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Colonial Female Subjects in Joseph Conrad's Lingard Trilogy

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Joseph Conrad esittää koloniaalisesta diskurssista ja länsimaisesta dualismista poikkeavan näkemyksen idän ja lännen suhteesta Lingard-trilogiassaan (2003–2010). Länsimaisessa koloniaalisessa kirjallisuudessa alkuperäiskansojen edustajat kuvataan usein stereotyyppisesti primitiivisenä massana. He edustavat länsimaiselle ihmiselle toiseutta, eli piirteitä, joita länsimaissa ei haluta tunnustaa osaksi itseä. Conradin trilogian miespuoliset henkilöahmot edustavat ennakkoluuloista patriarkaalista länttä ja naispuoleiset hahmot puolestaan itäisiä alkuperäiskansoja ja luontoa. Conrad kuvailee henkilöitään dualistisilla piirteillä, jotka on jaettu arvostettuihin maskuliinisiin piirteisiin ja niiden väheksytyihin feminiineihin vastakohtiin. Vaikka Conradin naispuoliset henkilöt esitetään käyttäen lännessä aliarvostettuja feminiinejä piirteitä, he eivät kuitenkaan jää halveksunnan kohteiksi, sillä Conrad esittää heidät voimallisina subjekteina, jotka vastustavat länsimaisen miehen yrityksiä alistaa heidät. Näin ollen Conrad kääntää dualismien arvostuksen päinvastoin, jolloin maskuliiniset käsitteet, kuten sivilisaatio ja älyllisyys, ovat merkityksettömiä naisten luontosuhteen rinnalla.

Conradin luomat naishenkilöt ovat voimallisia toimijoita, joiden subjektiivudessa näkyy ekofeminististen teorioiden käsittelemä luonnon yhteys ja vaikutus. Kulttuurinen ekofeminismi on feminismin suuntaus, joka korostaa naisen ja luonnon positiivista ja eheyttävää suhdetta. Tällainen luonnonvaikutus on nähtävissä Conradin naishahmoissa, jotka saavat voimaa ollessaan luonnon kanssa vuorovaikutuksessa, mutta lamautuvat länsimaisen yhteiskunnan piirissä. Naisten voimallisuus näkyy avoimena tunteellisuutena, ruumiillisuuden hyväksymisenä ja positiivisena elämellisyytenä, mikä tarkoittaa omien vaistojensa ja tunteidensa kuuntelemista ja arvostamista. Conradin teosten naishenkilöissä näkyy myös sosiaalisen ekofeminismin tutkima patriarkaanin vaikutus. Sosiaalinen ekofeminismi pyrkii naisen ja luonnon vapauttamiseen tunnustamalla patriarkaanin vallan ja pyrkimällä siten murtamaan sen. Tämä hierarkkinen valta näkyy länsimaisena dualistisena ajattelutapana, joka sortaa naisia ja luontoa. Conradin trilogiassa naiset kuitenkin kääntävät luontosuhteensa voitoksi ja puolustautuvat länsimaisen miehen alistusyrityksiä vastaan.

AVAINSANAT: ekofeminism, colonialism, dualism, female subjectivity

1 INTRODUCTION

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) introduces colonial female characters defying the Western dualistic view of the world in his novels *Almayer's Folly* (2003), *An Outcast of the Islands* (2009) and *The Rescue* (2010), designated as the Lingard Trilogy. Dualism is a deep-rooted process which sequences opposite concepts to a relation of superiority and separation (Plumwood 1993: 47). One of the most far-reaching dualisms was born as a result of colonialism when Westerners encountered native peoples they perceived as devalued in comparison to themselves. The concept of 'race' was socially constructed to justify the asymmetric relations of power between people as a result of racialisation practices (Garner 2010: 19, 22). Thus, the Western-centric ideology of white man being on top of a racial hierarchy was established. Whiteness, masculinity and Western civilisation became the beacons of humanity and everything deviating was deemed less worthy. In the Lingard Trilogy, the Western male characters represent the colonisers, who regard themselves superior to the women, the colonised. The relationship between the men and the women in the Trilogy is dualistic, but not in a traditional manner, since the women are not portrayed as inferior to the men.

Conrad presents the female characters in the Lingard Trilogy in a way which suggests they are colonial subjects connected with nature. Nature refers to both the physical landscape and features such as emotionality, animality, primitivity and body. These aspects became systematically subordinated in the West as a result of the scientific revolution, which made rationality and civilisation valued. Nature was perceived as uncontrollable and wild and thus condemned as the opposite of the masculine traits mentioned above. Women became devalued along with nature because they were considered lacking rationality. (Suutala 2001: 10.) The association between women and nature and men and civilisation is detectable in Conrad's writing, according to Jeremy Hawthorn: "In Conrad's novels and stories, references to tropical foliage typically condense a number of associations that together form a meaning-cluster standing in binary opposition to an opposed family of associations denoting European control" (2007: 62). The Lingard Trilogy contains this distinction as well, since the East is portrayed as feminine nature and the West as masculine civilisation.

Conrad challenges the stereotypical colonial relationship between the East and the West in the Lingard Trilogy. In other words, he does not present the Westerners as capable of influencing the cultures and identities of the indigenous peoples. Admittedly, the image of the East is created according to dualism since the Western perception of it as the place for feminine emotionality in reference to the masculine and rational West is repeated. In this respect, the Trilogy maintains the dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient, as analysed by Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* (2003). Said (2003: 5) suggests that Westerners are responsible for the way the Orient appears to them since they forge the image themselves. Usually this image reflects the dominant position of the Westerners who have the power to take liberties in associating the Orient with features devalued in the West (Said 2003: 5). Conrad's interpretation of the Orient, however, is reverse from the Western dualism, since the attributes he describes the Orient with, are suggested to be more valuable than those the West is portrayed by. This approach to the relationship between the East and the West most likely derives from Conrad's own experiences of colonialism.

Joseph Conrad is an important depicter of colonial relationships because he witnessed the effects of colonialism first-hand both in -and outside Europe. Conrad was born in Poland as Josef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski but obtained British citizenship in his thirties and lived in England until his death. For two decades of his life he sailed the seas of the world from the West Indies and the Eastern Malay Archipelago to Southern Congo, all of which became places he later set his novels in. (Ousby 1994: 203.) Due to Conrad's eventful life around the world, John Peters (2006: 19) praises him for being exceptionally international in comparison to other British authors. Conrad's nautical career and his life in Britain enabled him to witness the effects the colonial expansion had, not only on the Europeans, but also on the native peoples. His literary accounts of what he experienced were most importantly influenced and perhaps enabled by his *detachment* from what he saw: Conrad sailed in various locations in the distant corners of the world, and after returning to Britain, he lived as a foreigner in a foreign country although made a citizen. Thus, he was able to look at the colonial proceedings in Britain and elsewhere as if from outside, because he was not raised to support the British Empire.

Conrad's detachment from the Eurocentric ideology that supported and maintained Western superiority gave him the courage and ability to criticise colonialism by presenting the side of the colonised in his novels. In *The Rescue*, for instance, Conrad (2010: 4) laments the colonising of the Malay Archipelago and the futile battles the natives fought against the Westerners: "Their country of land and water – for the sea was as much their country as the earth of their islands – has fallen a prey to the western race – the reward of superior strength if not of superior virtue." The end of the quotation can be read as a sarcastic remark on the Europeans' conceited belief in their superiority. This assumption is supported by Conrad's choice of paralleling the conquering of the archipelago with hunting, which victimizes the natives. It is also noteworthy that when depicting the Malay Archipelago, Conrad highlights the nature of the area and the way the Malays deem the sea as part of their country. This produces an imagery of the European colonisers as molesting a formerly serene and respected scenery with their selfish aims of owning more territories simply because they deem themselves superior. In the Lingard Trilogy, Conrad's thoughtfulness towards the natives is manifested in the characterisation of the female characters.

The subjectivity of the female characters in the Lingard Trilogy reflects the prejudices and weaknesses of Western culture by revealing the restraints caused by patriarchal decorum. Susan Jones (1999: 2) pays tribute to Conrad for being "a sympathetic interpreter of women's contemporary situation", and praises his writing to have "initiated an astute, though largely unrecognised, exploration of female identity in the fiction". The representation of female subjectivity in the Trilogy deviates from masculine agency in deriving its power from nature rather than being dependent on the subordination of others. The powerful influence nature has on the women is lost for the Western men who are trapped in their rules of etiquette. Daniel R. Schwarz (2001: 16) recognises Conrad for his descriptions on the conflicting emotions the foreigners evoke in Westerners:

He brought a new psychological and moral intensity to the English novel and its traditions of manners and morals. He recognized the role in human conduct of repressed desires, unconscious motives, and unacknowledged impulses. [...] He understood the potential of the novel for political and

historical insights and thus enlarged the subject matter of the English novel. (Schwarz 2001: 16.)

Conrad's concerns in his novels include "repressed desires, unconscious motives, and unacknowledged impulses" (Schwarz 2001: 16) all of which belong into the principal areas of human behaviour. Conrad examines the relationship between the West and the East by bringing forth these elements that are uninhibited in the East but restricted in the West. The native female characters who display emotionality are therefore perceived as primitive savages by the colonisers. The women, however, are empowered by their emotionality and other feminine features they are characterised by, which is why they should be contemplated as free and uninhibited human beings in touch with their natural instincts that support their female subjectivity.

The two worlds of masculine West and feminine East are dualistically opposed in the Lingard Trilogy, but this thesis suggests that the female characters in the novels challenge the dualism. Although the colonial subordination of people according to their 'race' and the patriarchal devaluation of women and nature are results of historical and social construction, Conrad regards them as an essence between the Westerners and Easterners, and men and women. In other words, the dualism between masculinity and femininity and that between 'races' is acknowledged as a fundamental, monolithic feature that is derived from biology. Because Conrad writes from a clearly dualistic premise, the theoretical framework in this thesis must explain the background of the divided imagery. Therefore, men and women and West and East are discussed as collective cultural categories constituted through generalisation and categorisation. Nevertheless, the aim of the thesis is to indicate by the female characters that the dualisms characterising the women are not stable and universal but renegotiable.

1.1 The Aim of the Study

This thesis studies four female characters in Joseph Conrad's Lingard Trilogy and states that the women are portrayed as colonial subjects. The dichotomy between the Western

men and native women is thus renegotiated since the women do not appear as weak objects of the masculine colonial gaze. This thesis further argues that the colonial female subjects are created by reversing the evaluation of dualisms governing the Western world view. Consequently, features considered feminine and devalued in the West appear valuable in the native women's cultures and rule over masculine features preferred in Europe. In other words, though the native women embody the majority of the devalued feminine attributes, they are not disempowered by them. On the contrary, the feminine features, with nature as their common denominator, give them gratification and power and thus make them strong colonial subjects. Female subjectivity is analysed as constructed in the novels through love, positive primitivity, counter-gaze and othering.

1.2 The Lingard Trilogy

The material for this thesis is Joseph Conrad's three novels, *Almayer's Folly* (2003), *An Outcast of the Islands* (2009) and *The Rescue* (2010), which are together known as The Lingard Trilogy. The novels are referred to as a trilogy because they all feature the same character, Captain Tom Lingard, who does not, however, play a major role in the first two novels, which are published successively in 1895 and 1896. It is not until in the third part of the trilogy, published in 1920, that Lingard is given a more prominent role. Although the novels are set in the same area and share a few characters, they are nevertheless read as independent works. The events in the novels also proceed chronologically backwards, so that the latter parts of the trilogy reveal what has happened before the first part.

Almayer's Folly (2003) is Joseph Conrad's first novel unfolding the life of a Dutch trader, Kaspar Almayer, who has consented to the will of Tom Lingard, "the King of the Sea" (Conrad 2003: 3) to do business in Borneo and marry a Malay woman whom Lingard has rescued from Sulu pirates. Almayer is an unfortunate character who has not, even after twenty years, seen any of Lingard's great fortune promised to him for his cooperation. Thus, he finds himself trapped in an unhappy marriage in a "new but

already decaying house” on a river bank in the jungle surrounded by the Malay natives (Conrad 2003: 1). The only thing giving him strength to pursue his dreams of one day returning to Europe is his half-caste daughter Nina, whom he cherishes above all others. Almayer hopes to find gold that would secure his and Nina’s journey to civilisation, as he puts it, but like his house, these dreams are also beginning to decay hopelessly under the scorching Bornean sun. The father-daughter relationship plays a significant role in the novel, because it is like a lifeline for Almayer. As imaginable, the results are devastating when this lifeline is broken by Nina who falls in love with Dain Maroola, a Malay prince, much to his father’s dismay.

Almayer finds himself completely misplaced in the East, and is tormented by the loss of his daughter and the disenchantment of not being able to return to Europe. Almayer’s antagonist in the story is his wife, Mrs. Almayer, who is responsible for converting their half-caste daughter Nina into embracing Malay habits and beliefs instead of those cherished in Europe. Mrs. Almayer’s efforts are rewarded when Nina chooses Dain Maroola’s love over her father’s. Unable to control the will of the two women in his life, Almayer ends up alone, hiding his misery in the smoke of opium. Thus, the only central white character in the novel, Almayer, fails to find happiness and fortune in the Bornean jungle unlike the native characters.

Joseph Conrad’s second novel *An Outcast of the Islands* (2009) is also set in the Malay Archipelago, and its main character is Peter Willems. In contrast to the inefficient Almayer, Willems arrogantly flaunts his business abilities and racial superiority by regarding himself a gift for his native wife Joanna’s lazy family. Willems, however, indulges in a fraud and is consequently dismissed by his employer, who turns out to be Joanna’s father. Empowered by the situation, Joanna refuses to help Willems and throws him out of their house. Captain Lingard comes to his rescue, and boats the astonished Willems to the house of Almayer. While living with Almayer, Willems meets a mysterious Malay woman, Aissa, and begins an all-absorbing love affair with her. Their relationship becomes a competition of ownership, and the consequences are destructive when Willems notices too late that he has irrevocably surrendered both his body and soul to Aissa.

The Rescue (2010) was first published in 1920, although Conrad began writing it at the end of the 1890s, after completing *Almayer's Folly* (2003) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (2009). The third part, which concludes the trilogy, foregrounds Captain Tom Lingard as the protagonist of the storyline that takes place in the Malay Archipelago. Lingard is portrayed as a hero who rescues the passengers of a European yacht stranded in the shallows by offering the owners of the yacht, the Travers and their crew, security from the hostile natives while waiting for the tide to turn. For Edith Travers, the unusual situation and the surrounding nature signify a relief from the monotony of her marriage, and she finds unexpected companionship in Captain Lingard. The feeling is mutual, and the two realize having strong feelings towards each other. They do not, however, act upon their newly found happiness, and when the time comes for the Travers to sail on, Edith and Tom bid farewell to each other.

The analysis in this thesis focuses on the representations of the female characters and their subjectivity. The native women included in the analysis are Mrs. Almayer, Nina and Aissa. In addition, references will be made to a native princess Immada. As to the Western characters, Edith Travers will be discussed as an example of a European woman affected by both the Western patriarchal social order and the Malay culture.

1.3 Criticism of Joseph Conrad

The style and context of Conrad's novels reflect the spirit of the 19th Century, the period when his literary career took place in. The Victorian era is characterised by colonialism when European countries continued to expand their territories into colonies around the world. The rapid widening of the Western world as well as the inner turmoil brought on by the radical transition of rural societies into industrialised ones affected Western artists of various fields severely, and they felt it necessary to move forward from the realistic way of depicting life that had prevailed in the arts before. The alternate way of conveying reality and the changes in the European world view became known as modernism. (Childs 2008: 38; Ousby 1994: 631; Vartiainen 2009: 664.) Joseph Conrad lived at the heart of these events: He was a seaman who witnessed colonialism first

hand, and an author who wrote about what he saw by developing the new, modernist way of writing. Hence, his texts are first-hand accounts on the life and values of the Victorian people and the native peoples, written in a rich but ambiguous manner.

Joseph Conrad is a controversial author because he has received both laudatory acknowledgement as well as harsh criticism for his novels. Conrad became recognised already by his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (2003), which was well received at the time of its publication in 1895 (Watt 1979: 41–42). His position as one of the pioneers of modernist writing became truly fortified when *Heart of Darkness* (1999) was published in 1902, however. The novella is famous for its depictions of nature utilising the juxtaposition and ambiguity of darkness and light in a groundbreaking manner. Conrad's style gave him a reputation of a diffuse author, whose confusion of realistic narration with dreamlike images and non-chronological narration was deemed difficult to follow (Vartiainen 2009: 618). Despite the polarized opinions on Conrad, he is still considered one of the most prominent and innovative authors excelling in the modernist style of writing (Ousby 1996: 203).

The immense popularity of *Heart of Darkness* has upstaged Conrad's earlier works, which have become regarded as stylistically not as consistent as his later works (Peters 2006: 37). The reputable literary critic F.R. Leavis (1950: 190), for instance, devotes multiple pages for *Heart of Darkness* in his discussion on Conrad's works, but passes over the two first novels, *Almayer's Folly* (2003) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (2009) by simply stating that they are “excessively adjectival studies in the Malayan exotic”. The third part of the Lingard Trilogy, *The Rescue* (2010), is not praised by Leavis (1950: 183) either, since he judges it as not exciting enough to pass as an adventure story for the young and too simple and gallant to interest adults keen on romantic tales. The novels comprising the Lingard Trilogy yet reveal Conrad's improving skills in the symbolic style of modernist writing, which were perfected later in his major works (Stape 2002: xix).

Heart of Darkness is undisputedly Conrad's most famous novel, but not merely due to stylistic merits since it is also the novel that associated him with racism. In 1988, in his

essay “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”, Chinua Achebe (1996: 267) famously accused Conrad of writing as “a thoroughgoing racist”, thus expressing the allegation that has never been forgotten. Ania Loomba (1998: 136–137) agrees with Achebe’s opinion by stating that she also has identified a tendency in the novel to treat the native people and their lands as an insignificant background for the supremacy of the European characters. Edward Said (1994: xix), on the other hand, claims Conrad to have written *Nostromo*, published in 1904, by highlighting only Western ideologies without giving any thought for the cultures of the colonised peoples. Consequently, Achebe’s opinion has gained support and cast a shadow on Conrad’s other works as well. Despite the widespread criticism of Conrad, however, studies on the opposite opinion, aimed at absolving him from the alleged racism, have been proposed as well. As to racism in *Heart of Darkness*, Robert Hampson (1999) and Nicholas Harrison (2003) have published readings deviating from that of Achebe’s, whereas Masood Ashraf Raja (2007) has interpreted Conrad’s Malay novels to portray male Muslim characters in a positive manner.

Joseph Conrad’s novels, similarly to any other colonial accounts, involve characters representing two different worlds characterised according to dualistic attributes. Robert Hampson (2000: 1) states that Conrad was constantly faced with the fundamental question of “how to describe another culture”. Those accusing him of racism are of the opinion that he has described the foreign culture in a devaluing manner. As to Chinua Achebe’s negative criticism towards Conrad, Robert Hampson (1999: 207–208) argues that Achebe’s opinion is in part derived from his lack of understanding how the dualisms, such as those between civilisation and nature, colonisers and the colonised, light and darkness work, since he so determinedly interprets Conrad to prefer Western civilisation at the expense of the colonies. Dualisms should not be approached as straightforward divisions between concepts, however, but rather be interpreted in a deeper fashion conveying something of both parties described by them.

The dualistic attributes Conrad characterises the natives with reveal the features Europeans have aimed to deny in themselves. Abdul R. JanMohamed (1995: 19) suggests Conrad to belong to a group of “symbolic” colonial writers, which makes him

“aware of the inevitable necessity of using the native as a mediator of European desires”. According to this perception, Conrad describes the natives in order to describe the Westerners and their lacks and desires, but the dualisms these descriptions create are not to be interpreted to convey Western bias. Nicholas Harrison (2003: 33) is also of the opinion that the interaction the colonisers and the colonised have with each other is part of their identity construction which involves dualisms. Therefore, what Chinua Achebe perceives as straightforward racism can actually be interpreted as Conrad’s means to provoke the Western readers to contemplate on their own identities and views of the world. This idea is perhaps best manifested by the analyses done on Conrad’s female characters.

There are multiple juxtapositions between the native women and the Western women in Conrad’s novels, but the ones presented in *Heart of Darkness* have been studied most. According to Chinua Achebe (1996: 265), the distinction between the Congolese woman and the Western woman in *Heart of Darkness*, is based on the diminished role given to the native woman as nothing but “a savage counterpart to the refined, European woman”. Anthony Easthope (1991: 97) and Robert Hampson (1999: 209) disagree with Achebe by suggesting that Conrad specifically appreciates the native woman over the Western woman because he highlights the introverted nature of the European woman as opposed to the defiant and unrestrained image of the native woman. Consequently, the study of female otherness in Conrad’s novella can be interpreted to shed light on the Congolese woman and respectively cast a shadow on the supposedly valued white woman and the society she lives in. In fact, Chinua Achebe (1996: 267) acknowledges that students studying *Heart of Darkness* have also interpreted Conrad as being “less charitable to the Europeans in the story than he is to the natives”. Thus, Conrad’s work has evoked multiple readings, which also was the author’s intention: Conrad believed literary works to become alive through the reader’s interpretations on them, and therefore favoured a multifaceted and opaque style of writing that would inspire a variety of interpretations (Vartiainen 2009: 618). His female characters are examples of the ambiguity he aimed at.

The depictions of the female characters in Joseph Conrad's novels have caused controversy. Firstly, Conrad has been criticised for including exceptionally few female characters in his novels, and secondly, the characterisation of the women has been deemed unsuccessful (Watt 1979: 69). Susan Jones (1999: 5–6, 9), who has studied Conrad and his female characters substantially, submits that he was actually praised for his female characters presented in *Almayer's Folly*, but later his reputation for depicting women profoundly has declined, and Conrad has become mainly perceived as a sailor writing for men in men's world. Consequently, Jones (1999: 7) states that "some feminist critics continue to interpret Conrad's narratives as unremittingly patriarchal, reading into his presentation of women a blatant and uncomplicated misogyny". Nevertheless, this criticism clarifies that the female characters are significantly enough depicted to provoke attitudes concerning the connection between patriarchy and women's position. When it comes to Conrad's first works, Ruth L. Nadelhaft (1991: 13) suggests the female characters to "occupy critical space" in the novels. Thus, the women in the Lingard Trilogy should give crucial insight into the manner in which Conrad depicts the foreign culture.

2 COLONIALISM – ON THE SURFACE AND BENEATH

The European colonial expansion reached its peak between the middle of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries (Boehmer 1995: 29), which was also when Joseph Conrad wrote and published the *Lingard Trilogy*. Because the setting of the *Trilogy* is colonial, it is crucial that the concept of colonialism be introduced in order to provide an understanding of the context Conrad's characters are presented in. Colonialism will be approached as a combination of dimensions which could be described as taking place on the surface and beneath: On the surface, colonialism manifests itself as a concrete occupation of foreign countries, demonstrable on a map, but beneath the surface, it entails the effects of the cultural melanges on the identities of both the colonisers and the colonised. In other words, colonialism can be described as having a material and an ideological side to it. In addition to examining the central characteristics and concepts of colonialism, important themes related with it such as *othering*, *saving*, *the gaze*, *veiling*, *boundaries* and *liminality* will also be brought forth.

2.1 Concepts of Colonialism

In a simplified term, colonialism refers to the physical moving of people from one country to another with the purpose of occupying the foreign territories. The term colonialism was born when the Romans founded settlements inside Europe conquering various areas and tribes in order to expand their empire (Loomba 1998: 1). Nevertheless, colonial expansion has mostly been directed outward from Europe, especially during the era between the 16th and the early 20th centuries, when Europeans discovered multiple foreign lands they declared as their colonies (Osterhammel 2005: 4). One of the most famous results of global colonialism is the British Empire, which spanned across the world at the height of its power, making it the largest empire that ever existed (Luscombe 1996). Understandably, the colonial empires mentioned above were not simply created by conquering empty lands and placing people from the mother country to live in them. On the contrary, colonial expansion was often a violent process

accomplished by repressing the peoples who had been living in the newly found lands before the arrival of the colonisers.

Colonialism is significantly related with power and domination. The conquering of territories was a manifestation of power and the subsequent maintenance of the colonies demanded the acquisition of dominance over the natives. Due to these aspects of power, colonialism can be designated as “a *system* of domination” (Osterhammel 2005: 4). This system comprised of multiple constituents, such as trading, shipment of merchandise and slaves, as well as war related matters (Levine 2007: 13), all of which were accomplished by gaining domination over the native population. In other words, colonial power was distributed in a biased manner since the colonisers were usually the only ones exercising it while the natives were forced to submit. The domination of the colonisers was far-reaching since they not only took over the natives’ lands and declared sovereignty over them, but they also reinforced their own lifestyle and values over the natives’ culture and habits, which they often deemed primitive and of less worth.

The judgemental and dismissive attitude the Europeans had towards the native people reinforced the hierarchy they developed between themselves and the colonised. Similar attitude towards the foreign is reported already by Cornelius Tacitus, who devotes his work *Germania* (2009) on judging the lifestyle of the Germanic tribes, living outside the borders of the Roman Empire, as barbaric, in reference to the Romans who considered themselves civilised. During the 19th Century, colonial hierarchy did not only concern lifestyle and culture, however, but the native people themselves: The permanent features in the natives’ physiognomy, most saliently skin colour, became the fundamental object of scorn. This type of racial discrimination was begun already in the classical period and further enhanced during the medieval times and onwards. (Loomba 1998: 57, 105, 109.) Accordingly, the dominating colonisers became to question not only the customs of the colonised but also their very humanity.

‘Race’ is a feature that is socially constructed to justify the domination and subordination of people as a result of racialisation practices (Garner 2010: 19, 22). In

his work *Black Skins White Masks*, Frantz Fanon (2008: 82–83) discusses how the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised was established by marking blackness with negative connotations whereas whiteness was regarded as a positive trait. Western science played a significant role in racialisation in the late 19th century, when Western scientists established a causal relationship between savagery and civility and biological features, such as skin colour and the formation of the skull. As a result, black people were automatically and permanently condemned as savages whereas white skin guaranteed civil composition. (Loomba 1998: 60–63, 117.) ‘Race’ was made a scientific fact that rendered black people slaves by nature (Loomba 1998: 126). Consequently, the colonies were perceived to offer economical labour force, which in turn enhanced capitalism.

Capitalism and colonialism convey the European ideology of valuing monetary success at the expense of nature and non-Western people. This is manifested by the demand of the colonised to surrender their natural resources as well as themselves for the colonisers. The racist attitude, according to which the foreigners were less valuable than the Westerners, made the colonised tools for capitalism (Loomba 1998: 124). The colonisers were the only ones benefitting from the relationship with the natives: According to Ania Loomba (1998: 4), “In whichever direction human beings and materials travelled, the profits always flowed back into the so-called ‘mother country’”. The relationship between colonialism and capitalism can be described as being reciprocal since they accelerated each other, which is why Ania Loomba (1998: 4) designates colonialism as “the midwife that assisted at the birth of European capitalism”. In other words, the capitalist attitude was generated by the scientific revolution, and both of them were spread around the world by the colonial expansion.

Colonialism is defined by Norrie Macqueen (2007: xii) as “the single most powerful force shaping the world we inhabit”. Macqueen’s assertion can be regarded as quite accurate due to the two-dimensional effect of colonialism; first, there is the physical infiltration into territories that belong to other people, and secondly, the overall ideological underestimation of the natives, their outer appearances, habits and culture. The declaration of sovereignty over the indigenous peoples entails their ultimate

subordination in diminishing their value as human beings and making them nothing but labour force for the colonisers. Colonialism, in other words, does not only reshape the dominion on the world atlas but the identities of people as well. As to the effect British Empire had on its inhabitants, Lawrence James (1998: xiv) states that the “possession of an empire profoundly influenced the ways in which the British thought of themselves and the rest of the world. The British character was changed by the empire [...]. It encouraged a sense of superiority [...] [and] fostered racial arrogance”. Colonialism enhanced the dualism between the West and the East because it got the Westerners to regard themselves as masters and the natives as their slaves. The traces of these overwhelming cultural clashes have been most prominently documented in various texts.

2.2 Us and Others – Features of Colonialist Discourse

Colonialism is to a great extent retraceable in literary works. A present day reader must rely on texts in order to learn about colonialism, and during the actual colonial expansion the situation was quite similar, since it was only a small proportion of Europeans who actually acquired personal experience of colonialism. Yet, colonialism has generally had an immense effect on the Europeans’ world view and also on their conceptions of themselves. The media through which this influencing was made possible included a variety of texts and other art forms (Loomba 1998: 94). Therefore, Elleke Boehmer (1995: 12–13) designates the British Empire to have been “a textual exercise”. Texts were crucial factors in the colonisers’ attempts to define their superiority against the colonised. The colonisers’ dominance was translated in their texts thus making the texts extensions to their power (Loomba 1998: 96). Colonisation required both a pen and a sword but the former proved mightier, since the one who got to write got to define the world.

Colonial texts often follow similar patterns and share features which could be commonly designated as *colonialist discourse* (Boehmer 1995: 50). The majority of colonial accounts were written by Westerners who used their dominant position to

define and interpret the natives and their culture according to their Western dualistic world view, which favoured European customs and values. The recurrent characteristics of colonialist discourse tend to make the colonial texts one-sided and therefore misleading representations of the past. Ania Loomba (1998: 94–97) criticises textual presentations of colonialism and highlights their often biased and constricted views on the subject matter. Gayatri Spivak (1995: 269) adds that texts written on colonialism are, nevertheless, irreplaceable in mapping out the attitudes Europeans shared towards the native peoples, and vice versa, which is why they cannot be left unheeded.

Colonialist discourse has been extensively analysed by Edward Said whose work *Orientalism* (2003) is one of the most well known studies conducted on how attitudes towards foreign cultures are created and maintained textually for future generations to read. Said (2003: 2–3, 43) focuses on the duality between the West and the East, us and them, a distinction which he claims to have been established by European writers. According to Said, it is “the Occident”, i.e. the West, which puts into words “the Orient”, i.e. the East, and in the process attaches associations such as exoticism and menace with the East (2003: 1–2, 57). Shaping the image of the Orient illustrates one of the typical traits of colonialist discourse, which is the point of view of the texts as being restricted to that of the colonisers: Westerners are in the position of power and therefore able to dictate the foreign.

The majority of the European accounts on colonialism tend to contain colonialist discourse that is racist and prejudiced towards the native population. From the late 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century, Europeans published a great number of literary works on the colonial encounters. A common premise of these texts was that the colonised were simple-minded people, which in turn led to large debates on issues such as whether the natives were actually descending from monkeys instead of humans. These texts originated mainly from the pens of people who had spent time in various colonies, but some of them were written by authors who had never crossed the borders of Europe in the first place. (Sens 2003: 77, 79–80.) Europeans hardly questioned the truthfulness of these accounts since the false ones also bolstered up their egos.

Westerners became convinced of their supremacy over the primitive foreigners because it was constantly impressed on them in the tradition of colonialist discourse.

A common denominator of literary accounts on colonialism is their propagandist quality. The experiences acquired on site were not relayed to the home country as such but remoulded to suit what was thought of as the common good. As to colonialism, the propagandist texts were most vehemently published during the Victorian era when they were meant to help “sustain the colonial vision” (Boehmer 1995: 44). This meant reinforcing the idea of Western supremacy, which included highlighting their incomparability in both race and gallantry (Boehmer 1995: 13). Enhancing a nation’s sense of bravery and superiority was necessary because the European colonial writers chose to portray “the overseas man“ (Sens 2003: 77) as a menace for the Westerners. Elleke Boehmer (1995: 22) suggests that this decision was actually derived from the colonisers’ inability to relate and administer the unknown. Europeans suffered these difficulties because they aimed at explaining the foreign with their own terms instead of trying to broaden their view of the world (Boehmer 1995: 79). It was easier to condemn the incomprehensible as a danger than acknowledge the mystification and bafflement aroused by it.

The colonisers highlighted their supremacy and individuality by *othering* the native peoples. Othering is an intrinsic part of colonialism because it gives authority to the coloniser, the dominant Self, by the devaluation of the foreign Other, who is attached with features the Self wants excluded from his/her own identity. (Boehmer 1995: 21, 79.) The colonised were the Others and as such regarded as the imperfect versions of the Western Selves:

The colonized made up the subordinate term in relation to which European individuality was defined. Always with reference to the superiority of an expanding Europe, colonized peoples were represented as lesser: less human, less civilised, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass. (Boehmer 1995: 79.)

The natives were imagined inferior to the Westerners and thus unable to meet the Western standards of civilisation, rationality and humanity. The otherness of the

indigenous peoples was typically interpreted and displayed with prejudice and stereotypical descriptions.

The practice of using stereotypes in the portrayals of the Other was deemed crucial in colonial narratives because stereotypes worked both as immediate indicators of otherness as well as covers for the disconcerting alien nature of the foreign. Colonialist writers, therefore, did not individualise the natives but portrayed them degradingly as an inhumane mass. (Boehmer 1995: 79–80.) Albert Memmi (1991: 85) designates the stereotypical treatment of the natives as *depersonalization*, which is characterised by using plurality in the descriptions of the foreign: “The colonized [...] is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity (‘They are this.’ ‘They are all the same.’)”. Consequently, the natives were portrayed as insignificant Others representing nothing but “the background to his [the master’s] achievements and resources for his needs” (Plumwood 1993: 54). Presenting the white colonisers as the only individuals in a mass of natives, usually portrayed as slaves, highlighted the Westerners and their deeds at the expense of the destinies of the natives.

Othering is usually conveyed in plotlines presenting characters in unequal positions. In *An Outcast of the Islands*, however, Joseph Conrad describes it as a thought that manifests the emotions a male character goes through when contemplating a foreign woman. Conrad’s way of presenting othering through a narrator is revealing because it captures the essence of the phenomenon from the Western point of view:

[...] that feeling of condemnation, deep-seated, persuasive, and masterful; that illogical impulse of disapproval which is half disgust, half vague fear, and that wakes up in our hearts in the presence of anything new or unusual, of anything that is not run into the mould of our own conscience; the accursed feeling made up of disdain, of anger, and of the sense of superior virtue that leaves us deaf, blind, contemptuous and stupid before anything which is not like ourselves (Conrad 2009: 195).

Conrad conveys othering as an in-built feature of the Europeans, who have for long regarded themselves and their lifestyle as superior in reference to the foreign. As Conrad (2009: 195) writes, othering is characteristically “illogical” because there should

not be anything to condemn in alternate cultures and people in the first place. And yet, the deviant irresistibly brings forth the complicated feelings of scorn, dread and hate in the people deeming themselves more worthy. Characteristically to othering, those superior are also in denial towards the othered and everything they represent which leaves the dominant selves with a narrow view of the world that their prejudices prohibit from widening.

2.2.1 Themes in Colonial Literature

Europeans' perception of colonialism as means to civilise the natives is reflected in literary accounts on colonialism. "The process of civilization" was strongly supported by Dutch scholars, who were of the opinion that the civilised society of the West represented the most developed stage of human existence (Sens 2003: 91). In fact, "even today the eurocentric myth is spread that the expansion of European industrial culture over the rest of the world was due to superior intelligence, rationality, science and hence productivity of labour" (Mies & Shiva 1993: 147). The colonisers' mission to convince the indigenous people of the supremacy of the Western culture and convert them into obeying their customs was perceived as a salvation granted for the foreigners, and it became a popular subject in colonial literature. In colonial texts the aims of spreading the civilisation was conveyed by using imagery of *saving* the natives into the sphere of the supposedly better European culture.

The colonial literary theme of saving the native peoples from their culture and surroundings deemed primitive by Westerners was condensed into the imagery of a Western man saving a native woman. The native woman was thus portrayed as the object of saving and the white European man was the active saviour rescuing native women regardless of their social status from the native patriarchal men. (Loomba 1998: 153–154, 158, 171.) Saving only women derives from the tendency to parallel the native women with the foreign land in colonial narratives (Loomba 1998: 152). Therefore, a single image of a white man saving a native woman was simultaneously perceived to contain the idea of the white man as converting the entire population of the foreign land. Furthermore, the imagery also suggests the white man to have thus

succeeded in taming the foreign nature. Taming refers to suppressing nature under the scrutiny of the white man.

The urge of the colonisers to examine everything in the foreign countries was insatiable and thus it not only steered colonialism forward but also inspired authors to write about the yet uncharted being discovered. Elleke Boehmer (1995: 71) depicts the colonisers with the term “map-maker”, which captures the essence of the white man’s will to leave his fingerprints wherever he goes. Carolyn Merchant (1992: 24) sums up the proceedings of the colonial map-making by describing how “the oceans were charted, the new lands mapped, and the natural histories of the peoples, animals, plants, and minerals found there catalogued”. As becomes apparent from Merchant’s (1992: 24) inscription, the colonisers drew no distinction between organic and inorganic nature in their goal of specifying everything in terms understandable for the Europeans. They even went to the extent of writing the native peoples’ history of evolution, which is comparable with defining their purpose of existence.

The colonisers were not invited into the lands of the natives and were therefore regarded as intruders. The term “voyeur-violator”, coined by Kate Soper (1991: 141), aptly describes the colonisers and the relationship they had with the natives. The latter part of the term depicting colonisers is *violator* which refers to their desire to explore, reveal secrets and go deeper into the foliage of the new land. The first part of the term, *voyeur*, conveys the colonial literature to be conducted mainly from the point of view of the coloniser. Westerners are voyeurs since they have the right to gaze at the natives (Boehmer 1995: 71). In a colonial context, power is substantially related with who has the right to look at whom. bell hooks (2003: 207) has phrased the dominance the gaze expresses by the statement “there is power in looking”. The phrase manifests the inequality produced by gazing since it creates subjects who have the power to look at others they regard as mere objects.

Since the gaze is a manifestation of power, it offers the native people a possibility to use it in order to object to their subordination and claim the power usually reserved for the dominant colonisers. *Counter-gaze* refers to the gaze of the colonised, and it challenges

the dominance of the Westerners by returning the groping gaze back to them. According to bell hooks (2003: 208), the gaze is the very “site of resistance” because it opens “spaces of agency” for the colonised. In other words, having the courage to look at the colonisers is a revolutionary means for the natives to oppose their dominance and establish their subjectivity. In addition to counter-gazing, the colonised may wear veils to manipulate and interfere with the gazes of the colonisers.

The veil is an obstacle a native woman wears in order to protect herself against the Western gaze. The simple piece of cloth bears a great significance in colonialist narratives because the “opaque” veil is “erecting a barrier between the body of the Oriental woman and the Western gaze” (Yegenoglu 2003: 542). Veiling, in other words, equals with resistance which evokes frustration in the coloniser. Meyda Yegenoglu (2003: 546) notes how “the loss of control does not imply a mere loss of sight, but a complete reversal of positions: her body completely invisible to the European observer except for her eyes, *the veiled woman can see without being seen*”. The counter-gaze and the concealment of the colonised is an unbearable combination of fear and seduction for the coloniser, and it can only be subsided by unveiling the foreign (Yegenoglu 2003: 542, 546–547). The Westerner cannot simply turn away his gaze and stop looking because he must see despite the cost.

The necessity of the white man to get rid of the veil which seems to undermine his omnipotence in declaring himself the conqueror of the foreign, is a recurrent theme in colonial literature. According to Meyda Yegenoglu (2003: 543), “the veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantasmatically achieved”. Rey Chow suggests that the stripping of the veil only disillusion the coloniser, however, who comes to realise that the veil hides no secret but only a woman who has been defiled as a result of the coloniser’s obsession to expose her. Hence, the unveiled woman serves as a mirror for the coloniser in reflecting his gaze, thus making him painfully aware of himself and his actions. (Chow 2003: 342–343.) Chow’s thoughts make an allegory of colonialism as a whole in depicting the way in which the Westerners invested the East

with mysterious images of their own imagination which they then let lead them in their futile search for hidden secrets, destroying the people and the landscape in the process.

Colonialist narratives are saliently abundant with boundaries. In fact, the colonialist literature itself is inspired by the boundary between the civilised Europe and the unknown world not yet consumed by Western ideologies (JanMohamed 1995: 18). The boundaries described in colonialist narration can include those of shorelines, borders of countries, vegetation, veils, and bodies. The body is the most productive boundary, since it can alone feature all the boundaries mentioned above. In other words, the bodies' "boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious" (Douglas 2002: 142). In *Heart of Darkness* (1999), for instance, the skin of a Congolese woman is the boundary equalling with the menacing wall of jungle vegetation. The veiled body of the native woman can thus be interpreted to signify the foreign land veiled with forests, both of them threatened by the coloniser.

Liminality is a term used for the lack of boundaries, which is a far greater threat for the colonisers than the existence of boundaries. Liminality refers to being on the threshold between the past and the future that is yet unknown (Viljoen & van der Merwe 2007: 2). A person in a liminal stage is unpredictable because his or hers categorisation is difficult. The intimidation caused by liminality, may be expressed in terms of the attitude skin colour evoked during colonialism: "Colour was the most important signifier of cultural and racial difference" which is why "the lack of colour difference *intensified* the horror of the colonial" (Lomba 1998: 109). When there were no clear boundaries between the primitive natives and the civilised Europeans, the resemblance the natives had to the Westerners became intimidating. The thought of *the savage being almost like I* was too devastating. As Mary Douglas (2002: 150) notes, "any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins". Thus, half-castes presented a dilemma for the white hegemony because their categorisation according to the dualistic ideology was difficult. Consequently, it was essential to enhance the Europeans' dominance over the natives in colonialist discourse.

3 ECOFEMINIST VIEW ON WOMEN AND NATURE

Ecofeminism is a feminist theory connecting the subordination of women and the destructive treatment of nature. Similarly to any feminism, ecofeminism identifies and aims at deconstructing the domination of masculinity, but unlike other feminist theories, ecofeminism highlights the importance of preserving the environment including the earthiness in human beings. (Warren 1994: 1–2.) The term ecofeminism was born in the 1970s when Françoise d'Eaubonne used it to encourage women to take action and revolutionise environmental protection (Merchant 1992: 184). From this first occasion of connecting women with the fate of the planet, ecofeminism has evolved into multiple directions all of which yet stress “the historic and symbolic association of women with nature” (Jacobs 2003: 670). Ecofeminism parallels women with nature by attesting that they have been mutually subordinated in the West, and uses this connection to both criticise Western patriarchal culture and empower women (Jacobs 2003: 670). These aims have produced cultural and social ecofeminism, which are ecofeminist theories that have become especially well established (Plumwood 1992: 10).

Cultural ecofeminism approaches the woman-nature connection spiritually. Spirituality in this context refers to a belief in an empowering female spirit that exists everywhere. The spirit is seen as a force connecting people with the earth by granting them positive energy to live by loving life and each other while nurturing the earth. (Mies & Shiva 1993: 17–18.) Due to this spiritual aspect, ecofeminism is also referred to as “a new term for ancient wisdom” (Mies & Shiva 1993: 13), which highlights the prehistoric association between women and nature which was respected rather than shunned. Thus, cultural ecofeminism focuses on finding roots for the positive women-nature association from prehistoric times, when “nature was symbolised by pregnant female figures [...] and women were held in high esteem as bringers forth of life” (Merchant 1992: 191). Cultural ecofeminism encourages women to turn the degraded women-nature connection around by celebrating their biological dependence on nature and consider the connection with nature as a source for female subjectivity (Merchant 1992: 190, 192).

Social ecofeminism regards the mutual subordination of women and nature as a cultural rather than a biological matter (Madsen 2000: 125–126). The goal of social ecofeminism is to liberate women and nature by identifying and aiming at demolishing systems of domination responsible for the subordination of women and nature in society (Merchant 1992: 194). Social ecofeminism regards the mutual subordination of women and nature to be caused by patriarchy which dominates women, and capitalism which dominates nature (Merchant 1992: 184). The conception of patriarchal society subordinating both women and nature is acknowledged by both social and cultural ecofeminism. Consequently, patriarchal ideology is a key factor in ecofeminism since it is responsible for the subordination of women and nature and therefore the inspirer for the ecofeminist theories developed to liberate women and nature.

Patriarchy is a “system that privileges men and all things masculine, and a political system that places power in the hands of men and thus serves male interests at the expense of women” (Madsen 2000: xii). In other words, patriarchal society empowers male policy-makers who exercise their authority by advantaging men and disadvantaging women. According to Karen J. Warren (1996: xii), patriarchy and the inequality between sexes in Western society derive from the consistency according to which “*superiority justifies subordination*”. Consequently, the power structures of society contain causality, meaning that the valuation of one concept automatically requires the devaluation of another. Ecofeminist theories suggest that the superior position of men and masculinity be maintained by the dualistic oppression of women, femininity and nature.

Nature plays an important part in ecofeminist theories since it is one of the feminised entities, at the expense of which masculine patriarchal identity has claimed its dominant position. The oppression of nature refers to the abusive and destructive methods used in the construction and maintenance of the capitalised and industrialised society by vastly disregarding natural resources of energy, for instance (Merchant 1990: 63). Notably, the devaluation of nature also refers to a number of mental characteristics, such as “sexuality and the passions” (Merchant 1992: 194). Mies & Shiva (1993: 14) combine these two aspects of nature in the following way:

We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the same masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way. (Mies & Shiva 1993: 14.)

Accordingly, ecofeminism is interested in both the abuse and denial of nature, which equals the abuse and denial of women's emotions, bodies and sexuality. Ecofeminism aims at liberating both women and nature by turning their union into a positive connection that sustains female subjectivity.

Female subjects are powerful women whose subjectivity is based on the positivity of the women-nature connection promoted by ecofeminism. Therefore, female subjectivity manifests the ultimate ecofeminist goal which is to "reconcile humanity with nature" (King 1989: 130). This includes aspects such as living in a more sustainable way, and most importantly, being open to one's senses. Female subjects should also be regarded as powerful women who are neither victimized nor objectified (Kosonen 1996: 180). It is also noteworthy that female subjectivity differs from that of the Western men's because it is not constructed according to domination and subordination. In other words, female subjectivity is not based on women becoming male-like subjects, which is how female subjectivity was defined in feminist theories at first (Kosonen 1996: 193). Instead, female subjectivity resembles the definition given by feminists in the early 1980s, when the positive difference of women in reference to men was emphasised (Kosonen 1996: 194). According to ecofeminism, it is the women-nature connection that makes women different from men in a positive manner and provides women with a positive primitivity that empowers their subjectivity.

Positive primitivity does not necessarily have to supersede rationality (Suutala 2001: 148). On the contrary, Maria Suutala (2001: 148) combines positive primitivity and rationality, following the code of ecofeminism, by regarding the latter feature as a resource enabling humans to live in coexistence with nature instead of treating it dualistically thus justifying the domination of nature. In other words, humans' intelligence should assist in treating nature with respect and help in realising its

empowering and liberating effect. Ynestra King (1989: 134) also emphasizes the importance of such combinations by demanding for “a new way of being human on this planet with a sense of the sacred, informed by all ways of knowing, intuitive *and* scientific, mystical *and* rational”. As the quotation manifests, science and reason should not have to act as the all-powerful dominators condemning other forms of knowledge as negligible but work in unison with the more subjective types of knowledge.

3.1 Conceptual Analysis of the Dualistic Process

Dualism is a value-laden process separating concepts according to what is accepted and what is unaccepted in Western culture. Therefore, dualism is characterised by systematic inferiorization of one concept in relation to its opposite (Plumwood 1993: 47). To put it more accurately: “Dualism is the process by which contrasting concepts [...] are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive” (Plumwood 1993: 31). By “contrasting concepts” Val Plumwood (1993: 31) refers to entities that can be regarded as opposites, such as “masculine and feminine”. Secondly, she remarks those concepts to be organized “by domination and subordination” (1993: 31), which suggests them to be constructed and characterised by differences in their value: one is recognized whereas the other is unrecognized. The final remark on the definition of dualism is mutual exclusiveness, which claims that the characteristics included in a concept are not to be found in its opposite. Thus a concept in a dominant position, such as masculinity, is strictly separated from its opposite, femininity (Plumwood 1993: 32).

Dualism is characterised by *hyperseparation*, which is the most important feature characterising dualistically contrastive pairs. Hyperseparation refers to the ways in which dualistic opposites do not only differ from each other but are separated to the extreme, hence the prefix *hyper*; the dominant concepts radically exclude, i.e. contain none of the features attached to the subordinate concepts. This feature of dualism also contains that the differences between the dominant concepts and the subordinate ones are highlighted whereas the possible features they have in common are diminished or

hidden. (Plumwood 1993: 49.) Hyperseparation is the kernel of dualism since it makes it distinct from dichotomies and binary systems which lack the dimension of inequality between the opposites (Plumwood 1993: 47). Dualism is therefore a scheme of thinking that does not simply tract opposite concepts but places value on them.

The systematic and long-lasting oppression of women and the feminine in the Western culture has produced what Val Plumwood (1993: 2) designates as “a network of dualisms”. Therefore, masculinity and femininity can be regarded as umbrella terms for a number of concepts classified under either one. By the following list, Val Plumwood (1993: 43) depicts the dualistic opposites in Western thinking by grouping the masculine concepts on the left and those regarded as belonging into the feminine sphere on the right:

culture	/	nature
reason	/	nature
male	/	female
mind	/	body (nature)
master	/	slave
reason	/	matter (physicality)
rationality	/	animality (nature)
reason	/	emotion (nature)
mind, spirit	/	nature
freedom	/	necessity (nature)
universal	/	particular
human	/	nature (non-human)
civilised	/	primitive (nature)
production	/	reproduction (nature)
public	/	private
subject	/	object
self	/	other

The concepts on the left are the appraised qualities connected with “the elite male identity of the master” (Plumwood 1993: 44), which refers to the white, European population of men. The right hand side of the list depicts the feminine attributes that are regarded as inferior to those describing men and are therefore oppressed in the West (Plumwood 1993: 43–44). As becomes apparent from the list, a collective denominator

for the feminine concepts is nature since ten out of the seventeen dualistic pairs has nature as the opposite of the masculine concept.

The Western masculine identity is constructed on dualism, and its feminine counterpart is considered lacking from it in quality. According to Val Plumwood (1993: 51), male identity depends on dualisms because they maintain it: Men remain dominant because they have the power to determine women and femininity as inferior to men and masculinity. In fact, Plumwood (1993: 42) is of the opinion that there is no “masculine identity pure and simple” but “the identity of the master [...] defined by these multiple exclusions which lies at the heart of Western culture”. In other words, manhood contains and conveys mastery. Men declare themselves separate from all the traits of femininity they regard unworthy and inferior to masculine attributes. According to Mies & Shiva (1993: 164), “the patriarchal world view sees man as the measure of all value, with no space for diversity, only for hierarchy”. Consequently, the dominant masculine identity is declared as the norm and its devalued feminine opposite as deviant from the norm, i.e. lacking the features of its masculine opposite. Simone de Beauvoir discusses this conception in her well known feminist book *The Second Sex* (1997), published in 1949:

The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity (de Beauvoir 1997/1949: 15).

According to the quotation, men and women do not exist equally but on different levels: men represent the valued standard for humans of which women are considered lacking in quality. Defining the subordinate concept as a lack from the dominant one is called *relational definition* in dualistic terms. This feature of dualism dictates that the master does not treat its subordinates as individuals on their own, but as combinations of what the master is lacking *and* desiring. (Plumwood 1993: 52.) Thus, the master is surrounded by people and things that could be described as his shadows; they are his

own creations embodying features he disregards but also those he lusts for. The yearning towards the devalued features is hidden by denying any connection to the subordinate identity.

Denied dependency influences the identity construction of people both in the dominant and in the subordinated dualistic position (Plumwood 1993: 41). It refers firstly to the relationship between the dominant dualistic concept and its devalued opposite in establishing a dependency between the opposing concepts even if it is denied: The terms master and slave would not mean anything without the opposing term since there cannot be a master without a slave and vice versa. Secondly, *denied dependency* depicts the relationship between the dualistically opposing concepts from a material point of view in dictating that the master benefits from its subordinate opposite although not wanting to admit it. (Plumwood 1993: 48–49.) Thus, in terms of *denied dependency*, men's position in the Western culture is dominant because that of women's is submissive, and men owe to nature their economic gains since nature is the source of the material needed in economically profitable industrial procedures.

3.2 Masculine Mind over the Female Body

Plato laid the foundations for the dualistic juxtaposition of rational mind versus nature. Val Plumwood (1993: 80–81) suggests that the kernel in Plato's philosophy is the devaluation of nature and conversely the glorification of reason. The most famous instance of this tendency is Plato's cave allegory by which he explains the existence of the two layers of reality – the one we can sense and the other that contains ideas and is only accessible by reasoning. In the allegory, Plato depicts people to be chained inside a cave mistaking ever changing shadows reflected on the wall as reality. Those who have been able to leave the cave have achieved it by using philosophy, i.e. rationality, as a means to see beyond the shadows and get into connection with the higher realm of static ideas that is the true reality. (Skirbekk & Gilje 2001: 47, 49, 54.) In ecofeminist terms, the cave in the allegory represents nature and consequently, getting in connection with true reality means withdrawal from nature by reason that conquers the natural

(Plumwood 1993: 89–90). Val Plumwood (1993: 93) describes exiting the cave of nature as a vital transition in the development of the masculine identity:

The journey out of the Cave [...] is the ‘great task’ of separation, the oedipal journey of the establishment of masculinity; it is the journey [...] to true selfhood leaving behind ‘nature within’, and to the attainment of human cultural identity defined by rejection and separation from the lower order, which includes the mother, primal matter, the earth, and all that is conceived as belonging to it (Plumwood 1993: 93).

The quotation above manifests the fundamental features of dualism as it contains the terms of “rejection and separation” (Plumwood 1993: 93), which refer to the way in which masculine identity is constructed according to hyperseparation from women and femininity. Manhood equals the distinction from “emotions, the body, the passions, animality, the primitive or uncivilised, the non-human world, matter, physicality and sense experience, as well as the sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness” all of which are feminine, devalued dualistic concepts related with nature (Plumwood 1993: 19–20). Notably, only men are considered able to elevate their rational minds over their bodies, according to Plato’s philosophy. Women are unable to accomplish it since both the female mind and body are tied to nature.

The female body has been first and foremost seen as a biological entity conveying traits of animal nature. According to Cynthia Eller (2011: 8), these traits including “pregnancy, childbirth [and] lactation” have been designated as “women’s social disabilities”. Maria Suutala (2001: 23), quoting Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel (1989), further stresses that the attributes quoted above are the ones that have excluded women from the realm of the mind occupied by men. The dualistic division existing between men and women in this regard can be condensed by saying that women are only bodies whereas men are wisdom. Women’s association with nature has had physical and mental dimensions both of which have been aimed at paralleling women with animals. The physical resemblance to animals is conveyed in anatomy publications dating back to the 17th century in which women’s wombs are labelled as animals. (Suutala 2001: 10, 52.) Mentally women have been deemed to possess traits of animality, which equals

irrationality. (Suutala 2001: 10, 87, 148.) Consequently, the female body became associated with nature and it had to be controlled as much as the non-human nature.

During the Enlightenment, women's bodies were condemned as ungovernable and wild, i.e. beyond control, which was thought characteristic of nature (Plumwood 1993: 37; Suutala 2001: 10). Women were also considered requiring male surveillance in order to avoid their inner, threatening untamed animal to surface and make them hysterical (Suutala 2001: 10; Tiffany & Adams 1985: 12). According to Wendy Brown (1988: 55), "woman's apparent inability to escape her physiological 'animal' nature establishes her as an omnipotent challenge to a conception of the human being as transcending animality". Therefore, women were considered as belonging to nature permanently whereas men could strive to be separated from it. According to Carol Adams (1994: 11), rationality that used to mark the separation between human beings and animals was now used to make a distinction between men and women. Women were considered a stain and an obstacle in the way of men and science's triumphal march over the natural. The female body became the target of loath and even supernatural beliefs as women were accused of witchcraft and hunted during the 17th century. (Suutala 2001: 10, 11, 52.)

Witches embodied the disorder and chaos prevailing in nature but also the masculine fear of corporality. Burning witches symbolised man's attempts to achieve control over hostile nature. (Merchant 1990: 127.) Maria Suutala (2001: 31), quoting Claudia Honegger (1978), suggests that witch-hunts do not necessarily result solely from the will to restrain chaos, but are expressions of the fear men had towards animalistic women and wild nature. The animality in women was intimidating because it made them not only potential witches but also sexual beings and female sexuality was an unknown and ominous territory (Suutala 2001: 39). When sexuality was first declared a sin by Christianity, people in the West began to deny and degrade their bodies (Suutala 2001: 150). The visible enemies in the war against natural corporality became women, who were condemned as embodying the sinful and intimidating animal sexuality characterised by insatiability and unpredictability (Suutala 2001: 39). Thus, women

stood as reminders and embodiments of nature that men wanted not only to control but leave behind as well.

Men pursued the separation from nature, corporality and sexuality because they were afraid of women's sexuality but also that of their *own*. Sander L. Gilman (1992: 194–195) argues that men's fear of sexuality becomes especially well established by colonial relationships in which European men other the native woman by making her the embodiment of sexuality and then disapprove of her:

The 'white *man's* burden' [...] becomes his sexuality and its control, and it is this which is transferred into the need to control the sexuality of the Other, the Other as sexualized female. The colonial mentality which sees 'natives' as needing control is easily transferred to 'woman' [...]. [...] This need for control was a projection of inner fears. (Gilman 1992: 194–195.)

According to Gilman (1992: 194–195), it is the uncertainty and fear men have towards their own sexuality that drives them to master the sexuality in women. Consequently, the condemnation of the animal-like sexuality in women has been simultaneous condemnation of the animal in men.

3.3 Images of the Western and the Native Women

The Victorians regarded Western and native women as embodying dualistic features condemned feminine, in addition to which the European women were demanded to hide them as inappropriate. Maria Suutala (2001: 10, 151) is of the opinion that the restrictions of emotions expected from Western women equals exposing them to systematic patriarchal repression of their very womanhood, which has resulted in depressing women, making pleasing men the sole purpose of their existence (Suutala 2001: 10, 151). European women were expected to “learn to be ‘nice’ and to suppress their wild nature or be punished” (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 23). Thus, the Western women led a life of paradox as they had to be “pure and passionless” while still be able to please their husbands in bed (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 15). Victorian women were classified into roles of “mothers, virgins, and whores” according to their ability to

control their sexuality and submit themselves to their husbands' will (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 14). Even the slightest mishap in following the codes of proper behaviour was considered fateful:

According to evolutionism, Victorian women retained their animal natures, despite their veneer of domesticity. Moreover, there was no place for the civilized woman to go, except backward. Yielding to the passions inherent in female nature constituted downfall. The sullied reputation of the "fallen" Victorian woman was irreparable. (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 9.)

The animal was believed to lurk inside even the purest of European women. Due to the unpredictability of women, they were condemned to passivity whereas men were considered suitable for social and cultural action (Plumwood 1993: 50). According to the patriarchal ideology, women had to be diminished into "a new romantic ideal of womanhood" that paralleled a safe haven, "the domestic idyll" men could return to after acting on social arenas representing "the murderous competition for more profit, wealth, and progress" (Mies & Shiva 1993: 134, 146). Thus, Western women's minds and bodies were made to please men and serve their needs (Mies & Shiva 1993: 120). Patriarchal ideology had created a woman who stayed at home, delivered babies and acted according to the decorum dictated by men.

Colonialism brought Western men and their dualistic thinking into foreign countries where they came across foreign women who were yet to be tamed. The native women were perceived unaffected by the patriarchal frames the Western women had been constricted in. This possibility to interpret the Other woman freely was derived from the different societal stages the women were deemed to live in: Western evolution theorists in the 19th century defined progressive societal stages according to which the natives were regarded to live in a stage of "savagery [and] barbarism", characterised by "sexual promiscuity, Amazon revolts, and matriarchy", whereas Westerners were regarded as having reached the highest societal stage of civilisation "associated with a male vision of women's submission to a patriarchal social order" (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 7). In other words, in an ideal society men were perceived as having control over women,

which is why the wild and menacing *Other* women represented new and intriguing challenges.

The native woman became the most prominent image of the Other in various colonial media (Boehmer 1995: 81). European women had intimidated Western men with their qualities deemed animal-like, but when such an unpredictable nature was attached to a foreign woman she became *doubly colonised*. Double colonisation refers to native women's twofold subordination, both as the colonised and as women. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 250.) In a sense, the native women's exceptionally strong assimilation with the devalued dualistic attributes gave the Western women a momentary absolution since the European women were united with the Western men in othering the natives (Plumwood 1993: 67). Double colonisation, however, equalled with double enthrallment, and it did not take long before European men began to develop fantasies of the native woman, and she became the target of their desires.

The native woman was perceived as a complete opposite of the Western woman. The Victorian women were "nervous, hysterical, and sexless", whereas the native women were wild savages embodying "public nudity and overt eroticism" (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 15–16). Western men's imagination drew portrayals of the native women as "Amazons, virgins, and matriarchs" (Tiffany & Adams 1985: xi). Despite the role given to the foreign women, however, the Westerners yet considered it necessary to colonise them since they represented wild nature. European men became especially enthralled by the native women who proved resistant to their attempts of conquer. These powerful native women were designated as Amazons. Western men believed the Amazons to expect being conquered in spite of their defiant rejections because they could supposedly only love the one succeeding in taming them. (Tiffany & Adams 1985: 31, 100–101.) This idea manifests how the natives were narrated by the Westerners: The dominating colonisers imagined the native woman in a way *they* found intriguing.

The image the Western men forge of the native woman reveals the weaknesses of the masculine Self although it is supposed to enhance the men's superiority by reinforcing the dualism between the Self and Other. According to Tiffany & Adams (1985: 97),

“men invented the Wild Woman, and in their romance with her, perpetuate male supremacy. In this mythic process, the Wild Woman holds up a mirror that reveals the selves men desire to be”. The quotation above suggests that women and nature, designated as primitive and savage by patriarchal dualistic ideology, could yet present something that the dominating Westerners would like to be identified with. In fact, there has always been those, even if in the minority, who have “continued to uphold the idea that man was happiest and most satisfied in the first, primitive state and that society’s pitfalls and evils had corrupted man and had served to make life artificial” (Sens 2003: 91). There is a definite calling for ecofeminist contemplation of re-evaluating the Western obsessive aim of perceiving everything hierarchically and regarding Westerners as supreme in reference to foreign people.

3.4 The Dimensions of Nature

Nature is a multifaceted concept which conveys a number of meanings and is open to multiple interpretations in works of art. It is no surprise that nature has been declared as one of the most complicated terms to be defined in a language (Williams 1983: 219). In addition to being something visible and tangible, nature is also a symbol for a spiritual existence embracing humans’ emotionality outside man-made hierarchies and societal power structures. Christoph Parry (2003: 14) argues that when we read about nature, meaning the environment, all we infer it to say is what the writer has decided it to say, for landscape itself is mute. The interpretations readers make of landscape can differ to some extent from the meaning the writer has been after, but nevertheless the landscape always reads what individuals put into it. As Christoph Parry (2003: 12), quoting Kenneth Clark (1953: 1), submits, various landscapes have intrigued people for hundreds of years and they have been made mirrors of human emotions in works of art. Therefore, non-human nature can have many faces and it depends on the reader what the mental equivalent to the expression outside is.

Nature is commonly symbolised by a woman susceptible to abuse and symbolic penetration. There are illustrations dating back to the 17th century in which nature is

portrayed as a woman and science is a male figure walking on her footsteps eager to gain on the feminine nature in order to examine her more closely and reveal her secrets (Suutala 2001: 86–87; Merchant 1990: 110). This allegory has been taken further in paralleling excavations through the earth with sexual violation. Tiffany & Adams (1985: 66–67) suggest that gold mining in the tropical regions is comparable with the rape of a woman, as the diggers violently make their way towards the ultimate goal of gold, i.e. the womb. Kate Soper (1991: 141) also identifies similar perceptions in regarding nature as woman by stating how nature is “the potential spouse of science, to be wooed, won, and if necessary forced to submit to intercourse”. This approach reveals the tendency to no longer perceive the earth as a mother figure but as a lover or a virgin (Soper 1991: 142). Hence, nature can adopt any role that women occupy in a society.

Nature is attached with sexual connotations especially when it is foreign. Hence, the sexual equation made between nature and maidens is relevant with colonialism, in the reference of which “nature as physical territory is [...] presented as a source of erotic delight, and sometimes of overwhelming provocation to her masculine voyeur-violator” (Soper 1991: 141–142). Metaphorically then the colonisers deflowered the virginal feminine nature as they penetrated the jungles in their urge to reveal the secrets of the newly found land. As Tiffany & Adams (1985: 100) suggest: “Using the metaphor of sex and conquest, men enter the wilderness, a vast emptiness whose only purpose is to exist for them”. The relationship the colonisers had towards nature was not that unambiguous, however, since conquering the feminine nature brought up a wide range of feelings in the colonisers.

Nature is not always symbolised by an enticing female figure; it can also be portrayed as a hostile adversary. According to Kate Soper (1991: 143), the surrender of the virgin territory made the colonisers feel guilty and it also surfaced “the emasculating fears inspired by her awesome resistance to seduction”. Consequently, nature represented an intimidating adversary threatening the very manhood of the Western men who were used to their dominant position in their own countries. Elleke Boehmer (1995: 87) has also identified the imagery of feminine danger in the narratives of colonial writers who “evoked the treacherous features of unknown terrain by drawing on metaphors of the

engulfing female”. As manifested by the examples above, nature as woman is central in the theme of colonialism and therefore also in the analysis of the colonial novels written by Joseph Conrad.

In *An Outcast of the Islands*, Conrad establishes the connection between women and nature by using the sea as a metaphor depicting the fate of women and nature under the yoke of the scientific revolution in a patriarchal society. By describing the sea as it was in the old days in comparison to present times, Conrad conveys the way in which the recognition of both women and nature altered severely after the valuation of science and capitalism increased:

The old sea; the sea of many years ago, whose servants were devoted slaves and went from youth to age or to a sudden grave without needing to open the book of life, because they could look at eternity reflected on the element that gave the life and dealt the death. Like a beautiful and unscrupulous woman, the sea of the past was glorious in its smiles, irresistible in its anger, capricious, enticing, illogical, irresponsible; a thing to love, a thing to fear. (Conrad 2009: 14.)

By the sea of the old times, Conrad simultaneously refers to the way the physical landscape used to be contemplated as the respected mother figure responsible for lives and deaths and how women were also respected as the creators of life. Nature as the mother is described in the excerpt similarly to women in general, as possessing many sides some of which are lovable whereas others are almost intimidating. Such complexity of nature and women was not deemed a feature to be condemned in the times past, but taken as part of their enticement. The continuation of the quote verifies this:

But its cruelty was redeemed by the charm of its inscrutable mystery, by the immensity of its promise, by the supreme witchery of its possible favour. Strong men with childlike hearts were faithful to it, were content to live by its grace – to die by its will. (Conrad 2009: 14.)

Conrad’s writing displays how the sea, i.e. nature, was regarded as the mightiest force possible and therefore its caprices were accepted. The sea of the old times is associated with witchcraft and unpredictability similarly to women. It was not until science dethroned nature that these feminine characteristics were deemed as loathsome,

however. In Conrad's description the unpredictability is expected and accepted, which is an attitude eradicated during the scientific revolution:

That was the sea before the time when the French mind set the Egyptian muscle in motion and produced a dismal but profitable ditch. Then a great pall of smoke sent out by countless steam-boats was spread over the restless mirror of the Infinite. The hand of the engineer tore down the veil of the terrible beauty in order that greedy and faithless landlubbers might pocket dividends. The mystery was destroyed. Like all mysteries, it lived only in the hearts of its worshippers. The hearts changed; the men changed. The once loving and devoted servants went out armed with fire and iron, and conquering the fear of their own hearts became a calculating crowd of cold and exacting masters. (Conrad 2009: 14.)

Conrad describes the time when the reign of nature was brought to an end by man who believed himself capable and worthy of enslaving everything he decided was invaluable. In the beginning of the quote, Conrad most likely refers to the building of the Suez Canal, which is one of the early structural masterpieces of man in remoulding the earth in order to revolutionise the commercial water-borne traffic. Conrad's writing describes the ever growing importance of capitalism, which killed the spiritual dimension of nature. It is noteworthy that by the end of the quote, Conrad refers to the birth of the master identity whose dominance acquires the subordination of nature and women. The results of this devaluation are reflected in the way Conrad writes about the new sea which is the result of the triumph of science:

The sea of the past was an incomparably beautiful mistress, with inscrutable face, with cruel and promising eyes. The sea of today is a used-up drudge, wrinkled and defaced by the churned-up wakes of brutal propellers, robbed of the enslaving charm of its vastness, stripped of its beauty, of its mystery and of its promise. (Conrad 2009: 14.)

The excerpt written by Conrad conveys how the scientific world view altered the image of the sea from a mystical place into a waterway contributing to commerce. Emotionality underwent a similar control from freedom to express emotions into a controlled code of conduct. The fate of the old sea can also be seen as compatible with the treatment of the native peoples as nothing but slaves during colonialism. Thus, a single image portraying the sea can simultaneously serve as a metaphor for the devaluation of nature, women and the indigenous peoples.

4 COLONIAL FEMALE SUBJECTS IN THE LINGARD TRILOGY

Joseph Conrad's Lingard Trilogy portrays colonial female subjects able to defend themselves against the white colonisers. Due to this the novels do not follow the traditional conventions of colonialist discourse. The female subjectivity embodied by the female characters stems from the women's influential connection with nature. In order to convey the close women-nature connection, Conrad describes the women as possessing characteristics of nature or by describing the landscape to convey the emotions the women have. In what follows, the analysis of the four different manifestations of female subjectivity in the Lingard Trilogy will proceed from subjectivity empowered by love, subjectivity expressed by counter-gaze to subjectivity stemming from othering and finally to subjectivity empowered by positive primitivity.

4.1 Female Subjectivity Empowered by Love

Nina, presented in *Almayer's Folly*, is a liminal character because she is a half-caste native woman, whose skin is neither white nor black. Her liminality is also expressed by her position as being torn between two cultures, Western culture and that of the Malays. Conrad conveys the difference between the cultures by Nina's parents: Almayer represents European civilisation and persuades Nina to adopt the habits of the West, whereas her mother Mrs. Almayer represents the Orient and would prefer Nina to follow the culture of the Malays. Almayer's attempts to make Nina choose Western culture are comprehensive since they not only involve changing her outer appearance but also include affecting her values through education. In the end, it is love towards a Malay man that determines the side she chooses. Although it is an emotion that makes Nina choose her cultural side, she yet conveys rationality by her careful pondering on which culture she should prefer. Thus, her female subjectivity is characterised by positive primitivity combining both emotions and reason.

Almayer's intention to civilise Nina equals the traditional colonial imagery of a white man saving a native woman. Almayer, who is portrayed as perceiving the world according to the Western patriarchal ideology, deems it self-evident to show his deep affection to his daughter by acquiring her tutoring which would meet his standards of European education. In his firm belief of doing Nina a favour by sending her away to her study in Singapore, he simultaneously deprives Mrs. Almayer of her child. Nina, who is standing on the threshold between two cultures, is thus pushed in the direction of the West and prevented from declining into what Almayer deems as primitivity. Nina's education exposes her successfully to civilisation and separates her from her mother's influence which Almayer deems as destructive. When Nina returns to her parents, Almayer's civilising mission seems to have taken an effect.

After her education, the Western influence on Nina is highlighted but she is yet characterised by liminality. She is described through the eyes of Almayer who is pleased to notice that his daughter has grown into a woman who is "tall for a half-caste, with the correct profile of the father" (Conrad 2003: 9). Nina is also set apart from the natives by her white European dresses that enhance her purity and thus make her resemble the Western ideal of a woman. Her behaviour around her parents also follows the Western decorum dictating that women should be silent and well-behaved since she adapts to the poor lifestyle of her parents without complaints and to Almayer's amazement tolerates the presence of Mrs. Almayer. The reason for Nina's tolerance towards her mother is her interest in the culture her mother represents. Nina might be a European on the outside, but inside she is intrigued by the Malay culture and consequently undecided on whether to live according to Western values.

Underneath the mask of a collected person worn by Nina, there is a battle in progress between the teachings of the civilised education and the native legends told by Mrs. Almayer. The battle of disciplines derives from the abrupt end Nina's Western education came to as her teachers decided to send her back to her parents due to a misunderstanding. In Nina's own opinion, the decision to deport her was solely derived from her race: "Unfortunately her teachers did not understand her nature, and the education ended in a scene of humiliation, in an outburst of contempt from white people

for her mixed blood” (Conrad 2003: 26). Nina remains on the threshold between the cultures because the Western civilisation she was supposed to adopt rejected her. The quotation above suggests that Western civilisation equals with a hateful and awkward atmosphere for Nina. Therefore, it would seem understandable for her to sympathise with her mother who represents the opposite culture. Moving from liminality towards adopting a culture, however, is not a straightforward process but involves careful contemplation.

Nina’s liminality is characterised by frustration that derives from choosing between cultures she has not developed a special attachment to because they appear to her fundamentally the same:

It seemed to Nina that there was no change and no difference. Whether they traded in brick godowns or on the muddy river bank; whether they reached after much or little; whether they made love under the shadows of the great trees or in the shadow of the cathedral on the Singapore promenade, whether they plotted for their own ends under the protection of laws and according to the rules of Christian conduct, of whether they sought the gratification of their desires with the savage cunning and the unrestrained fierceness of nature as innocent of culture as their own immense and gloomy forests, Nina saw only the same manifestations of love and hate and of sordid greed chasing the uncertain dollar in all its multifarious and vanishing shapes. (Conrad 2003: 27.)

Nina is in a unique position for a colonial female character because she has witnessed both the Western and the Eastern lifestyles. According to her notions, human existence is guided by the same forces of love, hate and greed, despite the surroundings people live in. These forces are only manifested differently depending on the culture they are expressed in. In the end, it is the restrictions of expressing emotions in the West that makes Nina critical towards the European culture:

To her resolute nature, however, after all these years, the savage and uncompromising sincerity of purpose shown by her Malay kinsmen seemed at last preferable to the sleek hypocrisy, to the polite disguises, to the virtuous pretences of such white people as she had had the misfortune to come in contact with (Conrad 2003: 27).

The quotation above depicts Western society to be governed by a hypocritical game of wearing masks and pretending not to be different from others. As a half-caste, Nina would only be able to hide behind the masks of accepted attire and decorum, but hiding the hue of her skin would be impossible. In Western society she would be gazed at as ethnic and deviant from the white norm. Consequently, Nina ends up choosing the Malay culture due to its unrestrictedness in expressing emotions.

Conrad depicts the upcoming turmoil resulting from Nina's decision to live as a Malay by an approaching storm. Thus, Nina's connection with nature is highlighted. The storm symbolises the inner battle Nina fights, as she must choose the path of the native people instead of the one paved for her by her father. Conrad depicts the storm to arrive at night with Nina being the only one awake to face it. Almayer who is oblivious to Nina being torn between the cultures is also ignorant of the rising winds and in his confidence of having civilised Nina leaves her with his lamp and retires. Nina's feelings towards her father and his culture are manifested by her extinguishing Almayer's light and letting the lightning strikes naturally illuminate the vast forests sprawling in front of her instead. The thunder is depicted as a mighty force, but Nina is not intimidated by it. On the contrary, she is eagerly absorbing the power of the storm and the various images of nature displayed to her at each flash. It is as if she knew the storm would not harm her since it is nature's way of reminding her of her roots and prompting her to leave Almayer's house.

It is love that makes Nina to incline towards the Malay culture from the threshold between the West and the East. The Malays seem to her more sincere than Europeans because they display their sentiments freely. This difference between the two cultures becomes apparent for Nina as she falls madly in love with Dain Maroola. Dain, who is described to speak about his loving emotions "with all the unrestrained enthusiasm of a man totally untrammelled by any influence of civilised self-discipline" (Conrad 2003: 41), embodies the opposite of Westerners used to controlling their feelings. Dain's vitality and emotionality influences Nina profoundly, and she experiences a surge of emotions she is yet to acquire a comparison to:

And in the great tumult of passion, like a flash of lightning came to her the reminiscence of that despised and almost forgotten civilisation she had only glanced at in her days of restraint, of sorrow, and of anger. In the cold ashes of that hateful and miserable past she would find the sign of love, the fitting expression of the boundless felicity of the present, the pledge of a bright and splendid future. (Conrad 2003: 46.)

Nina's love to Dain brings about a clear juxtaposition between Western civilisation and the Malay culture. There is no longer similarity in the way Nina perceives the two but only disparity: The West represents the past, negativity and death whereas the indigenous culture is the future, emotions and life. Nina resembles a phoenix that springs up from the ashes of her unfair experiences during her education that almost withered her and flies towards a new life carried by the strength of the burning passion she feels towards Dain.

Conrad resorts to nature descriptions in order to manifest Nina's love towards Dain and the happiness and peace she feels of having found her place in the world. The love of the couple is symbolised by "immense red blossoms sending down on their heads a shower of great dew-sparkling petals that descended rotating slowly in a continuous and perfumed stream" (Conrad 2003: 45). The red colour of the flowers refers to the love between Nina and Dain since red is the colour for love. Colours are used to express the atmosphere between the couple also in a moonlit scene in which "they passed together out of the red light of the fire into the silver shower of rays that fell upon the clearing" (Conrad 2003: 111). In the previous quotation, the colours construct an imagery of love burning bright amongst the silver shimmer of the moon. The moonlight adds to the femininity of the atmosphere since the moon is the feminine heavenly body whereas the sun is its masculine opposite (Merchant 1990: 12). Thus, the loving feelings of the couple that represents the feminine East are portrayed by nature seen as marked by femininity.

In addition to conveying the love of Nina and Dain through descriptions of nature, Conrad displays the gratification and peace Nina has found alongside Dain in the Malay culture by depicting the serenity of nature surrounding the couple:

Over the low river-mist hiding the boat with its freight of young passionate life and all-forgetful happiness, the stars paled, and a silvery-grey tint crept over the sky from the eastward. There was not a breath of wind, not a rustle of stirring leaf, not a splash of leaping fish to disturb the serene repose of all living things on the banks of the great river. Earth, river and sky were wrapped up in a deep sleep, from which it seemed there would be no waking. All the seething life and movement of tropical nature seemed concentrated in the ardent eyes, in the tumultuously beating hearts of the two beings drifting in the canoe under the white canopy of mist, over the smooth surface of the river. (Conrad 2003: 44.)

The storm used in describing Nina's inner turmoil has been replaced with a nature description conveying ultimate calmness. There is significance in the couple drifting on a river since water is a feminine element (Merchant 1990: 12). In a dream imagery, water can also be taken to symbolise emotionality and represent one's mother (Ackroyd: 2012), which is befitting since Nina follows her mother's hopes and wishes as she floats along the water with a native man. The fulfilment of Mrs. Almayer's wishes, however, equal with the disappointment of Almayer.

The relationship between Nina and Dain is disapproved by Almayer who interprets it as degrading for Nina. Nina's decision to live with a native is utterly incomprehensible for Almayer who regards her as having fallen victim of the fate his civilising process was supposed to prevent:

'What made you give yourself up to that savage? For he is a savage. Between him and you there is a barrier that nothing can remove. I can see in your eyes the look of those who commit suicide when they are mad. You are mad. [...] Have you forgotten the teaching of so many years?' (Conrad 2003: 115.)

As the quotation above suggests, Almayer considers Nina a Westerner, which enhances his amazement at her decision to choose the cultural side he perceives as inferior. By the reference to a barrier between Nina and Dain, Almayer intends to remind Nina that there is a boundary between Dain's race and that of hers which he regards as white. What Almayer forgets, however, is that liminality is unpredictable since one does not know the place of the person in a liminal stage before it is explicitly expressed.

Nina confronts Almayer about liminality and the boundaries related with it and simultaneously she begins to establish her subjectivity as a colonial woman. She responds bravely to Almayer by raising his awareness of another boundary forgotten by him:

[...] 'I remember it [the education] well. I remember how it ended also. Scorn for scorn, contempt for contempt, hate for hate. I am not of your race. Between your people and me there is also a barrier that nothing can remove. You ask why I want to go, and I ask you why I should stay.'
(Conrad 2003: 115.)

The problematic nature of liminality is expressed to Almayer by Nina who reminds him of the existence of a boundary she experienced during her education, the one between white people and the likes of her, half-castes. The Western culture rejected her, whereas the eastern culture gave her the freedom of emotions and love towards Dain. Therefore, it is easier to break down the boundary separating her from the Malays.

The female subjectivity of Nina is established when she rejects Almayer's wishes to follow him to Europe and leave Dain:

'You wanted me to dream your dreams, to see your own visions – the visions of life amongst the white faces of those who cast me out from their midst in angry contempt. But while you spoke I listened to the voice of my own self; then this man came, and all was still; there was only the murmur of his love. You call him a savage! What do you call my mother, your wife?' (Conrad 2003: 115.)

Nina's response to her father is an indication of her colonial female subjectivity: She defends her native mother against her Western father and, most importantly, declares to have been listening to her own heart instead of the demands of Almayer. Dain is notably the hinge that affects her final decision to stay in Borneo and discard the European education and civilisation offered by Almayer. The quotation above also attests the end of Nina's inner battle she has fought between the cultures: along with Dain came serenity, commitment and faith to live in the culture paralleling the feminine features of nature.

4.2 Female Subjectivity Expressed by Counter-Gaze

A native chief Omar's daughter Aissa's connection with nature in *An Outcast of the Islands* can be considered Conrad's dedication to the thematic parallelisation between native woman and nature. Aissa embodies the foreign nature that is scrutinised by the white coloniser Peter Willems. The relationship between Aissa and Willems is characterised by gazing, veiling, unveiling and counter-gazing, which makes it a battle between dominance and defence. Divergently from stereotypical colonial narratives, Conrad empowers Aissa with the counter-gaze, thus making her a female colonial subject able to defend herself against the coloniser.

Willems is a coloniser intrigued by Aissa who represents to him the mystery of the foreign land he is obsessed to explore. He gazes at Aissa in a scrutinising manner and becomes to perceive her as an Amazon pretending to be resistant but yet waiting to be conquered: "Her lips were firm and composed in a graceful curve, but the distended nostrils, the upward poise of the half-averted head, gave to her whole person the expression of a wild and resentful defiance" (Conrad 2009: 55). Willems is the voyeur-violator eagerly looking at the native woman by taking notice of the smallest details about her while letting the hunter's instinct wake up inside him making him ready for the chase. She is the woman of the wildlife he is compelled to pursue in spite of the danger suggested by her being.

Conrad describes Aissa through binaries which enhance her parallelisation with nature (Panigrahi 2009: 4). Sambit Panigrahi (2009: 4) argues that similarly to nature, Aissa is also depicted as having both a beautiful and a threatening side to her. The dangers and delights presented by Aissa are acknowledged by Willems as he gazes at her: "He looked at the woman. Through the checkered light between them she appeared to him with the impalpable distinctness of a dream. She seemed to him at once enticing and brilliant – sombre and repelling" (Conrad 2009: 53). Willems is intoxicated by the woman's beauty in spite of the intimidating side to it. Jeremy Hawthorn (2007: 71) highlights that the binary image of Aissa is Willems's own creation since she is depicted from Willems's perspective, and therefore it is he who associates her "with an

'intense' tropical life that is both attractive and corrupt, beautiful and poisonous, promising joy but guaranteeing death". Willems creates the compelling image of her himself and thus becomes to obsessively pursue a creation of his own imagination.

Conrad depicts Aissa as being protected from the gaze of Willems by a multitude of veils. The first veils Aissa hides behind are fabricated by nature which enhances her as being part of nature. Willems contemplates her as "the very spirit of that land of mysterious forests, standing before him, with the vague beauty of wavering outline; like an apparition behind a transparent veil – a veil woven of sunbeams and shadows" (Conrad 2009: 53). Willems's enthusiasm towards Aissa is further aroused by the veil preventing him from seeing her properly. Despite the looming danger involved with veiled Aissa, and probably due to that, Willems is ever more determined to claim her as his own and to tame her wild nature. His task proves a challenging one because of nature that clings to her in order to veil her protectively against the gaze of Willems:

And he looked at her, standing above him, her head lost in the shadow of broad and graceful leaves that touched her cheek; while the slender spikes of pale green orchids streamed down from amongst the boughs and mingled with the black hair that framed her face, as if all those plants claimed her for their own [...]. (Conrad 2009: 60.)

Aissa seems unattainable for Willems who comes from an entirely different world as the woman blending in with the foliage caressing and protecting her. Willems is excluded from the relationship between the woman and nature, and he becomes envious of nature that is in seamless connection with Aissa: "I am jealous of the wind that fans her, of the air she breathes, of the earth that receives the caress of her foot, of the sun that looks at her now [...]" (Conrad 2009: 70). The more the two of them are separated, the more Willems wants to conquer her, but she remains distant, protected by nature she is solidly connected with.

The second element veiling Aissa from Willems is darkness which is a metaphor for nature and the Eastern culture. Notably, darkness in this context is not meant to be associated with negativity. After multiple attempts from Willems to induce Aissa to become closer to him and further away from her native roots, Conrad depicts Aissa to

be standing “on the threshold of that darkness from which she had come” (Conrad 2009: 117). Thus, it seems that Willems is on the verge of success in taming her, but his demands for Aissa to follow him to Europe only make her retreat away from him: “[...] it was as if she had drawn slowly the darkness round her, wrapping herself in its undulating folds that made her indistinct and vague” (Conrad 2009: 118–119). Conrad metaphorically suggests that Aissa rejects Willems by returning to nature, which makes her seem foreign and difficult to understand for the man. Willems becomes despaired when realising his multiple attempts to approach Aissa are to no avail.

The final and most frustrating veil for Willems is the one made of cloth and worn by Aissa on her own accord in order to reject the gaze of Willems:

Willems, looking at this strange, muffled figure, felt exasperated, amazed and helpless. [...] She looked like an animated package of cheap cotton goods! It made him furious. She had disguised herself so because a man of her race was near! He told her not to do it, and she did not obey. (Conrad 2009: 99.)

Veiled Aissa evidently challenges the dominance of Willems for whom the use of the veil is a personal assault although he acknowledges it to be a cultural habit. The veil worn by Aissa acts as a mirror reflecting the variety of confusing emotions the simple piece of cloth hiding part of the native woman’s face evokes in the Western man:

This little matter of her veiling herself against his wish acted upon him like a disclosure of some great disaster. It increased his contempt for himself as the slave of a passion he had always derided, as the man unable to assert his will. This will, all his sensations, his personality – all this seemed to be lost in the abominable desire, in the priceless promise of that woman. (Conrad 2009: 99–100.)

The veiled woman makes Willems disconcerted, and he begins to question and condemn his desire to sacrifice himself for someone who is a mystery. Not being in control of the situation is unbearable for Willems. Therefore, destroying the veil is his only option to get rid of the tension and take control:

[...] As soon as Abdulla and his companions had left the enclosure, Aissa approached Willems and stood by his side. He took no notice of her

expectant attitude till she touched him gently, when he turned furiously upon her and, tearing off her face-veil, trampled upon it as though it had been a mortal enemy. (Conrad 2009: 108.)

Willems's violent reaction towards the veil manifests the profound effect the possibility of losing control has on a person whose identity depends on dominance. Therefore, the unveiling of Aissa is not only meant to remove the final boundary between him and the woman but also to eradicate the symbol of the woman's disobedience and threat to his power. Willems expects the unveiling of Aissa to close the cultural gap between them, but it only makes it wider, since the unveiling highlights their differences he considers to be racial. Hence, the unveiling of Aissa can be read as an example of racialisation.

The unveiling of Aissa is a racialisation practice which results in Willems regarding Aissa as an ethnic woman, inferior to him. According to Steve Garner (2010: 20), "racialisation is something detrimental that *is done* to others as part of a power relationship". The unveiling is the action Willems executes in order to secure his dominance. After Aissa is exposed, Willems becomes disenchanted by the sight of her: She is no longer a mystery, but a representative of a culture Willems subordinates and deems inferior to his. Nevertheless, he is still determined to share his life with Aissa but is convinced that for them, to be together, himself or Aissa must change. He is most afraid of Aissa influencing him drastically enough to persuade him to eventually live according to the Malay culture:

Would his ideas ever change so as to agree with her own notions of what was becoming, proper and respectable? He was really afraid they would, in time. It seemed to him awful. She would never change! [...] She was too different from him. He was so civilized! It struck him suddenly that they had nothing in common—not a thought, not a feeling; he could not make clear to her the simplest motive of any act of his . . . and he could not live without her. (Conrad 2009: 99.)

Willems has an epiphany concerning the irreversible differences between him and Aissa. Nevertheless, his love towards her prevents him from renouncing the chase. Eventually, he becomes convinced that Aissa should be civilised. It would be downgrading for him to adopt the natives' ways, but for Aissa, the adaptation into Western culture would be an improvement, in his opinion. Therefore, Willems is

desperate to convince her to move to Europe with him and leave behind her countrymen he regards as bad influence:

He was carried away by the flood of hate, disgust, and contempt of a white man for that blood which is not his blood, for that race which is not his race; for the brown skins; for the hearts false like the sea, blacker than night. This feeling of repulsion overmastered his reason in a clear conviction of the impossibility for him to live with her people. He urged her passionately to fly with him because out of all that abhorred crowd he wanted this one woman, but wanted her away from them, away from that race of slaves and cut-throats from which she sprang. (Conrad 2009: 117.)

Willems does not want to live amongst the natives and their culture he regards as below him. For the sake of his own comfort, he demands to segregate Aissa from her culture. This radical deed does not become a reality because of Aissa's strong female subjectivity expressed by counter-gaze.

The courage to look at the colonisers instead of being an object of their gaze is a strong indicator of colonial subjectivity. Therefore, Conrad draws a great deal attention to the native women's eyes when constructing their subjectivity. Gazing is crucial for the women defying the colonisers because their eyes intimidate the Westerners the most. Almayer, for instance, is especially relieved to notice his civilising mission to have affected Nina's eyes "where the startled expression common to Malay womankind was modified by a thoughtful tinge inherited from her European ancestry" (Conrad 2003: 17). The "gleam of superior intelligence" (Conrad 2003: 10) Almayer detects in Nina's eyes, does not remove the threat of them when turned at him, however. This is manifested in *Almayer's Folly* in the scene in which Nina rebels against Almayer and defends her mother and Dain against his scorn for them. Instead of verbally responding to Nina, Almayer's anxiety in the situation is expressed by his exclamation: "'Nina!' [...] 'take your eyes off my face'" (Conrad 2003: 115). The novel includes another scene in which the look in Nina's eyes conveys an opposite emotion to defiance. When Nina tells Dain she wants to share her life with him he knows her decision just by looking into her eyes:

Neither of them spoke. He was regaining his senses in a slight tremor that ran upwards along his rigid body and hung about his trembling lips. She

drew back her head and fastened her eyes on his in one of those long looks that are a woman's most terrible weapon; a look that is more stirring than the closest touch, and more dangerous than the thrust of a dagger, because it also whips the soul out of the body, but leaves the body alive and helpless, to be swayed here and there by the capricious tempests of passion and desire; a look that enwraps the whole body, and that penetrates into the innermost recesses of the being, bringing terrible defeat in the delirious uplifting of accomplished conquest. It has the same meaning for the man of the forests and the sea as for the man threading the paths of the more dangerous wilderness of houses and streets. Men that had felt in their breasts the awful exultation such a look awakens become mere things of today – which is paradise; forget yesterday – which was suffering; care not for tomorrow – which may be perdition. They wish to live under that look for ever. It is the look of woman's surrender. (Conrad 2003: 110.)

By one look, the native woman is able to make a man feel as though he was divided in half, his soul separated from his body that becomes a seedbed of passion. Maria Suutala (2001: 57), quoting Aegidius Albertinus (1630-1631), states that a woman whose eyes pierce the body *and* the mind exceeds in danger a snake that only kills the body. A woman's gaze reaches the recesses of men, and therefore it is considered a threat for their composed selves. It is noteworthy that the quotation above describes a surrendering look of a woman directed at a native man accustomed to emotions of passion and love. When a native woman's counter-gaze is meant to be threatening and the target is a Western man unaccustomed to emotionality, the results are devastating.

Aissa defends herself against the selfish demands of Willems by her threatening counter-gaze. One of her sharp looks at Willems is like an arrow dashed at the man: "The heavy eyelids dropped slightly, and from between the long eyelashes she sent out a sidelong look: hard, keen, and narrow, like the gleam of sharp steel" (Conrad 2009: 55). The effect Aissa's gaze has on Willems is profound: "It touched his brain and his heart together. It seemed to him to be something loud and stirring like a shout, silent and penetrating like an inspiration" (Conrad 2009: 54). The counter-gaze is a comprehensive stimulator to the senses of Willems since it affects his brain, i.e. mind and his heart, i.e. emotions. Thus, Aissa's gaze acquaints him with an emotionality he has not experienced before:

Pressing against him she stood on tiptoe to look into his eyes, and her own seemed to grow bigger, glistening and tender, appealing and promising. With that look she drew the man's soul away from him through his immobile pupils, and from Willems' features the spark of reason vanished under her gaze and was replaced by an appearance of physical well-being, an ecstasy of the senses which had taken possession of his rigid body; an ecstasy that drove out regrets, hesitation, and doubt, and proclaimed its terrible work by an appalling aspect of idiotic beatitude. He never stirred a limb, hardly breathed, but stood in stiff immobility, absorbing the delight of her close contact by every pore. (Conrad 2009: 108–109.)

Willems seems hypnotised by Aissa's gaze that takes possession of him. Her gaze deprives him of reason and leaves him with body (nature) and emotionality. This is manifested by the "physical well-being" that follows the eradication of negative feelings from his "rigid body" (Conrad 2009: 109). In Willems's case, however, replacing his masculine features with those of positive primitivity represented by the assent of the feminine features is short-lived. Aissa's gaze makes him intimidated and threatened and therefore he condemns it as a manifestation of her primitive savagery in order to remind himself of his superiority:

And in her eyes there was the wonder and desolation of an animal that knows only suffering, of the incomplete soul that knows pain but knows not hope; that can find no refuge from the facts of life in the illusory conviction of its dignity, of an exalted destiny beyond; in the heavenly consolation of a belief in the momentous origin of its hate (Conrad 2009: 256).

Willems secures his dominance in reference to Aissa by depriving the woman of her humanity as he interprets the look in her eyes to convey an irrationality of animals not intelligent enough to comprehend reality as it is. The unveiled and gazing Aissa represents for the intimidated Willems the opposite of the thrilling mystery he was intrigued by before. Consequently, Willems seeks help from Lingard who is responsible for bringing him to the jungle where he encountered Aissa:

"Look at her! Always there. Always near. Always watching, watching... for something. Look at her eyes. Ain't they big? Don't they stare? You wouldn't think she can shut them like human beings do. I don't believe she ever does. I go to sleep, if I can, under their stare, and when I wake up I see them fixed on me and moving no more than the eyes of a corpse. While I am still they are still. By God! she can't move them till I stir, and

then they follow me like a pair of jailers. They watch me; when I stop they seem to wait patient and glistening till I am off my guard – for to do something. To do something horrible. Look at them! You can see nothing in them. They are big, menacing – and empty. The eyes of a savage; of a damned mongrel, half-Arab, half-Malay. They hurt me! I am white! I swear to you I can't stand this! Take me away. I am white! All white!" (Conrad 2009: 209.)

The citation above manifests the unbalancing influence the subordinated woman's counter-gaze has on the coloniser. Aissa as the embodiment of nature clearly represents an intimidating adversary for Willems whose very manhood and dominant position is threatened by her strong female subjectivity. When veiled, Aissa was the target of Willems's desire, but when exposed, she is the target of his loathing. This is because Willems does not encounter a victim behind the veil but a colonial subject whose gaze is just as wounding as his.

4.3 Female Subjectivity Stemming from Othering

The subjectivity of Mrs. Almayer in *Almayer's Folly* stems from her othering. Her husband Almayer highlights his supremacy over his native wife by making her his Other because of her emotionality, passivity, body, animality, witchery and sexuality. Although portrayed as the Other, Mrs. Almayer can yet be perceived as a colonial female subject since she embraces the features Almayer condemns. In other words, she is empowered by the characteristics that are deemed devalued in the West. Since Almayer others the features in his wife he would benefit from, it is arguable that the relationship between Mrs. Almayer and her husband not only conveys hyperseparation but also relational definition and denied dependency.

Mrs. Almayer is most prominently othered by her excessive emotionality. Conrad makes emotionality an exclusive feature of Mrs. Almayer and consequently one that is absent from Almayer's character. This is because a Western Self must reject emotionality in order to appear as rational and collected. Conrad (2003: 15, 33) highlights the emotional otherness of Mrs. Almayer by characterising her as "the irate

matron” with a “savage nature”. Notably, Mrs. Almayer’s emotionality is not solely expressed by wildness but the moods of this “domestic tempest” vary from violent “anger and contempt” to “stupefied idleness” and “apathy” expressed by “sulky silence” (Conrad 2003: 15–16, 25). Although occasionally expressing tense silence, the emotions of aggression and hate are the ones feared the most by Almayer since they are not regarded as feminine in traditional Western terms. Almayer shuns the volatility of Mrs. Almayer, and in order to be resigned of such features he secludes emotionality from his Self that has room only for its opposites, reason and mind.

Mrs. Almayer is othered because of her body that is condemned to convey animality. Conrad (2003: 16, 25, 32) portrays her by her corporality as “the savage tigress” with “claw-like” hands and “bony fingers” whereas Almayer is presented as the opposite of body by highlighting the capability of his mind by his high-flown ideas on the supremacy of civilisation. Whereas Almayer is reason, Mrs. Almayer is the body, the “betel-nut chewing mother, squatting in a dark hut, disorderly, half-naked, and sulky” (Conrad 2003: 13, 18). The image of her crouching in the dark, virtually without clothes, makes her the female Other primarily perceived as body. Consequently, Almayer is of the opinion that virtues of mind completely escape Mrs. Almayer whose voice he perceives to be always delivered “in angry remonstrance with its usual want of strictly logical reasoning, but with the well-known richness of invective” (Conrad 2003: 33). Mrs. Almayer’s emotionality in a body condemned as animal makes her associated with witchcraft and sexuality.

Mrs. Almayer’s image as the ultimate Other is completed by associating her with sexuality and witchery. The references made to her as “a witch” or “a witchwoman”, who is claimed to have “a Devil of her own to whisper counsel in her ear” enhance the intimidating effect she has on Almayer (Conrad 2003: 69, 82, 104). She is the epitome of evil whose animal body and animal emotions convey sexuality, which Almayer considers intimidating. Her “whole gamut of passion” (Conrad 2003: 24) is condensed in a corporal image of her seducing Almayer “with her soiled robe wound tightly under the armpits across her lean bosom, [and] her scant grayish hair tumbled in disorder over her projecting cheekbones” (Conrad 2003: 24). The sexuality of Mrs. Almayer is

uninviting, skeletal, devoid of cleanliness and the feminine features considered seducing such as large breasts and long, thick hair. Everything in Mrs. Almayer seems to be worthy to be othered, hyperseparated from the Western Self.

The features according to which Mrs. Almayer is othered are the ones that empower her. Her unrestricted emotionality enables her to conduct drastic deeds Almayer can only witness helplessly: “While she was burning the furniture, and tearing down the pretty curtains in her unreasoning hate of those signs of civilisation, Almayer, cowed by these outbursts of savage nature, meditated in silence on the best way of getting rid of her” (Conrad 2003: 15). Mrs. Almayer does not meet her husband’s Western standards of the ideal woman who should be obedient and silent. She is a woman behaving badly and Almayer’s reaction to her is having her killed. The burning of the furniture does not convey bad behaviour, however, since the deed Almayer considers as an incomprehensible lack of self-control, should actually be read as a liberation and triumph of the othered features considered worthless in the West.

Burning the furniture is an important symbolic act by which Conrad establishes the female subjectivity of Mrs. Almayer. By setting the furniture on fire, Mrs. Almayer simultaneously sets on fire the patriarchal subordination of women and their moulding into the decorum defined by men. Mary Douglas (2002: 171) has categorised powers into “positive” ones including “life, sex and fire” and “their opposites” including “death, blood and coldness”. Mrs. Almayer’s association with fire parallels her with the positive powers along with life and sex. Almayer arguably represents the negative ones since he planned a murder against his wife. Thus, beneath the actions and the appearance labelled as primitive, Mrs. Almayer can yet be claimed to represent positive forces of sexuality and fire, which are the maintainers of life. Moreover, it is revealed later on that “she had torn off the curtains to make sarongs for the slave girls, and had burnt the shadowy furniture piecemeal to cook the family rice” (Conrad 2003: 58). Consequently, the actions that Almayer straightaway interpreted in prejudiced manner as savage actually had unselfish goals.

The relationship between the Almayers is characterised by othering conducted by hyperseparation, denied dependency and relational definition. Firstly, Mrs. Almayer is hyperseparated from her husband by her depictions that deviate from his rational norms and make her seem as his subordinate. Secondly, the relationship is characterised by denied dependency which is manifested by Almayer's attempts to deny having a connection with Mrs. Almayer although he *is* dependent on her since it is her suppression that makes his dominance. Thirdly, and most importantly, the othering of Mrs. Almayer is in accordance with relational definition since she is not only characterised by features shunned and detested by Almayer but also those desired by him: Almayer criticises the exact features in Mrs. Almayer he lacks but would definitely benefit from.

The dualistic characterisation of Mrs. Almayer is more revealing to Almayer himself. Mrs. Almayer is a mirror for him to see his weaknesses in: Almayer is shy and inefficient, whereas Mrs. Almayer is extroverted and confident. Mrs. Almayer is the strong party in the marriage, but as a native woman she is doubly colonised because Almayer's patriarchal Self demands a subordinate in order to survive. Mrs. Almayer is also the Other whose sexuality Almayer condemns in order to hide his own fears of the long-repressed animal in himself to surface. Almayer strives to be separated from his wife, who as a mother conveys social disability and as a woman the incapability to overcome her animal body and mind. Almayer perceives himself possessing rationality needed in stepping out of Platos' cave of nature and leaving behind Mrs. Almayer. What he fails to comprehend is that nature and its attributes equal with subjectivity independent from othering or the need to subordinate other people. Mrs. Almayer embodies such subjectivity immune to patriarchal dualisms and definitions of oneself against others. She is characterised by nature that makes her a colonial female subject not apologizing for her being or actions.

4.4 Female Subjectivity Empowered by Positive Primitivity

Edith Travers, presented in the last part of the Lingard Trilogy *The Rescue*, is a Western woman whose female subjectivity is established in the Malay Archipelago. Edith represents the ideal Victorian woman, Angel in the House, who is obedient, silent and dedicated to her husband Mr. Travers. Consequently, her marital life is centred on the ambitions of Mr. Travers, whereas those of her own are left at the background. In nature, however, Edith discovers a way of being in touch with her emotions. Thus, her female subjectivity is constructed and empowered by positive primitivity, i.e. embracing characteristics labelled as nature.

Conrad displays the Western society the Travers live in as divided into two worlds: a masculine world occupied by men and a domestic one reserved for women. The masculinity of the urban surroundings is described in Peter Willems's reminiscing of the West in *An Outcast of the Islands*:

There were ships there - ships, help, white men. Men like himself. Good men who would rescue him, take him away, take him far away where there was trade, and houses, and other men that could understand him exactly, appreciate his capabilities; where there was proper food, and money; where there were beds, knives, forks, carriages, brass bands, cool drinks, churches with well-dressed people praying in them. He would pray also. The superior land of refined delights where he could sit on a chair, eat his tiffin off a white tablecloth, nod to fellows - good fellows; he would be popular; always was - where he could be virtuous, correct, do business, draw a salary, smoke cigars, buy things in shops - have boots . . . be happy, free, become rich. (Conrad 2010: 253.)

Europe is a masculine world meeting the requirements of men enjoying active cultural and social life supported by other men sharing their goals and delights in life. Women are not mentioned in Willems's description since the world of women is centred at home. During the Victorian era, women were expected to make the home as a haven for the men to retire in after work. Secluding women to the domestic sphere made them seem passive in reference to men who appeared as active.

The division between masculine activity and feminine passivity is detectable in the marriage of the Travers. Conrad (2010: 59) depicts Mr. Travers as a person “whose life and thought, ignorant of human passion, were devoted to extracting the greatest possible amount of personal advantage from human institutions”. Thus, he is a character “enthusiastically devoted to the nursing of his own career” (Conrad 2010: 73). Edith, on the other hand, is cut off from working life and she must focus on taking care of the household. Conrad describes her to have become indifferent and unenthusiastic towards her life at home. In fact, Edith is uninterested in Western society as a whole: “I have been living since my childhood in front of a show and [...] I never have been taken in for a moment by its tinsel and its noise or by anything that went on on the stage” (Conrad 2010: 147). In other words, Edith feels that the shallow Western society has got nothing meaningful to offer for her. Therefore, she is in demand for another, more profound way of living.

Edith is in search for genuine feelings that represent for her the fundamental purpose of existence. Along with her marriage she experiences her life to have become a monotonous series of shallow events devoid of a variety of sensations: “One comes across monstrous things. But I assure you that of all the monsters that wait on what you would call a normal existence the one I dread most is tediousness. A merciless monster without teeth or claws. Impotent. Horrible!” (Conrad 2010: 220). Most importantly, Edith has been compelled to abandon “her romantic ideas, [...] dreams where the sincerity of a great passion appeared like the ideal fulfilment and the only truth of life (Conrad 2010: 59, 73). The repression of emotions she has experienced in the West has obscured the true meaning of life she refers to as “the naked truth of things” (Conrad 2010: 73). When stranded in the jungle, she is granted a possibility to accomplish her search and find the genuine feelings.

In Malay Archipelago, Edith encounters people living outside Western society and through them she realises the magnitude in which Western decorum restricts the characters of people. Captain Lingard is one of the characters who represent the detachment from the Western norms and consequently has a major influence on Edith. Lingard breaks the Western decorum by displaying his feelings and opinions

unrestrictedly during conversations, which is a feature Edith finds agreeable: “This is truth – this is anger – something real at last [...] such a fresh experience for me to hear – to see something – genuine and human” (Conrad 2010: 63). Most importantly, Edith is pleased that Lingard has no place in the Western societal hierarchy:

She considered him apart from social organization. She discovered he had no place in it. How delightful! Here was a human being and the naked truth of things was not so very far from her notwithstanding the growth of centuries. Then it occurred to her that this man by his action stripped her at once of her position, of her wealth, of her rank, of her past. (Conrad 2010: 81.)

Not only is Lingard excluded from the societal hierarchy prevailing in the West, but he regards Edith detached from it as well. For Edith, it is relieving that Lingard does not perceive her as an upper class woman or as a wife but only as a woman. Thus, she is given a possibility to define herself again without the categorisation into patriarchal roles. Lingard represents features Edith would certainly like to be identified with but the person whose characteristics she comes to admire the most is a native princess Immada.

Conrad presents Edith as superior to Immada by conducting their encounter according to hyperseparation. This is manifested by Edith gazing at Immada who is presented as her subordinate:

Mrs. Travers fixed her eyes on Immada. Fairhaired and white she asserted herself before the girl of olive face and raven locks with the maturity of perfection, with the superiority of the flower over the leaf, of the phrase that contains a thought over the cry that can only express an emotion. Immense spaces and countless centuries stretched between them [...] (Conrad 2010: 67.)

Edith is portrayed as the white and fair Western woman gazing at the dark native girl. The mention of the “immense spaces and countless centuries” (Conrad 2010: 67) between them highlights the disparity between the societal stages they live in: Immada represents the first stage of savagery whereas Edith is suggested to have evolved to the last stage of civilisation. The difference between Edith and Immada is conveyed by opposites such as the flower and the leaf which refers to Edith’s magnificence in comparison to the modesty and primitivity of Immada. The juxtaposition between the

phrase and the cry, on the other hand is meant to highlight Edith's capability of rationality as a Westerner next to Immada who is only capable of displaying wordless emotions. Despite the multiple juxtapositions between them, however, Conrad displays Edith as envious of Immada.

Immada embodies the emotions that equal the purpose of existence for Edith. Thus, Edith's gaze is not meant to secure her position as superior to Immada but to be an indication of her admiration and respect towards the native woman:

She [Edith] envied, for a moment, the lot of that humble and obscure sister. Nothing stood between that girl and the truth of her sensations. She could be sincerely courageous, and tender and passionate and – well ferocious. Why not ferocious? She could know the truth of terror – and of affection, absolutely, without artificial trammels, without the pain of restraint. (Conrad 2010: 73.)

The candour and range of emotions Immada is free to express, makes Edith critical towards the Western way of disapproving the negative feelings in particular. Edith is both bewildered and invigorated to witness such unrestricted emotionality because it makes her realise that the freedom to express emotions is the essence of life she has been searching for. In other words, Immada does not represent primitivity for Edith but humanity characterised by positive primitivity.

In nature Edith embraces positive primitivity that has been deprived of her by the restraining norms of Western decorum. By looking at Immada, she is made aware of the possibility to express emotions instead of denying them: “She glowed with a sudden persuasion that she also could be equal to such an existence; and her heart was dilated with a momentary longing to know the naked truth of things; the naked truth of life and passion buried under the growth of centuries” (Conrad 2010: 73). According to the end of the quote, Edith is of the opinion that humanity related with positive primitivity has been “buried under the growth of centuries” (Conrad 2010: 73). This manifests the negative side of the progressive societal stages, since what was designated as progress was actually a setback to features considered feminine. The more science and rationality were admired, the more nature and emotionality were trodden down. In the Malay

Archipelago, Edith finds herself to be standing in a world skimmed of idolising rationality. She is at the source of positive primitivity equalling the valuation of emotions and celebrating women's empowering connection with nature.

Edith's visual display of positive primitivity creates an insurmountable boundary between her and Mr. Travers. Edith attracts the attention of Mr. Travers by wearing Malay clothing in order to manifest her newly found confidence and recognition of nature. Edith's changed appearance is disapproved by Mr. Travers who is both angry and frightened to witness his wife showing signs of embracing a culture he considers primitive. Consequently, he confides to a fellow European about Edith's actions he reckons as insanity: "Look at her costume. She simply has lost her head. Luckily the world needn't know. But suppose that something similar had happened at home. It would have been extremely awkward" (Conrad 2010: 170). Typically for a man familiar with Western society, Mr. Travers worries for their reputation. He considers Edith's clothes as a humiliating reminder of her tendency as a woman to regress into primitivity. What Edith regards as liberation from the Western norms, Mr. Travers interprets as a mockery of them. The garment worn by Edith thus ignites an argument between the couple during which the female subjectivity of Edith is fully established.

Positive primitivity provides Edith with confidence to verbally defend herself against her husband. Mr. Travers declares his disapproval of Edith's behaviour by appealing to her social status according to which assimilating with the Malays shows a serious lack of judgement. Since Edith seems to him completely ignorant of social positions in Western society, he announces her to be "perfectly primitive" and "imperfectly disciplined" (Conrad 2010: 130). This statement provokes the female subject in Edith and she breaks her silence to defend herself by stating: "I am the most severely disciplined person in the world. I am tempted to say that my discipline has stopped at nothing short of killing myself" (Conrad 2010: 130). Edith's words capture the suffocating effect the strict Western decorum has had on her. In nature, she finally has the courage to express herself and no longer be unnoticed. These feelings are captured by words: "Remember that I am not a shadow but a living woman still" (Conrad 2010:

178). Edith, who was almost faded in the West, is revived in nature and found the positive primitivity that makes her a female subject.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Joseph Conrad's *Lingard Trilogy* is characterised by colonial and patriarchal relationships. Colonialism equals with the West subordinating the East, whereas patriarchy refers to the subordination of women and nature. Notably, the relationships mentioned above can be combined, since Western society is characterised by patriarchal ideology that conveys male dominance gained by the control of women and nature paralleled with the native peoples. This equivalence is presented in the *Trilogy* by the Western colonisers approaching the native female characters and nature with a devaluing and violating attitude. The encounters between the Western men and native women do not produce dominance via subordination, however, since Conrad presents the female characters as able to resist the men's attempts to subordinate them. This effect is accomplished by the female subjectivity of the women that is consistent with the goals of both cultural and social ecofeminism.

The female subjectivity presented in the *Lingard Trilogy* conveys both the spiritual connectedness to nature highlighted by cultural ecofeminism and the liberation of women and nature from Western patriarchal restraints demanded by social ecofeminism. The spiritual connection with nature equals with the appreciation of the women-nature connection and the celebration of corporality and positive primitivity. These traits are manifested by the female characters in the *Trilogy* since all of them are content with and empowered by the attributes of nature they embody. The identification and eradication of patriarchal dominance examined by social ecofeminists takes place in the *Trilogy* when the female characters are provoked by the men's attempts to enhance their patriarchal superiority by subordinating the women. During these encounters the women establish their female subjectivity that liberates them from the devaluing patriarchal dualisms. Notably, the female subjectivity the women are characterised by is not dependent on the devaluation of others but is based on building a confidence in oneself supported by the attributes of nature.

Conrad's portrayals of the colonial female subjects defying the Western men can be read as criticism towards both colonialism and the dualistic oppression of women.

Conrad's writing is inconsistent with the conventions of colonialist discourse since the native female characters are neither depicted as victims nor as a depersonalised mass but instead, as active individuals occupying a central role in the novels. Conrad shows different sides of the Western colonial dominance by empowering the native female characters against the colonisers by counter-gaze and veiling. Moreover, female subjectivity in Conrad's novels challenges the valuation of the Western dualisms by appreciating the feminine attributes that are devalued and shunned in the West. This is manifested by highlighting emotionality and positive primitivity as the central features of female subjectivity. Conrad defies the Western centric masculine view of the world by portraying women usually silenced in colonial narratives and Western society as strong colonial subjects benefitting from the connection with nature and its feminine attributes.

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