Rhetorical Functions of Multiple Narrators and Focalization Shifts in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*

Wilkie Collins'in *Aytaşı* Romanında
Çoklu Anlatıcılar ve Odaklama Değişimlerinin Retorik İşlevleri

Elif Toprak Sakız*
Dokuz Eylül University

Abstract
Exploring the rhetorical functions of the multiple-narrator structure and constantly changing focalization in Wilkie Collins's epistolary novel *The Moonstone* is the focus of this study. Key events with regard to the loss of the Indian diamond are narrated in a repetitive pattern, each time with a shift in perspective depending on who remains in the focal position. Genettian concepts of alternating internal/external focalization and multifarious functionalities of narrator(s) are embodied in *The Moonstone*, culminating in a prevailing sense of mystery, ambiguity as well as an equivocal state of reality as generic conventions, yet on an underlying level, they reflect the ambivalent engagement with imperialism in the novel. The witness-narrator, Gabriel Betteredge, is constantly involved in a number of extranarrative roles alongside his narrating function: the directing function, communication function, testimonial function and ideological function that help to establish a relationship with the implied reader. The multiple-narrator structure and the use of focalization shifts as well as various narrative and extranarrative functions as sources of power are the main features in the novel that expose its uncertainty in response to the idea of empire.
Keywords: Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, multiple narrators, extranarrative functions, focalization, empire

Öz
Wilkie Collins'in mektup tarzı romanı *Aytaşı*'nda çoklu anlatıcı yapısının ve sürekli değişen odaklamanın retorik işlevlerini incelemek bu çalışmanın odak noktasıdır. Hint elmasının kaybına ilişkin önemli olaylar, her seferinde odak pozisyonunda kimin kaldığına bağlı olarak bakış açısındaki değişimle tekrarlayan bir örüntüde anlatılır. Genette'in kavramları olan içsel/dışsal odaklama değişimleri ve anlatıcı(ların) çok yönlü işlevleri *Aytaşı*'nda somutlaşır ve türsel özellikler olarak, romanı saran bir gizem, belirsizlik ve belirsiz bir gerçeklik durumunun egemen oluşuyla sonuçlanır. Ancak daha derin bir seviyede, romanın emperyalizme karşı kararsız tutumunu yansıtır. Tanık-anlatıcı Gabriel Betteredge, anlatma işlevi yanı sıra yönlendirme işlevi, iletişim işlevi, tanıklık işlevi ve ideolojik işlev gibi bir dizi anlatı-dışı rolün içinde sürekli olarak bulunur; bu roller, zımni okuyucu ile bir ilişki kurmaya yardımcı olur. Çoklu anlatıcı yapısı ve odaklama değişimlerinin kullanımı ile birlikte, iktidar kaynakları olarak anlatı ve anlatı-dışı işlevlerin çeşitli kullanımı, romanın imparatorluk fikrine karşı belirsizliğini açığa çıkaran ana özelliklerdir.
Anahtar kelimeler: Wilkie Collins, *Aytaşı*, çoklu anlatıcılar, anlatı-dışı işlevler, odaklama, imparatorluk

Introduction

In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said discusses the mutual impact and the underlying implications of Western representations of the East, emphasizing how an idea of the Orient

*Lect. PhD, School of Foreign Languages, Dokuz Eylül University
ORCID# 0000-0002-1579-6967; eliftopraksakiz@gmail.com; https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss
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is essentialized while all its symbols are exoticized. Such a monolithic understanding of the East has been constructed through a distorted and stereotypical image created by Western scholarship and literature. Everything related to the Orientalist discourse – landscape, subjects, and culture – is portrayed as uncivilized, mysterious, backward, and thus requiring the West to intervene. Said also explores the power dynamics inherent in this binary opposition, where the West exerts its power on the intellectual and political level to justify its dominion over the East. As a culmination of this ideology, most narrative strategies employed especially in nineteenth-century fiction appear to emerge as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" as all other discourses of Orientalism (Said, 1978, p. 3). The Orientalist text, according to Said, has visible "evidence […] for such representations as *representations*, not as 'natural' depictions of the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 21). It becomes evident from a narratological point of view, then, that narratives are rhetorical, rather than natural, representations, especially of the East. As such, in an attempt to discern Orientalist discourses in a text, a critical reader must investigate "style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances" (Said, 1978, p. 21). In this sense, Said's ideas here lead to a narratological approach in which certain narrative devices exploited by novelists underlie the text's embedded ideological and predominantly imperial message. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said argues that the existence of empire in the Victorian novel is reduced to and only discernible in the form of exotic objects ornamenting the background, and its ideologies are thus consolidated by the genre. Said illustrates how the wealth of a British character in a nineteenth century classical novel, like Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, is derived from the exploitation of slave labour on sugar plantations. The Oriental characters and objects are often peripheral to the main narrative, and merely functional as implicit sources of wealth or luxury decorations, such as oriental rugs, ivory, silk scarves and vases. However, it must be stated that Said's assertion is only partially true for Collins's novel. Differently from how oriental objects are approached to in the conventional literary context, the moonstone, the precious gem at the heart of Collins's novel, is sought for not only because of its commodity value but also because of its spiritual meaning. Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1982), unlike most other Victorian novels, revolves around an explicit imperial subject matter even though its response to imperialism seems far from unblurred. The novel's use of narrativization is strongly connected to its vague engagement with a partial critique of imperialism. Edward Said (1994) claims that "the empire functions for much of the European nineteenth century as codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction" (p. 63). Rhetorical narrative elements in Collins's nineteenth century epistolary novel are a testament to this contention.

The narrative techniques employed in the novel contribute to an equivocal state of reality, adding layers of complexity to the narrative, widening the gap between what is really taking place on the story level and what the narrative discourse is revealing about that which happens. In particular, the discourse of the empire is subject to certain narrativization processes in which both focalization and narration are ultimately regulated in line with a Victorian outlook. In fact, while the Orient just functions as a source of wealth for the white British protagonist in many classical Victorian novels, the moonstone's true value and holiness for the Oriental characters are also emphasized in Collins's novel. Even though Collins unequivocally draws attention to the exploitation of imperialism, he remains somehow inefficient in his criticism of it. The reason for this may be the mainstream ideologies of the British empire in the time and context in which he was writing, and his hesitance to put himself into a position of direct opposition. Drawing attention to Collins's "ambivalence about imperialism" and "his willingness to defend as well as criticise" it,

Nayder (2006) suggests that his attitude is caused by the pressures put on him by both publishers and nineteenth-century readers who were defensive of the British empire as well as the status quo, and unwilling to acknowledge the mistreatment of the subjects other than the white British (p. 140). Collins's ambivalent engagement with imperialism can be discerned, this paper claims, in certain narrative elements, including the multiple-narrator structure, frequent focalization/perspective shifts as well as several extranarrative roles the main narrator assumes. In this sense, these complex aspects of the epistolary structure of the novel function, beyond its generic formation, to demonstrate its uncertainty in response to the idea of the empire.

Collins's experiment with form in his detective novel with the employment of multiple-narrator structure and constant focalization shifts is perhaps its most distinguishing and praised aspect. Notwithstanding the effectiveness of these stylistic devices in terms of the necessities of the genre, it can be claimed that they, in a more general sense, serve to accentuate the Victorian sensibilities in terms of the subject of the empire. In other words, all these narrative elements are rhetorical to a certain extent. It is argued here, then, that there are rhetorical functions of narration as well as focalization in *The Moonstone* as regards its equivocal engagement with the conception of the empire and the British imperialism.

The Rhetorical Use of Focalization

Set in mid-nineteenth century, *The Moonstone* recounts the inscrutable loss of a valuable diamond of Indian origin, which is brought by a British military officer, John Herncastle, to England at the end of his duty in the British Army in India. The prologue is an account of how the precious yellow gem has been dislocated from the Palace of Seringapatam, where it was protected by three Indian Brahmins of the highest Hindu caste. Herncastle got possession of it during the siege of Seringapatam, during which the most rebellious actions against the British rule took place. It was also the last of a series of battles between the British army and local Indians. The well-known battle ended in victory on the side of Britain, in which a number of literary and theatrical productions celebrated the defeat of the Indian state of Mysore. The last words of the dying Brahmin prophesied that the Moonstone would have its vengeance upon Herncastle and others. The main narrative part relates the story of the transmission of the Indian diamond to Lady Verinder's country estate in Yorkshire. Franklin Blake, nephew to both John Herncastle and Lady Verinder, gives the diamond to Lady Verinder's daughter, Rachel Verinder, as her eighteenth-birthday present, but it is soon announced to have been lost at its first night in the English house. The mystery about its loss remains unexplored till the end while the main suspect of the theft becomes three Hindu priests, disguised as jugglers, who turn up in the daytime to perform some magic show for the household. In the denouement, the least suspected character, the one who brings the diamond to the house, Franklin Blake, turns out to have committed the crime under the spell of opium. Meanwhile, the generic features of the novel allow several character-narrators to take part in the act of narration to bear witness to the events regarding the loss of the diamond.

The loss of the Indian diamond in the novel is narrated in a repetitive fashion, each time with a shift in point of view based on who remains in the focal position. This multiple focalization, according to Genette (1980), appears "in epistolary novels, where the same event may be evoked several times according to the point of view of several letter-writing characters" (p. 190). Focalization, in the crudest sense, can be internal and external in accordance with its position relative to the story or the represented events, whereby external focalizer is closer in position to the narrator while the internal to the character,

giving way to such categories as narrator-focalizer and character-focalizer (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Bal, 1977). However, these categories are not simply based upon defining the agent of perception; as Rimmon-Kenan (1983) puts it, the focalized can be viewed either "from without" or "from within" (p. 78), demonstrating the degree in which inner elements such as thoughts and feelings are penetrated. In this sense, focalization is beyond mere perception through human senses since it involves the psychological and ideological facets (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, pp. 81-83). For Genette (1980), on the other hand, although external focalization is restricted as a "behaviourist" approach to characters, internal focalization of a single character is also limited to the mind of that character as well as the discernible actions of others (p. 10). Genette also points to the unstable state of focalization: "External focalization with respect to one character could sometimes just as well be defined as internal focalization through another" (Genette, 1980, p. 191). What is common in all these ideas about focalization is the implication that its specific use within a narrative is more or less rhetorical. A focalizer may represent an ideological position, and thus, it is one of the ways in which the norms of the texts are communicated to the reader.

The code of focalization in *The Moonstone* is predominantly *multiple* internal focalization which is located within homodiegetic narratives of eleven different narrators. Besides, the variation between internal and external focalization culminates in a prevailing sense of mystery, ambiguity as well as evasiveness of truth as generic features. The employment of alternating focal and vocal agents also has a rhetorical function in the narrative, whereby not every character can assume this privileged position. "The struggle for power in the novel," as Hughes puts it, "becomes a struggle for the control of texts" (2005, p. 269). Similarly, Miller (1988) contends that its multiple-narrator structure implicates control and surveillance. As can be observed in this argument, the control of the text can happen in the above-mentioned two ways: focalization and voice.

The narrative structure of the novel allows the characters to take the pen in turn so as to recount events revolving around the loss of the precious stone, documenting it with "attestations of witnesses who can speak to the facts" (Collins, 1982, p. 209). Genette calls for a distinction between "the *information* given by a focalized narrative with the *interpretation* the reader is called on to give of it (or that he gives without being invited to)" (Genette, 1980, p. 197). The character in the editorial position (and the one that is also responsible for the delivery of the moonstone to his cousin as inheritance), Franklin Blake, lays down a rule at the outset that each narrator should limit their account to solely what they have personally experienced, evading biased interpretations and second-hand knowledge: "the idea is that we should all write the story of the Moonstone in turn—as far as our own personal experience extends, and no farther" (Collins, 1982, p. 8). Despite his demand that narrator-focalizers must limit their content to an informative level, their narrative and its impact on the reader operate more on the interpretative level. The series of narratives, either at variance or in contradiction with each other, compels the reader to oscillate between various points of view to gain insight into the mystery. This actually depends on the characters' perception of the same event, which in turn relies on multiple factors:

> Perception depends on so many factors that aiming for objectivity is pointless. To mention only a few factors: one's position with respect to the perceived object, the angle of the light, the distance, previous knowledge, psychological attitude towards the object – all these things and more affect the picture one forms and passes on to others. (Bal, 2017, p. 132)

All these factors underlie the narrators' approach both to the precious object and its loss as their perceptions predominantly reflect their value systems and firmly-held subjective convictions.

Multiplicity of focalization within different parts of the narrative reflects the relativity of truth in the novel. As the focal character changes, a given event or character can be gradually transposed from a peripheral position into a principal role in terms of shedding light into mysteriousness, or what seems to be a manifest reality can turn out to be a delusion as to the intrinsic motives of the characters. Rosanna Spearman, the servant girl who has been adopted from reformatory and is known for her criminal background, for instance, becomes a primary suspect from the external focalization of most characters partly due to her criminal records and her suspicious behaviour just after the loss of the stone. A smear on the recently painted door of the room where the diamond is kept is regarded as a key clue for the investigation by the renowned detective, Sergeant Cuff, who asks to search everyone's wardrobe in the house to identify the paint-stained nightgown, hence the person who enters the room at the night of the diamond's theft. Rosanna is reported to sham ill, secretly going to the town to purchase some material to make a new nightgown for herself. Through external focalization, and a "vision from without" (Pouillon, 1946, cited in Genette 1980, p. 189), what we can view is merely Rosanna's perceptible actions and the external reality surrounding them, excluding her mental and emotional realm. All the pieces of information regarding her behaviour (such as wishing to go to her room with excuses of sickness, instead fleeing to the town) seem to be evident enough for others to blame her for the theft. However, there is a dominant sense of relativity of truth, and delusion of senses, in which what is discerned by the senses can still be called into question. This is one formal aspect of the narrative that warns the reader at the outset that seeing or narrative focalizing is not to be trusted at once without evaluating other perceptions and perspectives. In this instance, with the light of Rosanna's internal focal view, the obvious reality turns upside down. It turns out that she has gone to the town secretly to make a new nightgown for Franklin in an attempt to protect him from being convicted as the thief after discovering the paint-stain on his nightgown.

External focalization functions in the novel to emphasize the marginalization of the characters connected with empire. The actions of three Indian Brahmins, like Rosanna's, are observed externally, merely from a behaviourist dimension. Betteredge's daughter, Penelope's focalization within Betteredge's narration reflects their observable behaviours, which in turn seems to be illogical and meaningless in the absence of their internal focalization. Penelope observes the three Indians externally as they pour some magical liquid into the hand of the white boy accompanying them and ask him to foretell when and from which direction Franklin will come and if he has the Moonstone with him. The discernible actions of these Indian characters are outside the realm of Western notions of enlightenment. Due to the lack of internal focalization, they cannot be represented fully in the novel. This is because "[t]he predominant point of view throughout the narrative is Western vision, and those who are underrepresented are the three Indian priests whose focalization is never available to the audience" (Toprak-Sakız, 2022, pp. 563-564). Throughout the novel, these characters are not focalized at any point, which renders the novel's engagement with the imperial subject impaired. The meaning of the Moonstone for these Indian priests and their motives for pursuing the gem even by risking themselves are not explicated directly from their perspective.

A unique focalization seems not to suffice to explain the true nature of events. To be more specific, Rosanna's perception of the diamond's theft by Franklin proves mistaken when it is made clear that he has committed this crime not deliberately, but unconsciously. This

sense of ambiguity cannot be recovered until a new point of view is introduced by another narrator, Doctor Candy's assistant, in his diary where he has inscribed the doctor's disconnected utterances during his delirium, signalling that Franklin's unwitting crime is committed under the influence of opium slipped into his drink by the doctor:

> ... Mr. Franklin Blake ... and agreeable ... down a peg ... medicine ... confesses ... sleep at night ... tell him ... out of order ... medicine ... he tells me ... and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing ... all the company at the dinner-table ... I say ... groping after sleep ... nothing but medicine ... he says ... leading the blind ... know what it means ... witty ... a night's rest in spite of his teeth ... wants sleep ... Lady Verinder's medicine chest ... five-and-twenty minims ... without his knowing it ... to- morrow morning ... Well, Mr. Blake ... medicine to-day ... never ... without it ... out, Mr. Candy ... excellent ... without it ... down on him ... truth ... something besides ... excellent ... dose of laudanum, sir ... bed ... what ... medicine now. (1982, p. 422)

This essential information is deferred to a later moment as the only agent who holds it is sickened, having been exposed to a drastic amount of rain at the night of the theft and lost his consciousness since then. This deferral of the knowing character and his focalization as part of the implied author's plans is not only a generic requirement to arouse suspense but also a rhetorical tool that prolongs the ill-treatment of the marginalized Indian characters whose innocence has to be fully understood at a later moment in the narrative. Furthermore, providing an excuse for Blake in order to protect him from judgement as a true criminal is another rhetorical strategy on the part of the implied author. Specifically, the white male British character is not to be held responsible for such an offense despite the existence of clear evidence against him. Then, it is palpable that "[p]rimacy of British characters is central to the narrative that is structured through their *vision* and their *voice*" (Toprak Sakız, 2022, p. 563). Nayder also claims that "Collins appears an apologist for empire when he supplies Blake with an alibi for his theft of the diamond" (2006, p. 147). This parallels the oblivion when the Moonstone has been taken out of where it originally belongs to and brought to England. Neither the novel's characters nor its British audience seem to protest as the sacred diamond has been taken to a British estate as a valuable commodity.

In the detective novel, dominant focalization by the characters impacts the reader's perception of events; we tend to play the role of the detective to come to a conclusion, with the evidence provided, about the mystery to be solved. Thomas (2006) states that "we (like the victims) are immediately made to suspect that the three shadowy Indians who frequent the Verinder household before the theft are responsible for the crime" although, in the end, "the most unlikely (and very English) suspect" turns out to be the criminal (p. 68). Thus, focalizing predominantly through these privileged English characters proves to be misleading. Nonetheless, the same focal vision pardons Franklin Blake when the English protagonist is freed of the offense thanks to science, another Western asset valued by the implied reader. It is a scientific experiment that resolves the mysterious theft of the diamond by Blake, who is proven to have committed the crime in a state of opium-trance. The ending of the novel, thus, reinforces the idea that Western sense of reason and empiricism are implemental in solving problems, and the novel's audience can be easily triggered to adopt this mainstream vision. Moreover, "[a]t once an illicit substance and a legitimate medical treatment, opium is an apt representation of the Empire's complex and controversial place in nineteenth-century Britain, and in the novel" (Thomas, 2006, p. 71). The implicit connection between opium's hypnotizing and irrationalizing impact and the representation of the Eastern subject in the novel attests to this ambiguous existence of Empire in Victorian fiction.

The Extranarrative Functions of the Narrator

The discourse of the narrator often communicates, in explicit or implicit ways, the norms of the text, thus it is almost always rhetorical. Narrator's discourse, as Genette (1980) puts it, can assume several functions other than the actual narrating, and each of these functions matches one aspect of narrative, namely story, text, and narration whilst other extranarrative functions also mark the broader aim a narrator fulfils. The homodiegetic narrator in the major narrative, the house steward, apparently plays a peripheral role as he is merely an observer or a witness rather than a participant in the actions which are instead relayed in more detail within eight minor narratives with different narrators. Even so, this witness-narrator, Gabriel Betteredge, is constantly involved in a number of extranarrative roles alongside his *narrating function*, which brings him into a crucial position in the novel not because he knows better but because he can communicate well with the reader. The first and the foremost function of a narrator, for Genette, is narrative function, which is clearly associated with the story, or the telling of the story, and thus compulsory for the narrator as a primary task. Betteredge as well as the other narrators embark on this task with the purpose of relating the events regarding the loss of the Moonstone. Of all the five functions of a narrator, for Genette (1980), "none except the first is completely indispensable, and at the same time none, however carefully an author tries, can be completely avoided" (p. 259). Yet, this is not the sole nor the most important role a narrator assumes. Betteredge gains the upper hand as a narrator more owing to his aptness in his extranarrative duties.

One of the extranarrative functions Betteredge fulfils is *directing function* in which the narrator gives some "stage directions," metanarrative references to the discourse in terms of its internal organization (Genette, 1980, p. 255). Gabriel's narrative is composed of not only the story it tells but also the narrating act itself, by making references to the text as *pages* and lines and as telling the *story*: "I am the person (as you remember no doubt) who led the way in these pages, and opened the story. I am also the person who is left behind, as it were, to close the story up" (Collins, 1982, p. 508). With this function, Gabriel directs not only the text itself but also the reader's understanding of, and approach to, the subject matter, involving the loss of the Indian diamond on the surface and the idea of empire on a deeper level. At the outset, Betteredge emphasizes the significance of the subject matter so that his audience can pay full attention to, and by implication, accept his assertions:

> Here follows the substance of what I said, written out entirely for your benefit. Pay attention to it, or you will be all abroad, when we get deeper into the story. Clear your mind of the children, or the dinner, or the new bonnet, or what not. Try if you can't forget politics, horses, prices in the City, and grievances at the club. I hope you won't take this freedom on my part amiss; it's only a way I have of appealing to the gentle reader. Lord! Haven't I seen you with the greatest authors in your hands, and don't I know how ready your attention is to wander when it's a book that asks for it, instead of a person? (Collins, 1982, p. 31)

Calling forth his readers to attending wholly to what he is telling, Gabriel claims the role of a stage director. In this way, he takes over the directing function, whereby scaffolding the norms of the text as the unique source for the implied author to communicate his message to "the gentle reader," who seems to be white, English and of upper-middle class. This also attests to Said's idea that "Western writers until the middle of the twentieth century […] wrote with an exclusively Western audience in mind" (1994, p. 66).

The third aspect of narrative, which is the narrating situation, involves two main agents, the narratee and the narrator, as well as their communication. The *function of*

communication is the domain allowing space for the narrator to establish and maintain a relationship, often a positive one, not only with the narratee but also with the implied reader, with an underlying aim of gaining their confidence, thus the chances that his words and thoughts are found trustworthy. In fact, Genette (1980) underlines the crucial role of this function for the epistolary novel. The choice of a main narrator like Betteredge who is popular with everyone including the reader is the implied author's investment in this communicative function. Referring to himself as "a privileged character," Betteredge is self-confident for his ability to make the gentle household to take his advice: "Nine times out of ten they changed their minds – out of regard for their old original Betteredge" (Collins, 1982, p. 71). As an influential character, he implicitly advises his audience to trust his word. As a consequence of his advantaged position as well as his comical style and friendly disposition, the reader can easily identify with him, and the norms of the text informed by dominant Western ideology. To give an example, Betteredge's view represents the mainstream ideology of empire in which the Moonstone is regarded as "The Devil (or the Diamond)" (Collins, 1982, p. 67), rather than a holy element of Hindu religion. Unlike Indians, British characters demonize it in the belief that it causes bad luck, and Betteredge seems to influence the reader's opinion of the diamond. In this sense, the implied author, the main narrator, and the reader all seem to be positioned in the same realm in their response to the subject of empire as all of them are gathered around the sense of Englishness. Betteredge sees the Hindu jewel a threat to their English estate: "If it was right, here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond" (Collins, 1982, p. 32). This is in fact a contact or dialog which the narrator aspires to and also functions as a bridge between the implied author and the implied reader.

The narrator's relationship with the story he tells – an affective, moral, or intellectual one – brings forth his *testimonial function* or function of *attestation*. Attestation as to the source of his information, the reliability of his memory or his personal feelings in response to certain events constitute this extranarrative role, which is also employed rhetorically by Collins in the novel. Betteredge indicates the source of his temporal information as his daughter's diary, which shows that the foundation of his organization of time in his narrative underlines his presumed commitment to the fact; he not only relays events keeping stick to reality, but he also does so in accurate temporal order as recorded in the diary. This commitment to accurateness and detail, however, contrasts his indifference and faultiness of judgment in his treatment of the Indian priests. The steward admits to the neglect of the Indian priests in his narration "The Indians had gone clean out of my head (as they have, no doubt, gone clean out of yours. I didn't see much use in stirring that subject again" (Collins, 1982, p. 128). Although he acknowledges the cracks and deficits in his narration, he is reluctant to amend them as he does not view problematic the marginalization of the three Brahmins in the narrative. He even encourages the reader to assume a similar stance in their approach to these marginalized characters.

The last extranarrative role of the narrator is what Genette calls *ideological function*, which entails the narrator's both direct and indirect interventions in the text in the form of didactic and authorized commentary on the action. For example, Betteredge makes a comment on the paradoxical nature of the legal system, and his criticism aims to convince the reader that a supposedly guilty character can actually turn out to be just as innocent, as in the case of Rosanna: "The upshot of it was, that Rosanna Spearman had been a thief, and not being of the sort that get up Companies in the City, and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her, and the prison and the reformatory followed the lead of the law" (Collins, 1982, p. 22).

The narrator's alleged fidelity to telling the events just as they occur without any distortions

of the truth and any personal prejudices is, however, ironically controverted within the course of the narrative. His defence of the oppressed as a victim of the British legal system is not applicable to his treatment of the three Indian characters who have been arrested because of an undefined offense. The narrator does not sympathize with them even if he is aware that they are imprisoned only with an excuse: "Every human institution (Justice included) will stretch a little, if you only pull it the right way. The worthy magistrate was an old friend of my lady's –and the Indians were 'committed' for a week" (Collins, 1982, p. 79). Instead, as seen in this instance, he takes sides with English bourgeoisie that is capable of manipulating decisions taken by legislation. He makes another authoritative comment regarding the Indians' lack of rationality as they make use of some exotic liquid for fortune-telling, condemning them for being "foolish enough to believe in their own magic" (Collins, 1982, p. 47). Yet, the problem with his judgement is manifest in the fact that he himself behaves in the same way as the Brahmin priests, who act outside the realm of rationality. Their act of telling the future with the use of a magical ink is principally no different from telling the future by referring to a fictional work. In other words, the contradiction lies in that Betteredge resorts to similar practices of prophecy himself. He takes his favourite novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, as a model in his everyday deeds and decisions in the preposterous belief that whichever page he opens from the book randomly will guide him to take the correct path if he adapts the words to his current situation. Although he condemns the oriental characters for their foolishness, he is himself involved in irrational convictions by doing so. His devotion to Defoe's novel has further implications in terms of his homage to empire. Robinson's appropriating a foreign territory and its resources, taking the possession of a native as his servant and his material-oriented mind all parallel the appropriation of the Indian jewel by the English and the consolidation of British imperialism in *The Moonstone*. In the same vein, Robinson views the unknown foreign element (the inhabitants and footprints he comes across on the island) as the Devil, echoing Betteredge's calling the Indian jewel the Devil. Robinson's materiality is also echoed several other references to finance and banking, which, as Gooch (2010) underlines, are part of the novel's engagement with imperialism: "The intersection of service and finance in the novel implicates not only the British Empire but also the financial system upon which the imperial project depended" (p. 120). Said (1994) opines that "Robinson Crusoe is virtually unthinkable without the colonizing mission" (p. 64). The novel's reference to *Robinson Crusoe* can, then, be seen as its nod at ideologies of British Empire.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the dominant nineteenth-century conception of empire prevalent in the *The Moonstone* is communicated through the use of focalization as well as various narrative and extranarrative functions of the narrator. The novel's ambivalent attitude towards this issue lies in the fact that it both draws attention to the misdoings of the empire, and remains somehow uncritical of its material pursuits and moral corruption. The ending allows the Indian diamond to be returned to where it belongs to, yet this does not happen with the English characters' consent or a sign of regret. It is discovered later on by Murtwaite, a traveler to India, in his visit to a Hindu temple: "it has found its way back to its wild native land – by what accident, or by what crime, the Indians regained possession of their sacred gem" (Collins, 1982, p. 482). The Indian Brahmins have to "steal" something that is originally theirs to retrieve back its deserved status. Another contradiction in the novel is that although the relativity of truth is emphasized with the use of conflicting accounts of the same events in the multiple-narrator form, all the narrators gather around a common idea informed by the norms and foundations laid by the implied author, the idea of the primacy of British empire. The main narrator, functioning as the mouthpiece of the

implied author, occasionally becomes reproachful about British institutions, like the legal system and the police, yet when it comes to the ill-treatment of the colonized in these institutions, he remains silent, even lenient. It becomes evident, then, that both the dominant focalization and the dominant voice in the novel are under the yoke of this prevalent ideology of the mid-nineteenth century. All in all, this study shows that Collins attempts at a critique of empire and imperialism, yet he remains ineffective as he cannot get out of such underlying narrative strategies prevalent in his century.

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