

**A Comparative Analysis and Interpretation of Two Modern Curaçao Novels: *Election Dance* (2006) and *The Yard* (2010)**



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## Abstract

The main objective of this research paper is to illustrate the basic question of ethos and ideology in Joseph Hart's *Election Dance* (2006) and *The Yard* (2010). This is done on the basis of comparative analysis and interpretation of the narrative and three themes, namely: identity, social class, and power. These three themes were intentionally selected as they serve to illustrate the concept of ideology which places emphasis on the role of the higher class in accordance with the standpoint of Kevin Marx who believed that literature, along with other modes of entertainment, are not separate from social forces. It is Marx' definition of the concept of ideology which is adopted throughout this thesis.

The analysis and interpretation model used to conduct the research is based on van Boven and Doleijn's *Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* (1999).

Keywords: ethos, ideology, identity, social class, power

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## Introduction

In Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba, the Leeward Islands of the Dutch Caribbean, Papiamentu or Papiamentu is spoken. On the Windward Islands of the Dutch Caribbean St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius, English and Caribbean English lexifier Creole is spoken in daily conversation. In March 2008 a bill was passed and designated Dutch, English and Papiamentu as the three official languages of the five islands of the Netherlands Antilles; Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius (Pereira, 2018; see also Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, n.d.). On Curaçao, Papiamentu is viewed as the national language, while Dutch, English, and even Spanish could be seen as functional languages in the community. However, there are select groups who have immigrated and who still speak their mother tongue e.g. Portuguese and Sranan Tongo. Furthermore, Curaçao has been an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands since 2010. It is in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that English has established its importance on the island (Jacobs, 2013, p. 792). Historically, this could be attributed to the labor migration from the Windward Islands and the English Caribbean Islands (Rutgers, 1996, p. 148). Today, as Curaçao relies on tourism to contribute to its economic growth, much as many other Caribbean islands do, English again gains importance. In 2007, it was found that 2.999.784 tourists visited Curaçao, of which 53.110 were North American tourists, 39.873 Caribbean tourists, and 3.339 tourists considered from other parts of the world (Varlack, 2007, p. 30). This indicates that, apart from the European tourists and South American tourists, who, in part, would be able to communicate using their own native language of either Dutch or Spanish respectively, many other tourists will need to rely on English to communicate whilst on the island.

In a 2011 census which aimed to research the most frequently spoken languages in private households in Curaçao, it was also found that the fourth most commonly spoken language at home was English (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2020). Even though the greater majority use the national language or other two functional languages more frequently, it is notable that English still has its place on the island. This notion is further solidified due to the fact that English is taught as a foreign language in schools as early as the penultimate year of primary school. However, when it comes to literature, much of what is written and published is done so in either Papiamentu or Dutch. English is not often opted for amongst native authors, with a few exceptions such as Carla van Leeuwen author of *Because* (2021), Aletta Beaujon author of *The Beauty of Blue* (2009), and Lara Ghering author of *Whisk* (2004) who have written works in English. In this thesis, two Curaçao novels written by Joseph Hart, who grew up on the island of Curaçao will be: compared, analyzed and interpreted to highlight this and to prove that English is, though seemingly a lesser language, of great importance in the local language domain. The general goal of this thesis is to clarify the concept of ethos and ideology brought forth in the two works through a comparative analysis. The main research question is thus: what is the basic question of ethos and ideology presented by Joseph Hart through his two English-language novels? In order to conclude the general goal, the following specific research questions will be explored in order to gain a broader understanding. The two specific goals consist of: (1) how is the concept of ethos constructed based on Erica van Boven & Gillis

Dorleijn's *Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* (1999), and (2) how is the concept of ethos and ideology constructed using the themes of identity, social class, and power? These three themes have been selected to narrow the areas of analysis so that proper comparisons can be made of themes evident in both works.

## Chapter 1: Joseph “Jopi” Hart

Joseph “Jopi” Hart, was born on the island of Bonaire in 1940, but grew up in Curaçao. Originally a teacher, Hart studied and taught English at a school for higher general secondary education / pre-university education as well as at the local university (Hart, 2010). Moreover, Hart started his own language institute after retiring. It was there that his love for writing began as he habitually began to write texts to use for English grammar exercises (Hart, n.d.). Later, Hart would go on to write and publish his works as, according to Free Musketees—the publishing house that published Hart’s second novel, *The Yard*, in 2010—Hart:

became involved in social-cultural activities, published a collection of poetry *Entrega* in 2000 and his first novel *Election Dance* in 2006. Habitually designing his own grammar exercises, he discovered his facility in creating stories and applied this in writing novels, inspired by Curaçao’s multi-ethnic and divisive community: an exciting kaleidoscope of human interaction. (2010)

Whilst on holiday, Hart began playing with words and described a woman who would later play an important role in his novel *Election Dance - Damiëla* (Hart, n.d.). According to Hart, he has been writing for the past ten to fifteen years. Thus far, Hart has written poetry, short stories, and five novels; the first two, *Election Dance* (2006) and *The Yard* (2010), were written in English before Hart’s publisher in the Netherlands suggested that Hart write in Dutch as that is the official language in the Dutch Kingdom (Hart, personal communication, January 17, 2021). Of the five novels Hart has written, he has published a collection of poems, *Entrega* (2000), in four languages, namely Dutch, Papiamentu, English and Spanish, and a total of three novels. Hart is currently awaiting the publication of his latest two novels, *De Terugkeer* and *Contrasten in Kleur* (2021). Currently, Hart is also working on organizing his short stories in English with Papiamentu versions thereof, in which a poem will be added at the end of each short story (Hart, personal communication, February 14, 2021).

Though Hart writes his works in English, he must translate them to Dutch to facilitate sales in the Netherlands and Dutch Caribbean (Hart, personal communication, January 17, 2021). Hart stated that though the language situation is what it is, English is still a world language and one that is embedded in the local school curriculum. The question of how the role of English in the local language domain in Curaçao could have influenced Joseph Hart’s decision to choose English as a literary medium for the two novels begins to take shape here. Aware that English is one of the most spoken foreign languages on the island next to Dutch and the local vernacular, Papiamentu, Hart’s choice for English as a literary medium is also attributed to his upbringing as he grew up having English speaking servants in his household (Hart, personal communication, February 14, 2021). English increasingly became more important to the author as he would later go on to study and obtain a degree in English in the Netherlands (2021).

As for Hart’s passion for writing, Hart writes on the blurb of the Dutch version of *The Yard*, titled *De Wooncirkel*, that he does not write merely in order to sell an exciting and beautiful story to the reader, but because he cannot do otherwise. Hart expresses his need for an outlet for the intensity of his feelings that are closely linked to the socio-cultural history of the island presently, as well as in the past (Hart, 2017). Throughout Hart’s two novels, which will be dealt

with in this thesis, his love and admiration for the island on which he resides is evident and unmistakable.

### 1.1 Author Identity in Narration

Hart's undoubtable love for the island is highlighted in both *Election Dance* (2006) as well as *The Yard* (2010). A glimpse of this can be seen in the following excerpts of *Election Dance* as Hart gives an intentionally detailed description of the island's city, Willemstad:

They were seated at the waterfront, looking at the people, at the water lapping at the quay, listening to the cries of the birds as they hovered in the air, smelling the Santa Anna Bay sea-air, sipping their drinks, and saying nothing much. (Hart, 2006)

Hart continues with his description of the setting later in the paragraph by writing:

... freeing their intertwining spirits and letting them soar over the Anna Bay, over the rooftops of Punda and Otrobanda, looking down from their pinnacle of understanding at life evolving round the waterside, flowing through the alleys and passages of the old town, swelling to bursting point as they descended, gliding slowly and leisurely over the harbor, across the Anna Bay to the waterfront. (Hart, 2006)

In *The Yard*, published four years later, Hart again describes historical elements of the island:

... she now had this nice house overlooking the town and the wide inland harbor with the refinery and the dry dock company to the north, and to the south folksy Otrobanda, gradually dropping off to the coast with many colored roofs cluttered along narrow alleys and passages. The deep St. Anna Bay channel that gave access to the harbor, divided historic Willemstad into the two oldest city halves of Punda and Otrobanda. (Hart, 2010)

The above mentioned excerpts serve merely to illustrate the importance which Hart placed on describing the setting of the story in a way which simultaneously links to his comment of needing to express the intense feelings which he cherishes for his island.

Furthermore, yet other elements of Hart's own personal life can be seen back in his stories as well. An example of this can be found in the fact that Hart attributed his exposure to the English language through the English speaking servants which he grew up around. Similarly, he tells of English speaking servants in *Election Dance* when Matthew Bartels, the main protagonist of the story, recalls having had a servant, Ernestine:

Ernestine, who'd come to work for [the Bartels] as a 19-year-old from St. Kitts, would scurry between the table and the kitchen, her black face gleaming with sweat and apprehension. [...] Often Ernestine had been the innocent brunt of [Matthew's father's] uncontrolled maniacal behavior, sometimes sending her tray dishes flying through the dining-room. She would then calmly clean up the mess, crawling on hand and knees, picking up the biggest pieces and carefully sweeping the silver glasses and porcelain. (Hart, 2006)

Hart further emphasized the foreignness of Ernestine's character in contrast to the Curaçao backdrop through Ernestine's speech in, for example, the following sentence: "Master Matthew, can you gi' me a hand 'ere? Hold them clothes, please, so I can open this 'ere door" (p. 53).

However, the most notable element of Hart's life, which is so prevalent especially in *Election Dance*, is his profession. Hart's character, Matthew Bartels, is a secondary school Math



teacher. What is more, Hart's own personal knowledge of the educational system is showcased as he illustrates and mentions various teaching tactics and scenarios which take place in schools: "He was a natural in the application of the modern didactics of cooperative learning strategies and believed that his lesson was inefficient if he talked more than fifteen of the available forty-five minutes" (2006, p. 11). Additionally, Matthew Bartels not only taught secondary school, but was also a lecturer at the local university as can be seen in the following line, "Monday was his busiest day, as he had classes at UNA (University of the Netherlands Antilles) from three o'clock in the afternoon to six" (p. 13).

Once more, these illustrations are merely used to highlight Joseph Hart's identity in his own works. This is done as a prelude to the concept of ethos and ideology which will be discussed later on in the following chapters as, according to Busse, authors today function to meet the need that the readers have for authorial ethos. Busse contends that an author is a legal, social, and ideological figure whose identity is relied upon by the reader (Busse, 2013), thus making it necessary to highlight Joseph Hart's identity in the two novels as a preliminary action. A more detailed thematic based analysis will be given later on in this thesis in chapter 4.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to successfully analyze and interpret Hart's works, it is instrumental that this thesis highlights the concept of ethos and ideology as a means of narration. However, to understand this and how this is applicable in the novels which will be dealt with in this research, first the simpler relevant terms of narrator and story must be defined and explored. These serve to pave the way for the more in-depth analysis and interpretation which will take place later in this paper.

### 2.1 Narrator and Story

'Story' is defined in *Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* as a series of interrelated events which are presented by the narrator. As stated, a description of 'story' can also serve as: a history presented in a certain manner. 'History' then refers to the events in a logical-chronological context and 'story' to a particular representation thereof (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999, p. 36). Parallel to the narrator and story elements is the story theory and the narrative theory; both of which deal with the systematic description of narrative texts which is necessary for the conceptual apparatus used in analysis and interpretation. Collectively, the two areas are known as *narratology*. The *story theory* focuses on the structure of stories, which are seen as structures that have a number of fixed, interrelated elements that pertain to people, or that which have human traits (such as animals in children's literature that talk and act human-like). Moreover, the *story theory* allows for the analysis of the place, time period, duration, and order of events. It is in this structure that meaning is brought forth in a way which makes analysis possible; analysis of the characters, course of action, setting, time and motives (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999 p. 37) (see chapter 4). On the other hand, the *narrative theory* focuses on how the story is told and presented. The focus lies on the development of concepts and models which helps with the distinguishing and describing of the different storytelling techniques (p. 37) (see chapter 3).

### 2.2 Narration and Language Situations

It has been found that for narrative and literary texts, components and persuasive force of ethos stand out (Altes, 2014, p. 5). According to van Boven and Dorleijn, narrative texts have a more complex language situation than the lyrical, because two text levels are being dealt with. The first, "highest" level is that of the storytelling agencies that produce the words of the text and present the story world. In that story world, the characters communicate with each other. Their text is thus framed in that of the narrator; therefore it is spoken of an embedded language situation (1999, p. 183). The authors go on to describe the distinction between the narrator's level of text and that of the characters as one that is not only the core of the epic language situation but also the central problem in the interpretation of narrative texts. This is notable as the —what van Boven and Dorleijn call— *narrator text* and the *person text* (see chapter 3.2.2) are by no means always easy to distinguish. On the contrary, the two levels are constantly interfering with each other (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). In this way, the way in which a story is written and presented not only influences the specific characters of the story, but also influences and directs the readers' reaction (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999).

### 2.3 Concept of Ethos

Altes, author of *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation* (2014), writes that ethos is referred to as a “person’s or community’s character or characterizing spirit, tone, or attitude” in ancient Greek, while recalling how Aristotle “famously distinguished ethos as one of the three means of persuasion, alongside pathos and logos” (Altes, 2014, p. vii; see also Aristotle & Kennedy, 2007, p. x), or the “pragmatic triangle” as Eggs calls it (Altes, 2014, p. 3). According to Altes, the use of persuasion through the pathos rhetoric is to appeal to the audience’s emotions, while the logos rhetoric is used to “invoke objectivity” and “rational argumentation” (p. 3). Ethos, on the other hand, “pertains to character effects that coincide to create a trustworthy image of the speaker” (p. 3). For the purposes of this thesis, the same characteristics of the speaker will be applied to the writer as this research focuses on rhetoric used in the written form. Altes quotes Aristotle in her work by writing that “[there is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence” (p. 3). What is more, in Aristotle’s view, ethos consists of “three components [...] namely, practical wisdom and virtue and good will” (p. 3). Altes goes on to give a description of these three components by saying that practical wisdom, or *phronesis* as it is called in ancient Greek, is considered good sense and calls for the ability to adequately calculate a situation e.g. through the application of a theory to an existing situation. This first component of practical wisdom includes “the idea of knowledge and expertise acquired through experience” (p. 3). The second component, virtue, is utilized in rhetoric to persuade the audience to believe in the speaker’s “good character” as one who is honest and sincere (p. 3). According to Aristotle, this stems from a characteristic of humanity to trust impartiality over biasness (p. 3). However, Altes maintains that virtue is not tied with our modern perception of good character, but instead agrees with Kinneavy’s and Warshauer’s view that, in order to be convincing, the speaker, or writer in this case, “must exhibit that quality of character that a culture, and not the individual, defines as virtue” as “[t]he effectiveness of an ethical appeal thus depends on one’s ability to gauge society’s values and to display them [...] in one’s speech” (p. 3). As a result, this concept of portraying the culture’s idea of virtue “helps to create an effective impression of reliability and virtue, which of course would be deceptive, and a normative ethics of discourse, advocating actual sincerity and good—which would mean civic—character” (p. 4). The third concept of ethos, goodwill, or *eunoia* in ancient Greek, is defined as the ability to “[convince] an audience of the speaker’s good intentions” (p. 4) in an emotional manner. With this concept, the speaker is able to foresee the reaction which they will receive from the public and can thus manipulate their image in such a way that conjures up the desired outcome (Altes, 2014).

### 2.4 Concept of Ideology

The notion of ideology is viewed and interpreted differently by many. On its simplest level, ideology refers to a “political doctrine, a system of ideas and even ways of thinking” (UKEssays, 2015, para. 1). Kevin Marx, a German philosopher who pioneered the Marxism belief, believed that ideology attempts to mask the reality of the friction which is evident between social classes from one’s perception and consciousness, which in turn creates a “false consciousness” (Hamadi, 2017, p. 156). Essentially, Marx is of the opinion that higher social classes portray their ideals on

the lesser classes by invoking their ideology through unconscious and subliminal messaging to the working class as a result of what the current social and economic realities are (Hamadi, 2017).

When it comes to the portrayal of ideology in literature, Marxism upholds that the concept of ideology portrayed in literature serves to fulfill that of the dominant social class and that the ideologies are spread not through what is included in the works, but through what is left out—what is written between the lines (Hamadi, 2017). Marxism bases its position on “the assumption that literature must be understood in relation to historical and social reality of a certain society” (Hamadi, 2017, p. 155). Marx’ standpoint is that “literature is not a separate, self-enclosed region, and literary works are not isolated from social and political conditions” (p. 156). According to Marxism, ideology “consists of the ideas, beliefs, forms, and values of the ruling class that circulate through all the cultural spheres” adding that “culture and arts [...] can never be innocent entertainment, nor can they be independent of social forces, as they play a significant role in relaying ideology (p. 157). Marx’ notion of ideology focuses on how “leading institutions in society work through principles, ethics, morals, attitudes, conceptions of the world, its organisations, cultures and people” (UKEssays, 2015, para. 2).

Yet, not all theorists shared the entirety of the Marxism beliefs such as the French theorist Louis Althusser, who had an anti-humanist Marxism stance. Unlike Marx, who stressed “human freedom and self-determination” (Hamadi, 2017, p. 157), Althusser highlighted the scientific element of Marx’ theory; focusing on how “societal structures determine lived experience” (p. 157). As Althusser, who criticized Marx’ notion, sees it, ideology is the “imaginary way in which people represent to themselves their real relationship to the world”, contrary to the view of *The German Ideology*, which considers ideology as a “series of false impressions” (UKEssays, 2015, para. 3). Thus, in Althusser’s perceptive, the concept of ideology speaks to both the real as well as the fictitious reference to one's surroundings as a majority of society “live in accordance to their social relationships which dictate the person’s world” (para. 3). Althusser believed that “ideology makes [people] who they are [...] [and] makes [people] into being the persons that [they] become” (para. 3), however, he also “maintained that literature is an ideological form or state apparatus, rather than a perception of reality” (para. 3). Apparatuses of ideology are not limited to the arts, but also include institutions such as the church, which promote its beliefs and ways of thinking, the educational system, which also generates the government’s ideologies for the society to internalize, etc. (Hamadi, 2017, p. 158). Althusser contends that Marx’ “theoretical anti-humanism [...] recognizes a necessity for humanism as an *ideology*, a conditional necessity” and solely based thereon can “a policy in relation to the existing ideological forms, of every kind” be formed (Althusser, 2005, p 231). This includes religion, ethics, art, philosophy, law, and humanism itself.

## Chapter 3: Narrative Analysis Model

Before conducting a comparative analysis and interpretation of the two works *Election Dance* (2006) and *The Yard* (2010), it is important to establish and explore the analysis model used in *Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* by van Boven and Dorleijn. This in order to provide a basis for the comparative and analysis model which will be conducted in the following chapter as van Boven and Dorleijn focus primarily on the techniques which are used by the author in terms of the narrative choices which the story is conveyed in. Later on in chapter 4, the comparative analysis will focus on the content in terms of the themes i.e. social class, power and identity. This then links back to the *story theory* which was mentioned earlier in chapter 2.

### 3.1 Author Narration through Embedding

According to van Boven and Dorleijn, there are various roles which an author can choose to embody in an epic or narrative text, such as taking on the role of the narrator. In such texts, the author can opt to make his presence known through text *embedding*, a typical characteristic of the two text types (1999, p. 33). Bal and Tavor describe embedding as “a synonym of *to insert*” by implying that the insertion of one thing into another serves to achieve incorporation (1981, p. 43). Bal and Tavor go on to deduce three criteria which must be present for a phenomenon to be embedded, namely: “(1) *insertion*: the transition must be assured; (2) *subordination*: the two units must be ordered hierarchically; (3) *homogeneity*: the two units must belong to the same class” (p. 43). Through embedding, the author can establish his presence in one of two levels, namely through (1) that of the narrator, who produces text, and through (2) that of the world he tells (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999, p. 33). Depending on the chosen level, the author can, in turn, choose to either explicitly or implicitly show himself. However, this is not always clearly distinguished as there are different methods from which the author can choose. For instance, the author might make himself known in a more obvious way by explicitly stating that he is going to present the reader with a story in which the character(s) will be central and once stated, he then proceeds to switch to the actual story. Another method the author could opt for is to actually take part in the story in the form of a character, or the author might even choose to hide himself in the text in a way that makes it difficult to pinpoint his presence as the characters are front and centered (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). It is precisely the latter that is present in Joseph Hart’s *Election Dance*. The following excerpt is taken out of the novel’s introductory page to illustrate this:

[A] bit removed from the other dwellings, 17-year-old Shurendy is going through the last preparations for the cocaine smuggling operation. He has already been through several sessions during the past few weeks. The worst part is the stomach and bowel cleansing ordeal with that foul tasting liquid, followed by Imodium and a 24-to 36-hour water diet. He has learned to swallow up to 30 little plastic-wrapped balls and knows how to apply the correct amount of enema to get them all out. And now the real thing is about to happen. He’s nervous and a thousand things go through his feverish mind. He’s got to make it; so much depends on it. (Hart, 2006)

Hart takes an implicit role in the text as he describes the surroundings not through the character Shurendy's eyes, but through his own. He does so without revealing himself to the reader, but through the level of showcasing the world through his lens. Hart's presence, though relatively hidden, can still be seen in his introduction of Shurendy when he writes about the 17-year-old going through the last preparations, and when he writes that Shurendy has already been through several sessions before. It is from the author's mouth that the text is made known, not through the character himself. Hart does not stray away from his chosen embedding style in his later novel *The Yard* (2010) as the following excerpt taken from the introductory page illustrates:

Armani stood there, driven by some mysterious force and let the terrible beauty and hidden anguish draw lines into the very core of her soul.

She could not get enough of the neglected mansion. Ma Chila, her grandmother, had told her so much about this place, where she had spent more than half of her long life. [...] Although she had never known *Kurá di Shon Janchi* ('Master Janchi's Yard'), because it no longer existed as such when she grew up, Ma Chila's lively stories of the yard dwellers had been indelibly engraved in her memory. (Hart, 2010)

Similarly to *Election Dance*, it is evident that Hart makes his presence known implicitly through the way in which he introduces the protagonist Armani by writing that she stood there, and that she could not get enough. The way he introduced the grandmother is similar as he writes that Ma Chila, her grandmother, had told her about the yard. Hart is not explicitly manifesting himself, but rather doing so through the use of the 'he' and 'she' narratives, excluding himself and refraining from using the 'I' pronoun.

### 3.2 Van Boven and Dorleijn Model

Van Boven and Dorleijn's analysis and interpretation model, which is used throughout this thesis, has largely been taken from Stanzels' typological circle (*A Theory of Narrative*, 1986, p. xvi) that consists of the three narrative situations i.e., the authorial narrative situation, the figural narrative situation, and the first-person narrative situation to provide insight into the characteristics of the different basic forms of narration (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). The model is also based on the newer theory of Mieke Bal, which is of a different nature to that of Stanzels and is based on very different starting points (see *Narrative Theory: Major issues in narrative theory* chapter 3 and *The teller and the observer: Narration and focalization in narrative texts*). Bal's theory is currently commonly used to make the distinction between 'narrating' and 'seeing'; the point of view from which the events are told is not (necessarily) the same as the point of view from which they are observed (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999).

#### 3.2.1 Narrative view analysis

The author can play various roles in his story by choosing to what extent he integrates himself in the story. Apart from his explicit or implicit presence, the author can also choose who the narrator is; he can decide to take on this role himself, create an alternate narrator who is neither him nor the protagonist, or make the protagonist the narrator himself (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hart's presence in both *Election Dance* as well as *The Yard* has been more implicitly embedded. According to Stanzels' narrative standpoints (see

*Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* chapter 8), Hart's narration positions itself in the figural narrative; a narrative situation which is characterized for being told in the third-person point of view—the he or she forms. In such cases, it is spoken of a non-dramatized storytelling situation as there is no one in the text itself who takes upon himself the role of the narrator, instead the narrator remains anonymous and hides himself behind the story (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). As Stanzels introduced it, such narratives merely show that which the characters think, feel, see, experience, and go through in order for it to seem as though the story is telling itself (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999). Below are two examples taken out of Hart's novel *Election Dance* to illustrate this:

Matthew referred to his data and emphasized that he did not wish to accuse any single politician or civil servant.

We do not wish to start a witch hunt, but let it be known that the days of political double dealings and cronyism are behind us. Our future can no longer depend on the incompetence and greed of a small group of the political inner sanctum. And as we create a knowledge community people will no longer accept hollow campaign phrases and will hold the political establishment accountable. (Hart, 2006)

and:

Matthew was looking at her; saw it all and then saw more, as he now detached himself from the problem at hand, and was susceptible to other sensations that forced themselves on him. He was surprised at what he saw and felt. (Hart, 2006)

Comparing these to the following examples taken from his 2010 novel *The Yard* sheds light on the similarities in regards to the narrative situations:

Shon Jimmy was in a foul mood.

*That's what happens when that illiterate bunch of politicians taste the smell of power. They stop using their brains, what little they have, and think they can call the shots. They all do the same, stupid, arrogant bastards.* (Hart, 2010)

and:

The silence in the room weighed down on everyone of the team. They heard what Armani and Milo told them, but could still not believe what they were hearing, too stunned to grasp the enormity of what had taken place. Actually it was Milo who did most of the talking. Armani was quiet and answered questions as best she could in a flat, lifeless voice, often staring off in the distance, somewhat out of sync with her surroundings. (Hart, 2010)

It is evident from these examples that the narrators of both Hart's novels are not characters in their respective stories. They are merely conveying the feelings and happenings which the characters are experiencing as the story progresses. The narrators are all-seeing, or omniscient, in the stories which allows them to know what the characters are thinking and feeling without the characters needing to be the ones to express this to the readers. Opting for a figural narrative approach fits well with Hart's novels as both *Election Dance* as well as *The Yard* alternate perspectives in the chapter narrations. If Hart were to choose for an authorial or first-person narrative situation, the constant shift between the multiple perspectives and story lines would prove to be a greater challenge than simply using the figural narrative situation as he has done.

By doing so, Hart also emphasizes the omniscient perspective that allows for a natural flow between character perspectives. Thus, when compared with one another, the two novels which are dealt with here are comparable by their figural narrative styles in which Hart conceals the narrator.

As mentioned earlier, next to Stanzels' theory there is also that of Mieke Bal who makes the distinction between 'narrating' and 'seeing'. In the narratology of Bal there are three principal points which are used for specification, namely: (1) "the status of the narrative subjects with respect to the history", (2) "the nature of the embedded units", and (3) "the nature and attribution of the various levels" (Bal & Tavor, 1981, p. 47). For the first principal, Bal writes that the narrative subjects "have an identity which can be described [...] [i]f the subject has no diegetical name, that is to say if his identity is not that of an actor in the story, he is considered external" (p. 47). The principal question in Bal's narratology is not if the narrator is referring to himself in the text, but the question is how he relates to the narrative story; does he only narrate or does he perceive and act as well? (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999, p. 206). However detailed Bal's principals are, for the purposes of this research, a more in-depth look will not be taken in relation to the perception and action of the narrator in the two novels with which this thesis surrounds itself as it is sufficient to say that Stanzels' theory lends itself well to the analysis of the narration in the two novels with which this thesis surrounds itself. Such in depth analysis which Bal calls up will have greater analytical implications on narrative situations than that of Stanzels' authorial narrative situation as there is a broader range of options which authors can opt to use, and therefore, a wider area for analysis of these works.

### 3.2.2 Person text and narrator text

According to van Boven and Dorleijn, texts can be presented in either a person text, narrator text, or a combination of both (1999, p. 214). As established, both *Election Dance* as well as *The Yard* implicitly indicate the author's presence. By definition, the texts are therefore narrator texts as the characters are not at the forefront of the narrative process. All thoughts, conversations and points of view come indirectly from the author himself. A *narrator text* is spoken of when the narrator's wording of what the characters could have literally thought or said are presented in either a greater or lesser extent (p. 214). The so-called *indirect reason* is the manner in which these thoughts are expressed; typically characterized by subordinate clauses, consistent verb tenses, and a third-person point of view. Below an excerpt of *Election Dance* to illustrate this:

Matthew was exhausted. He had put on quite a show of strength with Ollie, but it had taken all of his concentration and will power. He felt hollow inside, as if he had been depleted of all his customary stamina. He had indeed slept for two full days and three nights, but the sleep had been filled with nightmares, leaving him confused, not knowing any more what was real and imagined. (Hart, 2006).

From this excerpt, the following subordinate clauses are apparent: "but it had taken all of his [...]", "as if he had been depleted [...]", "but the sleep had [...]", as well as the consistent verb tense, namely the past and past perfect: *was*, *had put*, *had taken*, *felt*, *had been depleted*, and so on, and the third-person perspective: using Matthew's name and the 'he' pronoun.



Besides the *indirect reason*, there is also the *direct reason*, in which the thought representations are given by the characters themselves. In these cases, the narrator is no longer the one speaking, but instead the characters are given the platform to voice their thoughts. This is done in the so-called *person text* which is characterized by having a direct inner monologue, a change in the verb tense, the change from the third-person perspective to the first-person, and the use of main clauses (Boven, van & Dorleijn, 1999, p. 214). The following excerpt of *The Yard* is used as an illustration of the above mentioned characteristics:

Marinus cannot accept this humiliation and storms away in a rage. Knowing him I expect many problems in the next few days.

In the meantime I make his wife and daughters feel welcome and their short stay as comfortable as possible, knowing full well that Marinus can never accept his family being on the receiving end of my generosity. But that is a later worry. I must now try to befriend this foreigner and find out as much as possible about her husband, who I [am] convinced will do everything in his power to rob me of my precious inheritance. (Hart, 2010)

In this fragment, the characteristics which are linked to the *person text* are visible. The character, Malaika—who Armani, the main character, embodies—is having an inner monologue in which she details what is taking place. She does so using the present tense: *make*, *can*, *try*, and so on, while not long before the story was being told in the usual past tense, as seen in the following fragment:

She shook herself free from that reverie, rubbed her face and massaged her temples, stood up gingerly, and then, recovering her usual stamina, went to the kitchen, made some coffee and sandwiches and came back, all businesslike energy.

“Okay, I [am] ready to go on. I know you want to hear what happened to Malaika’s daughter Ayomide; let [us] settle on Milagro; it [is] easier. [...] I [am] ready when you are.”

Again they went through the now familiar procedure and soon Armani was back in Malaika’s time cycle. (Hart, 2010)

Moreover, it is also comparable from these fragments that the shift has been made from third-person to first-person. Both this as well as the use of main clauses: “Marinus cannot accept [...]”, “Knowing him I expect [...]”, and “In the meantime I make his wife [...]” are characteristics of the person text.

### 3.2.3 Manipulation in relation to the concept of ethos

What is more, through the person-, narrator-, or combination text, the author is able to act in a so-called manipulating manner to a certain extent as, according to van Boven and Dorleijn, the representation of conversations and thoughts is one of the means of guiding the reader in a certain direction (1999, p. 213). It is thus notable that Hart’s novels differ in this regard as *The Yard* has been written with a combination of *person-* and *narrator text* while *Election Dance* is merely made up of *narrator text*, but as it stands both text types can be used by the author to sway the reader in the direction he wishes them to go. This is the first sign of the emergence of the concept of ethos which can help answer both specific research questions. As stated earlier in

chapter 2.3, the concept of ethos is used to create a trustworthy image of the author. This can be seen in relation to the way in which the author tells the story in both the person- and narrator text as mentioned above. An example of this can be seen here to expand on this idea:

The assignment is time-based; your group members depend on your contribution. So, do [not] sit there day-dreaming and thinking what you [are] going to do after school. And remember that you [will] have to do some explaining, so think your answers through and make sure you know how to explain by using the theory we just went through. Go! (Hart, 2006, p. 11)

This fragment of *Election Dance* showcases how Joseph Hart's character, Matthew Bartels, is portrayed in a way which gives way to credence on Hart's behalf. This obviously comes naturally to Hart as it has already been established in chapter 1.1 that Hart himself was a teacher for many years. By utilising the knowledge which he has obtained throughout his career as an educator, Hart is able to make use of the practical wisdom component of the concept of ethos (see chapter 2.3). As the passage goes on, Hart (2006) also taps into another component of ethos i.e., virtue, which emphasizes the persuasion of an author's attunement to societal values:

At a quarter past one school was over and most of the fifteen hundred teenagers would swarm outside in the midday heat, sweating, jostling and waiting for the bus or parents to pick them up. Those more fortunate – or unfortunate, depending on whose point of view was considered – to be living in the neighborhood, would start walking home, where the midday meal would be waiting, to be warmed up by themselves, as most parents worked full-time nowadays, if there were two parents at all. Others had a granny to look after them and the happy few had a live-in from one of the neighboring Spanish speaking countries to take care of things. (p.11)

In this passage, there are a number of societal realities mentioned e.g. the daily practices of nuclear families with regards to the child's after school norms, the setup of such households to include grandparents and/or live-in maids, and the exclusion of a parental figure in some households. With this, Hart's reliability is continually being established so that the reader can go in the direction that the author chooses to take the story without any hesitation or reluctance.

In *The Yard*, too, this can be found. An example of which, here:

Forced to talk Damian mustered all his courage, coughed behind his fist and stammered, not looking directly at the man, "I d-do [not] really know, Sh-shon Jimmy," using the outdated polite custom of mentioning a person's name, especially if that person was in a position of authority. "P-perhaps the Com-Commissioner thinks that Shon Jimmy can let me do d-delicate assignments that I [have] done for him" (Hart, 2010, p. 23).

In this excerpt, Hart uses his knowledge and expertise of the local customs of the inhabitants of Curaçao, the setting of the novel, to establish credibility as it is common to address elders or authority figures, not by their name, but by sir or ma'am in the local vernacular.

## Chapter 4: Comparative Thematic Analysis and Interpretation

Redirecting the focus now to the thematic comparative analysis and interpretation of Hart's two novels *Election Dance* and *The Yard*, this chapter is intended to further attempt to answer the two main research questions pertaining to the concept of ethos and ideology and how these are brought forth in the two novels addressed in this thesis. The concept of ethos and ideology serve as the frame of reference for the comparative analysis carried out in this chapter with the assumption that both novels incorporate the ideologies of the higher, or ruling, class (concept of ideology) and the author's tactical orchestration to achieve his desired emotional outcome in the reader (concept of ethos). The grounds for comparison here are to explore the themes of power, social class and identity and how one author conveys these in two different works in order to find similarities and/or differences. In this chapter, a *point-by-point analysis* will be carried out in order to illustrate per point what the similarities and/or differences are. Van Boven and Dorleijn's model is used in order to conduct a narrative analysis of the author. The literary communication schedule from Severing, Rutgers and Echteld shows that not only the author but also the text, the reader and the context are essential. This research has already delved into the following: perspectives (see chapter 3), the so-called action of the story which refers to the fact that stories are always about people (or animals or objects in fables and fairytales) who do, say, think, want and feel a number of things (see chapter 3), and description of the setting of the story (see chapter 1). Henceforth, *Election Dance* will be referred to as ED and *The Yard* as TY for the facilitation of the analysis. Each theme will be discussed first in ED before moving on to TY.

### 4.1 Social Class

The concept of ideology, as stated earlier in this thesis, is, according to the Marxist belief, grounded in the ideology of the ruling class as higher social classes push their ideals on the lower classes by invoking their ideology through unconscious and subliminal messaging based on the current social and economic realities. It is thus important to explore the theme of social class in both novels to see if and how Hart's concept of ideology is illustrated through his use of social class differentiation.

#### 4.1.1 Election Dance

Taking a look first at ED, it is evident that various classes are grouped together through neighborhoods. In the first chapter of ED, the reader is introduced to the young Shurendy, a boy who is involved in a drug smuggling scheme. Shurendy ends up dying in the first chapter due to the eruption of the drug pellets he had swallowed. In the newspaper article describing his death and involvement in the drug smuggling operation, Shurendy is categorized as a member of the lower class—as someone who is contributing to the negative perspective placed on Curaçao by the motherland. This sentiment of those being involved in drug smuggling is further emphasized in the following where Hart conveys to the reader the thoughts of his protagonist, Matthew Bartels, when observing his class during an assignment:

He noticed that Shahayra was again absent. 'Poor kid; the mother [has] probably been picked up again for drug trafficking and the father is non-existent, of course. Now she is

both mother and father; one more of the many victims of the over 16% structural unemployed and the relentless increase in violence and crime (Hart, 2006, p. 13).

Similarly to Shurendy, Shahayra is not described by her race. Instead, Hart uses his characters' names to indirectly convey a picture of the characters in the readers' minds as both Shurendy and Shahayra are names that would be more quickly associated with the local inhabitants of the island who are of African descent than the Dutch inhabitants among others. Due to the fact that Hart writes that Matthew had students from various backgrounds such as Portugal, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, the British West Indies, etc. (Hart, 2006, p. 12), it is notable that he chose names that would be considered local names for characters which he wanted to portray as somehow involved in crime and violence. However, Hart's novel does not make obvious distinction between the races in ED by implying that certain races belong to certain social groups. Thus, the area of race in relation to social class will not be explored here as it is assumed that Hart merely wanted to portray a reality rather than intentionally segregate a group.

Taking a look at the living situations presented in ED, it is made clear that contrary to "a cluster of dilapidated wooden houses with corrugated iron roofs and patched up walls" (Hart, 2006, p. 9), as Shurendy's neighborhood is described in the first chapter, the main character's living conditions are of a more luxurious kind as seen in the following fragment:

He [had] sold the sprawling, badly kept and memory haunted mansion in town where he [had] spent his youth and bought a charming, old house in a fourteen hundred square meter overgrown yard. He [had] had some restoration done in the sixty-year old country estate, and converted the four small bedrooms, formal dining-room, living-room and separate kitchen in to a modern and practical home with two bedrooms, a studio, a spacious living-room and well-equipped kitchen, separated by a cozy kitchen bar, where he had his meals. (Hart, 2006, p. 16)

The lavishness does not end there as Hart dedicates quite a few words to the detailed description of Matthew's decor and sophisticated technology found in his home. As Matthew is described as a mixed-race man "being the third generation of the Bartels family, originally from Holland" with local and Surinamese ethnicities mixed in (Hart, 2006, p. 12), he is placed in a higher social class; his physical appearance consisting of "thick, jet black, wavy hair, finely sculpted nose", gray-blue eyes and light brown skin (Hart, 2006, p.17). As a result of describing the comfortable living conditions of the protagonist, the idea of wealth and its link to the ruling class is again being made clear. Matthew, being a member of a higher class, is able to afford a comfortable living whereas the lower class are not.

As the story progresses, the reader is again introduced to the separation of social classes. However, it is less of a financial separation than it is an intellectual separation. An example of this is when Matthew attends and speaks at a campaign rally, after which Matthew is told:

Man you did it again. First we had the intelligentsia solidly behind you; then you became the sweetheart of the media; then the female and middle class voters went crazy about you, and now the simple man-in-the-street has recognized and accepted you. (Hart, 2006)

Through Hart's use of *intelligentsia* and *simple*, he is signalling to the reader that not only are the classes unequal in their wealth but that they are also dissimilar in intellect. What is more, the

crowd is described as “rough, smelly, good-natured and intensely erotic” (Hart, 2006, p. 175) implying that there is again a difference, here of a behavioral kind.

Yet another difference shown in the novel is the cultural differences between the upper and lower classes. Hart demonstrates this in the following in which Damiëla, one of Matthew’s love interests in the story, takes Matthew to a local nine-day burial ritual:

Matthew was feeling a bit uncomfortable. He knew nothing about this custom. He had grown up in a Dutch-Surinamese cultural environment with a sprinkling of some local culture and had learned the local vernacular at school, in the neighborhood, and by reading a lot of the Papiamentu newspapers. [...] He did not know that he would feel utterly out of place. (Hart, 2006).

From this fragment, it can be concluded that even when children of the upper class are born and raised in a multicultural community, they are less likely to be exposed to local customs and cultural rituals as they remain in their social circles with their own cultural environments. This all suggests and hints at Marx’ ideology theory which involves (unconscious) attempts to mask the reality of the friction that exists between social classes from one’s perception and consciousness, to create a false consciousness. Hart’s narrator displays unconscious and perhaps unintentional prejudice towards those from whom the protagonist wishes to get votes for his political gain or towards those who belong to different social classes than himself. It is clear from the examples that the concept of ideology is present in ED.

#### 4.1.2 The Yard

While reading TY the reader will also encounter indications of universal elements pertinent to class division. Whereas ED does not place much emphasis on the racial aspect which can play a role in social class, Hart does sprinkle this in throughout TY. Early on in the book, the reader is introduced to Shon Jimmy Jacobson, a member of the upper class with a Protestant background and Caucasian ethnicity. The following quotation shows how the character views some of the colored members of society with whom he deals with:

*Must keep these people in line. Admittedly, some are pretty good, those who studied abroad or here at our university. [...] As long as they accept our European or American values, behave accordingly and do [not] get too uppity, we can get along very well.* (Hart, 2010)

The idea that colored people need to adopt the European or American values in order to be accepted displays the divide that exists between the classes with regards to the morals and values which they adhere to. The upper class does not merely see the differences in wealth, but also that of behaviorism with regards to the values the lower class projects and the academic achievements which individuals possess. This attitude resurfaces again a little later when the character is thinking of politicians he had influence over:

*You give these blacks half a finger to help them on in life and they want your whole hand. In no time they even think they have a right to what you have worked your ass off for four generations to build up. Lazy and stupid, that [is] what they are. [...] My God, they should be happy they [are] here and not in Africa, where aids, hunger and all that killing make this island look like paradise.* (Hart, 2010)

Shon Jimmy attempts to mitigate this once he realizes how his thoughts may affect his dealings with people. As the passage goes on, the character expresses awareness that he, too, formed part of the problem as a member of the higher class. His class was always responsible for the lower class, in times of slavery and even after, as the ruling class could not let former slaves run the country on their own (Hart, 2010, p. 43). It is safe to assume that the character harbors prejudice against the colored inhabitants of the island, however as the story progresses Shon Jimmy reveals to be in a relationship with a colored woman whom he has great admiration for. What is more, he helps the main character of the story, who is also a colored woman. Thus, though Joseph Hart is illustrating the historical division of races and the effects they have on the present members of each group, the reader does not immediately jump to conclusions of deeming him a racist. Ethos, is therefore, again playing a role in how the reader is meant to perceive the character since Shon Jimmy's help and admiration for Armani is a positive one. For this reason, it is assumed that Hart intentionally included the following lines directly after expressing Shon Jimmy's stance on colored members of society:

*I need them as much as they need me. And if I [am] honest, I [have] got used to them; some are even quite likeable. [...] You like 'em; you even love 'em, you old pervert. How long have you been carrying on with Marvine?* (Hart, 2010)

With these lines and those following it where the character expresses extreme fondness for the support his mistress has offered him throughout the course of thirty years, Hart is using the power of persuasion so that the categorization of the character as a villain is allayed.

Another element of the societal view is also expressed through the main character Armani's aunt who recollects how her mother had chosen who would father her child:

The halting exchange gave her sufficient information to realize that this darkly handsome white specimen should and would be her daughter's lover and father her first child, thus ensuring a better future for mother, daughter and grandchild, based on the widely held belief that the lighter the color of one's skin the better off one was on the ladder to success and social acceptance. (Hart, 2010)

It is made even clearer here how an individual's skin tone is regarded by society and how it can be used for personal gain. The Marxist theory is illustrated in this by giving rise to the idea that the more one looks like a member of the upper class the quicker one is considered as such. This creates the impression among all levels of the social classes that a certain appearance is ideal—which indirectly implies that other appearances are not. This way of thinking embodies the false consciousness which Marx spoke about. It is precisely the spreading of such ideas which pose a danger to society as the lower class feel that in order to gain any form of accomplishment, be it professional or otherwise, they need to go to greater lengths to make these a reality. Hart shows this in his depiction of how Armani's aunt, Flor, sleeps around with those who have higher professional positions in order to boost her own son's career. Such mentalities end up doing more harm to the overall community.

#### **4.2 Power**

Social class goes hand in hand with power as the ruling class is able to sway and influence the lower class to adopt their beliefs as Marx pointed out. Having established how the theme of

social classes has been portrayed in the two novels, the theme of power will now be investigated in this section in relation to the concepts prominent in this thesis.

#### 4.2.1 Election Dance

When it comes to the display of power in ED it is evident that the members of the Triple T are all well-standing individuals in their respective fields: Matthew Bartels is an educator on both a secondary as well as higher educational level, Thelma Ignacio works for the Department of Economic Affairs, Valdemar Wernet does anthropological research and helps set up neighborhood organizations, Geoffrey van der Houten is a fiscal and legal analyst with the Federal Government, and Arnoldus Willems is a deputy head of the Department of Finances of the Insular Government directly responsible for the cash position serving as a constant source of brinkmanship for the Curaçao Insular Council (Hart, 2006, p. 25). It is the view of these five characters, namely the view that promotes Information Technology in education and in the community through various activities in the neighborhoods, community centers and in education itself that eventually has influence over the success of the New Frontier Movement (NFM) political party. This is due to the fact that the NFM has decided to adopt such views in their campaign by enlisting Matthew Bartels as a new member of their party to carry it out. The occurrence of the ideas of the Triple T group being adopted and taken to bring change in the community showcases how the higher social classes have influence and power over the general population including the lower class. The higher class, or rightly named ruling class, has the power to bring change in a way that the lower class is not able to do with equal effect. Instead, the ruling class uses their power to spread their ideas to the lower classes to ensure that their ideas get accepted by the public. This can be seen in the following fragments in which the political party is campaigning in front of a crowd:

There was a stunned silence, as if he had hit a wall.

‘What was Bartels talking about? How could they study when they needed work, when they had bills to pay, and children to feed?’

Matthew understood their hesitation and again he threw the question at them.

“Do you want to learn new skills for a better future or do you prefer to wait until we all go down together? I will teach you and you will learn and you will work.”

He paused dramatically, collected all his power and flung at them, “WILL YOU STUDY?”

And now the answer came in a riot of shouts.

“YES, YES, YES, WE WILL, WE WILL, TEACH US, TEACH US MATTHEW; TEACH US MATTHEW”. (Hart, 2006)

Prior to this, Hart establishes trust in Matthew’s action through writing that “Matthew had been listening to his colleagues and asked himself what it was that bothered him in all these speeches. He doubted the sincerity; felt instinctively that the audience was only listening with half an ear” (Hart, 2006, p. 172). Here, Hart is proving Matthew’s good intention and genuine care for the public through the use of the ethos rhetoric. The reader is convinced that the protagonist is sincere in his motives and virtuous nature leaving no doubt that his actions preceding this will be beneficial to the public being addressed. Hart closes the chapter with the following: “Matthew

raised his arms and stood there, a monument, a beacon of hope for the thousands that were there that memorable rally in Marchena, when the poor, the uneducated, and the destitute took him into their hearts” (Hart, 2006, p. 175). This reflects the concept of ideology as Hart conveys an unconscious view that a member of the upper class has of the lower class: poor, uneducated and destitute individuals who were eager and in need of the views and interference of the higher class to fix their situation.

Besides political and societal power, Hart also portrays how high society can have power in the sense that they can clean up their reputation without severe consequences. As occurs in ED, the main character’s past came back to haunt him. Matthew tried to cover up the fact that he had physically beaten his ex-wife in an event that ended her up in the hospital. Once this was brought to the attention of the general public, Matthew was quickly forgiven after this speech which his ex-wife gave and had recorded and that was televised:

I used to be a drug addict and Matthew knew that. He helped me get over it, married me and actually saved me. After two happy years I had a relapse and left him for three months. Went back to my ex-lover and drug provider, got myself pregnant. [...] I went back to Matthew. He forgave me, gave me shelter and loved me and later accepted Percival as his son, took care of him, because I was suffering from post-natal trauma and neglected the baby. I was extremely difficult to get along with. This led to the fatal confrontation when Matthew lost his patience and beat me. (Hart, 2006)

Matthew’s ex-wife goes on to explain how Matthew had carried on working to provide for both her and the child. The public was quick to forgive and even perceive him as heroic, wishing him well and clapping him on the back (Hart, 2006, p. 302). Considering the severity of what had taken place, it seems that Matthew’s reputation as the golden boy, which he was often referred to, gave him the power to garner forgiveness without real consequences. This would unlikely be the case if the subject had been someone of a lower social class with less political power and public acceptance. For this reason, it can be assumed that the subliminal message presented through this occurrence is consistent with the idea that the more power, influence and supremacy one establishes in a society, the more leniency is given to them as an automatic consequence of their social standings as they themselves set the social and moral standards in the community.

#### **4.2.2 The Yard**

Shon Jimmy plays an important role in TY when considering the theme of power just as with the aforementioned theme of social class. As mentioned, Shon Jimmy is a member of the upper class. It is precisely this class which has become accustomed to wielding power both in the past as well as in current times to a certain extent. This is shown in TY through the following lines:

Little did [...] any of these upstarts know that however high they climbed, they still owed their success to him and the likes of him. His class was no longer active politically. The color of their skin was not an asset in the elections. Instead they manipulated the colored politicians, paid for their campaigns, gave advice, and bribed a few here and there. (Hart, 2010)

The display of power portrayed here is a clear sign that the ruling class is responsible and credited for the success of those who succeed in penetrating the upper class. Joseph Hart is



conveying a societal message through this by indirectly implying that whomever formed a part of the lower class and successfully invaded and became a part of the upper class could only do so through the help of those already in the upper class. Thus, power plays an instrumental role in a society, however, power can only be obtained if given by a member of the ruling class. As a consequence hereof, the upper class ensures that their ideologies are largely accepted by the classes with the hopes that through the adoption of these ideologies they will be able to climb the social ladder. The following passage is used to further illustrate this point:

The information I have from the grapevine is that Shon Jimmy Jacobson is deeply involved in the whole scheme of the hotel and marina project. This means that the Commissioner of City Planning is dancing to his master's voice and so does the party leader. (Hart, 2010)

Here the power of the character is again emphasized. The main character and her team are trying to get Shon Jachi's yard restored and repurposed, but quickly realise that this cannot be done without the help of Shon Jimmy. Knowing this Armani sets up a meeting with him to try to persuade him to help their cause. This indicates how members of the society are already intune with the idea that in order to gain power, or at the very least accomplish their goals, one must associate oneself with someone who holds the necessary power to be able to complete those goals. Ergo, the ideology of the upper class is already ingrained in the social classes. In the above mentioned scenario, the author conducts the protagonist in such a way as to persuade the reader that her cause is the right and noble one. Armani is again and again recalling her past links with the building which she is attempting to restore and use. Her recollections are used by the author to instill trust and omit doubt of Armani's motives, a clear indication of the use of the concept of ethos. What is more, Hart allows the main character to display her own use of ethos when preparing her persuasion tactic to get Shon Jimmy on board with their plan:

They discussed the several options and agreed that the headlong and honest approach would be the best opening as he would [not] expect that. She should explain the overall plan and try to work on his feeling of belonging; his 'we-islanders' feelings. (Hart, 2010)

Another occurrence of the display of power shown in TY is when Armani is mentally transported back in time and inhabits the consciousness of Malaika, one of her ancestors. In this life cycle, Armani experiences how after the death of Shon Janchi, Malaika's partner, Malaika was given possession of the yard instead of Shon Janchi's son Marinus. What makes this particularly remarkable is that this took place during a time of slavery. By granting Malaika the property and an annual income, Malaika was, as a colored woman, granted power by her husband Shon Janchi, a Caucasian man. This echoes the earlier sentiment of how the upper class can, through their power, improve the financial and social status of those deemed beneath them. Once the power is given, it can even be used against other members of the upper class. Hart illustrates this in the following way when Marinus suddenly appears at Malaika's home after his father's death:

Before he can react I continue in very formal Dutch, "Your welcome is contingent on your behavior in accordance with the general rules of courtesy. If you persist in the uncouth behavior you just showed, you are not welcome on my property". (Hart, 2010)

Malaika, who has now acquired some power through having property, is able to exert her power in order to achieve a desired outcome. She is successful in this as Marinus leaves her property thereafter.

### 4.3 Identity

Next to social class and power, identity is another theme which can be used to search and highlight the ideology of the higher class in Hart's two novels. The identity shown by the characters, specifically their identity in their social class, will be explored in this section to further attempt to bring clarity to the presence of the Marxism belief.

#### 4.3.1 Election Dance

Taking a look again at the scene in which the main character is taken to the *ocho dia* burial by his love interest Damiëla, it is made clear that the identity of the characters are, to some extent, implanted in their culture. Damiëla's reaction to Matthew's uneasiness, trepidation and comparison of her customs to "being in the middle of Africa" (Hart, 2006, p. 189) shows how her identity is somehow embedded in her culture:

She had [not] expected this reaction. She knew he was not tuned in to the cultural scene; but that he would feel so much removed from this, to the point of being frightened, went beyond her. It was part of her life; she had grown up in the countryside where many of the old traditions were still held dear. [...] Matthew was so involved in this community and went out of his way for a better quality of life, as he called it, she had taken it for granted that in some way he would be part of the social-cultural fabric. (Hart, 2006)

As Damiëla's thoughts are conveyed to the reader, an interesting point is brought up: that despite Matthew's involvement in the culture on the political front, he does not share her culture, nor essentially, her identity as one embedded in the social class which she belongs to. A glimpse of the concept of ethos is also seen in the fragment in the sentence which reads: "Matthew [...] went out of his way for a better quality of life, as he called it". By including the phrase *as he called it*, the author could be encouraging a sense of scepticism in the reader in relation to what meaning a better quality of life could have and from whose perspective. The phrase is questioned in direct correlation to Matthew's disapproval of the burial ritual which leads Damiëla to unconsciously question what quality of life looks like for Matthew as a member of the higher class. The concept of ethos plays a role here as the narrator is displaying a sense of trustworthiness from Damiëla's point of view as someone who lives in a neighborhood "with one of the highest unemployment and crime rates" (Hart, 2006, p. 42) when she expresses slight doubt in Matthew's vision. Damiëla's scepticism resurfaces as the story goes on and her unconscious questioning begins to take a conscious form:

'What if the process he has now set in motion is solely inspired by the demands of the technology driven new economy? Where does this leave the local population? What values must they adhere to? Where do I stand with my cultural baggage? He does [not] feel emotionally attached to that, to use his own words'. (Hart, 2006)

This excerpt clearly shows the ideology which Marx spoke about. The lower class is greatly influenced by the decisions and actions of the upper class as they have the power to alter the

population's values through changes in economy and other vital structures. The financial realities and changes the higher class sets into motion can even affect the identity of the lower class as a direct result of adaptations to the political doctrine which, in turn, influences the way people think.

Matthew's identity is also rooted in his familial relation to social class. In a flashback, the reader is introduced to his mother's perception of what identity as a member of a particular social class looks like. As a parental figure, the views which Matthew's mother held would undoubtedly be passed on to Matthew. From the following fragments of ED it is evident that Matthew's mother viewed identity as a tie to one's social class:

[She] had also learned the skills pertaining to her social class, like playing the piano, fine cuisine and embroidery.

"I then attended a business school where I met an older student. I fell head over heels in love with him [...]. I could not tell my parents because he was not of our social class, had a different religion and his father was an obscure politician in the wrong party. [...] He hoped to prove he was worthy of me". (Hart, 2006)

It is clear that Matthew's mother knew that one's identity, with relation to whom one could marry, what lifestyle one could lead, and so forth, was predetermined by social classes. It is this idea that also reflects the Marxism belief. Members of the higher social classes did not intermingle with those of the lower class when it came to marriage. This shows how the way of thinking of the upper class has influence over individuals' actions. Presumably as a result of Matthew's upbringing, he too adopted these views which could have influenced his relationship with Damiëla due to the fact that their relationship was problematic on occasion as a result of the differences in cultural practices which was mentioned earlier. Instead, Matthew ends up with Thelma, who is for the most part equal to Matthew in terms of class positionings as a worker for the Department of Economic Affairs and intellect as a member of the Triple T.

#### **4.3.2 The Yard**

The way in which identity in one's social class is revealed in TY has much to do with a series of spiritual time travels that the main character undergoes under the guidance of the self-proclaimed healer, Roberta. During these recollective experiences, Armani inhabits several of her ancestors' minds and eyes. Through these events, Armani's connection to her past and her own self-discovery is strengthened. Discovering her past and experiencing Shon Janchi's yard greatly impacts Armani who was already enthralled with the yard from the beginning of the story. Armani's identity is intertwined with the history of her female predecessors who have lived and worked in the yard under their master Shon Janchi. Considering that her ancestors were regarded as slaves, it is safe to say that during their lifetime they were deemed members of the lower class. This is confirmed by the character Marinus in the following line as he informs his wife of who Malaika is: "This is my father's former slave and mistress and that must be her daughter, my foolish father's bastard child" (Hart, 2010, p. 171). To prevent the reader from taking on the idea that Malaika was nothing more than a slave, Hart establishes a strong depiction of what it means for Armani, and many of the characters which she inhabits, to be of African descent with familial ties to slavery through her earlier time travels. In this way, Hart is also establishing trust in the

reader in order to validate the defiance which Malaika would come to display towards Marinus as a member of the upper class. Hart attempts to establish trust by introducing the reader to the Mandina slaves during one of Armani's flashbacks by describing them in the following manner: "The Mandina slaves proved to be very valuable. Some have even risen to high positions at court and their women are exquisite and bear beautiful children" (Hart, 2010, p. 103). Yet, it is Armani's utterance of "[Do you not] see? That girl could have been me!" (Hart, 2010, p. 106) after seeing the sexual abuse done to a Mandina woman by a member of the Arabian military that builds anger within the reader and achieves Hart's desired outcome of having the reader root for those suffering i.e. the slaves. As the story goes on, Hart continues to create opportunities for the reader to firmly establish their *pro-Armani* and *anti-suppressor* mentality. All this is done in preparation for the final clash between Armani and Marius Wijnand, a descendant and the spirit of Marinus. It is during this altercation that both characters' identities are solidified and are confirmed as having existed before in past life cycles. This is shown through the following encounter when Armani confronts Marius Wijnand with the authentic property ownership documents:

At [Armani's] words a howl escaped from the very depth of Wijnand's soul, as also that episode burned through long encrusted layers of deeply buried consciousness and now exploded in his memory with a renewed sense of that loss [...]. His howl turned into a pitiful keening sound until his body began to shake [...] and his soul was now on its way to that other plane of life to continue its spiritual odyssey in search of redemption. (Hart, 2010)

What is particularly interesting is Hart's description of identity in terms of why a person is given the life that they lead. Hart suggests in TY that if an individual learns to cope and apply the knowledge and insight they acquired through their past experiences, they will have a better overall standing. The following lines are used to express this: "Depending on how this accumulated life experience is used in this life cycle, the soul will either continue its spiritual development to a higher plane or remain at that same level until it has worked out its karma" (Hart, 2010, p 201). Essentially the idea that is being toyed with is the idea that one's life is dependent on the deeds which are committed, whether that be good or bad, during the span of life. An individual's identity—and here it could even go so far as to infer social standings—is not formed by chance, but rather through intentional division based on personal accomplishments. Again the concept of ideology is implemented here, however in a more indirect manner. If the ideology of the higher class occupies itself with the spreading of mindsets which benefits the goals they aim to achieve, the message brought forth in TY complements this. This due to the fact that the message implies that if an individual wishes to elevate their identity and all which that encompasses, that individual must adhere to the moral standards of the ruling class. What is more, the reader is led to believe this as the author has previously established certitude in Armani's supernatural explorations. All these events contribute to the acceptance of the concept of ideology through the concept of ethos.

## Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore whether or not the concept of ethos and ideology was presented by Joseph Hart through his two English-language novels *Election Dance* (2006) and *The Yard* (2010). Based on a comparative narrative and thematic analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that the concepts are in fact present in Hart's works. The main research question that was set out to be answered was: what is the basic question of ethos and ideology presented by Joseph Hart through his two English-language novels? The first specific research question allows for practical interpretation and exploration of this. The findings to the question: how is the concept of ethos constructed based on Erica van Boven & Gillis Dorleijn's *Literair mechaniek: inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten* (1999) indicate that narration was used to cultivate an emotional response and create credence in the reader. Narration through embedding is used by the author to establish his presence. Hart indirectly guides the reader through positioning himself in the figural narrative. As he moves through the story, he uses his hidden presence to provoke his desired emotional response in the reader. This non-dramatized storytelling tactic is used in both *Election Dance* (2006) as well as *The Yard* (2010). The only slight difference in narration comes from the distinguishing of person and narrator text. Despite the fact that both texts are narrator texts, Hart momentarily shifts to person text in *The Yard* resulting in a combination text. It is concluded that Hart opted for both narrative situations in order to apply ethos and coerce the reader into believing what was being presented.

Furthermore, there are findings pertaining to the presence of the social hierarchical structures which alludes to Marx' ideology. This assisted in answering the second specific research question of how the concept of ethos and ideology are constructed using the themes of identity, social class, and power. The themes are used to illustrate the discrepancies between the members of society. Hart showcases how different life is for those with different social standings, how this has influence over their identity formation and how it affects the power which they wield. It is clear through the portrayal of the hierarchical rankings that highly regarded characteristics such as virtue, behaviorism and intellect are much more quickly linked with the higher class whilst characteristics such as criminality and violence are linked with the lower class. Hart uses ethos in order to guide the reader on the path he has set out before them in order to achieve his desired outcome which is to persuade them into trusting in the validity of the message.

The biggest take away from this research has been just how subtly ideologies can be implemented and how easily they can be overlooked and simply absorbed. This unconscious pull to exemplify the virtues of the upper class is so ingrained in a society that it can be hard to regain consciousness.

Though this thesis clearly illustrates the presence of the two concepts, it also raises the question of how elements such as the theme of race play a role in the formulation of the ideology introduced. Based on this, future researchers should consider delving into other themes not tackled in this thesis to better understand the implications of these concepts. Likewise, the question of how Mieke Bal's principles can be used to conduct a narrative analysis was also

brought up. Future researchers can explore this in Hart's novels to expand on this on a much broader scale.

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