. 81). Among eleven narrators of the novel, there are only two narrators (Ezra Jennings and Mr Murthwaite) who are of hybrid origins, and apart from them, none of the Indians are voiced on the narrating level. The implied author as a principle is located in an ideological position by assuming a power that gives him the opportunity of controlling the story, and providing his narrators with an autonomous and consolidating

voice. According to Said (1994), the novel genre entails “a highly regulated plot mechanism and an entire system of social reference that depends on the existing institutions of bourgeois society, their authority and power” (p. 71). It is the implied author’s choices, then, that permit Colonel Herncastle to claim overseas prospects by taking the moonstone with him to home, granting a right to the Verinder family to hold possession of the gem that originally belongs to Indians, to voice only selected characters rather than others.

Throughout the narrative, the implied author’s principles reign, and they are voiced through the main narrator Betteredge. Whatever narrated by him remains superficially on the surface of events revolving around the family members located in Yorkshire, disregarding the other side of the coin, which is the angle of the three Indians. Betteredge once admits that he has totally forgotten the Indians in his narration during his preoccupation with the other events: “The Indians had gone clean out of my head (as they have, no doubt, gone clean out of yours. I didn’t see much use in stirring that subject again” (Collins, 1982, p. 128). In his narrative, the Indians are completely marginalized, only referred to when they are of use for the main subject. Obviously, they are ignored not only as secondary characters, but also in the narrative discourse. Whatever happens on their side during their imprisonment is left out, entirely excluded from the narrative as ellipses. This colonial suppression is institutionalized through British laws, as well; the three Indians are taken captive for a week with the excuse of a minor offense that would not normally bring them to the court. The narrator takes this position of the legislation positively: “Every human institution (Justice included) will stretch a little, if you only pull it the right way. The worthy magistrate was an old friend of my lady’s –and the Indians were ‘committed’ for a week” (p. 79). Furthermore, Betteredge’s voice reflects the dominant vision regarding the moonstone as “The Devil (or the Diamond)” (p. 67). Obviously, it is far from being a devil for the Indians; it is demonized by the British household in that it is believed to bring trouble rather than fortune. Subsequent disapproval of what is insistently suggested by Betteredge makes him an unreliable narrator. In other words, what he claims to be true is in utter clash with what really seems to happen. However, the question is whether his unreliability as a narrator is primarily because of the fallibility of his vision or due to an intentional fallacy on the part of the implied author. Betteredge himself has self-awareness as to his contradictory narration; at the end of his part, he reveals: “You will soon be rid, now, of me and my contradictions” (p. 169). This evinces that his unreliability is not due to his ignorance, but it derives from author’s intentions.

This question of unreliability must be handled not only with reference to a rhetorical approach but also with the use of a postcolonial lens in this particular novel as the narration is laden with prejudices although the narrators claim to be committed to truthfulness. In the first place, the right to narrate is a source of power: "The struggle for power in the novel becomes a struggle for the control of texts" (Hughes, 2005, p. 269). In fact, it is the implied author's scheme to set each and every narrator in contradiction with each other. For Katleen Wall (1994), the implied author has different reasons to make use of an unreliable narrator. The main narrator, Betteredge, fits in the category of ordinarily unreliable narrator "whose world view, predispositions, ignorance, or absent-mindedness determine in some way what he or she notices, and how he or she interprets certain situations" (p. 22). His internalized vision of British supremacy informs his narration. Wall (1994) maintains that "an essential indication of the narrator's unreliability is frequently found in the discourse of narration, in the verbal habits of the narrator" (p. 20). This explains how Betteredge's unreliability is discerned by the reader. It is not the story itself told by him, but the discourse within which it is detailed is put into questioning. Even though every narrator (including Betteredge) is instructed to keep their narratives within the limits of their first-hand experience, relaying only the events relevant to the loss of the diamond, none of them seem to adhere to this imperative. In particular, Betteredge contradictorily asserts that his "plain statement of facts" has brought the reader out of the dark, and in the end, apologizes for his irrelevancy: "Please to excuse the faults of this composition –my talking so much of myself, and being too familiar [...] with you" (Collins, 1982, p. 180). James Phelan (2007) categorizes unreliability in "three main axes of communication": "the axis of facts and events ([...] misreporting or underreporting), the axis of understanding/perception ([...] misreading or misinterpreting / underreading or underinterpreting) and the axis of values ([...] misregarding or miscalculating / underregarding or underevaluating)" (p. 224). Betteredge's narrative is basically reliable in terms of reporting facts and events; yet, he seems unreliable in terms of his perceptions and values by misinterpreting and misregarding things he narrates. Another discursive mark to his unreliable narration is his disposal of Indian practice of fortune-telling, and again contradictorily employing a similar act of prophecy himself. In accordance with his view of *Robinson Crusoe's* infallibility, he believes that whatever he reads from the book randomly by opening a page, and then pointing with his finger at a random line helps him to apprehend the meaning of current events, and even to direct his actions accordingly in the future. This clash between what he narrates he does not believe and what he actually seems to believe renders him unreliable.



The impact of this unreliability on the authorial audience also needs elaboration, that is the reaction of his readers to his misjudgements and misinterpretations must be evaluated. Phelan's terminology – "estranging" and "bonding" unreliability – is helpful to understand this: "estranging unreliability [which means] unreliable narration that underlines or increases the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience" and "bonding unreliability [which means] unreliable narration that reduces the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience" (2007, p. 223-4). Betteredge's narrating has the influence of bonding on his audience as it is impossible to turn over his communication despite his manifest fallibility. The relationship between him and his reader is in tune with the description of Phelan (2007): "In bonding unreliability, the discrepancies between the narrator's reports, interpretations, or evaluations and the inferences of the authorial audience have the paradoxical result of reducing the interpretive, affective, or ethical distance between the narrator and the authorial audience" (p. 225). His occasionally ironical and comical remarks make the implied audience sympathise with him. He may be untrustworthy as a story-teller but actually popular with most characters, including Lady Verinder, Franklin Blake and Sergeant Cuff. He is the only character who tries to help isolated and crippled Rosanna Spearman; he even adopts the role of detective Cuff's assistant during his investigations. Due to his amiable character, he attempts at communicating and even establishing a close relationship with the authorial audience. The choice of such a narrator on the part of the implied author seems not to be coincidental; this narrator is capable of bonding with the authorial reader as regards their worldview. To put it another way, the bonding unreliability serves for the consolidation of dominant Western ideology reflected in the novel.

## Conclusion

It must be noted that the closure of the narrative contributes to the centralization and consolidation of the British imperialism. "The demonization of the Indian not only changed the way the British defined nationality, but also allowed them to justify their imperial aims and consolidate their authority" (Cozzi, 2010, p. 108). In the end, British rationalization and empiricism are at work in the discovery of the truth: a scientific experiment proves Blake's innocence with regard to the crime he has committed under the influence of the opium. Besides, all criminal acts of murder, theft and forgery are attributed to the Indians while white British protagonists – Blake and Rachel- are acquitted of the accusations. In the end, the peacefulness is retrieved back into the country house as soon as the wicked gem is returned to its place and all the evils and

mysteries are nullified. However, ironically this return to the state of peace is mainly guaranteed with the contribution of two characters/narrators of mixed origins. Ezra Jennings, Dr Candy's assistant, solves the mystery of opium's influence on Blake, who is triggered to commit the crime, and successfully carries out the experiment to prove the latter's innocence. What is implicit here is that a mixed origin character, Ezra Jennings is depicted as an opium addict himself just like Betteredge, who is also addicted to tobacco. The implication is that such unreasonable addictive habits are attached to the Oriental characters while their white counterparts seem to commit such crimes just by accident or by force. Likewise, without Murthwaite's knowledge and guidance, the conduct of the three Indians would remain inexplicable. However, despite their invaluable contribution, they both remain outcast due to their ethnic backgrounds. Their secondary position in the narrative is explained by Cozzi (2010): "The other knows things the English must learn; however, once that knowledge is acquired and appropriated, one will be permanently silenced and the other banished from the sacred space of the nation" (p. 122). The first one is Jennings, who suffers from an irrecoverable illness, and his death is implied in the final; the second foreigner is Murthwaite, who reports in the Indian temple in the last narrative where he observes the moonstone being returned to where it belongs.

To sum up, this postcolonial narratological analysis of the novel has been an attempt that complies with Said (1994)'s concept of contrapuntal reading which is "an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented" (p. 66). Obviously, not only the delineation of places and characters but also alignment of authorial audience as well as multiple narrators all collaboratively encapsulate the imperial subject matter in *The Moonstone*. What remains in the fringes is ultimately marginalized in the narrative discourse, as well. For this reason, the drive for exploring what lies beneath the implied author's principles brings a critical reader to the point of a "symptomatic reading", a reading that is not predicated on the interpretation of the implied author, but one's own (Abbott, 2008, p. 104). Considering all these narratological clues attests to the idea that narration is always a rhetorical act involving selecting, organizing, including, excluding and silencing.

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