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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanizing the Colonial Other: The Engaged Reader in Shakespeare, Swift, Conrad, and Barghout

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of
English and Comparative Literature
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts

By
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Under the supervision of
Dr. William Melaney

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ABSTRACT

In the modern hermeneutical tradition, the reader is the main source of textual meaning. The hermeneutical reader is encouraged to reinterpret literature and history, and to approach the text in the light of what we can know about the world. When approaching Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, the hermeneutical reader can no longer accept Prospero's authoritative and manipulative discourse on Caliban but attempts to rehumanize him and investigate his character when the reader begins to perceive the moral limitations of Prospero, his master. The hermeneutical reader of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* learns to question Gulliver's view of native people, his tendency to dehumanize the Yahoos and to collaborate with the Houyhnhnms in their plans to eliminate a racial other. From a hermeneutical point of view, whether or not Swift shares Gulliver's hostility towards the Yahoos becomes less important than how the reader interprets the text and the meanings that it evokes. The hermeneutical reader of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is encouraged to question and condemn the morality of the colonial aggressors, and perhaps Conrad himself, in a novel that highlights brutal acts committed by the Europeans against native Africans. Finally, the hermeneutical reader of Barghouti's novel, *I Saw Ramallah*, challenges the Israeli narrative of refugees who have found "a land without a people for a people without a land" by providing witness to the devastating effects that this narrative has visited upon the Palestinian people. The four works of literature under consideration have been read through a hermeneutical approach that has allowed the other to be re-humanized, rather than subordinated to colonial and imperial systems that disregard or violate what cannot be mastered.

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Introduction: Engaging the Reader in the Text

Nineteenth-century hermeneutics granted the author considerable authority as the main source of textual meaning, while arguing that the function of the reader was to investigate the text in order to grasp authorial intentions. However, modern hermeneutics shifts the interest from the author to the dynamic relationship between the reader and the text. Theories of reader-response criticism develop questions about epistemology with regard to the act of interpretation. These questions challenge the authority of the author, since the meaning of the text arguably depends on the reader's interpretation and his own rendering of things. This new emphasis gives rise to various debates and controversies, partly because interpretation and understanding are influenced by several factors, such as culture, ideology, and personal presuppositions.

Modern hermeneutics thus helps us understand how the text can acquire new meanings as it moves ahead in time and as it is read by readers from cultural backgrounds that differ from that of the writer. Roland Barthes indicates that the text then belongs to the reader as soon as it is published. Hence, only the reader can recreate the meanings of the text according to his own presuppositions and understanding of the world. Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Wolfgang Iser contribute to the possibility of reader-response criticism in the twentieth century. While recognizing the author in different ways, all of them suggest that the reader contributes along with the author in creating the meanings of the text.

Martin Heidegger's discussion of art in his essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," is complex and philosophical but sheds light on the active intervention of the reader in bringing meaning as well as giving life to the text. For Heidegger, the text is the major source of meaning which he privileges over the author, because he is more concerned with the projection of being in the text than with the role of genius in demonstrating the truth of art: "It is precisely in great art .

. . . that the artist remains inconsequential as compared to the text” (39) Heidegger also puts emphasis on the power of the imagination, which would allow the reader to penetrate into the other worlds that emerge through the work of art. Thus the work of art evokes meanings that the reader brings to life through active interpretation and the power of the imagination. Heidegger views literature as the most elevated form of art since it allows the reader to access the truth of beings in its use of language. For Heidegger, the use of language in literature allows the reader to experience the happening of truth: “Language alone brings what is, as something that is, into the open for the first time” (71).

Heidegger believes that the “happening of truth” occurs when the text allows other beings to emerge in their truth. The text evokes other worlds and other possibilities when it invites the reader to look beyond the text in order to see the beings that the text both reveals and conceals. In applying this theory, Heidegger examines Van Gogh’s painting of a pair of peasant’s shoes. This painting evokes a whole discourse, and allows the spectator to use his imagination in seeing the shoes first as “equipment” and then as the key to what lies beyond the painting, which is the world of a peasant woman to whom those shoes belong. The shoes tell the viewer much about the peasant woman, her suffering, misery and poverty, as well as her hard labor. In writing about this painting, Van Gogh was able to construct an image of a peasant woman laboring which was not present in the painting, and yet the painting evokes it. Thus the being in the painting allows us to penetrate into another being that is not in the painting or, in Heidegger’s terminology, as concealed and revealed by the painting. Thus art make possible something other than itself as it allows other worlds to emerge through its world, and, for Heidegger, such is the happening of truth as it “set itself to work” (Heidegger 38).

In *Interpretation Theory*, Paul Ricoeur uses phenomenological hermeneutics in order to show how the reader can conceive the world in the text by interpreting it. Ricoeur lays great emphasis on the text as the main source of meaning and on the reader who would reveal those meanings with regard to the author, who primarily projects his own meanings and intentions through the text. He argues against Romantic criticism and rejects the idea of “the absolute text” which he describes as “the fallacy of hypostasizing the text as an authorless entity” (30). Ricoeur recognizes both the author and the reader, since he believes that the author has his own meanings and intentions that he projects through the text and needs a reader to understand and reveal them to the world. Writing is an event that has specific boundaries; it happens in a certain time, refers to the world of the author, and reflects certain intentions. The event of writing, the author’s intentions and the world that he belongs to, are no longer available to the reader, and yet the reader has access to what the text brings to light. The reader therefore shares in the production of textual meaning.

For Ricoeur, the process of understanding is complex because the author is no longer there to “rescue” the meaning of the text; misunderstanding is possible and sometimes inevitable. The discerning reader should not reduce the text to private meanings but understand it as it is, that is to say, he should try to see the interpretive possibilities that are inherent in the text itself. Ricoeur claims that “what has to be appropriated is nothing other than the power of disclosing a world that constitutes the reference of the text” (92). The text allows the reader to empathize and see the world of the text as his own world; it allows the reader to imagine himself as the one being addressed. Ricoeur opposes the idea of “understanding the author better than he understood himself” because he emphasizes the finite nature of understanding. The reader understands the meaning of the text through his ability to relate it to an experience of being in the

world. Thus, in dealing with the text, the reader understands the reference that is projected in the text through its meaning. The event is the author and the author's intentions, which no longer exist, but meaning continues to exist in the text. The text reflects two different worlds: the world of the author and the world of the reader. Thus, the text bridges as well as creates distance. The reader can always view the text as referring to his own world, but the reader can also establish distance from the text and understand that it displays the author's world, which might refer either to the past or to a culture other than that of the reader.

The center of Ricoeur's discussion remains the text and the reader. Although he recognizes the importance of the author and rejects the idea of an absolute text, he does not believe that the author plays the major role in providing us with the meaning of the text; in general, the reader has all the power to display and recreate textual meaning. In some respects, Ricoeur's method reminds us of Heidegger. Ricoeur, like Heidegger, believes that the reader should see the possibilities that the text opens up in order to be able to understand its meanings. Although he tries to involve the author in his theory, the author's intentions are no longer central insofar as the reader's interpretation and understanding of the text has priority. Ricoeur even states that the author's intention "is often unknown to us, sometimes redundant, sometimes useless, and sometimes even harmful" (76).

Jean-Paul Sartre offers new conceptions of the process of writing in his book *What is Literature?* His approach is based on existentialism, which ascribes literary meaning to key terms like commitment, freedom and responsibility. In "Why Write?" Sartre emphasizes the role and importance of the reader to the process of writing and contends that there is a complex relationship between the writer and the reader. For Sartre, both of them are of equal importance since they "co-constitute" the text. Sartre, however, also argues that the writer should have a

purpose in writing. The writer should be committed and responsible. Literature can reveal the world in changing it. It is a shared institution that involves change; it is open to various interpretations and provides new meanings for the text. Sartre believes that the text is subject to change according to the period and to the audience whom the writer is addressing. Thus, writing involves a shared “pact” between the writer and the reader by which the writer seeks the reader's reaction and response. The writer thus needs a reader to understand his meanings and bring them to life: “It is not true that one writes for oneself. . . . There is no art except for and by others” (Sartre 31).

For Sartre, reading allows for various interpretations and gives new meanings to the text. The reader is in a process of discovery and recreation. The reader shares in producing and creating the text by understanding and disclosing the meanings that the writer has put into the text. Thus, by writing, the author makes an appeal to the reader and demands attentiveness in order to reproduce and recreate textual meanings. Sartre believes that by doing so, the writer appeals to the reader's freedom as the reader is free to bring about commitment to the text: “The writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work” (Sartre 34). Both the writer and the reader demand freedom and commitment from one another. If the reader doubts the commitment of the writer, he will lose interest in the work, which will become trivial and insignificant, and if the writer has no hope to find a free and committed reader, he will cease to write. Thus there is mutual trust between the writer and the reader because they are both aware that the text requires their commitment and freedom.

Sartre argues that in appealing to the reader's freedom, the writer should not seek to overwhelm the reader but rather should give him complete freedom in contributing his own meanings to the interpretation of a text. The writer should introduce a topic that is of some

interest and importance to the reader because the text requires the reader's response. The text should address an existing problem or experience that requires action and change, or help the reader better understand life. The writer cannot write to create an unjust world, since with such a gesture the reader would participate in recreating injustice. Writing should help the reader to attain freedom, to view the world from an objective standpoint and to liberate individuals from prejudices. Sartre claims that "the moment I feel myself a pure freedom I cannot bear to identify myself with a race of oppressors. Thus, I require of all freedoms that they demand the liberation of coloured people against the white race and against myself in so far as I am a part of it" (Sartre 47). As existentialism calls for creating one's being, for making free choices being responsible for those choices and their consequences, Sartre assigns literature a similar task. Both writer and reader have to be committed to and responsible for the text. Thus, Sartre highlights the importance of literature in changing life and its readers.

Wolfgang Iser's critical study, *The Act of Reading*, sums up the turn towards the reader in the hermeneutical tradition. His book presents the reader as the center of attention and the key to interpretation. He believes that theories should study the reader and the factors that affect the interpretive process, rather than focus exclusively on the writer's intention and the historical or social meaning of the text. He seems to agree with Sartre in maintaining that "it scarcely seemed to occur to critics that the text could only have a meaning when it was read. Of course, this was something everyone took for granted, and yet we know surprisingly little of what we are taking for granted" (Iser 20). Iser focuses on the aesthetic response of the reader or the interaction between the reader and the text, rather than the relationship between the reader and the writer which is rarely important. The interplay between the text and the reader and the response that the reading experience evokes generates meaning and guides interpretation. Iser rejects the idea of

an objective meaning contained in a “text-in-itself” since he believes that nothing should be dictated to the reader; instead, the reader should try to understand the text according to his own vision or according to the meanings that the text evokes in him.

Iser provides us with basic guidelines for understanding the notion of the reader as one that cannot be considered apart from the text. Iser believes that the only possible “ideal reader” is the author himself who “does not in fact need to duplicate himself into author and ideal reader, so that the postulate of an ideal reader is in this case, superfluous” (Iser 29). Moreover, Iser maintains that the text acquires new meanings each time it is read even by the same person. Instead of using the term “ideal reader” to identify what is essential to the reading process, Iser introduces the term the “implied reader” as one that cannot dispense with the way that the text indicates essential meanings. The implied reader can be identified with the reader who is invited by literature to respond to the text. Literature offers the reader a starting point from which he can draw upon his own judgment as based on crucial life experiences and presuppositions. The concept of the implied reader, therefore, does not impose on the reader any earlier meaning that he is expected to reproduce but rather helps us understand how meaning depends on the reader’s contribution to what is read.

The turn to the reader in the hermeneutical tradition grants the reader the authority to understand literature in light of personal experiences and to think about the relationship of the text to the contemporary world. By empowering the reader’s imagination, literature can acquire new meanings that were not necessarily accessible to the author as the text moves ahead in time and as new historical events indeed occur. Those new events and meanings can be stored and contained in the mind of the contemporary reader, and literature may evoke them and even offer the reader insights into them apart from the intentions of the author, who may not have been a

witness to them. Hence, the readers of a later age might see a canonical text as referring to something in their culture which the author would not have been able to access. Furthermore, an earlier literature might provide the occasion for providing the reader with moral insights that the author himself lacks. In this way, literature can help the reader revise all established definitions, question morality, and rethink the meanings of history.

In my thesis, I will present colonial and postcolonial readings of three major works in the canon of Western literature as well as one contemporary memoir, written by a Palestinian author. All of these works will be reexamined in the light of how the reader is situated as a potentially liberating agent in the interpretation of texts. William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver Travels*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* all invite the reader to investigate a hidden discourse that is restored in Mourid Barghouti's memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*. All of these literary works help us understand that the role of the reader in the reception of texts is a critical one, while also demonstrating how an imperial ideology has shaped both the text and, in the long run, the reader's response to literature.

The interface between reader and ideology is evident in all of the texts under consideration. In *The Tempest*, the reader is invited to question Prospero's authority and injustice in enslaving Caliban and treating him as only half human. Shakespeare would not have been familiar with colonial criticism in the seventeenth century, and yet the modern reader can only interpret his play as a representation of injustice, since it depicts the dehumanization of some races and the perception of them as inferior. Gulliver's fourth voyage can be interpreted in a similar way, as Gulliver despised the Yahoos whom he believes are merely vicious animals. However, some evidence in the text qualifies this interpretation once the reader gets to know that

Gulliver is their kin, which means that the Yahoos are human beings, too. In explaining the voyage as a satiric portrayal of human beings, some critics have argued that the author was a misanthropist, but I argue that the novel opens up another reading similar to that employed in *The Tempest*. Hence, Gulliver represents a typical imperial ideology that reoccurs throughout history. *Heart of Darkness* shocks the reader with the brutality of Europe and perhaps the innocence of the Africans who are reputed to be cannibals. However, while Conrad has been charged by one contemporary critic of harboring racist attitudes, his novel can be discussed as transcending the author's intentions and ideology. Finally, in *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti speaks to the reader of a marginalized other who faces a world that has yet not recognized his simple humanity. This memoir speaks for all of the marginalized people who are hidden in *The Tempest*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Heart of Darkness*, and who are silenced by a superior power dominating the narrative. Literature thus acquires new meanings that were not available to the authors themselves, inviting the reader to question many of the widely accepted discourses that compose conventional history.

Chapter I: A Post-Colonial Reading of 'The Tempest'

Hermeneutics has the potential to empower literature to the degree that it encourages the reader to interpret texts in terms of personal and political experiences. Heidegger, Ricoeur and Sartre all argue that the text invites the reader to recreate new meanings on the basis of new interpretations. Literature may help the reader gain insight and understanding, not by tracing what the author intends, but rather by completing what the author has left out. In this way, literature helps the reader rewrite history by investigating the absent/present discourses that the text evokes. *The Tempest* provides a noteworthy example of how texts can acquire new meanings and can become more significant in time, as interpretation undergoes change and revision. In the course of historical time, the reader's evaluation of main characters does not remain the same. Prospero, rather than Caliban, becomes the chief villain, and a character who was once marginalized emerges as more credible than might have been the case during an earlier period. Hence, instead of being concerned primarily with the author's own historical intentions, hermeneutical readers can begin to consider this play in terms of the ideologies and the experiences of the postcolonial period.

Caliban's representation in the play is complex and arose much debate among critics as he embodies the characteristics of the marginalized other and evokes a post-colonial reading of the play. Caliban is a developed "other" as he can speak directly to the audience and challenge Prospero's authoritative discourse, thus drawing the reader's attention to his humanity. His narrative demonstrates that the play can be read in post-colonial terms, even though it was written before the major period of colonization. Many critics argue that the representation of Caliban is largely based on accounts from travel literature concerning the discovery of the New World and that Caliban is Shakespeare's representation of native Americans. Other critics have

argued that Shakespeare's political intentions were concerned with the colonial world that was only then beginning to emerge in early modern times. Hence, some critics either contend that Shakespeare's Caliban reflects Montaigne's Noble Savage, or that he is refuting Montaigne's popular notion. Political approaches to the play result in strong claims to the effect that Shakespeare had specific texts and historical events in mind when he created this controversial character.

In his essay, "The Americanization of *The Tempest*," Alden T. Vaughan studies the American reading of the play that emerges during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Vaughan presents the different arguments of critics who believe that Shakespeare had written *The Tempest* to represent the discovery of the New World. This kind of reading appeals to the contemporary reader and adds special significance and complexity to the text:

The 'Americanist' reading is, of course, only one of many that have flourished in the past three and a half centuries, but it has dominated twentieth-century interpretations as it responded, like other scholarly readings, to cultural and ideological trends But especially fascinating and germane to English and American *literateurs* and historians is the possibility that Caliban reflects early Stuart England's perceptions of American natives and their complex interaction with European colonists. *The Tempest* never explicitly identifies Caliban as an Indian, but both the sources that probably inspired it and the text itself suggest to many viewers and readers an allegory of colonial America.

(Vaughan 1, 137)

Many critics believe that Shakespeare was largely influenced by the colonization of his time as well as the depiction of the natives in travel literature. Many texts from Shakespeare's period were highlighted as possible sources for his inspiration, and theories connecting Caliban and the native Indians found substantial ground from the play to support this reading.

Vaughan reminds us that Raleigh had insisted early that the representation of Caliban came out of colonization literature. Moreover, he explains that the new historicists have more

recently taken a special interest in contemporary texts to which Shakespeare would have had access:

Given this assumption, Caliban's Americanization seems likely to continue. Much of *The Tempest's* contemporaneous literature involves New World colonization, so much so that any tally of 'the common coinage' (Hulme's phrase) must include some literature of Americanization colonization. (Vaughan 1, 153)

Critics even draw specific connections between Caliban and the Indians, believing that Shakespeare may have had such connections in mind when creating him: "Like the Indians, Cawley pointed out, Caliban initially views the newcomers as gods and befriends them but is repaid with scorn and abuse; he originally owns the land but is soon dispossessed" (Vaughan 1, 144).

On the other hand, Barbara Fuchs believes that the play may also be about the colonization of Ireland, which was so offensive and cruel at that time and had greater impact on the English than the colonization of the New World:

My point is not that elements of colonialist discourse in the text do not apply to Americas Instead, I am attempting to display the layering of such context in the play, from the basic discourse of savagery developed by the English in Ireland to their eventual experiences in the Americas. To read only America in *The Tempest* is to ignore the connections that colonial quotation establishes between England's two main Western plantations, connections perhaps expressed most graphically in the instability of their geographic reference. (Fuchs 54)

Employing techniques that are used as well in the American reading of *The Tempest*, Fuchs reads the play as an allegory of the English colonization of Ireland. Fuchs goes on to make connections between Caliban and the Irish people: they were both viewed as savages in need of civilization; both were abused and mistreated by the colonizer; both were taught the language of the colonist. She also sees a likeness between Caliban's cloak and the Irish dress. Fuchs believes that, like the Irish, Caliban is seen as a savage to be civilized rather than enslaved by Prospero; he is ridiculed

by Trinculo and Stephano, who even thought of taking him back home to be displayed for financial gain:

Given England's anxiety over distinguishing savage from civilized, islander from colonizer in Ireland, it is possible to read this episode in Shakespeare's text as one of the indices of this colonial adventure. Alive or dead, Caliban fulfills the role of spectacular other and, throughout the comic process of recognition by which Stephano and Trinculo discover him, occupies an abject position. His monstrosity corresponds quite neatly to the Europeans' expectations. For Caliban himself, of course, the situation is framed by Prospero's abusive treatment, which has scripted him as victim. (Fuchs 47)

And yet, Fuchs also emphasizes that the real thrust of the Caliban narrative is to demonstrate how the savage other must be civilized in order to have a relationship to the mother country. The role of language in this process calls attention to Caliban's outsider status: "Emphasis on the impenetrability of Caliban's language – even he, according to Miranda, cannot understand it – evokes the English colonizers' frustration with Gaelic as a barrier to their presentation of the territory" (Fuchs 53). Caliban's alleged savagery is used to justify his cruel treatment, just as the English propagated the myth of Irish savagery in order to justify the colonization of Ireland.

The sources from which the figure of Caliban evolved continue to be a puzzle to some critics, who quotes long passages from texts that Shakespeare might have used in constructing him. John E. Hankins believes that Montaigne's essay, "Of Cannibals," and Aristotle's discussion of the bestial man were combined in the characterization of Caliban. These sources make it harder for us to decide how Shakespeare felt about this crucial figure. Hankins believes that Shakespeare's Caliban generally represented the notion of the savage but does not refer to a specific race:

But, while Caliban worships a Patagonian god, he is the child of an African witch from Argier (Algiers). This would seem to indicate that Shakespeare is not trying to represent primarily a red Indian from the New World but has broadened the conception to represent primitive man as a type. The name *Caliban*, a metathesis of *canibal*, supports this view, for contemporary voyages, as well as early

travelers from Homer and Herodotus to Mandeville, had found cannibals in many different quarters of the world. (Hankins 793)

For Hankins, the figure of Caliban is derived from cannibals who were believed to be natives of uninhabited places. Hankins believes that the description of Caliban probably comes from accounts of natives in travel literature. However, he doubts whether Shakespeare could have had direct access to accounts that would have influenced him indirectly:

It is entirely probable that Caliban's physical appearance is derived from some freak of nature brought back or described by returning voyagers. The early travels give many descriptions of curious creatures and Shakespeare shows a strong interest in them. Professor Cunliffe has noted a passage in Purchas, describing the voyage of Friar Joanno dos in Sanctos in 1597. (Hankins 794)

According to Hankins, Shakespeare does not have any sympathy towards Caliban, natives or savages. On contrary, Shakespeare combines two major influences that lend authority to his representation of a living being who cannot be assimilated to the human community:

The references to cannibals brought Aristotle and Montaigne together in Shakespeare's mind. Aristotle sees in the cannibal an example of bestial man in his natural state. Montaigne also uses the cannibals as an example of the 'natural man' and praises highly the climate and customs of his country. Shakespeare uses that praise in Gonzalo's utopian speech, stating what such a country might be ideally, but he does not repeat Montaigne's praise of the cannibal as he actually exists. Rather, his Caliban, or *canibal*, is the embodiment of Aristotle's bestial man. The dramatist has sought to realize in the flesh the philosopher's concept of a primitive savage who has not attained the level of humanity. (Hankins 798)

For Hankins, Caliban is Shakespeare's representation of the cannibals natives or savages as taken from accounts popularized in travel literature. He believes that Shakespeare presented Caliban as the lowest and basest of creatures to refute the notion of the Noble Savage and to discourage sympathy towards him.

Caliban's complex treatment in the play evokes many incidents of colonialism and racism, tempting the reader to consider that Shakespeare might have been aware of the political

issues pertaining to the regions that had been recently colonized in his own lifetime. Caliban is represented as the disposed native of an island where he is enslaved and mistreated. His physical characteristics become matters of disgust and curiosity. Trinculo calls Caliban “an islander,” while Stephano referred to him as a savage and Red Indian: “Do you put tricks upon’s with salvages and men of Ind, ha?” (Shakespeare Act II, Sc 2, Line 58-9). Both Stephano and Trinculo believe that Caliban could win them a fortune, if taken back and displayed. Trinculo: “Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver” Stephano exclaims: “If I can recover him, and keep him tame, and get to Naples with him, he’s a present for any emperor” (Shakespeare Act II, Sc II, Line 69-71). At the same time, Caliban’s humanity emerges in the play, especially when he demonstrates an ability to speak directly in his own language. This ability is almost always denied to the marginalized other in European literature, who is usually portrayed as completely inarticulate, like Swift’s Yahoos and Conrad’s Africans. This leads the reader to assume that Shakespeare has tried to do justice to Caliban’s humanity and may have sympathized with his predicament.

The contemporary reader may be inclined to accept many critical assumptions about Shakespeare’s depiction of the New World and its native inhabitants, while his text evokes incidents that might be taken as representations of colonial practices; however, we have a hard time determining the author’s actual intentions when writing *The Tempest*. New interpretations of the play only start to emerge during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: “Not until the end of the nineteenth century did a Shakespearean contend unequivocally that Caliban was Shakespeare’s portrayal of an American native” (Vaughan 139). The audience’s attitude and response towards Caliban dramatically changes in later periods, while originally he was

perceived as a disgusting and evil monster. Caliban's shift from a minor character to occupy the center of discussion in the twentieth century is also very significant, since it reflects a change in the audience's ideological perceptions, instead of mirroring Shakespeare's own intentions.

In her essay, "‘Something Rich and Strange’: Caliban's Theatrical Metamorphoses," Virginia Mason Vaughan presents an extensive study of the historical changes in Caliban's role and representation down through the ages:

Since Caliban's first appearance in 1611, Shakespeare's monster has undergone remarkable transformations. From drunken beast in the eighteenth century, to noble savage and missing link in the nineteenth, to Third World victim of oppression in the mid-twentieth, Caliban's stage images reflect Anglo-American attitudes toward primitive man. Shakespeare's monster once represented bestial vices that must be eradicated; now he personifies noble rebels who symbolize the exploitation of European imperialism. (Vaughan 2, 390)

Caliban first acquires recognition and significance on the basis of early modern attitudes toward the Noble Savage: "To generalize broadly, the eighteenth century was concerned with mankind as a social unit, civilized by generally accepted norms of behavior and commonly held beliefs . . . Caliban was not likely to become the age's favorite dramatic character" (395). During the Romantic period, Caliban came to be appreciated as a creature who had the ability to express emotions and powerful feelings, thus paving the way for a contemporary reassessment:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge described Caliban not as a sotted monster, but as a "noble being; a man in the sense of the imagination, all the images he utters are drawn from nature, and are highly poetical" Caliban was by then a more important character played by George Bennett, an actor who excelled in tragic as well as comic role To MacDonnell Caliban was no longer merely a comic butt; he had become "a creature, in his nature possessing all the rude elements of the savage, yet maintaining in his mind, a strong resistance to that tyranny." (Vaughan 2, 396)

Shakespeare could not have referred to the Noble Savage when he wrote *The Tempest*, since the notion was used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to positive aspects of human nature. Caliban was too dehumanized a character to conform to the notion of the Noble

Savage as it was defined during that period. Nor does Shakespeare clearly anticipate the humanization of Caliban which gradually evolves during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

Vaughan traces the evolution of Caliban in the English theatre, where he was presented as a brute monster in the eighteenth century, as an animal-like but with human characteristics in the nineteenth century, a fish-like man, an ape man, until finally as a human being played by a black actor: “Caliban’s politicized image did not penetrate the theatre until the late 1960s. By then Caliban had become a role often reserved for black actors” (Vaughan 2, 402):

The climax of Caliban’s politicization came, perhaps, during 1980-81, when productions around the world emphasized what had become the standard interpretation. In the popular imagination Caliban now represented any group that felt itself oppressed. In New York, he appeared as a punk rocker, complete with cropped hair, sunglasses, and Cockney accent. In Augsburg, Germany, Caliban continued as a black slave who performed African dances and ritual (Vaughan 2, 404)

The interpretation of *The Tempest* as an allegory of the discovery of the New World only starts to flourish during the nineteenth century where critics found connections among accounts of the natives in the New World, Montaigne’s writings on natives and the criticism of Caliban. Since 1945, however, Caliban comes to be associated with the themes of dispossession, enslavement, and marginalization:

After 1945 a growing number of literary critics began to view *The Tempest* as Shakespeare’s study of the colonists’ adventures in the New World In addition to Caliban’s North American image, there emerged an association between Shakespeare’s monster and Third World native peoples of whatever continent or country – who had been colonized by Europeans and were now throwing off their foreign governors and asserting independence. Like Caliban (so the argument goes), most colonized peoples are disinherited, subjugated, and exploited. Like him, they learned a conqueror’s language and values. Like him, they endured enslavement and contempt by European usurpers. Eventually, like Caliban, they rebelled. (Vaughan 2, 402)

Such notions were clearly unrecognized by the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century readers, who viewed Caliban as a villain and a monster. Even the earlier notion of a Noble Savage did not suit Caliban's depiction in the play. Moreover, attitudes towards enslavement, colonialism and imperialism were not considered to be wrong during most of the modern period. This largely explains why early theater goers may have detested Caliban, especially when he appeared as a deformed and disobedient slave who intended harm to his master.

Thus, it is hard to discern Shakespeare's view of Caliban and to assume that he was aware of its positive implications in the seventeenth century. Vaughan attributes the decline of the intentionalist school among *Tempest* critics to the difficulty of knowing exactly what Shakespeare has in mind when he created Caliban. On the other hand, he also argues that the intentionalist approach should be discarded, because it opens up more questions than it answers.

A purely historical reading of the play is still possible but yields few deep insights:

If an intentionalist reading is insisted upon, and if early interpretations of Caliban are taken into account, his principal prototype was probably the European wild man of Renaissance literature and iconography. But Shakespeare's intentions and Caliban's career are *not* the only issues Thus *The Tempest* and Caliban retain their American identities, possibly because they represent Shakespeare's vision of the New World and its natives but – more probably and more significantly – because they reflect recurrent themes in America, indeed world, history. (Vaughan 1, 153)

With changes in the perception of native peoples and the rejection of familiar justifications for empire, the reader begins to reconstruct the narrative to save the monster's humanity. The reader comes to affirm Caliban's identity as a marginalized other who was disposed and enslaved by the supreme white Europeans who dominate the narrative. The reader also re-interprets Caliban's physical characteristics to accord with any race that is considered inferior, whether as black American, Indian or African.

However, this same perception of Caliban as a racial outcast has a validity that need not be based on Shakespeare's precise intentions, which become relatively unimportant and misleading once the reader begins to glimpse a new discourse that might have been unavailable to the author. By taking into account the dimension of racial exclusivity, the reader can discern another dimension in the story when the image of the villain shifts from Caliban to Prospero. The reader at this point should no longer listen so uncritically to Prospero's authoritative discourse and to his hegemonic and domineering language, especially when he tries to control the narrative and every other character in the play.

Prospero controls and dominates all the events and actions of the play by means of magic. Even the actions of character are controlled by his spells. He dictates to Miranda in order to control her emotions and win her sympathy: "I have done nothing but in care of thee, / Of thee, my dear one; thee, my daughter, who/ Art ignorant of what thou art; nought knowing / Of whence I am, nor that I am more better/ Than Prospero, master of full poor cell, / And thy no greater father" (Act I, Sc 2, Line 16-20). Once Prospero convinces Miranda that both of them are victims, he justifies all his plans against the intruders, when she could no longer argue against him. Prospero even employs Miranda to carry out his plans and arranges her marriage to Ferdinand. Similarly, he subjects his brother Antonio and his fellows to several magical tricks in order to play with their emotions and control their reactions.

Prospero also controls Ariel with his authoritative discourse concerning how he saved him from torture and how he should be grateful and obey all of his orders. His kindness to Ariel is conditional upon Ariel's obedience to him. Otherwise, Prospero would scorn him if Ariel dares to ask for his freedom: "Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot/ The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy/ Was grown into a hoop? Has thou forgot her?" (Act I, Sc 2, Line 257/9).

Ariel eventually responds: “I will be correspondent to command,/ And do my spiriting gently” (Act I, Sc 2, Line 303/4). Prospero controls the narrative of past, present and future and exerts some influence on every action and emotion in the story – love, anger, fear and regret. He alone can decide when to forgive and show kindness, when to do harm and be cruel, based on his own plans. Prospero only seems to act according to his own self-interests. His favor of Ariel and kindness towards him is predicated on Ariel’s willingness to carry out orders. He forgives his enemies only to regain his position as the Duke of Milan. He even manipulates his daughter to fall in love and marry the son of the king of Naples.

Caliban is the only character who defies Prospero and disobeys him. In this regard, he deserves respect rather than scorn, as he refused to make himself Prospero’s slave. He is portrayed as the intruder, when originally he was the master of his own island. Prospero taught Caliban his language in order to obtain his services, but this was a mistake, because now Caliban can defy Prospero and challenge his narrative, rebel and curse him. The reader can no longer ignore Caliban’s discourse but listens to his voice saying, “This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother” (Act I, Sc 2, Line 333). The reader cannot perceive Prospero as justified in trying to enslave and even torture Caliban. The text also highlights Caliban’s humanity. We learn, for instance, that Caliban is a sensible being who displays human skills in his ability to learn language, sense and feel injustice, appreciate and love music, dream of his freedom, and finally plan and plot against Prospero. Prospero needs Caliban and also fears him, in contrast to Ariel, who does not threaten Prospero, since he is only a spirit. Langhroast argues that Prospero’s major conflict is with Caliban, rather than with Ariel, a truth which Prospero wishes to suppress in order to maintain his purity:

This can be argued for several reasons. First, Caliban is human, Ariel is not. Second, both are the slaves of Prospero. Third, there is a much richer

development of Prospero and Caliban than there is of Ariel. And finally, Prospero brings the baggage of Western civilization with him to the isle. What better counterpart to him than its lone, uncultured inhabitant Caliban?" (Langhorst 82)

There is no conclusive evidence in the text to argue that Caliban ever causes physical harm and that he deserves the torture he receives at the hands of Prospero. Langhorst explains why Caliban hardly deserves his captivity and ill treatment: "To Prospero, his [Caliban's] ugliness and lubricity are abundantly evident. Yet Caliban can be as guileless and as harmless as a child. His evil is not so manifest as to effortlessly make him an object of loathing" (Langhorst 80). Caliban's attempt to rape Miranda is of course what would mostly terrify Prospero, but such an act might be envisioned symbolically as a means for attaining independence. The rape of Miranda would threaten Prospero's racial supremacy and demonstrate Caliban's kinship to Prospero and Miranda. Caliban obviously refuses to accept his inferiority to Prospero. He refuses to accept Prospero as master of the island that originally belonged to him: "Which first was mine own king: and here you stay me/ In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me/ The rest o'th' island" (Act I, Sc 2, Line 344.6).

Prospero clearly sees Caliban as inferior: "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature/ Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains/ Humanly taken, all, all lost, quite lost;/ And as with age his body uglier grows,/ So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,/ Even to roaring" (Act IV, Sc I, Line 187-193). Prospero wants Caliban to accept the loss of the island and expects him to be his slave. He interprets difference as savagery and deformity. For him, Caliban is a misshapen monster simply because he is different; his language resembles the noises of animals because Prospero cannot understand it: "Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour/ One thing or other: when thou dost not, savage,/ Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like/ A thing most brutish" (Act I, Sc 2, Line 356/9). Prospero, like any other colonist, believes

in the supremacy of his language. He believes that the speaking of Prospero's language is the only thing that made Caliban human, but the beneficiary is not easily convinced: "You taught me language; and my profit on't/ Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/ For learning me your language" (Act I, Sc 2, Line 365/7). However, in attempting to rape Miranda, Caliban tries to make himself equal to Prospero and to prove his kinship to Prospero and Miranda: "O ho! O ho! Wouldn't had been done!/ Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else/ This isle with Calibans." (Act I, Sc 2, Line 351/3). Julia Reinhard Lupton uses this incident to support Caliban's humanity as she believes that he desires to couple and have children.

Yet Caliban's desire to have 'peopled . . . /This isle with Calibans' also evokes an Adamic dimensions of a more recuperative typological reading To 'people' the island with Calibans is to find himself in another, to realize his potential humanity Caliban's urge towards Miranda links him to Adam's blessing and identifies him with Adam's sin. In both cases the turn toward woman is a move not only toward fuller humanity but also towards humanity defined as creatureliness Read in this light . . . [this transgressive act] aligns rather than separates Caliban and Adam, inviting Shakespeare's creature into the fold of "people" as such, into a common humanity marked by both passion and possibility. (Lupton 18, 19)

Caliban's link to language can be related to his Adamic role in a paradisaal setting in which the destiny of mankind is hard to separate from an original transgression.

While Prospero may have been perceived favorably by seventeenth- and eighteenth century audiences, his image changes later on when the reader becomes more aware of his hegemonic, domineering, and imperialistic nature. But during this later period, Caliban's image was to shift from the villain to the victim, from a monster to a sensible human, once the audience became more familiar with the colonist's discourse, which was used to dehumanize a certain race in order to justify brutality. Once this discourse is established, the racial other is propagated as the villain or the brute; everything is likely to be permitted once the colonist acquires a sense of superiority over the savage other. The late twentieth century reader, however, rejects

dehumanization along racial lines. Prospero's morality and discourse is questioned and discredited by the audience who reconstructs Caliban's identity and listens to his narrative. The reader then begins to make connections between Prospero and every imperialist who appropriates land, suppresses native populations, and tries to justify himself by propagating certain images about native savagery, brutality, or terrorism.

Caliban, on the other hand, represents every marginalized race that is denied basic human rights, unjustly enslaved or dehumanized. Vaughan contends that "if Lee was the proximate cause of *The Tempest's* Americanization and Caliban's Indianization, the twentieth century's political-intellectual climate was their precondition, influencing Lee and his contemporaries simultaneously" (Vaughan 1, 145). Thus, the political dimension *The Tempest* can be related to twentieth-century experience, rather than to Shakespeare's intentions, which are hard to assess. The American reading of *The Tempest* is only one valid reading alongside other post-colonial readings: "Histories of early English contact with America and its native inhabitants now almost invariably cite *The Tempest* as a play partly or wholly about colonization and Caliban as partly or wholly a Jacobean representation of the Indian" (Vaughan 1, 149). "In the hands of new historicism, then, Caliban is the product of a literary and political milieu that includes but exceeds the American scene; he is an Indian and much else besides" (Vaughan 1, 152).

The inevitable shift in the interpretation of the play during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the growing interest in Caliban, and the change in the reader's perception of Caliban and Prospero all support the value of modern hermeneutics, which calls upon the reader to recreate the meanings of the text on the basis of shared experiences. The contributions of Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, and Jean Paul Sartre to this intellectual movement help the reader gain insight into the play as well as into the different interpretations that begin to emerge

in recent times. The change in attitude towards major characters, the rise of Caliban as the center of discussion, the claim that Shakespeare may have been interested in representing the colonization of America in addition to other postcolonial approaches all encourage the reader to fully consider the different discourses opened up by the text with reference to more recent experience and knowledge of the world.

Heidegger in particular is concerned with the projection of being in the work of art that the work both reveals and conceals. He maintains that the work of art evokes other worlds and possibilities that the reader can explore on an ontological level in order to reconstruct hidden discourses that constitute the work of art. The hidden discourse in *The Tempest* is Caliban's narrative, the story of a marginalized other who originally owns the land on which he lives and is disposed of it by the imperialist who tries to obscure his image in order to justify his exploitation. Caliban is both absent and present in the text. He was originally assumed to be a minor character in the play, probably because Prospero dominates the action and tries to cast Caliban as a savage brute. In time, however, Caliban becomes the main character in the play as the reader begins to hear and understand his discourse: "From this perspective, Caliban, rather than Prospero, is *The Tempest's* dramatic center. Barker and Hulme complain that critics have overlooked the play's complexity; instead, they say, critics have 'tended to listen exclusively to Prospero's voice: after all, he speaks their language'" (Vaughan 1, 152).

The text itself sheds light on Caliban's narrative and opens another discourse. With the few lines that Caliban actually speaks, the reader is able to construct an image beyond the text through a spoken discourse about marginalized races whose voices were silenced by the "grand narrative" of those who write history. Prospero tries to silence Caliban's voice in order to prevent his narrative from being heard. He sends his servant Ariel to interrupt Caliban as being a "liar"

whenever he attempts to tell his story. Julia Lupton argues that Prospero represents a law that Caliban tries to overturn, whereas Ariel speaks with a voice that “represents the phantasmatic dematerialization of that same law, its ghostly dissemination into every cove and corner of the island, its effective disabling of any counter-hegemonic movement” (Lupton 12). Far from instantiating a true political community, Ariel detracts from Prospero’s power to function successfully as a hegemonic figure. By challenging Prospero’s grand narrative, the reader manages not only to rethink matters of identity but to rewrite history as well.

Ricoeur believes that since the intentions of the author are often unavailable to the reader, the reader may interpret the text in relation to his present world. The text reflects both the world of the reader and the world of the author, but the reader is free to acquire distance from the text and to understand it as referring to the author’s world or by appropriating its meaning on a personal level. *The Tempest* can be read, therefore, in view of Shakespeare’s attitudes as well as the changing world of the reader. Thus while some critics try to distance themselves from the text and make valid guesses about Shakespeare’s intentions, others have read the text in terms of contemporary issues such as colonialism, imperialism, and racism. Some audiences have identified with Caliban, since they recognize the role of Western representation and propaganda in racial stereotypes that are used to justify various colonial projects. Such identification would allow us to read the play in terms of a critical standpoint that acquires more legitimacy as we move ahead in historical time.

For Sartre, literature is a shared institution that involves change; it is open to various interpretations and new meanings. Sartre believes that the text changes according to the audience addressed. Reading is a continual process of discovery and recreation. He believes that literature can reveal the world in changing it and that writing can help the reader attain freedom. Sartre

calls for a literature that allows the reader to create his own being on the basis of responsible moral choices. Interpretation of *The Tempest* has undergone dramatic changes, pertaining especially to the reader's view of Caliban. Theatergoers originally viewed Caliban as an ugly monster and as an object of detestation and disgust. In the nineteenth century, the audience starts to perceive Caliban's humanity, but the reader is still bound by Prospero's point of view. In the twentieth century, however, the reader could move away from established discourses and begin to challenge Prospero's viewpoint, which reflects his own mistaken perception of a racial other. Caliban is then rehumanized in the twentieth century, just as Prospero's values and morals are questioned and discredited. By defying Prospero's authority, the reader could banish certain prejudices and restore a narrative that has been lost and silenced: "As we ourselves change, our perceptions of Caliban – our own darkness – change. In the evolving image of Caliban we see a reflection of Anglo-American intellectual history. But we also see our ever-changing selves" (Vaughan 2, 405).

As the contemporary audience has become increasingly aware of the hegemonic discourse that has governed our world, new meanings and interpretations have been ascribed to *The Tempest*. Caliban's and Prospero's identities have been reconsidered and rewritten. Instead of merely listening to the grand narrative and its authoritative voice, the reader has managed to read between the lines, reconstruct a hidden discourse, and restore the lost narrative of a marginalized other who calls attention to moral concerns. While some critics have assumed that Shakespeare was conscious of the political implications of his play, the post-colonial reading is the creation and product of contemporary cultural and ideological perspectives. The familiarity of the reader with the discourse of imperialism, as well as colonial history, shapes his response and view of this complex play. By liberating the reader from an over-preoccupation with the

author's intentions, postcolonial readings empower literature to address current issues and provide the reader with new insights. As a consequence, the reader comes to share in rediscovering the text and in recreating its meaning in a way that integrates an informed experience of the world.

Chapter II: Signs of History in *Gulliver's Travels*, Book IV

Much of the criticism of *Gulliver's Travels* focuses on the author's moral attitude towards English colonial practices, the allegorical and satirical representation of Europe, and the negative view of human nature that can be found in the text. But this famous novel is more complex than the criticism suggests and can be interpreted in different ways and from different perspectives. Most interpretations of *Gulliver's Travels* are limited because they overemphasize the intentions of the author, which obscures other meanings that the novel contains. That Swift is writing to criticize England's government and colonial enterprises, and that he seems to be a misanthropist, are interpretations that can be derived from the author's letters to friends and other texts that he composed. However, in focusing on the intentions of the author, the reader is discouraged from discovering new meanings that are implicit but not explicit in the novel. In this chapter, I will be focusing on Gulliver rather than Swift and shall reveal hidden meanings that the novel may evoke apart from Swift's intentions. I shall argue that *Gulliver's Travels*, Book IV: "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhmns," emphasizes the representation of the self and the other and also that Gulliver may be seen as a type of colonial whose view of those he meets on this journey is impacted by colonial attitudes.

The idea of viewing the other as inferior, savage, or brute has been widely discussed by many writers from Michel de Montaigne to Edward Said. This idea expresses a typical imperial ideology whose only motive is to justify the colonial and imperial practices concerning the so-called "savage other." Montaigne discusses this idea in his essay, "Des Cannibals," where he defines the colonist in terms of three main traits. First, the colonist views the other as a savage whose only criteria is how this other differs from himself. Second, the colonist's barbarity

exceeds that of “the savage other” to which the title of the essay refers. Finally, the colonist typically steals and exploits the riches of “the savage other” for financial gain. The most important of these features is the first, which cogently summarizes the colonist’s view of the colonized, since the other two features are just consequences of the first one. When ‘the other’ is just a savage or an animal to the colonizer, then everything is likely to be permitted and the invader has the right to exercise superiority over this animal, benefit and profit by him, if not exterminate him. Montaigne’s discussion is an effective analysis of practices that re-occur throughout history, as well as in *Gulliver’s Travels*, Book IV. In the fourth voyage, Gulliver completely dehumanizes the Yahoos and views them as animals who are completely unlike himself.

In his work on Swift, Claude Rawson claims that Gulliver’s Yahoos resemble the eighteenth-century “Hottentot,” which is a name used to describe all savages with certain physical characteristics, especially African females. The stereotyping of the ‘savage other’ deeply concerned Swift, since he was against stereotyping the Irish in similar ways: “Swift was actively aware of the analogy, writing from ‘Wretched Dublin, in miserable Ireland’ to one correspondent that he would have to go ‘to the Hottentots’ to ‘match’ Irish behaviour’.” (Rawson 110). Gulliver stereotypes all of the Yahoos as savages with “hanging breasts” and the red-haired Yahoo females as being sexually vicious. Although Gulliver viewed the natives of all of the countries that he visited as deformed creatures or even as savages, there are strong sexual references in most of the voyages Gulliver visited: “A prurience about strange matings, or matings with strangers, as well as a generalized curiosity about the sexuality of the ‘other’, is comically recognized in Gulliver’s travels, where sexual confrontations of some sort occur in every voyage except perhaps the third” (Rawson 140). The novel highlights the complex sexual

relationship between the colonist and the colonized which Rawson analyzes in a very interesting way, claiming that “sexual disgust and sexual arousal are closer to one another than most people admit . . . the sexuality of natives is a staple of our imaginations about ethnic differences, including those which, for example, report, or impute, polygamy, promiscuity, incest, or sodomy, as well as quotidian lust, to savages” (Rawson 141). In the land of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver was sexually harassed by an eleven-year old female Yahoo while bathing in the river.

Gulliver’s description of the Yahoos demonstrates the influence of the Hottentot stereotype on the colonial mentality. Sartje Baartman was a Khoisan woman who “was exhibited for commercial profit in London and Paris” under the name of “Hottentot Venus” (Rawson, 115). Her oversized breasts and buttocks were objects of entertainment, sexual curiosity and disgust to the European audience. She was observed and exhibited as if she were a strange species of animal; people paid to see her and “extra fee for touching her” (Rawson 120). When she died, bodily remains were also exhibited. She was represented in paintings and even inspired plays and poems: “Elizabeth Alexander’s poem imagines Baartman saying: ‘Monsieur Cuvier investigates between my legs, poking, prodding, sure of his hypothesis...He complains at my scent’” (Rawson 118). As described by Rawson, the Hottentot stereotype inspired European women to wear dresses that imitated native costumes. As a result of this strange fascination, “a relationship was working itself out between primitivist fantasies and the social comportment and sartorial design of European society” (Rawson 136). This description of the Hottentot stereotype is largely reproduced in Gulliver’s references to the Yahoos as possessing similar traits.

In the fourth voyage, Gulliver expresses himself in ways that reinforce the colonial/imperial notion of otherness that has been an aspect of his thinking all along. The idea that the colonist usually views “the other” as a savage of an inferior race becomes evident in this

final journey. Here Gulliver is portrayed as the typical colonist who, upon landing in Houyhnhnm land, observes the Yahoos as looking unlike himself and compares them to animals: “At last I beheld several animals in a field Their Shape was very singular and deformed Their heads and breasts were covered with a thick hair . . . but the rest of their bodies were bare, so that I might see their skins, which were of a brown Buff Colour” (Swift 193). Although this description shows that the Yahoos are human beings in shape and form, Gulliver is blind to this clear resemblance. Gulliver has an unjustifiable hostility towards the Yahoos beginning with his first encounter with them: “I never beheld in all my travels so disagreeable an animal, or against which I naturally conceived so strong antipathy” (Swift 193). Therefore upon seeing a Yahoo coming near him, Gulliver “drew my hanger, and gave him a good blow with the flat side of it; for I durst not strike him with the edge, fearing the inhabitants might be provoked against me, if they should know, that I had killed or maimed any of their cattle” (Swift 193-94).

Gulliver fails to realize the Yahoos’ humanity, due to their different physical characteristics, which he views as ‘deformed’. The notion of mistaking differences for savagery was criticized by Montaigne in the sixteenth century. The so-called First World Europeans have a tendency to impose their own standards, such as whiteness, on others, and to reject and perhaps even “exterminate” those of a different race. English and other First World languages are recognized and accepted by the West, whereas the colonized “do not speak...any language” (Rawson viii). Swift gave the Yahoos “lips large, and the mouth wide: But these differences are common to all savage nations,” whereas Gulliver was given the characteristics associated with a higher race: “I differed very much from the rest of my species, in the whiteness, and smoothness of my skin” (Swift 205).

Gulliver's unjustifiable hostility to the Yahoos can be seen as a sort of racism, xenophobia and a rejection of the other's humanity: "natives and animals are seldom entirely separate in the minds of ruling groups" (Rawson, 98). He rejects and denies any kinship or likeness between himself and those savages who look defective, disgusting, and detestable to him in a manner that echoes the Europeans' refusal to accept the humanity of the Hottentots. "It is a symmetrical counterpart to the scientists' insistence on Baartman's animality, even as they note her intellectual and social skills" (Rawson 127). Consequently, every heartless act is justifiable and not considered immoral as the natives are always viewed as animals by the colonists who have the right to discover, entertain and exercise superiority over them. Gulliver's attack on the Yahoos is far more barbaric than their revenge on him, which disgusted rather than really harmed Gulliver. The less sophisticated minds of the Yahoos made them more innocent and less violent than the more elevated Gulliver. Moreover, Gulliver only refrained from killing the Yahoo in the first instance because he was afraid of angering the real natives of the island by killing one of their "cattle."

At no point in time does Gulliver feel any guilt for acting cruelly towards the Yahoos throughout his voyage. The Yahoos were detestable animals he abhors and believes ought to be exterminated. He seems to agree with the Houyhnhnms' barbaric projects against the Yahoos without sensing his or their atrocity:

Gulliver, helped by the sorrel Nag in Houyhnhnm land, makes things of Yahoo skin, as humans do with the skins of the beasts, engendering a crypto-cannibal frisson. This comes in *A Modest Proposal*, where it is suggested that if the proposal of eating the babies were adopted, then the manufacture of such products as 'admirable Gloves for ladies'. . . [in] the allegory of using the Yahoo skins is presented as a matter of what men do to beasts. (Rawson 84)

Even as witness to the debate among the Houyhnhnms about "exterminating" the Yahoos from "the face of earth" by castrating them as human beings do to animals, Gulliver does not object to

their project; in fact, this scene is followed by his description of the Houyhnhnms as a perfect race and his happy life among them.

Unlike the three others voyages, the Houyhnhnms are the only natives to whom Gulliver remains attached. He felt for the first time while among them that he never wanted to go back to his homeland: “And I cannot but observe, that I never had one hour’s sickness, while I staid in this island” (Swift 201). Gulliver’s idealization of the Houyhnhnms is unreasonable and unjustifiable:

In any case, Gulliver’s admiration for them gives evidence of his own hopeless delusion The list of charges against the Houyhnhnms is substantial And Gulliver’s master is exposed in a harsh inconsistency: horrified by Gulliver’s description of the European custom of castration of horses, he later suggests the same expedient in dealing with the Yahoos Book IV is Swift’s way of telling the reader that he ought not accept Gulliver’s conclusions about the transcendent virtue of the horses.

(Carnochan 23-24)

Gulliver’s positive description of the Houyhnhnms’ idealism and morality is often shown to be hollow. The Houyhnhnms do not have an exact word that would allow them to say that someone lies but considered Gulliver to be a liar since at first they were unwilling to believe him. He came through the sea from a land where people like him are masters and horses are slaves, so they accuse him of “saying the thing that was not.” The expression, “saying the thing that was not,” is ironic, since the Houyhnhnms still retain the concept of lying, or else they would have taken Gulliver’s stories as true. In fact, both Gulliver and the Houyhnhnms have double standards in judging matters of virtue, morality, and civility.

It is surprising for both the reader and Gulliver to learn in the end that the Yahoos are actually human beings. At first Gulliver strongly rejects this idea, although he starts to notice the resemblance, which might have been lurking in his mind from his first encounter with the Yahoos and which may explain his exaggerated hostility towards them. Gulliver was much

annoyed when the Houyhnhnms called him a Yahoo and pointed out the resemblance. He was in shock and in grief to be compared to the most disgusting animal that he “abhors.” Seeing the resemblance, he manages to hide his body with his clothes so that the Houyhnhnms would not notice his likeness to these poor creatures. Not knowing that Gulliver is wearing clothes and believing them to be part of his body, the Houyhnhnms believe that Gulliver’s body is somewhat unlike that of the Yahoos. Gulliver only takes off his clothes at night when he sleeps. When the resemblance was more clearly noted, Gulliver’s master stated that he seemed to be a perfect Yahoo. Gulliver tried to defend himself by giving his master details on the civilization of his country, but by doing so, he only called attention to the brutality and barbarity of his own nation. He gave his master details about “the art of war,” “cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols,” and so on. His master was shocked by these dreadful evils and responded by saying that the Yahoos could do anything if left to govern themselves.

Thus, instead of defending himself, Gulliver strengthens the Houyhnhnm’s belief that he is no more than a Yahoo, and perhaps even more savage: “That vast numbers of our people are compelled to seek their livelihood by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, forswearing, flattering, suborning, forging, gaming, lying, fawning, hectoring, voting, scribbling, stargazing, poisoning, whoring, canting, libeling, freethinking, and the like occupations” (Swift 219). In Book IV, Gulliver becomes more acutely aware of the evils and the corruption of his own society. Moreover, another incident shocks Gulliver and helps him realize his kinship to the Yahoos when a female Yahoo, who is sexually attracted to him, attacks him while he is bathing in a river. This is a moment of confrontation, Gulliver can no longer deny his kinship to the Yahoos. Here Gulliver begins to change his attitude towards life and learns a bitter lesson. He no longer views himself or his people as superior to the Yahoos, but he views all humankind as

Yahoos; all are brutes and savages. The Yahoos help Gulliver to see the truth about himself and his people. Thus he desires to isolate himself from the human race and live alone in exile, for he no longer wishes to live among Yahoos: “So horrible was the idea I conceived of returning to live in the society and under the government of the Yahoos” (Swift 248).

The fourth voyage marks a paradigm shift in Gulliver’s perspective when he made two important discoveries. The first discovery is his kinship to the Yahoos themselves and the second is the brutality of his homeland, England, which Gulliver ironically idealizes throughout Swift’s novel. Book IV could be analyzed through Montaigne’s essay, which stresses that the colonizer is more savage and brutal than the ‘savage other’:

I am not sorry that we should here take notice of the barbarous horror of so cruel an action, but that, seeing so clearly into their faults, we should be so blind to our own . I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torment We may then call these people barbarous, in respect to the rules of reason: but not in respect to ourselves, who in all sorts of barbarity exceed them. Their wars are throughout noble and generous Their disputes are not for the conquest of new lands . . . for they never meddle with the goods of the conquered. (Montaigne 370, 371)

Throughout Swift’s novel, there is little if any mention of real savagery or harm committed by the Yahoos. The only harm described by Gulliver is their defecating on him, and, in one incident, a mild form of sexual harassment by a little girl. However, Gulliver claims that the Yahoos are “cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but cowardly spirit, and by consequence insolent, abject, and cruel” (Swift 232).

On the other hand, Gulliver was possessed by a desire to harm and even to kill the Yahoos. His first reaction when he met one of them is to give him a strong blow with his handle. He even explains that he had wished to kill him but was afraid to anger the natives. Moreover, he collaborates with the Houyhnhnms and helps them use the skin of the Yahoos for practical

purposes. Gulliver even condones and justifies the genocidal plan of the Houyhnhnms, who are described as “endowed with general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideals of what is evil in a rational creature” (Swift 233). The comparison between the savage Yahoos and the civilized English becomes especially ironic once Gulliver realizes the brutality and savagery of his own nation. While the Yahoos worst offense is defecation and sexual desire, the English commits atrocities and crimes against humanity with their developed weapons that they use for killing their colonial victims. Yet Gulliver throughout the novel idealizes England as if blinded to its malice and treachery.

According to Raymond Bentman, “Gulliver straightforwardly praises England as a colonizer, ‘But this description, I confess doth by no means affect my British Nation, who may be an example to the whole world in their wisdom, care, justice in planting colonies’ and so on with an entire paragraph without any satirical device to indicate that Gulliver is being ironic” (537). However, as soon as he decides to defend his people and homeland by giving the Houyhnhnms details about his own civilization, Gulliver realizes the horrors and brutality that make the English worse than the Yahoos. He is thus able to see the follies of his countrymen, his culture, and himself:

But I must freely confess, that the many virtues of those excellent Quadrupeds placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had so far opened my eyes, and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light; and to think the honour of my own kind not worth managing; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do before a person of so acute a judgment as my master, who daily convinced me of a thousand faults in myself, whereof I had no perception before. (Swift 224)

The end of Gulliver’s voyage is dramatic as Gulliver gains insight into the morality that governs his world. He realizes that all humans are savages, malicious and corrupted. He is in a state of depression, unable to trust English society and morality or to accept the mistaken methods that

are used by the English to appear civilized. Gulliver's state of mind at the end of the novel was similar to that of Kurtz at the end of his voyage when he, too, discovered that the heroic mission of 'civilizing' colonial peoples was a great lie, especially once it began to involve cannibalism.

Swift's main view of the savage other is presented and analyzed in *Gulliver's Travels*, Book IV. The savage other is the one who is "the 'not us' who do not speak our language, or any language, whom we despise, fear, invade, and kill, for whom we feel compassion, or admiration, and an intense sexual interest" and that is "neither innocent nor harmless" (Rawson viii). Gulliver embodies the character of the colonist who is trapped in his own view and interpretation of things. His failure to see the humanity of the other tempts him to exercise power over the Yahoos without having to suffer from a guilty conscience. To Gulliver, the Yahoos are the worst animals he has ever seen. Therefore, he does not consider it to be immoral to attack, kill or torture them as they threaten his security. He also believes that he has the right to make use of them in the way he likes, take their land and everything that belongs to them, enslave them, make use of their skin, and finally exterminate or castrate them. In Gulliver's colonial discourse, atrocities are committed under the cover of civilization where natives are shut up and made invisible. The Yahoos are completely marginalized and disempowered; we never hear their voices or witness their behavior except through Gulliver's description of their savagery, which is limited to sexuality and defecation. They are also forced to assimilate to the view that their society has of them, until they become like the female Yahoo who throws herself at Gulliver.

Gulliver represents the colonist who is oriented towards his own supremacy and superiority. However, the more Gulliver excels in his voyages, the more he loses credibility, as the reader starts to see his deficient view of things, especially his idealization of England and his many misconceptions of the Houyhnhnms. Gulliver's partial self-realization encourages the

reader to question his colonial discourse. As he approaches the end of the novel, the reader has to revise Gulliver's account of the Yahoos and to question how Gulliver describes them. The Yahoos might be compared to any dehumanized race that was considered to be uncivilized by the Europeans of the eighteenth century. The reader is tempted to conclude that savagery is better than civilization, which corrupts human beings by making them behave worse than savages. Swift satirizes human beings by showing us how civilization does not make them better and makes Gulliver see the savagery of his civilized nation as exceeding that of the colonized.

Gulliver became ashamed of his kinship to the Yahoos when he learned that a Yahoo female was sexually attracted to him: "This was a matter of diversion to my master as well as a mortification to myself. For now I could no longer deny, that I was a real Yahoo, in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me as one of their own species" (Swift 233). The sexual aspects that emerge in all of Gulliver's voyages are controversial. It is as if, since sexuality is of interest to the colonist as well as the colonized, their mutual attraction shows that they are all of the same kind. However, Gulliver embodies the character of the colonist and presents the natives from his own viewpoint. Towards the end of the fourth voyage, he begins to understand that the colonized people are human beings like him. He changes his view of others, as he no longer views himself as superior to the natives, but he also comes to view all human beings as savage Yahoos and tries to isolate himself from humanity.

A long debate has been concerned with whether Gulliver is Swift's mouthpiece or whether Swift agrees with Gulliver's vision and ideals. Gulliver, like Swift, is a man who doesn't fit in wherever he goes. He always feels alien and outlandish: "In his letters from Ireland, Swift characterized himself as 'a stranger in a strange land' . . . [so] it is not surprising then, that Swift wound up creating the ultimate 'stranger in a strange land', Gulliver - a man who is by

definition an alien wherever he goes, and who is incapable of reclaiming a sense of home even when he returns to England” (Fabricant 311). Swift is an Anglo-Irish writer who doesn’t feel home in England or Ireland. He attacks the English government and colonial projects just as he attacks Irish backwardness. Swift finds himself too civilized to be Irish, and he despises English brutality and describes the English as cannibals in *A Modest Proposal*. Perhaps the solution Swift is tempted to accept is that he should live among the animals, or the Houyhnhnms, rather than with “a lawyer, a pick-pocket, a Colonel, a fool, a lord, a Gamster, a politician, a whoremunger, a physician, an Evidence, a suborner, an Attorney, a Traytor” (Swift 260). Swift brought Gulliver to the same conclusion; he made Gulliver realize the vices and the corruption of the English who are as savage and as brutal as the Yahoos. Swift wants Gulliver’s voyages to change the world and contribute to the reader’s understanding of it. Although Raymond believes that Swift urges the reader not to accept Gulliver’s conclusion concerning the Houyhnhnms, or his conclusion that human beings are the same as the Yahoos, there is no mention of whether the reader should accept Gulliver’s view of the Yahoos. What is challenging is that Swift himself views the other as a savage. Swift doesn’t favor the other in his writings: although he is against colonial brutality, he is also against the savage other. His description of the scene where an Indian shot Gulliver with a poisoned arrow is very significant. Rawson comments: “There can be no innocent reading of the innocence of the ‘harmless people’ after that. A second look at the passage, with its strong charge of indignation at brutal invaders and its animated rendering of their cruelties, shows the ‘harmless people’ as having very little identity” (21).

Whether Swift was a racist or attacked racism, and whether he was aware that his novel evokes the problem of the self and the other, are matters that do little good to explore, since I have argued that the text’s meanings are more useful to the critic than are the author’s intentions.

If Swift was a racist, his novel will continue to be read as one of the greatest anti-colonial and anti-imperial texts of all time. It is not clear whether Swift was completely unaware of the critical implications of his text. The novel itself is an attack on the English colonial system and the immorality of colonialism. Moreover, as is shown by Rawson, Swift was aware of the discourse on the Hottentots and knew of how they were sometimes compared to the Irish. But it is not clear whether Swift's representation of the Yahoos is derived from his hatred of Irish savagery or whether it is meant to criticize Gulliver for his mistaken view as creatures unlike himself. In any case, the reader is encouraged to reject Gulliver's view of the Yahoos, just as he rejects his view of the Houyhnhnms as an idealized view of the English.

Gulliver's Travels opens up a whole discourse about the colonial view of things and the depiction of the maligned other based on physical, ethnic, and cultural differences. The other is represented in a way that justifies every crime, including genocide, colonialism, and imperialism, that the civilized perpetuate on their colonial subjects. In the fourth voyage, the novel broadly highlights the morality of colonialism and its association with dehumanization and disempowerment. As a consequence, the reader gains insight into a dehumanized race whose voice and language are never heard and whose barbarism and savagery are not strongly in evidence. This voyage, more than any of the others, offers insight into all colonial projects from the sixteenth century up to our own time and can also help the reader gain insight into contemporary situations in which the identity of a marginalized people is often overlooked in both literature and the world.

Chapter III: Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a Colonial Text

In this chapter I attempt to answer the concern raised by Chinua Achebe, namely, “whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art” (344). The hermeneutical tradition addresses this concern by shifting the focus from the author to the reader and by giving the reader the capacity to think about the relationship between the text and the world. *Heart of Darkness*, like *Gulliver's Travels*, is a journey of discovery. It also confronts and challenges Marlow's views of the self and the other, forcing the reader to see the barbarity of a civilized race as far exceeding that of the so-called savage other. Like Gulliver, Marlow gradually recognizes the humanity of the cannibals, an idea that he resists throughout his journey. His final awakening came when he was able to meet Kurtz, only to be confronted with the brutality of his nation which he always tried to suppress.

According to Heidegger, the greatness of the work of art lies in its ability to project beings that the work both reveals and conceals. He argues that the work of art opens up other worlds, discourses, and possibilities that invite the reader to look beyond the text in order to investigate hidden discourses that are both absent and present. But the reader has to use his imagination and knowledge of the world in order to penetrate into what the text evokes. The worlds and meanings of the text are only accessible through the work of art and cannot be revealed without it. In examining one of Van Gogh's paintings of a pair of shoes, Heidegger was able to construct a whole image beyond the painting and to suggest the world of a peasant woman to whom the shoes belong. Although the peasant woman is not there in the painting, her very absence is the meaning that constructs her presence. The pair of shoes is the clue or the thread that the audience has to follow in order to pursue the meaning or the worlds and

possibilities that the work of art opens up. Heidegger argues that, in this regard, the painter or the author is no longer significant: “It is precisely in great art . . . that the artist remains inconsequential as compared to the text” (39). The work of art and the reader are better situated to bring new meanings to the work of art.

In his essay “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*,” Chinua Achebe offers compelling criticism that concerns the novel’s racism and marginalization of the African race. This essay provides an argument that can be used to discredit Conrad’s novel:

And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot . . . Whatever Conrad’s problems were, you might say he is safely dead. Quite true. Unfortunately his heart of darkness plagues us still. Which is why an offensive and deplorable book can be described by a serious scholar as ‘among the half dozen greatest short novels in the English language.’ And why it is today perhaps the most commonly prescribed novel in twentieth-century literature courses in English Departments of American universities. (Achebe 344-345)

Achebe’s discussion of the dehumanization and marginalization of the African race in *Heart of Darkness* lies at the core of his negative assessment of the novel. The absence/presence of the Africans in the novel requires that the reader pursue a hidden discourse of a silenced race and to question the morality of the narrator and perhaps the intentions of the author. The novel evokes a discourse of a marginalized other that the reader is invited to investigate and analyze. Achebe’s criticism is only possible on the basis of a novel in which he was able to analyze the racist ideology of the Western tradition and Conrad himself: “it is the desire – one might indeed say the need – 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 *Heart of Darkness* . . . better than any other work that I know displays that Western desire and need which I have just referred to” (337). Moreover, the novel offers clues

that the reader could pursue in order to construe the whole picture, penetrate the other's discourse and detect a different narrative that is absent and present.

Marlow's views and ideals at the beginning of his voyage reflect attitudes that are typical of nineteenth-century Europeans towards colonial Africa. While his values are challenged throughout his journey, he changes only gradually and then dramatically towards the end of the voyage. Like Gulliver, Marlow starts out with hostility and xenophobia towards the natives he encounters – in his case, the Africans whom he believes are cannibals. He calls them “cannibals,” “enemies,” and even “criminals.” Early in the narrative, he describes them as if were animals: “They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks – these chaps; but they had bones, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast” (Conrad 14). Marlow's tone as well as attitude starts to become more sympathetic as he begins to perceive the evils and injustices committed against the natives by those who fail to recognize their humanity: “They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation lying confusedly in the greenish gloom” (Conrad 17). Marlow's representation of the natives as cannibals is ironic. It seems to reflect an ideology deeply rooted in his culture as enshrined in a Western discourse that Marlow takes for granted: “Fine fellows – cannibals – in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them. And, after all, they did not eat each other before my face” (Conrad 34). His “cannibals” never engage in any act of cannibalism throughout the novel, but he persists to call them cannibals as if this were an incontestable fact.

Only after the voyage is well underway, does Marlow finally begin to question this belief, which becomes untenable when he observes how the natives reject cannibalism just as it begins

to acquire a certain justification. His realism is conspicuous in his description of how hunger can force human beings to do the unthinkable:

Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us – they were thirty to five...They were big powerful men with not much capacity to weigh the consequences, with courage, with strength...And I saw that something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there . . . Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear – or some kind of primitive honour? No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is, and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. (Conrad 41)

Marlow fails to find a single reason to explain why the natives on his ship choose not to eat the crew. The more that Marlow encounters the natives in his journey, the more his racist discourse is challenged. In time, he starts to recognize the humanity of the natives and the possible kinship between them and white Europeans: “No they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly” (Conrad 36). Once the humanity of the natives becomes evident, Marlow becomes shocked and disgusted with the crimes committed against them. He soon realizes that the sole purpose of his mission is for the possession of ivory and the profit it brings: “the word ivory rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it” (Conrad 23).

The meaning of the novel intensifies with the repetition of the name “Mr. Kurtz” who is “a very remarkable man” “an exceptional man” “a prodigy” “an emissary of pity, and science, and progress” “a universal genius” (Conrad 19, 22, 25, 28). Throughout the journey, Marlow pursues Kurtz with a passion, believing that he is perhaps the only remarkable and civilized man in Africa. He keeps himself busy, inquiring into Kurtz's methods, wondering what a civilized

man would do and how he would handle his life and work in such a savage place. For him, Kurtz becomes the basic reference: “I had plenty of time for meditation and now and then I would give some thought to Kurtz. I wasn’t very interested in him. No, still, I was curious to see whether this man who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there” (Conrad 31). Marlow believes that Kurtz is truly remarkable in the sense that he would be able to provide him with some sort of insight or disclose some deep secret. He believes that Kurtz is a ray of hope that shines amidst “an immense darkness.” Marlow explains:

I couldn’t have been more disgusted if I had traveled all this way for the sole purpose of talking with Mr. Kurtz. Talking with . . . I flung one shoe overboard and became aware that that was exactly what I had been looking forward to – a talk with Kurtz. I made a strange discovery that I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing. I didn’t say to myself, ‘Now I will never see him’ or ‘Now I will never shake him by hand,’ but, ‘Now I will never hear him.’ The man presented himself as a voice. (Conrad 47)

Marlow’s quest for Kurtz is a quest for knowledge, truth and justification. He was shocked at the contrast between the sacred mission of civilization and the savagery and greed of his countrymen. He hopes that Kurtz may be different or may disclose for him a secret that provides him with insight and justification for this mission. He hopes that Kurtz is truly remarkable in the sense that he may have a vision or an idea that would offer support for the indignation he feels for the savagery he witnesses throughout his voyage. He seems to be looking for a larger idea that gives some broader meaning to his voyage: “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only” (Conrad 7). According to Hunt Hawkins, “Marlow is initially attracted to Kurtz because ‘the man had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort’ . . . Kurtz had begun as

an idealist, and in his report he had quite sincerely proclaimed, ‘we can exert a power for good practically unbounded’. The ‘idea’ espoused by Kurtz that Marlow seems to admire, then, is not joining the natives but rather improving them” (288).

Marlow’s utter disappointment becomes evident once he meets Kurtz only to discover that he has “no method at all” (Conrad 62). Kurtz finally confirm the savagery and brutality of the Europeans in their imperial project. Ironically, he is more savage than anyone else Marlow met on his journey. Even the cannibals themselves show more restraint than Kurtz: “there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts” (Conrad 57). Kurtz was considered remarkable on the sole criteria of having the ability to make money: he is the guy who collects the largest amount of ivory. In truth, he is not exactly one person but a number of people; he represents all of Europe, European ideals as well as history. Adam Hochschild believes that Captain Leon Rom resembles Kurtz most strongly in the “collection of shrunken heads of African ‘rebels’” (176). Conrad himself describes Kurtz as saying, “His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (50).

Marlow was shocked with Kurtz’s shallowness and absence of motives. There is no justification, no larger idea to be adopted; there is only lust for money, racism and thirst for blood. Kurtz’s vacancy is indeed the very core that could be derived from the novel: “. . . Kurtz’s ‘vacancy’ in the story is in fact necessary and inevitable” (Meisel 21). Marlow rather inevitably experiences this vacancy in reply to his mission: there is no such mission or larger idea; there is rather “no method at all”: “There is nothing ‘to be found under’ Kurtz’s ‘eloquence’. The reason has nothing to do, of course, with Kurtz’s being any more a liar than anyone else, but with the inescapable conditions of meaning itself. The ‘matter’ of Kurtz’s

meaning escapes Marlow. . . because it simply does not exist” (Conrad 24-25). The meaning intensifies and the tensions increase once Marlow exposes Kurtz’s plans as a charter member of the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs: “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 as deity,’ . . . a kind of note at the foot of last page . . . ‘exterminate all the brutes’” (Conrad 50). Kurtz is absent or vacant in the sense that he couldn’t offer Marlow what he wants to find. He has nothing to say about a civilizing mission or a greater idea; however, he did provide Marlow with moral insight into the vacuity of the imperial project, shallow motives and false propaganda.

Marlow indeed achieves his quest for knowledge, but not in the way that he wanted or expected. Nothingness and absence are the very essence of meaning in this novel. But Kurtz has much to offer Marlow, who finally recognizes “that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it . . . he had summed up – he had judged. ‘The horror!’” (Conrad 70) Meisel discusses how Marlow’s preoccupation with evidence does not allow the truth to emerge in Marlow’s mind: “What is present through the evidence is precisely Kurt’s absence of morality” (Meisel 21). Kurtz is a kind of receding object and constitutes the heart of Marlow’s search in a way that is not immediately evident to him. Meisel thus approaches the problem of emptiness in terms of the narrative as a whole:

I suggest, then, that the horror that assails Marlow has to do with the impossibility of disclosing a central core, an essence, even a ground to what Kurtz has done and what he is. There is no central thread in the weave of the evidences that constitute his character, much less no deep center to his existence as a surface of signs. So when critics puzzle over Kurtz’s absence when Marlow finds him gone from his cabin, we may offer the alternative conclusion that Kurtz’s absence is itself a sign for his meaning, one which is ‘short’ or ‘wanting’ . . . [so that] it is the meaning of the story that keeps Kurtz’s meaning absent, and indeed, that makes of absence the ground of presence itself. (Conrad 25, 27)

While Conrad and Marlow should not be confused, Conrad involves Marlow in a voyage of self-discovery in a way that may be similar to Conrad's own voyage to the Congo. Some critics have interpreted Marlow's voyage as a voyage to the inner self or the unconscious. Conrad shows us how Marlow changes his views gradually and provides the reader with moral insights into the horrors of the European imperial project. Conrad challenges the propaganda of a "civilizing mission" through his representation of atrocities committed towards the natives and through his representation of Kurtz. According to Hunt Hawkins, Conrad introduces ideals familiar to the audience, like "the idea" of "efficiency" and the "civilizing mission," in order to demonstrate their fallacy:

Conrad and Marlow similarly reject the 'idea' in the course of the novel. When faced with the temptation to 'go native' – not merely to imitate the Africans but, like Kurtz, to exploit them – Marlow finds that no ideas of any sort can provide sufficient restraint. The particular idea of the 'civilizing mission' not only fails to restrain exploitation but actually prompts it. Kurtz provides a striking illustration. (Hawkins 295)

The gradual self-realization that Marlow undergoes allows his reader to discover the humanity of the so-called cannibals, who never engaged in any act of cannibalism, and also to discover the savagery of the Europeans themselves. Finally, it demonstrates the brutality of Mr. Kurtz, who was Marlow's final hope in his quest for an idea or a mission. Indeed, meeting Mr. Kurtz marks a paradigm shift in Marlow's understanding, since Marlow gets the real notion of "the idea" or the "civilizing mission" as a cover to trap and dazzle those who accept it. After this notion is rejected, Kurtz can be judged by the same moral standards that are applied to all human beings.

Without mentioning the Congo or King Leopold, Marlow expected his readers to make these connections: "The several casebooks on *Heart of Darkness* is full of Congolese history *Heart of Darkness* is full of details suggesting the particular inefficiency of King Leopold's

rule” (Hawkins 290). The historical references are inescapable as Conrad himself made the journey to the Congo during Leopold’s rule and gives the reader a close account of what took place during that time. In his “Open Letter to his Serene Majesty Leopold II,” George Washington Williams describes the natives in the Congo in a manner that echoes Conrad’s novel:

I was anxious to see to what extent the natives had ‘adopted the fostering care’ of your Majesty’s ‘benevolent enterprise’ and I was doomed to bitter disappointment Your majesty’s government has sequestered their land, burned their towns, stolen their property, enslaved their women and children, and committed other crimes too numerous to mention in detail These recruits are transported to under circumstances more cruel than cattle in European countries. They eat their rice twice a day by the use of their fingers; they often thirst for water when the season is dry; they are exposed to the heat and rain, and sleep upon damp and filthy decks of the vessels often so closely crowded as to lie in human ordure. And, of course may die. (124)

Conrad wants his reader to go beyond the literary text and reevaluate history. He gradually shakes the reader’s belief in a “civilizing mission” – or, in Hawkins term, “an idea” – which was dominant in the discourse in this time and was used to justify the horrors and injustice of imperialism. Conrad’s novel, conceived in this way, is a strong statement against imperialism. Conrad introduces his criticism by providing the reader with an image of the humanity and innocence of the natives, who had more restraint than their civilized counterparts. In this way, he demonstrates that the brutality of civilization can far exceed that of any savage nation.

Although Conrad sometimes dehumanizes the natives, he should be credited for recognizing their underlying humanity. He rejects imperialism when he reveals its false propaganda that is used to trap the Europeans, who condone colonialism under the cover of “an idea” or “civilizing mission”: “In assessing Conrad’s position, we should remember that the anti-imperialism was much less common in his time than in our own. Given the popular assumption that the peoples of Africa and Asia were ‘primitive’ and ‘barbaric’, it was by no means clear that

imperialism was wrong” (Hawkins 294). Moreover, Conrad should be credited for defying dominant European notions when he puts everything into doubt by challenging an imperialist discourse, which resurfaces whenever the West engages in crimes against humanity under the pretext of engaging in a civilizing mission.

Apart from Conrad’s supposed intentions, motives and morality, the reader can also transcend the author’s meanings insofar as interpretation in the hermeneutical tradition liberates the reader from all authoritative discourses, even of that of the author. *Heart of Darkness* empowers and liberates us as it shocks and helps us reject many familiar notions, thus enabling us to recognize the brutality of civilization. Similarly, the novel urges the reader to go beyond the text and to investigate a hidden discourse about a marginalized other, who was largely silenced by the author. The reader is encouraged to connect the story with history and to question the need to create rationalizations for “a civilizing mission” or “an idea.” Moreover, Kurtz’s vacancy is the very essence of meaning in the novel. Just as Heidegger claims that silence can speak, the reader is encouraged to investigate the discourse of a race whose very absence calls upon her to investigate the world, identity, and laws of this marginalized other. The role of silence in *Heart of Darkness* is intriguing as the truth seems to be hidden in silence. The reader is encouraged to complete what Marlow and perhaps what Conrad himself has left out and to question and reject familiar notions by reading between the lines and by using clues and evidence derived from the novel itself.

Marlow’s representation of the Africans as cannibals could be rejected by the reader since the novel offers no real evidence to support or verify such a view. On contrary, there is no act of cannibalism or harm recorded in the novel as committed by the Africans. Instead, the native Africans show restraint. This puzzles Marlow because he fails to understand what

standards can be maintained if someone faces hunger. On the other hand, the Europeans appear to be the real villains of the story. They lack restraint, cause harm, murder and slaughter the natives for no obvious reason. Hence, the reader is encouraged to reflect on the culture of the Africans, who appear more human and more civilized than the Europeans. The reader suspects and even reverses Marlow's account and perception: "No, they were not inhuman" is the message that is heard in a sudden moment when the whole picture shifts and the reader comes to see that the "darkness" named in the title is that of the Europeans rather than the Africans. Even though Conrad may have not favored the natives, he shows that the darkness and savagery of the Europeans far exceeds that of the native Africans. The reader thus gains insight into the prejudices, unjustified hatred and the moral biases that shaped the eighteenth-century ideology, causing the destruction and torture of anyone who has a darker skin.

Achebe's criticism helps us see how this insight largely derives from Conrad's perception of race, the question of morality and the dehumanization of native peoples. Moreover, Achebe was even able to identify with the Africans:

Many years ago at a Pan-African Writers' Conference in Stony Brook, I was in the audience as Achebe told how he had loved *Heart of Darkness* as a boy, and had 'naturally' identified with Marlow, even shared the traveler's fear of the natives, until one day he became aware that he was one of those natives. At that moment he recognized that the proper figure of identification was not the central figure of the white traveler but the dark, faceless, nameless limbs this traveler sees on the edges of the Congo (Hoeller 132)

Thus Conrad's novel not only urges the reader to rewrite history and also to rethink identity. Conrad's novel exposes a silenced race that the novel both reveals and conceals. This provokes the reader to ask questions concerning matters of identity, morality, culture and silence. Furthermore, as the novel moves ahead in time, and as it is read by different audiences

representing different backgrounds, new narratives arise, especially when the audience is forced to identify with the dehumanized race and to restore a lost narrative.

Hildegard Hoeller examined *Our Sister Killjoy*, a novel by Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo, “as a postcolonial revision of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” where the author reverses roles and forces himself to identify with a race that is normally subordinate:

It is also for the very same reason that Aidoo’s novel cannot be labeled racist Aidoo’s ‘alternative frame of reference’ – the kind that Achebe sees lacking in *Heart of Darkness* . . . is Conrad’s text . . . It is searching out and refraining from the ‘horror’ of *Heart of Darkness* Aidoo’s text is a postcolonial response to Conrad’s text Unlike Achebe I felt no need to write the history of my people in reaction to Aidoo’s novel. Indeed the fact that I was repositioned for once, rather than positioned for a long time, made the book so revealing to me. (142)

Thus, the power of the novel far transcends the author’s ideas and limitations. It is now the role of the reader to rewrite the African’s history and cultural identity. The novel in this way acquires new meanings and can be understood in different ways as it increases the audience’s awareness and life experience. The novel provides the reader insight into the imperial ideologies that have shaped our world whenever the colonist starts out on a “civilizing mission” but ends up violating the rights of humanity.

Heart of Darkness is a complex and philosophical novel that employs contrasting techniques in order to juxtapose savagery and civilization, allowing the reader to come to certain conclusions. The darkness referred to by Conrad in his title is that of the civilized Europe rather than Africa. There have been various interpretations of this novel that argue for or against Conrad’s racism. However, in either case, this novel invites the reader to perceive the horror of racism and imperialism as it presents the injustice and suffering of a marginalized race that was condemned to slavery, torture, starvation and even death in every image and scene. This novel exposes the dark motives of the Europeans and challenges their terrible ideology as they justify

their voyage as a “civilizing mission” and end up, in the figure of Kurtz, contemplating genocide. The gradual change of Marlow’s attitude towards the natives, his discovery of their humanity, and his disclosure of the dark motives of the Europeans encourage the reader to comprehend the discourse of the natives and to see more than what Marlow was able to understand. As the novel is approached with a more complete knowledge of other texts, history and the world, the twenty-first century reader gains insight into racism and learns how to revise some of the long-standing interpretations of modern history. Thus, *Heart of Darkness* urges the reader to reconstruct a lost narrative that challenges the grand narrative of Western history, and, in this way, is invited to achieve a more critical understanding of the dominant tradition.

Chapter IV: A Critical Inquiry into Palestinian Discourse

Interpretation in hermeneutics encourages the reader to reinterpret and understand texts in light of his or her own personal experience and knowledge of the world. Following this approach, the reader can gain insight into the portrayal of certain marginalized groups in Western literature as mirrored in various ideologies. With the emergence of other narratives that run counter to hegemonic discourses, the reader is encouraged to rethink specific ideas concerning history that are readily accepted as true. In this chapter, I examine Mourid Barghouti's memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*, as a counter narrative that calls attention to the plight of the Palestinians and, in this way, helps the reader question a dominant narrative that is often used to cover up atrocities and terror. *I Saw Ramallah* is a memoir of the Palestinian author, Mourid Barghouti, who lives in the Diaspora and whose remaining wish is that his son should be able to see Palestine. Barghouti restores a lost narrative and empowers the marginalized other by enabling the reader to listen to the other's voice as it speaks about displacement and dispossession. His story opens up various questions about the Palestine/Israel conflict and provokes the reader to rethink the dominant narrative.

In his book *The Persistence of the Palestine Question*, Joseph Massad exposes the different strategies employed by Israel throughout history in order to justify their colonization of Palestine to the West. Particularly in the twentieth century, Zionists undertook to rewrite Palestinian and Israeli history in order to render the Palestinians invisible, on the one hand, and win recognition and support from the West on the other. According to Massad, the Zionists assumed a role that conforms to a familiar colonial paradigm. They presented Palestine as "empty" and as inhabited only by "savages," just as they contended that they were engaging in a

“civilizing mission” to raise Palestine to a higher state of civilization (Massad 15). The early justification for adopting this attitude toward the Palestinians is filled with an imperial rhetoric:

The ‘heroic’ legend was described by Chaim Weizmann, Israel’s first president, in the context of Palestinians anti-colonial revolt of 1936 – 1939, as follows ‘On one side, the forces of destruction, the forces of the desert, have arisen, and on the other side stand firm the forces of civilization and building. It is the old war of the desert against civilization, but we will not be stopped.’

(Massad 21)

The Zionists also proclaimed that Palestine is their original homeland and that the Palestinians were the real colonists, and that in coming back to their place of origin after a long period of suffering, their era is a post-colonial one: “Theirs was an act of repatriation. Consequently, it is pre-Israel Palestine that represents a colonial era in Zionist discourse with Israel being its post-colonial successor” (Massad 26).

The Zionists sought to make all the connections necessary in order to substantiate the claim of being the descendants of the ancient Palestinians. This included the renewed use of Hebrew, recourse to archeology as well as the attempt to obliterate Palestinian history itself. In short, the Zionists had to remove the Palestinians from history and to reposition themselves as masters:

As for the history of the Palestinians in Palestine, Zionism undertook its rewriting. As a result, the war between the European Jewish colonists and the colonized Palestinians extended to the realm of cartography and archaeology with Israeli maps showing all of historic Palestine as Israel and Palestinian maps showing all of historic Palestine to be an occupied country. As for archaeology, the Israelis, who have monopoly on it, are in constant search for archeological ‘proofs’ of authenticate European Jewish claims to Palestinians/Israeli space and time. (Massad 39)

In more recent years, many Israelis have used the Holocaust as another justification for invading Palestine in order to draw the world’s sympathy as “the absolute victims” who fled Europe only to encounter another enemy. “Jewish history was rewritten by Zionism; one could say that it has been Zionized. Jewish history now became the triumphant history of the ancient Hebrews,

interrupted by an ignominious European Jewish history of programs and oppression, culminating in the Jewish Holocaust and then continuing with the triumphant history of Zionism” (Massad 129). It is a short step to then argue that the Palestinians who resist their dispossession are little more than “terrorists” who attack the Jewish state along with its dubious myth of origins.

In his memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti counters the Israeli narrative by rehumanizing the Palestinians as a people, just as he urges the world to listen to their voices and render them visible. The memoir recounts the truth of the Israeli colonial settler as a part of the everyday life of the Palestinians and the injustice that is done to them. The book is an anatomy of the shared sense of loss and humiliation that the Palestinians feel whether in the diaspora or in their own homeland as they are expelled from their homes, dispersed, and subjected to daily check points. Israel has robbed the Palestinians of everything by force – their history, culture, and geography – by means of twisted arguments that has dictated history to the world. Israelis have expelled Palestinians from their homes and cut down their trees in order to build settlements to accommodate a larger population. They have changed names, history, and spatial designates to enjoy full sovereignty and deprive the Palestinians of their possessions. Barghouti responds to his sense of dispossession and alienation by creating a narrative in which the Palestinians have rights to own and manage their own affairs, rather than simply presenting them as objects of Israeli atrocities. At the same time, Barghouti presents the devastating effects of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinians who feel humiliation everywhere as they belong nowhere. Even the simple family gathering of mother, father and sons under the same roof is denied to them as they lived dispersed with no right to return. Humiliation and bitterness underlie the situation when they come to their own birthplace and ask for admission from the Israelis, but have to wait for hours to gain entry or to be rejected in the end.

Barghouti analyzes the refugee's problem by portraying his sense of dispossession, disbelonging and nostalgia towards his own homeland and birthplace. He describes the sense of loss, defeat, and helplessness that he feels as a Palestinian who is expelled from his home with no right to return or lead a normal life among his family in his own birthplace. He lives as an alien and a stranger, dispersed in every country after being displaced and prevented from return in 1967: "And from here, from the Voice of the Arab radio station, Ahmed Sa'id tells me that Ramallah is no longer mine and that I will not return to it. The city has fallen . . . I am awarded a BA from the Department of English language and literature, and I fail to find a wall on which to hang my certificate" (Barghouti 3). In Palestine, Barghouti feels alien, a guest in his cousin's house. He finds difficulty in identifying with this place as everything has changed, even the nature of Palestine. His admittance is always a problem since he has to wait for consent from the Israelis to reenter his homeland: "I am used to waiting. I have not entered any Arab country easily, and today too I will not enter easily" (Barghouti 19). Outside Palestine he also feels exile; the world refuses him and he doesn't belong anywhere. He has to obtain permits every time to enter any country and he only wishes his "entry to Cairo Airport to become as natural as the entry of a German, a Japanese, or an Italian" (Barghouti 129). He has adapted and identified himself with a sense of dispossession and lack of belonging; moreover, he has learned not to attach himself to any place or possession, as he will eventually have to leave it.

Barghouti analyzes the bitterness and humiliation he feels as a Palestinian at the loss of his homeland. Every time he wishes to enter Palestine, he has to obtain a permit and wait for Israeli approval. Anger and provocation fill him as he feels the humiliation of having to obtain approval from the usurpers to enter his birthplace: "The others are still masters of the place. They give you permit. They start files on you. They make you wait" (Barghouti 38). He would wait for

hours at the bridge for a permit and then would expect rejection as well. For him the bridge is a symbol of his weakness, helplessness, and humiliation; it isolates him from his homeland and prevents him from leading a normal life in his house and country:

I would have thanked you had you been made by volcanoes and their thick, orange terror. But you were made by miserable carpenters, who held their nails in the corners of their mouths, and their cigarettes behind their ears. I do not say thank you, little bridge. Should I be ashamed in front of you? Or should you be ashamed in front of me? You are near like the stars of the naïve poet, far like a step of one paralyzed. What embarrassment is this? I do not forgive you, and you do not forgive me. The sound of the wood under my feet.

(Barghouti 10)

As a Palestinian, Barghouti is destined to feel exile and alienation even in his own land. He would visit his homeland as a guest in his cousin's house. His identification and memories of his homeland are robbed and shattered as Israeli officials change names and geography and his own political status becomes that of a refugee:

Here I am walking toward the land of the poem. A visitor? A refugee? A citizen? A guest? I do not know. Is this a political moment? A surreal one? A moment of the body? Or of the mind? The wood creaks. What has passed of life is shrouded in a mist that both hides and reveals. Why do I wish I could get rid of this bag? There is very little water under the bridge. Water without water. As though water apologized for its presence on this boundary between two histories, two faiths, two tragedies. The scene is rock. Chalk. Military. Desert. Painful as a toothache. (Barghouti 11)

Inside Palestine, everything has changed as the Israelis are robbing the Palestinians of their culture, identity and memories. For a Palestinian, agriculture, olive and fig trees constitute his very identity, but Israelis are removing the greenery of Palestine in order to build settlements in its place. It is demolishing houses, confiscating lands, and expelling Palestinians in order to build more and more settlements, as Barghouti bitterly recalls:

If you hear a speaker on some platform use the phrase 'dismantling the settlements,' then laugh to your heart's content. These are not children's fortress of Lego or Meccano. These are Israel itself; Israel the idea and the ideology and the geography and the trick and the excuse. It is the place that is ours and that they

have made theirs. The settlements are their book, their first form. They are our absence. The settlements are the Palestinians Diaspora itself. (Barghouti 29)

As a displaced Palestinian, Barghouti finds relief in clinging to the memories of his homeland, which remains in his soul, and in bringing up his son to love Palestine and to want to return to it. And yet, he is also haunted by the sense that his homeland has become increasingly abstract to him and to those he loves: “The long occupation has succeeded in changing us from children of Palestine to children of the idea of Palestine” (Barghouti 62). Barghouti keeps describing Palestine to his friends as a lost paradise with its lovely nature, green hills and olive trees. However, he feels shocked when he returns to Palestine and learns that it is no longer the Palestine he knows. Israel flags fly everywhere and their settlements have replaced the green areas. Thus, upon his return, he couldn’t weep and shed tears of homesickness as he feels he is not in his Palestine; it is a completely different place. The river that used to be filled is now empty: “Nature had colluded with Israel in stealing its water. It used to have a voice, now it was a silent river, a river like a parked car” (Barghouti 5). The Palestinians who remain on their land are subjected to daily checkpoints. Their movement, affairs, and freewill are restricted by the Israelis. “Occupation prevents you from managing your affairs in your own way. It interferes in every aspect of life and death; it interferes with movement and desire and walking in the street” (Barghouti 48). Palestinian homes are demolished and their land is confiscated. Israeli sovereignty over Palestine is complete and delivers “one message, all the time and every way: ‘We are the masters here’” (Barghouti 141).

Barghouti further stresses the controversial paradox when he – a Palestinian by birth, whose mother and grandmother and ancestors were Palestinians by birth – was able to turn an Israeli soldier into a symbol of what had gone wrong historically. Barghouti cannot accept the

Israeli justification of a right to return. Palestine was lost by force. What had happened is therefore a question of power. And yet, Barghouti wonders if the ordinary Israeli soldier can experience the Palestinians as human like him:

I know everything about the inhumanity of his job. He is a soldier of occupation, and in any case his situation is different from mine, especially at this moment. Can he notice my humanity? The humanity of the Palestinians who pass under the shadow of his shining gun every day? (Barghouti 14)

He looks for signs of the Israelis' humanity; he wonders about their lives as human beings, which would be contradicted by the guns they carry either to attack or defend themselves against the Palestinians. "Do their kids play football behind these walls? Do their men and women make love behind those windows? Do they make love with guns strapped to their sides? Do they load machine guns ready on their bedroom walls?" (Barghouti 29). Moreover, the Israelis and the Palestinians do not differ physically but have acquired their separateness in other ways.

Massad launches an inquiry into the nature of dehumanization and the hostility that is conducted apart from the issue of physical sameness. He presents an intriguing case of how Israelis would fight and defy any likeness between themselves and the Palestinians. A paper published in the learned journal, *Human Immunology*, examined the genetic variations in the immune system among people in the Middle East only to conclude that the Israelis and Palestinians bear the same genetic traits. However, the article which provided the evidence was quickly removed from the journal's website when letters were written in protest. Geneticist Dolly Tyan, one of the key sponsors of the journal, told subscribers that members of her own scientific society were "offended and embarrassed" by the article (Massad 151). In this regard, the Israeli claims for biological distinctiveness echoes Western xenophobia. Many Israelis have tried to cling to European ideals, culture, and even physical characteristics in order to separate themselves from Arabs in a manner that echoes Gulliver's need to differentiate himself from the

Yahoos by hiding his body with clothes: “It is important to note that both Jews and Palestinians are viewed as objects in relation to white gentile European subjects. To white Europeans, European Jews (as Edward Said has shown) represented the Orient inside Europe, with the Arab later becoming their ‘fearsome shadow’” (Massad 85).

According to this line of reasoning, Israel needed to separate its culture from the Middle East in every aspect of life to create a “civilized” Israel that would win recognition from the West. The role of Zionism in this process has been crucial but it is also deceptive:

This commitment to West European Enlightenment culture on the part of Zionism denies the actual geographic origins of most European Jews. The culture of the rural, poor, squalid shtetls of Eastern Europe is suddenly replaced subtextually in Zionist discourse with the cosmopolitan cultures of Berlin and Paris from where relatively few Jews originated. (Massad 58)

With these racial principles in mind, Israel became a Zionist State. Hence the Zionist project not only emphasized Jewish exclusivity basis but drew a sharp distinction between Arabs and European Jews. A new discourse was created with the aim of encouraging newcomers to see maturity in terms of the Europe that newcomers had left behind, so that “European-style civilization” could become “the set telos of this maturation process” (Massad 64). In this new Zionist hierarchy, the European Jews came on top, then the Arab Jews, and finally the Palestinians. Thus, Israel came to be based on an ideology of racial and religious discrimination which impacts its very identity:

While Zionism in early history presented itself unashamedly as a colonial-settler movement, it later insisted that it was nothing less than a Jewish national liberation movement which could be viewed as ‘anti-colonial’. What *Zionism remained unashamed about throughout its history, however, was its* commitment to building a demographically exclusive Jewish state modeled after Christian Europe, a notion pervaded, as the following will illustrate, by religio-racial epistemology of supremacy over the Palestinian Arabs, not unlike that used by European colonialism with its ideology of white supremacy over the natives. (Massad 140)

When Barghouti asks Felicia Langer, the Israeli lawyer who defends Palestinian detainees, if she would accept him as a *refugee* in *her* country, she answers: “I wish! But the laws of our government would not permit it” (156). His response is significant: “I expected that she should be upset, that she would contemplate my question for a little while and see what lay behind it. But she was completely unable to pick up the resounding bitterness in my question. Her answer came as a shock, as a slap in the face” (Barghouti 156). Bitterness underlines both the question and the reply; it also expresses the oppression, humiliation and provocation of this unbearable situation. Palestinians are only viewed sympathetically for the wrong reasons: “Israelis may feel sympathy for us but they find enormous difficulty in feeling sympathy for our cause and our story” (Barghouti 156). Barghouti revises the Israeli narrative that has been dictated to the world since the triumph of Zionism. In response to this narrative, he speaks of the Palestinian cause as the right to live, to own their country and to be treated as equal to the Israelis.

The idea that the Holocaust is responsible for much of what Israelis have done has been used to justify their policies towards the Palestinians and to gain the sympathy of the world. Barghouti states, however, that the Holocaust was not an Arab or Palestinian crime and that the Palestinians should not have to pay for it. The event of the Holocaust is no excuse for any attempt to holocaust the Palestinians.

When we were Palestine, we were not afraid of the Jews. We did not hate them, we did not make an enemy of them. Europe of the middle Ages hated them, but not us. Ferdinand and Isabella hated them, but not us. Hitler hated them, but not us. But when they took our entire space and exiled us from it they put both us and themselves out of the law of equality. They became an enemy, they became strong; we became displaced and weak. They took the space with the power of the sacred and with the sacredness of the power, with the imagination, and with geography (Barghouti 156-157)

Massad stresses the retrograde Israeli logic pertaining to the Holocaust, which no longer clearly applies a new situation in which the Israelis have arrived in Palestine as colonizers with guns and missiles, rather than as peaceful refugees. The opposition between refugee and invader is crucial to the distinction that Massad makes in positioning the newcomers to Palestine in relation to traditional Western colonialism:

This ‘transformation’ in the status of European Jews which took place en route (from the shores of Europe to the shores of Palestine) is absent from the history provided by a racialized ‘white’ discourse. At the outset, one must emphasize that the European Jewish colonial experience is not in itself unique, although the Jews’ experience as holocaust-surviving refugees certainly is. Other Europeans had a similar colonial status when they embarked on colonial settlement of the ‘New World’.

(Massad 82)

In this new situation, the Palestinians become isolated in a political community that no longer recalls the suppressed narrative. The world looks on and fails to acknowledge a more recent wrong at a moment when “Israel is joined by a large international chorus in demanding that the Palestinians accept Zionism’s ideological deployment of the Jewish Holocaust to justify its crimes against the Palestinians” (Massad 131). Thus, not only do Israelis steal Palestinian land, houses, and possessions, but also the Palestinian narrative, while positioning themselves as victims and dictating to the world that the Palestinians are terrorists and anti-Semites. There is no mention of Israeli colonialism, the expulsion of the Palestinian people, massacres, and other crimes against humanity.

By manipulating discourse, the Zionists were able to present themselves as being peaceful natives, rather than armed usurpers. Their discourse on terrorism has been thoughtfully analyzed by Massad: he shows how it ironically describes the weaker or the uncivilized party rather than the civilized, whose violence and terror is given legitimacy. This logic echoes

Montaigne's description of the civilized, who committed more savage acts than the savages themselves. The true source of violence is hidden in an essentialist discourse:

At the level of discourse, it is the anti-terrorist who creates the 'terrorist', not the other way round But if terrorism is the discourse of identity and equalization between Colonial State violence and those who resist it among the colonized, it remains remarkable that terrorism is identified not as a weapon of the strong, but ironically as the weapon of the weak In this colonial discourse which essentializes terrorism, terror is indeed the opposite of terror. (Massad 7)

From this standpoint, the "terrorism" of the civilized is condoned whereas that of the colonized is condemned. Israel, the civilized, and Mr. Kurtz should not be judged using the same moral standard as they have "larger idea" to "legitimize" and "redeem" violence. Thus the argument is accepted that the civilized will colonize the uncivilized, take their land, expel, and kill him, and if the uncivilized decide to defend themselves, they are classified as terrorists and more violence against them will be justified.

In *On Suicide Bombing*, Talal Asad also analyzes and challenges Western attitudes and definitions of terrorism as an adjective ascribed to the weak or the 'uncivilized' by exposing double standards in the way that this word condemns one act of terror only to justify the other. Talal Asad discusses the ideology that renders suicide bombing terrorism innocuous compared to Israeli bombings of Palestine and U.S. bombings of Iraq, when the number of victims resulting from the first is much less than those resulting from the second. According to this logic, the U.S. war against Iraq is justified as a war against terrorism; therefore, the terrorism committed by the U.S. during its war against terrorism should be justifiable as well: "There is no reason why, in the war against terrorism, this permission cannot cover the use of torture against presumed terrorist captives" (Asad 17). Asad analyzes the question of legitimization and what makes the audience approve of certain acts of atrocities as acceptable and 'humane'. The superior and

strong propagate the dominant discourse that insists on the savagery of the other. Once this other becomes a symbol of evil and terror, the act of getting rid of him becomes justifiable. The Western media propagates the violence of suicide bombing and the terrorism of Islam but does not do the same when it comes to the brutality of the Israelis. Asad cites a passage on a suicide bombing that took place in Jerusalem to show how it aims to evoke compassion for the victims and condemnation of the act.

Asad manages to counter the grand narrative on suicide bombing, not by defending the act but by comparing reactions to suicide bombing as opposed to atrocities committed against Arabs: “Western states (including Israel) have now massacred thousands of civilians and imprisoned large numbers without trials; they have abducted, tortured, and assassinated people they claim are militants and laid waste to entire countries” (93). The question is ultimately who is authorized to write history and establish a legitimate discourse. Only the powerful, namely, the white Europeans, dictate history and discourse. Other accounts of history written by the weaker party are not to be taken into account. Thus as an official discourse, terrorism is always ascribed to the weaker party in order to justify violence against them, which will not be recorded in history. As a result of this discourse, the experience of the other is replaced with an ideological justification for current policies: “While much of Israel’s violence is ‘explained’ by the pre-Israel status of European Jews, Palestinian violence is also viewed hermeneutically through the status of those same Jews, the status of the Palestinians as products of their own separate history being deemed irrelevant” (Massad 83).

In his essay, “Historical Truth, Modern Historiography, and Ethical Obligations: The Challenge of the Tantura Case,” Ilan Pappé questions the truth of history as he investigates the Tantura massacre as committed by Israelis in 1948. From a scholarly point of view, the Tantura

case raises fundamental questions about the writing of history. It exposed the truth of the Israelis as colonial settlers and counters their narrative that the Palestinians left Palestine willingly. Upon taking control of the coastal plain stretching from Haifa in the north to Tel-Aviv in the south, the Alexanderoni Brigade destroyed an entire region that was inhabited by an indigenous population: “By May 1948, the day the Jewish state was declared, 58 villages had already been erased from the face of earth” (Pappe 119). Pappe provides oral testimonies of eye-witnesses and investigates indirect evidence about the atrocities committed by the Israelis against the Palestinian civilians in the village of Tantura, ranging from massacres, execution, torture and rape. Pappe offers a vivid image of the rampage in Tantura where two hundred and fifty Palestinians were slaughtered, describing the torture witnessed by the victims’ family members and the Israeli soldiers rejoicing over atrocities as narrated by several eye-witnesses. His essay counters the myth of the Israelis as invariably ‘peace lovers’ and ‘refugees’ while the Palestinians are ‘terrorists’ and ‘savages’. The reality of Israelis as ‘colonial settlers’ rather than ‘refugees’ allows us to learn about the role of ethnic cleansing in the dominant narrative (Pappe 129). Pappe presents the government policy of obscuring and manipulating the facts in order to conceal the atrocities committed against the Palestinians.

Similarly, in the essay, “Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History,” Beshara B. Doumani launches an inquiry into discourse and history that questions how history is influenced and shaped by the ideology of the author:

As with all forms of intellectual production, the writing of history is organically linked to and affected by the ideological environment and historical context of the author, often shedding more light on the times of the writer than on the intended subject. The historiography of Palestine is a classic example of this phenomenon. As a land of great symbolic significance to adherents of world’s three monotheistic religions, and as the common objective of two competing national movements, its past has been subjected to multiple and, at least on the surface,

contradictory traditions of historical interpretation.
(Doumani 29-30)

Doumani presents the need to reconfigure Palestinian history as Israel has deliberately omitted Palestinians from history to sustain the myth that “Palestine was ‘empty’ before arrival of the first wave of Jewish settlers in 1881-84” (15). Emptiness in this case is a synonym for the absence of a developed civilization. Such a notion of Palestine and the Palestinians, however, went along with an imperialistic attitude that was strongly “chauvinistic”. Doumani discusses how the racial ideology of the West ended up dictating history and shaping a discourse that dehumanized certain races as savages and uncivilized. Massively in the nineteenth century, the histories of civilization “were dominated by tales of brave conquests and enlightened rule by white Christian males. ‘Natives’ – black, brown, and yellow – were portrayed either as resistors to the forces of progress, or romanticized as the pristine remnants of a passing tradition society” (Doumani 14).

In an attempt to rediscover Palestinians ‘as a people’, Doumani draws the reader’s attention to the Palestinian history, culture and identity. He shows that the Israeli effort to establish a discourse of ‘a land without people for a people without land’ involves displacing the Palestinians from their place of historical and geographical origin. In standard Zionist ideology, the history of Palestine starts with the immigration of the Jews who reconstruct the land and ‘rescue’ it in order to produce a state of civilization. From this standpoint, the existence of the Palestinians threatens the Israeli project, counters its discourse, and challenges its identity; therefore, the Israelis manage to cast the Palestinians as invisible to the world, thus insuring that much of what happened in the course of time would remain entirely hidden:

Consequently, our knowledge of Palestinian history is highly uneven, and the intersecting points of research present us with an almost surreal portrait. On the one hand, thousands of books and articles have focused high-powered beams on

particular periods, subjects, and themes deemed worthy of study. On the other hand, entire centuries, whose social groups, and a wide range of fundamental issues, remain obscured by dark shadows. (Doumani 12)

Doumani counters the Western discourse that excludes the Palestinians from Palestine and also propagates that Palestine was in a state of chaos until the West ‘redeemed’ it. He refutes the ideology of Israeli supremacy over the ‘uncivilized natives’ and the myth of ‘a land without people for a people without land’ by tracing Palestinian origin to “all walks of life: rural clan shaykhs, urban notables, merchants, artisans, peasants . . . by going beyond the political narrative to delve into the rich details of Palestinian life and cultural during the Ottoman period” (Pappe 21). By humanizing the Palestinians and reclaiming their culture, Doumani is able to challenge the Israeli narrative that tends to silence the Palestinian voice and to cast the Palestinians as invisible to the world.

Thus, the Israeli narrative became the axiom and basis for any negotiations to be conducted with the Palestinians. The PLO leaders had to recognize the Israeli narrative as fundamental in order to make terms with Israel; otherwise, negotiations become impossible. This meant that the tragedy of the Holocaust has to be kept in mind as a basic feature of any possible agreement. In such a situation, however, history is manipulated for political purposes:

Israeli demands that Palestinians recognize the Holocaust are not about the Holocaust at all, but rather about the other part of the package, namely recognizing and submitting to Israel’s ‘right to exist’ as a colonial-settler racist state. The Palestinian Authority has given up, but the Palestinian people should continue to resist this Zionist package deal. Their resistance is the only remaining obstacle to a complete Zionist victory, one that seeks to be sealed by Zionism’s rewriting of both Palestinian and Jewish histories. (Massad 142)

Having established themselves as victims and having cast the Palestinians as terrorists who only deserve Western recognition on basis of their physical victimization, Israelis perpetuate the axiom that underlies its ‘conversation’ with the Palestinians. Thus negotiations with the

Palestinians have only been in terms of peace; in other words, they have proceeded according to the principle that Israel was only obligated to give up its violence if the Palestinians were willing to accept the small plots of land that had been allotted to them.

However, negotiations were never conducted on the basis of equality, the right of refugees to return, or according to a clear plan to end the occupation and repatriate the Palestinians. Barghouti analyzes the Israeli strategy as a compromise for making terms and peace with Palestine: “The Israelis occupy our homes as victims and present us to the world as killers” (178). Israel propagates the deception of the Palestinians as terrorists and the Israelis as victims so that the world would condemn the Palestinians and condone the Israelis, even respect them for seeking peace. Moreover, Palestinians in time would consider the Oslo Accords to be a betrayal of their cause, since it legitimizes, recognizes, and ratifies Israeli oppression. The outcome this ‘truce’ has been negative: “Israel succeeded in tearing away the sacred aspect of the Palestinian cause, turning it into what it is now – a series of ‘procedures’ and ‘schedules’ that are usually respected only by the weaker party in the conflict” (Barghouti 61). In these negotiations, Arafat was considered by the Israelis to be more “pragmatic” as he yielded to and appropriated the Israeli narrative, whereas the Palestinians themselves generally regard him as having betrayed the Palestinian cause by signing an unfair agreement. The outcome of Oslo was the negotiation of a ‘peace process’ that required the Palestinians to bargain for a mere twenty-three percent of their land, having already given up their rightful claim of seventy-seven percent of it. In this situation, the idea of what is “pragmatic” undergoes a change in meaning:

It is not pragmatic to give the refugees the right of return; it is not pragmatic to give them back their property; it is not pragmatic to dismantle the colonial settlements in the occupied territories; it is not pragmatic to return all the territories to Palestinian control; it is not pragmatic to end all aspects of the occupation. Moreover, although Israel’s Jewish character was never part of the

negotiations, it has always been made explicit that transforming Israel into non-Jewish state is not pragmatic. (Massad 144)

In the meantime, the refugee problem is never discussed, given that “the option of return’ should never be given to Palestinians” (120). Even if some refugees were permitted to return, the argument in favor of return would not allow the Palestinians to negotiate an actual number. Barghouti emphasizes the refugee problem as a displaced Palestinian who longs to return and for the entry of his son into Palestine:

Israel allows in hundreds of elderly people and forbids hundreds of thousands of young people to return. And the world finds a name for us. They called us naziheen, the displaced ones. Displacement is like death. One thinks it happens only to other people. From the summer of ’67 I became that displaced stranger whom I had always thought was someone else. (Barghouti 3)

The refugee problem remains unresolved by Oslo because “it is not pragmatic” and seems to merit less attention than other issues. The Oslo Agreement thus becomes an official ratification of the Palestinians’ submission to the Israeli occupation and brings no real benefits to the Palestinians: “To ask the diaspora and refugees to sacrifice their rights, hopes, and dreams, so that some meager political benefits can accrue to native West Bank and Gaza Palestinians is to ask the diaspora and refugees more generally, to commit national suicide” (Massad 127). Massad analyzes the reason which makes the return of the refugees impractical when Israel builds more settlements and tries to bring more settlers to the occupied lands:

Is the return of Palestinian refugees not pragmatic because Israel is too small geographically? This does not seem to be the case as Israel continues to market itself as a final destination for millions of diaspora Jews in the Americas and in Russia whose interest in moving there, despite valiant Zionist efforts, is less than enthusiastic (Massad 144)

The reason thus why the return of the refugee “is not pragmatic” is that Israel remains in the grip of European Jewish supremacy, which is used to justify the displacement of Palestinians and the

attempt to bringing more co-religionists into country. Moreover, Israelis practice terrorism against the Palestinians to further displace them for the sake of their own settlers.

Massad presents an essay by an Israeli author who suggests castrating the Palestinians in a manner that echoes Gulliver's recommendation concerning the Yahoos. This suggestion was presented by a prominent Israeli journalist, Marian Belenki, in an article entitled, "How to Force Them to Leave," which argued that "the Israeli government use the threat of castration to encourage the Arabs to leave the country" (Massad 147). Yet, the world is still bound by the Israeli myth of victimization, which knows no bounds. Israeli crimes against humanity do not seem to alter the established discourse of Israel in the eyes of the West.

Beginning with Israel self-identification as a Jewish state (and the denial that it is built on Palestinian Arab land), its 'law of return', its labor and property laws, etc. Israel made no secret of the fact that the Jewish state is a state for the Jews only. From its socialist to its fascist variants, Zionism was always a colonial-settler movement whose aims were attainable at the expense of the Palestinian people. (Massad 88)

Thus the Israel of today has a double standard in "avowing humane ideals" which are exclusive to the Jews and more specifically to the European Jews. Moreover, Massad further refutes those "humane ideals" that are exclusive to the Jews by showing that they are dismissed when they are discovered to be in conflict with Zionist benefits:

Not only was Israel oblivious to the interests of the Jews when they interfered with Zionist interests, it in fact deliberately caused misery and hardships for tens of thousands of Jews in order to achieve Zionist goals. Israeli agents . . . bombed Jewish businesses and meeting places, including a synagogue in Baghdad in the early fifties with the express goal of terrorizing Iraqi Jews into thinking that they were the targets of anti-Jewish Iraqi attacks. (Massad 87)

Thus, the Israeli State in its identity and ideology is a separatist state that employs ethnic and religious discrimination, just as it uses state terrorism while propagating its values as 'humane ideals'.

In his memoir *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti counters this hegemonic discourse by exposing the truth of Israeli colonial practices and by showing how the Palestinians have specific historic and geographical origins. He also shows the devastating effect that the Israeli occupation has had on the Palestinians, the dispossession and sense of humiliation that they experience in daily life. Barghouti revisits the Palestinian narrative, challenging the dominant discourse of ‘peace lovers, victims and refugees’ who found ‘a land without people for a people without land’ only to encounter ‘terrorism’ and ‘anti-Semitism’ among the Palestinians themselves. He invites us to rethink history and identity by listening to the Palestinian counter discourse, thus exposing Israeli crimes of ethnic cleansing and expulsion. Barghouti manages to give us a new sense of discourse, history, identity, just as he shows us how these things are often the ideological imposition of an author that is used for justification, excuse, and propaganda. Barghouti discredits a flawed Israeli discourse by presenting its retrograde logic of twisted arguments and reversed roles, which is presented to the world as pure fact. His audience is invited to question a dominant version of history and listen to the marginalized discourse of the Palestinians.

Thus *I Saw Ramallah* might support a new history that allows the voice of the disempowered to be heard, so that the reader can perceive the marginalized other as the possible basis for an alternative narrative and future. While Israeli policies may dominate history, literature can help the reader reconfigure history by offering a credible narrative that allows the reader to perceive the Palestinians as victims rather than terrorists. This strategy allows us to rethink how history has been shaped by ideology and then to challenge the discourse that is founded on false claims. A careful reconsideration of the historical facts, as presented through literature, shows us a land of ‘colonial settlers’ rather than ‘refugees’ when we learn about the effects of Israeli policies on an indigenous people. In contrast, history as it has been

institutionalized in the so-called advanced societies has lost its credibility, while the audience for which it has been constructed has to reinterpret it in order to seek the truth.

Conclusion: Reconfiguring History.

Modern hermeneutics challenges and liberates the reader from imposed authorities and boundaries when inviting the reader to appropriate the text and adapt its meaning to changing situations. The text can be read in relationship to a specific culture but always acquires new meanings in time, due to the changing nature of the world. Jean-Paul Sartre believes that literature is an institution, evolving change and inviting the reader to reinterpret and recreate the meanings of the text. Martin Heidegger maintained that the process of interpretation is inseparable from our “being in the world” and therefore relates to the author’s situation and to the reader’s culture, ideas and presupposition. Heidegger also invites the reader to recreate the hidden meanings that the text evokes as it both reveals and conceals the truth. Paul Ricoeur believes that both the reading and the misreading of the text contribute to its meaning and invite the reader to view the text as referring to his own world as well as to the world of the author. After the author has interpreted the world and presented his meanings in the text, the role of the reader is to question the author’s interpretations and assumptions, and even to investigate hidden discourses that might not have been available to the author.

Hermeneutics thus raises the question of *mis*interpretation in terms of the content of literature and our response to it, since the reader is encouraged to question as well as reject the authority of the author. The author’s attempt to present and interpret identity, history, and discourse are subject to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Thus history and identity become questionable, and the reader is urged to reconfigure history and reconstruct identity with reference to his own experience of being in the world and by reinvestigating the hidden discourse and the lost narrative that the text both reveals and conceals.

In this regard, new narratives have emerged to challenge authoritative discourses and set notions and definitions that have come to us from the past. Changes in morality, awareness, and ideology during the twentieth century opened up new readings of Shakespeare's great play, *The Tempest*, and marked a shift in Caliban's status after he was completely dehumanized during previous centuries. A post-colonial reading of this play, which eventually became standard, strongly appeals to the twentieth-century reader, who began to question the authority and morality of Prospero in robbing Caliban of his native island, enslaving and torturing him. Prospero's narrative was discredited when the reader discovered a new narrative that shifted the reading from Prospero to Caliban. A similar strategy could be employed in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* in order to reconstruct the identity of the Yahoos who are completely dehumanized in Swift's literary masterpiece. The process of dehumanization is evident when Gulliver complies with the Houyhnhnms in their plan to exterminate the Yahoos. Although the Yahoos are completely disempowered in the novel and the reader never gets a chance to hear their voices, the reader is encouraged to inquire into their hidden discourse, which the text illuminates. By seeking evidence from the text, the reader cannot find support for Gulliver's claim that the Yahoos are evil or harmful. On contrary, Gulliver's abhorrence of the Yahoos is confined to his description of what he believes to be ugly and misshapen features, thus proving to the reader that Gulliver's hostility towards them stems from xenophobia and racialism. Similarly, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* opens a whole discourse about the Africans and the morality of colonialism and imperialism, and possibly Conrad's view of them as dehumanized in his text. The reader thus gains insight into European discourse on native Africans, which seems to stem from political intentions.

Other narratives emerge to reshape the reader's mind, to reconstruct the other's identity, to challenge monolithic discourses and grand narratives. Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Mourid Barghouti all were forced to identify themselves with "the dark, faceless, nameless limbs" and were urged to speak up for the marginalization of oppressed peoples (Hoeller 132). In the first three chapters, I discussed the literary narrative from the position of the powerful largely to determine how the reader can liberate himself from the author's prejudices in order to reconstruct the other's identity. In the final chapter, however, I considered the literary narrative from the position of the marginalized other. In his moving contemporary novel, *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti restores a lost narrative and manages to reconstruct Palestinian identity by challenging a monolithic discourse. He presents the plight and the predicament of the Palestinians, revising commonly accepted ideas about history and challenging a grand narrative, which is used to justify brutality against the other and to make things look better in the eyes of the world. Literature as well as our knowledge of the world helps us understand contemporary issues like the Palestine question, when the imperialist usually starts by naming a mission civilized and ends up by eliminating those who disagree.

Like the mission that Kurtz falsely idealizes, the Israeli State has used similar propaganda in order to justify the colonization of Palestine. Like Gulliver, who describes the Yahoos as savages and thus justifies mistreating and eliminating them, the Israeli State has managed to identify the Palestinians with inferiority in order to justify brutality against them. Like Prospero, who describes Caliban as evil and daemonic, the Israeli State has perpetuated the myth of Palestinian savagery in order to ignore their legitimate grievances. Thus, the same opposition between savage and civilized recurs throughout modern colonial history. As described by Montaigne, however, the civilized are commonly more savage than those who are called savages.

Terrorism as described by Joseph Massad and Talal Asad is a discourse that refers to the weak and used to justify terrorism against them. In this regard, Joseph Massad maintains that terrorism is the opposite of what it is said to be. It is condemned only when used by the weak and condoned when used by the stronger and described as anti-terrorism.

This controversial paradox was analyzed by Swift when Gulliver, in trying to distinguish himself from the Yahoos, explains to the Houyhnhnms the technology and art of war. His listeners then claim that he appears more savage than the Yahoos, who are much weaker and unable to compete with him in violence and savagery. Israel's colonization of Palestine is a typical imperial project. It was justified when the Zionists propagated the idea of an empty Palestine inhabited by savages, which rendered their mission a civilizing one. Although the Zionist project had been established before the fascist period, this retrograde logic allowed Palestinian resistance to Israel to be called anti-Semitism and terrorism. Moreover, Israel has managed to turn the world upside down by claiming that Palestine is their native country and that the Palestinians were the original colonists. This is the discourse that they tried to establish by rewriting their history and obliterating the Palestinians as invisible by removing them from time and place.

When discourse proves to be nothing but a question of power, and when the West manages to silence voices and cast peoples invisible in order to assure its domination and supremacy, the reader has a responsibility to empower the voices of the marginalized in order to reinterpret history and thus to create the basis for new narratives. Although marginalized and represented as savage and inarticulate, 'the other' in this case can still be rehumanized if the reader can determine how canonical and more recent texts clearly indicate that the condition of being outside is largely the product of history. In such instances, the reader can also learn

important things about who tortures Caliban, who wishes to castrate the Yahoos, and who wishes to exterminate the brutes. New readings of history and identity emerge in time-honored and more recent literary works that challenge the hegemonic discourses that shape our world. In this new hermeneutical situation, new narratives emerge that can begin to counter the grand narrative of colonial hegemony, opening up a possible future in which we continue to strive for justice, freedom and equality.

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