

**Authorial Attitude in Joseph Conrad's
Third-Person Fiction**

Yusuke Takahata

Royal Holloway, University of London

PhD

Declaration of Authorship

I, Yusuke Takahata, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always stated clearly.

Abstract

Mainly examining Joseph Conrad's third-person novels written in his early to middle career, this thesis argues that when the novelist adopts third-person narration, the works tend to exhibit problems of one kind or another that affect their fictional adequacy to varying degrees, and that these problems are deeply related to the handling of authorial attitude towards the characters, events, and fictional worlds he presents. Chapter 1 discusses three third-person short fictions written in Conrad's early to middle career to explore the variety of authorial attitudes Conrad's third-person works exhibit. Chapter 2 analyses 'The Rescuer' and argues that the split in the narrative voice between the romantic and the realistic modes, which culminates in the last part of the manuscript where the exploration of Lingard's Kurtzian idealism comes to focus, largely explains the impasse of the novel. Chapter 3 examines how the introduction of Marlow's first-person narration in *Lord Jim* allows Conrad to sidestep the difficulty—as was observed in 'The Rescuer'—involved in the treatment of romantic protagonists and fictional worlds. Chapter 4 scrutinises how *Nostromo*, by means of eliminating Decoud and scapegoating Nostromo, avoids the potential trivialisation of its socio-historical panorama which a rigorous anatomisation of the political condition of its fictional world and the resultant nihilistic vision could bring about. In Chapter 5 I compare the authorial attitude in *The Secret Agent* with that in

Nostramo and suggest, in the Conclusion, that there is a certain trade-off between the relative technical flawlessness of *The Secret Agent* and the emotional effect of *Nostramo*. The thesis concludes that an extra-heterodiegetic narrator exercising degrees of omniscience was essentially not a congenial device for Conrad, and that this was due to his tendency to be acutely conscious of certain limitations which his own fictional worlds have to carry.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I thank Professor Robert Hampson for his patient supervision as well as for the specific advices he gave me during my writing. He listened extremely tolerantly to my poor presentation of the embryonic idea of this thesis and let me pursue my project freely despite its somewhat idiosyncratic theoretical basis. Without this—and without the innumerable suggestions he gave me as to my interpretations of Conrad's individual works—it would have been quite impossible for me to complete this thesis. I also deeply appreciate the advices and the encouragement which my adviser, Professor Andrew Gibson, gave to me.

I owe much of my skill as a literary researcher to the professors in University of Tokyo, where I was educated up to the Master's level. Attending the classes of Professor Kazuhisa Takahashi, my former supervisor, greatly improved my critical practice. Though not my direct supervisor, Professor Takaki Hiraishi's influence on my idea of what literary studies is about has been so immense that if I had not acquainted myself with his ideas—both through his books and his classes—I would have been utterly unable to continue my career as a literary researcher.

My life as a postgraduate student, which lasted for eight years, was mentally and financially tough enough to sap my enthusiasm occasionally, and this was especially so while I was working on this

thesis. More than anybody else, it was my beloved wife, Mayumi, who supported me throughout this demanding period. Knowing that it was solely out of her affection that she endured the enormous inconvenience of living in a foreign country for a couple of years as a wife of a postgraduate student, I cannot be too grateful for her kind support and encouragement. My parents' assistance was also immense, both mentally and financially. Without it, I would not have dared to pursue my career as a literary researcher, let alone study in the U.K. I also thank my parents-in-law for their consistently understanding and encouraging attitude.

Finally, I wish to express gratitude to my examiners, Professor Allan Simmons and Dr. Michael Greaney, for their serious engagement with my thesis and helpful advices. Although they pointed out some problematic aspects of my thesis, they greatly encouraged me by generously praising its merits. This made me more confident that I could perform capably in my forthcoming career as a literary academic.

What I most earnestly hope now is that this thesis is worth the immense goodwill and expectations given to me by those people named here.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	5
Introduction.....	9
1. The Theoretical Basis of the Thesis.....	9
1.1 Relation to Contemporary Literary Theories.....	9
1.2 Theoretical Outlook.....	21
2. The Position of the Present Thesis within Conrad Criticism.....	37
Chapter 1 Three Varieties of Authorial Attitudes in Conrad's Third-Person Short Fictions.....	47
'The Return'.....	49
'The End of the Tether'.....	71
'Typhoon'.....	87
Chapter 2 The Impasse of 'The Rescuer' and Incoherence in Authorial Attitude.....	112
1. The Exploration of Lingard's Idealistic Dream in the Last Eighty-Seven Pages of 'The Rescuer'.....	114
2. The Last Eighty-Seven Pages and Conrad's Failure to Finish the Novel.....	125
3. The Split in the Narrative Voice between the Romantic and the Realistic.....	135
4. <i>The Rescue</i> as a Simplified Romance.....	154
Chapter 3 Marlow's Two Perspectives and Focal Transition in <i>Lord Jim</i>	

.....	171
1. The Behaviour of the Third-Person Narrator	173
2. Marlow's Oral Narrative.....	184
3. Marlow's Letters to the 'Privileged Man'	204
4. The Transition of Narrative Focus.....	214
Chapter 4 Decoud Eliminated, Nostromo Scapegoated, and Politics Defocused: The Treatment of Nihilism in <i>Nostromo</i>	222
1. International Capitalism and the Centre of <i>Nostromo</i>	223
2. Decoud, Authorial Voice, and the Trivialising Nihilism	235
3. Myth, the Scapegoating of Nostromo, and the Circumvention of Politics.....	258
Chapter 5 The Mask of Inhumanity and Positional Indeterminacy in <i>The Secret Agent</i>	278
1. The Primary Subject of <i>The Secret Agent</i>	278
2. A Sceptical Authorial Attitude towards Social Issues	289
3. The Narrator's Playfulness and Inhumanity.....	302
Conclusion.....	324
Bibliography.....	335

Introduction

1. The Theoretical Basis of the Thesis

1-1. Relation to Contemporary Literary Theories

Whereas Conrad criticism before the 1970s explored moral, philosophical, psychological, political, technical, and biographical issues in Conrad's literature mainly from what have been called liberal-humanist standpoints,¹ many of the subsequent studies exhibit influence from the development of literary and critical theories especially since the 1980s. Those theories have now flourished enough to become part of the institution of literary studies including Conrad criticism. The present thesis, though extensively benefiting from the fruits of those theories, does not belong to any specific school of existing theoretical approaches. Its ultimate interest lies in contributing to shed new light on the particularities of Conrad as a novelist mainly in

¹ According to Peter Barry, the term liberal humanism 'became current in the 1970s, as a shorthand (and mainly hostile) way of referring to the kind of criticism which held sway before theory. The word "liberal" in this formulation roughly means not politically radical, and hence generally evasive and non-committal on political issues. "Humanism" implies something similar; it suggests a range of negative attributes, such as "non-Marxist" and "non-feminist", and "non-theoretical". There is also the implication that liberal humanists believe in "human nature" as something fixed and constant which great literature expresses'. See Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002), p. 3.

terms of form and technique. We might say that the earliest liberal humanist critics such as F. R. Leavis, Douglas Hewitt, and Thomas Moser offered their readings to address the same issue and explicate what makes Conrad a unique novelist. The present thesis differs from those early studies first and foremost in that it is informed by the theoretical development of literary studies in the last few decades of the twentieth century, as I will demonstrate shortly. Another important difference—and this is also the difference between the present thesis and the majority of studies since the advent of theory—is that its focus is placed on the formal aspects of Conrad’s novels rather than on their subject matter. Although Conrad’s narrative technique has always been an object of critics’ interest and discussion since the time of Henry James,² the idiosyncrasies of Conrad’s subject matter in comparison with that of other English writers—which derive largely from his Polish background and his world-wide experience as a seaman—have attracted even greater attention. Indeed, as their titles illustrate, many of the important studies up to the 1970s are characterised by their exploration of characteristic Conradian themes.³

The general privileging of theme over form in Conrad criticism

² In his influential essay on *Chance* written in 1914, James analysed the novel’s complex narrative structure. See James, ‘The New Novel’, *Notes on Novelists: With Some Other Notes* (London: Dent, 1914), pp. 249-87.

³ See, for instances, Adam Gillon, *The Eternal Solitary: A Study of Joseph Conrad* (1960); Leo Gurko, *Joseph Conrad: Giant in Exile* (1962); R. A. Gekoski, *Conrad: The Moral World of the Novelist* (1978).

has continued since the advent of theory as well because of the bias of most contemporary literary theories towards extrinsic criticism. After deconstructive criticism lost momentum in the 1990s,⁴ critics have tended to foreground the politico-ideological dimensions of Conrad's works in terms of race, gender, and class and explore relations between his texts and a variety of extra-literary discourses.⁵ These criticisms are concerned with the thematic elements of Conrad's works rather than with how Conrad handles novelistic conventions and exhibits genre-specific techniques and ingenuities. This trend necessarily resulted in the general decline of formalist perspectives in Conrad criticism. In *The Craft of Conrad* (2011), Leonard Moss critiques the over-emphasis on themes in literary studies: '[l]iterary studies commonly excavate impressive ideas from novels and plays — impressive biographical, historical, political, philosophical, psychological, and ethical ideas—but say little about the technical matrix that yields those abstractions. It's as if the matrix can be discarded once its intellectual gold has been extracted. But the matrix *is* the gold' (117). Although Moss's proposal seems to fall short of

⁴ The most prominent and influential deconstructionist in Conrad criticism was J. Hillis Miller. His discussion of *Lord Jim* in *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (1982) has been an especially important contribution to the area. However, by and large, the main body of specialist Conrad criticism was unaffected by the vogue for deconstruction.

⁵ E.g. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981); Susan Jones, *Conrad and Women* (1999); Robert Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction* (2000).

making a new formalist turn in contemporary Conrad studies, the present thesis, agreeing with Moss, aims to contribute to a resurrection of formalist criticism in the area. A considerable proportion of the formalist studies of Conrad over the past few decades base their arguments partly or entirely on post-structuralist concepts.⁶ As I will address shortly, the formalist approach of the present thesis distances itself from post-structuralist perspectives because I consider them to be unsuitable for the project of this thesis.

It is comparatively easy, I think, to see the essential difference between my approach and those which analyse literary works from political viewpoints such as post-colonialism, feminism, and Marxism. Even though they often provide valuable contributions to the understanding of literary works—as is demonstrated in the way in which my argument in the following chapters benefits especially from

⁶ 'Post-structuralism' is famously hard to define definitively since it is a broad term denoting a diverse set of philosophies and theories that developed after structuralism. What I consider in the present thesis to be the constitutional elements of post-structuralism include: deconstructive orientation; constructionist views of a variety of socio-cultural phenomena which involve the denial of the unified, coherent human subject; and doubt as to the ability of language to refer to the real. Though often concerned with both form and subject matter, the following is a list of typical studies inspired by post-structuralism: Aaron Fogel, *Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue* (1985); Daphna-Erdinast-Vulcan, *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper* (1991); Bruce Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative* (1992); Michael Greaney, *Conrad, Language, and Narrative* (2002); Yael Levin, *Tracing the Aesthetic Principle in Conrad's Novels* (2008).

post-colonial criticism—they fundamentally differ from the approach of this thesis in that they are essentially not concerned with formal aspects of the novel, whereas my approach sticks to and remains close to the technical matrix of the fiction addressed. This is also to declare that the present thesis opposes the dissolution of the borderline between literature and the extra-literary sphere, a trend that began with the semiotic concept of ‘text’ and has more recently been expressed in slogans such as ‘the historicity of texts and textuality of history’ (Montrose 20).⁷ While necessarily adopting the insights provided by those political theories whose essential interests lie outside of literary works, my approach takes as its focus the phenomena within the literary works and excludes from examination the extra-literary sphere as such.

Since it sticks to the framework of fiction and seeks to clarify its fundamental principles from formalist perspectives, narratology may appear to have much more affinities with the approach taken in the present thesis. However, the former is generally oriented towards the

⁷ Hence my adoption of the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic criticism, which I will refer to again in my discussion of post-structuralist criticism. One might find a parallel between this dichotomy and the one between *homeophoric* and *heterophoric* interpretation which Ian Watt proposes in *Essays on Conrad* (2000). The former works ‘by natural extension of the implications of the narrative content, and retains a consistent closeness to it’, whereas the latter ‘reduce[s] what [an author] actually created to a mere illustration—something both secondary and ... second-rate’ because ‘all kinds of *heterophoric* interpretation inevitably disregard the great bulk of the concrete details of character and incident in a literary work’ (77).

illumination of generalities and universalities whereas the latter aims at the explication of the particularities of an individual novelist. What is commonly called classical narratology, which was inspired by Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist linguistics, necessarily had descriptive aims and showed tendencies towards taxonomy and typology (Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980) is arguably the greatest achievement in this area). Monika Fludernik aptly summarises its limitations: '[a]s applied narratology it faces the critical challenge "So what?—What's the use of all the subcategories for the understanding of texts?" As a theory, narratology—like deconstruction or Lacanian psychoanalysis — encounters the criticism that its theoretical proposals do not help to produce significant readings' (39). Over the past few decades narratology has been influenced by the emergence of political criticism and produced a series of sub-disciplines in combination with theories such as feminism, post-colonialism, and cultural studies (ibid. 44-6). Another and more important factor that has contributed to the recent development of narratology is what is called the 'cognitive turn' in the field.⁸ Cognitive narratology, absorbing insights from cognitive linguistics and empirical cognitive studies (ibid. 48-9), asks questions such as:

What cognitive processes support narrative understanding, allowing readers, viewers, or listeners to construct mental models of the worlds evoked by stories? How do they use

⁸ See Elrud Ibsch, 'The Cognitive Turn in Narratology' (1990).

medium-specific cues to build on the basis of the discourse or *sujet* a chronology for events, or *fabula* (what happened when, or in what order?); a broader temporal and spatial environment for those events (when in history did these event occur, and where geographically?); an inventory of the characters involved; and a working model of what it was like for these characters to experience the more or less disruptive or non-canonical events that constitute a core feature of narrative representations (Herman, 'Cognitive Narratology' 31)?

Whereas these new developments, which constitute what is called 'post-classical narratology',⁹ might be said to have advanced narratology into a new phase, the orientation towards generalities and universalities, as is clear in the above quotation, still remains as the constitutional feature of narratology. Yet, as will be shown in the next section, this thesis takes off from this new phase of narratology, even though my interest in the literary particularities of Conrad's works leads to only partial adoption of narrative theories.

Why the present thesis distances itself from post-structuralist perspectives requires a more detailed explanation. As I have mentioned earlier, the majority of recent intrinsic studies of Conrad's works adopt those perspectives to varying degrees. Levin's *Tracing the Aesthetic Principle in Conrad's Novels* (2009) and Greaney's *Conrad, Language, and Narrative* (2002) are representative cases of this. In order to shed new light on Conrad's disposition to be preoccupied with

⁹ The term was proposed in David Herman, 'Scripts, Sequences and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology' (1997).

what Leavis called ‘the presence of what he can’t produce’,¹⁰ Levin dismantles the present/absent dichotomy and proposes the concept of ‘the otherwise present’ which draws on Derridean deconstruction of binary oppositions (qtd. in Levin 3). Similarly, the post-structuralist view of language and textuality is at the core of the intrinsic approach of Greaney’s work. It might thus seem rather unorthodox today to both declare an intrinsic, formalist approach and choose not to predicate it on post-structuralist ideas. After all, no theory has superseded post-structuralism in the sphere of criticism which concentrates on the phenomena within literary works.

In order to clarify why post-structuralist perspectives are not helpful to the project of this thesis, here I would refer to a critique of deconstructive criticism offered by Gerald Graff in 1980. In ‘Deconstruction as Dogma, or, “Come Back to the Raft Ag’in, Strether Honey!’”, an essay review of *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979) by Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, and Hillis Miller, Graff critiques a certain flattening of the particularities of literary texts to which deconstructive criticism is prone. His contention that deconstructionists read every text as ‘a testing ground’ of ‘the problematics of signification’, namely ‘the instability of the relation between sign and meaning’, is substantiated by his critical examination of de Man’s essay, ‘Shelley Disfigured’ (407). De Man, in

¹⁰ For another famous critical comment on this disposition, see E. M. Forster’s argument of central void in Conrad’s fiction in ‘Joseph Conrad: A Note’, *Abinger Harvest* (London: Penguin, 1976), pp. 134-8.

his analysis of P. B. Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*, focuses on the phrase 'shape all light'. He asserts that the 'shape' becomes a figure for the fact that we impose 'on the senseless power of positional language the authority of sense and meaning' (Bloom et al. 64). But language, de Man proceeds to argue, 'cannot posit meaning; it can only reiterate (or reflect) it in its reconfirmed falsehood' (ibid. 64). Graff protests that this is 'a good deal more than a reading': '[d]e Man treats Shelley's poem as a vehicle of general, indeed universal, truths about language, meaning, and history' (414). Indeed, de Man finds in Shelley's poem the idea that 'the positing power of language is both entirely arbitrary ... and entirely inexorable in that there is no alternative to it'; he then goes on to claim that 'the reading of *The Triumph of Life* establishes that this mutilated textual model exposes the wound of a fracture that lies hidden in all texts' (Bloom et al. 62; 67). Graff challenges this formulation by pointing out: '[a]fter all, if it is really "established" that a "wound of a fracture ... lies hidden in all texts," then the deconstructor's uncovering of the wound in any particular text becomes tautological and trivial' (415).

Graff's critique of what he expresses as the 'rigged-in-advance aspect' of de Man's reading of Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*, of course, does not invalidate deconstructive criticism itself (415). Furthermore, deconstruction is only part of what is widely termed post-structuralist criticism. It would be totally inadequate to challenge the post-structuralist perspectives that condition much of the recent

intrinsic Conrad studies solely on the basis of Graff's contention against de Man presented more than three decades ago. Nevertheless, his argument captures a certain point which induces the present thesis to distance itself from post-structuralist perspectives: namely, to put the point most polemically, the fact that the essential interest of those studies which embrace post-structuralist perspectives lies not so much in the particularities of individual literary works as in how each text demonstrates the philosophical insights post-structuralism advocates. A typical example of this is found in the introduction to Henricksen's *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative* (1992). Henricksen's approach is self-confessedly post-structuralist. He follows the lead of Derrida and asserts that 'no one *should* be certain ... where texts (literary or otherwise) end and whatever remainder there might be outside of textuality begins' (1). He also positively declares to foreground 'such post-structural and postmodern concerns as the relationship between subjectivity and the constitutive discourses of society, the problematic grounding of narrative authority, and the agnostic relationship between grand narratives and the many voices their power would silence' (2). Since he rejects 'such certainties as unitary selfhood, the transcendental authority of the author, and the ordered autonomy of the literary text' and intends to 'wrest ... Conrad's texts from the interests of an older critical hegemony that largely ignored [the issues post-structuralism has raised]', he finds it necessary to justify his writing a book 'on a canonical figure—a white male from

the “patriarchal” canon’ and ‘offer[ing] “close readings” of separate novels, one per chapter’ (3). What I would call particular attention to here is the declaratory explanation of his project that appears in his justification of the book’s apparently ‘conventional’ approach:

Within the familiar structure of the critical book on a canonical author, I attempt productive misreadings that *discover in Conrad’s texts our own concerns* with the necessary transgression of traditional boundaries, with the institutional and ideological constraints that operate upon the stories we tell, and with the need to abandon monologic discourses in favor of a more open and unconstrained global dialogue (3; 4, emphasis added).

In this passage he explicitly states that the book intends to bring, from without, the philosophical theses of post-structuralism into Conrad’s texts rather than address their literary particularities from within.

Though Henricksen’s book is rather an extreme case, this tendency to start from extra-textual philosophical ideas and virtually reduce literary texts to their testing ground seems to be widely observed in post-structuralist criticism as a whole. Barry’s argument about a certain parallel between New Criticism and deconstructive criticism seems relevant here. He points out that what the two schools aim at are the precise opposite: the former seeks to show the unity of a text beneath its apparent disunity, whereas the latter is concerned with unmasking internal contradictions or inconsistencies in a text that reveal the disunity underlying its apparent unity (72). It should be

added that they contrast each other also in terms of their ideological stance: New Criticism showed affinity with what has been called 'liberal humanism', whereas post-structuralism represented by deconstruction played arguably the most important part in dismantling the presuppositions of that very ideology. Despite these, Barry argues, the two schools 'suffer from exactly the same drawback', which is that both approaches, as a result of the rigorous application of their respective extra-textual, preconceived schemas to the texts they discuss, tend to efface their literary particularities and make all texts seem similar (77). We can extend Barry's point further and formulate that post-structuralist criticism, notwithstanding its apparent status as the most up-to-date theory of intrinsic criticism, is essentially an extrinsic one in that it shows the greatest interest not in the individual literary works it discusses themselves but in its own philosophical concerns. Indeed, one might even identify post-structuralist criticism's reliance on the theories of Derrida and Mikhail Bakhtin with other extrinsic criticisms' embracement of theories such as feminism, post-colonialism, Marxism, and Freudian psychoanalysis insofar as their critical agendas are prone to reductive readings. The present thesis does not pretend to dispute the effectivity of those philosophical theories that support post-structuralist criticism itself. The point I am making here is that the effectivity of the application of those post-structuralist perspectives to literary criticism becomes questionable in particular cases, such as the present thesis, in which the analysis of the literary particularities of

an author's works is at stake. Wishing to avoid the risk of subordinating Conrad's novels to philosophical ideas of one kind or another brought from without, the present thesis seeks an intrinsic, formalist approach without turning to post-structuralist perspectives.

1-2. Theoretical Outlook

But how does the present thesis achieve methodological exactitude without recourse to any of the contemporary theories? When we stick to the realm of the literary without the help of extra-literary discourses and put emphasis not on generalities, as narratology does, but on the particularities of literary works, it becomes difficult to justify our methodologies theoretically. Rónán McDonald points out that literary criticism has necessarily entailed, from its beginning, a self-contradiction between the need to establish scientific authority to justify its practices and its role as advocate of 'culture as the redemptive alternative to science' (93). Scientific objectivity and the literary are essentially uncongenial; this accounts for why many of the contemporary literary theories shy away from discussion of literary qualities and invoke extra-literary discourses to achieve methodological justifiability.

As far as the traditional focus of the present thesis on Conrad the novelist itself is concerned, it seems that not much justification is required: nearly half a century having passed since Roland Barthes

argued for ‘the death of the author’, author-oriented approaches have not disappeared from the practice of literary criticism.¹¹ Recently Amar Acheraiou, in *Joseph Conrad and the Reader: Questioning Modern Theories of Narrative and Readership* (2009), has made an articulate case against the denigration of the author. He notes that Barthes’s contention of authorial demise still remains influential in contemporary literary theories that more or less adopt deconstructionist perspectives (16). The exile of the author, he observes, coincided with the deification of the reader as they were elevated ‘into an absolute interpretative authority of literary texts’ (1). As a result, ‘the question of the production of textual meaning is mostly confined to the polarized transaction between reader and text’ (1). He challenges this exclusion of the author from the process of the production of textual meaning by foregrounding the concept of authorial dissemination which he argues Conrad expresses in *A Personal Record*—I will return to this part of Acheraiou’s argument later—and by proposing a tripartite, rather than dual, model of transaction amongst the author, text, and the reader (1-22). This tripartite transaction as a basic model, now widely accepted as a corrective to the excessive downgrading of the author by (post)structuralism,¹² has been further

¹¹ See Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142-8.

¹² For example, the rhetorical approach towards narrative which James Phelan proposes in his series of works ‘assumes a recursive relationship (or feedback loop) among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations),

strengthened by adding contextual factors as the fourth element. Peter Rabinowitz's *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (1987) is an early example of an extensive scrutiny of various culture- and society-specific 'rules for reading' which are referred to in the process of interpretation usually without conscious thought. Although the analysis of these contextual factors in the production of textual meaning has become common after the advent of post-classical narratology,¹³ there were some pioneering works before it that addressed similar issues, which deserve a mention here. In *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (1975), Jonathan Culler, influenced by Barthes's concept of the text as an enigmatic inscription to be decoded by the reader,¹⁴ called attention to 'a system of conventions' shared by the institution of literature which serves to 'naturalise'—namely, to make comprehensible—literary texts (113-30). From the perspective of reader-response criticism, Stanley Fish, in his 1976 essay entitled 'Interpreting the *Variorum*', proposed the concept of 'interpretive communities', which offers another way to address the culture- and society-specific conventions that dictate the interpretations made

and reader response' (*Experiencing Fiction* 4). I will say more about the rhetorical approach towards narrative later.

¹³ 'Schemata' is a representative term in the post-classical narratology for such contextual factors. It is generally defined as 'collective stores of knowledge shared by prototypical members of a given or assumed community' that are referred to in filling any gaps in the text (Emmott & Alexander 411).

¹⁴ See, for instance, Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, pp. 19-20.

within a given group. These works were anticipated, according to Jurij Striedter, by Prague Structuralism—especially by the ideas of Jan Mukařovský who emphasised the interaction among the reader, text, and ‘the collectively shared socially and historically variable conditions’ (164).¹⁵ After these series of works that have led to the rigorous examination of contextual factors by post-classical narratology, the excessive privileging of the reader by deconstructionist criticism has been modified; the production of textual meaning is now considered in a more well-balanced manner as the interaction amongst the author, text, the reader, and context.

The question, therefore, is what specific kind of methodological framework underpins the traditional focus on Conrad the novelist in the present thesis. Writing at the turning point between liberal humanist criticism and more theoretical literary studies, William W. Bonney, in his *Thorns & Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad’s Fiction* (1980), asserted that ‘[t]here is indeed little need for additional critical studies that, chapter by abrupt and repetitious chapter, offer expeditious readings of [Conrad’s] major novels’ (ix). In his opinion, further contribution to Conrad studies can be made only by

¹⁵ Striedter states that Mukařovský, in turn, was influenced by Roman Ingarden who considered literary texts as an incomplete entity the concretisation of whose meaning requires the reader’s interpretive participation. See Striedter, *Literary Structure, Evolution, and Value: Russian Formalism and Czech Structuralism Reconsidered* (1989), pp. 155-261; Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art* (1973), pp. 331-55.

versatile scholars who are well acquainted with contemporary theoretical criticism and who can engender through application of these critical methods a more thorough comprehension of (1) the phenomenology of Conrad's philosophical outlook, (2) Conrad's conscious manipulation of traditional generic and characterological models, and (3) the substantial portion of Conrad's work that has heretofore been neglected (ix).

After Bonney's monograph was published, Conrad's 'conscious manipulation of traditional generic and characterological models' has been extensively explored;¹⁶ moreover, it would be hard today to claim that a 'substantial portion of Conrad's work' has been neglected after the renewed attention to Conrad's early and later fiction—and his plays.¹⁷ Even though his strict confinement of the future of Conrad studies into those three areas seems rather dogmatic, much of Bonney's prediction has turned out to be correct. Especially relevant here is the first half of his contention — that unfocused and unimaginative

¹⁶ E.g. Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition: Constructing and Deconstructing the Imperial Subject* (1993); Katherine Isobel Baxter, *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance* (2010); Andrew Glazzard, *Character Types from Populist Genres in Joseph Conrad's Urban Fiction*. Diss. University of London (2013). For examples of the study of Conrad's plays, see Alison Wheatley, 'Conrad's *One Day More*: Challenging Social and Dramatic Convention' (1999); Marjean D. Purinton, "'The Laugh of the Medusa" and *Laughing Anne*: A Feminist Reading of Joseph Conrad's Play' (2002).

¹⁷ Recent monographs tend more to include Conrad's early and later fiction into their selection. For example, Levin's *Tracing the Aesthetic Principle in Conrad's Novels* (2009) discusses *The Arrow of Gold* and *Suspense* along with *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, and *Under Western Eyes*.

discussions of Conrad's major works chapter by chapter without any topical and methodological framework are no longer needed. The fact that far fewer monographs of this kind are published these days seems to indicate that Bonney's assertion has been widely accepted amongst Conrad critics. The topical framework of the present thesis, namely the authorial attitude towards narrative content in Conrad's third-person fiction, will be fully discussed later. In what follows I will explain its methodological framework.

As part of my rejection of the post-structuralist approach to narrative, I have deliberately returned, in the context of post-classical narratology, to the origins of the academic study of narrative for the basis of my formalist analysis. Thus my critical practice partly benefits from Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). Since it was written not only before the significant development of narratology but also before the advent of theory which has dismantled the previously unexamined assumptions of the liberal-humanist criticism about culture and humanity, today few would simply invoke Booth's book as their theoretical basis. However, some parts of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* still remain helpful in the practice of literary studies. For one thing, Booth's idea of the technique of fiction as 'the art of communicating with readers' has been inherited by what is called the rhetorical approach to narrative (Phelan) or rhetorical narratology (Michael Kearns) (*Rhetoric of Fiction* xiii). Phelan summarises his approach as the understanding that narrative is a rhetorical act in

which ‘somebody [is] telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened’ (*Experiencing Fiction* 3). Kearns considers rhetorical narratology as a corrective to the taxonomy-oriented structuralist narratology that cannot satisfactorily address ‘the actual human experience of narrative’ (5). He quotes David Richter’s definition of rhetorical narratology that he states is exactly the same as his: ‘rhetorical narratology is concerned with what [narrative] *does* or how it *works*’; ‘[t]he rhetorical narratologist starts with the premise that the narrative is from the outset an act of communication between author and reader’ (qtd. in Kearns 6). For Phelan, Booth’s *The Rhetoric of Fiction* ‘paved the way for the rhetorical approach’ (‘Rhetoric/ethics’ 208). Kearns similarly remarks: ‘[l]ike many other people who teach narrative, I frequently return to Booth. I doubt that I could have conceived of rhetorical narratology had not [*The Rhetoric of Fiction*] (or one like it) been written’ (8-9). Having inspired one sub-discipline of post-classical narratology, Booth’s work can be said to have been revived for cotemporary literary theory.

Another thing to be stressed about *The Rhetoric of Fiction* is that the book, while systematically exploring a variety of fictional techniques, does not sacrifice attention to literary particularities in favour of generalities—the drawback which later narratology suffers from. Addressing precisely what Kearns called ‘the actual human experience of narrative’, it examines how particular literary effects are achieved or affected by certain rhetorical techniques the author

employs (5). Booth not only mentions famous fictional works—such as Jane Austen’s *Emma* and James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—as an illustration of the techniques he discusses; he also steps into the realm of their literary particularities, though to a limited extent. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* is indeed precious as a rare attempt to combine a theoretical approach with analyses of particular literary effects. Specific aspects of his theory have been criticised and become outdated. Even the concept of the ‘implied author’, arguably the greatest contribution the book made to literary theory, has undergone a thorough modification since its first appearance. Nevertheless, as is shown by the fact that many subsequent theorists and critics still adopt the essence of that concept after some corrections, some of the basic ideas of Booth’s book still remain effective.¹⁸ The present thesis, which confines its interest to Conrad’s texts as such and adopts a formalist approach, indirectly benefits from Booth’s attempt to theorise the connection between literary effects and fictional techniques.

Another, and more substantial influence on the present thesis comes from the Japanese scholar Takaki Hiraishi. In the long introduction to his monograph, *Behaviours of the Author in the Novel: A Study of Faulknerian Methods* (2003),¹⁹ he provides a detailed

¹⁸ I will mention shortly (pp. 32-5) how the concept of implied author has both provoked controversy and inspired subsequent narratologists.

¹⁹ *Shosetsu Ni Okeru Sakusha No Hurumai: Fohkunah Teki Houhou No Kenkyu* (Shohaku Sha: Tokyo, 2003). The book was published in Japanese, and there has been no English translation.

account of the principles that govern his critical practice. He articulates the reasons why he distances himself from mainstream contemporary literary theories, which are similar to those which I outlined earlier, and describes the object of his central interest as the behaviour of the author in the novel. Basically adopting Booth's concept of the implied author, what Hiraishi fundamentally focuses on in his critical practice is how novelists as implied authors exhibit novelistic skills and ingenuities in the process of expressing their worldviews in the form of stories (44). Using a simile which is almost identical to Moss's,²⁰ he maintains that it is not the worldview of a novel itself but the way in which the author strives to persuade the reader into accepting that worldview that matters in academic studies of the novel (7). The examination of the behaviour of the author is not something that leads to the establishment of a single theoretical standpoint; in Hiraishi's practice, this examination eclectically borrows ideas from contemporary literary theories as appropriate within the framework of its author-oriented approach (45). The object of his fundamental interest is exactly the same as what Booth described in his Preface to the first edition of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* as follows: 'the rhetorical resources available to the writer of epic, novel, or short story

²⁰ He employs the simile of *oblaat*—a thin edible layer of starch that is used in Japan to wrap bitter powdery medicines. The Japanese idiom 'to wrap something in *oblaat*' means to use a euphemism. He argues that the secrets of the novel lie not in its insights about the world and humanity themselves but in the oblaat that wraps them.

as he tries, consciously or unconsciously, to impose his fictional world upon the reader' (xiii).

A perspective similar to Hiraishi's idea of authorial behaviour can be found in Acheraïou's concept of 'authorial dissemination' which he derives from Conrad's account of the author's presence in the novel in *A Personal Record* (19).²¹ The following is the passage he quotes from Conrad:

I know that a novelist lives in his work. He stands there the only reality in an invented world amongst imaginary things, happenings and people. Writing about them he is only writing about himself. But the disclosure is not complete. He remains to a certain extent a figure behind the veil, a suspected rather than a seen presence — a movement and a voice behind the draperies of fiction (qtd. in Acheraïou 18).

Acheraïou finds in Conrad's account a corrective to the deconstructionist notion of authorial demise: the author, 'an actual, yet elusive presence discreetly navigating his literary work', 'melts away and disseminates' rather than dying or being exiled (18). In this model the ubiquitous author, 'a hidden, yet powerful overseer' 'presiding over the narrative', is also to be distinguished from 'the conventional view of

²¹ Daniel Schwarz, in his *Conrad: 'Almayer's Folly' to 'Under Western Eyes'*, quotes a similar passage from *A Personal Record*: '[a] writer of imaginative prose (even more than any other sort of artist) stands confessed in his works. His conscience, his deeper sense of things, gives him his attitude before the world' (qtd. in Schwarz 108).

the novelist as a clear, fixed source of enunciation and authoritative determiner of meaning' (20). Acheraïou sees Conrad's theory of authorial dissemination as the key to re-establishing in contemporary literary criticism the due balance of textual dynamics amongst the author, text, and the reader (20-22). His concept of the author as a disseminating existence in his or her novels is similar to the implied author whose behaviours Hiraishi aims to study: 'the shape in which the novelist appears in his text' indeed perfectly paraphrases Hiraishi's 'behaviours of the author in the novel' (Acheraïou 18). The authorial attitude towards narrative content, the concept which the present thesis repeatedly refers to in exploring various fictional issues in Conrad's works, can be said to constitute one aspect of the 'behaviours of the author in the novel'.

Behaviours of the implied author are perceived only through the technical matrix of the novel. Narratology, which specialises in theorising that technical matrix, therefore bears particular importance in my approach. The present thesis employs Genette's terminologies in *Narrative Discourse* such as focalisation and extra/intra-, homo/heterodiegetic narrators. Although Genette's theory has received some minor modifications by narratologists such as Gerald Prince, Mieke Bal, and Seymour Chatman, they have not been important enough to supersede Genette's theory.²² Since the precise

²² See, for example, Burkhard Niederhoff, 'Focalization', *Handbook of Narratology* (2009), pp. 115-23. He points out the deficiencies of Bal's proposition to replace Genette's triple typology of focalisation (117-22).

taxonomy of those concepts is not necessarily at issue in the present thesis, I will basically adopt the original concepts of Genette's foundational work.

More importantly, in framing the definition of the concepts of 'the author' and 'the reader'—the two essential elements that are repeatedly mentioned in my discussion of the literary effects of Conrad's works—I have referred to the narratologists' discussion on them. The concept of the 'implied author', which the present thesis adopts with some qualifications, has received extensive criticisms and corrections. Some have complained that Booth and his followers have not shown how to identify the implied author of any given text (Schmid 165-6). Others have asserted that the 'implied author' is not the 'second self' that the author creates, as Booth puts it, but a reader-created construct (Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction* 73; Schmid 165). This second criticism is especially significant because it has led to the virtual re-definition of the concept. In the chapter entitled 'Implied Author' of his *Handbook of Narratology* (2009), Schmid aptly defines the 'implied author' as 'the author-image contained in a work and constituted by the stylistic, ideological, and aesthetic properties for which indexical signs can be found in the text' (161). Obviously, this is a re-defined version of the concept which shifts some of its emphasis from the author to the reader. It is in fact closer to the 'inferred' author, which Chatman proposed in *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (1990), than to

Booth's original idea.²³ Although I would oppose the radically reader-oriented position which ignores the various constraints imposed by the creator of the text on the reader's interpretation of it, in the present thesis I will adopt the corrected version of the 'implied author'. Since the 'inferred author' is not a prevalent term in the current literary criticism, I will use the traditional term 'implied author' for convenience's sake even though technically what I mean by it is closer to the newer term.²⁴

There is another alternative to the implied author which is even less prevalent than the 'inferred author'. In place of the implied author, Chatman, Tom Kindt, and Hans-Harald Müller respectively propose 'text intent' and 'text intention' (Chatman, *Coming to Terms* 86; Kindt & Müller 285-6). Since text is by definition an inanimate entity without any intention, this concept is oxymoronic on the most basic level. However, given that the implied author's constructive intentions and the text are effectively inseparable, 'text intention' is not as unhelpful a concept as it might seem. Indeed, my argument implicitly adopts it when it sometimes anthropomorphises Conrad's novels and puts them in the position of the subject of verbs (e.g. '*Nostramo*

²³ Chatman discusses how Booth's implied author—the flesh-and-blood author's second self—does not matter in the actual process of the production of textual meanings and writes: '[i]ndeed, we might better speak of the "inferred" rather than of the "implied" author' (*Coming to Terms* 77).

²⁴ For a similar reason, I often use the common term 'third-person narrator' instead of more accurate ones such as 'extra-hererodiegetic narrator'.

scapegoats its eponymous character' (p. 267)).

Related to the problem of how to identify the implied author which I have mentioned, another point to be discussed is that of authorial judgments and their norms. In presenting a story novelists make implicit and explicit judgments about their characters, events, and fictional world according to certain norms. Though often difficult to identify with certainty, those judgments are perceived by the reader through elements such as comments made by narrators and characters, the method of characterisation, the way in which events are selected and arranged, imagery evoked in descriptions, and the tone of the narration. The norms that dictate these authorial judgments, though, again, 'notoriously difficult to arrive at', are one of the essentialities in our understanding of a given novel (Rimmon-Kenan 101). This viewpoint, which occupies a crucial position in the project of this thesis,²⁵ is integrally connected with the concept of the implied author. It was indeed in the context of his discussion of the explicit/implicitness of the author's judgments that Booth introduced the concept (*Rhetoric of Fiction* 67-86). More notably, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, in her *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983), goes so far as to re-define the implied author as 'a set of implicit norms' constructed by those judgments (88). Chatman similarly argues that the implied

²⁵ As will be fully discussed in the next section, authorial judgment is a subordinate concept to authorial attitude, even though they often overlap each other. Technically speaking, the central interest of this thesis lies in the latter rather than the former.

author serves to evoke codes that establish ‘the norms of the narrative’ (*Story and Discourse* 149). The norms of authorial judgments in a novel are thus inseparable from the concept of the implied author. In the process of addressing various fictional issues in Conrad’s works, the present thesis examines the norms of Conrad as implied author.²⁶

As to the other pole of the textual communication, the reader, the matter is more complicated. The concept of the ‘implied reader’, first extensively discussed by Wolfgang Iser, has come to be widely considered as the counterpart of the implied author, a kind of ideal reader to whom the implied author’s constructive intention is supposed to be addressed.²⁷ Some, like Schmid, see the implied reader merely as the implied author’s attribute (170). But as is seen in the incorporation of the concept into the structure of narrative transmission from real author to real reader through implied author, narrator, narratee, and implied reader—the schema Chatman proposed in *Story and Discourse* (1978) which many have basically accepted—the implied reader has established a fairly secure position within contemporary

²⁶ Phelan’s series of works on ‘narrative judgments’, which are the most prominent theoretical study in this area, are largely taxonomical as is seen, for example, in his six theses about narrative judgments which he applies to actual literary texts. Even though Phelan advocates the rhetorical approach to narrative as a corrective to the structuralist narratology, it still inevitably exhibits an orientation towards generalities rather than particularities (the same can be said of Kearns’s *Rhetorical Narratology* (1999)).

²⁷ Rabinowitz’s ‘authorial audience’ is effectively the same as the ‘implied reader’. See *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*, p. 21.

narratology (Chatman 151).

What is problematic about the concept of the reader is that the implied author's act of addressing his constructive intention to readers with particular attributes is an essentially political process of inclusion and exclusion. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, in her *Contingencies of Value* (1988), points out that what she calls 'noncanonical audiences' have been disregarded by the entire literary institution (25). She argues that 'the revulsion of academics and intellectuals at the actual literary preferences, forms of aesthetic enjoyment, and general modes of cultural consumption of nonacademics and nonintellectuals ... has been a familiar feature of the cultural-political scene since at least the 1930s' (25-26). In fact, not only literary critics but also the author takes part in this exclusion of certain unideal readers. As Culler points out in *Structuralist Poetics*, in writing a novel the author him/herself participates in the literary conventions shared within a particular institution of textual communication (116). It can happen that an actual reader does not coincide with the implied reader who is supposed to share these conventions with the author. In the following chapters—where the aesthetic dimension of the novels being discussed is at issue—I simply use the term 'the reader' to indicate the implied reader: since the interest of the present thesis concentrates on the constructive intentions of Conrad as implied author, it necessarily focuses on the ideal reader who is the supposed recipient of those intentions. However, it is to be noted that focusing solely on the implied reader can

be problematic when, especially with Conrad's works, interpretation of race- and/or gender-related matters is at issue—that is, when a discrepancy exists between Conrad's implied reader and the actual non-Western readers and/or female readers. In such circumstances 'the reader' obviously should not be assumed as something singular and homogeneous.²⁸

2. The Position of the Present Thesis within Conrad Criticism

Critics have divided Conrad's oeuvre into categories such as the Marlow tales,²⁹ political novels,³⁰ the Malay fiction,³¹ and the later novels³² in order to narrow down the focus of their projects; however,

²⁸ It is also to be noted that in writing some of his works Conrad had particular readers in mind. Many of his early works such as 'Heart of Darkness' were famously written for the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Also, as Peter McDonald has discussed meticulously, in writing *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* Conrad placed W. E. Henley in the position of the novel's primary reader and adjusted its content to suit his conservative attitude. See Peter McDonald, *British literary culture and publishing practice, 1880-1914*, pp. 22-67.

²⁹ E.g. Bernard Paris, *Conrad's Charlie Marlow: A New Approach to 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Lord Jim'* (2006); Paul Wake, *Conrad's Marlow: Narrative and Death in 'Youth', 'Heart of Darkness', 'Lord Jim' and 'Chance'* (2007).

³⁰ E.g. Eloise Knapp Hay, *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Study* (1963); Avrom Fleishman, *Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* (1967).

³¹ E.g. Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction* (2000).

³² E.g. Gary Geddes, *Conrad's Later Novels* (1980); Schwarz, *Conrad: The Later Fiction* (1982).

there has never been a book-length study devoted to Conrad's third-person fiction. The present thesis proposes an intensive focus on Conrad's third-person fiction from a formalist perspective and seeks to fill a gap in current Conrad scholarship. The second and more important contribution of the present thesis consists in combining its focus on Conrad's third-person works with the exploration of the issue of authorial attitude towards narrative content. Although the narrative contents of Conrad's works (such as imperialism and ethical conflicts) have been extensively discussed ever since the early criticism, there have been very few studies that thoroughly examine, from a formalist perspective, how those matters are treated by Conrad as implied author. Jeremy Hawthorn's *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (1990) is exceptional in this respect. Examining 'the dialectic between the consummate control of narrative distance and perspective in Conrad's greatest fiction, and the moral and human commitment which this control serves', Hawthorn contends that moral, intellectual, and ideological uncertainties on Conrad's part damage his works artistically (ix; ix-xv). His book is important because it shares the focus of the present thesis on the authorial attitude in Conrad's works. '[T]o determine what the narrative knows and in what ways it knows what it knows', Hawthorn argues, 'the author has to engage with the question of what the narrative—and, thus, indirectly, the author—believes and is committed to' (xii). The following passage makes even more explicit the

connection between Hawthorn's book and this thesis:

in choosing how to represent the speech, thought, consciousness of his or her characters, a novelist simultaneously makes crucial choices regarding the attitude that the narrative takes to them. And at the same time, the novelist reveals something of *his or her attitudes to the story told*, something of his or her own values and commitments (1, emphasis added).

The novelist's 'attitudes to the story told' are effectively the same as the implied author's attitudes towards the characters, the events, and the fictional worlds he or she presents which this thesis explores. Sharing this fundamental interest, Hawthorn's project can be said to be the forerunner of the present thesis.

Apart from its concentration on Conrad's third-person fiction, the approach of the present thesis differs on certain points from that of Hawthorn's book, which often leads it to disagree with his conclusions. As can be seen in the title of the book and in his devotion of its first chapter to the discussion of Conrad's use of free indirect discourse, Hawthorn's interest lies in Conrad's narrative techniques. In comparison, what the present thesis discusses is broader than narratological issues as it addresses elements such as construction of plot and the treatment of characters. In addition, the authorial attitude which this thesis examines is not limited to the moral, intellectual, and ideological un/certainty which Hawthorn discusses. Attitudes that implied authors can take towards narrative content are

various. Uri Margolin provides a list of narrators' attitudes towards 'the narrated', which can be applied to those of authors: 'neutral vs. judgmental, sympathetic vs. detached, involved vs. distanced, cynical, sentimental, emotionally charged, curious, amused, bewildered, and so on' (361). As Margolin admits, this list of narrators' (and authors') attitudes is 'open-ended'; for example, my argument about *Nostramo* in Chapter 4 would add 'evasive' to it (361). Whereas the scope of the present thesis is confined to Conrad's third-person fiction, what it analyses in terms of authorial attitude is broader than what Hawthorn's book examines.

The most important of the disagreements between Hawthorn's book and the present thesis, which derive from the difference in their approaches stated above, concerns the explanation of the artistic failures of some of Conrad's works. Hawthorn argues, as I have mentioned earlier, that moral, intellectual, and ideological oscillation on Conrad's part causes the artistic failure of his works. As far as my analysis of 'The Rescuer' in Chapter 2 is concerned, the present thesis agrees with this formulation. However, Hawthorn's argument diverges from mine when, for example, he argues that *Nostramo* is artistically successful because Conrad's critique of imperialism there is firm and consistent (*Joseph Conrad* xiii; 203-18). This thesis agrees that the attitude of Conrad as implied author towards the 'material interests' in *Nostramo* is coherently negative; however, it complicates the matter further by suggesting that a certain way in which Conrad

subtly blurs his firm critique of the ‘material interests’ in the ending invites us to question, at least partly, the novel’s artistic success. The divergent conclusions of Hawthorn’s book and my argument concerning *Nostramo* derive from the fact that the present thesis, by means of its broader perspective, develops and complicates Hawthorn’s exploration of the relation between Conrad’s moral, intellectual, and ideological un/certainty and the artistic achievements of his works.

Another exceptional critical work which shares the interest of the present thesis is Schwarz’s *Conrad: ‘Almayer’s Folly’ to ‘Under Western Eyes’* (1980). In a three-page long section entitled ‘Spokesman for Values: Rediscovering the Omniscient Voice’, he discusses the relation between third-person narration in Conrad’s works and his attitude towards their narrative content. Conrad’s adoption of third-person narrators, Schwarz contends, indicates moral, intellectual, and ideological confidence on the novelist’s part: ‘[a]s Conrad becomes more confident of his ability to confront and judge the major intellectual and historical trends of the twentieth century, he uses an omniscient speaker to articulate subtle alternatives to moral and political anarchy’ (110). Given the fact—which I will demonstrate in the following chapters—that ‘The Rescuer’, a typical third-person novel, suffers from the incoherence of the authorial attitude towards Lingard’s adventurous project, Schwarz’s argument seems to need a modification: even when Conrad adopts third-person narration, he may lack confidence and thus bring artistic problems. Indeed, the following

qualification he adds seems more helpful than his contention mentioned above: '[e]xcept when he feels absolutely certain of his judgments, such as his indictment of his urban civilisation in *The Secret Agent*, or of pretensions of imperialism in "An Outpost of Progress", Conrad's omniscient tales contain elements of the Marlow tales in which an active mind grapples with complex experience' (110). Taking over the problems explored by Hawthorn and Schwarz, and complicating and developing their arguments about Conrad's un/certainty and un/confidence, the present thesis aims to shed new light on the issue of authorial attitude in Conrad's literature.

Before moving on to a synopsis of each chapter, I will finally explain how the project of this thesis took shape and why I chose those particular works from Conrad's oeuvre. What initially attracted my attention were two issues which Conrad critics have sporadically discussed: the reason why Conrad was unable to complete 'The Rescuer' in his early career and the cause—and perhaps the validity—of what Leavis a long time ago called 'something hollow' about the reverberation of *Nostramo* (200). Since 'The Rescuer' is 'the missing link between *An Outcast [of the Islands]* and *Lord Jim*', the reason for Conrad's failure to finish it assumes a great significance in considering Conrad's early to middle career (Hampson, *Betrayal and Identity* 67). *Nostramo* is one of the most important of Conrad's works, and, as will be fully discussed in Chapter 4, what Leavis complained about the novel has attracted not a little critical attention. This thesis offers a verification of my initial

hypothesis that these two issues have much to do with the handling of authorial judgment through third-person narration, and that they can be considered as constituting one larger issue.³³ As my research progressed, it turned out that authorial attitude, a broader concept than authorial judgment, was more appropriate as its framework. As I examined Conrad's third-person works, I found that the attitude of Conrad as implied author towards his narrative content — the characters, events, and fictional worlds he presents—is closely related to the various fictional issues those works exhibit. In the discussions that follow I spend some time trying to identify the primary subjects of the works I analyse. This is necessary because without establishing the primary narrative content of a given text we cannot examine the authorial attitude towards it. Although the topics discussed are varied, all of the following arguments are underpinned by my attention to how Conrad as implied author handles, within the framework of the novel, his attitude towards the story he presents.

This thesis proceeds through a series of juxtapositions. Thus, in its central chapters *Lord Jim* and *The Secret Agent* will be juxtaposed respectively with 'The Rescuer' and *Nostramo*. Since most of it is narrated by Marlow, the most famous of Conrad's first-person narrators, *Lord Jim* might appear somewhat alien to the third-person works the

³³ Hence my exclusion of *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*: in its essence, this thesis is not so much a comprehensive study of Conrad's third-person fiction as an intensive study of 'The Rescuer' and *Nostramo*.

present thesis deals with. However, when we look carefully at the first four chapters of the novel delivered through the extra-heterodiegetic narrator—a part which often fails to receive due attention—and the relation between that part and the rest of the text, we see that it is reasonable to consider *Lord Jim* along with Conrad's other third-person novels. Lingard in 'The Rescuer' and Jim are similar in their romantic disposition; moreover, the two novels share the issue of the authorial attitude towards these romantic protagonists and their deeds—particularly where the deeds have political implications. Though divergent in settings and subject matter, it requires less justification for juxtaposing *Nostramo* and *The Secret Agent* as two political novels adopting third-person narration. Whereas some have seen the 'hollow' or 'rigged' nature of *Nostramo* as its flaw,³⁴ *The Secret Agent* has received another kind of criticism: as will be fully mentioned in Chapter 5 and the Conclusion, not a few critics have seen its apparent negativity as marring the novel artistically despite its technical flawlessness. Aiming to consider the validity and the sources of those contrasting criticisms, this thesis compares fictional issues found in *Nostramo* with those in *The Secret Agent* from the viewpoint of authorial attitude. My master's thesis juxtaposed *Under Western Eyes* with *Chance* and discussed the British teacher's and Marlow's first-person narration.³⁵

³⁴ Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (1948), p. 200; Martin Price, 'The Limits of Irony' (1987), p. 78.

³⁵ 'Twixt the Two Centuries: A New Look at Potentiality and Limitations of Conrad's Later Fiction'. Unpublished MA. Thesis, University of Tokyo (2010).

Based on my argument there that the former novel can be seen as the watershed between Conrad's middle and late career—which I still hold—it can be argued that the present thesis covers from the beginning to the culmination of his middle career.

Chapter 1 will discuss three third-person short fictions written in Conrad's early to middle career—"The Return", "The End of the Tether", and "Typhoon"—to explore the variety of authorial attitudes Conrad's third-person fiction exhibits. This chapter is also intended to function as a preliminary step to my main argument in the following chapters as those short fictions share with the four novels discussed there some of the issues concerning authorial attitude. Chapter 2 will consider the cause of the impasse that Conrad experienced in relation to "The Rescuer". To explore this, the chapter pays particular attention to the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript that were largely deleted in the published novel. Chapter 3 will deal with *Lord Jim*. It will discuss how the division of the narrative voice into the third-person narrator and Marlow enables Conrad to handle his authorial judgment about Jim in such a way that it allows him to sidestep the difficulty—as was observed in "The Rescuer"—involved in the treatment of the romantic protagonist. Chapter 4 will turn to *Nostramo* and try to explain the meaning of the episode in which Decoud and Nostromo transport the silver ingots to the Great Isabel in connection with the authorial attitude towards the domination of 'material interests' in Costaguana. Chapter 5 will compare the authorial attitude in *The*

Secret Agent with that in *Nostramo*. I will suggest that there is a trade-off between the relative technical flawlessness of *The Secret Agent* and a certain literary effect *Nostramo* achieves.

Chapter 1

Three Varieties of Authorial Attitudes in Conrad's Third-Person Short Fictions

*

In this chapter I will discuss three third-person short fictions³⁶ written in Conrad's early to middle career: 'The Return', 'The End of the Tether', and 'Typhoon'. Though all of them adopt extra-heterodiegetic narrators who appear to exercise omniscience, the authorial attitudes towards the narrative contents perceived behind those narrators differ from one work to another. In 'The Return' the narrative instability in the treatment of Hervey's 'revelations' points towards the possibility of thematic as well as stylistic confusion. As a result of the highly restrained exercise of the authorial judgment towards Captain Whalley's deed, 'The End of the Tether' can be said to suffer from

³⁶ There are two common terms to classify shorter fictions: the short story and the novella. The novella as a genre has received less critical attention and recognition than the novel and the short story since looser terms such as 'short novels' could substitute. In *Studying the Novel* Hawthorn takes D. H. Lawrence's *The Fox* as an example that shows the validity of acknowledging the novella as a genre: it is too short to be called a novel, but it lacks many of the constitutional elements of the short story such as 'a lack of character development' and 'coverage of a very limited time span' (58). 'The End of the Tether' and 'Typhoon' are typical novellas, whereas 'The Return' is to be seen as a short story due to its epiphanic character and its limited temporal and spatial span, though it is rather long for a short story.

insufficient exploration of its subject matter. The authorial attitude in 'Typhoon' is far less problematic than those in the previous two short fictions; however, the way in which Captain MacWhirr is subtly displaced from the narrative focus in the final chapter leads us to consider certain fictional requirements that derive from the peculiarity of the novella's subject matter. Through the discussion of those three short fictions I will explore the variety of authorial attitudes Conrad's third-person works exhibit. I also intend this chapter to function as a preliminary step to the main argument of my thesis; therefore, I will attempt to relate the issues each of the short fictions raises to the novels that will be addressed in the chapters that follow. I will accordingly juxtapose 'The Return' with 'The Rescuer', 'The End of the Tether' with *Lord Jim*, and 'Typhoon' with *Nostramo*. The first pair share incoherence or instability of authorial attitude; both of the works in the second pair employ characters who are sympathetic towards and personally committed to the protagonists in order to enhance the reader's engagement with them; the third pair displace their primary subject matter out of the narrative focus towards the endings for similar reasons.

1. 'The Return'³⁷

'The Return' has been one of the most neglected of Conrad's works. The majority of critics have either simply ignored the short story or castigated its poor quality. Guerard, for example, asserts that it is 'Conrad's worst story of any length, and one of the worst [stories] ever written by a great novelist' (96). Moser attributes the low quality of the short story to Conrad's poor handling of the sexual subject (*Achievement and Decline* 71-8). Lawrence Graver observes that it is one of 'the strangest works in the Conrad canon' (*Conrad's Short Fiction* 34). Some critics have argued for the work's merits, but what they actually do is largely to extract some philosophical motifs from it and appreciate them rather than vindicate the story's fictional adequacy. Edward Said, for example, emphasises the significance of Hervey's attempt 'to bring his past into causal relation with the present crisis in order to determine why his wife betrayed him' and argues that there is a similarity between Mrs. Hervey and Kurtz in that they, respectively, thrust Hervey and Marlow into a new realm of existence (*The Fiction of Autobiography* 106-7). Lewis E. Birdseye, appreciative towards the philosophical dimension of the short story in a similar manner to Said, asserts that 'Hervey's attempt to place the blame for his vastation on

³⁷ 'The Return' was completed in 1897 but, unlike most of Conrad's shorter fiction, was not published in magazine form. The only other exception is 'Falk', a novella that deals with the sensational subject of cannibalism. 'The Return' was collected in *Tales of Unrest* in 1898.

his wife is an attempt to substitute the apparent for the real ... The fixed and permanent as categories have been destroyed by the variable, the impermanent, the arbitrary' (174). For Celia M. Kingsbury 'The Return' 'has much to offer' because it 'conveys to us the dark side of restraint, the problem of relying solely on the opinion of others, and the hazards of sublimating "real feelings"' (33-4). Interesting as these arguments are, however, before appreciating the thematic depth of the story, we need to try to explain the source of its 'strange' texture which has discouraged most critics from seriously considering that depth.

'The Return' deals with the disintegration of the marital life of an upper-middle-class couple living in West London. This is rather an unusual subject matter since most of Conrad's works in this period were located in Southeast Asia. The short story's anticipation of *The Secret Agent* in its delineation of the brittle and dysfunctional marital relationship between a European couple is also notable, though the Verlocs belong to a much lower social class than the Herveys.³⁸ What most makes 'The Return' conspicuous among other early works, however, is its narrative instability caused by some fundamental contradictions it contains. One source of this instability is a certain discontinuity that exists between the early introductory part of the story and the main part after Hervey discovers the letter from his wife. Before Hervey comes back to his house and finds the letter, the narration is permeated with the narrator's voice and judgment. Not

³⁸ See Joseph H. O'Mealy, 'The Herveys and the Verlocs: *The Secret Agent's* Debt to "The Return"'.

only the entire picture of the marital life of the Herveys but also their personalities are delivered to the reader through the highly compressed and calculated ‘telling’ of the omniscient narrator. For example, the narrator tells us about the Herveys’ marital life as follows:

[i]n time [the couple] came to know each other sufficiently well for all the practical purposes of such an existence, but they were no more capable of real intimacy than two animals feeding the same manger, under the same roof, in a luxurious stable ... [t]hey understood each other warily, tacitly, like a pair of cautious conspirators in a profitable plot; because they were both unable to look at a fact, a sentiment, a principle, or a belief otherwise than in the light of their own dignity, of their own glorification, of their own advantage. They skimmed over the surface of life hand in hand, in a pure and frosty atmosphere—like two skilful skaters cutting figures on thick ice for the admiration of the beholders, and disdainfully ignoring the hidden stream, the stream restless and dark; the stream of life, profound and unfrozen (115),

As is often the case with the mode of ‘telling’, there is effectively no room for the reader to see the Herveys and their marital life in a way that is different from the one the narrator prepares for us. This makes a contrast with the theatre-like presentation of ‘showing’ in the main part where Hervey’s and his wife’s words and gestures are directly delivered to the reader without being filtered through the narrator’s encapsulation.

It is not this shift in itself that creates the discontinuity I mentioned. Summarising background information through ‘telling’

and then presenting the crucial scenes of a story in the mode of ‘showing’ is, to use a term that might sound somewhat dated now, the most common strategy of ‘dramatisation’.³⁹ What produces the problematic discontinuity in ‘The Return’ instead is the remarkable shift in the nature of the authorial attitude. The narrator’s implacable disdain for the Herveys in the early part of the story is palpable. For example, we are told about their marriage that Hervey ‘considered himself well connected, well educated and intelligent’ and that he had chosen as his wife a girl who ‘in his opinion was well connected, well educated and intelligent’ (112). The enumeration of the three adjectives ‘well connected, well educated and intelligent’ is heavily ironic as only the last one is obviously untrue. In addition, the narrator’s repetition of the same three adjectives implies Hervey’s preference for stereotyped women as well as the couple’s actual lack of individuality, which serves to increase the distance between them and the reader. In fact, the narrator’s irony towards the couple in the earlier part is unbounded, almost to the point of explicit malice. The

³⁹ Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* explains this principle of dramatisation that derives mainly from Percy Lubbock’s *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) (which, in turn, derives from James’s 1884 essay ‘The Art of Fiction’) as follows: ‘[t]he narrator must not say “bleak walls,” or “vacant eye-like windows,” or “black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre.” The walls and windows and tarn should be dramatically portrayed in order to be made visually alive with their bleakness and vacuity and luridness *shown* to the reader rather than merely *told*’ (202). He refers to ‘the dogmas about showing rather than telling’ and proposes to re-evaluate a variety of devices and techniques that the mode of ‘telling’ employs (196).

narrator describes the beginning of the couple's relationship as follows: '[h]e had married five years ago. At the time all his acquaintances had said he was very much in love; and he had said so himself, frankly, *because* it is very well understood that every man falls in love once in his life' (112, emphasis added). This account, especially its use of the conjunction 'because', ironises Hervey by insinuating that he did not love her sincerely but just followed the social convention unthinkingly. The narrator's disdain is directed at Mrs. Hervey as well. He states that '[s]he was also intensely bored with her home where ... her individuality—of which she was very conscious—had no play', but adds immediately after this: '[s]he strode like a grenadier, was strong and upright like an obelisk, had a beautiful face, a candid brow, pure eyes, *and not a thought of her own in her head*. He surrendered quickly to *all those charms*' (112, emphases added). This obvious and ironic contradiction between her alleged individuality and her having 'not a thought of her own in her mind' ridicules Mrs. Hervey, while the inclusion of having 'not a thought of her own in her head' among her 'charms' is also scathing, particularly in relation to the couple's claimed 'intelligence'.

The narrator's irony towards the Herveys is so intense that at some points it seems to verge on the excessive. A typical instance occurs in the scene towards the beginning of the story where Hervey ascends the staircase after talking with the female servant. The narrator mentions the works of art Hervey has collected and remarks:

‘[h]e had artistic tastes—at home’; ‘[h]is tastes were distinctly artistic’ (116). Although the qualification ‘—at home’ may imply that Hervey’s having artistic tastes itself is suspect from the viewpoint of his profession, there are no clear rhetorical signs at this stage that indicate that the narrator does not mean what he says. However, the description of the paintings that follows strongly implies Hervey’s philistinism:

[o]ld church towers peeped above green masses of foliage; the hills were purple, the sands yellow, the seas sunny, the skies blue. A young lady sprawled with dreamy eyes in a moored boat, in company of a lunch basket, a champagne bottle, and an enamoured man in a blazer. Bare-legged boys flirted sweetly with ragged maidens, slept on stone steps, gambolled with dogs. A pathetically lean girl flattened against a blank wall, turned up expiring eyes and tendered a flower for a sale (116).

Though it is not very explicit, these paintings seem to be examples of kitsch.⁴⁰ Foregrounding the conventionality of Hervey’s tastes, the description above undermines the narrator’s preceding remark that he has ‘distinctly artistic’ tastes. That is to say, the narrator first affirms

⁴⁰ Conrad’s own ‘artistic tastes’ are exhibited when, in his letter to William Blackwood, he expresses his affinity with Richard Wagner, Auguste Rodin, and James McNeill Whistler: ‘I don’t compare myself with [William Thackeray, Walter Scott, and George Eliot]. I am *modern*, and I would rather recall Wagner the musician and Rodin the Sculptor who both had to starve a little in their day—and Whistler the painter who made Ruskin the critic foam at the mouth with scorn and indignation’ (*CL2* 418).

that Hervey's tastes are artistic and then disproves his own statement by describing the specific features of Hervey's picture. It is as if here the narrator enjoys playing with his own disingenuousness.⁴¹

The narrator's disparaging attitude towards the Herveys in the early part becomes much less perceptible after Hervey discovers the letter from his wife. At the same time as the compressed and calculated 'telling' that summarised the Herveys' life is replaced by the dramatic presentation of 'showing', the judgment-laden narration with its biting sarcasm shades into a relatively neutral presentational mode through focalisation and free indirect discourse. Although the narrator's ironisation of Hervey reappears intermittently as his mind oscillates between 'revelation' and the initial state of blindness—this 'revelation' of Hervey will be fully discussed shortly—in the main part of the story it is comparatively hard to identify the narrator's voice and judgment. Ted Billy well captures the implications of this attitudinal gap: '[i]f we were to consider the ending of "The Return" in isolation from the rest of the text, it would be possible to sympathize with Hervey's estrangement from his wife and from his customary assumptions about human existence. However, Conrad's opening scene mocks his protagonist's claim to individuality' (177).

Heterogeneity in authorial attitude towards characters is not a rare phenomenon in Conrad's works. The modulating irony towards

⁴¹ The third-person narrator in *The Secret Agent* exhibits a similar kind of disingenuousness. See Chapter 5, pages 317-20.

Verloc in *The Secret Agent*, which Jakob Lothe points out, is a typical example of this (232-3). What is unique about 'The Return' in Conrad's oeuvre is that one attitude shifts to another quite sharply. The palpability of the negative authorial attitude towards Hervey decreases so clearly that the modal gap between the early and the main parts almost amounts to a disruption. Dale Kramer points out a particular problem which is related to this inconsistency: '[Conrad's] handling of narrative perspective creates unnecessarily a situation in which the narrator's broader perspective can become conflated with the more constricted intellect of one of the characters (Hervey, usually) coming to conscious self-knowledge⁴²' (9-10). In the early part the narrator introduces Hervey as an imperceptive philistine to be relentlessly satirized; however, in the main part, in which the presentational mode shifts from the analytical survey of Hervey from without to the focalisation through him, the distinction between the narrator's and Hervey's perspectives becomes less clear despite their intellectual and perceptual gap.

A typical example of the confusion brought about by this occurs towards the end of the story when Hervey, being unable to bear the bleak insight he has gained, enters the room to seek for his wife's help. He finds that there is absolutely 'nothing' within her eyes that allows their communication. What he sees is described as follows:

⁴² As I will demonstrate shortly, it is rather questionable whether Hervey really arrives at self-knowledge.

On the candid light of the eyes flitted shadows; shadows of doubt, of suspicion, the ready suspicion of an unquenchable antagonism, the pitiless mistrust of an eternal instinct of defence; the hate, the profound, frightened hate of an incomprehensible—of an abominable emotion intruding its coarse materialism upon the spiritual and tragic contest of her feelings (169).

This cannot entirely be what Hervey saw himself. Firstly, Mrs. Hervey's hatred of the 'coarse materialism' of Hervey's emotion is something only the narrator and the reader share—earlier, when the narrator focalised through Mrs. Hervey, the reader was told that she felt both her husband and her lover could offer to her 'nothing but the coarseness of their abominable materialism' (162). Furthermore, analytical phrases such as 'the ready suspicion of an unquenchable antagonism' and 'frightened mistrust of an eternal instinct of defence' seem too intellectual to be Hervey's own. Interestingly, a phrase in the above quotation is repeated in the passage that follows which looks like Hervey's free indirect discourse: '[t]he years would pass—and he would have to live with that unfathomable candour where *flit shadows of suspicions and hate*...The years would pass—and he would never know—never trust...The years would pass without faith and love...' (169, emphasis added). The use of the phrase 'shadows of suspicions and hate', whose variant appeared in the previous quotation, indicates that these passages are both delivered through the narrator's perspective. And yet everything else in this passage leads us to interpret it as a

presentation of Hervey's inner thought through free indirect discourse —after some modification of tense and pronouns it would perfectly fit into quotation marks after phrases such as 'he thought:'. In other words, the second passage occupies rather a strange position of indeterminacy between the narrator's and Hervey's perspectives. The matter is even more complicated by the possibility that the 'shadows of suspicion and hate', which is reported from the narrator's perspective, is not authorially endorsed. That is, here the quasi-omniscient narrator may be deliberately limiting his perspective to present faithfully Hervey's subjective projection of the 'shadows of suspicion and hate' onto his wife's eyes. Given the intellectual and perceptual gap between the two, this conflation of their perspectives effectively amounts to a confusion.

The most notable indicator of the narrative instability of 'The Return', however, is the way in which Hervey's 'revelations' are treated. In 'The Return' there are several scenes in which Hervey suddenly gains insights that he has never had before. Critics have picked out three of those scenes as the most essential moments of revelation, but each critic focuses on different ones. I will quote those three moments in full in chronological order. The first one occurs in the early part of the story just before Mrs. Hervey comes back home:

[h]e realized that he had had a shock ... a thrust, insidious and penetrating ... A dark curtain seemed to rise before him, and for less than a second he looked upon the mysterious universe of moral suffering. As a landscape is seen complete,

and vast, and vivid, under a flash of lightning, so he could see disclosed in a moment all the immensity of pain that can be contained in one short moment of human thought. Then the curtain fell again, but his rapid vision left in Alvan Hervey's mind a trail of invincible sadness, a sense of loss and bitter solitude, as though he had been robbed and exiled. For a moment he ceased to be a member of society ... He was a simple human being removed from the delightful world of crescents and squares. He stood alone, naked and afraid, like the first man on the first day of evil (124).

The second revelation happens later during Hervey's conversation with his wife. Picking up the fan which his wife has snapped, Hervey is 'penetrated by an irresistible belief in an enigma, by the conviction that within his reach and passing away from him was the very secret of existence—its certitude, immaterial and precious!' (161) Shortly after this Hervey's consciousness is described as follows:

[w]hile she had been speaking he had wandered on the track of the enigma, out of the world of senses into the region of feeling. What did it matter what she had done, what she had said, if through the pain of her acts and words he had obtained the word of the enigma! There can be no life without faith and love—faith in a human heart, love of a human being! That touch of grace ... flung open for him the portals of beyond, and in contemplating there the certitude immaterial and precious he forgot all the meaningless accidents of existence: the bliss of getting, the delight of enjoying; all the protean and enticing forms of the cupidity that rules a material world of foolish joys, of contemptible sorrows. Faith! Love! —the undoubting, clear faith in the truth of a soul ... It was what he had wanted all his life—but he understood it only then for the first time. It was through the pain of losing her that the

knowledge had come (162-163).

The third revelation appears towards the end of the story before Hervey enters the room for his wife's help. Hervey ponders over his wife's inability to share with him the genuine feelings whose preciousness he has purportedly realised in the second revelation. What then comes into his mind is described as follows:

[i]n the pain of that thought was born his conscience; not that fear or remorse which grows slowly, and slowly decays amongst the complicated facts of life, but a Divine wisdom springing full-grown, armed and severe out of a tried heart, to combat the secret baseness of motives. It came to him in a flash that morality is not a method of happiness. The revelation was terrible. He saw at once that nothing of what he knew mattered in the least. The acts of men and women, success, humiliation, dignity, failure—nothing mattered. It was not a question of more or less pain, of this joy, of that sorrow. It was a question of truth and falsehood—it was a question of life or death (167-8).

No critic has picked out and addressed those three moments as a set: Mark Wollaeger and Gekoski exclude the last revelation from their argument, whereas Kramer omits the second one. My reading, which emphasises the difference between the second revelation and the other two, is closer to Kramer's argument that the first and the third revelations exhibit 'narrator-endorsed consciousness' (9). However, it would not be accurate to say that Hervey's first and the third revelations are perfectly free from authorial irony. That it is only 'less

than a second' that Hervey 'looked upon the mysterious universe of moral suffering' in his first revelation can be read as funnily deflating, while hyperbolic phrases such as 'a Divine wisdom springing full-grown, armed and severe out of a tried heart' (in the third) sound rather suspect and might be said to record Hervey's self-dramatisation (124; 167). Furthermore, Hervey's limited intelligence seems to be reflected in a number of strange sentences in the third revelation such as: '[I]t came to him in a flash that morality is not a method of happiness' (we are tempted to ask, 'who said that being morally correct is a *method* of happiness?' though this seems to be part of his conventional Victorian bourgeois expectation) and vague statements like: '[I]t was not a question of more or less pain, of this joy, of that sorrow. It was a question of truth and falsehood—it was a question of life or death' (167; 168).⁴³

However, the context within which the first and the third revelations are embedded points towards the authorial endorsement those insights receive. The first revelation is immediately followed by the narrator's generalisation: '[t]here are in life events, contacts, glimpses, that seem ...' and by a direct address to the reader: '[g]o and seek another paradise, fool or sage' (124-5). This seamless shift from the presentation of Hervey's revelation to the display of the narrator's own voice serves to suggest the authenticity of Hervey's first revelation.

⁴³ This vagueness can also be interpreted as Hervey's self-dramatisation. See pages 63-4.

At the end of the story, after the third revelation, Hervey leaves their house never to return again. The allusion to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* serves to make this ending ironic:⁴⁴ in stark contrast to Ibsen's drama in which the wife leaves the husband to reject their loveless marital life, in 'The Return' it is the husband who leaves at the end. This ironic inversion certainly invites us to see 'The Return' as a parody of *A Doll's House*. On the other hand, however, the fact that Hervey moves from a position of being humiliated by his wife's unexpected abandonment of him to that of abandoning his wife might be seen as a kind of elevation of Hervey's status that reflects the narrator's endorsement of his final insight. Conrad's account of the short story in his letter to Edward Garnett supports this point. He writes: 'I wanted the truth to be first dimly seen through the fabulous untruth of [Hervey's] convictions—of his idea of life—and then to make its way out with a rush at the end' (*CL1* 387, emphasis added). As I will discuss shortly, 'the fabulous untruth of [Hervey's] convictions' can be understood to include his spurious insight in his second revelation. That 'the truth' 'make[s] its way out with a rush at the end' suggests that Hervey's final revelation and his subsequent sudden departure receive the author's endorsement.

In contrast to this, Hervey's second revelation is almost blatantly untrustworthy. We are told that Hervey realises, in the state of

⁴⁴ See Peter Keating, 'Conrad's Doll's House' (1985) and Paul Kirschner, 'Conrad, Ibsen, and the Description of Humanity' (1993).

existential anxiety that suddenly opened its abyss before him that day, that 'faith in a human heart' and 'love of a human being' were what Hervey 'had wanted all his life'. However, this contradicts the fact, which we were told earlier, that he had suppressed human emotions in favour of conventionality and appearances.⁴⁵ Hervey is evidently self-deceptive here. The persistent repetition of words and phrases used to describe the revelation also serves to discredit it. The phrase 'certitude immaterial and precious' is repeated five times in seven pages, and the words 'love' and 'faith' appear as a set as many as nine times (161-67). Because those words are treated as if they were a set phrase, the impression we get about Hervey's new insight is that of obsession; the idiosyncrasy of the phrase 'certitude immaterial and precious' makes its repetition especially conspicuous. The irony discerned behind these things invites the reader to look at Hervey's second revelation skeptically.⁴⁶

In considering this dubiousness of Hervey's second revelation, Hampson's argument is helpful. He points out the allusion to 'the codes and conventions of popular theatre' in 'The Return' and argues that much of Hervey's behaviour is theatrical and should be seen as performance ('From Stage to Screen' 60-63). He observes that Hervey 'goes through a succession of poses ... in which he reproduces ... various stage clichés', and concludes that 'Conrad signals the inauthenticity of

⁴⁵ Consider, for instance, the passages I quoted on pages 51-3.

⁴⁶ Gekoski remarks that '[the story's] affirmation of the transcendental value of Love is totally unconvincing' (55).

Hervey's speeches and actions' by means of the employment of the codes of popular theatre (62). In the extremely unsettling situation in which he first suddenly finds himself abandoned by his wife and then realises that her return makes the situation no better, Hervey feels his identity shaken; what he actually does after his wife comes back, however, is to go through 'a succession of poses' in order to gain control of the situation rather than face his inner self. Although it is ambiguous how far Hervey's incoherent behaviour is to be seen as performance rather than ordinary self-deception, this perspective makes it easier to understand his incoherent behaviour which at first glance appears rather strange.

What I would particularly like to call attention to here, however, is the fact that a certain confusion can be observed in the norms of authorial judgment concerning Hervey's second revelation. In the earlier part of the story the narrator provides obvious clues to the criteria for the authorial judgment of the characters and the fictional world of the story. Thus Kramer argues that in 'The Return' there is an opposition between 'genuine behavior' and 'conventional' behaviour; the author endorses, of course, the former (8). I would slightly modify Kramer's schema by redefining it as the opposition between genuine feelings and conventional behaviour. I would also add that what the narrator (or Conrad as implied author) condemns also includes the bourgeois attitude that values material comfort and ignores genuine human feelings. This can be observed in the following passage that describes the people the Herveys kept company with:

[t]hey moved in their enlarged world amongst perfectly delightful men and women who ... tolerated only the commonest formulas of commonest thoughts, and recognized only *profitable* facts. It was an extremely charming sphere ... *where all joys and sorrows are cautiously toned down into pleasures and annoyances* ... where noble sentiments are cultivated in sufficient profusion to conceal the pitiless *materialism* of thoughts and aspirations (113, emphases added)

Evidently, those ‘perfectly delightful men and women’ are ironised by the narrator for reducing ‘all joys and sorrows’ to mere ‘pleasures and annoyances’, and for espousing a ‘materialism’ that represses genuine feelings. We could even say that, though appearing cynical and disdainful, the narrator is in a sense a humanist as he attacks what threatens sincere human emotions. Gekoski’s observation that “‘The Return’ is unique in Conrad’s oeuvre in that it asserts Love and the emotional life as *positive* values’ supports this point (54).⁴⁷

Given that this is the most important norm according to which the characters and their behaviours are judged in the story, we see that the narrator, in his treatment of the second revelation, ironises Hervey despite the fact that the insight which visits him completely *agrees* with the narrator’s norm. The aspiration for ‘faith in a human heart’

⁴⁷ Gekoski’s point, though, is debatable. Conrad’s later works like *Chance* and *The Rover* celebrate love as a positive value. Towards the ending of *The Rover*, for example, Peyrol decides to sacrifice his own life in his mission to decoy the British gunboat for the sake of Arlette’s love with Réal.

and 'love of a human being', which Hervey purportedly realises are the most important things in life, is nothing if not the genuine human feeling which the norm of the story endorses. The 'certitude' of the 'secret of existence' is 'precious' just because it is 'immaterial' and free from the bourgeois attitudes that undermine human emotions. The reason why Hervey's second revelation should be ironised is not because its content is spurious but rather because he does not seem to really assimilate that insight: the blatant self-contradiction and the overdramatic diction in the second revelation suggest that Hervey is merely performing the acquisition of the insight without actually understanding it. The rather tortuous strategy Conrad adopted, in which an insight that agrees with the norms of the story visits Hervey but in a suspect manner which appears to undermine that insight itself, is potentially confusing.

Illuminating in this context is Conrad's letter to Edward Garnett in which he explains what he attempted in 'The Return'. Conrad writes: 'what I aimed at was just to produce the effect of cold water in every one of [Hervey's] speeches ... I wanted to produce the effect of insincerity, or artificiality. Yes! I wanted the reader to see him think and then to hear him speak—and shudder. The whole point of the joke is there' (*CL1* 387). For convenience's sake, here we could tentatively express 'the truth' as the thesis that genuine feelings are essential in human life. From his letter we see that Conrad's intention was to let that 'truth' be felt first through 'the fabulous untruth of [Hervey's]

convictions' presented in the second revelation. But we can also say, using Conrad's own words, that 'the effect of cold water' produced by Hervey's 'fabulous untruth' appears to affect 'the truth' that should be authentic in itself. Conrad's account: 'I wanted the truth to be first dimly seen through the fabulous untruth of that man's convictions—of his idea of life—and then to make its way out with a rush at the end' makes it clear that technically it is not the case that the narrative of 'The Return' suffers from confusion in dealing with Hervey's second and third revelations: rather, the narrative precisely expresses Hervey's confused consciousness. However, it is undeniable that this strategy gives an apparent impression of confusion on the author's part,⁴⁸ which explains why Conrad had to defend the story in his letter. After explaining in the above quotation what he attempted to achieve in the story, he laments: '[b]ut if I have to explain that to you—to You!—then I've egregiously failed' (*CLI* 387). The fact that Conrad needed to explain his intention in detail outside the text indicates that its tortuousness—or, possibly, Conrad's inept handling of this complicated strategy—made the story rather hard to comprehend.

The connection between Hervey's second and the third revelations raises another issue with regard to the authorial attitude. After the second revelation in which he gains the idea that Mrs. Hervey is capable of sharing with him 'love' and 'faith', Hervey '[makes] a step

⁴⁸ Wollaeger, for instance, argues that 'Conrad's confused attitude toward [Hervey's response to his abandonment]' causes the story's 'wild inconsistencies of tone and attitude' (51).

forward, putting his arms out, as if to take [Mrs. Hervey] to his breast' (163). Naturally, this insincere gesture is vehemently rejected by her, but he is disappointed and, after she leaves the room, starts musing over her inability to share his new vision. Hervey experiences despair in picturing a future in which he must be resigned to never seeing his vision of 'love' and 'faith' come true and in which he cannot share the pain with anybody. As the sentence '[i]n the pain of that thought was born his conscience' articulates, the final revelation comes as a result of Hervey's realisation that the vision of 'love' and 'faith' he gained in his second revelation is never to materialise (167). In this sense Hervey's second and third revelations are continuous and organically connected with each other, even though the former is ironised and the latter is largely endorsed by the author.

What is problematic is that in this seamless transition from Hervey's second to third revelation, it is rather unclear at which point the authorial attitude towards him shifts from ridicule to endorsement. In the same tenor as the treatment of his second revelation, the description of Hervey between the two revelations is basically ironic. His lamentation of his wife's rejection of his wooing records his sheer inability to see how dubious it looks to her after all those years of their loveless marital life. His egregious self-deception is exposed when '[h]e remembered that he had loved her' (167). However, as to his despair at having to live a marital life devoid of 'love' and 'faith' whose desolateness '[n]obody shall know', we are not quite sure how ironic the

narrative is (165). Certainly, it smacks somewhat of Hervey's self-dramatising performance as in his previous behaviour. But it is notable that the same existential fear of Hervey's is repeated after his third revelation where the narrator's ironisation of him ceases to be clearly perceived. For example, just before Hervey's final departure in which 'the truth' of the story 'make[s] its way out with a rush', Hervey contemplates: '[t]he years would pass without faith and love...' (*CLI* 387; 'The Return' 169). This suggests that Hervey's despair at his barren future expressed before his final revelation is not an obvious object of ironisation. This is to say that the narrative between Hervey's second and third revelations exhibits mixed degrees of ironisation of Hervey, and this makes obscure the point around which the authorial attitude towards Hervey shifts from scorn to approval. The problematically seamless connection between the spurious and the authentic revelations creates another source of narrative instability here.

In beginning this section I stated that 'some fundamental contradictions' underlie the narrative instability of 'The Return'. What I have attempted to demonstrate above is that it is the issue of authorial attitude—the confusing deployment of the norms of authorial judgment and the bewilderingly seamless transition between ridicule and endorsement of Hervey—that constitutes those fundamental contradictions in the short story. As will be shown in Chapter 2, the unstable authorial attitude in 'The Return' finds its counterpart in 'The

Rescuer' where the authorial attitude is split between one mode which serves to construct and sustain the novel's romantic fictional world on the one hand and another mode whose political discernment has the potential for undermining that very romantic fictional world on the other. Their similar problems seem to correspond to Conrad's recognition of the failures of those two works: Conrad applies epithets such as 'odious', 'infernal', and 'left-handed' to 'The Return'; it is reasonable to assume that Conrad had a comparably low regard for the manuscript which he left unfinished for almost twenty years and revised drastically before publishing it without 'elation' (*CL1* 386-8; 391-4; 'The Return' 11; *The Rescue* 11). I will show in Chapter 2 that the failures of those two works come from similar sources.

The next section discusses 'The End of the Tether', a novella in which the issues of authorial attitude exhibit a totally different aspect from that in 'The Return'. Instead of narrative instability, the problem in 'The End of the Tether' expresses itself as the extreme unclarity of the authorial attitude causing interpretational ambiguities which, I will argue, not so much enrich the novella as make the reader unsure as to the meaning and the significance of the story.

2. 'The End of the Tether'⁴⁹

In his early article entitled 'Critical Confusion and Conrad's "The End of the Tether"' (1963-4), Graver asserted that critics had overlooked the authorial ironisation of Captain Whalley's flaws and regarded him as a heroic figure to an unjustifiable extent. He gives three examples of such early reading. M. C. Bradbrook in *Joseph Conrad: Poland's English Genius* (1941) remarks that 'the old man, simple, heroic in his integrity, is ruined only in a material sense' (27). Oliver Warner in *Joseph Conrad* (1951) argues that Whalley 'is one of Conrad's noble portraits.... No flaw marks Whalley's character or intentions. Conrad portrayed many good men, but none who appeal more directly to the heart' (143). And Paul L. Wiley in *Conrad's Measure of Man* (1954) sees Whalley's deception of the people around him as 'due rather to circumstance than too any inherent weakness of nerve or will' (64). Graver invokes Conrad's letters to refute such readings. In his letter to Edward Garnett Conrad expresses disgust against the contemporary reviews which see poignant heroism in Whalley's act: 'Touching, tender, noble, moving...Let us spit' (qtd. in Graver 375). Writing to his publisher's assistant, David Meldrum, Conrad stresses the ironisation of Whalley by his conversation with Captain Elliott: '[t]he Elliot [sic] episode [in which Whalley meets an old colleague] has a fundamental

⁴⁹ 'The End of the Tether' was completed in 1902 and collected in '*Youth, a Narrative, and Two Other Stories*' in the same year.

significance in so far that it exhibits the first weakening of old Whalley's character before the assault of poverty' (ibid. 376). Some more recent critics offer modern versions of those early views. Said, for example, asserts that '[t]he central tension of the story is the connection of Whalley's increasing blindness to his increasing sense of honor and fidelity; the blinder he becomes, the more he clings to an outmoded code of action' (*The Fiction of Autobiography* 116). Otherwise, Graver's argument is now rather outdated since Whalley's flaws have been discussed extensively by later critics. Sanford Pinsker, for instance, in "The End of the Tether": Joseph Conrad's Death of a Sailsman' (1971) remarks that Whalley's suicide is 'more pathetic than tragic' and that he 'plunges to his death with all illusions still intact' (75). Billy similarly observes, in *A Wilderness of Words: Closure and Disclosure in Conrad's Short Fiction* (1997), that 'Whalley's pathetic downfall is a direct result of his decision "in the prime of life...to serve no one but his own auspicious Fortune"' (197-8). Notwithstanding this, however, the 'critical confusion' Graver argues for provides a good starting point for considering the features of the novella.

The biggest cause of critics' disagreement about the evaluation of Whalley lies in the obscurity of the authorial attitude towards him. For a novella presenting Whalley's ethical conflict, 'The End of the Tether' spends a remarkable number of pages focalising its narrative through other characters — chapters VII to VIII through Massy, chapters IX to X through Sterne, Chapter XI through Sterne and Massy,

Chapter XII through Van Wyk, and Chapter XIII through Van Wyk and Massy. This can be understood partly in terms of convenience in the progression of plot: Massy's deep concern about the extension of his contract with Whalley, Sterne's detection of his captain's debilitating blindness, and his determination to take advantage of it are smoothly delivered to the reader thanks to the focalisation through them. As David Mulry argues, we can also see this as Conrad's 'modern' method to make the character of Whalley multifaceted ('Untethered' 22-3). What is interesting is that when the narrative focuses on Whalley, there is scarcely a sign from which the reader can infer the authorial attitude towards him. During Whalley's confession to Van Wyk of his deception of all the people around him in Chapter XIII, his ethical conflict is presented extensively through free indirect discourse:

He had lived on without any help, human or divine. The very prayers stuck in his throat. What was there to pray for? and death seemed as far as ever. Once he got into his cabin he dared not come out again; when he sat down he dared not get up; he dared not raise his eyes to anybody's face, he felt reluctant to look upon the sea or up to the sky. The world was fading before his great fear of giving himself away. The old ship was his last friend ... but at her, too, he hardly dared to look, for fear of finding he could see less than the day before. A great incertitude enveloped him. The horizon was gone; the sky mingled darkly with the sea. Who was this figure standing over yonder? what was this thing lying down there? And a frightful doubt of the reality of what he could see made even the remnant of sight that remained to him an added torment, a pitfall always open for his miserable pretence. He was afraid to stumble

inexcusably over something—to say a fatal Yes or No to a question. The hand of God was upon him, but it could not tear him away from his child. And, as if in a nightmare of humiliation, every featureless man seemed an enemy (302-3).

Whalley's sharp distress brought by his growing blindness is expressed most vividly here. The remarkable thing is that there is no comment on this on the narrator's part, direct or indirect, which would imply the attitude of Conrad as implied author towards Whalley's plight. Conrad's other third-person narrators who foreground their own voices, such as the one in *The Secret Agent* that I will discuss in Chapter 5, would make their attitude clear in one way or another, such as ironic observations and judgment-laden adjectives. The same can be said as to the final chapter during which Whalley becomes the focaliser for the first time in eight chapters. Before Massy places his coat with iron plates in its pockets near the compass to wreck the ship, Whalley's inner state after his confession to Van Wyk is explored: '[t]his necessity of every moment [to conceal his quasi-blindness] brought home to Captain Whalley's heart the humiliation of his falsehood. He had drifted into it from paternal love, from incredulity, from boundless trust in divine justice meted out to men's feelings on this earth' (324). A little later the narrator's analysis develops further: '[i]n the steadily darkening universe a sinister clearness fell upon his ideas. In the illuminating moments of suffering he saw life, men, all things, the whole earth with all her burden of created nature, as he had never seen

them before ... [His daughter], too, he had never seen so clearly before' (324). In these passages the narrator enters Whalley's mind and anatomises the sources of his distress and where his blindness leads him morally and spiritually; however, again the narrator does not provide any indication of his own opinion on Whalley's situation. The presentation of Whalley's distress in these passages is remarkably devoid of judgment.⁵⁰

There are some occasions in the text in which authorial ironisation of Whalley might be discerned faintly. When he is asked by his daughter to send her two hundred pounds which she needs to run her boarding-house and recognises that he needs to sell his own ship, he shows a sign of self-deception: 'he perceived clearly that [parting with his ship] had been unavoidable. Perhaps he had been growing aware of it all along with an unconfessed knowledge ... It would have had come to that in the end! It was fortunate she had forced his hand. In another year or two it would have been an utterly barren sale' (183). Here Whalley rationalises his plight not only to avoid blaming his daughter but also to alleviate his own pain. When Whalley explains his past achievement to Van Wyk in the early stage of their relationship, he first says that it was '[a] trifle'; however, as he gets a little carried

⁵⁰ Phelan classifies the functions of narrators into three: reporting, interpreting, and evaluating ('Narrative Judgments' 326). Borrowing his schema, we can formulate that the narrator of 'The End of the Tether' confines his behaviour to the first two functions—most of it belonging to the first—and stays clear of the third.

away in the course of his speech, he contradicts himself, exclaiming: '[w]hy, that new route reduced the average time of a southern passage by eleven days for more than half the year. *Eleven days!* It's on record' (286, emphasis added). In both of these cases Whalley's human weakness is recorded in a way which allows a slight ironisation of him, but the narrator sticks to descriptive presentation and refrains from offering direct comments or interpretations for the reader.

The judgment of Whalley's character and deed is partly made through the voices of other characters. However, it is to be noted that Captain Elliott and Sterne—the two characters whose critical views of Whalley serve to relativise him—are considerably discredited by the narrator. As was mentioned in Conrad's letter which Graver quotes, Captain Elliott's critique of Whalley—'[f]act was he had a too good opinion of himself'—leads the reader to see him critically (210).⁵¹ But Elliott's disposition is described with judgment-laden adjectives 'conceited and tyrannical', and we are told that '[t]hough in conversation many pretended not to mind him in the least, others would only smile sourly at the mention of his name, and there were even some who dared to pronounce him "a meddlesome old ruffian"' (195-6). In the account of Sterne's discovery of Whalley's debilitating blindness in chapters IX and X, Whalley's deception of the people around him is condemned through him: it is a 'reckless perversity of

⁵¹ This criticism reminds us of Captain Brierly about whom Marlow remarks: 'I suppose if you had asked him point-blank he would have confessed that in his opinion there was not such another commander' (*Lord Jim* 46).

avarice' which is 'disturbing', 'frightful to contemplate', and 'repugnant' (254; 248; 251). As Mulry points out, 'avarice' is not quite a precise diagnosis since it is rather the projection of Sterne's own acquisitiveness; however, his anger at Whalley's dishonesty is legitimate in itself ('Untethered' 23). It is, therefore, reasonable to consider some of his condemnation to be delivered in place of authorial comments. However, Sterne is characterised as sly, impudent, and mutinous. The narrator's irony is palpable in his quotation of Sterne's words in his account: '[a]lways—as he was ready to confess—on the lookout for an opening to get on, it had become an instinct with him to watch the conduct of his immediate superiors for something “that one could lay hold of.” It was his belief that no skipper in the world would keep his command for a day if only the owners could be “made to know” (239).⁵² That is to say, some portion of the negative judgments of Whalley by those characters is invalidated by the fact that they are ironised by the narrative. It is indeed rather unclear to what extent the narrator (and Conrad as implied author) agrees with those characters' criticism of Whalley.

The authorial attitude at the ending of the novella is also obscure. Jennifer Turner argues that the ending presents a 'disturbing stillness' (230). Indeed, Ivy's reaction to her father's death is a strange mixture of emotional paralysis and deep sorrow. The first thing we are told is

⁵² I will discuss in Chapter 5 the same technique observable in the ironic presentation of Winnie Verloc's set phrases in *The Secret Agent*. See page 299.

that the effect of her long-time plight prevents her from grieving Whalley's death expressively: '[h]er eyes were dry: no cry of sorrow or whisper of thanks went up to heaven from her lips. Life had been too hard, for all the efforts of his love. It had silenced her emotions' (338-9). As Turner points out, here Ivy's impassiveness amounts to her failure 'to live up to her father's idealized memory' (230). On the other hand, her sincere lament for her dead father is also noted:

But for the first time in all these years [the sting of her hard life] had departed, the carking care of poverty, the meanness of a hard struggle for bread. Even the image of her husband and of her children seemed to glide away from her into the gray twilight; it was her father's face alone that she saw ... she ... remained there till dusk, perfectly motionless, giving him all the time she could spare (339).

The fact that Ivy devotes what little time she has for Whalley points towards her true affection. The last two sentences of the novella integrate these two facets of Ivy's emotion: '[t]here had been whole days when she had not thought of him at all—had no time. But she had loved him, she felt she had loved him after all' (339). Billy observes: 'given the hints of Ivy's apathy in the passage, one must question the depth and sincerity of Ivy's sentimental reverie, for she may have only *felt* "she had loved him after all"' (195). Mulry similarly calls attention to the ironic effect made by the word 'felt' and the use of past perfect: 'had loved' ('Untethered' 27). Acute as these readings are, they seem to be too reluctant to accept the novella's presentation of the daughter's

undemonstrative and moderate filial affection for her father. In fact, other critics, like Turner, consider that Ivy finally ‘produces the desired affirmation of [Whalley’s] life’ (230). As the critics’ divergent interpretations demonstrate, there is so little indication from which the authorial attitude towards Ivy’s response to Whalley’s death can be inferred that the reader is rather unsure whether they are meant to focus on the father and daughter’s barren misery or on the poignancy of their emotional bond. As to this Billy observes: ‘a careful inspection of Conrad’s closing pages reveals that opposing elements are held in balance; sentimental and ironic implications are locked in a dynamic tension’ (194).⁵³ However, since it was only for the sake of his daughter that Whalley deceived Massy and the other people concerned, the ambiguity in the depiction of Ivy’s reaction to her father’s death means that the authorial attitude towards Whalley’s deed remains obscure to the end.

What we have seen can be situated within the analytical/descriptive dichotomy which Yves Hervouet argues played an essential role in Conrad’s early career (201-2). After the painful process of writing ‘The Return’, Conrad declares in his letter to Edward Garnett: ‘[i]t is evident that my fate is to be descriptive and descriptive only. There are things I *must* leave alone’ (*CL1* 387). According to

⁵³ And yet Billy’s interpretation of the relationship between Whalley and Ivy is generally on the negative side. He points out the possibility of Whalley’s projection of his idealised image of his late wife onto Ivy and problematises the relationship between the father and the daughter as one-sided (196-7).

Hervouet, 'The Return' is the last attempt in Conrad's early career to produce an analytical work. In the context of my argument in this thesis, the 'descriptive' style mentioned here can be interpreted as the mode of presentation in which authorial attitude towards narrative contents is not made clear. Though 'The End of the Tether' might belong to Conrad's middle rather than early career, we can regard the novella, according to Hervouet's schema, as a typical case of a descriptive work. Indeed, 'descriptive' is an appropriate epithet for the way in which Whalley's ethical conflict is presented through free indirect discourse and objective descriptions that are largely devoid of irony, authorial comments, and value-laden adjectives. This makes a stark contrast with the early part of 'The Return', in which the narrator's (and Conrad-as-implied-author's) critical attitude towards Hervey is palpable. It does not seem necessarily to follow, though, that this judgment-oriented style can be called 'analytical': 'analytical' is superordinate to 'judgmental', and a narrative can be analytical without foregrounding value judgments.

One of the implications of the obscurity of the authorial attitude in 'The End of the Tether' is that the reader is not provided with authorial judgments of one kind or another that would assist them in grasping the ultimate meaning and significance of the story. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth re-evaluates direct commentary by the authorial narrator, which he contends had been discredited by 'the misleading

“post-Jamesian” critical “dogmas” of impersonal narration’,⁵⁴ and, in the section entitled ‘generalizing the significance of the whole work’, he discusses the advantage of that narrative method: ‘as we turn to the task of generalizing the effect of the entire work, making it seem to have a universal or at least representative quality beyond the literal facts of the case, it is not so clear that other devices can even approximately serve’ (197). Not only does he seem to underestimate the cases in which a third-person narrator is meant to be clearly distinguished from the implied author,⁵⁵ his emphasis on ‘a universal or at least representative quality’ is only too obviously outmoded as subsequently developed theories contributed to reveal ideologies that had been naturalised and hidden within such previously unexamined concepts as ‘universality’ and ‘objectivity’. Nevertheless, it remains true that the reader of a novel is inclined to seek for something that makes the story significant ‘beyond the literal facts of the case’, and the point I am making is that the third-person narrator of ‘The End of the Tether’ hardly provides such materials. The scarcity of authorial judgments makes the reader unsure of how to take the story—including its significance.

Important in relation to this is the presence of Van Wyk, an

⁵⁴ Booth quotes from W. J. Harvey, ‘George Eliot and the Omniscient Author Convention’ (1958).

⁵⁵ In Chapter 5 I will argue that the third-person narrator in *The Secret Agent* functions as a kind of mask that distances the novel’s fictional world from Conrad as implied author.

intellectual Dutch recluse who became acquainted with Whalley through the regular visits of the *Sofala*. In his scepticism Van Wyk is reminiscent of the middle-aged Marlow in *Lord Jim*.⁵⁶ When Whalley, in the earlier stage of their relationship, remarks that ‘the world ha[s] progressed’ since when the grandfather of the Sultan financed the local pirates, Van Wyk exhibits his distrust of the idea of human progress as he demurs ‘with unexpected acrimony’: ‘Progressed in what? he wanted to know’ (288). In a similar vein, he challenges Whalley’s belief in the essential goodness of human nature: ‘[men] might be silly, wrong-headed, unhappy; but naturally evil—no. There was at bottom a complete harmlessness at least. . . . “Is there?” Mr. Van Wyk snapped acrimoniously’ (289). Van Wyk’s ‘disdain of a man who had once been credulous himself’ reminds us of Marlow’s animosity towards Jim’s young optimism,⁵⁷ though in this novella it is the older man rather than the younger whose naïveté provokes the other. A more important similarity between him and Marlow in *Lord Jim* is a functional one—both of them provide a personal perspective that is more sympathetic towards the protagonist than the authorial narrator.

⁵⁶ At the same time, Van Wyk can also be regarded as a counter version of Stein. While both are a sort of recluse and have non-English descents, they contrast with each other in that Stein is an embodiment of romanticism, whereas Van Wyk stands for scepticism.

⁵⁷ For example, when Jim expresses his resolution to turn over a new leaf with his new job, Marlow’s world-weary doubt is derisive as well as melancholy: ‘A clean slate, did he say? As if the initial word of each our destiny were not graven in imperishable characters upon the face of a rock’ (142).

Just as Marlow's personal interest in Jim serves to reduce the distance between Jim and the reader which is greater while the third-person narrator introduces him,⁵⁸ so does Van Wyk's personal admiration for Whalley make him a more engaging character to the reader. Van Wyk's personality is described as follows: '[f]astidious, clever, slightly sceptical, accustomed to the best society ... he possessed a latent warmth of feeling and a capacity for sympathy which were concealed by a sort of haughty, arbitrary indifference of manner arising from his early training' (280). Because of this highly favourable characterisation of Van Wyk, the reader is encouraged to acknowledge the value of Whalley as the protagonist who has 'something that fascinate[s] [Van Wyk's] scepticism' (290).

Van Wyk's role as the mediator between Whalley and the reader, however, is obviously much more limited than Marlow's in *Lord Jim*. Unlike Marlow, who is given the privileged position of first-person narrator, Van Wyk is treated merely as one of those characters whom the authorial narrator foregrounds as the focaliser only for a while. Van Wyk's interview with Whalley in Chapter XIII is certainly a crucial part of the novella as Whalley's ethical conflict is delivered to the reader vividly through Van Wyk's perspective (302-3).⁵⁹ Moreover, after the depiction of the sinking of the *Sofala* in the final chapter, Van Wyk gathers information about Whalley from Sterne and the lawyer in

⁵⁸ This will be fully addressed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁹ See the passage I quoted on pages 73-4.

whose office Whalley and Massy made the contract in a way which reminds us of Marlow putting together the fragmentary information about Jim's last moments. But Van Wyk is not given the opportunity to present his comment on Whalley's last choice which would serve to deepen the novella's exploration and assessment of it. While he listens to what Sterne and the lawyer have to say about Whalley, we are told little of his reaction to it, which is somewhat strange given his former strong commitment to Whalley. After he leaves the lawyer without offering any substantial opinion, he is called a '[q]ueer person that Dutch tobacco-planter from Batu Beru' in the conversation between the lawyer and his acquaintance (337). This relativisation of Van Wyk makes a stark contrast with Marlow in *Lord Jim* who presents a soliloquy on Jim's end in the last three paragraphs of the novel without having his narrative enclosed by the extra-heterodiegetic narrator. In 'The End of the Tether' Conrad seems to adopt only partially the strategy of using a sympathetic and perceptive character as the mediator between the protagonist and the reader which he extensively employed in *Lord Jim*.

Van Wyk, whose personal commitment to and deep understanding of Whalley make him the most suitable character in the text to comment on the last phase of Whalley's life, leaves without offering any substantial judgment or interpretation of it. As I have argued earlier, the authorial narrator also keeps his attitude towards Whalley's deed unclear to the end. This is to say that Whalley's deception of Massy

and other people concerned and his final choice to die with the ship remain unjudged. But does this mean that the novella's exploration of its subject matter is not thorough enough? Ernest Hemingway's so-called 'iceberg theory' seems relevant in considering where the descriptive style of 'The End of the Tether' leads to. In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway asserts: '[t]he dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water' (192). Carlos Baker explains this as follows: '[t]he visible areas glint with the hard factual lights of the naturalist. The supporting structure, submerged and mostly invisible except to the patient explorer, is built with a different kind of precision—that of the poet-symbolist' (117). I would interpret this as follows: 'only one-eighth of [the iceberg] being above water' indicates a descriptive style which excludes explanatory analyses, while the fact that the remaining invisible part of the iceberg occupies seven-eighths of its total amount suggests that it takes a considerable amount of ingenuity on the part of novelists to make this descriptive style yield rich literary effects. As to the nature of Hemingway's achievement *The New York Times* wrote: '[n]o amount of analysis can convey the quality of *The Sun Also Rises*. It is a truly gripping story, told in a lean, hard, athletic narrative prose that puts more literary English to shame'. Indeed, Hemingway's singularity is that he devised an original way to reconcile a descriptive style with a full exploration of subject matter. By comparison, in the case of 'The End of the Tether', the uncertainty as to how the last phase of Whalley's life is meant to be

judged leaves the reader somewhat adrift, and this is not complemented by any other element so that the scarcity of guides for the reader's judgment can be turned into a virtue. Some might celebrate, like Mulry, the indeterminacy as to the reader's expected reaction to Whalley's fate as embodying Conrad's 'modern, even post-modern, vision' that enriches the novella by rendering its reader at once 'free' and 'cast off' ('Untethered' 21-8). However, critics' relative disregard for the novella⁶⁰ seems to suggest that this kind of defence, which is convincingly applied to Conrad's other works with similar indeterminacy such as *Lord Jim*, is not quite relevant to 'The End of the Tether'. The result of the novella's descriptive style seems to be insufficient exploration of its subject matter rather than the achievement of Hemingwayesque richness.

In the discussion so far we have examined the contrasting cases of authorial attitude in these two third-person short fictions: the combination of judgmentalness and instability in the authorial attitude towards Hervey creates the impression of confusion in 'The Return', whereas the absence of clear authorial judgment about the last phase of Whalley's life causes the ambiguity of 'The End of the Tether' to be bewildering rather than rich and even to incur the possibility of pointlessness. In contrast to this, 'Typhoon', in line with the greater critical attention and acclaim given to it, exhibits fewer signs of flaws or

⁶⁰ Frederick Karl asserts that 'to go from "Heart of Darkness" to "The End of the Tether" is to go from a universally tragic experience to a rather tepid personal one' (140).

problems in its authorial attitude towards the narrative content. However, as my argument will show, the behaviour of Conrad as implied author in the novella, especially in its final chapter, provides us with some clue to the features of such a problematic and complex novel as *Nostramo*.

3. 'Typhoon'⁶¹

Conrad's account of the conception of 'Typhoon' in his Author's Note suggests MacWhirr's centrality in the novella. When he was searching for some subject for a novella, 'the instance of a steamship full of returning coolies from Singapore to some port in northern China', which he had heard years before, occurred to his recollection (v). 'Yet', he states, 'it was but a bit of a sea yarn after all' (vi). He goes on:

I felt that to bring out its deeper significance which was quite apparent to me, something other, something more was required;⁶² a leading motive that would harmonize all these violent noises, and a point of view that would put all that elemental fury into its proper place. What was needed of

⁶¹ 'Typhoon' was begun in 1899 and completed in 1902. It was serialised in *Pall Mall Magazine* in 1902, and was published in *Typhoon and Other Stories* in 1903.

⁶² Since the completed novella focuses on the personality of MacWhirr rather than on the ship's voyage itself, it is rather hard to say what Conrad means by the 'deeper significance' of the sea yarn he has heard of. From the phrases 'all these violent noises' and 'all that elemental fury', we might infer that the 'deeper significance' indicates something like the human impact of the ship's desperate struggle against the ferocity of nature.

course was Captain MacWhirr. Directly I perceived him I could see that he was the man for the situation (vi).

As Christof Wegelin rightly observes, '[t]he story opens and closes with the question of the captain's character; that question is thematically central' (45). Everything in the novella can be said to serve to portray MacWhirr's character. His 'feat'—surviving the typhoon and handling the problem of the coolies' dispossessed silver coins—is a vehicle through which his character is explored. Other major characters in the novella function as a kind of foil for MacWhirr. Jukes's imaginativeness, which makes him over-anxious about the coolies' possible uprising, contrasts with MacWhirr's total lack of imagination.⁶³ The juxtaposition of Solomon Rout's cheerful and affectionate wife with Mrs. MacWhirr's apathetic attitude towards her husband is also to be understood in the context of this contrastive strategy.

The opening of 'Typhoon' brings into focus MacWhirr's character: 'Captain MacWhirr, of the steamer *Nan-Shan*, had a physiognomy that, in the order of material appearances, was the exact counterpart of his

⁶³ Critics have pointed out the similarity between Jukes's and Jim's imaginativeness. Stephen K. Land, for example, argues that Jukes 'is a paler version of Jim, a young, relatively inexperienced, but highly promising officer endowed with a hyperactive imagination' (93). H. M. Daleski similarly observes that 'Jukes is a potential Jim, a man who would indubitably have gone the same way of Jim were it not for the grace of his captain' (107). However, it is also to be noted that Jukes is a much better officer than Jim as he does not have any obsession about achieving the heroism of 'light holiday literature' (*Lord Jim* 7).

mind: it presented no marked characteristics of firmness or stupidity; *it had no pronounced characteristics whatever*; it was simply ordinary, irresponsive, and unruffled' (3, emphasis added). Though making clear the centrality of MacWhirr's character in the novella, this opening is peculiar in that it denies any 'pronounced characteristics' to the protagonist's mind. Francis A. Hubbard states that '[i]ntroducing someone by saying things about him is familiar enough, but the things that are said are ordinarily meant and taken to distinguish the person in some way, to set him apart so that he can thereafter be identified, referred to, or understood' (3). He observes that the introduction of MacWhirr in 'Typhoon' violates that convention (3). Although presently we see that MacWhirr does possess distinctive characteristics—literalism and total lack of imagination—the novella's focus on the exceedingly simple nature of the protagonist is an intriguing point in itself. Some critics have expressed bewilderment about this. Joseph Kolupke wonders: '[w]hy did Conrad invest such a heavy significance in the half-comic figure of MacWhirr?' (508) Similarly, Guerard asks: 'how far does Conrad mean to carry this celebration of the uncomplicated and unintellectual man? Is it even a celebration at all?' (297) The reader's interest necessarily concentrates on what MacWhirr's peculiar personality will bring about and how the novella will treat him, as well as how and if his character undergoes change of one kind or another.

Despite this simplicity of MacWhirr, however, critics have made

divergent evaluations of him. Critics' opinion of MacWhirr generally took a favourable turn in the 1980s. Whereas early critics simply saw 'Typhoon' as 'hymning' 'Captain MacWhirr's heroism on the Nan-Shan', in the 1960s and the 1970s some presented more critical views of him through juxtaposition of MacWhirr and Jukes (Hewitt 112; Moser, *Achievement and Decline* 13). In *Conrad's Short Fiction* (1969), Graver, for example, calls MacWhirr 'a blunt and unimaginative captain' while he commends Jukes as 'an energetic, reasonably imaginative man' (95; 96). Paul S. Bruss, in an article entitled "'Typhoon": The Initiation of Jukes' (1973), asserts that MacWhirr, incapable of a 'penetrating insight into the metaphysical' and lacking the 'imaginative subtlety' necessary for 'awakening and change', 'becomes the contrast for the perceptive and rapidly maturing Jukes—who will become, after the benefit of more sea experience, a captain with a superiority beyond the dull MacWhirr's reach' (54). This downgrading of MacWhirr in comparison with Jukes was subsequently modified in the 1980s and the 1990s by those critics who called attention to the narrative's ironisation of Jukes, which concomitantly involved a re-evaluation of MacWhirr. Schwarz, for instance, argues in *Conrad: 'Almayer's Folly' to 'Under Western Eyes'* (1980):

Conrad's omniscient voice creates the process of discovering the value of MacWhirr's one-minded service to a code and the shortcomings of Jukes's aesthetic imagination when confronted with a situation requiring instinctive reactions. He places the ingenuous reader in the position of

misunderstanding MacWhirr and Jukes prior to the crisis, and then gradually awakens him to the actual value of the two characters (111-2).

Lothe similarly points out in *Conrad's Narrative Method* (1989) that the narrator invites the reader first to share Jukes's perspective and then to shift their sympathy from Jukes to MacWhirr through describing the two characters' different attitudes towards the coolies (109-11). His commendation of MacWhirr's 'increased self-knowledge' at the ending finds its counterpart in Hawthorn's emphasis in *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (1990) on the 'educative power of experience' MacWhirr embodies (114; 222).⁶⁴

Yet the case is that this re-evaluation of MacWhirr provides only a partial picture of the trend in criticism of 'Typhoon' over the past several decades. Some critics after the 1970s remain sceptical about the merits of MacWhirr. As I will mention later again, Bonney, in *Thorns & Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction* (1980), offers an exceedingly unfavourable view of MacWhirr as he calls the captain a 'psychic cripple' (37). Billy's argument in *A Wilderness of Words: Closure and Disclosure in Conrad's Short Fiction* (1997) is neither positive nor negative towards MacWhirr as he examines the complexity involved in the combination of authorial ironisation of the captain and the evocation of the reader's sympathy for him. Another thing to be noted is the critique of MacWhirr from postcolonial perspectives that

⁶⁴ As will be discussed later, MacWhirr's 'self-knowledge' and 'education' are questioned by the fact that he seems to change very little after his experience.

has flourished over the past few decades. Kolupke, for instance, examines MacWhirr's 'racist' aspects and regards the *Nan-Shan* as a 'ship-of-state, a political microcosm' (506; 504). He contends that 'the story must *not* be taken merely as a realistic description of a storm', disputing the simplicity of the novella's theme which some critics have argued for (502).⁶⁵ Ross G. Forman, in an argument that connects the image of the mob the novella evokes in its description of the typhoon with the Yellow Peril which was then commonly invoked in relation to Western countries' involvement with China, argues that the 'British sense of fair play and justice', which MacWhirr's handling of the coolies' dispossessed silver coins seems to embody, was 'often used to justify the white man's burden' (404). He suggests that MacWhirr, engaged in the British imperial project as captain of the ship that carries coolies from the 'tropical colonies' to 'the treaty port of Fu-chau', embodies the Eurocentric ideology of the time.

It is appropriate, therefore, to say that critical assessment of MacWhirr remains largely unsettled. Nisha Manocha's recent argument that 'Typhoon' is 'anti-teleological' in that it 'resolve[s] neither the question of Captain MacWhirr's ability with respect to his handling of the ship during the typhoon nor the human problem below her deck' can be said to express this condition (43). On the other hand,

⁶⁵ Bonney, for example, asserts that the world of the novella is 'one which admits little epistemological confusion' and that 'in *Typhoon* there is little question of locating "meaning"' (*Thorns & Arabesques* 33). Guerard similarly remarks that the novella 'requires no elaborate interpreting' (294).

MacWhirr's 'feat', namely his handling of the typhoon and the coolies' dispossessed silver dollars, seems to leave room for re-examination here. As I have mentioned earlier, MacWhirr's 'feat' is a vehicle through which his character is explored, and how these actions are to be judged has been one of the major issues in the critical discussions of the novella. Before the *Nan-Shan* encounters the typhoon, MacWhirr notices a fall of the barometer which is 'of a nature ominously prophetic' 'taking into account the excellence of the instrument, the time of the year, and the ship's position on the terrestrial globe' (6). However, he spares no thought for that except: 'There must be some uncommonly dirty weather knocking about' (6). When the symptoms of the typhoon start to appear and Jukes proposes that the course of the ship should be altered, he dismisses Jukes's plan claiming that Captain Wilson's 'storm strategy', which he has been reading, is 'the maddest thing' (34). MacWhirr not only asserts his official responsibilities to the ship's owners and rejects the idea of altering the ship's course which would consume extra coal; he also despises the strategy of dodging a typhoon itself: "A gale is a gale, Mr. Jukes," resumed the Captain, "and a full-powered steam-ship has got to face it" (34).

MacWhirr thus makes the *Nan-Shan* run head-on into the huge typhoon. Some critics, like Kolupke, argue that MacWhirr's rejection of Captain Wilson's storm strategy is right in the light of his success (506). However, the majority of critics see MacWhirr's dismissal of the book more negatively. Daleski writes that MacWhirr's decision 'must

be adjudged rash to the point of irresponsibility' (107). Bonney is especially critical; he calls MacWhirr's rejection of the storm strategy 'gross inadequacy', 'pathetic absurdity', and 'insanity' (*Thorns & Arabesques* 33; 34; 36). In fact, in the text there is little vindication of MacWhirr's rejection of Captain Wilson's strategy. His words: 'A gale is a gale' exhibit ignorance and lack of imagination rather than bravery, and, as Bonney points out, MacWhirr's opposition to the book is described as approaching the realm of superstition: '[h]e had indeed been making his confession of faith' (*Thorns & Arabesques* 41; *Typhoon* 35). The effect of this confession, we are told, 'was to make Jukes, on the other side of the door, stand scratching his head for a good while' (35). MacWhirr's logic is indeed strange. He says to Jukes:

If the weather delays me—very well. There's your log-book to talk straight about the weather. But suppose I went swinging off my course and came in two days late, and they asked me: 'Where have you been all that time, Captain?' What could I say to that? 'Went around to dodge the bad weather,' I would say. 'It must've been dam' bad,' they would say. 'Don't know,' I would have to say; 'I've dodged clear of it.' See that, Jukes? I have been thinking it all out this afternoon (34).

This is almost a sophistry: according to this logic one would never be able to avoid a danger whose probable damage he or she cannot prove afterwards. Also, as Kolupke rightly observes, MacWhirr's dismissal of Captain Wilson's theory can be seen partly as deriving from his being 'overwhelmed by the complexity of the advice in the book': MacWhirr,

we are told, 'ended by becoming contemptuously *angry with such a lot of words and with so much advice, all head-work and supposition, without a glimmer of certitude*' (Kolupke 505; Conrad 33, emphasis added). Billy similarly points out that '[MacWhirr's] feeble intellect wades into technical verbiage that is too deep for him to fathom', and diagnoses that his rejection of the book 'testif[ies] to his ignorance of navigation' (102).

It is questionable, furthermore, whether the survival of the *Nan-Shan* is to be regarded as a 'feat' at all. As some critics suggest, the ship's overcoming the typhoon is enabled largely by mere luck; apart from rigorously sticking to his normal duty, MacWhirr virtually does nothing special that contributes to the ship's survival (Bonney, *Thorns & Arabesques* 41; Manocha 43). When the *Nan-Shan* finally manages to arrive at its destination, the appearance of the ship is described as follows:

She seemed, indeed, to have been used as a running target for the secondary batteries of a cruiser. A hail of minor shells could not have given her upper works a more broken, torn, and devastated aspect: and she had about her the worn, weary air of ships coming from the far ends of the world ... She was incrustated and gray with salt to the trucks of her masts and to the top of her funnel; as though (as some facetious seaman said) "the crowd on board had fished her out somewhere from the bottom of the sea and brought her in here for salvage" (90).

Catherine Rising aptly raises the possibility that the *Nan-Shan* is beyond repair (128-9). Recalling the fact that the ship 'had been built

in Dumbarton less than three years before', we can even say that if the *Nan-Shan* is in truth beyond repair at the end of the story, MacWhirr's decision to ignore the storm strategy and run head-on into the typhoon amounts to a folly (7).

The other component of MacWhirr's 'feat', his distribution of the coolies' dispossessed silver coins, also influences the reader's assessment of Macwhirr's character. While the *Nan-Shan* struggles its way through the typhoon, the silver dollars which each of the coolies kept in his wooden chest get scattered, which plunges the 'tween deck into a chaotic anarchy. Hearing this news Macwhirr orders Jukes to go to the 'tween deck and collect the coins. After the ship comes out of the typhoon, he distributes the collected coins equally to each of the coolies. Jukes states in the letter to his friend: 'all the coolies having worked in the same place and for the same length of time,⁶⁶ he reckoned he would be doing the fair thing by them as near as possible if he shared all the cash we had picked up equally among the lot' (101). Three dollars that were left after the distribution were given to the three most damaged coolies. The presence of the two hundred coolies is significant as the major characters' attitudes towards them affect the reader's view of those characters. The narrator's description of the coolies in Chapter I is notable in this context:

⁶⁶ As I will address shortly, those coolies have *not* worked in the same place and for the same length of time. Jukes and MacWhirr homogenise those Chinese workmen.

every single Celestial of them was carrying with him all he had in the world—a wooden chest with a ringing lock and brass on the corners, containing the savings of his labours: some clothes of ceremony, sticks of incense, a little opium maybe, bits of nameless rubbish of conventional value, and a small hoard of silver dollars, toiled for in coal lighters, won in gambling-houses or in petty trading, *grubbed out of earth, sweated out in mines, on railway lines, in deadly jungle, under heavy burdens—amassed patiently, guarded with care, cherished fiercely* (7, emphasis added).

The suggestion of the narrator's sympathy with the coolies' hard work in this early passage establishes them as a kind of touchstone for the major characters in the novella.⁶⁷ For example, the reader's sympathy towards Jukes is reduced by his patronising attitude towards the Bun Hin's Chinese interpreter, though technically he is not one of those coolies. With a sense of 'racial superiority' Jukes talks to Bun Hin's clerk in ridiculous pidgin English:

“No catchee rain down there—savee?” pointed out Jukes. “Suppose all'ee same fine weather, one piecie coolie-man come topside,” he pursued, warming up imaginatively. “Make so—Phooooo!” He expanded his chest and blew out his cheeks. “Savee, John? Breathe—fresh air. Good. Eh? Washee him piecie pants, chow-chow top-side—see, John?” (13)

⁶⁷ In Chapter 3 I will make a similar point about the pilgrims in the *Patna*. In the description of the pilgrims we can discern the extra-heterodiegetic narrator's mild celebration of them as in the case of the coolies in 'Typhoon'. More importantly, the description makes it clear that the primary narrator is politically more liberal than Marlow who plays down the racial and political implications of Jim's misconduct in the *Patna* incident. See pages 175-7.

Jukes's derogatory attitude is evident here, and the Chinese interpreter's reaction to his pidgin English and 'exuberant motions of eating rice and washing clothes' is described as follows:

the Chinaman, who concealed his distrust of this pantomime under a collected demeanor tinged by a gentle and refined melancholy, glanced out of his almond eyes from Jukes to the hatch and back again. "Velly good," he murmured, in a disconsolate undertone, and hastened smoothly along the decks, dodging obstacles in his course (13-4).

On which side the narrator's sympathy lies is obvious. Throughout the text Jukes's racist aspect—he calls the coolies 'brutes'—serves to increase the distance between him and the reader (83).⁶⁸

MacWhirr's equal distribution of the silver dollars to the coolies—and his comment after having the dispossessed coins collected: 'Had to do what's fair'—establishes him as more liberal and fairer than Jukes (88). In the final letters in Chapter VI Rout and Jukes praise MacWhirr's handling of the problem: Rout tells his wife that the captain 'has done something rather clever'; Jukes admits to his friend that MacWhirr 'got out of it very well for such a stupid man' (96; 102).⁶⁹ As a result of such views, it may be easy for the reader to see

⁶⁸ A similar point can be made about Shaw in 'The Rescuer'. Shaw's racism is clearly presented as offensive, and the Malay helmsman's contempt for him makes the reader view him disapprovingly. See Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction*, pp. 169-71.

⁶⁹ I will address Jukes's condescension in calling MacWhirr 'such a stupid man' shortly.

MacWhirr's handling of the coolies' silver coins positively. However, it should be noted that he also calls the coolies 'only Chinamen' (88). When Jukes proposes that they should dodge the typhoon, calling the coolies 'our passengers', MacWhirr is scandalised: 'Never heard a lot of coolies spoken of as passengers before. Passengers, indeed!' (31) As the postcolonial criticisms I referred to earlier have noted, MacWhirr is subject to the Eurocentric ideology of the time, too, even though this is made less conspicuous by Jukes's more flagrant racism (6).

The novella provides another point that undermines MacWhirr's 'feat'. As I have quoted earlier, MacWhirr's equal distribution of the silver coins is based on the supposition that 'all the coolies [have] worked *in the same place* and for the same length of time' (101, emphasis added). But in Chapter I the authorial narrator has told us that the coolies are going back to Fo-kien 'after a few years of work in *various* tropical colonies' (6, emphasis added). Moreover, they have not been engaged in the same kind of work: their silver dollars were 'toiled for in coal lighters ... sweated out in mines, on railway lines, in deadly jungle' (7). These statements not only challenge MacWhirr's assumption that the coolies have worked 'in the same place' but also suggest the possibility that 'a few years' differs in each case. Although this does not mean that MacWhirr could have done something preferable to his equal distribution of the silver dollars, it does serve, together with his Eurocentrism, to check somewhat the reader's commendation of MacWhirr's heroic deed.

Not unlike *Lord Jim* whose last ten chapters consist of Marlow's letters to the 'privileged man', the final chapter of 'Typhoon' is mostly composed of letters written by the major characters to their family and friend. The two works are also similar in that their characters' letters finish the text without being enclosed by the authorial narrator's voice. Manocha writes that those letters in 'Typhoon' refuse to help us settle our opinion of what MacWhirr has achieved: they exist 'to accentuate the anti-teleological shape of the narrative, decidedly exploratory rather than final' (43). As we have seen, however, in Chapter VI the whole picture of MacWhirr's 'feat' is presented so that the reader is invited to question his deeds: the new-built *Nan-Shan* may have become beyond repair as a result of MacWhirr's decision to run head-on into the typhoon, and his distribution of the coolies' silver dollars is shown to be based on inaccurate assumptions about the work undertaken by the coolies. As is illustrated by Manocha's recent commentary which emphasises the unresolved state of the questions concerning MacWhirr's deeds, critics have tended to overlook the deflation of MacWhirr's achievement which operates in the final chapter.

Is the ironisation of MacWhirr's achievement the dominant tone of the novella's ending, then? Not a few critics have noted that Jukes's attitude towards MacWhirr reverts to its initial state at the end.⁷⁰ Towards the end of Chapter V Jukes finds himself greatly encouraged

⁷⁰ See, for instances, Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment*, p. 232; Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 115.

by MacWhirr's firm determination to survive the typhoon, which marks a turning point in terms of the relationship between the two characters. In his letter at the end of the novella, however, we cannot observe this changed attitude of Jukes's any longer; while admitting MacWhirr's cleverness, he calls his captain 'such a stupid man' (102). Kolupke, for example, laments this: 'Jukes's final condescending judgment of MacWhirr as a "stupid man" represents a considerable weakness of character on his part—it is as if the truth he discovered in the moment of crisis has been replaced by his former glib notions, a blindness more reprehensible in the light of his new stock of experience' (507). Eberhard Griem similarly describes Jukes's experience as a 'failed initiation' and observes that his final patronisation of MacWhirr 'is both comical and deplorable in its obstinacy' (30). These critics may overlook a slight change in Jukes's view: though still seeing MacWhirr as 'a stupid man', he has now found that such a person can achieve a great thing, and that he had underestimated his captain's merits. We can discern Jukes's grudging respect for MacWhirr here. Yet it is undeniable that Jukes's attitude towards MacWhirr here is almost as patronising as in the beginning of the story. The effect of Jukes's deflation of MacWhirr's 'feat' by the epithet 'stupid' is considerable, especially since there is no authorial narrator's comment that encloses and relativises Jukes's letter.

However, what is happening in Chapter VI of 'Typhoon' is more complicated than just that. For one thing, the description of Mrs.

MacWhirr's callousness in the last chapter serves to reduce the distance between the reader and MacWhirr. She reads her husband's letter 'wearily' and 'perfunctorily', and is relieved to know that he is not coming back home yet (93; 94). Concealing this, she hypocritically says to her acquaintance on the street: 'He's not coming home yet. Of course it's very sad to have him away, but it's such a comfort to know he keeps so well' (95). She proceeds to remark: 'The climate there agrees with him', and the narrator comments ironically: she talked 'as if poor MacWhirr had been away touring in China for the sake of his health' (95-6). The adjective 'poor' points to the narrator's criticism of Mrs. MacWhirr and his sympathy with MacWhirr. In fact, the explicitly unfavourable way in which Mrs. MacWhirr is introduced — 'Mrs. Macwhirr (a pretentious person with a scraggy neck and a disdainful manner)' — indicates that her unpleasant character and her mistreatment of her husband themselves are a foil to evoke the reader's sympathy for MacWhirr (14).⁷¹ As Billy points out, the sympathy evoked for MacWhirr by the description of Mrs. MacWhirr in Chapter VI serves to counter the ironisation of him (97).

More important is the part of MacWhirr's letter which his wife

⁷¹ A similar schema is observable in 'Because of the Dollars'. In this short story there is a sort of tension between Davidson's friends and Mrs. Davidson, who takes a callous attitude towards her husband and distrusts his friends. Hollis, one of those friends who exhibits homosocial solidarity with Davidson, hates Mrs. Davidson and defends Davidson's act from her criticism, which serves to increase the reader's sympathy with the protagonist.

fails to find and only the steward gets the opportunity to read: '[i]t did not occur to her to turn back overleaf to look. She would have found it recorded [on the other side of the leaf] that between 4 and 6 A. M. on December 25th, Captain MacWhirr did actually think that his ship could not possibly live another hour in such a sea, and that he would never see his wife and children again' (94). This is arguably the most moving moment in the novella as it reveals that MacWhirr, who has appeared to be an obtuse and stolid man, in fact possesses sincere affection for his family and has turned his thoughts to them as he prepared himself for death during his struggle against the typhoon. This restrained expression of MacWhirr's affection is made poignant by its contrast with Mrs. MacWhirr's callous indifference towards him. At this revelation of MacWhirr's inner state, the reader's attitude towards him is made more appreciative than at the beginning of the story.

A point to be noted here is that it is not so much MacWhirr himself as the way the reader sees him that changes through the story. Critics have disagreed about whether MacWhirr undergoes a substantial change. Some contend that MacWhirr matures through the ordeal of the typhoon. As I have mentioned earlier, Hawthorn and Lothe emphasise respectively 'the educative powers of experience' which MacWhirr benefits from and his 'increased self-knowledge' (Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad* 222; Lothe 114). Hubbard similarly writes that MacWhirr 'has seen the possibility of losing his ship and has thereby

been forced to give up his belief that only present facts matter'; 'what he must imagine', Hubbard proceeds to argue, 'includes catastrophe, total destruction, the end of the world, and that changes him' (16). Others deny any positive change on MacWhirr's part. Bonney, consistent with his highly negative view of MacWhirr, asserts that he 'reaps few lasting refinements in understanding' after his experience of the typhoon (*Thorns & Arabesques* 49). In a similar vein Guerard observes that 'Captain MacWhirr remains to the end incapable of genuine introspection' (299). In fact, the text seems to allow both of those readings. It is true that MacWhirr's ignorance about the destructive power of a typhoon is replaced by a degree of awe of nature, and that he is forced, during his struggle against the typhoon, to abandon his former disregard for the future. But it is to be noted that MacWhirr refuses to accept Captain Wilson's strategy even after he realises that he had underestimated the danger of the coming typhoon. Towards the end of Chapter V, where he encourages Jukes to face out the difficulty before him, MacWhirr denies the effectivity of the book to him: 'These books are only good to muddle your head and make you jumpy'; 'We must trust [the *Nan-Shan*] to go through [the storm] and come out on the other side. That's plain and straight. There's no room for Captain Wilson's storm-strategy here' (87). Even if we take into consideration that the strategy of dodging a typhoon no longer works once the ship enters the eye of the typhoon, MacWhirr's words here indicate that his anti-intellectual attitude has not changed. His

advice to Jukes: 'Don't you be put out by anything ... Keep her facing it. They may say what they like, but the heaviest seas run with the wind. Facing it—always facing it—that's the way to get through ... Face it. That's enough for any man', which only contains mere encouragement and in effect provides nothing practically helpful, well registers this, though the way it makes Jukes experience 'an access of confidence, a sensation that came from outside like a warm breath' and 'feel equal to every demand' is impressive as the climax of the novella (89). As I will discuss shortly, the final chapter of 'Typhoon' does not describe MacWhirr directly, which makes it difficult for the reader to judge how far, or if at all, he has changed after his experience of the typhoon. Given MacWhirr's extreme simplicity and unimaginativeness, it may well be that he has not undergone any substantial change at the ending. What is clearer and more essential than MacWhirr's possible change is the transformation of the way the reader sees him. We could formulate that the central effect 'Typhoon' achieves is what might be called a readerly pleasure involved in our enhanced appreciation of MacWhirr. As is clear in the episode in which MacWhirr fails to understand Jukes's protest against the newly-hoisted Siamese flag, in the early part we are invited to see him with an amused, patronising eye. However, as we witness how such an egregiously unimaginative and stolid man is seriously unsettled by the typhoon and how affectionate he in fact has been towards his family, we find that much of our former patronising attitude towards MacWhirr has been replaced

by our appreciation of his character.⁷² This enhancement of the reader's evaluation of MacWhirr serves to counter the ironisation of his 'feat' in the final chapter which I have discussed.

This observation helps us consider the whole structure of the novella. As the story moves from the introduction of the major characters through the *Nan-Shan's* encounter with the typhoon to its arrival at Fu-chau, the tone of 'Typhoon' basically moves from comic to heroic and then back to comic again. Conrad states in his letter to J. B. Pinker that '[Typhoon] is my first attempt at treating a subject jocularly so to speak' (*CL2* 304). The jocular tone of the novella (which Conrad testifies to) understandably recedes during the *Nan-Shan's* struggle against the typhoon. In the climactic scene towards the end of Chapter V, in which MacWhirr encourages Jukes and expresses his wish not to lose his ship, the mode of narrative is not comic but heroic. In the following passage MacWhirr thinks of the possibility of death as he tries to put the matchbox into its usual place in the corner of the shelf:

before he removed his hand it occurred to him that perhaps he would never have occasion to use that box any more. The vividness of the thought checked him and for an infinitesimal fraction of a second his fingers closed again on the small object as though it had been the symbol of all these little habits that chain *us* to the weary round of life (85, emphasis added).

⁷² In this sense we can answer in the affirmative the question Guerard has posed: does 'Typhoon' present a celebration of MacWhirr (297)?

This is the only occasion in the text in which the narrator uses the pronoun 'us', and its effect is that the reader is invited to share MacWhirr's perspective. Together with the fact that here MacWhirr has been forced to abandon his former disregard for everything beyond immediate and tangible facts, the narrator's use of the pronoun 'us' allows the reader's empathy with MacWhirr which was impossible while the tone of the novella was comic. In the final paragraph of Chapter V the typhoon is described explicitly anthropomorphically:

The hurricane, with its power to madden the seas, to sink ships, to uproot trees, to overturn strong walls and dash the very birds of the air to the ground, had found this taciturn man in its path, and, doing its utmost, had managed to wring out a few words. Before the renewed wrath of winds swooped on his ship, Captain MacWhirr was moved to declare, in a tone of vexation, as it were: "I wouldn't like to lose her." (90)

The grand depiction of the typhoon's confrontation with MacWhirr here makes him appear not quite the same person as we saw through the jocular tone before the *Nan-Shan's* encounter with the typhoon. Invoking again Hemingway's 'iceberg theory' which I referred to in my discussion of 'The End of the Tether', we could appreciate MacWhirr's simple remark at the end of the above quotation as an achievement of a Hemingwayesque richness through understatement. Billy is right in noting that in this part 'Conrad lures us into wholehearted approval of the Captain's heroic capabilities' (104-5).

As has been mentioned earlier, in the final chapter, which jumps

to a time after the *Nan-Shan* has survived the typhoon, we are provided with materials to ironise MacWhirr's 'feat' with, and Jukes reverts, though not completely, to his initial patronising attitude towards him. The description of the mutinous second mate at the port and how the major characters' letters are read is, as in Chapter I, humorous. These things seem to indicate that the tone of the novella, which has departed from comicality during the *Nan-Shan's* struggle against the typhoon, returns to its initial state in the final chapter. However, given how the reader's view of MacWhirr changes through the story, it is more appropriate to say that the tone of the ending of 'Typhoon' is subtler than a simple restoration of the comicality with which the novella began. As our attitude towards MacWhirr is transformed from amused patronisation to a degree of respect, some portion of the initial comicality of the novella, which was inseparable from MacWhirr's laughable character, disappears concomitantly.

This subtlety created by the blend of our increased appreciation of MacWhirr and the partial restoration of the comicality is an essential part of the impression 'Typhoon' leaves in the reader's mind. This recognition helps us understand the slight defocusing of MacWhirr at the ending of the novella. Interestingly enough, Chapter VI contains no direct description of MacWhirr after the event by the authorial narrator. His distribution of the silver dollars to the coolies after the ship's survival of the typhoon is presented to the reader through Jukes's letter to his friend. MacWhirr's letter to his wife, in which his inner

state during his ordeal is revealed, is filtered through the narrator's mediation so that the reader cannot access his letter directly. While his wife 'glance[s] wearily here and there into the many pages', MacWhirr's words that the reader gets are fragmentary: '. . . They are called typhoons . . . The mate did not seem to like it . . . Not in books . . . Couldn't think of letting it go on . . .'; '. . . Do what's fair . . . Miserable objects . . . Only three, with a broken leg each, and one . . . Thought had better keep the matter quiet . . . hope to have done the fair thing . . .' (93; 94). While this constitutes a telegraphic summary of the story, it is notable that the text of his letter itself is not provided here. The most moving part of his letter, which I quoted earlier, is delivered through the narrator's indirect discourse beginning with: '[s]he would have found it recorded [on the other side of the leaf] that ...' (94). These things make us wonder if the ending of the novella screens MacWhirr from our eyes. Whereas we could say that his letter to his wife tells us almost as much about MacWhirr's interiority as the rest of the text does, it is also true that MacWhirr after his struggle against the typhoon is slightly defocused in the final chapter of 'Typhoon'. Some critics have addressed this point. Billy remarks that it is rather 'surprising' and 'anticlimactic' that we are not told in the last chapter about the detail of MacWhirr's victory over the typhoon (98). Kaoru Yamamoto argues that in the final chapter the narrator avoids making a direct assessment of MacWhirr in his own voice by receding from the foreground and having other characters judge him in their letters

(19-20).

I have mentioned earlier that although MacWhirr's extreme stolidity leads us to infer that he has changed little after his experience of the typhoon, the text does not provide enough evidence for us to form a conclusion on that matter. The slight defocusing of MacWhirr in the final chapter undoubtedly contributes to this uncertainty. If the narrative had squarely focused on MacWhirr after the ship's survival of the typhoon and provided a direct depiction of him, it is quite likely that MacWhirr would be shown to have changed little after the experience. This would cancel out some of the reader's increased appreciation of him and amount to a detraction from the subtle impression of the ending which is enabled by the complication of the novella's comicality through the reader's re-evaluation of MacWhirr. In other words, the slight defocusing of MacWhirr in the final chapter of 'Typhoon' derives from the need to preserve the novella's subtle effect on its reader. That requirement, in turn, is attributable to the peculiarity of the novella's subject matter—MacWhirr's extremely unimaginative stolidity which almost pre-empts the possibility of his growth through the ordeal.⁷³

We can observe a similar phenomenon in *Nostromo* where the expansion of international capitalism, the novel's primary subject matter, is defocused at the end. I will argue in Chapter 4 that the particular strategy the novel employs to avoid the thorough exploration of its subject matter constitutes one reason why some critics hesitate to

⁷³ Allan Simmons aptly calls MacWhirr 'an unlikely hero' (*Joseph Conrad* 66).

recognise *Nostramo* as Conrad's unadulterated magnum opus. In the case of 'Typhoon', it is uncertain whether the slight defocusing of MacWhirr at the ending is to be problematised at all. What can be said is that it serves to obscure the authorial attitude towards MacWhirr. Whereas the materials to undermine MacWhirr's 'feat' are provided in the final chapter, some of the reader's increased appreciation of him is preserved thanks to this defocusing. As a result, at the ending of the novella the reader is left unsure how far MacWhirr is ironised or celebrated by the author. This unclarity of the authorial attitude, as should be clear from my argument so far, contributes to the subtle impression the novella leaves in the reader's mind. In this sense we can say, in line with Lothe, that Conrad was 'wise' in keeping the authorial attitude obscure at the ending (115). Compared with the narrative instability in 'The Return' which caused the impression of confusion and the over-restrained exercise of the authorial judgment in 'The End of the Tether' that led to the insufficient exploration of its subject matter, in 'Typhoon' Conrad seems to handle his authorial attitude—or the defocusing of that attitude—more dexterously.

Chapter 2

The Impasse of ‘The Rescuer’ and Incoherence in Authorial Attitude

*

The Rescue (1920) was published as one of Conrad’s last novels between *The Arrow of Gold* (1919) and *The Rover* (1923), but it was at the start of his career—from 1896 to 1899—that Conrad wrote the original version of the first half of the novel. As is well known amongst Conrad scholars, the production of this third novel involved an immense artistic difficulty and caused the novelist to abandon it for nearly two decades. In completing the novel later in his career Conrad not only wrote the entire second half but also made innumerable alterations to the original version, which means that the first half of the published novel is quite different from the text Conrad left unfinished in his early career. The initial version of the first half of the novel, which was entitled ‘The Rescuer’, has survived as a manuscript.⁷⁴ As

⁷⁴ ‘The Rescuer’, MS Ashley 4787. The manuscript is now in the British Library. There are numerous erasures and additions in the manuscript. In writing this chapter I opted to concentrate on the final version of the text: i.e., I did not pay any particular attention to some sentences having been added after the initial writing, and I chose not to consider the sentences Conrad crossed out. Although those additions and erasures are undoubtedly an interesting material for potential analyses, a minute study of the genesis of the novel lies outside the interest of my thesis.

it is unaffected by Conrad's later revision and records his early struggle vividly, the manuscript provides us with much insight into the problems Conrad the novelist faced before he entered the most productive phase of his career.⁷⁵ Some critics have made close comparisons between the manuscript and the published novel,⁷⁶ but considering the huge potential of 'The Rescuer' for helping to illuminate some aspects of the artistic development in Conrad's early to middle career, we must say the manuscript has not been given due attention. In this chapter I will attempt to identify the causes of Conrad's early-career failure to complete the novel and, through that process, aim to consider further

⁷⁵ Critics have disagreed about the dating of the later part of the manuscript. John Dozier Gordan and Moser believe that much of Part IV of the manuscript dates from 1916, whereas G. B. Ursell and Hampson (following Ursell) attribute the entire manuscript to the period 1896-9 (Gordan, *Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist* (1941); Moser, "The Rescuer" Manuscript: A Key to Conrad's Development and Decline' (1956); Ursell, 'Conrad's Early Writing' (Diss. University of London, 1973); Hampson, *Betrayal and Identity* (1992)). It is effectively impossible to decide with certainty whether Conrad's later reworking on the novel is reflected in the last part of the manuscript or not. However, the present thesis adopts Ursell and Hampson's theory mostly because of the anticipation of Kurtzian idealism in Lingard's speech in the last part of the manuscript, which I will discuss in detail in this chapter. It is unlikely, I think, that Conrad, after the publication of *Chance* and *Victory* and along with his composition of *The Arrow of Gold*, should rigorously attempt to pursue his early motif of the dangerous fusion between political idealism and egoism in *The Rescue*.

⁷⁶ See for instance Moser, "The Rescuer" Manuscript: A Key to Conrad's Development and Decline' (1956); Juliet McLauchlan, 'Why Did Conrad Abandon the Manuscript of *The Rescue*?' (1992).

the issue of authorial attitude in Conrad's third-person fiction. The primary object of my analysis is 'The Rescuer', but I will also compare *The Rescue* with the manuscript in order to see what kind of solution the later Conrad chose in order to avoid the early problem and what that did to the completed novel.

1. The Exploration of Lingard's Idealistic Dream in the Last Eighty-Seven Pages of 'The Rescuer'

The plot and the chapter structure of 'The Rescuer' is basically the same as in the published novel, except that the manuscript ends at the scene in which Lingard and Edith depart the brig for the mainland—the scene equivalent to the end of Chapter 4 of Part IV in *The Rescue*. Part I introduces Lingard and relates Carter's visit to inform him of the stranded yacht; Part II moves back in time to present how Lingard's commitment to his Malay friends began; Part III: 'The Capture' (the first two parts are not given titles) describes Lingard's confrontation with the yacht people, his interview with Edith on the night of the same day, and the news of Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer's abduction brought by Carter; Part IV: 'The Point of Honour and the Point of Passion' (in *The Rescue* this title is given to Part V and this part is entitled 'The Gift of Shallows') relates Lingard's bringing Edith (and all the other crew members in the yacht) to his brig and his subsequent talk with her, which results in his decision to go to the mainland with her. Despite

the overall similarity between the two versions, however, ‘The Rescuer’ is quite different from *The Rescue* in some significant respects. As my interest in this chapter lies in the causes of Conrad’s early failure to complete the novel, in what follows my discussion will necessarily tend to address such elements of the manuscript that show its divergence from the published novel.

At the risk of oversimplification, I propose to define the most basic thematic component of ‘The Rescuer’ as the triangular split of Lingard’s loyalty between his commitment to Hassim and Immada, his romantic relationship with Edith Travers, and his obligation to save the yacht people—especially Mr. Travers and d’Alcacer⁷⁷ who have been abducted by Daman. Critics have offered different schemas of the novel. For example, Hampson remarks: ‘Lingard’s identity-for-the-other is the identity established earlier among his fellow-adventurers. Lingard’s commitment to Hassim and Immada, and his existence in the Malay world, represents a romantic dream-identity, that can perhaps best be interpreted as his identity-for-self’⁷⁸ and argues that ‘[t]he intrusion of the white world challenge[s] his identity-for-the-other, and the passionate impulse that Mrs Travers awakened [undermines] his

⁷⁷ In the earlier part of the manuscript he is called Linares rather than d’Alcacer.

⁷⁸ Hampson’s discussion of ‘The Rescuer’ in *Joseph Conrad: Betrayal and Identity* invokes the theoretical framework of R. D. Laing’s existential psychology. The definition of the terms Hampson uses is quoted from Aaron Esterson’s *Leaves of Spring* as follows: ‘[a] person’s definition of himself in relation to others is his identity-for-self. Whom he feels himself to be in the eyes of the other, or who he is in the eyes of the other, is his identity-for-the-other’ (qtd. in Hampson 10).

identity-for-self' (*Betrayal and Identity* 87; 97). Although it concerns the published novel rather than the manuscript, Geoffrey Harpham provides another schema contending that in *The Rescue* Lingard moves from his narcissistic love of his brig through his 'male-male bond' with Hassim to his 'male-female' bond with Edith (108).⁷⁹ My schema excludes Lingard's relationship with his European fellow-adventurers and his bond with the brig because they are treated as something preliminary to his more crucial engagements that are explored squarely in the text. On the other hand, I propose to distinguish between Lingard's obligation to save the yacht people and his fascination with Edith—the two elements which Hampson, for example, considers to merge—because the former concerns Lingard's racial allegiance to the people from his own country, whereas the latter is about his romantic love. Separating Lingard's duty to rescue the two white men from his fascination with Edith is more relevant in 'The Rescuer' than in *The Rescue*. As I will discuss in the next section, in the last part of 'The Rescuer', which is deleted in the published text, we are told of Edith's oscillation between her need to make Lingard rescue Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer on the one hand and her strong sympathy with Lingard that tempts her to surrender to Lingard's attraction on the other. Edith's

⁷⁹ This might appear to suggest some psychoanalytical models of development of desire, but Harpham contends that Lingard's move is not to be reduced to such simple schemas because '[his] desire had already befallen him, his self-sufficiency had already been compromised, long before Mrs. Travers and the prospect of adult heterosexuality had appeared on the horizon' (107).

internal conflict presented here not only makes her a more independent character than in *The Rescue* but also foregrounds the gulf between Edith and the yacht people.⁸⁰ This means that ‘The Rescuer’ implies much more strongly than the published novel the possibility to separate Lingard’s love for Edith from his obligation to rescue the yacht people. In any case, the novel has quite a schematic framework in which Lingard’s allegiance is split between different kinds of commitments.

In considering the cause of Conrad’s failure to complete ‘The Rescuer’, the exact nature of Lingard’s commitment to Hassim and Immada is the most crucial factor. Hampson notes as to *The Rescue*: ‘the nature of Lingard’s political ambitions is more ambiguous [than Jim’s]. Is this renegade behaviour (as in Clifford’s *A Freelance of Today*), or one-man imperialism on the model of Brooke?’ (*Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 163) In ‘The Rescuer’ the motive in Lingard’s commitment to Hassim and Immada is clearer than in the published novel. This difference mostly derives from the last part of the manuscript in which Lingard and Edith leave the brig for the mainland in a boat. Most of the revision Conrad carried out in publishing *The Rescue* takes the form of deletion of sentences from the manuscript. The distribution of the excisions is fairly even; however, as we approach the end of Chapter 6 of Part IV, the frequency and the

⁸⁰ It should be noted that Lingard does not (as the reader does) know Edith’s oscillation between him and the yacht people here because this part is mostly focalised through Edith. In the next section I will explore the subtleties created by the shifts of focalisation in the last part of the manuscript.

scale of the deletion clearly increase. Little of Chapter 7 survives in its original form in *The Rescue*, and chapters 8 to 10, which are the last ones of the manuscript, are entirely excised. On this evidence it is arguable that the problem Conrad had with this part of the manuscript had much to do with his failure to finish the novel in his early career. In this context, it is significant that McLauchlan, for example, addresses 'the last sixty-three pages of the manuscript' and analyses them closely, though the reason for her division of the text at page 536 is rather unaccountable (584). I would argue that it is more appropriate to expand the sample to the last eighty-seven pages and draw the dividing line at the beginning of Chapter 7 of Part IV, not only because after this the deletions become much more frequent and extensive but also because the narration, which had been moving between the brig and the boat in Chapter 6, focuses exclusively on Lingard and Edith in this part.

This part of the manuscript is significant because Lingard's idealistic dream that lies at the core of his commitment to Hassim and Immada is foregrounded here. McLauchlan's view of this part is quite negative:

[Conrad] was trying to explain, very explicitly, and at great and repetitive length the nature of Lingard's moral commitment to his young friends. There are long, long passages of mingled direct and indirect speech from Lingard, interspersed with Mrs. Travers's spoken or mental reactions. Now, in manuscript and first edition, Lingard has already told her the whole story. The effect, then, of the protracted

harangues is to embroil rather than clarify Lingard's moral struggle (585).

In effect, she regards Lingard's presentation of his dream to Edith in this part as a redundant and baffling repetition. But if we compare the first account of his story earlier in the novel with the second account in the last eighty-seven pages, we see that McLauchlan's argument is seriously flawed. Lingard's first exposition to Edith of his commitment to his Malay friends, which appears in Chapter 7 of Part III, is delivered through the narrator's mediation, denying the reader access to what he actually told her:

And then he spoke, liberating the visions of two years into the night in which she could see them as if outlined in words of fire. It was interesting like the discovery of a new world. She was being taken along the boundary of an exciting existence, and she looked into it through the guileless enthusiasm of the narrator. The heroic quality of the feelings concealed what was disproportionate and absurd in that gratitude, in that friendship, in that inexplicable devotion; and left to view only the workings of a human sympathy so vast as to possess the fascination of a monstrous sentiment. The headlong fierceness of purpose invested his obscure design of conquest with the proportion of a great enterprise (311-2).

The narrator's omniscient analysis which appears still earlier in Chapter 6 of Part II certainly notes the existence of Lingard's idealistic dream behind his commitment: '[h]e was, without knowing it in the least, making a complete confession of the secret idealism hidden under

the simplicity of his strength' (186). The narrator's anatomisation of Lingard's involvement with his Malay friends lasts for almost three pages here. However, compared with what comes in the last part of the manuscript, we must say that the exact nature of Lingard's idealistic dream behind his commitment is not fully clarified at this stage. This causes Lingard's commitment to Hassim and Immada to appear relatively vague until we reach the last part. In the scene in Chapter 5 of Part II in which Jörgenson tries to discourage Lingard from continuing his commitment to his Malay friends, what is foregrounded is Lingard's sense of obligation: the reasons he provides to dismiss Jörgenson's warning is that he is 'in debt'⁸¹ and that he has '[n]ever dropped anything in [his] life', which indicates that honour is in Lingard's mind here (177-8). As is suggested by the title 'The Point of Honour and the Point of Passion' given to Part IV (Part V in *The Rescue*), we can regard Lingard's concern for honour as the central motif of the novel which connects it with Conrad's other major works such as *Lord Jim*. However, further explanation of his motives which he offers in response to Jörgenson's persistent discouragement shows a degree of uncertainty: 'I must have meant something when I interfered, whether I knew it or not. I meant it then—and did not know it; I mean it now' (180). In addition to this, at the beginning of Part III when Lingard confronts Mr. Travers and the yacht people, the narrator notes

⁸¹ Although the straightforward reading would be to interpret this as moral debt, we could also take it literally given that Lingard's elaborate preparation for his project included purchase of weapons.

that the foundation of Lingard's commitment to Hassim and Immada is shaken: '[w]hat could he tell them? They could form no conception of his life, of his thoughts, for, even to himself, in these surroundings, the two years of ardent endeavour and hope suddenly were as though they had never been' (219). The unsettling of Lingard's self-assurance is partly attributable to the fact that Mr. Travers embodies precisely what he wanted to avoid in coming to the East: being called a 'casual adventurer' by Mr. Travers, Lingard retorts: 'if I hadn't been an adventurer I would have had to starve or work at home for such as you' (255). Besides this class hostility, Lingard's position as a renegade who has left the world of his own people in favour of his Malay friends may well cause him to feel his choice questioned by his encounter with the people from home. What I would like to call attention to is that this loss of conviction on Lingard's part happens *before* his romantic involvement with Edith and his obligation to rescue Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer arise: contrary to McLauchlan's argument that '[t]he *coup de foudre* ... causes Lingard to drop the power he unquestionably has', the foundation of his commitment to his Malay friends is already insecure before the events that threaten and challenge its execution most powerfully (582). This leads us to question the exact nature of Lingard's motive in his commitment to Hassim and Immada.

In the last eighty-seven pages of 'The Rescuer', in which Lingard expounds to Edith his involvement with Hassim and Immada again, this nebulosity is dispelled as the idealistic dream at the core of his

commitment is revealed thoroughly. Towards the end of Chapter 7 of Part IV, there is a description of the significance his commitment carries in terms of the formation of his identity, which obviously goes beyond a mere repetition of what has been told earlier:

It was nearly three years now since he had first gone along this shore in a boat uncertain of what he would find but at last finding what he wanted. And it was at night too ... it seemed to him that his life had commenced in that very moment. What went before did not count somehow. Now when he looked back he could not see anything he cared for beyond that night. It did not count. No, by Heavens, it did not count (538-9).

In Chapter 8 Lingard continues to relate his commitment to the Malay prince and princess. He depicts his oscillation between resolution and doubt that was intensified by the solitude in his project: '[t]here were nights when I thought I was a fool. There were mornings when opening my eyes I would say to myself: I can do no more—now's the time. But no—I held myself in ... I never thought of giving it up. I couldn't! But I wished I had never seen that land—you know' (551-2). The important part comes towards the end of the chapter after the detailed explanation of the history of the local political situation:

He meant to re-establish the confederacy. That was the idea ... It came suddenly, it had grown up slowly as he learned more of the country, of the people in his long talks with his friend and with the girl too. [Edith] perceived that the democratic side of the institutions had got strong hold of him. It was a free nation. Every man had a voice in the

choice of a supreme ruler; the village headmen attended the hereditary chiefs of districts to represent in great councils the interests of the common people ... he was coming to stop all [the confusions and injustice made by the usurpers].⁸² He was coming with the rightful rulers, to knit the people together and make them take their stand in the world like one man—like one man by heavens! (569-70)

Here the political dimension of Lingard's idealistic dream at the core of his commitment to Hassim and Immada is exhibited distinctly.⁸³ Around the beginning of Chapter 9 Lingard goes so far as to describe to Edith the national flag of the new Wajo country he has designed: '[t]he flag was yellow—Wajo colour—with a red diagonal stripe and a white star in the centre ... He explained that the star was a five-pointed star—a lone star just now but later on others could be added, one for every state of the confederacy' (575). He proceeds to talk about his dream to hoist that flag with his own hands for the newly established federation,

⁸² The second part I omitted in the quotation describes the usurpers' evil deeds such as introduction of debt slavery. The replaced part in the original sentence goes as follows: 'But he was coming to stop all that' (570).

⁸³ Interestingly enough, what is displayed here seems comparable to elective monarchy, a comparatively rare political system which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth adopted. Before the Third Partition obliterated Poland from the world map in 1795, aristocrats called *szlachta*, who occupied around 10 percent of the entire population, had the right to elect the king amongst themselves (See Zdzisław Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Life* (2007), pp3-4). Conrad was a descendant of *szlachta*, and the fact that Lingard's 'democratic' vision reflects Conrad's native country's political system might imply the novelist's personal commitment to the character. See Section 3 of this chapter for the discussion of Conrad's characterisation of Lingard.

and, when Edith suggests that he has other courses of action to take, he retorts: “No. Only this one. One to everyman. There are twenty ways of doing pretty well, very well indeed, uncommonly well, a hundred ways to make a name, to make a lot of money—aye! to make a lot of noise in the world too; but there is only one real chance for a man to get satisfied, to the full—to the last—to the end that’s sure to come” (577-8). It is also notable that the egoistic streak within his idealistic project is foregrounded more intensely here: ‘[a] great game! Worth playing ... The four states welded together by his hand ... His work! His!’ (570).

In Part II we have witnessed how Lingard, after being saved by Hassim, decides to commit himself to his Malay friends out of his sense of mission and how this sense of mission is fraught with egoism;⁸⁴ here the impression Lingard’s egoism gives to the reader is far more intense, almost to the extent that it smacks of megalomania. As I will explore in Section 3, the fusion of idealism and egoism observed in Lingard’s speech here suggests his connection with later Conradian dark protagonists such as Kurtz and Charles Gould. Compared with the omniscient narrator’s earlier analysis and Lingard’s first exposition of his plan to Edith, this part provides a much more concrete, direct, and vivid account of the nature of the idealistic dream at the core of his

⁸⁴ Hampson meticulously examines Lingard’s misreading of his Malay friends which initiated his commitment (*Cross-Cultural Encounters* 164-7). He summarises: ‘[t]hrough his egoism, [Lingard] reads their impassivity as trust, as an appeal to him to involve himself in their plight’ (166).

commitment. We should also note that Lingard, having been dispirited by the news of the kidnap of the Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer, appears in this part to have regained his vigour and shows reluctance to abandon his idealistic dream.

2. The Last Eighty-Seven Pages and Conrad's Failure to Finish the Novel

The question that arises with regard to what I have noted above is: does this extensive anatomisation of Lingard's egoistic idealism in the last eighty-seven pages have anything to do with Conrad's failure to finish the original novel? I would argue it does. This last part is conspicuous first and foremost because it was almost completely excised in the published novel, which suggests its connection with the impasse of the manuscript. Before examining the causal relation between those two, however, I would like to consider here a certain kind of discontinuity between the last part of the manuscript and the rest of the novel. This becomes clear, firstly, when we remember what Lingard says to Edith before they leave the brig for the mainland. When Edith suggests that Lingard should tell everything about his plan to Carter, who mistrusts his entire behaviour, Lingard remarks: '[y]esterday it might have been done. Only yesterday! I can't believe my own voice. Yesterday, did I say? Only six hours ago—only six hours ago I had something to tell. You heard it. And now it's gone.

Tell him! There's nothing to tell anymore' (484). This indicates that the capture of Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer, which decisively threatens the realisation of his project, has also undermined the foundation of his self-assurance, depriving him of the courage to display his scheme in the face of Carter's distrust. But as we have seen, in the last eighty-seven pages of the novel Lingard 'tells' a lot about himself to Edith again, which clearly contradicts his earlier statement quoted above. Another factor which contributes to the discontinuity between the two parts is that Lingard's motive in his commitment to Hassim and Immada expressed in the last eighty-seven pages is substantially different from its earlier version both in its intensity and quality. Earlier in the novel Lingard's commitment to his Malay friends suffered from a degree of uncertainty so that the exposure to Mr. Travers's scorn and distrust destroyed his confidence, while the abduction of Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer has threatened his resolution about the project further. In contrast to this, he is quite eloquent about his idealistic dream in the last eighty-seven pages of the novel, which creates the impression that he has suddenly become confident without any intelligible reason.

More importantly, when Lingard harangues Edith about his political dream mentioned in the previous section, showing the strong egoistic streak, 'the point of honour' seems to be almost absent from his mind. As I have already observed, the earlier part of the novel noted that initially honour lay at the centre of Lingard's commitment to his

Malay friends. The diluted presence of honour in Lingard's mind in the last part of the novel amounts to a considerable alteration to Lingard's motive in relation to his commitment. There is also the interesting suggestion of a gap between Lingard's conception of Immada as his faithful ally and what she actually feels about him. In the last part of the manuscript Lingard states proudly: 'she believes in me as a child believes in its father.'⁸⁵ There's nothing I cannot do. If I were to tell her I could pull the heaven nearer to the earth if I liked, she would believe me—I think' (564). However, as the reader has already been informed by this stage, Immada's trust in Lingard has been considerably affected by her suspicion of his betrayal: Jörgenson remarks in his letter that she in effect approved of Daman's plan to exclude Lingard from their project of restoration by imploring Jörgenson to give the arms to Daman, which effectively amounts to a forsaking of her obscure and irresolute benefactor (344). Considering that Lingard himself has read this letter and been informed of Immada's shaken trust earlier in the novel, his bragging about her faithfulness at this stage is rather strange. The most plausible

⁸⁵ This remark of Lingard smacks of colonial infantilisation, even though Immada really was a child when he first met her. Lingard sees Immada as a child and the text provides no description of Immada having romantic emotions towards him, but Edith suspects that their relationship contains some elements of heterosexual love. When she says to herself after her first long interview with Lingard: 'I am sure [Lingard's] fatherly affection is only one of his delusions', it is implied that she believes Lingard disguises his heterosexual love for Immada by claiming the pseudo father-daughter relationship (325).

interpretation would be that Lingard is oblivious of Immada's mistrust because of his excitement in his speech to Edith, but this little mitigates the contradiction between his representation of Immada's faithfulness and her actual mistrust of him.

I have examined above how the last part of the manuscript brings to the novel some elements which are not continuous with the previous part. This is not necessarily to be seen negatively since these contradicting elements had the potential for enhancing the complexity of the novel if they were handled successfully. Yet the fact remains that this discontinuity observed in the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript, together with the knowledge of their editorial fate, causes the last part to look like a discrete text which is to be considered separately from the rest of the manuscript.

There are several ways in which this focus on Lingard's idealism in the last eighty-seven pages can be connected with the possible cause of Conrad's failure to finish 'The Rescuer'. The first explanation, which is the simplest, is that the novel's plot reaches an impasse because Lingard shows a disinclination to abandon his idealistic dream. This can be observed through Edith's contemplation of their situation during the voyage to the mainland. Most of the last eighty-seven pages of the novel is focalised through Edith, and the rich depiction of her inner conflict there makes her a far more complex and round character than in *The Rescue*, the implications of which I will discuss later. On the one hand she reacts against Lingard's egoistic instinct

and tries to stick to her sense of duty to make him save her husband and d'Alcacer: '[Lingard] had made of [Hassim and Immada] two heroic beings to people the world of his creation that it was her task to destroy' (568). On the other hand, she also feels intensely attracted by his peculiarly pure soul and tempted to surrender to her sympathy with him: she estimates the strength of Lingard's instincts 'with a comprehension amounting to sympathy' (561). The following passage, which comes just after the description of Lingard's resolution not to trouble his own country even if he is arrested by the Dutch authorities, captures Edith's dilemma evocatively: '[the delicacy of his sentiment] seemed to make their intimacy more profound, their antagonism more hopeless. The strife between them would be more poignant ... his finest qualities stood in her path, guarding his desire, and invulnerable to her feeble hands like steel-clad knights armed cap-a-pie' (574). This ambivalence of Edith seems to be partly attributable to Conrad's indecision as to her attitude. As I will discuss shortly, the last part of the manuscript often implies Conrad's wavering between several potential courses for the novel to take; whether Edith should be sympathetic towards or critical of Lingard's dream seems to have been one of those difficult choices for Conrad.⁸⁶

Particularly illuminating in this context is Edith's apprehension about what will happen when they reach the main-land. In the

⁸⁶ In Section 4 of this chapter I will discuss Edith's role as Lingard's critic in 'The Rescuer'.

following passage the inescapable confrontation between Lingard's reluctance to abandon his dream and Edith's need to make him sacrifice it for the sake of the two white men is implied:

she ought to know that he could give in no more than the rocks assaulted by the sea could give in ... —Then what? She refused to follow the march of her thoughts ... Could this journey in the boat with this man never end? It would have been almost better than it never should, and if they were to sit thus side by side she did not wish him other than he was. But the journey must end—end in one way only (563).

A little later in the manuscript Edith muses over what Lingard could do about the conflicting missions after their arrival: '[i]t was conceivable he had some plan that would save [her husband and d'Alcacer] without endangering the work which was the object of his life. But had he? She told herself that she was beginning to doubt it' (585). It is obvious that Lingard does not have any such plan in 'The Rescuer', and it is very likely that Conrad did not have it, either. On the one hand, the tension caused by Lingard's unwillingness to abandon his idealistic dream shows the potential for enriching the novel: an exploration of the confrontation between Lingard and Edith and of Lingard's adherence to his political vision—the specificity of which is revealed in the last part—might have made the novel more complex and engaging than *The Rescue* if it had been handled successfully. We see, on the other hand, that Lingard's retention of his initial plan has made the resolution of the various conflicts in the novel quite hard to achieve. Hawthorn

makes a similar observation about Conrad's abandonment of the novel, though what he addresses here is the implications of Lingard's split loyalty rather than the clash between Lingard's and Edith's egos: 'the issue of racial as against human or moral solidarity ... is so foregrounded in *The Rescue* that its resolution demanded overt decisions regarding the plot. Conrad abandoned "The Rescuer" at the point near where such decisions had to be taken' (*Joseph Conrad* 98). The specific way in which the political dimension of Lingard's dream sustains his commitment to Hassim and Immada is introduced for the first time towards the last part of the manuscript. It is obvious that in this part Conrad was moving in a direction opposite to a resolution of the complex conflicts.

Another thing to note in relation to the cause of the impasse of 'The Rescuer' is that the last eighty-seven pages of the novel creates an impression of discrepancy between the Lingard who harangues Edith about his self-centred dream and the Lingard who is fascinated by Edith's attraction. In most of the last part of the manuscript Lingard is presented, focalised through Edith, as a formidable opponent who threatens her mission to save her husband and d'Alcacer: '[t]he impetuous and deliberate passion in his life, his lust of conquest, his lust of generosity were like a triple wall encircling the men she had to save. This was her task ... she had to defend something else than her life—she had to defend its integrity against the magnificence of this man's instincts' (560-1). This relationship between the two characters

appears to change when the focalisation is switched to Lingard in the latter half of Chapter 9 of Part IV. The following is the shifting point of the focalisation:

[Lingard] seemed lost in a profound meditation and suddenly he asked—‘Why did you come with me?’ She had several times asked herself that question without finding an answer she could accept. She said nothing and her silence made her appear to him greater than he had thought her to be. He remembered the sufferings she must undergo, her life that had known no danger till that day, and he was amazed at her courage, he felt for her that admiration a fearless devotion to duty must command. His heart was very full of feelings which he could not express; it never occurred to him that they could be expressed. He extolled her to himself without words and he was for the moment penetrated by the sense of her supreme excellence just as on certain nights even the most prosaic of men is penetrated by the glory of a sky full of stars (586-7).

At the beginning of the third sentence of the quotation the focalisation is switched to Lingard for the first time since he woke her up towards the middle of Chapter 7, and the impression created now is that Lingard as Edith’s admirer, which had been foregrounded before the last eighty-seven pages, reappears and replaces Lingard as Edith’s insuperable opponent. After this the focalisation fluctuates between Lingard and Edith until the end of the manuscript—there are five switches of focalisation in the final eleven pages—and by then Lingard is revealed to us as much less of the formidable egoist that we witnessed through Edith’s eyes.

What needs to be considered carefully here is that much of this impression of discrepancy derives from a dialectic between the two focalisations. The reader has been informed about Lingard's infatuation for Edith by the focalisation through him, whereas Edith's knowledge of Lingard's feelings is much more limited. In fact, the text provides no hint that she is aware of how much she has enthralled him and thereby weakened his resolution to realise his dream. Therefore, the Lingard focalised through Edith is substantially different from the Lingard the reader knows:⁸⁷ his aspect as her formidable opponent who clings to his idealistic dream tends to be emphasised—even exaggerated—when Edith is the focaliser. Most of the impression we have that one characterisation of Lingard is replaced by another can thus be ascribed to this trick involving focalisation. However, even if we take this fact into full consideration, there nonetheless exists an oscillation between two characterisations of Lingard in the last eighty-seven pages. The image of Lingard as Edith's insurmountable opponent is, to be sure, what Edith *thinks* she sees. But Lingard's eloquent presentation of his political dream, which I quoted in the previous section, is what really happened independent of Edith's consciousness.⁸⁸ Exhibiting

⁸⁷ The same can be said about Edith: the Edith focalised through Lingard differs from the Edith described by the third-person narrator. See my argument on page 159.

⁸⁸ Although most of the last part of the manuscript is focalised through Edith, we have access—mostly indirectly but sometimes directly—to Lingard's speech. Yet it is to be noted that, given the possible non-coincidence between his speech and his genuine feelings, we do not have full access to Lingard's consciousness as long

idealistic passion, self-assurance, and a strong ego in his assertive speech to Edith, and appearing unwilling to abandon his dream, this Lingard is certainly different from the weakened Lingard we have seen whose political dream has been fatally encroached on both by his infatuation for Edith and by the abduction of Mr. Travers and d'Alcacer. This tension between the 'two Lingards' emerges rather abruptly in the last eighty-seven pages, which induces us not only to see them as separated from the previous part of the manuscript, but also to consider that Conrad's inability to successfully synthesise the dialectic between the two aspects of Lingard partly contributed to his failure to complete the novel.⁸⁹ Indeed, these two versions of Lingard indicate two different courses the novel could take. In *The Rescue*, where Lingard does not possess such a strong egoistic idealism as he shows in the last part of the manuscript, Lingard is consistently Edith's ardent admirer. His fascination with the heroine deprives him of his ability to act decisively and thereby contributes to the eventual catastrophe. In 'The Rescuer', where Lingard seems reluctant to abandon his idealistic project and where we can observe a clash between Lingard as an egoistic dreamer and Lingard as Edith's devotee, two potential courses

as Edith is the focaliser.

⁸⁹ Building on Moser's observation about the original characterisation of Lingard in 'The Rescuer', Schwarz infers that the competition between the '[t]wo Lingards, the flawed one and the idealised one', caused Conrad's failure to complete the novel in his early career (*The Later Fiction* 111). Although Schwarz's schema of the 'two Lingards' is rather simplistic, I agree with his attribution of Conrad's inability to complete the novel to the divergence of Lingard's character.

are suggested simultaneously: if Lingard's infatuation for Edith becomes dominant, the novel is likely to take a course similar to the one in *The Rescue*; if his idealistic political dream overpowers his fascination with Edith, on the other hand, the novel is likely to take a considerably different course from that taken by the published novel, though it is hard to anticipate what it would have been specifically. This produces a kind of suspense as to the direction of plot in the last part of the manuscript. The later Conrad seems to have judged the latter course to be unattainable and consequently diluted Lingard's characterisation as an egoistic idealist.

3. The Split in the Narrative Voice between the Romantic and the Realistic

The final and most important explanation of the connection between the foregrounding of Lingard's idealism in the final part of the manuscript and the cause of Conrad's failure to finish the novel has to do with the issue of authorial attitude. 'The Rescuer' adopts a third-person narrator who appears to be a typical and unproblematic omniscient narrator as he does not show any apparent hesitation in offering analyses of the characters in his own voice. However, this narrator's behaviour is not always inconspicuous: for example, he attracts our attention throughout the manuscript when he focuses on the nature of Lingard and Edith's experience as lovers. The

extraordinary quality of what they experience through their relationship is one of the central thematic components of the novel (especially in *The Rescue*) as is indicated by the amount of words spent to describe it, but the narrator — and Conrad — is sometimes unsuccessful in *showing* the exact nature of that extraordinariness.⁹⁰ For one thing, the narrator's diction in some parts reminds us of what Leavis critically termed 'adjectival insistence', though it is much less frequent and problematic than in 'Heart of Darkness' (177). The following quotation is from the first long conversation between Lingard and Edith in Chapter 6 of Part III: 'she smiled above his head, fascinated by the simplicity of images and expressions. She was only half-conscious of that smile which lingered unseen on her lips in a beginning of amused compassion that seemed to detect in the obscurity of the night, in the words of the man, a naïve and dramatic intensity' (300-1). The exact content of 'a naïve and dramatic intensity' is not clearly shown to the reader because of the abstractness and obscurity of the expression. In addition to this issue of diction, in the following passage, which is from the scene after Lingard and Edith's departure for the mainland, we can see Conrad's poor handling of a similar motif from a different angle. Carter, left behind to defend the brig, considers the nature of the situation to himself: '[h]ad he not been so young he would have felt that the situation was beyond his grasp, but he was too

⁹⁰ What I have in mind here is the principle of showing which Lubbock advocates in *The Craft of Fiction* and Booth critically reintroduces in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. See Note 39.

young to see it whole and in a manner detached from himself" (496). Here the omniscient narrator's voice intrudes and claims the extraordinariness of the situation by remarking that Carter is too immature to comprehend it. By this the narrator gestures towards complete understanding as to the extraordinary nature of the situation but refuses to provide that understanding for the reader. This behaviour is rather problematic because it seems probable that the narrator himself does not know how exactly the situation is extraordinary. Despite his appearance as a typical omniscient narrator, the symptom of evasion involved in his restrained exercise of omniscience suggests that his omniscience is, at least partly, spurious.

The most problematic aspect of the extra-heterodiegetic narrator in 'The Rescuer' lies in the split in his narrative voice, and in what follows I will show that it provides us with the most crucial connection between the last part of the manuscript and Conrad's failure to finish the novel. To consider this we need to look at the issue of genre in 'The Rescuer' (and *The Rescue*). Conrad states in his letter that *The Rescue* is to become 'the swan song of romance', and the finished novel is given the subtitle: '*A Romance of Shallows*' (CL6 362). A mere glimpse at the components of the plot will suffice to show that the novel possesses a number of the attributes of imperial or adventure romance such as the exotic setting and the protagonist's adventurous undertaking. In view of what I intend to discuss about the split narrative voice in 'The Rescuer', I would like to call particular attention

here to how the novel's affinity with romance is exhibited through the extra-heterodiegetic narrator's behaviour. Towards the beginning of Part II where Hassim and Immada are introduced, the political history of 'The Shore of Refuge' is described in a romantic rather than factual manner. Here the narrator explicitly laments the end of the pre-modern age in his own voice:

Now all is forgotten: the sufferings, the crimes, the appalling virtues and the strange friendships of the dead adventurers ... A laggard progress has come at last and it has changed everything except the sunshine ... civilisation stalks from island to island in the old sunshine; and where treads the foot of the greedy spectre there the song of fierce life dies out, to be replaced by a dreamy mutter of laws and statistics ... All is changed: the face of things, the face of life, the words of faith, the methods of strife. All! Only the hearts of men, unchanged, are still capable of friendship and hate (111-2).

This tone of lament is important as it explicitly registers the narrator's romance-oriented disposition.⁹¹ Similarly noteworthy is the way in which the narrator describes Lingard's character when he tells us how Lingard's commitment to his Malay friends began:

In such acts performed simply from conviction, what may be

⁹¹ Here we may recall Northrop Frye's observation about the affinity between romance and nostalgia: '[t]he perennially childlike quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space' (186). We might also remember the invocations of 'romance' by the third-person narrator of *Romance*, Conrad's collaboration with Ford Madox Ford.

called the romantic side of the man's nature came out; his responsive sensitiveness to the shadowy appeals made by life and death, which is the groundwork of a chivalrous character. It was this unguarded generosity of heart recognising the existence of mankind outside itself which more than his virtues or his foibles secured for him the affection of a strange and imaginative race. He had it all his life. And even yet, in riverside villages backed by immense forests there may be found here and there an old jurumudi, an invalid voyager who remembers the name of that man—'generous to the poor, severe for the living, and who showed respect to our dead as though they all had been his brothers' (133-4).

The narrator here celebrates the virtues of his protagonist, a phenomenon we rarely expect to encounter in Conrad's realist works; his praise is so unequivocal and unreserved that it is nearly indistinguishable from the local people's commendation of Lingard. The last example comes from the middle of Chapter 2 of Part III. During his analysis of Mr. Travers's character, the narrator mentions those Western men who come to the East to serve colonial projects:

It had so happened that some time before [Mr. Travers] had been thrown in contact with one of those men who are in the forefront of the race and yet remain obscure, one of those unknown guides of civilisation, who on the advancing edge of progress are administrators, warriors, creators; who abroad display a wisdom greater than that of a serpent but at home, being single-minded, unselfish and enthusiastic, show an innocence of which a domesticated dove would have every reason to be ashamed (234-237).⁹²

⁹² This is not a mis-pagination: there are extensive deletions in these pages of the

What we should note is that the narrator here praises the colonists without any qualification. Hawthorn observes: '[a]lmost without exception, the word "adventurer" is used positively in *The Rescue* "The Rescuer"' (*Joseph Conrad* 207). This indicates the narrator's failure to note 'the fact that European men engaged in what seemed like boys' adventures could in fact be adventurers engaged in dubious activities in the service of imperialism' (ibid. 207). The narrator's glorification of the colonists in the quotation above perfectly substantiates Hawthorn's point: the romantic mode of the narrative voice of 'The Rescuer' is completely uncritical of the colonialism lurking behind the 'adventures'.⁹³

On the other hand, however, the narrative in 'The Rescuer' also extensively undermines the novel's character as an adventure romance

manuscript.

⁹³ In this context the opening of *The Rescue* is noteworthy. The first four paragraphs of the novel were added when Conrad completed it, and the second paragraph depicts James Brooke, the model for Lingard, in a highly celebratory tone: 'a true adventurer in his devotion to his impulse—a man of *high mind* and of *pure heart*, lay the foundation of a flourishing state *on the ideas of pity and justice*. He recognized *chivalrously* the claims of the conquered; he was a *disinterested adventurer*, and the reward of *his noble instincts* is in the veneration with which a strange and faithful race cherish his memory' (17, emphases added). Resembling the second example from 'The Rescuer' that commends Lingard's virtue, this passage shows the same uncritical attitude towards colonialism as is found in 'The Rescuer'. The romantic aspect of the narrator is taken over to the published novel, though most of the examples I quoted here are deleted in *The Rescue* together with other sentences surrounding them.

by its politically acute perspective, creating another mode which is essentially incompatible with the romantic mode. Discussing the treatment of political ideologies in the novel, Hawthorn argues that we can observe a 'clash between the demands of the Romantic and of the Realistic' in 'The Rescuer' and *The Rescue* (Joseph Conrad 98).⁹⁴ Following him, I will call this anti-romantic attitude of the narrative that does not (as the romantic mode does) fail to note the political implications of imperialism the 'realistic' mode.

We can discern this realistic mode first and foremost in the presence of Wyndham and Jörgenson. Wyndham, a character who is completely absent in the published novel, appears when the process of Lingard's involvement with Hassim and Immada is described in Part II. The narrative employs old Dutch official documents to present him: 'the Englishman called Wyndham who has been living for many years with the sultan of Solo, and whose great influence upon the turbulent chief is deplorable and should be put an end to in the interest of our northern possessions' (139). This renegade warns Lingard against committing himself to his Malay friends by presenting himself as someone whose life has been ruined by the abandonment of his identity as a white man. He contends that white people 'can never forget [their] origin' and that the local people's 'primitive virtues' are 'poison' to them, only leading to the eventual '[d]amnation' (141-2).⁹⁵ He advises Lingard not to fight

⁹⁴ Baxter similarly notes the 'amphibious quality' of the novel between romance and realism (*The Rescuer's Synopsis* 124).

⁹⁵ His warning anticipates the 'privileged man' in *Lord Jim*; he predicts the

for their sake because it would lead to the recognition that ‘they are human beings’ (141-2). When Lingard asks: ‘[a]nd aren’t they?’, he answers: ‘[t]hey are—very. That’s the worst of it—for when you begin to see it your ideas change. You see injustice and cruel folly of what, before, appeared just and wise’ (141-2). This remark of Wyndham aptly captures how colonialism relies on the failure—or, more precisely, reluctance—to acknowledge that the colonised are no less human beings than the coloniser. This casts an intense doubt on the adventurous undertakings of Lingard and the other white men in the region which the romantic mode of the narrative praised. Some critics contend that Wyndham is deleted in *The Rescue* because he is irrelevant to the entire nature of the novel;⁹⁶ however, we see the serious flaw of this theory when we note the significant contribution Wyndham’s presence makes to the formation of the realistic mode in the novel which critiques the negative aspects of colonialism. Some of his

failure of Jim’s new life in Patusan because he believes that it is ‘like selling your soul to a brute’ for a white man to devote himself to the cause of coloured people (258). Although Wyndham and the ‘privileged man’ are quite opposite in their views on colonialism—the former sees it negatively whereas the latter approves of it from a racist point of view—the warnings they give are interestingly similar.

⁹⁶ McLauchlan, for example, argues: ‘Conrad came to see that [the passage depicting Wyndham] was largely irrelevant to Lingard’s sworn commitment, paternal and chivalrous, to Hassim and Immada and their cause’ (583); Benita Parry similarly contends that ‘Wyndham and his homilies are ... absent from *The Rescue*, as they must be since the substance of his dogma is irrelevant to the fiction’s action’ (48-9).

role is taken over by Jörgenson, to be sure, but the critique of colonialism offered by Jörgenson is, as I will address shortly, much less direct and clear.

Jörgenson is quite similar to Wyndham in terms of his tragic appearance as a renegade and the pessimism with which he warns Lingard. In contrast to Wyndham, on the other hand, Jörgenson is given a much more important role (especially in *The Rescue*) as he takes a crucial part in the progress of the plot. It is clear that this character was created for the purpose of critiquing the thoughtless and politically naïve crossings of the intercultural/racial borderlines. He is introduced as ‘an evident failure’ who embodies the risks of romance: ‘[h]e demonstrated one way in which may end the romance of the illiterate who read it not in books but in their own life, one way in which prosaic fate deals with men who dream quickly and want to handle their dreams in broad daylight’ (162). His being ‘an evident failure’ is expressed in his tragic loss of identity: ‘[l]ook at me. I came out a boy of eighteen. I can speak English, I can speak Dutch, I can speak every cursed lingo of these islands ... but I have forgotten the language of my own country ... Everything left me—youth, money, strength, hope—the very sleep’ (182). From his experience of losing identity he tries, like Wyndham, to persuade Lingard out of getting deeply involved with his Malay friends. At the same time, he is certainly freer from the Western people’s ethnocentrism than any other character in the novel: this can be seen in his judgment, in the later part of *The Rescue*, that

Lingard should prioritise his fidelity to Hassim and Immada over his mission to save the yacht people. On the other hand, his behaviour is confined to foregrounding the difficulty of intercultural/racial engagements caused by the colonial situation. In other words, when he takes part in Lingard's project, his interest is strictly limited to ensuring its success and he does not show any interest in the specific political problems lying behind the situation. Being resigned to everything and having no commitment in life except his participation in Lingard's project, he does not offer a positive critique of colonialism as such. This passivity invalidates Parry's assertion that Jörgenson's ideological virtue makes him 'the fiction's unacknowledged hero' (50). This said, the fact remains that he is a significant character whose discouraging presence contributes to the realistic mode of the novel and offsets the romance-oriented aspects of the narrative voice. If not a hero, he is surely a key person in terms of the novel's politico-ideological balance.

The realistic mode of the novel does not rely solely on those two tragic characters. Hampson's observation about the thematic structure of the novel is helpful here: '[a]s in *Lord Jim*, the foreground is occupied by the European's dilemma ... In the background, Hassim and Immada repeat the narrative of Doramin and Jewel—the political and personal betrayal of Malays by Europeans' (*Cross-Cultural Encounters* 163). In 'The Rescuer' the narrative indeed notes the Malay people's plight and their voices, shedding light on the

background of the novel's fictional world. For example, when the narrator remarks about the Malay crew of Lingard's brig: '[o]f the lot only one or two wore sarongs—the others having submitted (at least at sea) to *the indignity of European-cut trousers*', the perspective of the natives, whose culture is being encroached on by Western culture, is presented to the reader through the technique of double voice (20, emphasis added). We can see a similar kind of attention paid in the scene of Lingard's first long interview with Belarab: '[a]ll who had the fear, the horror and the hate of the new methods of life and happiness forced upon them by superior wisdom and by irresistible strength, all who abhorred restraint, change and a foreign rule, all who were faithful to the old traditions turned to [Belarab] for help or safety' (208). Although the phrases 'superior wisdom' and 'irresistible strength' imply the stealthy intrusion of the European perspective, here Belarab's resentment against the Western imperialism is conveyed to the reader without being minimised.

That the criticisms of colonialism made from the Malay people's perspectives are presented without any valid counter-argument throughout the novel is an interesting point. When Lingard invites Hassim and Immada to his brig after being saved by them, Hassim asks Lingard about his country. Being told that Britain is much stronger than the Netherlands, Hassim asks: '[a]nd do you make them pay tribute for their land?' (135) Lingard answers in the negative, contending that that 'is not the custom of white men', to which Hassim

mistrustfully remarks: '[t]hey are stronger than we are and want tribute from us. And sometimes they get it—even from Wajo where every man is free and wears a kriss' (135-6). This is a gripping moment in which the Western countries' double-standard is vividly exposed. After Hassim's remark, we are told only that '[t]here was a period of dead silence while Lingard looked thoughtful and the Malays gazed stonily at nothing': Lingard (and the narrator) has absolutely nothing to say against what Hassim has pointed out (136). Similar phenomena are observable in Jörgenson's conversation with Tengga and Daman. When Tengga expresses his wish to loot the yacht as a revenge for the Dutch who expelled him from his land in the past, Jörgenson merely points out the 'imprudence' of it (338). To this Tengga emphasises the injustice of the Europeans: 'we must not touch them because their skin is like yours—and to kill them would be wrong, but at the bidding of you whites we may go and fight with people of our own skin and our own faith—and that is good' (338). Even though Tengga's desire to plunder is not justified since he wrongfully identifies the yacht people with the Dutch who took his land, the impression we get here is that Jörgenson's superficial attempt at pacification is too weak when it faces Tengga's condemnation of the Europeans' injustice.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ As is seen from Tengga's identification of the Dutch with 'you whites', there is a tension in the novel between the Western perspective which distinguishes between British and Dutch imperialism on the one hand, and the Malay perspective which rejects such a distinction and regards the various kinds of Western colonisers uniformly as the 'whites' on the other. The narrative's

Similarly, Daman, coming on board the *Emma* to ask Jörgenson for ammunition and weapons, asks him how many Chinamen will be killed in the Second Opium War, which is going on at that time, and talks resentfully about his father who was hanged by the whites 'for killing only eight Chinamen' (343). Seeing Daman's deep-rooted rancour, Jörgenson says to himself: '[t]his man must have been very young at the time [of his father's hanging] but he seems to have been brooding over it —and that is dangerous in a native', but what he actually does is to tell Daman 'with a don't-care-damn air' that 'white men [are] not so easy to kill as Chinamen' (344). Again, neither Jörgenson nor the narrator provides any valid and logical counter-argument against the Malay people's claim on their right to revenge themselves on the whites and against their perception of European double-standards. The novel is so written that the reader is led to accept with little reservation the Malay people's criticisms of colonialism.

position as to this issue is rather unclear: the former perspective is relativised by the fact that it is presented mainly through Mr. Travers, a character the reader is meant to despise; however, the latter is also questioned as is suggested by Tengga's misattribution of the injustice of some Dutch people to the 'whites' in general. This issue of distinguishing between different kinds of imperialism comes to the fore in 'Heart of Darkness', whose differentiation of British imperialism from Belgian imperialism has long been provoking critical controversies. C. P. Sarvan, for instance, reports in his 'Racism and the *Heart of Darkness*' his conversation with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o at the University of Nairobi on 19 July 1977. According to Sarvan, Thiong'o critically observed that 'though Conrad ... castigates Belgian atrocities, he is much milder in his criticisms of British imperialism' and that this 'compromise[s] Conrad's otherwise admirable stand' (9).

I have discussed above the split in the narrative voice concerning the attitude towards imperialism. The narrator celebrates Lingard's and the other Europeans' adventurous undertakings in the region while he also provides plenty of materials that lead to a thorough critique of the very deeds he commended. This obviously points towards his attitudinal incoherence, which undermines his status as an omniscient narrator. More importantly, the incoherence in the authorial attitude allows us to connect with more conviction the final eighty-seven pages of the manuscript and Conrad's failure to complete the novel. The last part of 'The Rescuer', in which Lingard's egoism is foregrounded, is precisely where the problem of the incoherent authorial attitude culminates. The anatomisation of Lingard's Kurtzian idealism and its political implications is incompatible with the romantic mode of the narrative that celebrates him as an adventurer, and in the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript the clash between the novel's romantic and realistic modes cannot be evaded any more. As will be fully discussed shortly, it necessarily happens that the realistic mode overpowers the romantic mode there.

Also of note is that, although the realistic mode of the narrative has the potential for critiquing Lingard's and other Western people's colonial projects, this stance is not necessarily something that would propose solutions to the actual colonial situations described. The critique of colonialism in the novel rather assumes a tinge of fatalistic

resignation.⁹⁸ From the standpoint of this inactive critic of colonialism, as it were, the narrator throughout the novel notes the inadvisability of Lingard's crossing of the intercultural/racial borderline. For instance, in the scene of Lingard's first long interview with Edith, in which he talks to her about his entire plan, the narrator notes the imprudence of Lingard's engagement: '[s]he was being taken along the boundary of an exciting existence, and she looked into it through the guileless enthusiasm of the narrator. The heroic quality of the feelings concealed *what was disproportionate and absurd in that gratitude, in that friendship, in that inexplicable devotion*' (312, emphasis added). Although there is some ambiguity as to the attribution of the judgment in the quotation, since this part of the novel is basically focalised through Edith, what is important is that the reader is led to discern the ill-advised aspect of Lingard's undertaking. It is not difficult to see that this facet of the realistic mode of the narrative voice, together with the tragic and discouraging appearances of Wyndham and Jörgenson, makes Lingard's commitment to Hassim and Immada appear unpromising and doomed. In other words, in 'The Rescuer' the narrative *knows*, in its realistic mode, that Lingard's engagement with

⁹⁸ This may be interpreted as reflecting Social Darwinism, which was prevalent in Conrad's time, that takes it for granted that stronger nations should conquer weaker ones. When the narrator calls the Western countries' military power 'irresistible strength', for example, we could detect behind his rhetoric a certain kind of deterministic belief which gives tacit approval to Western imperialism (208).

his Malay friends will not end successfully even while it devotes itself, in the mode of romance, to the affirmative presentation of his project to the reader. In this incoherence of the narrator's behaviour we can observe the technical implications involved in treating a romantic fictional world with a realistic mode, which I will address at the end of this chapter.

Contrary to Moser's contention that the politics in the novel are peripheral, the realistic mode of 'The Rescuer' shows an acute political awareness with regard to the colonial situations in the region ("The Rescuer" Manuscript' 329). This politically acute mode of realism becomes predominant and thereby terminates the split in the narrative voice between the realistic and the romantic when the novel starts to focus on the analysis of Lingard's idealism. As I have argued earlier, Lingard's idealistic dream, which is inseparable from what Parry calls 'colonial paternalism', is subject to criticism from the realistic mode of the narrative (49). Jörgenson's letter which is sent to inform Lingard about the situation during his absence contains an apt diagnosis of his position: 'you meant so well about so many things that a hellish mess is all I expect' (333). Later in the novel we are told that Lingard had made Hassim and Immada promise 'to be a friend to all white men' before the yacht came (488). Given how he treats his Malay friends after the coming of the white people in the yacht and how the white people behave towards them, we should say this promise Lingard imposed on his friends is harmful as well as unfair. The realistic mode

of the novel thus induces the reader to look critically at Lingard's romantic idealism, and by the time we reach the last eighty-seven pages, the romantic mode that uncritically commends Lingard as a heroic adventurer has almost ceased to exist (recall here that all the passages I quoted earlier in which the narrator celebrates the romantic world of adventure appear in the earlier part of the novel). As to the dialectic between the romantic and the realistic, Hawthorn remarks: '[w]henver the romantic in Conrad dominates the realist in him, the negative elements in the semantics of "adventurer" tend to be suppressed' (*Joseph Conrad* 208). We can say that the exact opposite phenomenon is happening towards the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript: as the thorough analysis of Lingard's idealistic project is brought to the foreground, the romantic mode needs to recede. The focusing on Lingard's idealism in the last part changes the nature of the novel considerably by giving a manifest ascendancy to the realistic mode which had been in equilibrium with the romantic mode, though it is not the case that this suddenly happens in the last eighty-seven pages since the romantic mode has been reducing its presence gradually as the novel moves on to the latter half. The remaining question is: what made Conrad foreground the anatomisation of Lingard's idealism so extensively in the last part of the manuscript and bring about the substantial tonal change?

The most likely answer to this question, I suggest, is that Conrad became fully aware of the potentiality of Lingard's idealism during the

process of his writing and subsequently changed the direction of the novel in the last part. This hypothesis is supported by the resemblance between Lingard in the last part of the novel and later Conradian idealists such as Kurtz and Charles Gould. As Royal Roussel points out, the problematic fusion between naïve idealism and egoistic desire in the character of Lingard anticipates the destructive idealism of Kurtz and Gould (57). The parallel between Lingard and Kurtz has been implied earlier in the novel when he imagines the elimination of his Malay friends after remembering the disgrace he incurred in the interview with Mr. Travers:

They all heard [Mr. Travers] order me out of his ship—he thought and thereupon for a second or so he contemplated without flinching the lurid image of massacre. And yet I told [Edith] not a hair of her head shall be touched—not a hair. And irrationally at the recollection of these words there seemed to be no trouble of any kind left in the world because the prospect of fighting *to extermination* (nothing less would do) these people with whom he had been for two momentous years of his life on terms of close intimacy, trust, dependence and friendship, caused him a kind of transport in which the various episodes of a desperate fight were seen through some softening medium and moved his heart like a vision of some extraordinary good fortune (329-30, emphasis added).

The explicit revelation about Lingard's inclination to betray his Malay friends is shocking enough, but even more notable is the anticipation of Kurtz's 'Exterminate all the brutes!' ('Heart of Darkness' 78) It is

notable that this similarity becomes much more evident in the last part of the novel where Lingard proudly talks to Edith about his great influence on Immada. Here he makes it clear that he has a higher opinion of Immada than of Hassim and remarks: 'I can *talk to* her; she has fire—she has faith—I can put into her little head all that is in mine and it lives there...I've *talked to* her...' (565, emphases added). Since this is Lingard's perception rather than an ascertained fact, there exists the possibility that their actual relationship does not coincide with his assertion. However, what is significant is that the relationship he depicts here is like that between a guru and a disciple, and it reminds us of the Russian youth in 'Heart of Darkness' who protests against Marlow's irreverence for Kurtz saying 'You don't talk with that man—you listen to him' (81). Like the youth who 'talked of everything' with Kurtz and was made to 'see things', the impression Lingard's description gives us is that he has 'enlarged' Immada's mind in a Kurtzian manner (83). His rather patronising expression 'her little head' lends further support to this reading. The rather sudden emergence of Lingard's connection to those later Conradian idealists in the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript suggests that the motif of the dangerous fusion between political idealism and egoistic desire developed during the writing process and led Conrad to develop the novel in a new dimension. McLauchlan's observation that Conrad 'had not been able to form a consistent conception of Lingard until he had come to terms with Kurtz' supports this hypothesis (582). From the

viewpoint of the coherence and the completion of the novel, we can say that ‘The Rescuer’ was taking the wrong course as Conrad started to focus on Lingard’s egoistic idealism in the last part. As Hampson suggests, the novelist needed other separate novels to explore thoroughly the motifs he attempted to deal with in the last part of ‘The Rescuer’.⁹⁹ That Conrad was able to complete *The Rescue* in his later career precisely because he had written those novels is obviously the other side of the same coin.

4. *The Rescue* as a Simplified Romance

So far I have scrutinised ‘The Rescuer’ — mainly the last eighty-seven pages of it—in terms of the split in the narrative voice between the romantic and the realistic modes, and related this to the possible causes of Conrad’s failure to finish the novel. Before connecting this analysis with the larger issue of the early Conrad’s difficulty in dealing with third-person narration, in this final section I will compare the manuscript with *The Rescue*, the published novel, by looking at the excisions Conrad made to the manuscript. I aim to examine how the later Conrad solved his early problems and what kind of result that produced, which should contribute to deepen our understanding of the unfinished manuscript and the technical difficulty

⁹⁹ Hampson writes: ‘[t]he narrative was too rich thematically: in subsequent works, Conrad was to explore separately issues which were intermingled in “The Rescuer”’ (*Betrayal and Identity* 100).

Conrad faced in his early career. Although the deletions made to the manuscript are so extensive that almost all elements in the text have some excised part, we can certainly extract some patterns. In what follows I will categorise the excisions into some groups and consider their effects on the published novel in turn.

The first thing to be noted is the attenuation of the narrative's realistic mode that undermines the novel's romantic orientation. In the previous section I have argued that this realistic mode of the narrative is recognised through the presence of Wyndham and Jörgenson, as well as through the narrative's indirect presentation of the voices of the colonially repressed people. Wyndham disappears from *The Rescue* as we know, and the already quoted passage which presents Jörgenson as a kind of victim of romance is excised in *The Rescue*: '[h]e demonstrated one way in which may end the romance of the illiterate who read it not in books but in their own life, one way in which prosaic fate deals with men who dream quickly and want to handle their dreams in broad daylight' (162). The reader also has less opportunity to hear Hassim and Immada's voice in the published novel. The following conversation between Hassim and Immada is from the scene before Lingard and Edith's departure for the mainland:

From us [Lingard] had demanded mercy and forgiveness—from us who have so many dead to remember—so much shame—so many defeats ... “Ah but those were our dead, our enemies, our vengeance” said Hassim in a deliberate and ironical voice ... And if I let live those who deserved death the

disgrace would not have been his; and the whites are merciful to their enemies. It is with their friends that they are severe according to their laws which are hard to understand and would bring disgrace upon a man if they were obeyed ('The Rescuer' 451-2).

Hassim and Immada's somewhat restrained criticism of Lingard's betrayal here is poignant enough, serving to undermine the optimism of the romantic mode of the narrative; however, this passage is deleted in *The Rescue*. Likewise, the following passage from the scene of Lingard and Edith's departure, which focuses on Hassim's perspicacious understanding of Lingard's psychology, is absent from the published novel:

[Hassim] did not see the necessity for his friend and protector to save the two white men since it was clear to him from what he had seen on board the yacht and later on from his talk with Lingard that the latter had been offended in some way by these people. If there was a necessity, it was only because they were "of the same skin". This he could understand (506).

We can say these excisions of Hassim and Immada's raw voice and the consequent flattening of their character function as a sort of editorial repression which reduces the presence of the novel's realistic mode and its political awareness.

The dilution of the motif of the renegade in *The Rescue* also serves to subdue the realistic mode of the novel. The deletions involving Wyndham and Jörgenson I have just mentioned can be understood also in this context. More significantly, Lingard's distress as a renegade is

considerably attenuated in the published novel. The following is the deleted passage from the part describing how Lingard's involvement with Hassim and Immada has changed his cheerful character:

[Lingard's fellow adventurers] tried to draw him out by a course of chaff. When this failed they grew distant and Lingard had a subtle sense of solitude, the inward loneliness of a man who is conscious of having a dark side to his life. It hurt him ... He missed the criticism, the praise, the envy, the slaps of the back, the rough jokes. Before he had been many months engaged in his secret enterprise he began to feel unreasonably like an outcast. Nobody knew what he was doing but all the same everybody seemed to disapprove of it ... he imagined himself, at times, to be the object of universal detestation (171-2).

In the same way, from the scene in which Carter threatens Lingard with a pistol and demands his allegiance to the yacht people, Conrad cut out impressive sentences that foreground Lingard's position as a renegade: '[t]he episode separated him violently from the kinship with his race. It found him out' (369). In both cases Lingard's sense of isolation from his own people because of his deep commitment to his Malay friends is vividly presented. The excisions of these passages make Lingard's involvement with the Malay people less demanding. The political awareness that questions in the mode of realism the viability, as well as the prudence, of his adventurous commitment in 'The Rescuer' is thus considerably weakened in the published novel.

I have mentioned earlier that Lingard in the manuscript is a more

complex and darker character who shows a clearer orientation towards egoistic desire and power. This alteration to Lingard's personality has been one of the issues which critics most frequently mention in comparing the manuscript with the published novel.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, the flattening of Edith's character, which is integrally connected to that of Lingard's, has received comparatively little attention. In a word, in 'The Rescuer' Edith is a more round character than in the published novel.¹⁰¹ When Immada implores Lingard not to look at Edith during the conversation in the cabin of the brig, Edith argues back: "Do not listen to them" entreated Edith in a pleading tone. "You shall regret it, you shall regret it all your life" ("The Rescuer' 439-440). Here she exhibits a much stronger ego than in *The Rescue* where she remains much more passive. The following deleted passage depicts Edith defeating Lingard sexually in their relationship: '[w]as she dismayed by her sudden loss and by the mournful image of sorrow

¹⁰⁰ For instance, McLauchlan remarks that in *The Rescue* Lingard's 'immense, though largely unrecognised, desire for power' is considerably weakened (581-2). Moser similarly observes: '[t]he most significant alteration of 'The Rescuer' is the simplification and emasculation of Lingard ... the later Conrad obscures the most important and interesting facts of Lingard's psychology: ... his egoistic longings for power; his lack of self-knowledge; his moral isolation. As a result, he has none of the vitality and intensity of Conrad's great self-destructive heroes' ("The Rescuer" Manuscript' 346).

¹⁰¹ In his early letter sent to Blackwood on 6 September in 1897, Conrad remarks that Edith is 'a complex type' whereas Lingard is 'simple'; he finds it necessary to explain that it is Lingard who is to be the central figure of the novel (*CL1* 381). The trace of this initial conception of the novel remains more strongly in 'The Rescuer' than in *The Rescue*.

without end, or was it the fear for herself that made her look so white, so cold, so still? He discovered he would never know—for she would never tell! ... *he understood that she would only demand—and obtain. And she knew all*’ (420-2, emphasis added). Since this passage is focalised through Lingard, what he perceives about Edith may differ from the reality—indeed, the image of Edith he assumes does not coincide with the one the reader has acquired through the presentation of her inner state. However, it is significant that Lingard’s submission to Edith which is caused by his infatuation with her is suggested here. Such an image of Edith as a calculating character making use of her sexual attraction is hardly observable—or, rather, much less explicit—in the published novel.

More importantly, Edith in the manuscript sometimes looks at Lingard’s adventurous project critically despite her fascination by it: “It is terrible no doubt”—she meditated—“to perish miserably by violence to the end that this man should conquer that *absurd* kingdom for his friend the prince of the woods and for that girl he loves. Because I am sure this fatherly affection is only one of his *delusions*’ (324-5, emphases added). Later on, in the same vein we are told: ‘[s]he had an acute perception that the risk of death was indeed as nothing to him before the vision of the endangered dream *he called* his life’ (491, emphasis added). Her ironic observation of Lingard’s acts in the deleted passages above makes her a more independent and complex character than in the published novel. This position of Edith as Lingard’s critic

culminates in the excised last eighty-seven pages of 'The Rescuer' where, as we have observed earlier, Lingard is focalised through Edith as a formidable opponent who threatens her mission to rescue her husband and d'Alcacer. When Lingard presents to her his ambition for a new democratic confederation in the region, she pronounces a rather severe diagnosis to him: 'I fear ... you are preparing for yourself a terrible deception' (578). Edith's independent character here creates a tension within their relationship which mostly disappears in the published novel.

This flattening of Edith's character is mainly attributable to the reduction of the complexity of Lingard's character: since there is less emphasis on Lingard's egoistic idealism in *The Rescue*, Edith's role as the critic of his problematic nature disappears concomitantly. I have argued earlier that in the last eighty-seven pages of 'The Rescuer' the collision between Lingard's reluctance to abandon his idealistic dream and Edith's necessity to make him rescue her husband and d'Alcacer made it difficult for Conrad to move the plot forward. By contrast, the plot of *The Rescue* progresses smoothly as it is rid of this last part: the clash between the lovers' interests is greatly mitigated. But the resultant flattening of Edith's character in the published novel only makes her more of a conventional heroine of romance. During the interview between Lingard, Edith, and Jörgenson — which comes towards the beginning of the latter half of the novel that Conrad wrote in his later career—Edith protests against the way Lingard sees her

when he advises her to catch hold of the rail before he lets her go: “And pray don’t look upon me as a conventional ‘weak woman’ person, the delicate lady of your own conception” she said, facing Lingard, with her arm extended to the rail. “Make that effort please against your own conception of what a woman like me should be” (192-3). What we should note is that if Edith had not undergone the flattening revision and had retained her original character in *The Rescue*, this protest would not have been necessary at all. This rather conspicuously self-referential scene could be regarded as reflecting Conrad’s consciousness of the conventionalisation of Edith’s character in the published text.

I have discussed above the attenuation of the realistic mode brought about by the dilution of the motif of renegacy and the flattening of some important characters. Though seemingly at odds with this, we can also recognise that the love romance between Lingard and Edith is more subdued in the published novel than in the manuscript. Compare, for example, the following passages from the end of Lingard and Edith’s first long interview: ‘And I’ve told you what I have told nobody...Think of *me* also...I told you because I—because *I trust you*’ (‘The Rescuer’ 321, emphases added); ‘And I’ve told you what I have told nobody. Think of *my feelings* also. I told you because I—because *I had to*’ (*The Rescue* 130, emphases added). Though the effect produced by the alterations is rather vague, we could detect a subtle weakening of the element of love romance there: Lingard’s speech in ‘The Rescuer’

is a little more passionate than that in *The Rescue*. A much more palpable alteration can be seen in the way Edith is named in both texts. In Part IV of 'The Rescuer' the narrator mostly calls her 'Edith', whereas in the same part of *The Rescue* she is called 'Mrs. Travers'. Hawthorn rightly observes that the purpose of this shift is 'both to modify the degree of intimacy apparent between the two and also to act as a reminder of the social gulf between Lingard and Mrs. Travers' (*Joseph Conrad* 81).

The restraint on Lingard and Edith's love romance in *The Rescue* is related to the novel's norms about the social. The following deleted soliloquy from Lingard foregrounds an important dichotomy: 'I think I could tell her everything, everything about myself and she would understand tho' she is a lady. She is that but she is a woman too. A woman by heavens, I could tell her everything' (347-8). Obviously, what is in Lingard's mind here is the opposition between the class gulf and the genuinely human relationship that would overcome such gaps. The narrative of 'The Rescuer' shares this concern, which we can see in the following passage from the scene right after the end of Lingard and Edith's first long interview:

[Edith] had the faculty of being able to think her own thoughts—and the courage. This faculty is odious to men since an individual thought is the condemnation of the commonplace, the vulgar and the false. As gift of Heaven it is at the same time the most fortunate and the most cruel. In this exceptional soul the development of ideas did not dry up the spring of passions, and she could give to an emotion the

amplitude of a thought (322).

Along with the narrator's praise of Edith's character, we can discern here his sense of social norm: 'the commonplace, the vulgar, and the false' can be understood as signifying social conventions that repress human passion and emotions, and the narrator's attitude is disapproving towards that repression, as was the case in 'The Return'. The narrator whose norm can be inferred from this passage, therefore, seems to be positive about Lingard and Edith's romantic relationship which seeks to overcome the class gulf. The quotation above, however, is excised in the published novel apart from the first sentence. The narrator in *The Rescue* does not show the liberalness observed here, and the class crossing of the two lovers' relationship is less encouraged. This can be connected with the novel's eventual return to the world of realism (which I will address shortly): in view of the final disintegration of Lingard's romantic dream world, the asocial nature of Lingard and Edith's love romance had to be restrained.

Regarding this subdual of the love romance as a kind of adjustment for the sake of the integration of the plot, we can synthesise our observations on the various kinds of deletion and conclude that the revision by the later Conrad made *The Rescue* more of a conventional romance. The flattening of the characters—especially the obliteration of Lingard's egoistic idealism—, the reduction of the untamed voices of the colonially repressed people, and the dilution of the motif of renegacy all serve to eliminate elements that do not fall under the category of

conventional romance. I hasten to note that *The Rescue* is nevertheless not a conventional romance as such:¹⁰² as has been mentioned earlier, the novel's indirect method still allows us to discern the voices of the colonially repressed people which undermine Lingard's romantic acts. It is when we compare it with the earlier version and scrutinise the specificities of the excisions that the novel's aspects of a conventional romance stand out.

How to assess the result of this revision is a difficult issue. From the position that appreciates the embryonic form of Kurtzian idealism in the initial character of Lingard and its analysis, the flattening of his personality in *The Rescue* is to be seen as an impoverishment. Moser's assertion that the published novel is 'infinitely worse' than 'The Rescuer' exemplifies this view ("The Rescuer" Manuscript' 355). From a position that values moral themes in Conrad's works, Moser suggests that *The Rescue* is marred because '[b]ad luck, coincidence, the misunderstanding of good intentions, someone else's madness—all these are to blame, not the impeccable hero' (349). Although many of the recent studies of Conrad deal with *The Rescue* and analyse it along with Conrad's masterpieces,¹⁰³ Conrad's own words imply his relatively

¹⁰² For a detailed study of how Conrad self-consciously used the conventions of romance in *The Rescue*, see Baxter, *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance*, pp.119-34.

¹⁰³ The following are some examples of comparatively recent monographs on Conrad that deal with *The Rescue*: Erdinast-Vulcan, *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper* (1991); Hawthorn, *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment* (1992); Harpham, *One of Us: the Mastery of Joseph*

low regard of the finished novel. Whereas in his letter to J. B. Pinker on 15 February in 1919 he expresses his hope of receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature for *The Rescue*, he also remarks, in his letter on 24 October in 1918 to William Rothenstein, that the revision of the novel for the purpose of publication is ‘an odious business’ which is ‘not worth performing’ (CL6 362; 295). In the Author’s Note to *The Rescue* he similarly confesses that when he set out to revise and finish the novel in 1918, it was not ‘with elation’ (11).

Since my major interest in the present chapter lies not so much in analysing *The Rescue* in itself as in referring to the published novel for the sake of understanding ‘The Rescuer’ better, I will refrain from getting into an evaluation of *The Rescue*. What I would like to call attention to here, instead, is the thematic implications of the final events in the published novel. Regarding the various flattenings and simplifications later Conrad made to the manuscript mostly as conventionalisation, I have argued that *The Rescue* shows a stronger affinity with romance than ‘The Rescuer’ does. However, what happens at the end of *The Rescue* is a collapse of Lingard’s romantic engagements—both his commitment to his Malay friends and his romantic relationship with Edith—and a concomitant denial of romance. As Hampson rightly observes, Lingard’s inability to decide where he belongs causes mistrust in the mind of people around him (*Betrayal and Identity* 92). The two fatal events—Carter’s attack on the Illanun

Conrad (1996).

praus and Jörgenson's suicidal explosion of the *Emma*—which destroy Lingard's honour and status are attributable to Carter's and Jörgenson's mistrust caused by this inability of Lingard to fix his identity: Carter's desperate shots and Jörgenson's refusal to tell Edith the true aim of the ring would not have happened if they had been sure that Lingard would be faithful to the parties each of them supports. Lingard's introspection after he receives the news of Carter's attack on the Illanun praus is to be understood in this context: 'Lingard could not defend himself from a feeling that [the real cause of the disaster] was in himself, too, somewhere in the unexplored depth of his nature, something fatal and unavoidable' (247). When he diagnoses that the 'traitor' who betrayed him is himself, the most plausible interpretation would be that Lingard was ruined by his own inability to decide which side he should give his allegiance to (247).

Those events enervate Lingard so much so that he can no longer reciprocate Edith's love and trust in the final interview. The following passage, which comes after the death of Jaffir who brought Hassim's last message to Lingard, shows how his sense of guilt for virtually betraying his Malay friends' trust has destroyed his romantic innocence:

Lingard looked persistently at Carter, thinking that now Jaffir was dead there was no one left on the empty earth to speak to him *a word of reproach*; no one to know the greatness of his intentions, the bond of fidelity between him and Hassim and Immada, the depth of his affection for those

people, the earnestness of his visions, and the unbounded trust that was his reward. By the mad scorn of Jörgenson flaming up against the life of men, all this was as if it had never been. *It had become a secret locked up in his own breast forever* (334, emphases added).

Having all of his romantic dreams annihilated and his self-image contaminated by guilt, his personality is transformed to the extent that he looks like another character; the passage above can be read as a declaration of the death of Lingard-as-a-romantic-hero and the birth of a secret-ridden Conradian protagonist. In fact, we can see the novel itself as a rite of passage that drives Lingard out of his romantic world and initiates him into the world of realism. What is noteworthy in relation to this is the role of Carter who in the end joins Lingard's brig in place of the mutinous Shaw. Carter's change in the face of Lingard's desolation is described minutely:

The listlessness of that man whom he had always seen acting under the stress of a secret passion seemed perfectly appalling to Carter's youthful and deliberate energy. Ever since he had found himself again face to face with Lingard he had tried to conceal the shocking impression with a delicacy which owed nothing to training but was as intuitive as a child's (314).

He shows deep sympathy with and concern for the new-born Lingard's distress: "And I am your man still," Carter added, impulsively, and hastened to look away from Lingard, who had tried to smile at him and had failed' (315). Bearing in mind the novel's character as a rite of passage for Lingard, the presence of this faithful sympathiser can be

interpreted as a kind of compensation for Lingard's loss of his romantic innocence and self-assurance.

In terms of consistency with the other two novels constituting Conrad's Malay trilogy—*Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*—this final characterisation of Lingard is somewhat problematic: the fictional world of those two early works is predated by that of *The Rescue*, and Lingard in *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* is not, as we know, the secret- and guilt-ridden Conradian character whose birth is suggested at the end of *The Rescue*. We can defend this inconsistency, however, first by considering the fact that *The Rescue* was completed more than twenty years after the publication of the other two novels. Furthermore, the final characterisation of Lingard as a kind of sinner¹⁰⁴ in *The Rescue* can be evaluated positively as its rich thematic implications connect the novel with Conrad's other acclaimed works such as *Lord Jim* and *Under Western Eyes* and show the development which Conrad the novelist achieved between his writing of the manuscript and the publication of the completed novel.

¹⁰⁴ Compare this with the scene of Marlow's last moments with Jim in Patusan: "This is glorious!" I cried, and then I looked at *the sinner* by my side. He sat with his head sank on his breast and said "Yes," without raising his eyes, as if afraid to see writ large on the clear sky of the offing the reproach of his romantic conscience' (*Lord Jim* 253, emphasis added).

*

In this chapter I have focused on the last eighty-seven pages of ‘The Rescuer’ and explored its relation to Conrad’s failure to complete the novel. I have argued that the problem of the incoherent authorial attitude culminates in the last part of the manuscript where the analysis of the embryonic form of Lingard’s Kurtzian idealism is foregrounded, and that this largely explains the novel’s impasse. Given the gradual predominance of the realistic mode over the romantic mode and the deep insight exhibited by the former, it is reasonable to presume that the realistic mode, which recognises the political implications of Lingard’s project, is closer to the true norms of the novel. It is even possible that the romantic mode of the narrative was simply necessitated by the romantic nature of Lingard’s story. This is to say that the most fundamental problem of ‘The Rescuer’ lies in its structure in which the romantic fictional world is analysed in a realistic mode,¹⁰⁵ and in considering its implications it is helpful, I propose, to look at *Lord Jim*.¹⁰⁶ Jim’s story contains as many romantic elements as

¹⁰⁵ *Romance*, a novel in which Conrad collaborated with Ford, is an interesting case as it deals with a romantic fictional world with a romantic mode. As the general critical disregard of the work suggests, the result of this collaboration was disappointing. However, it is notable that the novel, unlike ‘The Rescuer’ and *Lord Jim*, adopts the protagonist’s first-person narration. Presumably, Conrad (and Ford) judged that the form in which a protagonist recollects his own past was required if a consistently romantic mode was to be adopted.

¹⁰⁶ Moser points out the connection between ‘The Rescuer’ and the Patusan

Lingard's, and the political discernment with which Jim's story is implicitly judged is similar to the case in 'The Rescuer'. As will be discussed in the next chapter, however, the way in which the romantic fictional world of *Lord Jim* is treated is totally different from its equivalent in 'The Rescuer'. In the next chapter I will examine how the introduction of Marlow's first-person narration allows Conrad to handle in a different way the problem of authorial attitude towards a romantic fictional world.

section of *Lord Jim*: 'how was Conrad finally able to write the third full-length novel? The answers are not far to seek. He was able to do it by taming the very materials that had so baffled him. The Patusan portion of *Lord Jim*, the portion Conrad added to the pilgrim-ship episode to convert the latter from a short story to a novel of sin and "redemption," represents, essentially, a reworking of "The Rescuer"' ("The Rescuer" Manuscript' 342).

Chapter 3

Marlow's Two Perspectives and Focal Transition in *Lord Jim*

*

In terms of narrative structure, *Lord Jim* occupies a rather exceptional position in Conrad's oeuvre. The first four chapters of the novel are presented to the reader by the anonymous extra-heterodiegetic narrator who is reminiscent of the Victorian omniscient narrators,¹⁰⁷ but he soon withdraws from the foreground and hands over his position as the narrator to Marlow, who is attending the official inquiry about the *Patna* incident. The rest of the novel is delivered through his voice, and his narration is subdivided into two parts—his oral narration to his friends and his letters to the 'privileged man'.¹⁰⁸ Although Conrad is famous for his use of discontinuous points of view in his works, the shift from the third-person to the first-person narration in the earlier part of *Lord Jim* is especially conspicuous for its alteration of the texture of the novel. The first four chapters of the novel remind us of Conrad's other earlier works adopting third-person

¹⁰⁷ As I will argue later, we should not simply regard him as a typical omniscient narrator.

¹⁰⁸ Marlow's written narrative is further subdivided into three parts: the explanatory letter, the main letter, and the final three paragraphs which are separated by an asterisk from the rest of the main letter. I will return to this in Section 3.

narration such as ‘The Rescuer’. When Marlow takes over the role of narrator, the text departs from the style of Conrad’s early third-person works, almost explicitly calling attention to that process of transition itself.

Basing my argument on the recognition that in its first four chapters *Lord Jim* is comparable to Conrad’s earlier third-person works such as ‘The Rescuer’, in this chapter I will scrutinise how the narrative transition from the third-person narrator to Marlow transforms the nature of the novel. Section 1 examines the behaviour of the extra-heterodiegetic narrator and the relation between the first four chapters of the novel and Marlow’s narratives that follow. Section 2 and 3 discuss Marlow’s narrative, focusing on his psychology as a character.¹⁰⁹ In Section 2 I will deal with Marlow’s oral narrative and

¹⁰⁹ Although criticism over the past several decades has offered plenty of new and helpful insights into the politico-ideological dimensions of the novel—some of which are listed in Notes 112-5—critical understanding of Marlow’s psychology involved in his relationship with Jim seems to remain largely unrevised since before the advent of theory. There have been a few recent studies devoted to the scrutiny of Marlow’s psychology as a character, but the tenor of their arguments differs from that of mine. Paris’s discussion in *Conrad’s Charlie Marlow: A New Approach to ‘Heart of Darkness’ and Lord Jim* (2005), though notable as a full exploration of Marlow’s psychology as a mimetic character (Paris invokes Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg’s taxonomy in *The Nature of Narrative* (1966)), shares with the majority of critics the notion that Marlow’s conflicting statements about Jim simply reflect his vacillation, which I intend to complicate in this chapter. Levin, in her *Tracing the Aesthetic Principles in Conrad’s Novels* (2008), points out the possibility of Marlow’s ‘psychologically motivated evasions’ and ‘scruples’ which my argument will also address; however, she focuses on his betrayal of Jim

consider the conflicting statements Marlow makes about Jim. An attempt will be made to complicate the common reading that emphasises Marlow's vacillation by focusing on the narratological implications of the transition in Marlow's attitude towards Jim's case, which critics have not fully addressed. Section 3 will focus on the way Marlow's knowledge of Jim's end affects his attitude towards Jim's case and thereby transforms the texture of his narrative in his letter. Throughout these two sections particular attention will be paid to the oft-overlooked fact that Marlow's oral and written narratives are respectively governed by two discrete perspectives that are conditioned by the different levels of information he has about Jim's fate. I will finally argue that the focus of the novel is gradually displaced from Jim's story as such and the judgment of it to Marlow's psychological subtleties as a character as the text progresses from the third-person narrator's introduction of Jim through Marlow's oral narrative to his letters to the 'privileged man'.

1. The Behaviour of the Third-Person Narrator

Critics of *Lord Jim* have tended to devote their attention to Marlow's narrative which constitutes most of the text quantitatively and exhibits rich thematic density. The anonymous

in disseminating and appropriating Jim's unfortunate story which he once agreed to consign to oblivion, whereas my argument will foreground the transition in Marlow's attitude towards Jim (38; 47).

extra-heterodiegetic narrator presents the first four chapters of the novel in an apparently conventional manner, which seems responsible for the critics' relative inattentiveness to his function. Like the majority of critics I will mainly focus on Marlow's oral and written narratives in this chapter, but before proceeding to analyse them I will consider certain roles which the primary narrator plays in relation to the entire novel.

Bonney's argument about the combination of first-person and third-person narration is helpful here.¹¹⁰ He offers the generalisation that in Conrad's novels the third-person narrative voice serves as a 'negative qualifier' of the perceptions of first-person narrators that are often optimistic, romantic, or partial ('Discontinuous Point of View' 101). This model also applies to the narrative transition in *Lord Jim*, though Bonney rather unaccountably excludes *Lord Jim* from his discussion. Before Jim starts to work as a sailor, we are told in Chapter I of the training-ship episode in which Jim fails to act according to his heroic self-image. After his failure to take action, the narrative presents Jim's self-deceptive contemplation:

He felt angry with the brutal tumult of earth and sky for taking him unawares and checking unfairly a generous readiness for narrow escapes. Otherwise he was rather glad he had not gone into the cutter, since a lower achievement had served the turn. He had enlarged his knowledge more than those who had done the work. When all men flinched, then—

¹¹⁰ Bonney, 'Joseph Conrad and the Discontinuous Point of View'.

he felt sure—he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas. He knew what to think of it. Seen dispassionately, it seemed contemptible (10).

This episode, which is shared only between the reader and the third-person narrator, allows the reader not only to see more critically than Marlow does Jim's self-defence about the *Patna* incident—Jim fails again to accomplish what is expected of him despite his 'enlarged knowledge'—but also to take a relative view of Marlow's narrative for its ignorance of Jim's weakness revealed in this episode. Lothe rightly observes that the training-ship episode 'makes the reader more critical of Marlow's sympathies and of the motivation for his narrative undertaking' (139).

In addition to this, the narrator's description of the pilgrims in the *Patna* is also illuminating in terms of his potential for relativising Marlow's narration. As Gail Fincham points out, the narrator represents the eight hundred pilgrims in a favourable manner as he 'celebrates with lyrical intensity the mysterious purpose' motivating them (70). We can discern this in the heroic undertone of the following quotation:

Eight hundred men and women, with faith and hopes, with affections and memories, they had collected there ... after treading the jungle paths, descending the rivers, coasting in praus along the shallows, crossing in small canoes from island to island, passing through suffering, meeting strange sights, beset by strange fears, upheld by one desire ... At the call of an idea they had left their forests, their clearings, the

protection of their rulers, their prosperity, their poverty, the surroundings of their youth and the graves of their fathers (13-4).

Right after this the German skipper calls them 'dese cattle' (14). As is implied by his ludicrous English, the narrator tacitly disapproves of him. We see that the narrator presents these pilgrims as more respectable than the skipper and the other corrupted white sailors (though at this stage it remains uncertain whether Jim is to be included in the same category as these ignoble white men). The narrator's norm displayed here is thus much more liberal than that of Marlow who tends to minimise the racial and political implications of the *Patna* incident.¹¹¹ Recent critics have discussed the problematic aspects of Marlow's narrative from political perspectives. They point out Marlow's inattentiveness to the victimisation of the non-Europeans such as the pilgrims and the Patusan people,¹¹² his (and Jim's) patronising attitude towards the people in Patusan,¹¹³ and his

¹¹¹ Padmini Mongia points out what might be termed the philosophisation of the racially- and politically-specific incident: '[a]lthough the origin of Marlow's interest in Jim is the racially charged episode aboard the *Patna*, his narrative quickly becomes concerned with "larger" issues of epistemological and metaphysical doubt' (173).

¹¹² Suresh Raval, *The Art of Failure: Conrad's Fiction*, p. 63; Baxter, *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance*, p. 35; Mongia, 'Narrative Strategy and Imperialism in Conrad's *Lord Jim*', p. 177.

¹¹³ Hampson, *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction*, p. 141.

complicity in Jim's position as coloniser in Patusan.¹¹⁴ Although this chapter does not fully address the political implications of Marlow's narrative due to its limited scope, it is to be noted that, in considering his narrative behaviour, his Orientalist slant is no less important than his psychology involved in his relationship with Jim.¹¹⁵ Here I confine myself to pointing out that the extra-heterodiegetic narrator's divergence from Marlow in politico-ideological terms, which is suggested in the description of the pilgrims, serves to relativise Marlow's narrative that follows. Bonney remarks: 'the fictional convention of omniscience necessarily lends validity to its understanding, just as the first-person convention necessarily discredits the reliability of the speaker' ('Discontinuous Point of View' 111). Although the extra-heterodiegetic narrator in *Lord Jim* seems not to be a typical omniscient narrator—which I will discuss shortly—he still seems to have the potential for making the reader take a relative view of Marlow's narrative which occupies most of the text in terms both of quantity and of impression.

Having said this, it is also notable that the overriding principle in the third-person narrator's behaviour seems to consist in making smooth the narrative transition to Marlow's first-person narration.

¹¹⁴ Mongia, 'Narrative Strategy and Imperialism in Conrad's *Lord Jim*', p. 178.

¹¹⁵ See, for other examples of political discussions, Parry, *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers*, pp. 76-98; Natalie Melas, 'Brides of Opportunity: Figurations of Women and Colonial Territory in *Lord Jim*'; Terry Collits, *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*, pp. 124-140.

This can be seen when we follow the transition of the narrator's attitude towards Jim. On the surface he appears to become increasingly less critical of Jim through the first four chapters, and Lothe, for instance, argues that in Chapter IV there is 'a subtle change in the authorial narrator's own attitude to Jim': 'if previously factually informative and somewhat critical of Jim, he is now more eager to understand him' (144). In Chapter I the third-person narrator is palpably ironic towards Jim, even to the point of appearing satiric. For example, he foregrounds the calculating aspect of Jim's job by remarking that commanders are led by water-clerks to shops where they are 'received like a brother by a ship-chandler he has never seen before' and that '[t]he connection thus begun is kept up, as long as the ship remains in harbour, by the daily visits of the water-clerk' (5). When he states right after this that a water-clerk 'is a beautiful and humane occupation', he sounds rather disingenuous and the resultant effect is evidently ironic, though the irony here is not directed particularly to Jim (6). Similarly, his use of the phrase 'Ability in the abstract' can sound sarcastic. The narrator remarks: '[a] water-clerk need not pass an examination in anything under the sun, but he must have Ability in the abstract and demonstrate it practically' (5). If we focus on the fact that Jim's series of failures can be seen as failures to put his high potential into actual performances—he is liked by his employers and shows competence in Patusan before Brown intrudes, after all—the narrator's statement that Jim possesses 'Ability in the

abstract' sounds truthful. On the other hand, when he observes, in explaining why Jim does not leave the sea even when he needs to escape from 'a fact', that '[h]e kept to seaports because he ... had Ability in the abstract, which is good for no other work but that of a water-clerk', we feel a bathetic deflation working around that set phrase (5; 6). The expression 'exquisite sensibility' he uses in describing Jim's inexplicable eastward escape is obviously ironic, too, although the precise implications of the irony are not yet apparent to the reader (6).

After the narrative moves on to Jim's working in the *Patna*, the style becomes more straightforwardly descriptive and the heavy irony of the third-person narrator is hardly perceptible there. However, there are signs which suggest that the narrator's attitude towards Jim is none the less critical at that stage despite its apparent change. In describing the progress of the official inquiry the narrator often employs internal focalisation through Jim and free indirect discourse. They primarily serve to reduce the voice and presence of the third-person narrator and to allow the reader to come closer to Jim's consciousness, but we can sometimes detect the narrator's irony there as well. In the following passage Jim is thinking about 'something' which lies beyond the mere factual elements of the *Patna* incident:

[the facts those men were so eager to know had] something else besides, something invisible, a directing spirit of perdition that dwelt within, like a malevolent soul in a detestable body. He was anxious to make this clear. This

had not been a common affair, everything in it had been of the utmost importance, and fortunately he remembered everything. He wanted to go on talking for truth's sake, perhaps for his own sake also (25-6).

When we remember that right before the collision 'the line dividing [Jim's] meditation from a surreptitious doze on his feet was thinner than a thread in a spider's web', the sentence 'fortunately he remembered everything' becomes ironic: if Jim really remembers 'everything' including his quasi-doze, this is obviously unfortunate rather than fortunate for his self-defence (21-2). Moreover, the fluctuation of the narrative voice in the passage also produces an implicitly ironic effect. We can interpret the third sentence in the quotation as Jim's free indirect discourse, whereas the fourth, final sentence seems to return to the narrator's focalisation through Jim. When we look at the final sentence closely, we can discern a transition of the level of focalisation in the middle of the sentence: the first half is certainly internal focalisation through Jim, but the second half approaches zero focalisation as it seems to depart from Jim's consciousness and adds information that weakens his self-defence. This series of narrative shifts from Jim's free indirect discourse through internal focalisation to quasi-zero focalisation undoubtedly serves to ironise Jim, though the consequent effect is more subdued than that of the narrator's sarcasm in Chapter I. Whereas the narrator's focalisation through Jim and free indirect discourse serve to allow the reader access to Jim's consciousness, the ironic effects embedded there

paradoxically create a critical distance between the reader and Jim.

It is more precise, therefore, to say that in the latter half of his presence the extra-heterodiegetic narrator refrains from being overtly ironic without actually becoming less critical of Jim. There is no good explanation for this behaviour of the narrator apart from the necessity of making smooth the transition to Marlow's first-person narration: if the narrator had remained overtly and incisively critical of Jim, the narrative transition to Marlow's sympathetic narration would have given an abrupt impression. That is, even though the narrator's critical attitude towards Jim remains consistent, he changes his tone not for any inherent reason—according to his own norms, for example—but just for the sake of narrative convenience. This is why I argued earlier that he should not be regarded as a typical omniscient narrator. The way the narrator's autonomy is subordinated to the convenience of narrative shift serves to undermine his position as the authorial voice in the text. Furthermore, Lothe's view that '[the narrator's] narrative contains very few (if any) suggestions of limited knowledge' is questioned when we look at the very first sentence of the novel: '[h]e was an inch, *perhaps* two, under six feet ...' (5, emphasis added). Here the narrator's omniscience is weakened in a palpable manner by the word of uncertainty, 'perhaps'. As if substantiating this observation, at the end of the novel the third-person narrator does not reappear to enclose Marlow's narrative. I am not arguing, of course, that his reappearance would have made the novel better—the case seems to be

the exact opposite—but his failure to return to the foreground of the text does indicate that he is not given an undeniably authorial position in the novel. The extra-heterodiegetic narrator in *Lord Jim* shows a considerable potential for relativising Marlow's narration, but the major principle behind his behaviour seems to consist in handing over the role of narrator to Marlow smoothly and retreating from the foreground of the text as inconspicuously as possible.

In preparation for my discussion of Marlow's narration, I would like to call attention here to another point with regard to the third-person narrator's behaviour—his proleptic mention of Jim's retreat into Patusan in Chapter I. After describing Jim's eastward escape from 'a fact', the narrator states as follows:

[a]fterwards, when his keen perception of the Intolerable drove him away *for good* from seaports and white men, even into a virgin forest, the Malays of the jungle village, *where he had elected to conceal his deplorable faculty*, added a word to the monosyllable of his incognito. They called him Tuan Jim: as one might say—Lord Jim (6, emphases added).

Reading this passage—especially in our first reading—perhaps our attention may be drawn to the explanation of the title of the book. However, it is noteworthy that some other crucial pieces of information are provided here. First, the phrase 'for good' implies that the novel cannot end otherwise than with Jim's death or with a situation in which Jim's permanent residence in Patusan is declared in one way or another. Since the smallest knowledge of the nature of Conrad's fiction induces

us to expect that the latter scenario is rather unlikely to occur in a happy and harmonious manner,¹¹⁶ this proleptic information at the beginning of the novel creates a sort of tension in the reader's mind. Second, and more importantly, by describing Jim's retreat to Patusan as concealment of 'his deplorable faculty', the narrator forestalls much of the reader's expectation of Jim's redemption:¹¹⁷ we are told that Jim will choose to conceal his weakness rather than overcome it, and the judgmental adjective 'deplorable' establishes Jim's character as unchangeably defective.

This forestallment of the reader's expectation is significant because it anticipates the shift of the novel's focus from Jim's possible redemption to something else. As will be discussed in the next section, although the transition from the third-person narration to Marlow's narrative is achieved by the two narrators sharing their interest in the possibility of the extenuation of Jim's crime, Marlow's narrative ultimately diverges from its initial motive and assumes a somewhat autonomous aspect. The extra-heterodiegetic narrator's proleptic

¹¹⁶ As to this Rabinowitz, in *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*, observes that 'nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and American canonical fiction, especially after the rise in popularity of naturalistic techniques, has a strong streak of pessimism', and that it influences the reader's expectations about the progression of the narrative (120-1). Although there might be some exceptions which qualify his argument, it seems to hold true at least with the reader of Conrad's works.

¹¹⁷ In the following section I will discuss how the possibility of Jim's redemption initially motivates Marlow to get involved in Jim's case.

mention of Jim's retreat into Patusan towards the beginning of the novel takes on great significance when we consider, after having read the whole text, how the narrative focus of the entire novel has shifted.

2. Marlow's Oral Narrative

The way Jim reacts to the aftermath of his misconduct in the *Patna* incident is an intriguing mixture of stoicism and failure to face his own character flaw. On the one hand, Jim is determined to confront his adversity in his own way. While the other white officers of the *Patna* who are responsible for the incident run away from the official inquiry, Jim chooses to attend it despite Marlow and Brierly's encouragement to evade it. After the trial in which Jim has his certificate cancelled, Chester, a seedy acquaintance of Marlow's, insinuates that Jim over-reacts to his failure, with which Marlow later agrees partly—'Perhaps he did take it too much to heart' (133). Following the lead of Stein who diagnoses that Jim is romantic, Marlow observes that Jim is tormented by 'the reproach of his romantic conscience' (253). On the other hand, Jim fails to fully recognise his sheer inability to live up to what is expected of him, as well as his moral responsibility in the incident; instead, he regards the event as a missed opportunity in which he could have achieved his romantic self-image which had been inspired by the 'light holiday literature' he read when he was young (7). During his retelling of the incident to Marlow he

exclaims: 'Ah! what a chance missed! My God! what a chance missed!', which outrages Marlow: 'Ah, he was an imaginative beggar! ... He had no leisure to regret what he had lost, he was so wholly and naturally concerned for what he had failed to obtain. He was very far away from me who watched him across three feet of space' (65; 66).

Consequently, Marlow's attitude towards Jim is highly ambivalent, which forms one of the most prominent features of *Lord Jim*. Marlow consistently mentions Jim's unreadability. He summarises the impression he had about Jim after his retelling of the *Patna* incident as follows:

The views he let me have of himself were like those glimpses through the shifting rents in a thick fog—bits of vivid and vanishing detail, giving no connected idea of the general aspect of a country. They fed one's curiosity without satisfying it; they were no good for purposes of orientation. Upon the whole he was misleading (60).

In relating Jim's departure for Patusan, Marlow remarks with a sort of resignation: 'I am fated never to see him clearly' (185). As if tossed about at the mercy of Jim's incomprehensibility, from the earlier stage of their relationship through Jim's eastward escape from the rumours of the scandal to Marlow's visit to Patusan, his oral narrative continually wavers between sympathy with Jim's youthful earnestness and moral objection to his failure to face his misconduct. Marlow's attitude towards Jim is further complicated by his recognition that Jim is 'one of

us', namely one of the members of European officers and gentlemen.¹¹⁸ When Jim asks Marlow pressingly: 'What would you have done?' during his account of the moments just before his leap from the *Patna*, Marlow remarks: '[t]here could be no mistake: I was being bullied now, and it behoved me to make no sign lest by a gesture or a word I should be drawn into a fatal admission about myself which would have had some bearing on the case. I was not disposed to take any risk of that sort' (83). Shortly afterwards he admits: 'I was aggrieved against him, as though he had cheated me—me!—of a splendid opportunity to keep up the illusion of my beginnings, as though he had robbed our common life of the last spark of its glamour' (101). This acknowledgment that Jim's misconduct in the *Patna* incident has reflected negatively upon the morality of himself and the community to which he belongs, combined with his wish to defend the youth who reminds him of his younger self,¹¹⁹ contributes to his conflicting attitudes towards Jim's case.¹²⁰

Marlow's ambivalent feelings towards Jim lead to his unstable

¹¹⁸ The phrase 'one of us', which is repeated almost persistently in the text, has long been the object of critics' discussion, and its political implications have been pointed out by many. Baxter, for instance, remarks that 'us' tacitly suggests 'common or garden white middle class male of the late nineteenth century' (*Swan Song* 38).

¹¹⁹ When Jim declines Marlow and Brierly's encouragement to evade the inquiry, Marlow remarks: 'he believed where I had already ceased to doubt' (118).

¹²⁰ Hampson points out that one of the things Marlow and other local white sailors are concerned about is 'the circulation of the *Patna* story among the larger colonial community' which would serve to 'undermine the European position of authority' (*Cross-Cultural Encounters* 131).

evaluation of Jim's new life in Patusan. This is observed most clearly in the opening two paragraphs of Chapter XVI. In this part Marlow's narrative suddenly leaps to a proleptic depiction of Jim's new life in Patusan. The chapter begins with a remarkably bright tone: '[t]he time was coming when I should see him loved, trusted, admired, with a legend of strength and prowess forming round his name as though he had been a stuff of a hero' (134). Marlow proceeds to describe his last view of Jim there: he was 'in a strong light, dominating, and yet in complete accord with his surroundings—with the life of the forests and with the life of men' (134). This positive atmosphere contrasts with the previous chapter which relates Jim's suffering in Marlow's room after the delivery of the judgment. However, doubts and uncertainty soon creep into his narration: 'I own that I was impressed, but I must admit to myself that after all this is not the lasting impression ... I cannot fix before my eye the image of his safety' (134-5). He even remarks thereafter that at times he feels he should have accepted Chester's offer to employ Jim in his dubious project as custodian of coolies on a guano island. This is rather a shocking statement as Marlow here as good as confesses that he occasionally wishes Jim had died—Marlow knows that the ship Jim would have boarded is likely to have been destroyed by a hurricane in the Pacific. The phrase 'blessed finality' in the following passage clearly means Jim's death:

Finis! The Pacific is the most discreet of live, hot-tempered oceans: the chilly Antarctic can keep a secret too, but more in

the manner of a grave. And there is a sense of blessed finality in such discretion, which is what we all more or less sincerely are ready to admit—for what else is it that makes the idea of death supportable? End! Finis! The potent word that exorcises from the house of life the haunting shadow of fate. This is what ... I miss when I look back upon Jim's success (135).

As Jim stays alive after the inquiry and keeps troubling Marlow by escaping eastward from the scandal, quitting the series of jobs Marlow puts in his way, Marlow's wish for the 'blessed finality' remains unfulfilled.

Towards the end of the second paragraph of Chapter XVI Marlow makes another significant remark: 'I don't mean to say that I regret my action, nor will I pretend that I can't sleep o' nights in consequence; still the idea obtrudes itself that he made so much of his disgrace while it is the guilt alone that matters' (135). Marlow's moral objection to Jim is most manifestly expressed here: he feels that Jim fails to recognise the exact nature of his misdeed in the *Patna* incident—disgrace concerns social self-image whereas guilt is about ethical principles. This is why he later states that he is not certain of 'the fabulous value of the bargain', namely the propriety of his decision to give Jim the opportunity in Patusan (190). Marlow's remark that the door between the world and Patusan will be shut behind Jim 'with a vengeance' is also to be understood in the context of Marlow's moral objection to him (178). In addition, we could interpret in a similar vein the following reflection, which appears after Marlow's disquieting conversation with

Jewel on his last day in Patusan: '[t]ruth shall prevail ... Yes, when it gets a chance. There is a law, no doubt—and likewise a law regulates your luck in the throwing of dice. It is not Justice the servant of men, but accident, hazard, Fortune—the ally of patient Time—that holds an even and scrupulous balance' (244). From the psychoanalytical perspective, we can regard Marlow's remark on the ascendancy of Fortune over Justice as paradoxically suggesting his preoccupation with Justice—that is, we can infer that here Marlow is concerned about the retribution of one kind or another that Justice might have inflicted on Jim.¹²¹ The precipitousness of the tonal change from the bright proleptic depiction through Marlow's faint misgivings to the expression of his moral objection to Jim at the beginning of Chapter XVI vividly illustrates Marlow's wavering attitude towards Jim and his new life in Patusan. Baxter points out that the affirmative depiction of Marlow's last view of Jim at the opening of the chapter clashes with his later account of the same scene at the end of Chapter XXXV: '[i]n the later passage the light is running out and Jim, whilst catching what light is left, is diminutive rather than "dominating" ... [t]his differentiation from his darkening surroundings fails to imply the "complete accord" of Marlow's former vision' (*Swan Song* 45). The tone of Marlow's oral narrative is so unstable that there are not a few conflicting accounts

¹²¹ See Sigmund Freud, 'Negation', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 19 (1923-25) (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 235-9.

like this example.

These contradictory statements in Marlow's oral narrative are one of the major sources of the bewilderment which the reader of *Lord Jim* experiences,¹²² and the most straightforward reading would be to regard them simply as reflecting Marlow's vacillation. Every now and then Marlow talks about the sheer difficulty of verbalising his experience with Jim. In his account of Stein and his arrangement to send Jim to Patusan in Chapter XXI, Marlow states: '[m]y last words about Jim shall be few. I affirm he had achieved greatness; but the thing would be dwarfed in the telling, or rather in the hearing' (172). He makes a similar remark later while he relates Jim's 'success' in Patusan:

Immense! No doubt it was immense; the seal of success upon his word, the conquered ground for the sole of his feet, the blind trust of men, the belief in himself snatched from the fire, the solitude of his achievement. All this, as I've warned you, gets dwarfed in the telling. I can't with mere words convey to you the impression of his total and utter isolation (207-8).

We can safely consider that these complexities and subtleties of what he personally perceived in Jim's case cause Marlow to keep vacillating between conflicting stances on it.¹²³ The following statement, which

¹²² Cedric Watts, for instance, remarks that his initial reaction to the novel was to see its intricate style as 'infuriating' ('Introduction' 11).

¹²³ The majority of critics hold this view. Paris, for instance, observes that 'Marlow's ambivalences create vacillation and doubt throughout the oral portion of his narrative' (152). John Peters similarly writes that Marlow vacillates

appears just after Marlow's conversation with Jewel in which she vents her distrust on him, succinctly expresses this: 'I cannot say what I believed—indeed I don't know to this day, and never shall probably' (244). Indeed, it could be argued that one of the novel's major attractions is the way Marlow's vacillation engages the reader and invites them to join his 'epistemological quest', namely his arduous attempt to understand Jim's case (Schwarz, *Almayer's Folly to 'Under Western Eyes'* 77).¹²⁴

However, I would argue that *Lord Jim* leaves room for another reading that complicates this common interpretation. To examine this, I propose here to focus on how Marlow's attitude towards Jim's case subtly shifts throughout their relationship. In *Fiction and Repetition* Hillis Miller observes that *Lord Jim* 'is made up of episodes similar in design' and that 'no episode serves as the point of origin, the arch-example of the *mythos* of the novel, but each is, by reason of its analogy to other episodes, a repetition of them, each example being as enigmatic as others' (33-4). 'The narration in many ways', he proceeds to argue, 'not least by calling attention to the way one episode repeats another rather than being clearly a temporal advance of it, breaks down

'between being drawn to Jim's romantic sensibility and judging Jim and upholding conventional moral standards' (108).

¹²⁴ Schwarz, for example, argues: '[j]ust as Marlow is engaged in a moral odyssey as he repeats the journeys of Jim's physical odyssey, so the reader takes part in an odyssey of judgment in which she or he is presented with an abundance of evidence and opinions' (*Rereading Conrad* 93).

the chronological sequence and invites the reader to think of it as a simultaneous set of echoing episodes spread out spatially like villages or mountain peaks on a map' (35). He insightfully captures how the reader of the novel finds it difficult to put the various conflicting elements into one chronological and causal order. His emphasis on simultaneity is especially relevant, given the fact that Marlow's entire oral narrative is uniformly governed by his perspective between his last view of Jim in Patusan and his learning of the last event—the implications of which I will address later. However, Miller's post-structuralist emphasis on indeterminacy seems to cause his failure to fully recognise elements which go hand in hand with the 'temporal advance' of the story.

The most important of such elements is the transition in Marlow's attitude towards Jim's case. In Chapter V Marlow explains in a comparatively lucid manner what led him to concern himself with the *Patna* case: he hoped to find 'some profound and redeeming cause, some merciful explanation, some convincing shadow of an excuse' for Jim that would enable him to vanquish 'the doubt of the sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct' (41). This part is indeed often quoted as one of the most vivid articulations of the novel's central motif.¹²⁵ In the official inquiry Marlow notes that the authority quite unaccountably decided that 'up to the time of the accident the ship had

¹²⁵ Brian Artese aptly expresses the standard interpretation of the central motif of *Lord Jim*: 'the purpose of the novel is to pierce the blind wall of persecution surrounding [Jim] with a more insightful sympathetic evaluation' (130).

been navigated with proper and seamanlike care', which is contrary to fact (122). This means that the legal narrative produced by the inquiry is unreliable for its failure to judge Jim's negligence, and that it should be critiqued by the reader who knows how Jim had actually behaved before the collision. The legal aspect of Jim's misconduct in the *Patna* incident is thus treated rather perfunctorily, which causes the focus of the novel to be placed not so much on how Jim can practically atone for his misdeed in the incident as on how he—and Marlow—can internally come to terms with the after-effect of his ignominious act.

It is noteworthy, however, that the possibility of Jim's redemption—and the concomitant reinstatement of Marlow's moral belief—soon ceases to be the chief motive of Marlow's involvement with Jim. Before becoming acquainted with Jim, Marlow had been asked by Brierly to coax Jim into escaping from the inquiry. Marlow had declined mainly because he felt insulted by Brierly's condescending manner of speaking, but also because he believed that Jim's choice not to escape from the trial was admirable: 'I became positive in my mind that the inquiry was a severe punishment to that Jim, and that his facing it—practically of his own will—was a redeeming feature in his abominable case' (55). As is seen from his use of the word 'redeeming feature', Marlow seems to be seriously thinking of Jim's redemption here. However, after he has listened to Jim's retelling of the *Patna* incident, Marlow offers to Jim the very plan of escape which he had confidently dismissed in his

interview with Brierly. This suggests that Marlow, after recognising the indefensible aspects of Jim's misconduct and his response to it, has given up his initial hope for Jim's redemption as such at this stage. A similar phenomenon can be observed in relation to what Marlow remarks towards the end of Chapter XV. He brings Jim to his room after the delivery of the judgment; looking at Jim's 'convulsive shudders' as he apparently fights for his breath, Marlow is moved and states: '[t]o bury him would have been such an easy kindness! It would have been so much in accordance with the wisdom of life, which consists in putting out of sight all the reminders of our folly, of our weakness, of our mortality' (132; 133). Here Marlow's sympathetic identification with Jim and his humane reluctance to abandon him is foregrounded. Right after this he remarks: '[t]here was nothing but myself between him and the dark ocean. I had a sense of responsibility' (133). Yet when we look at Marlow's eventual decision to send Jim to Patusan, it is evident that he ends up putting into practice the very 'wisdom of life' which he once dismissed because of his sympathy with Jim.¹²⁶ In both cases Marlow's disappointment leads him to carry out what he once declared to go against his conscience.

Distancing ourselves from the puzzling chronology and the conflicting statements in Marlow's oral narrative and focusing on what he actually does, we can extract a story line which has rarely been

¹²⁶ Marlow admits the absurdity of appointing Jim to be a trading-clerk in 'a place where there was no trade' (180).

addressed by critics: namely, Marlow, as he moves through the stages of his relationship with Jim, gradually takes distance from him, withdraws from his role as Jim's protector which he once undertook, and eventually abandons him psychologically if not practically. After Jim's retelling of the *Patna* incident, in which Marlow's hope for Jim's redemption is shaken, he starts by degrees to feel burdened about his role as Jim's guardian as Jim continually escapes eastward from the scandal and keeps quitting his given jobs. By the time Jim has a violent scuffle with the Siamese officer in Chapter XIX and the possibility of his ruin arises—'he would lose his name of an inoffensive, if aggravating, fool, and acquire that of a common loafer'—Marlow has come to think of how to get rid of him (153). In fact, when he decides with Stein to send Jim to Patusan, he openly admits—though with a little hesitation—his rather cold and egoistic attitude: 'I was about to go home for a time; and it may be I desired, more than I was aware of myself, to dispose of him—to dispose of him, you understand—before I left' (169). A little later he confesses rather bluntly: '[a]t the moment I merely wished to achieve his disappearance' (176).

Just before Jim's departure for Patusan he states that he is annoyed by Jim's incomprehension of the situation and confesses: 'for the first and last time in our acquaintance I perceived myself unexpectedly to be thoroughly sick of him' (180). This irritation can be seen in certain stylistic variation in this part of the novel. In Chapter XXII and XXIII, Marlow employs free indirect discourse to describe

Jim's speech, the intensiveness of which is somewhat conspicuous. The following is the scene in Chapter XXII in which Marlow warns Jim about the danger involved in going to Patusan. Marlow records: '[t]his was a chance he had been dreaming of. He couldn't think how he merited that I...He would be shot if he could see to what he owed...And it was Stein, Stein the merchant, who...but of course it was me he had to...I cut him short' (176). Here the free indirect discourse involves omission of Jim's exact words by means of dots, which, together with the final sentence 'I cut him short', gives us an impression of Marlow being irritated by Jim's frivolous chatter. Just after Chapter XXIII begins, Jim's speech even as represented through Marlow's free indirect discourse lasts for a considerable period of time:

Mr. Stein called [Doramin] 'war-comrade.' War-comrade was good. *Wasn't it?* And didn't Mr. Stein speak English wonderfully well? Said he had learned it in Celebes—of all places! That was awfully funny. *Was it not?* He did speak with an accent—a twang—*did I notice?* That chap Doramin had given him the ring. They had exchanged presents when they parted for the last time. Sort of promising eternal friendship. He called it fine—*did I not?* They had to make a dash for dear life out of the country when that Mohammed—Mohammed—What's-his-name had been killed. I knew the story, of course. Seemed a beastly shame, *didn't it?*... "He ran on like this ... (178-9, emphases added)

Marlow's faithful reproduction of Jim's question tags again makes Jim appear somewhat ridiculous. Compared with other forms of Marlow's narration, these uses of free indirect discourse serve to foreground the

growing psychological distance between Marlow and Jim.

Marlow's account of his last day in Patusan also contains a vivid depiction of his aloofness from Jim. When Jim confesses that the memory of the *Patna* incident still torments him by making him feel isolated from his people, Marlow's reaction is described as follows: '[t]hat's what he said to me on my last day with him. I did not let a murmur escape from me: I felt he was going to say more, and come no nearer to the root of the matter' (233). His detached diagnosis that Jim is still blind to 'the root of the matter' is arguably harsher than any other comment he makes on Jim in the text; his determined refraining from offering any comment to Jim seems rather cold. When Jim says to him right after this as if expecting some relieving words: '[a]fter all what has [the *Patna* incident] proved? Nothing. I suppose you don't think so...', we are told only that Marlow 'made a protesting murmur' (233). Although Marlow's consciousness is little verbalised here, the series of markedly uncommunicative behaviours on Marlow's part surely give us the impression that he has closed his mind to Jim. At this stage Marlow no longer seems to expect anything worthwhile from Jim's speech; he even tacitly tries to discourage Jim from continuing to speak.

Even though this observation of Marlow's attitudinal transition is certainly one undeniable element of the novel, it sounds rather discordant with the common reading that emphasises his personal

commitment to Jim.¹²⁷ Moreover, it is obvious that Marlow's growing aloofness is only one aspect of his complex attitude towards Jim. As is seen in their last conversation towards the end of Chapter XXXV in which Marlow is 'profoundly humbled' by Jim's expression of affection for him and turns his 'burning face' away, he retains some of his emotional tie with Jim even after the psychological distance between the two has decisively grown (255). I am foregrounding the rather inconspicuous story line of Marlow's attitudinal transition because examining the narratological implications of Marlow's psychology involved there allows us to complicate the common reading that regards the conflicting statements in Marlow's oral narrative simply as vacillation. It is not difficult to discern Marlow's uneasy conscience about sending Jim to Patusan, an act of which he remarks: 'we, metaphorically speaking, took him up and hove him over the wall with scant ceremony' (176). The 'inexplicable pain' he feels when Jim shows gratitude for his arrangement in Patusan is its most obvious indicator (177). The following passage records Marlow's reaction when he hears from Jim about his success in Patusan and the great trust the people there place on him: 'I observed quickly that he had found that out in the end. I had been sure of it, I added. He shook his head. "Were you?"

¹²⁷ The 'human friendship' between Jim and Marlow has been emphasised by some of the major critics (Lothe 173). Watt, for instance, argues for a humanistic reading of the novel when he calls their friendship 'so rewarding and touching a personal relationship' that exhibits 'emotional warmth' (*Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* 337).

He pressed my arm lightly above the elbow. “Well, then—you were right” (189). Considering that in deciding to send Jim to Patusan he ‘merely wished to achieve [Jim’s] disappearance’, we cannot swallow his declaration that he ‘had been sure of’ Jim’s success (176). This seems merely conventional politeness, and when he offers no comment to Jim’s ‘[w]ere you?’, he indeed seems rather uncomfortable.

Marlow’s generalisation about conscience and human solidarity in Chapter XXI is also noteworthy in this context. As he mentions his plan to go home, he starts to reflect on the importance of a clear conscience in going back home: ‘[t]here are the girls we love, the men we look up to, the tenderness, the friendships, the opportunities, the pleasures! But the fact remains that you must touch your reward with clean hands, lest it turn to dead leaves, to thorns, in your grasp’; then, a little later he shows pity for ‘the stragglers’ like Jim who are denied ties with other people because of their sense of guilt (170; 171). Impressive as it is, this eloquent monologue sounds slightly suspect for the reason that it comes soon after Marlow’s decision to ‘dispose of’ Jim is mentioned (169). We can infer that here Marlow’s uneasy conscience about sending Jim to Patusan partly induces his meditation about guiltlessness which he thinks differentiates himself from Jim the ‘straggler’. This differentiation, though, is ironically undermined by the fact that Marlow’s hands, which let go of Jim from rather a selfish motive, are not quite clean, either. Indeed, the fact that Marlow talks about Jim ‘many times, in distant parts of the world,’ ‘at length, in

detail' suggests that his entire oral narrative is motivated by his wish to come to terms with his compunction about the way his attitude towards Jim has changed (27).

To see the magnitude of the emotional impact of Marlow's changed attitude towards Jim and its significance in the novel, it is relevant to look at the scene during Jim's retelling of the *Patna* incident in which one of the narratees tells Marlow that he is 'so subtle' (74). As he listens to Jim's story, Marlow remarks, he noticed his being driven into 'a dispute impossible of decision if one had to be fair to all the phantoms in possession—to the reputable that had its claims and to the disreputable that had its exigencies' (73). He also states that Jim 'appealed to all sides at once—to the side turned perpetually to the light of the day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness' (73). It is ultimately this liberalness of Marlow, which compels him to be fair to 'the disreputable that ha[s] its exigencies' and to face 'that side of us' which 'exists stealthily in perpetual darkness', that maintains his involvement with Jim and makes him take charge of Jim from the unsympathetic third-person narrator. Therefore, the fact that the tinge of liberal tolerance perceived in Marlow's 'confounded democratic quality of vision' that denies him 'a discriminating eye' 'for the hod of the rag-picker or the fine linen of the next man' eventually gives way to his rather selfish desire to get rid of Jim bears great significance in terms both of his conscience and of the direction the novel takes (73-4).

Marlow's changed attitude towards Jim sheds light on the role of the first two paragraphs of Chapter XVI in the novel. I have argued earlier that the insertion exhibits Marlow's unstable view on Jim's new life in Patusan. In the light of what I have discussed above, we can also consider that the bright depiction of Jim's 'success' in Patusan partly derives from Marlow's wish to salve his conscience—as I will discuss later, his uneasy conscience about having abandoned Jim is offset psychologically by representing Jim's new life in Patusan as glorious. When a first-time reader reaches this part, he or she reads it without the knowledge of this psychological subtlety of Marlow since the two paragraphs are inserted while Marlow is still considerably sympathetic towards Jim. That is to say, the two paragraphs exhibit signs of Marlow's uneasy conscience proleptically before the reader becomes well acquainted with it. Indeed, it is only when we reread the novel that we fully understand the implications of the prolepsis in terms of Marlow's psychology.

Marlow's oral narrative thus exhibits signs of his faint compunction about having withdrawn from his commitment to Jim, as well as the mixture of sympathy with and moral objection to him. This recognition enables us to see the contradictions in Marlow's oral narrative in a different light: that is, we can consider them not only as simple vacillation but also as obfuscation which is caused—or more precisely necessitated—by his uneasy conscience about how he distanced himself from Jim by degrees. The coexistence of Marlow's

conflicting statements about Jim throughout his oral narrative, together with the disrupted chronology, undoubtedly serves to blur Marlow's attitudinal transition, which he feels rather uncomfortable about, and to make the reader (and his audience) relatively inattentive to it. For example, when Marlow talks about 'a moment of real and profound intimacy' with Jim at the end of Chapter XXIII where 'the sort of formality that had been always present in [their] intercourse vanished from [their] speech', we are prone to underestimate the fact that it is enabled, in this later stage of their relationship, largely because this is the scene in which Jim is about to leave for Patusan permanently, relieving Marlow's long-time burden (184). The very fact that relatively little critical attention has been paid to Marlow's attitudinal transition can be partly attributed to this obfuscating effect of the tonal as well as chronological intricacy of his oral narrative. Consideration of Marlow's uncomfortableness about his changed attitude towards Jim's case and his psychological need for salving his conscience even offers the possibility of seeing the conflicting impressions his oral narrative gives as something strategic.

In examining this we are also addressing the issue of the tension between Marlow's perspective at the time of narration and that at the time of narrated events — a tension every first-person narrative essentially entails. Although the fluid chronology of his narrative serves to make the reader oblivious to this, Marlow's oral narrative is, as I noted earlier, homogeneously governed by one and the same

perspective—that between his last view of Jim in Patusan and his hearing about the last catastrophic event. This means that the descriptions of the narrated events—including the accounts of Marlow’s internal states there—can be affected by the narrating Marlow’s manipulative intention. In the case of Marlow’s oral narrative, the tension between the narrating and narrated perspectives is made even more tricky because what the third-person narrator describes at the beginning of Chapter XXXVI as the ‘incompleteness’ of Jim’s case keeps Marlow’s feelings towards the subject of his narrative rather undigested (257). He remains less than fully certain of Jim’s success in Patusan as is seen in his unsettling conversation with Jewel on the last day in Patusan—facing her mistrust of Jim and Marlow, his ‘exorcism’ fails as he is unable to vanquish the ‘spectre’, namely his doubt about the permanence of Jim’s success there (242; 243). Conviction of Jim’s achievement of his romantic dream, which would serve to salve his conscience, is denied to Marlow. On the other hand, his moral objection to Jim also remains unaddressed as long as Jim’s apparent success in Patusan continues where nobody severely challenges him to face his deficiency—no matter how precarious that success seems to be. The ‘incompleteness’ of Jim’s story places Marlow in a state of limbo, as it were, as to his attitude towards what he narrates, which causes his undigested feelings to permeate his entire oral narrative and makes it hard to understand statically.

Concerning the reading I have proposed, an obvious difficulty lies

in assessing how much of Marlow's contradictions are to be seen as obfuscation rather than simple vacillation, as well as how self-conscious he is in that act of obfuscation. What must be noted here is that overemphasis on Marlow's deliberate obfuscation can lead to a reductive reading which detracts from the rich ambiguities of the novel. Instead of running such risks by further pursuing those ultimately unanswerable questions above, in the next section I will turn our attention to Marlow's letters to the 'privileged man' and try to demonstrate that focusing on Marlow's psychology involved in his changed attitude towards Jim's case sheds light on how the qualitative difference between Marlow's oral and written narratives arises. Particular attention will be paid to the way in which the resolution of Marlow's limbo, which is brought about by his knowledge of Jim's eventual death, changes the texture of his narrative.

3. Marlow's Letters to the 'Privileged Man'

Marlow's written narrative, which occupies the last ten chapters of the novel, can be subdivided into three parts: Marlow's explanatory letter to the 'privileged man' (Chapter XXXVI and XXXVII), his main letter that relates Jim's death (Chapter XXXVIII to XLV), and the final three paragraphs of the novel that are separated by an asterisk from the rest of the letter. The effect of Marlow's main written narrative being framed between those two is significant, but before considering it,

in what follows I will examine the texture of the main narrative which is substantially different from that of Marlow's oral narrative.

In considering Marlow's written narrative, it is important to bear in mind that this part is governed by a perspective which is totally different from the one that governed his oral narrative. Marlow in this part knows—unlike in his oral narrative—Jim's eventual fate, which necessarily affects his feelings about Jim's case. It is rather evident that Jim's death largely resolves his smouldering moral objection to Jim: the catastrophic event, which Marlow calls 'an unavoidable consequence', could be seen as a sort of punishment for the Romantic's failure to face his past misdeed (261). On the other hand, Jim's quasi-suicide also provides Marlow with the opportunity to salve his conscience by representing Jim's end as something glorious. By constructing the story in which Jim finally realises his long-time dream to achieve the romantic heroism of the 'light holiday literature', Marlow can minimise the pang of conscience coming from the recognition that he is not a little responsible for Jim's ruin (7). We might even assume that Marlow, in a way, welcomes his opportunity to narrativise Jim's death.¹²⁸

The signs of Marlow's narrative being influenced by these unarticulated—or rather, unacknowledged—psychological subtleties

¹²⁸ Marlow acknowledges his role as the organiser of the story: 'I put it down here for you as though I had been an eyewitness. My information was fragmentary, but I've fitted the pieces together, and there is enough of them to make an intelligible picture' (262).

can be discerned in the relatively straightforward quality of Marlow's narration in his main letter to the 'privileged man'. His written narrative is far more linear than his oral narrative as he simply introduces Brown's life, describes his intrusion into Patusan and the eventual confrontation between Jim and Brown, and finally provides the concluding account of Jim's end. Marlow's narrative here is unswervingly oriented towards the final representation of Jim's romantic death, even to the extent that it seems somewhat teleological.

Marlow's treatment of Brown provides one example of how his attitude is dictated by that goal of his narrative project. Brown is one of those caricatured villains that frequently appear in Conrad's work such as Mr. Jones in *Victory* and the Frenchman without hands in 'Because of the Dollars'. Jameson regards him as an incarnation of *ressentiment* (257-8). Indeed, the villain who came to have 'a strange vengeful attitude towards his own past, and a blind belief in the righteousness of his will against all mankind' as a result of '[giving] way to an outburst of sombre and violent grief' over the dead body of his lover who offered him the opportunity to reclaim his life can appear a somewhat ludicrous character (283; 270). Despite this, however, the impression we get from the text is that Marlow takes Brown seriously. He hardly applies to Brown the degree of ironic criticism he exhibited in his intercourse with Jim; on the contrary, we can even discern Marlow's attempt to elevate Brown's villainous deeds. He describes the confrontation between Jim and Brown as 'the deadliest kind of duel on

which Fate looked on with her cold-eyed knowledge of the end'; he calls Brown and his subordinates 'the emissaries with whom the world [Jim] had renounced was pursuing him in his retreat' (294). Marlow's description of Brown's massacre of Dain Waris and his men goes as follows:

Thus Brown balanced his account with the evil fortune. Notice that even in this awful outbreak there is a superiority as of a man who carries the right—the abstract thing—within the envelope of his common desires. It was not a vulgar and treacherous massacre; it was a lesson, a retribution—a demonstration of some obscure and awful attribute of our nature which, I am afraid, is not so very far under the surface as we like to think (309).

Although we can faintly recognise Brown's voice intruding into his diction, here Marlow certainly emphasises the dramatic impact of Brown's criminal act, which indirectly leads to enhancing the magnitude of Jim's heroic end. (Consider what Jim's final act would look like if Brown's massacre had been represented merely as casual sadistic violence.) Given the critical discernment Marlow displayed in his oral narrative, this unresisting acceptance of—and somewhat questionable glamorisation of—Brown's massacre seems to indicate Marlow's strong desire to construct a heroic narrative around Jim's death.

More important is Marlow's depiction of the scene after Jim is informed of Dain Waris's death. When Tamb' Itam insinuates to Jim

that his men might face retaliation from the villagers, Marlow writes:

“[t]hen Jim understood. He had retreated from one world, for a small matter of an impulsive jump, and now the other, the work of his own hands, had fallen in ruins upon his head. It was not safe for his servant to go out amongst his own people! I believe that in that very moment he had decided to defy the disaster in the only way it occurred to him such a disaster could be defied (312).

Considering that this is one of the circumstances in which Marlow possesses the least access to Jim’s internal state in the novel—this part is based on what he hears from Tamb’ Itam who, unlike Dain Waris who understands Jim with ‘a European mind’, is not supposed to be able to penetrate his master’s consciousness—the first two sentences should be read as Marlow’s interpretation (200). The interpretative nature of the final sentence in the quotation is even more explicit. As can be seen from Marlow’s admission that ‘all I know is that without a word he came out of his room and sat before the long table’, here he presents his interpretation of Jim’s consciousness quite confidently despite the great uncertainty brought about by the insufficient information (312). Marlow’s highly interpretative narration continues further. After Jim dismisses Jewel and Tamb’ Itam’s proposal to defend themselves, Marlow states: ‘[i]t was then, *I believe*, he tried to write—to somebody—and gave it up’ (312, emphasis added). In depicting Jim’s rejection of Jewel’s encouragement to fight, he observes: ‘with the growing loneliness of his obstinacy his spirit seemed to rise above the ruins of

his existence' (313). Marlow notes his lack of information and makes qualifications for these statements: '[w]hat thoughts passed through his head—what memories? Who can tell'; 'whether he had any hope—what he expected, what he imagined—it is impossible to say' (312; 313). Nevertheless, Marlow's interpretative descriptions of Jim here are so steadfastly oriented towards the final representation of Jim's romantic end that those qualifications seem to count little. If anything, they serve to enforce it.

We have observed the way Marlow's narrative agenda reduces the flexibility of his narration, as it were, and makes him direct his narrative towards the glorification of Jim's final act even in a teleological manner. From this perspective we can reconsider the frequently discussed issue of the 'structural rift' between the *Patna* and Patusan sections (Fincham 58). Jameson, for instance, notes that 'a qualitative shift and diminution of narrative intensity' are observed as we move 'from the story of the *Patna* and the intricate and prototextual search for the "truth" of the scandal of the abandoned ship, to that more linear account of Jim's later career in Patusan' (195). Although the apparent affinity between the Patusan section of *Lord Jim* and adventure romance as such tends not to be seen as a flaw of the novel today, since recent critics have noted the self-conscious and strategic use of the elements of romance in the novel,¹²⁹ the general critical

¹²⁹ Hampson, for example, points out 'the systematic overturning of romance conventions in the first part of the novel' and observes: 'it means that the romance world of Patusan has already been ruled out as a possible reality' (*Cross-Cultural*

consensus seems to be that at the superficial level the Patusan section appears simpler and less modernist than the Patna section.¹³⁰ But technically it is Marlow's written narrative, rather than the entire Patusan part, that shows the relatively linear and simple nature. As becomes clear when we look at Chapter XXIV to XXXV—the part between the beginning of the Patusan section and the transition to Marlow's written narrative—the account of Marlow's visit to Patusan, while it is delivered through Marlow's oral narration, abounds in complexities (such as an unchronological narrative structure) nearly as much as the *Patna* section. Indeed, some critics have proposed another schema that emphasises the qualitative gap between Marlow's oral and written narratives rather than that between the *Patna* and Patusan sections. John Batchelor, for instance, describes the transition from Marlow's oral to written narrative as involving 'a shift from moral relativity to moral "flatness" in the novel's dramatic organization'; Greaney similarly argues that the narrative transition is 'implicated in the disappointing moral and narratological simplifications of the novel's second phase' (141; 80). Although the first schema that emphasises the division between the *Patna* and Patusan sections has the virtue of addressing the issue of genre, the second schema that stresses the distinction between Marlow's two

Encounters 129).

¹³⁰ For instance, see, in addition to Jameson's observation I have just quoted, J. H. Stape's remark: '[t]he moral issue in the Patusan section are made to appear deliberately more clear cut than those of the *Patna* section' (74-5).

narratives is more relevant when we focus, as in this chapter, on the texture of narrative. In this light it is appropriate to divide the novel into three parts in terms of narrative structure: namely, the first four chapters delivered through the extra-heterodiegetic narrator, Marlow's oral narrative to the anonymous narratees, and his letters to the 'privileged man'. The comparatively little critical attention to the qualitative difference between the last two parts can be attributed partly to the critical over-emphasis on the *Patna*-Patusan division.

In contrast to his oral narrative in which Marlow's undigested feelings towards Jim's case caused a certain obscurity in the direction of the narrative's progress, Marlow's written narrative, because of being supported by the implicit teleology of his narrative project, shows a clear and straightforward nature. However, we need to consider here the framing devices between which Marlow's main letter is placed: his explanatory letter and the final three paragraphs of the novel. Marlow's explanatory letter, especially in Chapter XXXVI, is informed by his uncertainty about the meaning of Jim's end, whose texture is closer to his oral narrative rather than to his main letter. We can see this in his musing after the mention of the past conversation between the 'privileged man' and himself: 'the question is whether at the last [Jim] had not confessed to a faith mightier than the laws of order and progress. I affirm nothing. Perhaps you may pronounce—after you've read' (259). Being unsure about how to interpret Jim's end, his doubt extends to 'the language of facts, that are so often more enigmatic

than the craftiest arrangement of words' (259).

We can read in a similar way the final three paragraphs of the novel, where a faint hint of doubt in Marlow's monologue seems to undermine the optimism of the very narrative he has just presented. We can generalise that as the paragraphs progress, Marlow's assuredness about the heroic status of Jim's end wanes. In the first paragraph he foregrounds the 'excessively romantic' aspect of Jim's final act: '[n]ot in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success!' (318). Marlow describes Jim's 'success' employing the phrase 'a proud and unflinching glance' that appears in Jim's legend amongst the villagers: 'it may well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he had beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side' (317; 318). The second paragraph, beginning with the contrastive conjunction 'but', introduces Jewel—the woman Jim abandoned against his pledge—into the focus of his musing: '[h]e goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct' (318). Given his emphasis on Jim's 'success' in the previous paragraph, the question that follows: '[i]s he satisfied—quite, now, I wonder?' and the answer he gives himself: '[w]e ought to know. He is one of us' can sound rhetorical (318). At the same time, although the ambiguity is considerable, we might be able to read Marlow's faint misgivings in the following self-question: 'have I not stood up once, like an evoked ghost,

to answer for his eternal constancy?' (318) His doubt sounds deeper when he asks: '[w]as I so very wrong after all?' (318). This impression is substantiated by the final paragraph that describes the actual condition of Jewel after being abandoned. Marlow starts the paragraph with the rhetorical question: '[w]ho knows?' that gives up resolving his contradictory impressions about the meaning of Jim's deed (318). He then depicts Jewel's 'soundless, inert life in Stein's house', and the paragraph—and the novel—ends rather abruptly with his description of Stein who 'has aged greatly of late' (318). The somewhat offhand manner in which the paragraph ends might take the reader aback, but it is clear that the celebration of Jim's final act in the first paragraph has ceased to be felt in the final one which focuses on Jewel's misery and Stein's decline towards death. Even though the second paragraph is fairly ambiguous, Marlow's uncommunicativeness in the final paragraph implies the waning of his assuredness about Jim's 'success'. That is to say, after Marlow finishes his narrative of Jim's heroic end, doubts about the legitimacy of the very story he has just presented seem to crop up in his mind.

The comparatively straightforward impression Marlow's main written narrative gives is thus complicated by the framing narrative devices that exhibit the same uncertainty as in his oral narrative. It is reasonable to see this as a continuation of Marlow's vacillation. However, when we think of the roundabout procedure in which the linear and somewhat teleological main narrative is presented only to be

cast doubt on by the framing devices, it seems that the psychological subtleties involved in his withdrawal from his commitment to Jim provide a more exact explanation: that is, the structure of Marlow's written narrative reflects the conflict between his desire to narrativise Jim's end as the realisation of his romantic dream—which would serve to salve his conscience—and his awareness of the possibility of misrepresentation which makes him uncomfortable about the narrative he provides. Scrutiny of Marlow's psychology involved in his attitudinal transition and its narratological implications helps to illuminate the source not only of the difference of texture between his oral and written narratives but also of the tonal heterogeneity within his written narrative.

4. The Transition of Narrative Focus

In the discussion above I have examined the way in which Marlow's complex attitude towards Jim's case and its transition throughout the novel affect the texture of his oral and written narratives, paying particular attention to the difference between Marlow's two perspectives that respectively govern each of his narratives. On the basis of what I have argued, I will finally consider the issue of the focus of the novel through surveying the transition of the status of Jim's story as such and situate *Lord Jim* within Conrad's third-person novels I discuss in this thesis. As I hope my argument

has shown, Marlow not only functions as a narrative device in the novel but also occupies a crucial position as a character by virtue of the psychological subtleties he exhibits in his involvement in Jim's case. When the first four chapters of the novel end and Marlow replaces the anonymous third-person narrator, his oral narrative raises as another centre of the novel his own complex emotions about Jim's case. That is to say, Jim's story, which the narrative had been exclusively focusing on, starts coexisting with Marlow's. On the one hand, this coexistence is certainly to be seen as an organic interrelationship in which the two stories enrich and depend on each other; however, when we examine how the status of Jim's story faintly changes through the transition from Marlow's oral to written narrative, we see that this coexistence is also a *competition*. In a sense, the narrative shift from the detached third-person narrator's introduction of Jim and his incomplete account of the *Patna* incident to Jim's retelling of the event to Marlow can be seen as a process of according Jim the opportunity to make his voice heard.¹³¹ Throughout Marlow's oral narrative Jim's voice has plenty of

¹³¹ On the other hand, paradoxically, this process also makes it more difficult for the reader to understand Jim. Since Marlow, unlike the quasi-omniscient narrator, cannot see Jim's inner state, Jim becomes enigmatic once Marlow undertakes the role of mediator between him and the reader. Filtered through Marlow's human perspective, Jim's personality, which gives contradictory impressions, appears almost incoherent. For example, when Marlow says to Jim in Chapter XXIII: 'If you only live long enough [in Patusan] you will want to come back', Jim replies 'absently': 'Come back to what?', 'with his eyes fixed upon the face of a clock on the wall' (181). Given that in the preceding part Jim had made Marlow feel 'thoroughly sick of him' by his frivolity, the gap felt between that and

opportunity to reach the reader directly thanks to Marlow's personal commitment to him. By contrast, in Marlow's written narrative all the information about Jim is hearsay, and the reader is completely denied access to his unfiltered voice. It is significant, in this context, that Jim's unaddressed letter, which is sent to the 'privileged man' together with Marlow's letters, offers only short and incomplete sentences: '[a]n awful thing has happened'; 'I must now at once...' (260). Jim's story thus becomes more dependent on Marlow's narrative mediation in his written narrative. To put it another way, towards the end of the novel where Marlow's interpretation comes to contain Jim's consciousness, the competition between Jim's and Marlow's stories that informed Marlow's oral narrative has ceased to be even: as we have seen, Jim's last moment is subordinated to Marlow's interpretative narrative act. We can even regard this process as a kind of appropriation.¹³² Indeed, when Marlow intensifies the interpretative character of his narrative in depicting Jim's last moments and presents the soliloquy in the final three paragraphs which foregrounds his complex emotion, Jim's story as such, which enjoyed the exclusive narrative focus in the first four chapters, seems at last to have been displaced by Marlow's narrative project from the focus of the novel.¹³³ Mark Conroy's observation about

Jim's sudden gloom makes him look like an unintelligible mystery (180).

¹³² The use of the term 'appropriation' in this context belongs to Levin, who argues that 'Marlow is empowered by the appropriation of Jim's story' (218).

¹³³ It has been pointed out that the reader's expectation for a definitive judgment of Jim is finally confounded (e.g. Simmons, "He Was Misleading": Frustrated

the novel's strategic shift of focus is illuminating here:

One is initially drawn to Jim's story by the assumption that it may have something to reveal about the legitimacy of the merchant marine and the British project of empire, and that the story would provide clues to the viability and fate of that larger project. Yet, as the story reaches its conclusion, those specific historical dimensions are ignored in Marlow's reflections in favor of the abstractly metaphysical and the unknowable (116).

Even though Conroy's discussion emphasises the historical and political aspects of the novel which I did not address in this chapter, his attention to how the initial object of the reader's interest is displaced from the focus of the novel has much in common with what I have been arguing. The narrative shift from the first four chapters conveyed by the third-person narrator through Marlow's oral narrative to his concluding letter to the 'privileged man' also involves transition in narrative focus that subtly changes the nature of the novel itself.

In the previous chapter I argued that the split in the narrative voice between the romantic and the realistic—and the potential of the latter for undermining the romantic fictional world of the novel—contributed to the impasse of 'The Rescuer'. The trace of a similar issue can be observed in the relation between the extra-heterodiegetic

Gestures in *Lord Jim*' (2000), p. 31). My argument develops this critical commonplace by establishing how the denial of 'an answer to the riddle posed by Jim's character' is accomplished through the transition of narrative focus from Jim's story as such to Marlow's narrative project itself (31).

narrator and Marlow in *Lord Jim*. On the simpler level, we can formulate that Conrad successfully coped with the difficulty involved in authorial judgment on a romantic character who requires ironic detachment and empathy at the same time by dividing the narrative between the anonymous third-person narrator and Marlow and thereby providing different levels of criticism and sympathy about Jim. More important is the difference in degree and nature of the extra-heterodiegetic narrator's and Marlow's criticisms of Jim. Whereas the exceedingly detached third-person narrator has the potential for criticising every aspect of Jim's deficiency, Marlow's criticism of Jim has its limitations due to his ideological bias and personal emotions as a character. To put it specifically, Marlow's criticism of Jim mainly concerns his failure to face his character flaw; unlike the third-person narrator, Marlow is hardly aware of the racially-charged aspect of the *Patna* incident or of the political implications of Jim's series of acts in Patusan. What we see in *Lord Jim* is that the political awareness which would lead to a fundamental critique not only of Jim's misconduct in the *Patna* incident but also of the entire fictional world of the latter half of the novel is implied by the existence of the extra-heterodiegetic narrator but stays in the background of the novel. Though having the potential for undermining the authority of Marlow's narrative, the extra-heterodiegetic narrator almost consigns his existence to oblivion after the first four chapters and does not reappear at the end of the

novel to enclose Marlow's written narrative. The result is that the fatal critique of Jim's new life in Patusan and of Marlow's narrative that is inattentive to its political implications is at once discerned by the reader *and* confined to the background of the text. By virtue of dividing the judgments made by the narrative voice into two levels—one unbounded and the other biased and limited—and allowing the latter the apparent predominance over the former, Conrad in *Lord Jim* deals successfully with the problem involved in analysing a romantic fictional world in a realistic mode whose judgments have the potential for undermining that very world.

It seems helpful to look at Marlow's trope of 'the last word' in this context. After introducing Patusan to the narratees and expressing a doubt about the propriety of his decision to send Jim there ('I ought to be delighted, for it is a victory in which I had taken my part: but I am not so pleased as I would have expected to be'), he addresses the issue of judging Jim employing that trope:

[a]nd besides, the last word is not said—probably shall never be said. Are not our lives too short for that full utterance which through all our stammerings is of course our only and abiding intention? I have given up expecting those last words, whose ring, if they could only be pronounced, would shake both heaven and earth. There is never time to say our last word—the last word of our love, of our desire, faith, remorse, submission, revolt. The heaven and the earth must not be shaken (172).

Considering the contrast he makes between this and '*my last words*

about Jim', it is evident that by 'the last word' Marlow means judgment made by some transcendental entity with firm authority (172, emphasis added). Expanding this trope Marlow uses intra-diegetically into an extra-diegetic dimension of Conrad's third-person novels, we can interpret 'the last word' as indicating the authorial judgment whose political discernment can potentially undermine the novel's fictional world. The mode of realism in 'The Rescuer' had the potential for foregrounding this 'last word', as it were. We can formulate that the impasse of 'The Rescuer' partly derives from its poor handling of the 'last word' that threatens to undermine the legitimacy of the novel's focus on Lingard's adventurous project. In *Lord Jim*, by shifting the narrative focus from the judgment of Jim's case as such to Marlow's psychological subtleties involved in his relationship with Jim, Conrad transposes the focus of the novel from 'the last word' by the authorial voice to Marlow's personal 'last words' about Jim and thereby succeeds in avoiding the difficulty he had with 'The Rescuer'. As the novel ends with Marlow's soliloquy without the return of the extra-heterodiegetic narrator, the 'last word' of the authorial voice remains unuttered.

In the next chapter I will discuss *Nostramo*, the novel in which Conrad reverts to third-person narration after the series of Marlow tales. Being a novel that deals with the effects of international capitalism promoted by Anglo-American imperialism in a fictional country in the South America, *Nostramo* exhibits fewer romantic elements than 'The Rescuer' and *Lord Jim* do. However, the novel

contains another kind of threat to its fictional world. Employing Marlow's trope mentioned above, my main focus will be on how and if *Nostramo* succeeds, without recourse to a first-person narrator, in handling its version of the 'last word'.

Chapter 4

Decoud Eliminated, Nostromo Scapegoated, and Politics Defocused: The Treatment of Nihilism¹³⁴ in *Nostromo*

*

Nostromo, a novel which critics almost unanimously regard as one of Conrad's most important works, is essential for the understanding of the issue I have examined in the previous two chapters: namely, the relation between authorial attitude towards narrative contents and the use of third-person narration in Conrad's literature. The novel not only reverts to third-person narration after the series of Marlow tales including *Lord Jim*, but also squarely deals with political subjects as it thematises international capitalism in a fictional country of South America. Given that in 'The Rescuer' the combination of third-person narration and a subject matter with certain political implications brought about the problem of incoherent authorial attitudes and led to the impasse of the novel, and that this in a way necessitated the

¹³⁴ It is to be noted that the term 'nihilism/nihilist' has a historically-specific meaning. *Oxford English Dictionary* describes it as: '[a] supporter of a revolutionary movement in 19th-cent. and early 20th-cent. Russia, which rejected all systems of government, sought the complete overthrow of the established order, and was willing to use terrorism to achieve this end. Also (in extended use): a terrorist, a revolutionary' ('nihilist'. Def. A. 2.). In this chapter I will use the term simply to refer to a more general belief that nothing has any genuine value or meaning.

circumvention involving Marlow's first-person narration and the focal transition in *Lord Jim*, our interest necessarily centres on how *Nostramo* copes with the problem of authorial attitude in a third-person fiction which early Conrad was in effect unable to solve. This chapter will address this question mainly through considering the reason why the transportation of the silver ingots to the Great Isabel by Nostromo and Decoud should be the central episode of the novel. Analysing the roles of Decoud and Nostromo, I will examine the treatment of nihilism in the novel and argue, in conclusion, that *Nostramo*, too, ultimately circumvents its political subject, but that the strategy of that circumvention is intriguing and quite different from that of *Lord Jim*.

1. International Capitalism and the Centre of *Nostramo*

Nostramo presents a vast cast of characters.¹³⁵ The reader is required to distribute their attention amongst more characters than in any other of Conrad's works. By his frequent use of focalisation and free indirect discourse, the ubiquitous third-person narrator famously keeps moving from one character's viewpoint to another's, creating an impression of multi-focality in the novel. Joyce Carol Oates calls the novel 'a serio-comic extravaganza' 'without a center of consciousness that defines it that we can accept without irony' and argues that the

¹³⁵ The way Conrad mentions in the Author's Note each of the characters in turn as if they were his real acquaintances seems to justify putting our initial focus on characters here.

'diffusion of energies' in the novel is problematic (601; 599). This observation captures well the somewhat strange effect generated by the way the narrative's attention is divided amongst multiple characters.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the reader is not expected to be equally sympathetic towards all the characters in the novel: they are 'certainly hierarchized, and some carry more authority than others' (Collits 152). For instance, Captain Mitchell, the O.S.N.'s superintendent in Sulaco who occasionally takes the role of narrator, is evidently ironised by the narrative so that the reader cannot but see him critically. His complacent narrative to the anonymous tourists is subject to authorial relativisation for its failure to recognise the political implications of the historical events it relates. For instance, when he declares that the 'Treasure House of the World', the title *The Times* gave to the newly independent Occidental Republic, is '[a] very good name', his total incapability to understand the mechanism of colonialism and international capitalism is exposed (351). The narrative of *Nostramo* makes the reader aware that, when Mitchell contentedly remarks that the connection between the San Tomé mine and the Western capitals was 'saved intact for civilisation—for a great future, sir', it was in reality saved for colonial exploitation (347).

Giorgio Viola is another character whom the reader is evidently prevented from regarding as a central character of the novel, though the narrative's irony towards him is much milder than in Mitchell's case. Once having fought with Garibaldi and still espousing the ideal of

liberty, Viola is certainly an important character in considering the political motifs of the novel. Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins appositely remark: '[i]t would have been difficult to represent more painfully the obliteration of Garibaldian *noblesse oblige* in an age of international capitalism' (xxiii). Indeed, the novel reveals the obsolescence of Viola's ideal of liberty and his pathetic inability to adapt himself to the modern world in which the traditional opposition between tyranny and the people has been replaced by the promotion of what the novel expresses as 'material interests' by the imperial expansion of great powers. Being an old-fashioned humanitarian having an 'austere contempt for all personal advantage', he is utterly incapable of understanding the greedy and impersonal dynamics of the modern capitalist world (25). When the narrative observes that Viola's face has 'the immobility of a carving', we can interpret this as symbolising his fossilisation (23). Viola lives in the world preceding the one explored in *Nostramo*, which makes him a peripheral character in the political world of the novel.

After excluding those characters to which the novel seems to assign obviously marginal roles, there still remain several characters who appear to be entitled to claim centrality in the novel. With its panoramic cast, the novel seems to challenge the reader to identify the most central character(s), and critics have offered different views as to which character(s) should receive the greatest attention. Hay, for instance, asserts that Dr. Monygham is 'the novel's moral conscience',

while Oates deems Decoud to be the most important character as he provides ‘a human voice’ which ‘bring[s] [the novel] into focus’ (*Nostramo* 87; 596). Indeed, for many critics, interpreting *Nostramo* is virtually inseparable from this process of privileging one character (or some characters) over the others, and this constitutes one of the major critical issues about the novel.

One of the things for which *Nostramo* is acclaimed is the fact that the novel, as early as at the beginning of the twentieth century, understands and vividly depicts the mechanism of the expansion of the international capitalism promoted mainly by the United States of America, the then emergent empire which was advancing its imperial ambition to become eventually a world superpower. The way it succeeds in conflating that political motif with the personal dramas of its characters has also been highly praised. The novel aptly captures the idiosyncrasies of the politico-economic conditions of South America and dramatises how foreign ‘material interests’ affect the society of Sulaco and the individual people living there. Hawthorn’s observation about the combination of the private and the collective in the genre novel is helpful here:

Characteristic of the modern novel ... is its exploration of *both* the subjective and the social, of *both* the private and the collective. It is this combination of the broadest social and historical sweep with the most acute and penetrating visions of the hidden, private life, *and their interconnections*, that is characteristic of the modern novel and at the heart of its power and continuing life (*Studying the Novel* 29).

Indeed, if we extract from *Nostramo* the collective side of the story—an American tycoon invests on a silver mine in a South American country managed by a British expatriate; he finances the establishment of a pro-Western dictatorship which brings about modernisation in the country; a rebellion breaks out in which indigenous parties attempt to recover the mine from foreign capital; the Western province possessing the mine becomes independent, achieving economic prosperity under the control of Western capital—and ask ourselves if that alone can constitute a novel, the answer would be most likely no. Even if we disregard our twenty-first century hindsight which allows us to see the recapitulation above as a common and repeated narrative in modern world history, the political events depicted in *Nostramo* hardly seem to deserve anything more than a summary account without their dramatisation through the individual characters.

At the centre of the political events in the novel is the San Tomé mine. Charles Gould is the owner of the mine, but it is his wife, Emilia, who dramatises the ruinous effect which the ‘material interests’ represented by the mine exercise on human values. Gould is portrayed as a man whose private feelings are steadily overridden by his passion for the mine. Even when Emilia accepts his proposal, the narrative notes that ‘directly he found himself alone he became sober’ (50). The way Gould sacrifices his marital life for the silver mine is expressed as ‘that subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was

no longer the sole mistress of his thoughts' (262). When the narrative presents the couple, Emilia is usually the focaliser, causing the reader to empathise with her and see Gould from without.¹³⁶ Indeed, Gould is characterised in such a way that the reader can hardly sympathise with him despite his superficially central role in the novel.¹³⁷

By contrast, Emilia, whom Jameson called 'Conrad's only interesting woman character', is the character who receives more authorial sympathy than any other character in the novel (229). In Chapter VI of Part First, a long chapter which provides a thorough introduction of Emilia's character and portrays the circumstances under which she came to live in Costaguana as Charles's wife, we can see many passages where the narrative seems to praise her without any irony or reservation. The narrator describes what made the grim and misanthropic Monygham accommodate himself to his new life in Sulaco as Emilia's 'humanising influence' (36). As to Emilia's intelligence and enthusiasm the narrative remarks: 'she was guided by an alert

¹³⁶ That he is rarely given the position of a focaliser can be connected with his dehumanisation by 'material interests': because his inner state is never made clear after he starts to manage the mine, the impression he gives is made less human.

¹³⁷ Gould might become a little more sympathetic character when we see him as an embodiment of Karl Marx's theory of alienation. His project to make use of the wealth of the silver mine fails as the means turns into the goal and his enslavement by the mine compromises his initial ideal. This undermining of the original purpose of Gould's enterprise can be said to epitomise Marx's theory of alienation, on which, see 'Comments on James Mill', *Marx and Engels: Collected Works*. Vol. 3. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), pp. 211-28.

perception of values. She was highly gifted in the art of human intercourse, which consists in delicate shades of self-forgetfulness and in the suggestion of universal comprehension' (36). When we are told that the mere parting of her mouth 'seemed to breathe upon you the fragrance of frankness and generosity', we might even have the impression that she is presented as the idol of the novel (48).¹³⁸

The narrative certainly provides materials for the reader to take a relative view of Emilia when it notes the 'idealistic view of success' underlying her early passion for Gould's project (51). When she discusses with her husband the attitude of the investors such as Holroyd towards Gould's project, the naïveté of her philanthropic idealism is impressively revealed as she asks: '[c]an it be that they really wish to become, for an immense consideration, drawers of water and hewers of wood to all the countries and nations of the world?' (54) Failing to recognise the exact implications of the 'immense consideration' that the investors seek and mistaking their motive for something humanitarian, Emilia is here shown to be exceedingly unworldly, even to the point of ignorance. Indeed, throughout the

¹³⁸ One of the instances in which the reader is irresistibly led to sympathise with Emilia appears in Chapter I of Part Second. When Don José totters on hearing of the birth of the Ribiera government, Emilia exhibits her tact and kind-heartedness as she pretends to offer her cheek to him in order to support him without letting his vulnerability be noticed (103). Emilia is characterised as an exceedingly attractive woman, so much so that it almost seems that refusing to sympathise with her would be against the constructive intention of Conrad as implied author.

story of the advancement of 'material interests', Emilia's naïveté undergoes a bitter disillusionment and her idealism ends up facing a pathetic defeat. However, even when her early belief is shown to have been ineffectual, the narrative still seems to be sympathetic towards her. Chapter XI in Part Third, which relates the interview between Emilia and Monygham just after the Goulds' eighteen-month visit to Europe and the United States, contains a scene in which Emilia's misery is thrown into sharp relief. During their conversation Emilia, who had confided to Monygham her moderate wish to 'have [her husband] to [herself] for one evening on [their] return to [their] house', receives the message from Gould that he will stay in the mine that night (363). Instead of direct access to Emilia's inner state, here we are told that Monygham, who understands Gould's 'subtle conjugal infidelity' and had anticipated the news, 'had got up and stood looking away', and that '[a] profound silence reigned for a time' (372). Expressing Emilia's despair indirectly through her devotee's silent and sorrowful delicacy, this is arguably the most poignant moment in the novel. Notwithstanding her early failure to recognise the danger lurking in Gould's project which subsequently caused her misery, the reader is still led to empathise with Emilia's distress at the end of the novel. Insofar as we focus on the way her tragic disillusionment gives a human dimension to the exploration of international capitalism, Emilia can be seen as the central character of the novel.

Monygham's status in the novel is worth consideration in this

context. As is shown by Hay's view that he is 'the novel's moral conscience' which I mentioned earlier, Monygham's sceptical intelligence may appear to make him a privileged character who is free from authorial irony and criticism (*Nostramo* 87). However, the narrative clearly notes the illusory—and even monomaniac—aspect of his devotion to Emilia which induces the reader to take a relative view of his behaviour: '[t]he doctor was loyal to the mine. It presented itself to his fifty-years' old eyes in the shape of a little woman ... As the dangers thickened around the San Tomé mine this illusion acquired force, permanency, and authority. *It claimed him at last!* (310, emphasis added) The authorial sympathy with Monygham is thus with some qualification. In fact, when it is related how Father Berón's torture and Monygham's eventual submission to it had destroyed his self-image in Chapter IV of Part Third, the narrative anatomises his obsession with disgrace detachedly rather than encourage the reader's sympathy for the grim misanthrope.

Interestingly enough, the narrative seems to be most favourable towards Monygham when he shows compassion for Emilia's distress in the scene I have just mentioned:

People believed him scornful and soured ... [w]hat he lacked was the polished callousness of the men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion. This want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches (372).

Although this is less than a full defence of Monygham's disagreeable character, here the narrative is more positive about him than anywhere else in the text. Given the detached presentation of the lame misanthrope throughout the novel, we can say the narrative's attitude towards Monygham has slightly changed here. Together with the fact that this passage appears towards the end of the novel, there could be even found something manipulative about it. This can be better understood when we consider Monygham's relation to Emilia. Throughout the novel Monygham is presented as almost inseparable from his devotion to Emilia. It is he who, during the commotion of the Monterists' rebellion, soliloquises: '[n]o one seems to be thinking of her' and thereby directs the reader's attention to Emilia's inner state (272). Indeed, Monygham's personal interest in and admiration for her significantly serve, especially in the latter half of the novel, to foreground Emilia's plight and enhance its dramatic intensity. The interview between the doctor and Emilia can thus be said to highlight Monygham's supplemental role to enrich Emilia's tragedy.

As has been suggested above, the process of Emilia's painful disillusionment throughout the novel gives a vividly human dimension to the delineation of international capitalism in *Nostramo*, and insofar as we focus on the novel's generic aspect as a political novel, Emilia appears to be at the centre of the novel. However, the account I have offered so far *does not* encapsulate *Nostramo* adequately; indeed, it does

not even mention the eponymous character of the novel. Between Mitchell's recollective narrative about the political events in Sulaco—which provides a basic framework for Part First and reappears in Chapter X of Part Third—the novel presents various events during the Monterists' rebellion, and at the centre of those events is the episode in which Nostromo and Decoud transport the silver ingots in the lighter. This event, which Said and Jameson similarly consider to be an 'absolutely central episode in the novel' or the 'most fundamental event of all', is indeed conspicuous in that, as I will discuss shortly, the rescue of the silver ingots has effectively no direct connection with the outcome of the political upheaval depicted in the novel (Said, 'Beginnig Intention' 107; Jameson 272). It is because of this episode, more than anything else, that *Nostramo* refuses to be reduced to a summary account of the politico-social history of Sulaco. In Part First and Chapter X of Part Third, the narrative frequently uses the auxiliary verb 'would' to provide background information of the events during the Monterists' rebellion.¹³⁹ This use of the iterative creates a contrast between the static nature of the recollective, summary accounts on the one hand and the dynamic representation of the events during the revolution such as the departure of Barrios's troop for Cayta, Nostromo and Decoud's embarkation, and the interview between Nostromo and Monygham on

¹³⁹ This narrative style—narrating one time what happened several times—is what Genette termed 'iterative' in *Narrative Discourse* (116).

the other.¹⁴⁰ To put the point most polemically, had it not been for the episode of Nostromo and Decoud's rescue of the silver ingots, the entire story in the novel could have been handled in the static mode of the recollective, summary account.

Our critical attention thus necessarily turns to the function and the meaning of the episode. Lothe, for instance, calls it 'a sort of narrative-within-a-narrative' and notes a peculiarity of the episode which distinguishes it from the rest of the novel: 'once Decoud and Nostromo are isolated with the silver in the lighter, the complexities of *Nostromo* are, as it were, temporarily suspended, and its narrative attains an exceptional simplicity which, combined with the gradual increase of suspense, establishes a significant variation on the authorial narrative' (193). In addition to the relation between the episode and the entire novel, we also need to consider one of the greatest ironies in the novel: the fact that their expedition, which constitutes the central event of the narrative, was in a sense totally unnecessary. The plan made by Decoud aimed to ensure that the six months' worth of silver should be handed to Holroyd so that his financial support for the Ribiera government would continue; however, in Part Third we realise that Holroyd's support has not been affected in the least by the loss of the silver. When Nostromo reports to Gould that the silver ingots sank with the lighter, we are told through

¹⁴⁰ For a full study of the usage of 'would' in the novel, see E. Stegmaier, 'The "Would-Scene" in Joseph Conrad's "Lord Jim" and "Nostromo"'.

Mitchell's words that Nostromo is not blamed at all. In a way, the removal of the silver which resulted in Decoud's suicide and Nostromo's spiritual enslavement was, as Nostromo suspected during their expedition, 'a joke' (193). If we cannot explain why this strange episode involving Nostromo and Decoud—of all characters—should be placed at the centre of the novel, it would be tantamount, I would venture, to not having read *Nostromo* at all. In the following pages I will separately focus on the two characters who engage themselves in the rescue of the silver—Decoud and Nostromo—and consider their roles in the novel, aiming in conclusion to explain the meaning of their expedition.

2. Decoud, Authorial Voice, and the Trivialising Nihilism

Often regarded as Conrad's alter ego reflecting his deep scepticism and his position as an exile, Decoud has received considerable critical attention as 'a spokesman for the author' (Erdinast-Vulcan, *The Modern Temper* 76). He is given the privilege of expressing in detail his views on the people and events around him by letter without any narrative mediation. Lothe makes an apt remark about this: '[a]s Decoud ends his letter, then, we can conclude that it has not just summarized much of the main action of *Nostromo* up to this point, but also commented on it and revealed Decoud's pivotal position as a main character associated with most of the various cross-currents of action in

the novel' (193). Oates's argument that Decoud provides a human focus for the coreless novel, which I mentioned in the previous section, can be seen as another expression of this 'pivotal position' of Decoud.

One of the reasons for Decoud's importance is that the novel's conflict about nihilism is explored through his tragedy. Conrad's fiction addresses a dilemma which is implied in the following famous sentence: '[t]he only legitimate basis of creative work lies in the courageous recognition of all the irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic, so burdensome, so fascinating, so dangerous—so full of hope' (*CL2* 348-9). Critics have offered various accounts of the 'irreconcilable antagonisms'. Oates, for example, describes the dilemma in terms of an idealist-sceptic dichotomy: 'if the idealists are horribly limited in vision, mistaking the "bait" of melodrama for reality, and thereby drawing into destruction any number of other, less credulous people, it is certainly the case that the skeptics offer very little' (591). Kenneth Graham offers his version as follows:

an intolerable moral dilemma, a state of intellectually unstable but aesthetically exciting impasse, in that the values [Conrad] vehemently upholds of love, service, and fidelity are always revealed in stress to have an endemic central hollowness, a lack of total support from the universe, which the human will must nevertheless go on countering with passion and desperate self-delusion (6).

Gekoski, interpreting the 'irreconcilable antagonisms' within the similar opposition between nihilism and adherence to ethical principles,

contends that the dilemma between those two poles creates a certain equilibrium which is essential for the success of Conrad's literature:

Conrad's assertion of human isolation and universal meaninglessness, taken on its own, leads to a nihilism that he was quick to reject; in the same way, the ethical standards of his assertion of social responsibility, deprived of the darkness of their metaphysical base, become simply naïve moralizing. Only when these two visions exist together, mutually limiting and defining, in conflict and yet interdependent, is the moral situation ... created (22).

Foregrounding the contrast between idealists and sceptics, and addressing the opposition between nihilism and 'consolatory' action which is 'the friend of flattering illusions', *Nostramo* is undoubtedly one of Conrad's works that most rigorously address the 'irreconcilable antagonisms' (50). Here I will define the novel's 'antagonism' as conflicting attitudes towards the nihilistic worldview permeating the text and examine how Decoud's tragedy contributes to the exploration of that issue.

Decoud's loss of composure on the Great Isabel and his eventual suicide clearly dramatises the destructive nature of nihilism. Being a self-proclaimed cosmopolitan and a 'dilettante in life', he takes an exceedingly cynical attitude towards the politico-social condition of Costaguana (145). In his conversation with his European friends he compares the country's situation to an 'opera bouffe in which all the comic business of stage statesmen, brigands, etc., etc., all their farcical

stealing, intriguing, and stabbing is done in dead earnest', and asserts disdainfully:

It is screamingly funny, the blood flows all the time, and the actors believe themselves to be influencing the fate of the universe. Of course, government in general, any government anywhere, is a thing of exquisite comicality to a discerning mind; but really we Spanish-Americans do overstep the bounds. No man of ordinary intelligence can take part in the intrigues of *une farce macabre* (112).

Decoud participates in what he called '*une farce macabre*' without discarding this nihilistic view mainly for the sake of Antonia, the woman he loves, but also because he simply failed to declare his original intention to leave Sulaco once the guns were delivered. However, once he is severed from everyday reality as he leaves the harbour in the lighter with Nostromo, what the narrative calls 'his affectation of careless pessimism' or his 'barren indifferentism posing as intellectual superiority' starts to be shaken; when he is left alone on the Great Isabel with the silver ingots and forced to stay there without knowing when and if he can return to the mainland, the uncertainty and the absolute solitude affect his composure fatally, driving him eventually to commit suicide (204; 111). When the narrative tells us that '[i]n our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part', we are led to believe that Decoud's intellectual rejection of any kind of illusion has made him unable to sustain his existence in

the solitude and resulted in his ruin (357). Decoud's tragedy appears to present itself as a cautionary tale about the inability of a nihilistic worldview to support people in extreme situations and thereby explores one pole of the dilemma concerning nihilism.

However, as well as the issue of how much we should take at face value the narrative's explanation as to Decoud's death, which I will address later, we also need to consider the more specifically political aspects of Decoud's nihilism in order to comprehend his role in *Nostramo*. Indeed, his greatest importance in the novel lies in the fact that his political nihilism seems to coincide, almost completely, with the view of the novel's authorial voice. In Part Second Decoud makes a series of statements about the political situation of Sulaco whose insights are so keen that we realise, after having read the novel, that they are perfectly substantiated by the events depicted in the text. In Chapter V of Part Second, for example, while the major characters return in the carriage from the harbour where they saw off Barrios's troop departing for Cayta, Decoud talks about the time of Francis Drake and exposes the mechanism of colonial exploitation in the region:

“In those days this town was full of wealth. Those men came to take it. Now the whole land is like a treasure-house, and all these people are breaking into it, whilst we are cutting each other's throats. The only thing that keeps them out is mutual jealousy. But they'll come to an agreement some day—and by the time we've settled our quarrels and become decent and honourable, there'll be nothing left for us. It has always been the same. We are a wonderful people, but it has

always been our fate to be”—he did not say “robbed”, but added, after a pause—“exploited!” (127)

This observation accurately captures the way Holroyd’s financing the establishment of the Ribiera government causes the Monterists’ rebellion in which many people are killed, and how that eventually results in the independence of the western province which keeps the San Tomé mine under the control of Western capital. Similarly, Decoud describes the enterprise of the National Central Railway as ‘that great Costaguana undertaking which is to put money into the pockets of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans, Germans, and God knows who else’, which is shown to be true by Sir John’s recognition that the construction of the railway is ‘a project for systematic colonisation of the Occidental Province’ (167; 87).

Decoud’s political insights are thus absolutely correct in relation to the world of the novel, and the novel’s analysis of the political condition of Costaguana clearly deepens after Decoud’s appearance in Part Second. In relation to this, we need to consider here the anonymous third-person narrator’s behaviour concerning political topics. The third-person narrator in *Nostramo* is not the impersonal and reserved one we see in ‘The End of the Tether’ as he is not hesitant in foregrounding his analytical comments on characters and events. The beginning of Chapter VI of Part Third most clearly shows his behaviour as an omniscient narrator. In this scene in the Plaza of the Casa Gould, where ‘the levities and the sufferings’ of the ‘incorrigible’

people there imply '[t]he cruel futility of things', the narrator anatomises Gould's realisation of his misjudgment in committing himself to Ribierism:

His taciturnity, assumed with a purpose, had prevented him from tampering openly with his thoughts; but the Gould Concession had insidiously corrupted his judgment. He might have known, he said to himself ... that Ribierism could never come to anything ... He had persuaded himself that ... the backing up Don José's hopes of reform was good business (260; 261).

This combination of omniscient analysis and the representation of Gould's thought is followed by the narrator's generalisation about the danger of wealth:

[Gould's] weapon was the wealth of mine, more far-reaching and subtle than an honest blade of steel fitted into a simple brass guard. More dangerous to the wielder, too, this weapon of wealth, double-edged with the cupidity and misery of mankind, steeped in all the vices of self-indulgence as in a concoction of poisonous roots, tainting the very cause for which it is drawn, always ready to turn awkwardly in the hand (261).

Exhibiting an aphoristic wisdom which none of the characters in the novel is allowed to express, here the narrator's theory about wealth assists the reader's understanding of the process in which Gould's judgment has been insidiously affected by the spell of the silver mine. This is followed by an account of Gould's resolution to destroy the mine

in the case of his losing it in which the narrator's omniscient analysis is foregrounded:

For all the uprightness of his character, he had something of an adventurer's ¹⁴¹ easy morality which takes count of personal risk in the ethical appraising of his action ... this resolution expressed the tenacity of his character, the remorse of that subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was no longer the sole mistress of his thoughts, something of his father's imaginative weakness, and something, too, of the spirit of a buccaneer throwing a lighted match into the magazine rather than surrender his ship (261-2).

The narrator's analytical explanation about Gould's 'easy morality' and his affinity with buccaneers clearly exceeds what the reader can speculate by themselves on the basis of the previously given information about Gould: the reader has no choice but to simply accept the narrator's omniscient commentary to supplement their understanding of Gould's personality. As is shown here, in some parts of the novel the third-person narrator foregrounds his omniscient analyses quite assertively, even to the point of appearing didactic.

This observation does not hold true, however, when the narrator deals with specific political issues in Sulaco. His political position is not necessarily vague as he makes clear his disdain for the Monterists

¹⁴¹ Before getting involved in the San Tomé mine Gould had declared that the Goulds, including himself, 'are no adventurers' (49). The narrative here registers the change of Gould's personality—or rather the actualisation of his potentiality as an adventurer—that accompanies the development of the story.

and their supporters. As I will discuss later, the Monterists such as Sotillo are presented as ludicrous characters despite the considerable legitimacy of their political views. In addition, their supporters tend to be represented as an ignorant mob. For example, the following passage, which describes Pedrito's entrance to Sulaco, shows the narrative's ridicule of the surrounding crowd: they 'stared literally open-mouthed, lost in eager stillness, as though they had expected the great guerrillero, the famous Pedrito, to begin scattering at once some sort of visible largesse' (278-9). As I have remarked earlier, the narrative also openly ironises Mitchell's Eurocentric optimistic narrative. Nevertheless, when direct analyses of the specific political situation of Sulaco are to be foregrounded, the narrator seems to be hesitant in exercising the assertive omniscience which he fully exhibits elsewhere in analysing characters and presenting philosophical generalisations. This point is demonstrated in his behaviour at the beginning of the Chapter VIII of Part First. Remarking: '*[t]hose of us whom business or curiosity took to Sulaco in these years before the first advent of the railway can remember the steadying effect of the San Tomé mine upon the life of that remote province*', here the narrator rather abruptly identifies himself as a visitor to Costaguana (72, emphasis added). He continues his narration with that identity: '*[t]he outward appearances had not changed then as they have changed since, as I am told, with cable cars running along the Street of the Constitution, and carriage roads far into the country*' (72, emphasis

added). This limited perspective as an embodied character-narrator is incompatible not only with the bird's-eye account of Sulaco's geography in Chapter I of Part First, but also with the omniscience with which the narrator analyses characters. Some critics have interpreted this narrative inconsistency as serving to relativise the narrator's perspective. Lothe, for example, argues that 'the identification of this "I" comes to function as a sort of safeguard against the reader's possible tendency to identify the narrator with the author'; Ludwig Schnauder similarly remarks that the narrator's strange behaviour here 'might be taken as a hint that his perspective, too, is biased and far from omniscient' (187; 195). Indeed, we have seen that bias in the presentation of the Monterists.

However, this narrative deviation becomes more meaningful when we consider it in relation to its political background. In fact, it is not a coincidence, I would argue, that the narrator assumes the non-omniscient personal perspective just before he refers for the first time in the text to the 'quite serious, organised labour troubles' in Sulaco (72). The labour trouble, which is mentioned here as if in passing, has significant political implications since it is closely connected with the exploitation by the foreign-invested enterprises. Here the narrator seems to avoid deepening his analysis of this political issue by his gesture of non-omniscience. In other words, he eschews taking a position between the local labourers and the foreign capital. In Chapter VI of Part First the narrative had explored without any

hesitation a political subject as it focused on the American imperialism embodied by Holroyd. The difference seems to lie partly in focalisation: when the narrative examined the nature of the political force supporting Gould's project through the conversation between Holroyd and Gould, the narrator did not need to manipulate his status as an omniscient narrator; whereas at the beginning of Chapter VIII, where there is no focaliser and the narrator has to foreground his own account of the labour troubles, he seems to pretend non-omniscience and turns away from the analysis of the political implications of the problem. The other factor that causes this divergent behaviour on the narrator's part may be found in the different nature of those political issues: that is, whereas the narrator has no hesitation in critiquing U.S. foreign policy, he becomes uncomfortable when he needs to tackle Costaguana's domestic issues such as the labour trouble. For one thing, it is easier for Conrad to denounce U. S. imperialism rather than the colonial exploitation by British enterprises such as the National Central Railway.¹⁴² More importantly, as I will address shortly, in *Nostramo* the treatment of the domestic problems brought about by colonialism is a central novelistic issue involving much difficulty. We can say that the narrator changes his distance to the political topics according to their awkwardness.

¹⁴² Conrad's mentions of the Spanish-American War in his letters to Cunninghame Graham show that the novelist was highly critical of the U.S. imperialism at the time. See Watts, *Letters to Cunninghame Graham*, pp. 84-5; 95.

As has been discussed above, whereas the narrator confidently presents omniscient analyses of characters and philosophical generalisations, he becomes uncommunicative when he needs to deal in his own voice with the domestic political problems in Sulaco. The narrator addresses political subject matter mainly by having his characters speak for him, and it is Decoud who plays the central role in this respect. As is seen, for example, from Monygham's comment on the deadly effect of the 'material interests' in Chapter XI of Part Third—'the time approaches when all that the Gould Concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back'—Decoud is not quite the sole character to serve as the narrator's spokesman in the novel; however, the way Decoud's insights, which are so accurate that they seem virtually authorial, serve to deepen the analyses of the specific political conditions of Sulaco in Part Second suggests that he is by far the most important mouthpiece of the authorial voice in the novel (366). Gekoski supports this point when he observes: '[t]here are, in fact, times in *Nostramo* when the voice of the omniscient narrator is virtually indistinguishable from that of Decoud. Conversely, there are also times when Decoud's voice is unmistakably Conradian in tone and content' (133).

Decoud's having exceedingly accurate political insights—even to the point of being indistinguishable from the authorial voice of the novel—makes it rather tricky for the narrative to handle him. For

example, when he asserts to Antonia with a cynical perspicacity that the rebellion could have been avoided only by bribing Montero, it has the potential for deflating the importance of the political events of the novel. It is not difficult to imagine that, if Decoud had survived the revolution and been allowed to comment on the newly independent Occidental Republic in the last chapters, his political discernment would have exposed the colonial aspects of the independence, revealed the exploitative intention of the Western capitals behind the title 'Treasure House of the World', and thereby reduced the whole political event in the novel to '*une farce macabre*'. Conroy makes an interesting remark in this context: the last chapters of the novel focus on the personal stories of Decoud and Nostromo because '[w]ith the triumph of material interests the narrative seems not to have much else to say' (137). Indeed, a sharp insight, like Decoud's, into the mechanism of international capitalism and Costaguana's 'political immaturity' inevitably leads to a nihilistic resignation—any attempt at political improvement in the country is equal to '[p]loughing the sea'—and this reduces the socio-historical panorama in the novel to a deterministic moral that leaves the novel little else to say (277; 136). I would argue that this nihilistic acknowledgement is the novel's version of the 'last word' which I discussed at the end of the previous chapter: the fatal, definitive judgment about the expansion of international capitalism in Costaguana must remain unuttered in order that the novel's dramatic effect shall not be trivialised.

The most important and intriguing strategy which *Nostramo* adopts to avoid this threat to its *raison d'être*, which involves its eponymous character, will be fully considered in the next section. Here I would point out another means the novel uses to prevent the dwarfing of its socio-historical panorama: that is, it simply eliminates Decoud by making him commit suicide and thereby forbids him from commenting on the newly independent Occidental Republic at all. From her novelist's perspective, Oates writes: 'Decoud is too intelligent to be controlled—therefore he must be eliminated' (596). Indeed, without killing him, it would be almost impossible for the novel to prevent Decoud's trivialisation of its socio-historical drama. Having been an important character who has served to deepen the analysis of the political facets of the novel's fictional world, in the last chapters Decoud has become the novel's *bête noire*. The effect of Decoud's absence in the last chapters of the novel is evident: apart from Monygham's observation about the destructive effects of the 'material interests' which I quoted earlier, there is no such direct analysis of the specific political situations of the Occidental Republic as Decoud presented in Part Second. Mitchell's optimistic and Eurocentric narrative in the first half of Chapter X of Part Third is certainly undermined by the indigenous people's smouldering ill feelings towards the pro-Western authorities, which Father Corbelán insinuates to Monygham and Emilia in Chapter XI of Part Third; however, the narrative soon moves its focus elsewhere and does not deepen its

analysis of the political implications of that problem. In fact, having eliminated Decoud, the narrative in the final chapters even seems to find it convenient not to have a spokesman through whom to provide an unambiguous judgment about the political situation of the new country. We can say that *Nostramo*, in order to defend the status of its political subject matter, needed to jettison its mouthpiece and thereby leave the final phase of its political drama virtually unanalysed.

Critics have pointed out that there is something rigged about Decoud's suicide. Price, for instance, complains: '[i]f Decoud is a "victim of the disillusioned weariness which is the retribution meted out to intellectual audacity", he seems a thinner character in his death than in his life. One may feel that he is not so much "swallowed up in the immense indifference of things" as sentenced and executed by his author' ('The Limits of Irony' 78). He proceeds to make a penetrating remark: 'I wonder why so few are ready to question the propriety of Decoud's suicide, to ask, that is, whether it seems an action that follows from his nature rather than a somewhat superstitious reprisal against the irony and skepticism that the author otherwise overindulges' (78). Oates addresses the same problem when she ironically asks: '[i]f Conrad insists that [Decoud] is an "egotist", and his death is somehow bound up with his "egotism", on what grounds dare one protest?' (596). Indeed, the narrative's account of Decoud's death towards the end of Chapter X of Part Third is offered 'in the most wickedly dogmatic terms', as Oates accurately observes (596). In stark contrast to the way it

shuns omniscient analyses of the specific political issues, the narrative here didactically *informs* the reader of the cause of Decoud's suicide with godlike assurance: 'the truth was that he died from solitude, the enemy known but to few on this earth, and whom only the simplest of us are fit to withstand. The brilliant Costaguanero of the boulevards had died from solitude and want of faith in himself and others' (356). This diagnosis is so assertive that it is as if the reader is not permitted to consider the reason of Decoud's suicide for themselves. When the narrative weaves into its account of Decoud's suicide a generalisation about the effect of extreme mental conditions, it also seems to be very keen on making its analysis convincing:

Solitude from mere outward condition of existence becomes very swiftly a state of soul in which the affectation of irony and scepticism has no place. It takes possession of the mind, and drives forth the thought into the exile of utter unbelief. After three days of waiting for the sight of some human face, Decoud caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality (356-7).

That the success of the smooth elimination of Decoud is an indispensable part of the novel's strategy to protect its subject from trivialization is illuminating when we consider the keenness of the narrative shown here to guide—or rather manipulate—the reader's interpretation. The novelistic need deriving from the trickiness of Decoud's role necessitated this rather awkward foregrounding of the narrator's direct judgments.

The account of Decoud's suicide in Chapter X of Part Third is not the only spot where we can observe the signs of the novelistic strain, as it were, deriving from Decoud's tricky function in the novel. Here I would take up the description of the process by which Decoud becomes involved in the politics of Costaguana as another illustration of this strain. When Decoud visits Costaguana with the consignment of new rifles, he is overwhelmed by Don José's enthusiastic welcome and Antonia's expectation of his commitment. As a result, he fails to declare his intention to leave the country and eventually chooses to participate in the politics of Costaguana as the editor of the *Porvenir*. The novel offers two different explanations for Decoud's political commitment. One is that, as Decoud is moved by the real atmosphere of Sulaco, his cynicism, which had made him ridicule politics in South America, declines. A fortnight after his arrival in Sulaco, Decoud affirms to Emilia that he feels 'no longer an idle cumberer of the earth' (115). When the carriage returns from the harbour where the major characters saw Barrios's troop off, the narrative records his reflection:

To contemplate revolutions from the distance of the Parisian Boulevards was quite another matter. Here on the spot it was not possible to dismiss their tragic comedy with the expression, "*Quelle farce!*" the reality of the political action, such as it was, seemed closer, and acquired poignancy by Antonia's belief in the cause. Its crudeness hurt his feelings. He was surprised at his own sensitiveness. "I suppose I am more of a Costaguanero than I would have believed possible," he thought to himself (128).

This passage clearly registers Decoud's emotional entanglement in the political drama of Costaguana and certainly makes him appear much less of a cynic than his initial characterisation. The other explanation provided by the novel is that Decoud devotes himself to Costaguana's politics only in order to maintain his relationship with Antonia. In his conversation with Antonia in Chapter V of Part Second, he declares: 'I have no patriotic illusions. I have only the supreme illusion of a lover' (137). In his interview with Emilia in the next chapter, in which he expresses his plan to separate the western province as an independent country, he makes a similar articulation:

I am not deceiving myself about my motives. [Antonia] won't leave Sulaco for my sake, therefore Sulaco must leave the rest of the Republic to its fate ... I can't part with Antonia, therefore the one and indivisible Republic of Costaguana must be made to part with its Western province. Fortunately it happens to be also a sound policy (156).

Reducing the independence of the Occidental Republic to a mere pretext to secure his relationship with Antonia, Decoud here presents himself as rather unserious as well as egoistic.

In Chapter V of Part Second the narrative provides a clue to conflate those two explanations of Decoud's political commitment: '[h]is disdain grew like a reaction of his scepticism against the action into which he was forced by his infatuation for Antonia. He soothed himself by saying he was not a patriot, but a lover' (128). Here it is implied that Decoud's attribution of his political commitment to his love

for Antonia can be seen as a kind of defence mechanism to make his emotional entanglement less undignified. When we consider the contrast between Decoud's interior monologue in which he ingenuously exhibits a degree of seriousness on the one hand and his speeches to Antonia and Emilia in which he performatively presents himself as frivolous on the other, this psychological account is certainly plausible. At the same time, however, Decoud's characterisation as a cynical dilettante seems to make this account less than fully convincing: even after the narrative's attempt to explain Decoud's contradictory behaviours, there still remains an essentially unbridgeable gap between Decoud's intense cynicism and his serious participation in the politics of Costaguana. The two explanations of Decoud's commitment remain not fully reconciled, and we can say that the narrative of *Nostramo* itself slightly wavers as it presents the process of Decoud's political entanglement.

What this narrative instability seems to suggest is that the narrative suffers a strain when it makes Decoud, a cynical and intellectualistic dilettante, join the politics of Costaguana in order that he shall serve as its political spokesman. It is in this context that we can better understand why Antonia should appear in the novel. Although Antonia's enthusiasm is directed towards politics in contrast to Emilia's domesticity, these two characters share their naïve idealism and their positions as the novel's idol considerably overlap each other.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ In his Author's Note Conrad states that Antonia is modelled on his first love

Her specific *raison d'être* seems to lie in the fact that she is needed to attract Decoud and thereby make him take part in Costaguana's politics against his cynicism, which is rather a demanding task. Just as Monygham's role was supplemental to that of Emilia, so is Antonia's function in the novel tied to Decoud's political commitment.¹⁴⁴

In the discussion above I have examined the awkward relation between Decoud and the authorial voice in the novel. This awkwardness derives from the novel's problematic need to at once deepen the analysis of its political subject and repress the nihilistic vision that is necessarily brought about by that analysis.¹⁴⁵

(411). Indeed, apart from the blindness of her political passion, Antonia is characterised so attractively that she can be said to compete with Emilia for the reader's sympathy in the novel.

¹⁴⁴ Monygham and Antonia can be regarded as what James termed a '*ficelle*', a 'minor character who belong[s] more to the treatment than to the subject of a novel' (James Miller 14).

¹⁴⁵ '[A] possibly debilitating paradox at the heart of [the novel's] own project', a phrase by Jim Reilly, may appear to refer to the same point as mine; however, like Kiernan Ryan's argument in 'Revelation and Repression in Conrad's *Nostramo*' (1987)—which Reilly's discussion draws heavily on—his emphasis is placed on the novel's anxiety that a frank analysis of the politico-historical condition of Costaguana might lead to criticism of its own conservative values (143). My argument diverges from theirs firstly in that it regards *Nostramo* as substantially less conservative and colonialist than Reilly and Ryan do, and more importantly in that it attributes the source of the novel's 'debilitating paradox' not to the anxiety about its own ideology being criticised but to the trivialisation by nihilism which an unbounded anatomisation of the novel's political subject is likely to bring about. This issue of the repression of—or rather the escape from—politics will be fully examined in the next section.

Nostramo's greatest conflict lies precisely in the contradictory attitudes towards nihilism. Erdinast-Vulcan writes: 'Don Avellanos is rendered unfit for the contaminated politics of his country by his very purity and nobility. He lacks the measure of cynicism and the innate mistrust of human nature which, in terms of the narrative, seem to be the necessary qualification for a historian' (*The Modern Temper* 74). Implicitly contrasted with Don José is, of course, Decoud's nihilistic cynicism that is absolutely free from Don José's naïve and sentimental failure to recognise the hopeless essence of Costaguana's politics. What is interesting is that, whereas the novel judges Don José's ideal to be invalidated by Decoud's nihilistic discernment, its sympathy seems to lie with Don José much more than with Decoud: in other words, the novel intellectually endorses Decoud but emotionally repudiates him. Oates observes with regard to the narrative's dogmatic account of Decoud's death: '[t]hat a novelist should so humorlessly and willfully punish one of his creatures—and that creature already doomed!—might suggest a certain crude, punitive quality in the novelist, which art usually obscures' (597). Indeed, we might even discern something resembling the novel's *hatred* for the character that has perfectly articulated, despite being its mere creature, the nihilistic view about its political panorama which by rights should belong only to the authorial voice. This punitive attitude towards Decoud is, incidentally, obviously unfair considering that the novel, after, all, has capitalised on Decoud's perspicacity to deepen the analysis of its fictional world.

Some critics have observed that the novel's nihilistic vision is not necessarily convincing. Graham, for instance, takes up the depiction of the process of Gould's dehumanisation by the silver mine and contends that the authorial diagnosis that Gould has fallen victim to the mine's moral degradation faces resistance from the reader:

against that point—or rather, all round it ... —is our experience of having been emphatically involved as readers in Gould's 'necessities of successful action' ... Everything else in the book that resists its own disillusioning vision ... reinforces the positive aspect of Gould, or at least seriously qualifies any simplistic and aphoristic 'placing' of his dehumanization. This felt complexity of the book's local and overall development makes it impossible for the gnomic phrase, 'Material interests', to dominate our response as conclusively as has often been suggested (129-30).

Considering the little authorial sympathy with which Gould is presented in the text, Graham's defence of him is rather questionable. However, this observation can be seen as deriving from the fact that, as I have pointed out, the authorial sympathy in *Nostramo*—on the emotional level—lies in those characters who are denied, by their 'purity and nobility', the discernment fully exhibited by the sceptics such as Decoud and Monygham (Erdinast-Vulcan, *The Modern Temper* 74). The following excerpt from the concluding part of Price's article on the novel insightfully expresses these subtleties:

The book achieves some tragic force. It does not achieve that force by demonstrating the inevitable corruption and the

implicit blindness of all action, at least of all action that professes a purpose or an ideal. For Conrad's feelings are truer than his thought. There is more complexity in his presentation of characters than there is in his analysis; and, if we see more in what they do than Conrad's ironic handling allows for, it is because they have won their claims upon our minds and feelings in those unattended moments when Conrad's oversight allows them some freedom ('The Limits of Irony' 79).

Price's emphasis lies on the narrative lacuna in which characters escape the devitalising authorial control rather than on the conflict in the authorial attitude towards nihilism which I have been arguing for. However, this passage, together with Graham's observation, can certainly be read as capturing how *Nostramo's* ambivalent treatment of nihilism can give impressions that contradict its nihilistic vision.

In the last chapters, *Nostramo* avoids pursuing a rigorous analysis of its fictional world, which would risk trivialising its socio-historical panorama, by eliminating Decoud who served as the authorial voice's political mouthpiece. However, as I have mentioned earlier, the novel's most intriguing and important strategy to evade its political subject involves its eponymous character, Nostromo. In the next section I will focus on him and consider his centrality in the novel in relation to its treatment of politics. I will also attempt to explain why the episode of Nostromo and Decoud's rescue of the silver ingots should be central to *Nostramo* from the same perspective.

3. Myth, the Scapegoating of Nostromo, and the Circumvention of Politics

I have argued earlier that *Nostromo* dramatises a conflict about nihilism and human weakness—innocent idealists such as Don José have the perceptual limitations of their optimism exposed, while nihilists like Decoud are shown to be utterly unable to establish values to sustain themselves. It is quite striking that the eponymous character of the novel has absolutely nothing to do with this central dialectic. He is free from the naïve idealists' fallacy simply because he has no principles at all; likewise, he is never ruined by the destructive power of nihilism because he has absolutely no interest in philosophical thinking. The only thing that moves him is reputation, a desire 'to be well spoken of' (178). Critics have indeed expressed curiosity about the novel's according the status of title character to what Conrad called 'nothing at all—a fiction—embodied vanity of the sailor kind' (*CL3* 175). Oates, for instance, goes so far as to contend that the novel is 'mis-titled' because there is nothing central or important about Nostromo (595). As Erdinast-Vulcan remarks, *Nostromo* is 'a question-begging title' (*The Modern Temper* 81). It is essential for the comprehension of the novel to consider the meaning of this deceptively unimportant character being adopted for the title of the book.

Nostromo's importance is closely connected with the issue of genre, and Erdinast-Vulcan's argument about the novel's framework is helpful

here. According to her, *Nostramo* addresses a 'dialogic tension between myth and history', 'two incompatible modes of perception' (*The Modern Temper* 68-9). She expresses the difference between the two modes as follows:

Whereas the mythical mode presents a picture of the land as a microcosm, an enclosed totality ... in a timeless space, the historical mode introduces the names of real historical figures ... and local idioms ... which not only create an exotic effect, but supplement the temporal and spatial dimensions by presenting the action as a specific stretch of the history of a specific place (73).

The worldviews those two modes of perception provide are accordingly divergent: myth produces 'a totalizing significance' and an 'ideological coherence' which are a mere fiction, while history is prone to relativism (77). Adopting her schema, in the following discussion I will call the superstitious mode of belief in the novel—including the legend about the gringos—'myth'.

One of the most conspicuous things about *Nostramo* is that, notwithstanding its specific political and historical focus, it seems keen, throughout the text, to keep in the reader's mind the legend about the two gringos and the forbidden treasure in the peninsula of Azuera. The opening chapter of the novel, which presents the geography of Sulaco from a bird's-eye perspective, brings into focus the local folklore about the fate of 'two wandering sailors—Americanos, perhaps, but gringos of some sort for certain' who made an expedition to Azuera in

search of its hidden treasure, never to return again:

The two gringos, spectral and alive, are believed to be dwelling to this day amongst the rocks, under the fatal spell of their success. Their souls cannot tear themselves away from their bodies mounting guard over the discovered treasure. They are now rich and hungry and thirsty—a strange theory of tenacious gringo ghosts suffering in their starved and parched flesh of defiant heretics, where a Christian would have renounced and been released (6).

Depicting the curse entailed in wealth, this local legend obviously serves as ‘an allegorical framework’ for the novel that presents the moral degradation brought about by the silver mine (Hay, ‘*Nostrómo*’ 84). Erdinast-Vulcan makes an apposite remark about this:

This presentation of the legend as a quaint folk tale, a ‘strange theory’ of poor, primitive people, is strangely at odds with the factual and detailed rendering of the story. The dissonance is all the more intriguing at a second reading, when one realizes that what is deprecated here as a ‘local fiction’ is, in fact, real and powerful enough to cast its deadly spell on the protagonists of the story (*The Modern Temper* 72).

Indeed, given that this legend belongs to the realm of myth which is essentially incompatible with the realistic portrayal of international capitalism in the novel, the fact that the folklore is given a referential relation to the novel’s politico-historical panorama strikes us as rather bizarre.

It is *Nostrómo* who connects the legend of the gringos—and the

mode of myth—to the fictional world of the novel. As can be deduced from the fact that there are two gringos in the legend, there is another character who falls victim to the curse of wealth: Gould. His dehumanisation as a result of his involvement in the San Tomé mine certainly embodies what the folklore of the gringos allegorised. However, it is only Nostromo who is directly tied to the realm of myth. This becomes clear when we pay attention to the fact that it is when Nostromo is brought into the narrative focus that the legend of the gringos starts to be mentioned again. As Keith Carabine aptly observes, Nostromo, who ‘does not seem to make any difference between speaking and thinking’, is represented ‘*externally* through the narrator’s description of his actions and gestures’ until the moment ‘he is reborn into the world of consciousness on Azuera’ in Part Second (*Nostromo* 178; Carabine 638-9). The narrative focalises on Nostromo’s inner state for the first time in the text when he is called to Teresa’s deathbed and is implored to fetch the priest for her. Since he does not believe in priests and there remains little time for him, he declines Teresa’s request, which soon makes him feel guilty:

He was feeling uneasy at the impiety of this refusal. The Padrona believed in priests, and confessed herself to them. But all women did that. It could not be of much consequence. And yet his heart felt oppressed for a moment at the thought what absolution would mean to her if she believed in it ever so little. No matter. It was quite true that he had given her already the very last moment he could spare (184).

Immediately after this first focalisation through Nostromo, the legend of the gringos is mentioned for the first time since the opening chapter of the novel: 'I am needed to save the silver of the mine. Do you hear? A greater treasure than the one which they say is guarded by ghosts and devils on Azuera' (184-5). As if proving that this is not a mere coincidence, in the following pages which describe Nostromo and Decoud's embarkation and their conversation on the lighter, we can observe that the local legend is mentioned twice in the same chapter at the same time as Nostromo's thought is disclosed much more manifestly than before. On leaving Viola's house, Nostromo refers to Paquita and tells Monygham that her next lover 'need not be afraid I shall linger on earth after I am dead, like those Gringos that haunt Azuera'; later, on the lighter he resents the burden imposed on him and tells Decoud that their mission is more dangerous 'than sending a man to get the treasure that people said was guarded by devils and ghosts in the deep ravines of Azuera' (186; 190).

This concurrence of the resumption of the mentions of the legend and the deepening analysis of Nostromo is not the only indicator of his connection with the mode of myth. After refusing Teresa's desperate request, Nostromo starts to be haunted by a sense of guilt which seems to approach the realm of superstition. He recounts the episode to Decoud on the lighter: '[n]ot a single fat padre would have consented to put his head out of his hiding-place tonight to save a Christian soul, except, perhaps, under my protection. That was in her mind. I

pretended I did not believe she was going to die. Señor, I refused to fetch a priest for a dying woman...' (193). He proceeds to curse his own inability to dismiss Teresa's superstitious resentment: '[t]he thing sticks in my throat ... Curse on all superstition. She died thinking I deprived her of Paradise, I suppose. It shall be the most desperate affair of my life' (193). In fact, Nostromo's enslavement by the silver is embodied in his sense of guilt for the dead—Teresa and Decoud. When he finds the floating boat from the lighter on his way back from Cayta and realises that Decoud has committed suicide, he becomes aware that he is responsible for the death of two people: 'he knew the part he played himself. First a woman, then a man, abandoned each in their last extremity, for the sake of this accursed treasure. It was paid for by a soul lost and by a vanished life' (360). His relationship with Linda and Giselle in the last chapters is also loaded with a curse by Teresa's last appeal for Nostromo to save them. Suffering from a superstitious sense of guilt for the dead as the actualised curse of the silver, Nostromo serves as the interface between the realm of myth and the politico-historical world of the novel.

I have referred earlier to Erdinast-Vulcan's argument that *Nostromo* presents a tension between two incompatible modes of perception—myth and history. Critics have addressed this issue indirectly when they point out the displacement of history and politics from the narrative focus in the last chapters of the novel. Conroy, for example, notes:

as the silver is focused upon with more intensity, the dense social and materialistic structure of the first section is progressively hollowed out. The last section, involving the death of Decoud and the domestic tragedy of the title character, moves further into interior drama, with stark backdrops such as the lighthouse on the Great Isabel, and away from the complexity of Sulaco itself (137).

I. S. Talib similarly argues that the last three chapters of *Nostramo*, with its ‘uncertain thematic focus’, ‘do not seem to hold the whole novel together’ (8).¹⁴⁶ Indeed, the final account of Nostromo’s ruin, which manifestly foregrounds the parallel between Nostromo and the gringos in the legend, appears to be disconnected with the previous exploration of the politico-historical panorama of Sulaco. By concentrating the narrative focus onto his final mythical tragedy and thereby pulling the narrative out of the realistic mode, Nostromo certainly serves to depoliticise the novel’s ending. As Erdinast-Vulcan aptly expresses, the ending of *Nostramo* ‘reverses the ostensible triumph of the historicist mode in the novel’ (*The Modern Temper* 83).

The reason why *Nostramo* moves its focus away from politics in the last part seems to lie, as I have suggested in the previous section, in the trivialising nihilism which a rigorous analysis of politics in the novel would necessarily arrive at. Ribierism is ironised for its being supported by Hernández the bandit and the ridiculous Barrios, as well

¹⁴⁶ Erdinast-Vulcan provides a useful list of critics’ comments that criticise the ending of the novel (*The Modern Temper* 84).

as for the fact that its sponsor, Holroyd, finances it merely as a ‘caprice’ or a ‘hobby’ (60-1). On the other hand, when local parties—such as Guzmán Bento, Montero, and Sotillo—claim their right to expel the foreigners and recover the mine from their exploitation, they are invariably treated disdainfully despite the considerable legitimacy of their assertion. Gamacho’s ludicrous contention, in his speech at the end of Chapter V of Part Third, that they should declare war ‘at once against France, England, Germany, and the United States’ is a parody of the ineffectual politics of the indigenous parties (281). As Lothe and Reilly suspect, *Nostramo* seems not to have any positive alternatives to the political problems it presents, which makes the ultimate trivialisation of its politico-historical panorama inevitable (Lothe 213; Reilly 146). Price’s criticism of the facileness of the nihilism in the novel seems quite appropriate: ‘[i]t is not hard to be realistic if one rules out hope, and it is not hard to be ironic—it is in fact hard not to be—if all forms of political activity lead to the same inevitable futility. Unlimited irony can easily turn into fatalism’ (‘The Limits of Irony’ 78).

However, the flight to myth by the final focus on Nostromo’s personal tragedy is not the only strategy *Nostramo* employs in dealing with the potential trivialisation entailed in its nihilistic political vision. The novel provides a more specific consolation for the bleak story it has presented by showing, through Nostromo’s personification of the gringos in the legend, that the moral of the cautionary legend—those who covet wealth will face retribution—is true. In the opening chapter

of the novel the narrative remarked that the poor local people associated the ideas of evil and wealth 'by an obscure instinct of consolation' (5). When Nostromo embodies this legend by stealing the treasure and being punished for it in the end, the novel implies the validity of that very association of evil and wealth which longs for the realisation of poetic justice. Showing that a greedy coveter of wealth will suffer retribution even in the contemporary real world, the novel offers the possibility of consolation to its reader who has witnessed the distressing tragedy brought about by wealth.

It is only too easy, however, to notice a twist in logic within the account I have just provided. The greed which has caused the political disturbances in the novel belongs not to Nostromo but to the 'material interests' themselves. To put it figuratively, Nostromo's punishment and the desolation brought about by the intervention of international capitalism in the novel form skew lines: if the reader of *Nostromo* wishes at all for consolation by retribution of one kind or another, it should obviously concern not the silver Nostromo stole but the suffering inflicted on the people and society of Sulaco by the 'material interests': Emilia's conjugal misery, the futile deaths involved in the revolution, and the eventual promotion of colonial exploitation in the province.¹⁴⁷ When Nostromo is made use of as a consolation for the nihilistic vision

¹⁴⁷ Jean Franco makes almost the same observation, though hers is concerned solely with the politico-social dimension of the devastation: '[Nostromo's] theft, however, is trivial compared with the long-term exploitation of the natives in the mine and the "innumerable lives" that are sacrificed to it' (97-8).

of the novel, he is virtually punished for what he has not perpetrated. In short, in order to prevent its nihilistic conclusion from trivialising its socio-historical panorama before the reader's eyes, *Nostromo* scapegoats its eponymous character. Conrad's statement about the origin of the novel in his Author's Note can be understood in the same context. After describing how he encountered the model of Nostromo, he declares that '[i]t was only when it dawned upon [him] that the purloiner of the treasure need not necessarily be a confirmed rogue, that he could be even a man of character, an actor and possibly a *victim* in the changing scenes of a revolution' that he had the inspiration for the novel (408 emphasis added). This passage becomes double-edged when we bear in mind what I have argued above: Nostromo is victimised — and appropriated — not only by the foreign-controlled Sulaco revolution but also by the novel itself.

We can see the final depiction of Nostromo's 'triumphant' death as epitomising the novel's appropriative character. In Chapter XII of Part Third the narrative starts to call him by the epithet 'the slave of the San Tomé silver' or 'the slave of the treasure'. This is so frequent — as many as five times in the same chapter — that it seems manipulative, revealing the narrative's teleological movement towards the final presentation of the culmination of Nostromo's enslavement. However, when Nostromo is shot by Viola in mistake for Ramírez, the word 'master' is added to the epithet: '[a]nd the voice of the resourceful Capataz de Cargadores, *master* and slave of the San Tomé treasure ...

answered careless and cool, but sounding startlingly weak from the ground' (397 emphasis added). In the same vein, the final sentence of the novel after Linda's passionate cry: 'Never! Gian' Battista!' presents Nostromo not as a slave but as a conqueror:

It was another of *Nostromo's successes*, the greatest, the most enviable, the most sinister of all. In that true cry of love and grief that seemed to ring aloud from Punta Mala to Azuera and away to the bright line of the horizon, overhung by a big white cloud shining like a mass of solid silver, the genius of the magnificent Capataz de Cargadores dominated the dark Gulf containing *his conquests of treasure and love* (405 emphases added).

Erdinast-Vulcan, somewhat critically, describes what this ending does as 'a sublime vindication of his life as a mythical hero' (*The Modern Temper* 83). Indeed, this celebration of Nostromo's mastering the 'treasure and love' is reminiscent of the ending of *Lord Jim* in which Marlow represents Jim's death as heroic and triumphant.

However, just as the final celebration of Jim's 'heroic' end by Marlow is subject to relativisation both from psychological and political perspectives, so is this 'triumph' of Nostromo to be ironised—even more manifestly than in the case of Jim. The 'true cry of love' is uttered not by his lover, Giselle, but by Linda who depressed him by her resemblance to Teresa. Moreover, who could be convinced that Nostromo has become the 'master' or 'conqueror' of the San Tomé treasure when he is shot by an old man who mistakes him for a petty

thief? Obviously, Nostromo does not deserve the glorification which he receives at the end of the novel. The final celebration of Nostromo should be seen not, as Erdinast-Vulcan suggests, as a vindication of his life as a hero but rather as a compensation for the role of the scapegoat imposed on him. As the price for being punished for the desolation brought about by the detestable international capitalism which he has absolutely nothing to do with, Nostromo is given the image of a triumphant hero as well as the title of the novel.

Before proceeding to consider what might be termed the novelistic propriety of these things, let us now return to the centrality of Nostromo and Decoud's transportation of the silver ingots in the novel. Bearing in mind the novel's need to prevent its nihilistic vision from dwarfing its socio-historical panorama, the episode can be seen, I suggest, as the inception of the novel's strategic deflection of the reader's attention from politics. In terms of plot, the rescue of the silver ingots exists to cause Decoud's suicide and Nostromo's enslavement by the treasure. On the one hand the episode serves to realise Decoud's elimination and consequently prevents a rigorous analysis of the politics of the Occidental Republic. More importantly, the episode also connects Nostromo and the mode of myth—through his superstitious guilt for Teresa and Decoud—and places him at the focus of the novel. If some readers feel that Part Third of the novel—especially chapters V to VII—slackens until Nostromo wakes up at the old abandoned fort, it is because after the episode of the rescue of the

silver the novel's focus has subtly moved away from the political outcome of the Monterists' rebellion itself to the personal fate of Nostromo (and of Decoud to a lesser degree).

This point is also illuminating when we look at the final chapters of the novel. In a sense, Chapter XI of Part Third perfectly qualifies as the final chapter of the novel since it presents, after Mitchell's superficial account in Chapter X, the actual politico-social situation of the newly independent Occidental Republic and dramatises its human implications through Emilia's poignant despair. When Monygham leaves the room and the narrative presents Emilia's reflection over her ideal to make life 'large and full' and the destruction of that ideal by the very project through which she wished to realise it, the novel's motif concerning 'material interests' is precisely summarised through her conjugal misery:

she saw clearly the San Tomé mine possessing, consuming, burning up the life of the last of the Costaguana Goulds ... A terrible success for the last of the Goulds. The last! She had hoped for a long, long time, that perhaps——But no! There were to be no more. An immense desolation, the dread of her own continued life, descended upon the first lady of Sulaco. With a prophetic vision she saw herself surviving alone the degradation of her young ideal of life, of love, of work——all alone in the Treasure House of the World (373; 373-4).

In fact, if *Nostromo* were the novel of which I provided an interim delineation in Section 1—a novel which is truly about international capitalism and its effect on human values—it could have ended with

Emilia's forlorn murmur: 'Material interests' at the end of this chapter (374). That another two chapters should follow this possible end means that the essential focus of the novel has been subtly displaced, after Nostromo and Decoud's expedition, away from the politico-historical panorama to Nostromo's embodiment of the legend about the curse of wealth.

Precisely because Nostromo and Decoud's transportation of the silver ingots serves an important novelistic function, we can observe in its presentation some slight signs of strain, as we already have in the narrative's treatment of Decoud. In order to bring Nostromo into focus in the expedition, the novel has Decoud make a series of comments expressing his interest in him prior to their embarkation. In his letter to his sister he suggests a parallel between Nostromo and himself: 'I recognised something impassive and careless in [Nostromo's] tone, characteristic of that Genoese sailor who, like me, has come casually here to be drawn into the events for which his scepticism as well as mine seems to entertain a sort of passive contempt' (178). Given Decoud's intelligent cynicism and Nostromo's emptiness as a character, it is rather hard to say how convincing the following justification Decoud provides as to his interest in Nostromo is: '[e]xceptional individualities always interest me, because they are true to the general formula expressing the moral state of humanity' (178). Even if Decoud's interest in him appears somewhat strained, attracting the reader's attention to Nostromo through it is necessary to prepare for the

rescue of the silver which brings Nostromo into the focus of the novel.¹⁴⁸ Likewise, when the narrative stresses the essential similarity between the two characters at the end of Chapter X of Part Third, its aim seems to lie in claiming the inevitability of the two characters having been partners in the scheme. According to the narrative, Decoud is '[a] victim of the disillusioned weariness which is the retribution meted out to intellectual audacity', whereas Nostromo is a 'victim of the disenchanted vanity which is the reward of audacious action' (359-60). This suggestion of a parallel between the two characters, the convincingness of which seems rather questionable given their utter dissimilarity, is to be understood in the context of the novel's need to make the episode of their expedition appear to be a product of organic imagination rather than of functional necessity.

Let us now return to what I ventured to call 'novelistic propriety' about the way *Nostromo* shuns a rigorous anatomisation of its political subject. It has been pointed out by some critics that the novel evades

¹⁴⁸ It is in effect only Decoud who pays attention to Nostromo's inner state in the novel. After the party on the *Juno* toward the end of Chapter VIII of Part First, Nostromo subtly expresses to Viola his discontent about his social status for the first time in the text: 'I have sat alone in at night with my revolver in the Company's warehouse time and again in by the side of that other Englishman's heap of silver, guarding it *as though it had been my own*' (93 emphasis added). However, the old man, with his absent-minded musing, is effectively not listening to Nostromo's speech. Likewise, in the interview between Nostromo and Monygham in Chapter VIII and IX of Part Third, Monygham is so absorbed in his own scheme that he is totally inattentive to Nostromo's articulations of his resentment against the 'betrayal' of the rich.

the specificity of its subject's political implications. Arnold Kettle, for instance, notes 'the failure to recognize in its full theoretical and moral significance the process of imperialism that leads to the element of mistiness' in the novel (78). Ryan provides a fuller explanation as to this point. He argues that *Nostramo*, just as 'Heart of Darkness' does, represses its political subject by dehistoricising the 'historically produced reality' and ontologising the knowable politico-historical issues into 'the unfathomable, metaphysical status of an eternal human condition' (46; 45). Ryan relates his discussion to Leavis's famous intuitive observation about the novel: 'for all the rich variety of the interest and the tightness of the pattern, the reverberation of *Nostramo* has something hollow about it; with the colour and life there is a suggestion of a certain emptiness' (200). Ryan's argument that this hollowness derives from 'a pervasive, insistent *absence* swelling beneath the surface of the text' caused by the novel's circumvention of its political subject is so convincing that the meaning of Leavis's comment, which has aroused critics' curiosity, seems to have been definitively decoded (54).

I would expand Ryan's account by suggesting that the specific way in which *Nostramo* avoids politics—or, more precisely, the *ineffectuality* of that avoidance—adds to the hollow impression of the novel. To say nothing of the glorification given as compensation to Nostromo at the end of the novel, the novel's whole strategy of avoiding the trivialisation of its socio-historical panorama—by its gesture of providing consolation

for its nihilistic vision through the scapegoating of Nostromo, as well as by mingling the mode of myth into its realistic fictional world—produces so little effect that it can hardly be taken seriously. Erdinast-Vuclan’s comment on the mythicisation of the novel’s ending is only too right: ‘[t]he modern reader is probably far closer to Decoud and to Dr Monygham than to the mythical hero, and the consolations of myth are no longer easily accessible to him or to her’ (*The Modern Temper* 84). When we think of the fact that such an ineffectual strategy of circumvention was necessitated in order to defend the novel’s primary subject, it seems that Conrad’s negative comments on the novel might be seen as unfeigned. In his 1904 letter to William Rothenstein he remarks: ‘[p]ersonally I am not satisfied. It is something—but not *the* thing I tried for. There is no exultation, none of that temporary sense of achievement which is so soothing’ (*CL3* 163). His letter to André Gide written almost a decade later shows that his view has not changed: ‘[i]t was an utter frost, you know. . . . All in all, even with all my tenderness, I myself cannot bear to read it” (*CL5* 79). Indeed, Forster’s famous sharp diagnosis of the essence of Conrad’s literature seems to hold true especially as to *Nostromo*, a novel which exploits its very title character as a smokescreen for its central void: ‘[Conrad] is misty in the middle as well as at the edges ... the secret casket of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel’ (152). All these things might account for the novel’s failure to gain, despite the great attention it receives, critics’ unanimous recognition as Conrad’s

unchallenged magnum opus.

I hasten here to modify the over-critical tone of my argument. The novel's gesture of circumventing a rigorous anatomisation of its political subject is not, after all, so glaring as to fatally mar its rich conflation of the politico-historical background and the personal dramas of the individual characters. In fact, the dramatisation of the human implications of the 'material interests' through Emilia's poignant disillusionment is arguably no less reverberative than the closure of Conrad's other powerful works such as 'Heart of Darkness'. In addition, the novel's ineffectual avoidance of politics seems at least to be self-conscious. The way *Nostramo* presents its central emptiness half-concealed might be seen itself as an avant-garde provocation by a modernist (or perhaps a post-modernist) novel. Baxter, for example, views the ending of the novel positively as an experimental subversion of the conventions of both romance and realist literature:

It is in this experimentalism, the adaptation of romance techniques to psychological-, historical-, political-realist ends, that Conrad demonstrates his avant-garde credentials ... Indeed, I would argue that nowhere else does Conrad's anxiety about, and resultant aggression towards, his readership manifest such a successful aesthetic outcome (*Swan Song* 81).

Ultimately, the evaluation of the way *Nostramo* treats its eponymous character in the end seems to depend on where one situates the whole novel—and Conrad the novelist—within the traditional-experimental

continuum.

*

The romantic elements of 'The Rescuer' and *Lord Jim* largely recede from the fictional world of *Nostramo*. Concomitant to this is the disappearance of the problem of incoherent authorial attitude that was at issue in 'The Rescuer'. Indeed, the authorial attitude of *Nostramo* towards the 'material interests' is consistently negative. However, the novel exhibits traces of another problem related to authorial attitude: namely the potential trivialisation of the novel's primary subject matter arising from within and the narrative's evasion of it. *Nostramo* seeks to circumvent a political acknowledgement which would undermine the very significance of its socio-historical panorama firstly by eliminating its political spokesman, Decoud, after he has fulfilled his role, and secondly by scapegoating Nostromo in order to offer consolation for the reader and deflect their attention from the trivialisingly nihilistic political vision the novel arrives at. Conrad's next novel, *The Secret Agent*, which I will discuss in the next, final chapter, contrasts with *Nostramo* as it is devoid of this kind of avoidance strategy and the novelistic strains it involves. However, just as Conrad had to effectively abandon third-person narration in *Lord Jim* to solve the difficulty he faced in 'The Rescuer', he needed, I will argue in the next chapter, to sacrifice certain virtues of *Nostramo* to achieve the relatively

flawless texture of *The Secret Agent*.

Chapter 5

The Mask of Inhumanity and Positional Indeterminacy in *The Secret Agent*

1. The Primary Subject of *The Secret Agent*

In the Author's Note to *The Secret Agent* Conrad describes the process in which he obtained the idea for the novel after the completion of *Nostramo*. He mentions two sources of inspiration. One is an unexpected detail of the attempted bombing of the Greenwich Observatory in 1894 which he heard from his friend Ford: he, Conrad writes, 'remarked in his characteristically casual and omniscient manner "Oh, that fellow was half an idiot. His sister committed suicide afterwards"' (249). The other is what he describes as 'the rather summary recollections of an Assistant Commissioner of Police', which he says he encountered 'about a week later' (249).¹⁴⁹ After he heard Ford's anecdote and read in the book about a dialogue between the Assistant Commissioner of Police and the Secretary of State, Sir William Harcourt, his idea started to crystallise:

It was at first for me a mental change, disturbing a quieted-down imagination, in which strange forms, sharp in outline but imperfectly apprehended, appeared and claimed attention as crystals will do by their bizarre and unexpected

¹⁴⁹ The book has been identified as Sir Robert Anderson's *Sidelights on the Home Rule Movement* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908).

shapes. One fell to musing before the phenomenon—even of the past: of South America, a continent of crude sunshine and brutal revolutions, of the sea, the vast expanse of salt waters, the mirror of heaven's frowns and smiles, the reflector of the world's light. Then the vision of an enormous town presented itself, of a monstrous town more populous than some continents and in its man-made might as if indifferent to heaven's frowns and smiles; a cruel devourer of the world's light. There was room enough there to place any story, depth enough there for any passion, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of lives (249; 250).

Gekoski argues that this passage implies that 'the connection between the ending of *Nostramo* and the inception of *The Secret Agent* was also imaginatively necessary' (140). Indeed, Conrad's rhetoric here certainly invites us to see the two political novels as continuous. At first glance the withdrawal from Costaguana to London seems to separate *The Secret Agent* from *Nostramo* thematically. *The Secret Agent* is a domestic novel in that it turns away from the exploration of Western imperialism and confines its focus to contemporary English society; John Lyon's observation that some readers of the novel have been disappointed by 'a narrowing of scope' is to be understood in this context (24). However, there exist some organic connections between the two novels that point to certain thematic development. Hampson suggests that the revolutionary who presides over the secret society in the Occidental Republic which is mentioned towards the end of *Nostramo* anticipates the anarchists in *The Secret Agent* (*Conrad's*

Secrets 97). He points out elsewhere, in a discussion of William Booth's *In Darkest England* (1900) and the London of 'Heart of Darkness', a more fundamental thematic connection between the two novels: '[i]n the context of "the stupendous growth of cities" and the glaringly unequal distribution of the "enormous increase of wealth", the discourse of imperialism is transferred to the English working classes, and the transfer is facilitated because the same relation of power/knowledge obtains' ("Topographical" Mysteries' 165). Certainly we could say that, through its treatment of the social injustices in English society, *The Secret Agent* explores in a different setting a power structure involving exploitation and subjugation which is essentially similar to the ethos of Western imperialism analysed in *Nostramo*. Also, the geographical transfer from Sulaco to London signifies tracing back from the colonial periphery to 'the very centre of the Empire on which the sun never sets' (*The Secret Agent* 169). In a sense, *The Secret Agent* investigates the background from which the imperialist spirit of Sir John's National Central Railway in *Nostramo* emerged.

On the other hand, the primary subject of *The Secret Agent* is not as easy to identify as that of *Nostramo*. In the latter novel the distinctive phrase 'material interest' is repeatedly used so that the reader can recognise that the corrosive effect of international capitalism promoted by Western imperialism is thematically at the centre of the novel. *The Secret Agent* is devoid of such a clear-cut unifying motif, which has led one critic even to claim: 'the book lacks, unlike most of

Conrad's work, a unifying theme, and when it is carefully examined falls apart into a succession of only superficially related scenes' (Baines 408). That the novel deals with anarchism is true, but as Conrad's remark in his letter to Cunninghame Graham shows, the anarchists in the novel are 'not revolutionaries—they are shams' (*CL3* 491). This implies that defining *The Secret Agent* as a novel primarily about anarchism would be inadequate. Although the Professor is exceptionally significant—and his critique of the English society assumes a considerable amount of authority—the anarchists in the novel are described as pathetic, physically miserable, and filled with bravado and *ressentiment*. Lyon, for example, critically observes that the novel's pejorative delineation of the anarchists 'pre-empts any imaginative engagement with radical politics' (15).

Conrad's account in the Author's Note of the sources of his inspiration suggests another possibility, since it implies that the depiction of the police also constitutes an essential part of the novel. *The Secret Agent* clearly exhibits attributes of detective fiction, and the police investigation of the attempted bombing plays an essential part in the progression of the novel's plot. However, Conrad subverts the convention of the genre by presenting the police as corrupt—both the Assistant Commissioner and Chief Inspector Heat act according to their self-interest rather than to their duty. Yet the corruption of the police obviously cannot stand as the primary subject of *The Secret Agent* by itself as it is no more than a part of the novel's conspiratorial portrayal

of English society.¹⁵⁰ Finally, Conrad's Author's Note leads us to see Winnie Verloc as the centre of the novel:

Slowly the dawning conviction of Mrs. Verloc's maternal passion grew up to a flame between me and that background ... At last the story of Winnie Verloc stood out complete from the days of her childhood to the end, unproportioned as yet, with everything still on the first plan, as it were; but ready now to be dealt with ... *This* book is *that* story, reduced to manageable proportions, its whole course suggested and centred round the absurd cruelty of the Greenwich Park explosion. (250-1).

The Secret Agent places much of its focus on the domestic life of the Verlocs. The condition of Winnie's marital life is an essential part of the novel's portrayal of the family. Winnie's marriage to Verloc is presented as a 'bargain' she has made: she gave up her young lover who could not afford to support Stevie and her mother and chose to marry Verloc for the sake of financial security rather than because she loved him.¹⁵¹ She confesses to Ossipon after murdering Verloc: 'he loved me.

¹⁵⁰ Norman Sherry has demonstrated that Conrad's main source in writing *The Secret Agent* was David Nicoll's pamphlet *The Greenwich Mystery*, which asserts that the bombing was a police plot involving a double agent and *agent provocateur* for the purpose of reducing the influence of the anarchists (228-47). Hampson argues that by following this source Conrad 'offered the anarchist rather than the official narrative of the bombing—and, through the success of *The Secret Agent*, has made that the best-known interpretation of the event' (*Conrad's Secrets* 98).

¹⁵¹ Through Winnie's story *The Secret Agent* addresses the nineteenth-century critique of marriage. From the perspective of nineteenth-century women's liberation, marriage came to be seen by some as women's subjugation. John Stuart Mill, for instance, asserts: '[m]arriage is the only actual bondage known to

Oh yes. He loved me till I sometimes wished myself——’, implying that her sexual life with Verloc occasionally made her feel suicidal (218).¹⁵² The gender issues surrounding Winnie’s story—which I will fully discuss later—certainly constitute an important part of the novel’s theme. However, given the substantiality of the novel’s portrayal of anarchism and social conspiracy, proposing that *The Secret Agent* is primarily about the collapse of Winnie’s brittle marriage would be reductive, too.

The definition of the primary subject of the novel should be something that encompasses all of those elements mentioned above. I would adopt the succinct one provided by Simmons: *The Secret Agent* is ‘an ironic condition-of-England novel’ (*Joseph Conrad* 131). The class injustice foregrounded by the anarchist critique of society, the corruption in the police represented by the self-interest of the Assistant Commissioner and Chief Inspector Heat, and the suffering of women under patriarchy which Winnie’s conjugal condition thematises all serve to create a sordid portrait of late Victorian society. Those three motifs are loosely connected with each other in their depiction of

our law. There remain no legal slaves, except the mistress of every house’ (217). Some, like George Drysdale, even contended that many marriages (like the Verlocs) were effectively a form of ‘legalised prostitution’ (355). On the other hand, the novel also allows us to see the attack on marriage from the anarchist rather than the feminist perspective. I will return to this point later.

¹⁵² Since she never expressed such feelings before the revelation of Stevie’s death, we might discern a degree of self-deception on Winnie’s part here. I will say more about ironisation of Winnie later.

various social inequities, and English society in *The Secret Agent* is viewed largely from these perspectives. Winnie's crude but impressive statement that the police 'are there so that them as have nothing shouldn't take anything away from them who have' and Stevie's revelation expressed in the reverberative phrase '[b]ad world for poor people' can be said to embody an important aspect of the novel's outlook (138; 136).

The way in which the word 'domestic' is used in the text is significant in relation to the novel's depiction of English society. In their second interview, Sir Ethelred asks casually after listening to the Assistant Commissioner's concise report as to the case of the bombing affair: 'And you say that this man has got a wife?' (175) The Assistant Commissioner confirms it, sketchily describes the family, and sums up his comment by stating: 'From a certain point of view we are here in the presence of a *domestic* drama' (175, emphasis added). But Sir Ethelred's thoughts 'seemed to have wandered far away, perhaps to the questions of his country's *domestic* policy' (176, emphasis added). Although 'perhaps' might imply a degree of playfulness on the narrator's part, here the slippage enabled by the polysemous word 'domestic' connects the familial affair of the Verlocs and the larger dimension of English society. Indeed, we could argue that the Verlocs provide a vehicle to explore the pathology of English society. Their indolent disinclination to examine their marital relationship, for example, forms a parallel to English society's complacency as embodied

in the lady patroness of Michaelis who cannot 'conceive how [the annihilation of all capital] could affect her position' (89). Similarly, the Verlocs' anti-heroic undistinguished character can be associated with the mediocrity of English society which the Professor attacks in his conversation with Ossipon in the final chapter: 'You are mediocre. Verloc ... was mediocre. And the police murdered him. He was mediocre. Everybody is mediocre' (244). The word 'domestic' serves to expand the thematic significance of the portrait of the Verlocs.

The novel also presents a political spectrum as part of its indirect depiction of the English society. At its most basic level *The Secret Agent* presents English bourgeois society's resistance to 'the revolutionary (and the reactionary) attack' against it (Fleishman 187). The first event in the novel is Verloc's interview with Vladimir, the First Secretary of an unnamed foreign country (which is obviously Russia), in which he is ordered to arrange a bombing against the Greenwich Observatory. Vladimir explains his scheme: 'What we want is to administer a tonic to the Conference in Milan ... Its deliberations upon international action for the suppression of political crime don't seem to get anywhere. England lags' (23). His intention is to force '[t]he imbecile bourgeoisie of this country' into renouncing 'its sentimental regard for individual liberty' by arranging a seemingly incomprehensible, 'purely destructive' terrorism against science, '[t]he sacrosanct fetish of to-day', and thereby unsettling the complacency of English society (24; 23; 26; 25). This rightist critique of English

society by Romanov Russia finds its leftist counterpart in the anarchists' hostility towards the establishment. Yundt's diagnosis that the economic condition of Western society at the time is 'cannibalistic' sounds compelling despite his personal ludicrousness (41). The Professor, whose penetrating insights make him by far the most important of the anarchists, does not offer as specific and succinct a critique of English society as Vladimir's, but the following remark encapsulates his defiant hostility towards it: 'To break up the superstition and worship of legality should be our aim. Nothing would please me more than to see Inspector Heat and his likes take to shooting us down in broad daylight with the approval of the public' (58).¹⁵³ When Vladimir orders Verloc to have one of the anarchists around him commit the bombing against the Greenwich Observatory, the rightist and leftist enemies of the English society come together through the double agent, though none of the anarchists actually takes part in Vladimir's plot apart from the Professor's casual provision of the explosive to Verloc. Yet the attempt fails and English society remains perfectly undamaged in the face of the malice of its enemies from both sides of the political spectrum.

¹⁵³ The Professor's wish to reveal the latent violence of a society articulated here anticipates what critical theory in the latter half of the twentieth century has problematised as violence inherent in a system. Slavoj Žižek, for example, proposes the concept of 'objective violence' which is 'no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their "evil" intentions, but is purely "objective", systemic, anonymous' (10-11).

Compared with the thematisation of international capitalism through the phrase 'material interest' in *Nostramo*, the presentation of contemporary English society in *The Secret Agent* remains rather vague. We are shown Verloc's dysfunctional family, the grotesque and impotent anarchists, the corrupt police, and the bizarre society salon where miscreants and policemen socialise, but we are denied access to the ordinary social life of London. During the scenes in which characters such as Verloc, the Professor, and the Assistant Commissioner walk London's streets, glimpses of ordinary English society are provided, but they are far from substantial since they tend to be reduced either to a faceless multitude or to a part of the metaphysical darkness of London. The following passage from the beginning of Chapter II, in which Verloc walks to the Embassy in the morning, is the most direct portrayal in the entire text of social life of London:

Through the park railings [Verloc's] glances beheld men and women riding in the Row, couples cantering past harmoniously, others advancing sedately at a walk, loitering groups of three or four, solitary horsemen looking unsociable, and solitary women followed at a long distance by a groom with a cockade to his hat and a leather belt over his tight-fitting coat. Carriages went bowling by, mostly two-horse broughams, with here and there a victoria with the skin of some wild beast inside and a woman's face and hat emerging above the folded hood (9).

This captures the everyday life of wealthy Londoners;¹⁵⁴ however, this sort of realistic description of London's social life is hardly to be found elsewhere in the text. When the Professor walks in the street after his interview with Ossipon in Chapter V, the anonymity and nonhuman quality of the crowd is foregrounded:

after a while he became disagreeably affected by the sight of the roadway thronged with vehicles and of the pavement crowded with men and women. He was in a long, straight street, peopled by a mere fraction of an immense multitude; but all round him, on and on, even to the limits of the horizon hidden by the enormous piles of bricks, he felt the mass of mankind mighty in its numbers. They swarmed like locusts, industrious like ants, thoughtless like a natural force, pushing on blind and orderly and absorbed, impervious to sentiment, to logic, to terror too perhaps (65).

Unlike the realistic portrayal in the previous passage, here the crowd is presented, focalised through the Professor, as a subhuman collective that threatens his theoretical self-confidence. Similarly, the gloomy description of the street outside the Italian restaurant as 'an immensity of greasy slime and damp plaster interspersed with lamps, and enveloped, oppressed, penetrated, choked, and suffocated by the

¹⁵⁴ Hampson calls attention to the passage's depiction of the social strata: '[t]hese horse riders, carriage passengers and walkers are those who have the leisure to spend their daylight hours in this way: these are not the unemployed, who would sleep in the Park at night, but those who don't have to work for a living, which was the necessary qualification for a gentleman. Meanwhile, the uniformed groom following "at a long distance" displays, through that "distance", precisely the mark of deference required from domestic servants' (*Conrad's Secrets* 74).

blackness of a wet London night, which is composed of soot and drops of water’, which appears in the scene where the Assistant Commissioner makes for Verloc’s house, seems somewhat disconnected from the ordinary social world of London (119).¹⁵⁵ The narrative of *The Secret Agent* takes the reader through various aberrant sections of the English society in London, but its most common part seems to be out of the novel’s focus.

2. A Sceptical Authorial Attitude towards Social Issues

In the previous chapter I argued that, despite its rich and complex texture, *Nostramo’s* attitude towards its primary subject, ‘material interests’, is relatively fixed and homogeneous as it never provides a perspective that views the expansion of international capitalism positively. In contrast to this, I would argue, *The Secret Agent* ultimately refuses to fix its authorial attitude towards its narrative content,¹⁵⁶ and in what follows I will demonstrate the specific ways in

¹⁵⁵ Michael Newton writes that Soho at the time was ‘the apotheosis of Bohemian London, a bolthole for refugees, prostitutes and Anarchists’; ‘[i]n 1903, sixty per cent of the population of the parishes of St Anne in Soho and neighboring St James’ s were of foreign extraction, two-thirds of those being Polish Jews. The “native English” had moved elsewhere ... The area’s perceived foreignness gave it a raffish, extraneous air. Though in the very heart of London, a walk of a minute or two from the West End, the district was as a blank space on the map’ (19-20). That Verloc’s house is located in such an area suggests that the novel does not intend to portray the ordinary part of English society.

¹⁵⁶ Erdinast-Vulcan points out ‘the refusal of the text to declare its political stance

which the novel carries out that strategy. In his Author's Note Conrad states: 'the whole treatment of the tale, its inspiring indignation and underlying pity and contempt, prove my *detachment* from the squalor and sordidness which lie simply in the outward circumstances of the setting' (248, emphasis added). One of the most prominent features of the novel is indeed the anonymous third-person narrator's detachment from the events and characters he narrates. But this detachment is more than the mere distance the narrator takes from the characters and the events by means of emotional restraint; rather, it is achieved, for one thing, through the sceptical attitude with which the narrative approaches the various social inequities I have mentioned in the previous section.

The Secret Agent presents the police—and implicitly state power more generally—as corrupt, but the narrator's attitude towards the Assistant Commissioner is arguably more favourable than towards any other character in the novel. In Chapter V we are told how his marriage forced him to give up his favorite work in 'a tropical colony' and do the current work that bores him (79). (This might be said to constitute another 'domestic drama' in the novel (175)). However, the narrator suggests that the Assistant Commissioner's discontent is of his own making when he notes that the Commissioner got married 'rather impulsively' (79). Yet, since the narrator never focuses on the

affirmatively' ('Conrad's Anarchist Aesthetics' 208). My argument will show that the novel's avoidance of fixing its position is not limited to politics proper.

Assistant Commissioner's wife, the impression we get is that he is on the Commissioner's side with regard to his unsatisfying marriage. The description of the Assistant Commissioner's escape from his work and home—his daily whist party at his club (before going home to dinner) which he shares with three other male 'co-sufferers' to cope with 'the secret ills of existence'—seems entirely sympathetic as it accords with the novel's gloomy worldview; we might even read it as exhibiting the narrator's homosocial solidarity with the Assistant Commissioner (82). More interesting is the narrator's comment on the Assistant Commissioner's intention to protect Michaelis for the sake of the lady patroness, to whom his wife is greatly indebted. 'If [Michaelis] is laid hold of again', the Assistant Commissioner thinks, 'she will never forgive me' (89). To this, the narrator remarks:

The frankness of such a secretly outspoken thought could not go without some derisive self-criticism. No man engaged in a work he does not like can preserve many *saving illusions about himself*. The distaste, the absence of glamour, extend from the occupation to the personality. It is only when our appointed activities seem by a lucky accident to obey the particular earnestness of our temperament that we can taste *the comfort of complete self-deception* (90, emphases added).

The passage begins by registering the fact of the Assistant Commissioner's 'derisive self-criticism'. However, by suggesting that those of us who, unlike the Assistant Commissioner, feel comfortable with our work are merely self-deceiving, the narrator directs his irony

not towards the Assistant Commissioner's self-interest but rather towards the reader. This forestallment of the reader's criticism of the Assistant Commissioner's scheme epitomises the novel's sceptical attitude towards judgment of social inequities. Since the narrator's irony is turned rather unexpectedly upon the reader, their confidence in their own grounds for judgment is destabilised. Similarly, the narrator's treatment of Chief Inspector Heat, who attempts to criminalise Michaelis in order to conceal his secret connection with Verloc, contains his characteristic irony; however, that does not seem to lead to a serious criticism of police corruption as the narrator does not show any clear sign of disapproval.

The narrator's sceptical attitude has a different effect in relation to class injustice. In the previous section I mentioned that the anarchists in *The Secret Agent* are presented as ignoble and ludicrous. However, that does not mean that their criticism of English society is repudiated in the text. As Mulry rightly observes, 'at no point does [Conrad] undermine the underlying complaints from the "discredited" anarchists of social inequity, complacency, cruelty, and despair' ('The Anarchist in the House' 11).¹⁵⁷ Lyon's argument is helpful in this context: the narrative's attacks on the anarchists' physical grotesqueness are '*ad hominem*—attacking the man rather than any

¹⁵⁷ In the previous chapter I pointed out a similar phenomenon observable in *Nostromo*: the criticism of Western imperialism made by the local parties such as Guzmán Bento, Montero, and Sotillo is largely legitimate despite the unfavourable way in which those characters are treated. See page 265.

intellectual position he may espouse, but nonetheless seeking tendentiously to discredit not merely the individual but his politics or morality as well' (16).¹⁵⁸ That is to say, the anarchists' critique of English society—such as Yundt's claim that the 'cannibalistic' economic conditions mean that the capitalists '[nourish] their greed on the quivering flesh and the warm blood of the people'—does not receive any intellectually serious refutation in the text (41). In this respect the most important of all the anarchists is the Professor, whose radicalism is presented as something that the reader cannot readily dismiss just because he is physically miserable and motivated by *ressentiment*. In his first interview with Ossipon he remarks: '[t]he terrorist and the policeman both come from the same basket. Revolution, legality—counter moves in the same game; forms of idleness at bottom identical' (56). Implying that terrorists' attempts at revolution actually serve for the maintenance of the system they intend to destroy, here the Professor anticipates Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicist concept of the 'irresistible, pervasive' power which 'takes advantage of attempts at subversion to intensify repression' (Belsey 36). This is not less perspicacious than any other comment made by the authorial narrator in the text. Although it is clearly motivated by *ressentiment*, his theory itself appears so coherent that, when he waves away the people in England as dependent on 'conventional morality' and differentiates

¹⁵⁸ Much earlier than Lyon, Gekoski had also criticised the novel's employment of *ad hominem* criticism: '[w]hy sheer physical grossness, or senility, should militate against the value of what a man has to say, I am not sure' (144).

himself as having a character 'free from everything artificial', we are not a hundred-percent sure on what exact ground his claim is to be refuted (54-5).¹⁵⁹ The Professor's position in the novel is thus similar to Decoud's in *Nostramo* in that many of his insights seem authentic and indeed productive for an interpretation of the novel despite the ironic treatment he receives as a character from the narrative. On the other hand, it remains true that the anarchist critique of English society in the novel gives the impression of being undermined because of being expressed by those who smack of solipsism (Michaelis), empty bravado (Yundt), or self-deception and *ressentiment* (the Professor). In Chapter III the narrator explicitly offers his negative view of revolutionists:

obviously one does not revolt against the advantages and opportunities of [a given social state], but against the price

¹⁵⁹ It is easy to hear the echo of Friedrich Nietzsche in the Professor's contention that 'the weak, whose theology has invented hell for the strong', are '[t]he source of all evil on this earth' (241; 239). In *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper* Erdinast-Vulcan explores the way the 'fault-lines' in Conrad's works reflect his complex attitude towards the modern age that is devoid of God and meaning. She argues that it was Nietzsche who embodied the *Zeitgeist* of that modern age for Conrad (1-21). On the other hand, in his 1899 letter to Helen Sanderson Conrad dismissed Nietzsche's philosophy as 'mad individualism' (CL2 188). Conrad's attitude towards Nietzsche in *The Secret Agent* thus seems similar to that towards Cesare Lombroso, which I will discuss shortly, in that it combines the expression of his philosophy through one of the characters with criticism of that expression. (See page 298.) Just as Ossipon, the disciple of Lombroso in the text, is ironised by the narrative, so may the Professor be undermined for his espousal of Nietzschean thought.

which must be paid for the same in the coin of accepted morality, self-restraint, and toil. The majority of revolutionists are the enemies of discipline and fatigue mostly. There are natures, too, to whose sense of justice the price exacted looms up monstrously enormous, odious, oppressive, worrying, humiliating, extortionate, intolerable. Those are the fanatics. The remaining portion of social rebels is accounted for by vanity, the mother of all noble and vile illusions, the companion of poets, reformers, charlatans, prophets, and incendiaries (42-3).¹⁶⁰

The list of adjectives in the third sentence, which ruthlessly exposes the egregious laziness of revolutionists, is especially scathing. The reader, as a result of these things, is placed in a state of limbo between sympathy with and distrust of the anarchist critique of the class injustice.

The same can be said as to the novel's treatment of women's suffering through the story of Winnie's pain, compromise, and endurance. Chapter XI contains the most extensive—and arguably the most poignant—depiction of Winnie's life history. Shortly after the focalisation switches to Winnie with Verloc's words 'You go to bed now. What you want is a good cry',¹⁶¹ the narrative starts to present

¹⁶⁰ The last sentence is deliberately unsettling as it enumerates heterogeneous types of people—poets, reformers, charlatans, prophets, and incendiaries—as if they were in the same category. The narrator here seems not so much to challenge the reader to decode its meaning as to derive pleasure from his own act of baffling the reader without any legitimate reason. In the next section I will explore similar cases in detail.

¹⁶¹ With regard to this incongruous and patronising remark the narrator offers in his own voice criticism of sexism: '[t]his opinion had nothing to recommend it but

Winnie's recollection of her early life which was devoted to the protection of Stevie from their brutal father:

With the rage and dismay of a betrayed woman, she reviewed the tenor of her life in visions concerned mostly with Stevie's difficult existence from its early days. It was a life of single purpose and of a noble unity of inspiration ... But the visions of Mrs Verloc lacked nobility and magnificence. She saw herself putting the boy to bed by the light of a single candle on the deserted top floor of a "business house" ... She remembered brushing [Stevie's] hair and tying his pinafores—herself in a pinafore still; 'the consolations administered to a small and badly scared creature by another creature nearly as small but not quite so badly scared; she had the vision of blows intercepted (often with her own head), of a door held desperately shut against a man's rage (not for very long) ... And all these scenes of violence came and went accompanied by the unrefined noise of deep vociferations proceeding from a man wounded in his paternal pride, declaring himself obviously accursed since one of his kids was a "slobbering idjut and the other a wicked she-devil". It was of her that this had been said many years ago (191-2).

Winnie's feeble but determined resistance to the violence of their oppressive father is depicted restrainedly but evocatively—the use of parenthetical insertions are especially effective.¹⁶² The next

the general consent of mankind. It is universally understood that, as if it were nothing more substantial than vapour floating in the sky, every emotion of a woman is bound to end in a shower' (191).

¹⁶² Winnie's father is reminiscent here of Jean-Pierre Bacadou in 'The Idiots'. Bacadou gets mortified and desperate by having four mentally-retarded children consecutively. His marital life is totally destroyed, resulting in Bacadou being murdered by his wife.

paragraph focuses on Winnie's 'crushing memory' of her family's miserable life in the 'Belgravian mansion',

an exhausting vision of countless breakfast trays carried up and down innumerable stairs, of endless haggling over pence, of the endless drudgery of sweeping, dusting, cleaning, from basement to attics; while the impotent mother, staggering on swollen legs, cooked in a grimy kitchen, and poor Stevie, the unconscious presiding genius of all their toil, blacked the gentlemen's boots in the scullery (192).

This is followed by the description of Winnie's giving up of her young lover just before her decision to marry Verloc:

But this vision had a breath of a hot London summer in it, and for a central figure a young man wearing his Sunday best, with a straw hat on his dark head and a wooden pipe in his mouth. Affectionate and jolly, he was a fascinating companion for a voyage down the sparkling stream of life; only his boat was very small. There was room in it for a girl-partner at the oar, but no accommodation for passengers. He was allowed to drift away from the threshold of the Belgravian mansion while Winnie averted her tearful eyes (192).

As I have mentioned earlier, Winnie claims that the prostitutional nature of her conjugal life with Verloc sometimes made her feel suicidal. Although Winnie's suffering as a woman is not presented as a direct result of patriarchy, throughout these accounts it is presented in relation to successive male figures such as her brutal father, the 'gentlemen' in the Belgravian mansion, and her husband whom her

family circumstances forced her to marry. It is not surprising that some feminist critics have argued for Winnie's thematic centrality. Bev Soane, for example, contends that Winnie 'symbolizes all women in oppressive systems whose domestic containment makes masculine action possible' (46).

On the other hand, however, Winnie is never sentimentalised or romanticised as the narrator applies to her the same degree of irony as to other characters. This can be seen, first of all, in the way Winnie is characterised as belonging to the category that Lombroso termed 'mattoids' 'whose lunacy has so long concealed itself behind a habitual calm' until it explodes as 'transitory madness' (402). The ironical fact that Ossipon, Lombroso's disciple in the text, is described as exhibiting the features of 'degenerates' himself—he has 'a flattened nose and prominent mouth cast in the rough mould of the negro type'—makes the novel's attitude towards Lombroso's discourse difficult to discern (35). However, as critics such as Hampson and Ellen Burton Harrington have suggested, *The Secret Agent* both adopts and ironises Lombroso's theory in its delineation of characters.¹⁶³ The novel's suggestion that Winnie is a 'degenerate' with an innate insanity

¹⁶³ Harrington observes: 'Conrad both mocks Lombroso's typologies and easy classification of degenerates and uses his ideas about atavistic throwbacks and criminal types to sketch his central characters' (58). Hampson argues that the combination of ironisation and adoption of Lombroso's discourse is enabled by the novel's radical scepticism and its 'anarchic subversion of systems' ('Conrad and Criminal Anthropology' 326).

effectively forestalls the reader's empathy with her. In fact, given that Verloc's belief in 'being loved for himself' derives not only from his imperceptiveness but also from Winnie's deception for the purpose of self-preservation, we should say Winnie is no less ironised by the narrative than Verloc is (228). The narrator's repeated quotations of Winnie's set phrases also attest to her ironisation. Her hatred of Yundt is expressed by quotations of her words 'a disgusting old man' (47; 145). A more complex example is the repetition of the phrase that life does not 'stand much looking into'. Just before the passages that depict Winnie's life history, the narrator quotes this set phrase with an obviously ironical intention, making a contrast with the poignancy evoked in the subsequent part: 'Mrs Verloc, in common with other human beings, was provided with a fund of unconscious resignation sufficient to meet the normal manifestation of human destiny. Without "troubling her head about it", she was aware that it "did not stand looking into very much"' (191). The narrator's use of Winnie's words here clearly implies his recognition of both the idiosyncrasy and the inadvisability of her policy.

More importantly, at the same time as the novel notes women's sufferings under patriarchy, it also expresses strong scepticism about the possibility of women's liberation. After Winnie murders Verloc, the narrator foregrounds her new position as a 'free woman', but the tone is clearly ironic: '[s]he had become a free woman with a perfection of freedom which left her nothing to desire and absolutely nothing to do ...

She was a woman enjoying her complete irresponsibility and endless leisure, *almost in the manner of a corpse* (208-9, emphasis added). The unsettling simile in the last sentence insinuates the insubstantiality of Winnie's freedom. Subsequently, when she encounters Ossipon on the street and asks him for protection, she exclaims 'I'll slave for you', ironically demonstrating that, when given her 'freedom', she can only 'duplicate [her domestic role] on a lower level with Ossipon, as a fallen woman' (*The Secret Agent* 229; Harrington 67). When the narrator states: 'Mrs Verloc was no longer a free woman' referring to Winnie's timid question to Ossipon: 'Where are we going to, Tom?', the bathetic effect is palpable (231). As Harrington rightly observes, 'Conrad's ironic vision ... effaces the possibility of her liberation from traditional roles' (67).

This questioning of the idea of a 'free woman' can also be considered in relation to the novel's treatment of anarchism. During the nineteenth century marriage came to be criticised not only by feminism but also by anarchism. Famously Marx and Friedrich Engels claimed in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) that 'it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e. of *prostitution both public and private*' (72, emphasis added). Anarchism too criticised marriage as part of the capitalist institutions. Emma Goldman, for instance, in her essay 'Marriage and Love' (1911) condemned marriage as a patriarchal institution that

serves to subjugate women and restrict their freedom: it is devoid of 'the spontaneity, the intensity, and beauty of love' (177). Thus Winnie's status as 'a free woman' after her murder of Verloc can be said to embody the anarchist ideal of emancipating women from the subjugation of marriage as well. However, since Winnie's new status as 'a free woman' is quickly invalidated as she falls into slavish dependence on Ossipon, the anarchist concept of women's liberation is concomitantly ironised here.¹⁶⁴ Winnie's ruin thus questions both the feminist and the anarchist ideas of 'free women'.

As we have seen, *The Secret Agent* shows a highly sceptical attitude towards the social inequities it presents such as class injustice, the corruption of the police, and the suffering of women under patriarchy. As we have seen most clearly in relation to Winnie, the narrator juxtaposes the perspective that problematises those injustices with the one that ironises naïve wishes to resolve them. In arguing this I am disputing some critics' contention that *The Secret Agent* lacks depth on an intellectual level. Guerard, for instance, argues that 'a relative absence of subtle intellectual conflict' informs the novel and that '*The Secret Agent* is not (so far as ideas are concerned) a work of exploration and discovery. It dramatizes positions already securely held and carries no farther than a casual essay might have' (223; 224). Berthoud similarly asserts that 'if there is one point on which critics

¹⁶⁴ The anarchist idea of women's liberation is ironised also by the way in which the anarchists exploit or are dependent on women.

agree, it is that the novel does not offer a serious intellectual challenge' (*The Secret Agent*' 103). These views seem to derive from a confusion between the pessimistic tone of the novel and its scepticism on the intellectual level. The depressing drama acted by the ignoble and petty characters makes the novel's tone unambiguously hopeless; in this sense we could say that *The Secret Agent* is a pessimistic novel. The narrator's worldview implied in phrases such as 'this world of vain effort and illusory appearances' supports this view (123). However, this observation is limited to the atmospheric level, as it were. As I have suggested, when we look at how the novel actually deals with the social inequities it presents that are largely responsible for its hopeless tone, we see that on the intellectual level *The Secret Agent* is sceptical rather than pessimistic. Lothe supports this when he maintains that the combination of 'the characteristic indeterminacy of [the narrator's] attitudinal position' and 'a pervasive existential and epistemological uncertainty' shows that the adjective 'sceptical' is more appropriate to apply to the narrator than 'pessimistic' (256). The scepticism of *The Secret Agent* keeps its authorial attitude ultimately indeterminate and opens a space for intellectual exploration of its subject matter.

3. The Narrator's Playfulness and Inhumanity

The positional fluidity in *The Secret Agent* is achieved also by certain attributes of the narrator. Before examining the narrator

himself, however, here I would consider the way in which the narrative is ordered and structured, a realm where the functions of the narrator and the author are conflated. It has been widely acknowledged that *The Secret Agent* makes a highly effective use of chronology and narrative order. Guerard, for instance, praises its 'flawless plotting' with the following dexterous summary:

the events so contrived as to cause the characters a maximum discomfort, and to extract from the dramatized experience a maximum ironic significance. And the knowledge of these events withheld or offered in such a way as to make possible the greatest suspense and the most rewarding macabre comedy (228).

One example which supports Guerard's observation is how the conjugal relationship between Winnie and Verloc is foregrounded just when Verloc is unsettled by the failure of the bombing and when the revelation of Stevie's death is imminent. After the failure of the bombing Verloc comes back home with an unusually disturbed appearance and tells her that he has withdrawn all the money they have from the bank. Though perplexed, she replies to Verloc's question if she trusts him: 'If I hadn't trusted you I wouldn't have married you' (153). Verloc subsequently brings up the plan of emigration suddenly and without a proper explanation. She naturally objects to it and remarks: 'The business isn't so bad ... You've a comfortable home ... And you are not tired of me' (154). She proceeds to declare in a resolute manner that she intends not to accompany Verloc in his emigration, but,

after a while, she regrets her unkind words and tries to ‘make it as if it had not been’:

She turned her head over her shoulder and gave [Verloc] planted heavily in front of the fireplace *a glance, half arch, half cruel*, out of her large eyes—a glance of which the Winnie of the Belgravian mansion days *would have been incapable, because of her respectability and her ignorance*.¹⁶⁵ But the man was her husband now, and she was no longer ignorant. She kept it on him for a whole second, with her grave face motionless like a mask,¹⁶⁶ while she said playfully: “You couldn’t. You would miss me too much” (155, emphases added).

Winnie’s confidence in her ability to sexually attract and control him is clearly registered here. This is unsettling in this particular part of the novel because the reader knows that a catastrophic collapse of her marital life will come about shortly when she learns of the death of her beloved brother and its cause. By having Winnie foreground her sexual relationship with Verloc at this particular stage of the story the narrator (or Conrad) succeeds in extracting ‘a maximum ironic significance’ (Guerard 228).

Another example occurs when the narrator shakes the reader

¹⁶⁵ Winnie’s concern for respectability is made clear when she rebukes her mother for her arrangement to move to the almshouse: ‘Whatever people’ll think of us—you throwing yourself like this on a Charity?’ (126). However, her concern is ironically undermined when we remember that the Verlocs sell pornography and ‘marital aids’ in their shop in Soho.

¹⁶⁶ It is also implied here that Winnie’s appearance as a ‘genuine’ wife is only a mask.

emotionally by means of perspectival shifts between the Assistant Commissioner and the Verlocs. In *The Secret Agent* there are two occasions—the transition from Chapter VII to VIII and that from Chapter X to XI—in which the focalisation switches from the Assistant Commissioner to the Verlocs, and one of the effects is that the reader experiences an atmospheric jump from the light-heartedness surrounding the Assistant Commissioner to the gloom of the Verlocs. The last part of Chapter VII describes the Commissioner's visit to Verloc's house after his interview with Sir Ethelred. Having had his 'adventurous disposition' unsatisfied for a long time, he finds this special mission of visiting the culprit by himself exciting (90). He has a sense of 'evil freedom'; when he gets out of the Italian restaurant, '[a] pleasurable feeling of independence' possesses him (118; 119). An intriguing passage appears towards the end of the chapter as the Assistant Commissioner watches a few pedestrians disappear into the darkness of Brett Street:

The adventurous head of the Special Crimes Department watched these disappearances from a distance with an interested eye. He felt light-hearted, as though he had been ambushed all alone in a jungle many thousands of miles away from departmental desks and official inkstands. This joyousness and dispersion of thought before a task of some importance *seems* to prove that *this world of ours* is not such a very serious affair after all. For the Assistant Commissioner was not constitutionally inclined to levity (119, emphases added).

Werner Senn, whose *Conrad's Narrative Voice* includes a study of Conrad's usage of hedging words such as 'seem', observes: '[w]hatever seems, seems so to somebody. However, this recipient object of cognition is very often deleted from the surface and can be retrieved only by analysis of the deep structure' (150). In this passage it is obviously to the narrator that the Assistant Commissioner's light-heartedness seemed to prove the unserious nature of the world. Seemingly defending the Assistant Commissioner's light-heartedness, the narrator here foregrounds his own voice and invites the reader, through the phrase 'this world of ours', to share the uncaring attitude the Assistant Commissioner displays before his meeting with Verloc. This contrasts remarkably with the depressing mood which we perceive as soon as Chapter VIII begins. The chapter depicts Winnie's mother's decision to move to an almshouse for the sake of Stevie's security; the cab ride to the almshouse in which Winnie blames her mother's decision and makes her regret it; Stevie's painful disturbance by the misery of the poor cabman and his horse; and his depression after his mother's move.¹⁶⁷ In witnessing these distressing moments, the reader cannot but doubt not only the truthfulness but also the sincerity of the narrator's statement towards the end of the previous chapter that 'this world of ours is not such a very serious affair after all' (119). In

¹⁶⁷ Many critics have emphasised the importance of the cab ride. U. C. Knoepfelmacher, for instance, argues that 'Stevie's reaction to the cabman's maltreatment of the horse and his identification with the brute' is emotionally 'at the novel's very center' (250).

describing the cab that is about to carry the family to the almshouse, the narrator states: '[t]he conveyance awaiting them would have illustrated the proverb that "truth can be more cruel than caricature", if such a proverb existed' (124). At the same time as he displays his playfulness by taking the trouble to employ a fictional proverb, he also invites the reader to lament and empathise with the plight of Winnie's family, which clashes with his proposition of light-heartedness at the end of the previous chapter.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the transition from Chapter X to XI. After he returns from Brett Street and reports to Sir Ethelred what he has learned about the attempted bombing, the Assistant Commissioner visits the house of the lady patroness of Michaelis, where he meets Vladimir and intimidates him by informing him of the police's identification of Verloc as the suspect and declaring his intention to purge foreign spies. After Vladimir leaves him as if defeated, the chapter ends with the description of the Assistant Commissioner's satisfaction: 'the thought passed through his mind that Mr Vladimir, honorary member, would not be seen very often there in the future. He looked at his watch. It was only half-past ten. He had had a very full evening' (181). Not thinking at all about the tragedy that has befallen the Verlocs in his contented reflection about his personal achievement, the Assistant Commissioner here exhibits a light-heartedness which is almost identical to that he felt towards the end of Chapter VII. This slight frivolity is precipitously replaced by

the funereal atmosphere of the Verlocs as Chapter XI starts. As we are shown the hopeless miscommunication between Verloc and Winnie which ends with the murder, we cannot but feel a huge tonal change from the previous chapter. This transition could also be described as a process in which the light-hearted Assistant Commissioner's incomprehension of the 'domestic drama' is exposed. Berthoud writes:

Conrad has so ordered his narrative as to give us Verloc's murder (chapter XI) after the Assistant Commissioner's final report (chapter X), so that we are able to savour to the full the incomprehension implicit in the self-satisfied little joke with which the Commissioner takes his leave of the Minister: 'From a certain point of view we are here in the presence of a domestic drama' (*The Secret Agent* 108).

Indeed, when the Assistant Commissioner describes Verloc's family to Sir Ethelred, his failure to recognise their true condition is exposed as he uses the word 'genuine' as many as four times: Winnie is 'a genuine wife'; Verloc and Winnie have 'a genuinely, respectably, marital relation'; and Stevie is Verloc's 'genuine brother-in-law' (175). From a perspective that is pessimistic about the nature of marriage—like the feminist and anarchist ones I mentioned in the previous section—it could be ironically argued that the marriage between Verloc and Winnie *is* genuine precisely for its lack of genuine affection. But the point here is the Assistant Commissioner's incapability of discerning the imminent disintegration of the Verlocs. When Chapter XI starts, the vivid depiction of the catastrophic collapse of their brittle marital

relationship seems to deny not only the Assistant Commissioner's view of the family as 'genuine' but also his light-heartedness accompanying that idea. On both of these occasions the narrator places the reader within the opposition between the light-hearted nonchalance of the Assistant Commissioner and the gloom and pathos of the Verlocs and prevents them from fixing their position between these two emotional poles.

The display of the narrator's editorial privilege, which, again, overlaps that of the author, deserves a passing mention here. A good example of this occurs during the interview between Verloc and Vladimir in Chapter II where the narrator moves between summary of their speech and direct presentation of it. When Vladimir asks to him, 'You understand French, I suppose?', the narrative summarises Verloc's response as if the words he actually uttered do not deserve a direct quotation: 'Mr Verloc stated huskily that he did ... He muttered unobtrusively somewhere deep down in his throat *something about* having done his military service in the French artillery' (16, emphasis added). When Vladimir asks shortly afterwards why Verloc stole 'the design of the improved breech-block of their new field-gun', which resulted in his '[f]ive years' rigorous confinement in a fortress', the narrative presents his response in a similar vein: 'Mr Verloc's husky conversational voice was heard speaking of youth, of a fatal infatuation for an unworthy——', which Vladimir interrupts by the teasing ejaculation: 'Aha! *Cherchez la femme*' (16). Here the narrator's

decision not to present Verloc's actual words directly serves again to create the impression that the story of his young passion is too ridiculous to be wholly quoted. When we are told about Vladimir's plan to give 'a jolly good scare' to '[t]he imbecile bourgeoisie' of England, however, it is now his turn to have his speech filtered through the narrator's ironic encapsulation:

And Mr Vladimir developed his idea from on high, with scorn and condescension, displaying at the same time an amount of ignorance as to the real aims, thoughts, and methods of the revolutionary world which filled the silent Mr Verloc with inward consternation. He confounded causes with effects more than was excusable; the most distinguished propagandists with impulsive bomb throwers; assumed organisation where in the nature of things it could not exist; spoke of the social revolutionary party one moment as of a perfectly disciplined army, where the word of chiefs was supreme, and at another as if it had been the loosest association of desperate brigands that ever camped in a mountain gorge (24).

This time Vladimir's speech is denied direct access to the reader partly for the reason, we are led to assume, that he falls victim to the narrator's ironisation because of his laughable ignorance about the revolutionary world.

Aside from these quasi-authorial roles, the narrator also exhibits his distinctive character, if such a term is appropriate in describing an anonymous extra-heterodiegetic narrator. The first thing to be noted is his narratorial self-satisfaction. A good example of this is found in

the simile the narrator uses in describing Chief Inspector Heat's resentment against the Assistant Commissioner's detection of his intention to criminalise Michaelis. When the Commissioner vents his distrust onto him: 'I have reason to think that when you came into this room ... it was not Michaelis who was in your mind; not principally—perhaps not at all', Heat's reaction is presented as follows:

He felt at the moment like a tight-rope artist might feel if suddenly, in the middle of the performance, the manager of the Music Hall were to rush out of the proper managerial seclusion and begin to shake the rope. Indignation, the sense of moral insecurity engendered by such a treacherous proceeding joined to the immediate apprehension of a broken neck, would, in the colloquial phrase, put him in a state (92; 93).¹⁶⁸

Though not an inappropriate simile, this image of 'a tight-rope artist' seems to be not so much a faithful presentation of Heat's contemplation as the narrator's own idea, considering the analytical diction in the second sentence. In the subsequent part the narrator uses this simile repeatedly: '[t]he indignation of a betrayed tight-rope performer was strong within him. In his pride of a trusted servant he was affected by the assurance that the rope was not shaken for the purpose of breaking his neck, as by an exhibition of impudence'; '[the Assistant

¹⁶⁸ We can also see here a power struggle between a boss and his subordinate which forms a parallel with the one between Vladimir and Verloc. In both of the interviews the subordinates feel indignation against what they perceive as their boss's unfairness.

Commissioner's] manner was easy and business-like while he persisted in administering another shake to the tight rope' (99; 100).¹⁶⁹ This persistent use of the simile of 'a tight-rope artist' illustrates the nature of the narrator's relationship with his characters. His interest seems to lie not so much in faithful representation of the characters' voices as in making a parade of his witty simile. Indeed, here the narrator appears to derive pleasure from his own presentational ingenuities.

The mordant edge of the narrator's humour is outstanding even within Conrad's oeuvre which abounds in ironic third-person narrators. The description of Verloc's personality in Chapter II illustrates this. After we are told, during his walk to the Russian Embassy, about Verloc's belief that the rich and the source of their wealth should be protected—the whole social order favourable to their hygienic idleness had to be protected against the shallow enviousness of the unhygienic labour'¹⁷⁰—the narrator writes: '[i]t had to—and Mr Verloc would have rubbed his hands with satisfaction had he not been constitutionally averse from every superfluous exertion. His idleness was not hygienic, but it suited him very well. He was in a manner devoted to it with a sort of inert fanaticism, or perhaps rather with a fanatical inertness'

¹⁶⁹ The simile is repeated twice more right after this: '[t]he Chief Inspector, who had made up his mind to jump off the rope, came to the ground with gloomy frankness'; '[t]he Chief Inspector, driven down to the ground by unfair artifices, had elected to walk the path of unreserved openness' (100; 101).

¹⁷⁰ Hampson points out that this part reveals Verloc's actual commitment to conservative ideology despite his appearance as 'Delegate of the Central Red Committee' (*Conrad's Secrets* 74; *The Secret Agent* 138).

(10). The witty slippage of meaning, in which the word 'idleness' refers to affluence of the upper class in the former quotation and Verloc's egregious sloth in the latter, is amusingly ironic. The way in which the inverted repetition of 'inert' and 'fanatic' in the last sentence ironically shifts the emphasis onto Verloc's indolence is also humorous. Shortly after this the narrator tells us that Verloc's aversion to 'every superfluous exertion' discourages him not only from rubbing his hands but even from the effort of winking: 'at the notion of a menaced social order he would perhaps have winked to himself if there had not been an effort to make in that sign of scepticism' (10-11). This hyperbolic expression of Verloc's laziness is hilarious if scathing.

The amusement evoked in the delineation of Verloc's extreme laziness is replaced by a degree of seriousness as the narrator calls attention to 'an indescribable air' about Verloc that is 'common to men who live on the vices, the follies, or the baser fears of mankind' (11). However, the tone of seriousness gradually diminishes as the wickedness of the occupations the narrator gives as examples of those vile men becomes more and more trivial: 'the air of moral nihilism common to keepers of gambling hells and disorderly houses; to private detectives and inquiry agents; to drink sellers and, *I should say*, to the sellers of invigorating electric belts and to the inventors of patent medicines' (11, emphasis added). Sellers of beverages or 'invigorating electric belts' and 'inventors of patent medicines', though they do profit from people's 'vice' (fancy for alcohol) and 'fear' (for poor health), are

rather too innocent to be included in the category of ‘men who live on the vices, the follies, or the baser fears of mankind’. This bathetic effect points towards a jocular intention. Indeed, the way the narrator foregrounds his presence by the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘my’ here and in subsequent passage indicates some amount of playfulness on his part: ‘[b]ut of that last *I am not sure*, not having carried *my investigation* so far into the depth. *For all I know*, the expression of these last may be perfectly diabolic. *I shouldn’t be surprised*. What *I* want to affirm is that Mr Verloc’s expression was by no means diabolic (11, emphases added). This is the only place in *The Secret Agent* in which the narrator uses the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘my’. Some critics have tried to explain its meaning and significance. Lothe, for example, sees the introduction of these pronouns as the introduction of ‘a more subjective and less self-assured perspective’ (231). He argues that Conrad here ‘wants to make some sort of formal reservation, repeating the first-person personal pronoun five times to emphasize that he, as author, is not to be confused with his authorial narrator’ (231). This is an interpretation similar to the one I proposed in the previous chapter with regard to the third-person narrator’s use of the pronoun ‘I’ in Chapter VIII in Part First of *Nostromo*.¹⁷¹ However, the narrator’s playful mood in this part of *The Secret Agent*, which is also observable in the preceding passages that describe Verloc’s indolence, seems to indicate that his use of first-person pronouns is a kind of joke that

¹⁷¹ See pages 243-5.

anticipates and mocks serious analyses such as the one Lothe provides. Indeed, there is no good reason why, in this particular part of the text, the narrator should come to the fore. By including Verloc in the category of men 'who live on the vices, the follies, or the baser fears of mankind', the narrator creates a disquieting mood. Yet his subsequent tongue-in-cheek remark: 'What I want to affirm is that Mr. Verloc's expression was by no means diabolic' deflates that serious mood. Indeed, this entire passage is funnily pointless. Unlike in *Nostramo*, in *The Secret Agent* there is little sign that suggests limitation of the third-person narrator's omniscience. In Chapter I, for example, he remarks that Winnie's mother's belief in her French descent 'might have been true' (5). Price takes this up as 'an instance of the suspect detail' in the novel and writes: '[t]his suggests a narrator estimating the plausibility of remarks he has heard, but comes in fact from an author who alone can have decided whether his character's remark is truthful. And why should it not be? Pretension?' ('Satire and Fiction' 236). As a matter of fact, in this particular case the narrator's equivocation can be interpreted as an innuendo about Winnie's maternal grandmother's sexual promiscuity. However, in view of the narrator's playfulness displayed elsewhere, it is not impossible to consider, like Price, that the narrator is playing with his gesture of non-omniscience even here. The narrator of *The Secret Agent* can be said to parody such signs of limited omniscience as the third-person narrator of *Nostramo* exhibits in Chapter VIII in Part First.

The narrator's playfulness does not always simply amuse the reader because his dark humour often verges on inhumanity. The narrator often shows facetiousness which, in combination with the situation in which it is displayed, unsettles the reader. In relating Winnie's pity for the horse that carried her family to the almshouse, the narrator inserts an ironic parenthetical comment which implies women's general hypocrisy: 'Mrs Verloc, with that ready compassion of a woman for a horse (when she is not sitting behind him), exclaimed vaguely: "Poor brute!"' (136) In this example it is not very clear whether the narrator's humour is meant simply to amuse the reader or to make them uncomfortable by its hint of gratuitous spite. However, in some instances the effect of the narrator's humour is clearly disturbing. For instance, shortly after the scene of Winnie's murder the narrator describes the dead body of Verloc as follows: '[i]ts attitude of repose was so home-like and familiar that she could [gaze on it] without feeling embarrassed by any pronounced novelty in the phenomena of her home life. *Mr Verloc was taking his habitual ease. He looked comfortable*' (209, emphasis added). Given the seriousness of the circumstances, this apparent facetiousness can be said to approach perversity. 'Such comments' Wendy Lesser rightly argues, 'by mocking the seriousness of death, at first glance appear to lift the narrator above the level of human sentiments; at second glance, they appear to be questioning the very existence of such sentiments' (203). Indeed, this is one of the moments where the narrator seems most

inhuman in the text. In his Author's Note Conrad stresses that his stance in writing the novel was a combination of 'scorn' and 'pity' (251). However, the narrator's apparent inhumanity, as is observed here, leads us to doubt the presence of 'pity'. Gekoski seems right in asserting: '[t]here is plenty of scorn in *The Secret Agent*, but surely little pity—and it may be that the two are scarcely compatible. The effect of Conrad's irony (which is brilliantly sustained) seems to militate against whatever pity one might humanly expect to feel, given the situation' (146-7).

In addition to these signs of facetiousness, a certain disingenuousness on the part of the narrator also suggests his lack of human concern. This is observed most clearly in Chapter XI. In describing Verloc's egregious inability to recognise the nature and extent of the devastation he has brought to Winnie, the narrator makes remarks that superficially appear to defend him. For instance, the narrator mentions the precarious future of the Verlocs after the failed bombing and states:

His judgment, perhaps, had been momentarily obscured by his dread of Mr Vladimir's truculent folly. A man somewhat over forty may be excusably thrown into considerable disorder by the prospect of losing his employment, especially if the man is a secret agent of police, dwelling secure in the consciousness of his high value and in the esteem of high personages. *He was excusable* (196-7, emphasis added).

To begin with, the sudden shift from the ordinary to the unusual in the

middle of the second sentence is distinctly comical. That '[a] man somewhat over forty may be excusably thrown into considerable disorder by the prospect of losing his employment' is what Barthes calls 'doxa' in *S/Z*, namely common ideas that are supposed to be shared by many people. But the subsequent abrupt mention of 'a secret agent of police' with the tongue-in-cheek introduction: 'especially if the man is' takes the reader aback by its jump from the preceding discourse.¹⁷² More important is the way the narrator seemingly defends Verloc here. Verloc is surely excusable insofar as his panic after his interview with Vladimir is concerned. However, he is *not* excusable in exploiting his unsuspecting brother-in-law in his scheme and thereby betraying Winnie's trust in his honesty and his respect for her brother, and *this* is obviously the point of the situation. That is to say, here the narrator ignores the truly inexcusable aspect of Verloc's deed and pretends to defend him by deliberately limiting his focus to a more trivial aspect in which Verloc is excusable. The following passage, which describes Verloc's 'sympathy' with his wife, shows a similar disingenuousness on the narrator's part:

¹⁷² This part is reminiscent of the famous first sentence of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife' (1). Since it is obviously *not* a universally acknowledged truth 'that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife' (and since Austen clearly intends the implied reader to see this), the authenticity of the statement is deflated in the middle of the sentence.

Mr Verloc's sympathy with his wife was genuine¹⁷³ and intense. It almost brought tears into his eyes as he stood in the parlour reflecting on the loneliness hanging over her head. In this mood Mr Verloc missed Stevie very much out of a difficult world. He thought mournfully of his end. If only that lad had not stupidly destroyed himself! (200)

Besides Verloc's sheer failure to recognise his responsibility for Stevie's death, this passage records Verloc's solipsism which is fatally incapable of understanding Winnie's true feelings.¹⁷⁴ He comes near shedding tears for her, but without seeing the extent and the nature of her anguish. Nevertheless, the narrator does not mention these genuinely important points and affirms instead that Verloc's sympathy with Winnie is 'genuine and intense', which is true but deliberately ignores the egregious perceptual limitations of Verloc's sympathy. Recurrently mentioning in a similar vein Verloc's 'tender sentiments', 'humaneness', 'generosity', 'magnanimity', and 'sincerity' while he is obviously aware that Verloc's imperceptiveness makes them totally off the point, the narrator disturbs the reader by his playful insincerity which seems totally alien to human concern.

Elsewhere the narrator's disingenuousness is even more blatant.

¹⁷³ Since the word 'genuine' echoes the Assistant Commissioner's superficial diagnosis of the Verlocs (see pages 308-9), the reader is led to question Verloc's sympathy with his wife.

¹⁷⁴ At the same time, we should note the ironical point that the marriage between Verloc and Winnie has been enabled precisely by his not understanding her true feelings: if he had known that Winnie's motive in marrying him had been a financial one, he might not have chosen her as his wife.

When Verloc stops Winnie's attempt to go out, for example, the narrator remarks that Verloc refrained from harbouring misogynistic contemplation that 'women [are] wearisome creatures after all' and just pointed out to Winnie the inadvisability of going to her mother's house at that late time of night '*[w]ith true greatness of soul*' (202, emphasis added). Since it is obvious, from how Verloc has been presented in the text, that his soul is anything but great, the impression we get here is not so much disingenuousness as deception on the narrator's part. Another striking example occurs in Chapter XII when the narrator focuses on the now dead Verloc for the last time in the text. He writes that he had 'perhaps one single amiable weakness: the idealistic belief in being loved for himself' (228). The narrator's deliberate ignoring of Verloc's many other weaknesses — such as imperceptiveness and inability to face his responsibility—which are clearly more serious than the 'belief in being loved for himself' amounts to an untruthful understatement. In these examples the narrator's disingenuousness is so flagrant as to lead us even to question the justifiability of the narrator's playfulness itself.

We have seen how the narrator's facetiousness and disingenuousness make his playfulness assume inhumanity. Some critics have in fact problematised the narrator's apparent lack of human concern. Sung Ryol Kim, for example, arguing that the narrator of *The Secret Agent* is to be 'viewed with suspicion', provides an incisive analysis of the scene in which Chief Inspector Heat

investigates the remains of Stevie's body which is highly relevant in this context (76). He quotes the following passage: '[a]nd meantime the Chief Inspector went on peering at the table with a calm face and the slightly anxious attention of an indigent customer bending over what may be called the by-products of a butcher's shop with a view to an inexpensive Sunday dinner' and observes that the narrator 'attempts to transform Inspector Heat's reaction, one of justifiable horror, into perverse comedy' (*The Secret Agent* 70; Kim 77). Kim proceeds to point out: '[the narrator's] characterization is wildly inaccurate. Food is the last thing on Heat's mind as he strives to maintain self-control, fighting down the "unpleasant sensation" in his throat' (77). That is, the narrator, in order to present 'perverse comedy', evokes the image of food in disregard of its inaccuracy and incongruousness. Kim concludes that the narrator's scorn for humane values observed in this example leads us to 'question the narrator's reliability and, more importantly, his humanity' (77).

Given the highly disturbing effect of the narrator's inhumanity, it seems true, as Kim asserts, that the narrator's lack of human concern even affects his reliability. Erdinast-Vulcan supports this when she argues that '[the narrator's] contempt for the socio-political system and his verbal brutality towards the characters are designed to evoke the reader's indignant protest and opposition' ('Conrad's Anarchist Aesthetics' 209). Some critics consider that the narrator's inhumanity not only undermines his reliability but also mars the novel artistically.

Lesser, for example, contends that ‘all sentiment is flattened by a heavy irony, but the ironic vision is itself made to seem brittle and false by its notable avoidance of feeling’ (204).¹⁷⁵ However, when we look at it in terms of authorial attitude towards narrative contents, the narrator’s inhumanity can be seen as another vehicle to achieve positional indeterminacy on the author’s part. Guerard argues that ‘the chill humor of *The Secret Agent* functions as ‘a mask’ that enables Conrad to ‘dramatize physical action and crisis in a fictional present’, which he thinks Conrad could not achieve otherwise (227; 228). His formulation that the narrator’s problematic behaviour is a kind of mask is helpful. There is no evident ground on which to consider, like *Kim*, that Conrad disagrees with the narrator’s statements (*Kim* 76). Yet it can at least be argued that the narrator’s playfulness, which disturbs the reader by its inhuman nature, serves as a mask that allows Conrad to present the sordid fictional world of the novel without condemnation or lamentation and thereby to efface signs of authorial commitment.

At the end of the novel the Verlocs have been obliterated and Vladimir’s scheme has turned out to be appropriated for the elimination of the foreign influences from the English society. Through the depiction of the Professor walking amongst the crowd as if defeated, we are presented with the continuance of the English bourgeois society which we have been led to see as hopelessly mediocre. A society

¹⁷⁵ For other examples, see Irving Howe, *Politics and the Novel*, pp. 93-100; David W. Pitre, ‘Loss of Temper, Loss of Art: Narrative Inconsistency in Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*’.

fraught with class injustice, the corruption of the police, and the oppression of women is shown to be totally unaffected by the events depicted in the novel. At the ending the Professor is portrayed as a miserable self-deceiver who is overwhelmed by the throng: '[a]nd the incorruptible Professor walked too, averting his eyes from the odious multitude of mankind. He had no future ... He walked frail, insignificant, shabby, miserable ... Nobody looked at him. He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men' (246). By thus presenting the Professor, the most acute critic of English bourgeois society, disdainfully rather than sympathetically, the novel refuses to offer an ultimate value judgment about that society to the end. By means of the sceptical treatment of the social issues and the narrator's playfulness which seems impervious to human emotions, the authorial attitude in *The Secret Agent* is kept largely unidentifiable.

Conclusion

Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (1921), one of the earliest studies of point of view in the novel, is today referred to almost solely through Booth's critique of its 'dogmatic' privileging of 'showing' or 'drama' over 'telling' or 'picture' (*Rhetoric of Fiction* 196). What Herman rightly calls the book's 'markedly prescriptive framework' leads to Lubbock's teleological view of literature in which James's *The Ambassadors* is seen as a culmination of the novelistic craft ('History of Narrative Theory (I)' 27). Obviously, the book has become even more dated than its successor, Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). However, the way Lubbock expresses the advantage of adopting first-person rather than third-person narration is full of interesting suggestions: 'instead of drifting in space above the spectacle [the first-person narrator] keeps his allotted station and contemplates a delimited field of vision. There is much benefit in the sense that *the picture has now a definite edge*; its value is brought out to the best advantage when its bounding line is thus emphasized' (127-8, emphasis added). The present thesis, focusing on Conrad's third-person works, has explored what happens to Conrad's fiction when this 'edge' does not exist around the 'picture'. What actually happens, I conclude from my investigation in the previous chapters, is somewhat problematic.

In 'The Rescuer', the authorial attitude is split between the

romantic mode that glorifies Lingard's adventurous project on the one hand and the realistic mode on the other that is conscious of its political implications and thus can threaten the foundation of the novel's romantic fictional world. As I have argued, this incoherence in the authorial attitude is largely responsible for the impasse of the novel: when the exploration of Lingard's Kurtzian idealism and its political implications comes into focus in the last eighty-seven pages of the manuscript—the part that was almost completely deleted in the published novel—the contradiction between those two modes becomes most glaring. In *Lord Jim* this problem of the authorial attitude towards the romantic protagonist and fictional world is sidestepped firstly by shifting the narrative focus from the judgment of Jim's deed as such onto Marlow's psychological subtleties, and secondly by dividing the narrative into the quasi-omniscient narration by the extra-heterodiegetic narrator and Marlow's first-person narration. While Marlow's exploration of Jim's character and deed exhibits a certain limitation deriving from his politico-ideological bias, the third-person narrator has the potential not only for viewing Jim much more critically than Marlow does but also for questioning the legitimacy of Marlow's narrative which is largely inattentive to the politico-ideological implications of Jim's deed both in the *Patna* incident and in his new life in Patusan.¹⁷⁶ By separating these two

¹⁷⁶ In fact, Marlow embodies the Eurocentrist perspective which naturalises the repression of non-Western voices.

perspectives and giving apparent ascendancy to the one registered as more limited—Marlow’s narrative occupies most of the text and closes the novel without being enclosed by the third-person narrator’s comment—*Lord Jim* solves the issue of incoherent authorial attitude, which ‘The Rescuer’ suffered from, and prevents its romantic fictional world from being undermined by a more politically acute perspective. However, Conrad needed to introduce Marlow’s first-person narration to produce this outcome.¹⁷⁷

In *Nostramo*, in which Conrad reverts to third-person narration after the series of Marlow tales, we cannot perceive any sign of attitudinal incoherence as the novel’s treatment of its primary subject, the unstoppable expansion of international capitalism, is consistently negative. However, the novel exhibits another problem related to the issue of authorial attitude: the socio-historical panorama around the ‘material interests’ which the novel presents—and the dramatisation of its human implications through Emilia’s poignant marital

¹⁷⁷ William Deresiewicz offers a highly helpful analysis of how the introduction of Marlow’s first person narration solved the technical difficulty Conrad faced in his early third-person works. He focuses on the way in which the concept of community is treated in *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* and examines the split in the narrative voice of the novel between the ‘we-narrator’—the sentimental one that is sympathetic towards the crew’s private feelings—and the ‘they-narrator’—the authoritarian one that dismisses such feelings in favour of the maintenance of order. Although Deresiewicz’s dichotomy is concerned with the domestic politics of class, it shows structural similarity with the incoherent authorial attitude towards imperialism in ‘The Rescuer’ which I have addressed. See Deresiewicz, ‘Conrad’s Impasse: *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* and the Invention of Marlow’.

disillusionment—is susceptible to the potential trivialisation which a rigorous anatomisation of the political condition of the newly independent Occidental Republic and the resultant nihilistic vision could bring about. In order to avoid this internal threat, *Nostramo* firstly forbids Decoud, the political spokesman of the author in the novel, from making any comment on the Occidental Republic by eliminating him from the text and, secondly, offers rather superficial consolation for the distressing tragedy the reader has witnessed by punishing Nostromo's greed, presenting him as a scapegoat for the 'material interests' which are truly responsible for that tragedy. In other words, *Nostramo* subtly displaces politics from its narrative focus in the ending to prevent its socio-historical panorama from being dwarfed by the nihilistic vision that necessarily arises from within. The novel shows moments of novelistic strains in this process, which I argue is closely related to what Leavis a long time ago called 'something hollow' about its reverberation.

The Secret Agent contrasts with *Nostramo* in terms not only of the authorial attitude but also of the emotional effects on the reader. Though employing indirection through Decoud as the author's spokesman, *Nostramo* shows little hesitation in disclosing its consistently negative authorial attitude towards its primary subject matter, 'material interests'. The emotional intensity of the socio-historical panorama of the novel is enabled precisely by this position-taking on the author's part. That is to say, it is because the

authorial voice of *Nostromo* implicitly *laments* Emilia's conjugal misery and the devastation of the 'material interests' it embodies that the reader feels the rich pathos of her position. In comparison, the sordid fictional world and the ignoble characters of *The Secret Agent* indicate that the novel does not aim at achieving such emotional effects. *The Secret Agent* does not present the kind of narrative content whose dwarfing needs to be avoided for the sake of fictional adequacy. This partly explains the comparative technical flawlessness of *The Secret Agent* which not a few critics have mentioned with epithets such as *tour de force* and virtuosity.¹⁷⁸ In *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper*, Erdinast-Vulcan even excludes the novel from her discussion for the reason that it is 'technically flawless' and devoid of 'fault-lines', namely 'unresolved structural and thematic tensions' (5). The novelistic strains observed when *Nostromo* eliminates Decoud and scapegoats Nostromo were the 'fault-lines' my argument found in the novel; *The Secret Agent*, by contrast, never shows comparable symptoms. In technical terms, therefore, we can recognise a certain development from *Nostromo* to *The Secret Agent*.

The Secret Agent, however, is not an unproblematic work that can be simply celebrated as the technical apex of Conrad's third-person fiction. Some earlier critics have argued that what they consider as the novel's intense negativity prevents it from engaging the reader and

¹⁷⁸ See, for instances, Gekoski, *Conrad: The Moral World of the Novelist*, pp. 141-2; Price, 'Conrad: Satire and Fiction', p. 234.

damages it artistically. Howe, for instance, contends that *The Secret Agent* is ‘a coarse-spirited burlesque’ whose irony becomes ‘facile through its pervasiveness and lack of grading’ (97; 96). Gekoski, for a similar reason, diagnoses *The Secret Agent* as ‘probably the most perfectly sustained yet also the thinnest of Conrad’s major novels’: the novel, he argues, ‘creates a group of unworthy and contemptible characters—and then brilliantly castigates them for their unworthiness and contemptibility’ (142).¹⁷⁹ Even though Howe and Gekoski seem to miss the subtleties of the novel’s authorial attitude produced by the combination of deep scepticism and the inhuman narrator’s function as a mask, their proposition still remains valid to a degree. For instance, Erdinast-Vulcan, to whom Howe’s critique of the novel is still ‘extremely relevant’, almost repeats those earlier critics’ opinion when she writes: ‘the ruthless irony displayed in the narrator’s treatment of the characters, the total indictment of their sordid, absurd mode of existence, and the glaring absence of any alternatives to this mode of existence within the world of the text, are extremely disturbing’¹⁸⁰ (*Conrad’s Anarchist Aesthetics*’ 208; 209). These judgments are rather hard to verify because they involve the issue of the evaluation of

¹⁷⁹ Though comparatively recent, Price’s analysis of the satiric nature of the novel in ‘Conrad: Satire and Fiction’ (1984) offers a similar opinion (pp. 233-42).

¹⁸⁰ It might be the case that this disturbing nature is exactly the intended literary effect of the novel. However, it is significant that not a few critics have regarded this effect as marring the novel, rather than enriching it. This makes a contrast with the poignancy of *Nostramo* which few, if any, critics have deplored or problematised in itself.

literary value, the realm from which recent academic criticism has generally shied away due to the politico-epistemological difficulties it entails.¹⁸¹ In the context of the present thesis, it suffices to note that a series of critics have problematised the novel's extremely dark vision as affecting its fictional adequacy. I have suggested that the comparative technical flawlessness of *The Secret Agent* is enabled by the fact that, unlike in *Nostramo*, Conrad does not need to put strain on the novel in order to prevent its fictional world from being dwarfed: the dark vision surrounding the sordid English society and the ignoble characters it depicts is immune to trivialisation. But it is also this particular nature of its fictional world that has been seen by some as making the novel less engaging. In *Nostramo* the case is the exact opposite: whereas the fictional requirement to protect the socio-historical panorama of the novel from potential trivialisation produces fault-lines in the text, it is the dramatisation of the human implications of that panorama through Emilia's conjugal misery that arguably most engages the reader emotionally. In other words, there is a certain trade-off between *Nostramo* and *The Secret Agent* in terms of the dialectic between the technical perfection and the novelistic power to engage the reader. Which novel is more successful is an ultimately unanswerable question that seems to depend partly on one's view of

¹⁸¹ Phelan and Booth have pointed out that the process of establishing the hierarchy of criteria for evaluating literary works is where arbitrariness and subjectivity inevitably intrude (Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction* 147-8; Booth, *The Company We Keep* 56).

literature. What can be said is that we cannot regard the technical virtuosity of *The Secret Agent* as simply guaranteeing its position as the pinnacle of Conrad's third-person fiction.

The problem of incoherent authorial attitude, which caused the impasse of 'The Rescuer' and necessitated the introduction of Marlow's first-person narration in *Lord Jim*, ceases to be observed in *Nostramo* and *The Secret Agent* as the romantic elements recede from their subject matters—considerably in *Nostramo* and completely in *The Secret Agent*—and the authorial attitude becomes stable. In this sense, we can consider that the difficulty early Conrad faced in relation to third-person narration had much to do with the romantic elements in the subject matter. Yet in those two later novels emerges another problem in relation to authorial attitude: the dialectic between the 'fault-lines' deriving from the evasion of the subject matter and the emotional effect that subject matter produces on the reader, which remains unresolved as a kind of aporia. This survey, suggesting that Conrad was finally unable to write an unproblematic novel with third-person narration in his most productive time of early-to-middle career, leads us to conclude, following Schwarz, that a third-person narrator exercising degrees of omniscience was essentially not a very congenial device for Conrad's fiction.¹⁸² But why is this so? From what I have examined in the present thesis I would deduce that it has much to do with the novelist's tendency to be conscious of certain

¹⁸² See Schwarz, *Conrad: 'Almayer's Folly' to 'Under Western Eyes'*, p. 110.

limitations of his own fictional world—or rather, his tendency to choose fictional worlds the limitations of which he will end up recognising keenly. In ‘The Rescuer’ Conrad is conscious that a rigorous analysis of the political implications of Lingard’s commitment to his Malay friends would threaten the very foundation of the romantic fictional world of the novel. The same can be said of *Lord Jim*: Conrad knows that if the extra-heterodiegetic narrator in the first four chapters were allowed to comment on Marlow’s narrative project and Jim’s new life in Patusan, his penetration into their political implications would inevitably undermine the novel’s romantic fictional world. Though *Nostramo* contains much fewer romantic elements, Conrad is acutely conscious, again, that the socio-historical panorama around ‘material interests’ and its human implications, the thematic centre of the novel, would be dwarfed by the nihilistic vision brought about by a rigorous anatomisation of the political condition of the newly independent Occidental Republic. Not dealing with Western imperialism and thus having no need to handle its critique, *The Secret Agent* exhibits little trace of Conrad having striven to cover the limitations of its fictional world, which might seem to exclude the novel from the schema I am discussing. However, the fact that Conrad strove, as if in some sort of disclaimer, to keep indeterminate his attitude towards the ignoble characters and the sordid English society he depicts by means of the combination of deep scepticism and the inhuman narrator could be said to indicate a degree of his consciousness of certain limitations of the

novel's fictional world. In this sense, the extremely dark vision of *The Secret Agent*, which has induced a series of negative verdicts on the novel, can be seen as the novel's soft spot.

In *Joseph Conrad and the Anxiety of Knowledge* (2014), William Freedman examines the insistent haziness and evasiveness of many of Conrad's fictions which Forster and H. L. Mencken respectively described as 'a central obscurity' and 'a sense of seeking and not finding' (152; 11). He argues that this evasive obscurity derives from the characters', the narrators', and the author's anxiety about the exposure of certain destabilising secrets, which results in the ambivalence between revelation and obfuscation. These secrets are typically:

violations of the cardinal principle of fidelity: secrets of betrayal, treacherous deception, or abandonment, often of one's precious but fragile masculine self-possession as it yields to the temptations of untrammelled vice, the dread of mortality and obliteration, the summons of despair, the lure of the indulgent, unconsidered impulse, or the all-but-irresistible seductions of the sensuous woman without and the seditious feminine element within (18).

All of these, he contends, 'are seen and not seen, glimpsed and turned from, illuminated and obscured, acknowledged and denied, and all assault and mortally threaten the treasured self-possession that alone sustain us' (18). Conrad's consciousness of certain limitations to his own fictional world, which this thesis has explored, can be seen as one of those 'secrets' whose revelation the author is anxious about. The

uncongeniality of third-person narration for Conrad, I suggest, is to be considered in relation to this anxiety. It is not a coincidence that all of the three works Freedman discusses as the examples of Conrad's evasiveness—'Heart of Darkness', *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*—adopt first-person narration. Without the 'edge' of the picture provided by first-person narration, Conrad had a harder time obfuscating the limitations his stories had to carry.

Bibliography

- Acheraïou, Amar. *Joseph Conrad and the Reader: Questioning Modern Theories of Narrative and Readership*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Artese, Brian. *Testimony on Trial: Conrad, James, and the Contest of Modernism*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Macmillan, 1985.
- Baines, Jocelyn. *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Baker, Carlos Heard. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*. 4th ed. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Barthes, Roland. *Writing Degree Zero*. Trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. London: Jonathan Cape, 1967.
- . 'The Death of the Author'. *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977. 142-8.
- Batchelor, John. *Lord Jim*. London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988.
- Baxter, Katherine Isobel. 'The Rescuer Synopsis: A Transcription and Commentary'. *The Conradian* 31.1 (2006): 117-27.
- . *Joseph Conrad and the Swan Song of Romance*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.

- Belsey, Catherine. 'Historicizing New Historicism'. *Presentist Shakespeares*. Eds. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes. London; New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Berthoud, Jacques. *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- . 'The Secret Agent'. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Ed. J. H. Stape. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 100-121.
- Berthoud, Jacques, and Mara Kalnins. Introduction. *Nostramo: A Tale of the Seaboard*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Billy, Theodore. *A Wilderness of Words: Closure and Disclosure in Conrad's Short Fiction*. Lubbock, Tex.: Texas Tech University Press, 1997.
- Birdseye, Lewis E. 'The Curse of Consciousness: A Study of Conrad's "The Return"'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad* 9 (1977): 171-8.
- Bloom, Harold, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, and Hillis Miller. *Deconstruction and Criticism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Bonney, William W.. 'Joseph Conrad and the Discontinuous Point of View', *Journal of Narrative Technique* 2 (1972): 99-115.
- . *Thorns & Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction*. Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 2nd ed. Chicago; London:

- University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- . *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. Berkeley, Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1988.
- Bradbrook, M. C.. *Joseph Conrad: Poland's English Genius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941.
- Bruss, Paul S. "Typhoon": The Initiation of Jukes'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad* 5.2 (1973): 46-55.
- Carabine, Keith. 'Introduction, *Nostromo*'. *Joseph Conrad: Critical Assessments*. Vol.2. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1992.
- Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- . *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Collits, Terry. *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*. London; New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Conrad, Joseph. 'Because of the Dollars'. *Within the Tides*. Gloucester, U.K.: Dodo Press, 2007.
- . 'The End of the Tether'. *Youth; Heart of Darkness; The End of the Tether*. London: Dent, 1946.
- . 'Heart of Darkness'. *Heart of Darkness and Other Stories*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1999.
- . *Lord Jim*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2007.
- . *The Mirror of the Sea: Memories and Impressions; A Personal*

- Record: Some Reminiscences*. London: Dent, 1946.
- . *Nostramo: A Tale of the Seaboard*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . *The Rescue*. Charleston, South Carolina: BiblioLabs LLC, 2006.
- . 'The Rescuer'. N. d. MS Ashley 4787. British Lib., London.
- . 'The Return'. *Tales of Unrest*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977.
- . *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2007.
- . 'Typhoon'. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus', Typhoon, Amy Foster, Falk, and To-morrow*. London: Dent, 1951.
- . *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*. Eds. Frederick Karl and Lawrence Davies. 9 vols. London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983-2008.
- Conroy, Mark. *Modernism and Authority: Strategies of Legitimation in Flaubert and Conrad*. Baltimore, Md.; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
- Cox, C. B. *Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination*. London: Dent, 1974.
- Culler, Jonathan D. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- . *Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty*. Rev ed. Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Daleski, H. M. *Joseph Conrad: The Way of Dispossession*. London: Faber, 1977.

- Deresiewicz, William. 'Conrad's Impasse: *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and the Invention of Marlow'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 38.3 (2006): 205-27.
- Drysdale, George. *The Elements of Social Science: or, Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion*. 25th ed. London: E. Truelove, 1886.
- Emmott, Catherine, and Marc Alexander. 'Schemata'. *Handbook of Narratology*. Eds. Peter Hühn, et al. New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009. 411-19.
- Erdinast-Vulcan, Daphna. *Joseph Conrad and the Modern Temper*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- . "Sudden Holes in Space and Time": Conrad's Anarchist Aesthetics in *The Secret Agent*. *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans van Marle*. Ed. Gene M. Moore. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992. 207-221.
- Esterson, Aaron. *Leaves of Spring*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Fincham, Gail. 'The Dialogism of *Lord Jim*.' *The Conradian* 22.1-2 (1997): 58-74.
- Fish, Stanley. 'Interpreting the *Variorum*'. *Is There A Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Fleishman, Avrom. *Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967.
- Fludernik, Monika. 'Histories of Narrative Theory (II): From Structuralism to the Present'. *A Companion to Narrative Theory*.

- Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 36-59.
- Fogel, Aaron. *Coercion to Speak: Conrad's Poetics of Dialogue*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Forman, Ross G. 'Coolie Cargoes: Emigrant Ships and the Burden of Representation in Joseph Conrad's *Typhoon* and James Dalziel's "Dead Reckoning"'. *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 47.4 (2004): 398-428.
- Forster, E. M. 'Joseph Conrad: A Note'. *Abinger Harvest*. London: Penguin, 1976. 134-8.
- Franco, Jean. 'The Limits of the Liberal Imagination: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Nostrómo*'. *Gabriel García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude: A Casebook*. Ed. Gene H. Bell-Villada. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 91-107.
- Freedman, William. *Joseph Conrad and the Anxiety of Knowledge*. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2014.
- Freud, Sigmund. 'Negation'. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 19 (1923-25). London: Vintage, 2001. 235-9.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Geddes, Gary. *Conrad's Later Novels*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980.
- Gekoski, R. A. *Conrad: The Moral World of the Novelist*. London: Elek,

1978.

Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Gillon, Adam. *The Eternal Solitary: A Study of Joseph Conrad*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1960.

Glazzard, Andrew. 'Character Types from Populist Genres in Joseph Conrad's Urban Fiction'. Diss. University of London, 2013.

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. United States: Filiquarian Publishing, LLC. 2005.

Gordan, John Dozier. *Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1941.

Graff, Gerald. 'Deconstruction as Dogma, Or, "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in Strether Honey!"'. *Georgia Review* 34 (1980): 404-21.

Graham, Kenneth. *Indirections of the Novel: James, Conrad, and Forster*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Graver, Lawrence. *Conrad's Short Fiction*. Berkeley, Calif.; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

---. 'Critical Confusion and Conrad's "The End of the Tether"'. *Joseph Conrad: Critical Assessments. Vol. 2*. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1992. 375-8.

Greaney, Michael. *Conrad, Language, and Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Greenberg, Jonathan Daniel. *Modernism, Satire, and the Novel*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- Griem, Eberhard. 'Rhetoric and Reality in Conrad's "Typhoon"'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 24.1 (1992): 21-32.
- Guerard, Albert J. *Conrad the Novelist*. Cambridge, Mass.: London: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- Gurko, Leo. *Joseph Conrad: Giant in Exile*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1962.
- Hampson, Robert. "'If you read Lombroso': Conrad and Criminal Anthropology". *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures: Papers from the International Conrad Conference, University of Pisa, September 7th-11th, 1983*. Ed. Mario Carreli. Milan: Mursia International, 1988. 317-35.
- . *Betrayal and Identity*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992.
- . "'Topographical" Mysteries: Conrad and London', *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans van Marle*. Ed. Gene M. Moore. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992. 159-174.
- . 'The Late Novels'. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Ed. J. H. Stape. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 140-159.
- . *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Joseph Conrad's Malay Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.

- . 'From Stage to Screen: "The Return", *Victory*, *The Secret Agent* and *Chance*.' *Joseph Conrad and the Performing Arts*. Eds. Katherine Isobel Baxter and Richard J. Hand. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009. 59-76.
- . *Conrad's Secrets*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. *One of Us: The Mastery of Joseph Conrad*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Harrington, Ellen Burton. 'The Female Offender, the New Woman, and Winnie Verloc in *The Secret Agent*.' *The Conradian* 32.1 (2007): 57-69.
- Harvey, W. J. 'George Eliot and the Omniscient Author Convention'. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 13.2 (1958): 81-108.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. *Joseph Conrad: Narrative Technique and Ideological Commitment*. London: Edward Arnold, 1990.
- . *Studying the Novel*. 6th ed. London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010.
- Hay, Eloise Knapp. *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Study*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963.
- . 'Nostromo'. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*. Ed. J. H. Stape. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 81-99.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Scribner's, 1932.
- Henricksen, Bruce. *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

- Herman, David. 'Scripts, Sequences and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology'. *PMLA* 112.5 (1997): 1046-59.
- . 'Histories of Narrative Theory (I): A Genealogy of Early Developments'. *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 19-35.
- . 'Cognitive Narratology'. *Handbook of Narratology*. Eds. Peter Hühn, et al. New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009. 30-43.
- Hervouet, Yves. *The French Face of Joseph Conrad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Hewitt, Douglas John. *Conrad. A Reassessment*. Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952.
- Hiraishi, Takaki. *Shosetsu Ni Okeru Sakusha No Hurumai: Fohkunah Teki Houhou No Kenkyu [Behaviours of the Author in the Novel: A Study of Faulknerian Methods]*. Shohaku Sha: Tokyo, 2003.
- Howe, Irving. *Politics and the Novel*. New York: Horizon Press, 1957.
- Hubbard, Francis A.. *Theories of Action in Conrad*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1984.
- Ibsch, Elrud. 'The Cognitive Turn in Narratology', *Poetics Today* 11.2 (1990): 411-8.
- Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. Trans. Simon Stephens. London: Methuen Drama, 2012.
- Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic and Theory of Literature: With an*

- Appendix on the Functions of Language in the Theater*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
- James, Henry. 'The New Novel'. *Notes on Novelists: With Some Other Notes*. London: Dent, 1914.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge Classics, 2002.
- Jones, Susan. *Conrad and Women*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.
- Karl, Frederick Robert. *A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1960.
- Kauhl, Gudrun. 'Strategies of Reappraisal: Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.' *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 26.2-3 (1994): 103-18.
- Kearns, Michael S. *Rhetorical Narratology*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Keating, Peter. 'Conrad's Doll's House'. *Papers on Language and Literature Presented to Alvar Ellegard and Erik Frykman*. Eds. Sven Bäckman and Göran Kjellmer. Göteborg: ACTA Univ. Gothoburgensis, 1985. 221-232.
- Kettle, Arnold. *An Introduction to the English Novel. Vol. 2, Henry James to the Present Day*. London: Hutchinson, 1953.
- Kim, Sung Ryol. 'Violence, Irony, and Laughter: The Narrator in *The Secret Agent*.' *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 35.1-2 (2003): 75-97.
- Kingsbury, Celia M. "'The Novelty of Real Feelings': Restraint and Duty

- in Conrad's "The Return". *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 32.1 (2000): 31-40.
- Kirschner, Paul. *Conrad: The Psychologist as Artist*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968.
- . 'Conrad, Ibsen, and the Description of Humanity'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 25.3 (1993): 178-206.
- Knight, Charles A. *The Literature of Satire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Knoepflmacher, U. C. *Laughter & Despair: Readings in Ten Novels of the Victorian Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Kolupke, Joseph. 'Elephants, Empires, and Blind Men: A Reading of the Figurative Language in Conrad's "Typhoon"'. *Joseph Conrad: Critical Assessments. Vol. 2*. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1992. 501-13
- Kramer, Dale. 'Conrad's Experiments with Language and Narrative in "The Return"'. *Studies in Short Fiction* 25.1 (1988): 1-11.
- Land, Stephen K. *Conrad and the Paradox of Plot*. London: Macmillan, 1984.
- Leavis, F. R. *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. New ed. London: Chatto & Windus, 1960.
- Le Boulicaut, Yannick. 'Crossing Cultural Lines in *The Rescue*'. *Joseph Conrad and the Orient*. Eds. Amar Acheraiou and Nursel İçöz. Boulder, CO; Lublin, Poland: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2012.

- Lesser, Wendy. 'From Dickens to Conrad: A Sentimental Journey.' *ELH* 52.1 (1985): 185-208.
- Levin, Yael. *Tracing the Aesthetic Principle in Conrad's Novels*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Lombroso, Cesare. 'Criminal Anthropology'. *Twentieth-Century Practice: An International Encyclopaedia of Modern Medical Science*. London: Sampson Low Marston and Co, 1897.
- Lothe, Jakob. *Conrad's Narrative Method*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.
- Lubbock, Percy. *The Craft of Fiction*. New York: The Viking Press, 1957.
- Lyon, John. Introduction. *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Maisonnat, Claude. 'Noström's Scriptive Fate: From Romance to Modernity'. *L'Époque Conradienne* 23 (1997): 69-99.
- Manocha, Nisha. 'Conrad's Tidalectic Sea Tales'. *The Conradian* 38.2 (2013): 36-52.
- Margolin, Uri. 'Narrator'. *Handbook of Narratology*. Eds. Peter Hühn, et al. New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009. 351-69.
- 'Marital Tragedy'. *New York Times* (1923-Current file): 1. Oct. 1926. *ProQuest*. Web. 31. Mar. 2013.
- Marx, Karl. 'Comments on James Mill'. *Marx and Engels: Collected Works*. Vol. 3. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975. 211-28.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Ed. Martin Malia. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998.
- McDonald, Peter. *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice*,

- 1880-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- McDonald, Rónán. *The Death of the Critic*. London: Continuum, 2007.
- McLauchlan, Juliet. 'Why did Conrad Abandon the Manuscript of *The Rescue*?'. *Joseph Conrad: Critical Assessments*. Vol. 3. Ed. Keith Carabine. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1992. 577-99.
- Melas, Natalie. 'Brides of Opportunity: Figurations of Women and Colonial Territory in *Lord Jim*.' *Qui Parle: Literature, Philosophy, Visual Arts, History* 3.2 (1989): 54-75.
- Mencken, H. L. *A Book of Prefaces*. New York: Knopf, 1917.
- Mill, John Stuart. *Essays on Sex Equality*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.
- Miller, James E.. *Theory of Fiction: Henry James*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972.
- Mongia, Padmini. 'Narrative Strategy and Imperialism in Conrad's *Lord Jim*'. *Studies in the Novel* 24.2 (1992): 173-86.
- Montrose, Louis. 'The Poetics and Politics of Culture'. *The New Historicism*. Ed. H. A. Veenser. New York: Routledge, 1989. 15-36.
- Moser, Thomas. "'The Rescuer' Manuscript: A Key to Conrad's Development-and Decline'. *Harvard Library Bulletin* 10 (1956): 325-55.
- . *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957.

- Moss, Leonard. *The Craft of Conrad*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011.
- Mozina, Andrew. *Joseph Conrad and the Art of Sacrifice: The Evolution of the Scapegoat Theme in Joseph Conrad's Fiction*. New York; London: Routledge, 2001.
- Mulry, David. 'The Anarchist in the House: The Politics of Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.' *The Conradian* 32.1 (2007): 1-12.
- . 'Untethered: Conrad's Narrative Modernity in "The End of the Tether"'. *The Conradian* 33.2 (2008): 18-29.
- Najder, Zdzisław. *Joseph Conrad: A Life*. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007.
- Newell, Kenneth. *Conrad's Destructive Element: The Metaphysical World-View Unifying Lord Jim*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011.
- Newton, Michael. Introduction. *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2007.
- Niederhoff, Burkhard. 'Focalization'. *Handbook of Narratology*. Eds. Peter Hühn, et al. New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009. 115-23.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. "'The Immense Indifference of Things": The Tragedy of Conrad's *Nostromo*'. *Joseph Conrad: Critical Assessments*. Vol. 2. Ed. Keith Carabine. Mountfield: Helm Information, 1992. 590-607.
- O'Mealy, Joseph H. 'The Herveys and the Verlocs: *The Secret Agent's*

- Debt to "The Return". *Studies in Short Fiction* 20.2-3 (1983): 115-20.
- Paris, Bernard J. *Conrad's Charlie Marlow: A New Approach to 'Heart of Darkness' and Lord Jim*. New York, N.Y.: Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Parry, Benita. *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers*. London: Macmillan Press, 1983.
- Patai, Daphne, and Will H. Corral, eds. *Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Pearson, Nels C. "Whirr" is King: International Capital and the Paradox of Consciousness in *Typhoon*. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 39.1 (2007): 29-37.
- Peters, John G. *Joseph Conrad's Critical Reception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Phelan, James. 'Narrative Judgments and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative: Ian McEwan's *Atonement*'. *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 322-36.
- . *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007.
- . "Rhetoric/ethics". *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Ed. David Herman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 203-216.

- Pinsker, Sanford. "The End of the Tether": Joseph Conrad's Death of a Sailsman'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad* 3.2 (1971): 74-6.
- Pitre, David W. 'Loss of Temper, Loss of Art: Narrative Inconsistency in Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.' *Midwest Quarterly: A Journal of Contemporary Thought* 26.1 (1984): 95-109.
- Price, Martin. 'Conrad: Satire and Fiction'. *Yearbook of English Studies* 14 (1984): 226-242.
- . 'The Limits of Irony.' *Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Conrad's Nostromo*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 69-79.
- Purinton, Marjean D.. "The Laugh of the Medusa" and *Laughing Anne*: A Feminist Reading of Joseph Conrad's Play'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 34.1-2 (2002): 77-94.
- Rabinowitz, Peter J. *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- . 'Lolita: Solipsized Or Sodomized? Or, Against Abstraction-in General'. *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*. Eds. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 325-339.
- Raval, Suresh. *The Art of Failure: Conrad's Fiction*. Boston Mass.; London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.
- Reilly, Jim. *Shadowtime: History and Representation in Hardy, Conrad*

- and *George Eliot*. London; New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Richter, David. *Narrative/theory*. White Plains, N. Y.: Longman Publishers, 1996.
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London : Methuen, 1983.
- Rising, Catharine. 'Typhoon: Conrad's Tacit Recessional'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 35.1-2 (2003): 123-32.
- Roussel, Royal. *The Metaphysics of Darkness: A Study in the Unity and Development of Conrad's Fiction*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1971.
- Ryan, Kiernan. 'Revelation and Repression in Conrad's *Nostromo*.' *Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Conrad's Nostromo*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 43-55.
- Said, Edward W. *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*. Cambridge Mass,: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- . 'The Novel as Beginning Intention: *Nostromo*.' *New Casebooks: Joseph Conrad*. Ed. Elaine Jordan. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 103-115.
- Sanchez, Reuben. 'Conrad's "Serried Circle of Facts" in *Lord Jim*'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad* 43.1 (2011): 61-83.
- Sarvan, C. P. 'Racism and the *Heart of Darkness*.' *International Fiction Review* 7 (1980): 6-10.
- Schmid, Wolf. 'Implied Author'. *Handbook of Narratology*. Eds. Peter Hühn, et al. New York: Walter de Gruyter Berlin, 2009. 161-73.

- Schnauder, Ludwig. *Free Will and Determinism in Joseph Conrad's Major Novels*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.
- Scholes, Robert E., and Robert Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Schwarz, Daniel R. *Conrad: 'Almayer's Folly' to 'Under Western Eyes'*. London: Macmillan, 1980.
- . *Conrad: The Later Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- . *Rereading Conrad*. Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 2001.
- Senn, Werner. *Conrad's Narrative Voice: Stylistic Aspects of His Fiction*. Bern: Francke, 1980.
- Sherry, Norman. *Conrad's Western World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Simmons, Allan. "He Was Misleading": Frustrated Gestures in *Lord Jim*. *The Conradian* 25.1 (2000): 31-47.
- . *Joseph Conrad*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *Contingencies of Value*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Soane, Bev. "The Colony at the Heart of Empire: Domestic Space in *The Secret Agent*." *The Conradian* 30.1 (2005): 46-58.
- Stegmaier, E. "The "Would-Scene" in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*." *Modern Language Review* 67 (1972): 517-23.
- Striedter, Jurij. *Literary Structure, Evolution, and Value: Russian Formalism and Czech Structuralism Reconsidered*. Cambridge,

- Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Talib, I. S. 'Conrad's *Nostromo* and the Reader's Understanding of Anachronic Narratives.' *Journal of Narrative Technique* 20.1 (1990): 1-21.
- Turner, Jennifer. 'The "Passion of Paternity"—Fathers and Daughters in the Works of Joseph Conrad'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 39.3 (2007): 229-47.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Epic Strain in the English Novel*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1958.
- Ursell, G. B. 'Conrad's Early Writing'. Diss. University of London, 1973.
- Watt, Ian. *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1980.
- . *Essays on Conrad*. Cambridge, U. K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Watts, Cedric. *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- . Introduction. *Lord Jim*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1986.
- Wake, Paul. *Conrad's Marlow: Narrative and Death in 'Youth', Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim and Chance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Warner, Oliver. *Joseph Conrad*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951.
- Wegelin, Christof. 'MacWhirr and the Testimony of the Human Voice'. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad* 7 (1975): 45-50.
- Wheatley, Alison. 'Conrad's *One Day More*: Challenging Social and

- Dramatic Convention'. *The Conradian* 24.1 (1999): 1-17.
- White, Andrea. *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition: Constructing and Deconstructing the Imperial Subject*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Wiley, Paul L.. *Conrad's Measure of Man*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954.
- Wollaeger, Mark A.. *Joseph Conrad and the Fictions of Skepticism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Yamamoto, Kaoru. *'Jiko' no Mukouhe—Konraddo Chu-Tanpen Shosetsu wo Yomu [Beyond the 'Self'—Reading Conrad's Short Stories and Novellas]*. Okayama, Japan: University Education Publication, 2012.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. London: Profile Books, 2009.