CONRAD'S EASTERN FICTION: A CRITICAL STUDY

by

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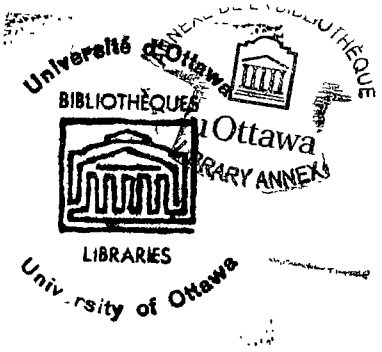

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Swan Peng Chong was born in China on October 15, 1934 and raised in Malaysia where he received his primary and secondary school education. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from Nanyang University, Singapore, in 1960, and his Master of Arts degree in English from the University of New Brunswick in 1966. He has taught English at high schools and universities in Singapore and Canada.

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Introduction

Born a Pole, Joseph Conrad became first a French seaman at the age of seventeen and then an English seaman about four years later. For two decades in his active life as a sailor he travelled to almost every part of the globe. When he settled down to write fiction, it was the memories of the sea and his dramatic encounters in foreign lands that aroused his imagination. He apparently had a passion for actuality and experience, but what gives his fiction its unique force and appeal was his ardent inner urge to recapture human emotions and to understand human activities, especially in certain crucial or criminal situations.

Conrad's literary products are bulky and varied. They may however be divided into three major groups: the Eastern fiction, the Sea fiction, and the Western fiction.[1] These divisions are understandably rough, but there is much to be gained by their use. First, each group, with its unique setting--the jungle, the sea, and the city--is apparently inspired by a different source of experience. Second, each group deals with a distinct subject matter and concerns certain aspects of man and his dilemma. Third, each group has its particular symbolic significance and psychological interest, and consequently its unique aesthetic effect. Therefore to make a special study of one group of Conrad's work is not to limit the meaning and artistry of that group, but rather to examine its meaning and artistry in a more systematic

and concentrated manner.

As a seaman in the British Merchant Service, Conrad sailed for a time in Eastern waters, mainly in the Malay Archipelago between the years 1883 and 1888. Although his actual stay on land and sea during his three visits to the East was a short one, totalling less than one year,[2] it was the East that inspired him to write. There was something mysterious in the way Conrad received his first creative impulse, since his childhood exile and his adventurous and romantic life in France before going to the East were apparently more exciting and dramatic as fictional materials. Many critics have speculated upon the reasons for Conrad's fascination with the East. For some, Conrad had a passion for the exotic and the mysterious, and the East was congenial to his brooding temperament. For others, Conrad saw in the East and its people a plight similar to that of conquered and exploited Poland. In depicting the defeat and collapse of the conquerors in the East he derived some kind of moral satisfaction. And for still others, Conrad saw and felt the East as a powerful symbol for the dark aspect of man's nature. Whatever view one may have of Conrad's elaborate use of the East and its peoples, it is evident that his Eastern experiences were of great significance to him. It was in the East that he met Almayer (Olmeijer) whose life suggested to him the basis of his first story. He wrote in A Personal Record: "But if I had not got to know Almayer pretty well it is almost certain

there would never have been a line of mine in print."[3] It was from "the Eastern Seas," he said towards the end of his life, "I have carried away into my writing life the greatest number of suggestions."[4] So the East not only provided him with the initial creative impulse but continued to inspire him throughout his literary career.

Taken together Conrad's Eastern fiction is a powerful expression of his vision of man's moral strength and weakness. Man deteriorates and collapses alone in the wilderness, but he is also able to sustain his integrity in the face of the dark powers. In the jungle he reveals his best as well as his worst. In reading this group of works, we see the folly of man who chooses to live in an unreal world. At the same time we admire his capacity for endurance and suffering. Putting his characters in alien and perilous surroundings, Conrad was at his best in showing the fundamental human passions in a most intense way. He was especially interested in the motives that kept men alive, despite intense pains and hardships. He was also fascinated with the mystery and the menacing powers of women. All these, as I shall demonstrate in this study, are closely connected with the dark jungle and the squalid inertia of native life. Because of this gloomy vision of man's life, one of the prominent and recurring symbols in the Eastern fiction is the grave, the "infernal" hole where the white man is trapped. And the central feeling is one of man's passive suffering because of his

unavailing struggle and his inevitable death. So this group depicts not only a different world but also a way of life and conduct distinct from the other two groups of Conrad's work.

Although it was the East that moved Conrad to write his first novels, it was his sea tales that brought him immediate public recognition. Conrad, however, as Richard Curle observed, "had the greatest dislike of being taken for a mere writer of sea stories. Indeed nothing irritated him more."[5] Conrad's annoyance at this label is understandable, since many early reviewers had compared him with Clark Russell, and he had a very low opinion of the latter's marine melodrama. With reference to The Rescue, Conrad wrote to Edward Garnett on August 5, 1896: "You see I must justify--give a motive--to my yacht people(,) the artificial, civilized creatures that are to be brought in contact with the primitive Lingard. I must do that--or have a Clark Russell puppet show which would be worse than starvation."[6]

The paradox of being a Pole and a seaman writing novels in a foreign language had long prevented most critics and readers from taking Conrad's works seriously. Even such a perceptive writer and critic as Virginia Woolf had this to say in a lecture on Georgian and Edwardian novelists in 1924: "Mr. Conrad is a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes him, however admirable, not very helpful."[7] It was this sense of being misunderstood and of being taken as a literary freak that made Conrad's

writing life most uncomfortable. But the fact remains that the sea figures prominently in Conrad's works, and that a Conrad who had not been to sea would not be the same writer at all. The importance of the sea is evident in his description of The Mirror of the Sea: "It is the best tribute my piety can offer to the ultimate shapers of my character, convictions, and, in a sense, destiny--to the imperishable sea, to the ships that are no more, and to the simple men who have had their day."[8] The sea and the ship are a major source of his literary inspiration and the sea fiction, more than the other two groups, has the closest bearing upon his own life. With reference to Captain MacWhirr in "Typhoon," Conrad said: "MacWhirr is not an acquaintance of a few hours, or a few weeks, or a few months. He is the product of twenty years of life. My own life. Conscious invention had little to do with him."[9] The events described in "Youth" and in The Shadow-Line, as pointed out by both biographers and critics, draw upon Conrad's actual life as a seaman and officer. Only a writer of Conrad's genius could transmute his twenty years of life at sea into such a powerful expression of human drama as The Nigger of the "Narcissus" which, even at its primary level, is Conrad's finest achievement in this group. As an early anonymous reviewer observed: "Mr. Conrad is all for plain, unvarnished realism, but realism which only the hand of a master could make attractive. . . . On the voyage a storm is encountered. It takes many pages to

describe, but the reader follows the description breathlessly, and feels as if a storm had never been described before. We have nothing but the highest praise for this distinguished contribution to modern literature."[10]

In the Sea fiction, Conrad is primarily concerned with an ethic of dedication to service. It was on the high seas and aboard ship that Conrad felt the poignant sense of community and responsibility. He was here especially interested in the nature of man's courage and fidelity. He parades before us "a group of men held together by a common loyalty and a common perplexity in a struggle not with human enemies, but with the hostile conditions testing their faithfulness to the conditions of their own calling."[11] So while the outward actions of these stories have the air of romantic and exciting adventure, the real interest lies in the inward complexity of man's psychology. The sea stories are naturally confined to the nautical drama of a voyage which, quite rightly, also lends itself to rich symbolic interpretations. Since all voyages must end, all these sea tales move to some kind of resolution of the plot; and the protagonists come to grips with reality, as seen in Jukes of "Typhoon," the unnamed captains of "The Secret Sharer" and The Shadow-Line, and the captain and crew of The Nigger of the "Narcissus." The elements of testing and maturing are prominent in the works of this group which are also characteristically devoid of women and love interest.

While Conrad's Sea fiction is an absorbing analysis of his personal experiences, his Western fiction is not. Apparently he was not involved in a South American revolution nor was he connected with the sordid world of London anarchists. As he wrote to Madame Poradowska after the French translation of The Secret Agent: "You well know that anarchy and anarchists are outside my experience . . . I created this out of whole cloth."[12] As a writer who drew heavily upon his past experiences, his creative impulse was bound to seem exhausted at times. Conrad obviously experienced a moment like this when he said: "After finishing the last story of the 'Typhoon' volume it seemed somehow that there was nothing more in the world to write about."[13] It was therefore natural that at this point in his writing career he should have looked to other sources for inspiration.[14] The result was a series of full-length novels with a new subject matter and interest, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes. This group was conceived with greater detachment and inventive effort. It was not only more ambitious in scope but also more topical. It was a profound meditation on modern history and the urban world of politics with its growing callousness and atrocity. Referring to Under Western Eyes, Conrad said: "It is the result not of a special experience but of general knowledge, fortified by earnest meditation."[15] This observation could also be applied to all the works in this group.[16]

With Conrad's Western fiction, we immediately note a change of atmosphere and interest. Leaving the dark jungle and the stormy sea behind, we now enter a world not only of railway trains and newspapers but also a world of political assassination, bombing, espionage, and atrocity. The main interest now lies in the analysis of the nature and meaning of such Western preoccupations as colonial exploitation, material progress, and political revolution. The focus is shifted from the dilemmas of the individual to important issues of public concern, and consequently the characters are shown in close relation to their society. In commenting on the Eastern fiction, some critics suggest that Conrad strongly believes in civilized society as an external check in preventing man from succumbing to isolation and the heart of darkness. This seems hardly the case when we see Conrad's characters in society where they are just as lonely and isolated. They apparently lack social sensibility, since they neither have the ability nor the desire to establish meaningful connections with one another. The disintegration of the family unit, like the Verloc family group in The Secret Agent and the Goulds in Nostromo, reflects the chaotic and conflicting society around them. So although man now lives in a civilized city, he also experiences the darkness of the jungle, like the Verlocs who exist in a shop "hidden in the shades of the sordid street seldom touched by the sun" (pp. 38-39), where Mrs. Verloc feels

"as lonely and unsafe as though it had been situated in the midst of a forest" (p. 201).* In man's desire for material gains and political domination, there is a strong tendency towards social dissolution and destruction. Yet in this maelstorm of man's self-delusive and destructive activities, Conrad presents woman as the moral center of his Western fiction. In complete contrast to the Eastern fiction, she is the source of reality and salvation for men, and consequently she gives to this group an aesthetic effect distinct from the other two groups of Conrad's work.

Conrad's two African pieces, "An Outpost of Progress" and "Heart of Darkness," have more affinity with the Western than the Eastern fiction. Although Conrad's Malaysian sojourn and his Congo voyage of 1890 were closely associated in his imagination and had much the same dark impact on his works, the African tales are quite different from the Eastern fiction in import. They are stories of initiation and moral education rather than stories of passive suffering; and the Africans play little part in the plot. These tales depict the lofty idealism of the Westerners who want to bring progress and civilization to backward people, but who, being ignorant of their own desires, are wholly possessed by the powers of

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* For Conrad's works I have used, as indicated in the Bibliography of Primary Sources, the Dent edition which is identical in pagination to the standard Doubleday editions. All page references to his novels and short stories are to this edition.

darkness. Like the Western fiction, they are concerned with the nature and meaning of colonialism and capitalism. They also reflect Conrad's deep scepticism concerning political motives and the virtues of material progress. The protagonists shared the public beliefs of their time and became the forerunners, though they failed miserably, of a cause highly glorified by their countrymen. In contrast, the white protagonists in the Eastern fiction are the rootless men, the social outcasts and exiles who wander into the jungle in quest of their own destiny. Perhaps for these reasons Conrad said that his African stories were "a departure from the Malay Archipelago." In writing them he found a "very different atmosphere" and also "a different moral attitude."[17]

In this thesis, I examine Conrad's Eastern fiction as a literary entity and attempt to establish its unique qualities. In the process I investigate the sources of Conrad's creative strength. But essentially my aim is to make a close critical analysis of this body of work. Since the native characters and the jungle setting are the most distinctive characteristics of this group, I shall consider these two aspects first. In Chapter I, with Conrad's first novel Almayer's Folly as the basis, I examine Conrad's artistic treatment of the Easterners in terms of the intrinsic needs of the novel. In so doing, I try to correct two extreme views of Conrad's handling of the Malays: one accusing him of wilful distortion and the other

praising him for scientific accuracy. In Chapter II, I discuss the nature and function of setting in this group of works, and show in particular how the jungle setting of An Outcast of the Islands enhances the meaning of that novel. In Chapter III, I attempt to explain Conrad's creative difficulties with The Rescue, a strange literary phenomenon which, in my opinion, has not been satisfactorily accounted for. In Chapter IV, I analyse Conrad's two short stories with Malays as protagonists and show how they differ from the white protagonists in their reactions to experience in a world of illusion. In the last chapter, I illustrate how Conrad achieved a different aesthetic effect by introducing an inner narrator in Lord Jim. As a result, he brilliantly and effectively transformed the seamen society and the native community into a work of high art.

The works included in this study have these basic characteristics: first, the role of the Eastern setting is important; second, the natives play a significant enough part to make the link between East and West a meaningful aspect of the work. Although they are set in the East, The Shadow-Line and Victory do not meet these requirements. The Shadow-Line belongs more appropriately with the Sea fiction; as for Victory, the natives do not play an important role.

CHAPTER I

ALMAYER'S FOLLY: CONRAD'S TREATMENT OF THE EASTERNERS

1.

"I am content to sympathize with common mortals," Conrad writes in the Author's Note to Almayer's Folly, "no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forest behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea. For, their land--like ours--lies under the inscrutable eyes of the Most High. Their hearts--like ours--must endure the load of the gifts from Heaven: the curse of facts and the blessing of illusion, the bitterness of our wisdom and the deceptive consolation of our folly" (p. viii). Again, recalling the writing of this novel, Conrad says: "It seems now to have had a moral character, for why should the memory of these beings, seen in their obscure sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers of this earth?"[1] It is evident in these quotations that Conrad views all his characters, coloured or white, with sympathy and compassion. It is the human bond and the common destiny of men

that he wants to portray.

However, a study of all Conrad's works does show his preference for one race and his disdain for the others. Most of his admirable characters are Englishmen, while other Europeans, like the Dutch, Portuguese and German are either repulsive or degenerate. No wonder Kazimierz Waliszewski has criticized him for a pro-English bias, pointing out that all his good seamen are English, and that not a single Englishman is to be found among the colonialist exploiters in his works.[2] Adam Gillon has also remarked that Conrad was unthinkingly and almost instinctively against Jews: "Despite his moving tragic vision of man, he was not free from the general attitudes and prejudices of his age."[3] To accuse Conrad of racial prejudice might be too serious a charge. But he definitely believes in marked differences between races. In reply to Kazimierz Waliszewski's criticism, he writes: "As to the question of 'inferiority of races', I permit myself to protest--although evidently the fault is on my side for having given you a wrong idea of my intention. It is the difference between races that I wished to point out."[4]

The difference between the Eastern races is more clear cut, though Conrad's attitude towards the Easterners is less defined. Generally speaking, Conrad's Malays are brave and dedicated to their undertakings, his Arabs are cunning and deceptive, and his Chinese are grotesque and inscrutable.

But we cannot say with confidence that Conrad likes one Eastern race more than the others. If it appears that Conrad is more sympathetic towards the Malays than the Arabs or Chinese, it is because the Malays are the natives of the land that forms the setting in his Eastern fiction, not because of any unique qualities in the Malay race that compel his admiration.

Conrad's attitude towards the Easterners is ambiguous because his treatment of them is flexible, varying according to the intrinsic need of each novel. He is mainly concerned with the displaced white men stranded among alien people in a foreign land. But this is not to say that Conrad treats the Easterners with slightness and flippancy. Although he is not the first novelist to introduce Easterners into English fiction, he is certainly one of the first to do so with a serious purpose. That the Easterners are not merely an exotic or passing interest is shown by the fact that they are allowed to play structurally and thematically an important role. They actively shape or interfere with the destinies of the white protagonists. Moreover, they are treated with meticulous care and profound insight. They are so intensely interesting and convincingly alive that the reader has no moment of doubt about the reality of their existence.

2.

Conrad's first novel, Almayer's Folly (1895), despite its shortness, has a large gallery of portraits of different nationalities. There are Malays, Arabs, Chinese, Dutch, English and Eurasians. And their conflicts and interactions are as significant as the history of the deteriorating protagonist, Almayer. For this reason, Albert Guerard has observed that the early readers of Almayer's Folly "had justifiable difficulty in discerning its center of interest," because "it really has none."[5] But to say the novel has no center of interest is not to say it is without interest. In spite of its obvious marks of immaturity, it still makes delightful reading, especially in its rendering of different racial attitudes.

Almayer's Folly, in the main, deals with the futile and agonizing struggles of a Dutch trader, Almayer, the only white man in Sambir, a remote, sordid native settlement in Borneo. He is a meek and impotent man who lives in his glorious dreams rather than in reality. As the story opens, he is shown in a degenerate condition, surrounded by native intrigues. Through his reflections, we learn that he is imaginative, ambitious, and self-confident. Leaving his parents as a young man, "ready to conquer the world" (p. 5), he works for the old Hudig in Macassar. Then through his admiration for Captain Lingard's wealth and prestige in the Eastern world, he becomes a clerk

to the old successful seaman, hoping for a better prospect for himself. Tom Lingard, an adventurous English trader in the Malay Archipelago, in his younger days has fought and defeated a gang of native pirates, carrying off from their midst a little girl whom he subsequently adopts and dearly loves, sending her to be educated in a convent by the white people. At Lingard's suggestion, Almayer, despite his strong feeling of racial superiority, marries Lingard's adopted daughter because the material gains from the alliance are a temptation too strong to be denied. Lingard then places the couple at his trading post in Sambir, about forty miles up a treacherous river the entrance to which Lingard alone has the secret of reaching. A daughter, Nina, is born and the couple live in intense hostility. Nina is sent to be educated in Singapore among the white people.

With the arrival of the Arab trader, Abdulla, Almayer's monopoly in the area is destroyed. He is unable to compete with the energetic, crafty Arab trader. Eventually his trade dwindles to nothing and worse still, Lingard's fortunes decline. Lingard goes to Europe looking for fresh capital for his enterprise, but is never heard of again. Almayer now lives in humiliation, treated with contempt by the native people, and overshadowed by the successful and prosperous Abdulla. His native wife lives in a nearby hut, reverting to savagery in all her ways.

Nina is scorned for her Malay blood by the white people to whose hands she has been entrusted for a decent education.

When she grows up to be a young and beautiful woman, she returns to Sambir. Almayer is extremely attached to Nina, almost to an incestuous degree. She brings new hope to his languid and meaningless existence. He strives for quick fortune so that he can escape with his daughter from the abyss of native life to a life of comfort and glory in Amsterdam. But Nina is torn between the irreconcilable conflicts of her parents, both of whom appeal to her by their different racial heritage. Her problem takes a new turn when Dain Maroola, a handsome dashing Prince of Bali, comes to Sambir for trade. She and Dain fall passionately in love.

Almayer has discovered Lingard's note-book, supposed to contain the secrets of gold and diamonds in the interior. He persuades Dain to make an expedition to find the treasure. The expedition is thwarted by the Dutch and Dain returns as a fugitive. With the Dutch officers coming to Sambir, the local Rajah asks his one-eyed statesman, Babalatchi, to kill Almayer in order to keep the secrets of the treasure. But a disfigured body found in the roaring river changes the murderous plot. With the help of her mother, Nina is to escape with Dain to Bali, but Almayer finds out and intercepts them. The situation is complicated by the jealous slave girl, Taminah, who informs the Dutch officers of Dain's hiding place. After some heated confrontations, Nina sails with Dain, leaving her despondent father behind. Almayer becomes totally degenerate, moves in

with the opium-smoking Chinese, Jim-Eng, and eventually takes to smoking opium himself. He dies while the natives are rejoicing over the news that a grandson is born to the old Raja of Bali.

As indicated in the outline of the story, Almayer's Folly cuts across a wide range of racial interrelationships and interreactions, and allows the so called backward peoples to play an important role, a phenomenon rarely seen in English fiction before. The early critics, as a whole, either overlooked or ignored this quality. They were chiefly impressed by the author's unusual power in describing the strange tropical scenes and atmosphere. And for this reason Conrad has always been called an exotic writer.

Edward Garnett is perhaps the first critic to see that the native characters are fascinating: "What particularly captivated me in the novel was the figure of Babalatchi, the aged one-eyed statesman and the night scene at the river's edge between Mrs. Almayer and her daughter."[6] Both the native characters and the tropical atmosphere are so powerfully depicted that Garnett even fancied the author "might have Eastern blood in his veins."[7]

However, some early critics, among whom Hugh Clifford is the most typical and authoritarian, show strong disapproval of Conrad's treatment of the native people. In a review of Conrad's early novels, Hugh Clifford writes:

To my thinking two grave blemishes are to be found in Almayer's Folly. The longing of the woman who has been married to an European, she herself being a full-blooded Malay, for the off-spring of the ill-assorted match to return to the position of an ordinary native girl is strongly described; but when one brings a little knowledge to bear upon the subject, one cannot avoid the fact that in real life such a woman would cherish no such desire. Like all native women under similar circumstances, her one wish would be to see her daughter brought up to be more European than the Europeans; and the reader's credulity is even severely tried when he is told that the girl herself, on her return after some years of schooling in Singapore, shares her mother's desire, and is only anxious to revert to the position of a native. This shows a complete misunderstanding of the minds of those native and Eurasians who have come into close contact with white folk. Their aspirations are strainingly, painfully directed towards what they cannot but regard as the higher level of civilization, and in making them cherish a desire to revert to the beginnings from which they originally sprung Mr. Conrad has been guilty of a misdemeanour, a scientific crime no less heinous than that which would have been his had he made a light gas sink instead of ascend. This

is his first mistake. The second is his complete ignorance of Malays and their habits and customs. He has seen them, seen them often, perhaps, but he has seen them from the outside, and when he sits down to write of them his ignorance of Malayan men and things crops out on every side, like the stone in a rubble heap over which a little thin grass has grown sparsely. The prime minister, Babalatchi, yawns and stretches himself while conversing with his King. Had he done so in real life the poor dear man would have ceased to live, or at all events would have been forced to retire into a well merited obscurity. The youths in the King's presence are represented as lying about, sprawling over the floor, and kicking their heels in the air! Mr. Conrad's Malays eat sirih in a manner for which Mr. Conrad alone is responsible. It is, perhaps, merely a detail, but sirih could not be consumed in the manner described. These are merely instances, unimportant no doubt, but they betray a want of knowledge of his subject which cannot but diminish the value of Mr. Conrad's work for one who knows. In the same manner he renders the speech of his Malay in a fashion which displays a profound want of knowledge of the Malay's habit of thought and mode of expression; and when we come to examine the psychology of his natives

we must own to an even greater sense of disappointment. In fact Mr. Conrad's Malays are only creations of Mr. Conrad, very vividly described, very powerfully drawn, but not Malays.[8]

I have quoted the passage at length not only because the charges are serious and the writer is a well-known expert on things Malay[9] whose criticism of Conrad's native characters has been often cited as the final authority by critics, but also because it touches on the important issue of the relation between a work of art and the real world. Judging from the critical opinions in the above passage, Clifford obviously would like to see fiction as a representation rather than a presentation of life. Conrad's Malays, according to Clifford, are not Malays at all, because "in real life" they do not cherish such a hope or behave in such a way as Conrad has described. This critical approach fails to see that a work of art has a world of its own, with an inner order and truth, a world that evolves from within rather than without and, as E. M. Forster has pointed out, has "internal harmony."[10] Clifford's criticism is based upon his first-hand knowledge of the Malays in real life rather than the Malays in a dramatic situation as depicted in a work of literary art.

Clifford's own rendering of the native peoples in his stories leaves much to be desired, in spite of his superior

knowledge of the Malays. His characters in Studies in Brown Humanity, a collection of his short stories, are either lifelessly wooden or ridiculously sentimental, and the human situations are either incredibly grotesque or naively superficial, to say nothing of the native psychology. They are seen through the eyes of a colonial master, and the stories, by and large, are written to justify the British rule in Malaysia. In "A Malay Othello", a story dealing with the crimes and injustices of the native society, the author makes this concluding remark: "No action was taken during the days before the Protection of the British Government came to pacify the troubled land, and the White men always suffer bygones to be bygones, and begin to rule a new country with a slate washed clean of all past records of crime."[11] British rule may indeed have brought many good things to Malaysia and helped it develop, but it also created some uneasy social problems. If Clifford wanted to write stories of enduring human appeal and truth, he should have moved beyond his colonial duties and prejudices. This is exactly what he could not or would not do, and accounts for the weakness of his writings. It is therefore not surprising that none of the stories in the collection deals with the social or racial problems that result from British rule. This is enough to show that a good knowledge of the subject is no guarantee of artistic success. In the last analysis, it is not how much the artist knows that counts, but rather how the artist puts his knowledge

to the best use in revealing human truth. Conrad is a good case in point. So is E. M. Forster who obviously knew less about India than Kipling. But by general consent A Passage to India is superior to Kim in its presentation of Indian problems and human conditions, and in its achievement as a work of literary art.

Conrad's reaction to Clifford's criticism is understandably modest. In a letter to William Blackwood, he admitted his ignorance and his dependence on travellers' tales for the sources of his Malay characters.[12] Consequently, some early critics have without much deliberation pointed to Conrad's native people as a source of weakness in the novel. On the other hand, some recent scholars claim native life as the best aspect of the novel. Thus Guerard remarks: "Of these various interests and subjects the most peripheral is probably the most successful: the Malayan local color and the picture of Sambir, and the insight into native psychology."[13] Dale Randall has even claimed that "one can learn more about the mental habits and the ethnic peculiarities of the Malay from reading Conrad than from a whole shelf of scientific treatises."[14] Both Clifford and Randall, it seems to me, have gone beyond the facts, one complaining that familiar things are missing, and the other adding something that is not there.

In recent years, John E. Saveson has written two articles on the sources of Conrad's primitive peoples.[15] He wants to

show that Conrad was well versed in the evolutionary theories and philosophical ideas of his day, and that Conrad changed his view of primitive peoples between his first two novels and Lord Jim as a result of his increasing sophistication in this respect. While we could easily agree to Conrad's sophistication, we fail to see why all Conrad's ideas about the native peoples have to be traced to a definite source. Saveson is certainly right in pointing out that Conrad was aware of the intellectual climate of his time, but in his over-enthusiasm about the sources for Conrad's native peoples he leads the reader too far from Conrad's actual works. Saveson claims that Conrad's chief guide to sophistication was H. G. Wells though, as he admits, there is no record of any such exchange of ideas between the two. In view of Conrad's reading interest, it seems to me very unlikely that Conrad could have read all the specialized books listed by Saveson.

As a seaman turned writer who had sailed in the Eastern seas for some time and whose creative imagination fed upon his actual experience and observations, Conrad's Eastern experience is of great importance to his writing. Nevertheless, it is only a base, for all art is a recreation of experience rather than a mere description of it. For this reason Conrad has observed that both Clifford's Studies in Brown Humanity and In A Corner of Asia lack artistic qualities, and that despite some marks of merit, they do not "leave enough to the imagination."[16]

The artist, with his unique temperament and vision of the universe, gives form and meaning to the random matter of actuality, as Conrad has stated: "Art veils part of the truth of life to make the rest appear more splendid, inspiring or sinister."[17] It is therefore misleading to examine Conrad's Eastern characters by the criteria of actual life known to have been lived in that area or by referring to a specialized knowledge for their source, because both approaches ignore the intrinsic needs of the novel.

3.

In his account of the genesis of Almayer's Folly, Conrad gave great importance to the figure of Almayer: "If I had not got to know Almayer pretty well it is almost certain there would never have been a line of mine in print."[18] There was nothing, as the story reveals, unusual about the Dutchman. It was his dependent and vulnerable position that captured Conrad's imagination. In recollecting his first meeting with Almayer, Conrad conveyed a compelling impression of the degraded aspect of the white man, shabbily dressed, wearing straw slippers, alone and despondent, seemingly lost in a menacing alien land.[19] Although Conrad's sympathy was with Almayer, he seemed to be more interested in the destiny of Nina. Recalling the devious course of the writing of the novel, he wrote that he was constantly

"haunted by the fate of Nina."[20] And when Aniela Zagorska, who was translating the novel into Polish, approached him with the problem of the title, Conrad agreed that Almayer's Daughter "might be a very good title, especially in point of view of the public."[21]

Two reasons may be given for the importance of Nina's role in the novel: first, the love theme, and second, her status as a half-caste.[22] She is the only character who has to make a racial choice in the midst of racial divisions and conflicts; for other characters the racial line is simple and straightforward. For this reason, her final decision to desert her white father for a primitive life with Dain Maroola carries an overriding significance. Many critics have noted this point, but have not given a satisfactory explanation. Clifford, as mentioned above, insists that the Nina-Dain episode betrays Conrad's shocking ignorance of the native people. Saveson observes that Nina's final action illustrates "the law of evolutionary anthropologists that in any crossing of a higher with a lower strain, either of men or animals, the offspring will regress."[23] For Clifford, it is a distortion of "real life." For Saveson, it is scientific fact. Both have allowed their knowledge from external sources to interfere with their understanding of the lives of men in a dramatic situation as depicted in an imaginative work of art.

Looking more closely at the text, critics also have different

views on the Nina-Dain relationship. Paul Wiley has described it as "an enslavement through sensuality," and observed that the parting of Nina and Dain from Almayer is "only a prelude to the suffering that will follow their increasing awareness of the racial difference between them."[24] This remark hardly accords with the internal evidence of the novel. The final word about their romance is that "a grandson is born to the old Rajah in Bali, and there is great rejoicing in the land" (p. 206). On the other hand, G. I. Colbron observes that Nina's final action is a right one, because she has chosen not to go "where her Malay blood will make her despised, but where her white blood will give her a superiority that will spell power even after her beauty fades."[25] Yet the fact is that Nina never, at any moment in the novel, entertains the thought that her white blood would give her a superiority among the natives. And there is no evidence to suggest it would. Both Wiley and Colbron base their views on easy racial assumptions and tend to distort Conrad's complex and flexible racial attitudes. J. H. Hicks, who looks beyond the racial barriers and whose judgement seems to be more acceptable, considers the Nina-Dain relationship "a valid affirmation of love and loyalty" and the ending of the novel a "personal and social fulfillment" for Nina.[26]

Nina's importance, as I have said, is on two counts: her sexual role and her status as a half-caste. The two are closely related. She is a sexual force in the novel. While in Singapore,

a "young fellow from the bank" was attracted to her, and caused her to be immediately expelled from Mrs. Vinck's house, as the latter had expected the young man to be in love with her own daughter. Later, when back in Sambir, her beauty captured the attention of the rich and powerful Abdulla who would pay Almayer three thousand dollars if Almayer would consent to the marriage between Nina and his nephew, Reshid. When Dain first saw Nina, he was "dazzled by the unexpected vision . . . of so much loveliness met so suddenly in such an unlikely place" (p. 55). On the other hand, "Nina saw those eyes fixed upon her with such an uncontrolled expression of admiration and desire that she felt a hitherto unknown feeling of shyness, mixed with alarm and some delight, enter and penetrate her whole being" (p. 55). Dain had a "quiet masterfulness it was her delight to obey" (p. 65); and he felt himself "carried away helpless by a great wave of supreme emotion, by a rush of joy, pride, and desire" (p. 68). So the relationship between Nina and Dain is one of sexual attraction. In Conrad's world of love, especially in his early works, the relation between man and woman is entirely based upon sexual need. Conrad shows little consideration for racial barriers or class distinctions in depicting this relation. He is mainly interested in the irrationality and the uncontrollableness of man's sexual nature. This is also seen in his handling of the minor character, Taminah, the slave girl who cherished a passionate yearning for Dain, the native prince.

Her desire was so intense that merely from watching Dain appear and disappear on his brig she seemed to have undergone "a struggle," and later she had to cool herself off in a stream.[27] And it was because of her sexual jealousy that she informed the Dutch officers about Nina's and Dain's hiding place.

Although Taminah was an attractive girl who pleased the Sambir statesman Babalatchi so much that he would pay fifty dollars more to purchase her, she lacked the kind of female charm that Dain found in Nina. Nina was more desirable to Dain because she was sexually more appealing than Taminah, not because she was socially or racially superior.

The rivalry between Almayer and Dain for the mind and heart of Nina is the most important part of the novel. It is the pivot that provides impetus for Almayer's final downfall. Almayer's fierce love for Nina springs not from his paternal instinct. It is not his fatherly consideration that moves him to protect his beloved daughter from being corrupted by a native but rather his emotional need. This is first hinted at by his powerful speech to Nina after the supposed death of Dain:

> "You stand there as if you were only half alive, and talk to me," he exclaimed angrily, "as if it was a matter of no importance. Yes, he is dead! Do you understand? What do you care? You never cared; you saw me struggle, and work, and strive, unmoved; and

> my suffering you could never see. No, never. You have no heart, and you have no mind, or you would have understood that it was for you, for your happiness I was working. I wanted to be rich; I wanted to get away from here. I wanted to see white men bowing before the power of your beauty and your wealth. Old as I am I wish to seek a strange land, a civilization to which I am a stranger, so as to find a new life in the contemplation of your high fortunes, of your triumphs, of your happiness. For that I bore patiently the burden of work, of disappointment, of humiliation amongst these savages here, and I had it all nearly in my grasp" (p. 101).

Besides the irony, this is also a very disturbing speech from a father to a daughter. Almayer professes the importance of Nina's happiness but in effect he emphasizes his own happiness which is unattainable without Nina. His excessive attachment is not just a result of his complete social isolation but is rooted in a perverse desire. Conrad was characteristically evasive about Almayer's sexual attachment to Nina, but the truth becomes more evident in the end when she is going to desert him: "What if he should suddenly take her to his heart, forget his shame, and pain, and anger, and--follow her! . . . His heart yearned for her. What if he should say that his love for her was greater

than . . . " (p. 192).

Although Dain's easy triumph could be viewed as a sexual conquest, Nina's decision to follow him cannot be regarded as a confirmation of a more vital sexual life in the primitive people, or as a rejection of the obsolete values of a dying civilization. The novel is apparently very critical of the civilized man and his superficial values and weaknesses, but at the same time it offers no evidence of positive values in primitive man and his society. In the last analysis, Nina's final action is designed to be the concluding and fatal blow to a man whose folly lies in his unrealistic notion about himself and his world. Following his idle dream, Almayer repeatedly misjudges his ability and the situation. In deserting Almayer, Nina is not rejecting a father but an unreal parasitical life. Her final choice is not only consistent with the development of the theme but also consonant with her character. Her long struggle for a "life that means power and love" (p. 190) underlies her final action and at the same time reveals the essential qualities that Almayer totally lacks in his vain struggle for happiness.

4.

Besides the half-caste girl, Conrad is interested in the strange world of the Malay chieftains with its endless

intrigues and strifes. In narrating the repeated struggles for power, Conrad gives us a glimpse into the senseless violence and pathetic insecurity of native life, a life that does not become visible or tolerable to us until the artist has assimilated it.

Babalatchi and Lakamba are the two most interesting and convincing Malay rulers. They figure prominently in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands. Originally they were both "Malay adventurers; ambitious men of that place and time; the Bohemians of their race" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 50). They liked to live in a world of lawlessness where they could loot and plunder. When Lakamba first landed at Sambir, "he was disappointed to find already some semblance of organization amongst the settlers of various races who recognized the unobtrusive way of old Patalolo, and he was not politic enough to conceal his disappointment" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 50). He claimed to be an exiled prince and set up camp fourteen miles down the Pantai River. Once settled, he began to intrigue. "The quarrel of Patalolo with the Sultan of Koti was of his fomenting, but failed to produce the result he expected because the Sultan could not back him up effectively at such a great distance" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 51). Then he incited the Bugis settlers and with their support "besieged the old Rajah in his stockade with much noisy valour and a fair chance of success" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 51). But his attempted

coup was thwarted by the appearance of Lingard's armed brig and his backing of Patalolo, who guaranteed the trader "his queer monopoly" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 202).

In subsequent days, Lakamba lived in sulky resignation until Babalatchi brought him back to his active life of plotting. Babalatchi was a vagabond of the seas, a man with diverse experiences. He had a "long career of murder, robbery and violence" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 52) by following Omar el Badavi, the leader of a band of Brunei pirates. When Omar's party was seriously checked by the white men, Babalatchi, with Omar and Aïssa, drifted into Sambir "in search of a safe refuge for his disreputable head" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 51). They were slighted by Patalolo and Babalatchi threw himself at the service of Lakamba. He proposed a scheme for Lakamba's accession to power by making an alliance with the Arab traders who would wreck the commercial monopoly and influence of Lingard and Almayer. In An Outcast of the Islands, Omar's daughter, Aïssa, is used by Babalatchi as the temptation for which Willems betrays his boss, Lingard. Babalatchi brings Lakamba to power by having Willems pilot Syed Abdulla's trading ship into the harbour. Although the ship does not actively participate in the coup, it threatens the town with its guns while Patalolo bows out. In Almayer's Folly, we see the consequences of the Arabs' presence at Sambir. Lakamba is now the Rajah and Babalatchi is the prime minister. The Dutch have displaced

the English as controlling foreign power. Abdulla has become the most powerful trader and Almayer's business has totally collapsed.

Babalatchi and Lakamba are not only the most important figures in the history of Sambir but also the most realized native creations. They are astonishingly alive and real and their vitality derives from their intense passion for wealth and power. Their minds perpetually turn to treacherous intrigues which seem to be the only source of their interest in life. Crudity appeals to both of them. But Babalatchi has an outward calm and civility. He could act a part so cunningly that he could deceive even those who felt him to be an unspeakable scoundrel. He is eloquent, persuasive and flattering, while Lakamba is undiplomatic, moody and offensive. It is clear that Conrad intended them to be contrasting characters, an interesting pair whose different temperaments and attitudes are a result of their varied experiences rather than of their psychical evolution as claimed by Saveson.

Saveson in his overenthusiasm to prove that Conrad was well versed in the evolutionary theory of man advancing from an impulsive to a reflective creature draws this distinction about Conrad's characters: "Babalatchi, the most sophisticated of the Malays, is more impulsive than Almayer . . . and . . . less impulsive than his master, Lakamba. This scale reaches an extreme in Mrs. Almayer, who destroys the furnishings of Almayer's

house in outbursts of savage temperament."[28] On first reading, this observation appears to be acceptable. But on a closer examination, we find that not only do Conrad's characters not conform to such a geometrical precision but that there is a fallacy in this comparison.

Obviously Almayer is the most reflective character in the novel. He cannot act independently in difficult situations. Instead he falls back on others in his glorious dream of success, first on Lingard, then on Dain Maroola. But his tendency to futile contemplation is not meant to show that he is mentally and psychologically more advanced than the native, though this is true, but to show that he is "a person of weak character,"[29] a victim in the midst of native intrigues. There is no question about the contrast between native impulsiveness and civilized contemplation, but one has to see it in relation to the overall significance of the work.

Saveson's hierarchical arrangement of the native people according to temperament is most unsatisfactory. It is a fallacy to assume that Babalatchi is more advanced in his psychical evolution than Lakamba, since both of them belong to the same race. As individuals, they of course have their peculiar traits; and their differences are a result of their varying experiences in life. Babalatchi's sophistication, it is indicated, is a result of influences of other cultures, especially his long association with the Arabs. "He gathered experience and wisdom

in many lands, and after attaching himself to Omar el Badavi, he affected great piety (as became a pilgrim), although unable to read the inspired words of the Prophet" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 52). He had also served as Serang of country ships, and had "visited the distant seas, beheld the glories of Bombay, the might of the Mascati Sultan; had even struggled in a pious throng for the privilege of touching with his lips the Sacred Stone of the Holy City" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 52). Conrad's irony in these descriptions is clear. Nevertheless he convinces us of the sources of Babalatchi's sophistication.

Among the native characters, Mrs. Almayer is the one who has been most exposed to outside influences. She is Captain Lingard's adopted daughter, has been brought up among white people, and under the strong influence of "the new faith" (p. 22). Although she was unhappy at first, she was able to bear her new life with calm submission. In subsequent days, she seemed to be cheerful, learning the new language easily and even nourishing a hope of ultimately becoming Lingard's wife (p. 22). But in her later days, she is transformed into a savage and impulsive woman. The refining influence obviously does not work in her. Yet it seems to me that her intense hatred for white men and civilized things as revealed in her "savage outbursts" cannot be explained by her race alone. It is more naturally an outcome of her painful experience with white people. Made an orphan and seeing her people killed and all

that is dear to her destroyed by the white men, she is raised under the restrictions of a convent. Later her white husband treats her most cruelly and humiliatingly, forcing her to live in a hut and separating her from her only daughter. Her life is one of deprivation and oppression. So all her anger and outbursts could be viewed as her protest against being betrayed and unjustly used by the civilized people. Conrad as an artist is more interested in human experience that moulds the character and attitude of the individual than the general psychical differences between primitive and civilized men. Similarly, he is not concerned, as Clifford thinks he should be, with the general principle that native people have no desire to revert to their original status. He is interested rather in the particular case of Mrs. Almayer and her experience.

My view is that Conrad's characters are more flexible than Saveson's observation allows. Babalatchi is apparently a master schemer. His intelligence shows up in various ways, especially in his firm grip on the delicate situation in Sambir. He is quick to perceive that so long as Lingard's and Almayer's influence remains strong and intact it is not worth Lakamba's while to kill the old Rajah Patalolo (An Outcast of the Islands, pp. 56-57); and he sees decisively that in the escape of Dain Maroola from the Dutch officers lies Lakamba's as well as his own safety. But Lakamba at times shows that he can control himself well and that his mind is

more developed and imaginative than Babalatchi's. For instance, when he received Dain Maroola whose return had been anxiously expected he could play calm and indifferent so as to maintain his dignity as a Rajah, while Babalatchi in his eloquence foolishly disclosed all their secret fear and uneasiness about Dain's expedition and his safe return. Again he could foresee that if Almayer was taken by the Dutch officers to Batavia and punished for smuggling gunpowder, he would tell them the secrets about the treasures in order to find mercy--an intelligent speculation that "the most sophisticated" Babalatchi could not entertain. Consequently he ordered that Almayer must die in order to make the secrets safe. This is obviously a savage decision. Yet it has a logic of its own.

Mrs. Almayer is a minor but important character. Although she is extremely impulsive, she is not deficient in mental power. Both in what she did, especially her handling of the dead body found in the flooding river, and in what she said to her daughter before she left with Dain, she showed that she had the presence of mind and the practical knowledge to cope with a warlike existence. As for wisdom, that mental stature was claimed for her by both Lakamba and Babalatchi (pp. 129, 133). Therefore to place her at the lowest point in the scale of mental faculties, as Saveson does, is to contradict the evidence of the novel.

Conrad seems to have a genuine fondness for the young

Malays. The old Malays in his fiction, perhaps with the exception of Doramin, are all physically repellent and treacherous by nature, while the young Malays are energetic and daring in their undertaking and frank and intelligent in disposition. Nevertheless, he is less successful in his treatment of the young ones.

Dain Maroola, Dain Waris, and Hassim are the young Malays in Conrad's three full length Eastern novels: Almayer's Folly, Lord Jim, and The Rescue. Conrad intended them to be different characters. He presents them as princes of different tribes in different parts of the Archipelago. Dain Maroola is a prince of Bali; Dain Waris, a Bugis prince in Patusan, is originally from Celebes; and Hassim is a prince of Wajo. He also takes care to indicate their distinctive tribal characteristics. For instance, Marlow describes the Bugis in Lord Jim: "The men of that race are intelligent, enterprising, and revengeful, but with a more frank courage than the other Malays, and restless under oppression" (p. 256). With regard to Hassim's wanderings in The Rescue, the omniscient author states: ". . . it is a common saying amongst the Malay race that to be a successful traveller and trader a man must have some Wajor blood in his veins. . . . The trader must possess an adventurous spirit and a keen understanding; he should have the fearlessness of youth and the sagacity of age" (p. 67). The ideal trader of Wajo is a man who "is as ready to intrigue and fight as to buy and sell" (p. 68). In view of Conrad's brief experience in the East

it is difficult to believe that he was able to differentiate the physical characteristics and varying ways of life of these tribes which, especially from a foreigner's point of view, are very much the same. Conrad must have derived this knowledge from elsewhere. But if we want to explore the sources for Conrad's native people, as Norman Sherry has superbly done,[30] travellers' tales rather than scientific treatises are the right place to look.

Despite Conrad's intention, these young Malays have more similarities than differences. They are all good fighters, courageous and passionate. But as characters they do not succeed in the same degree. Hassim is an unrealized figure. He does not impress us as a youthful leader of the adventurous and daring Wajo race. As a deposed prince, he appears pathetic and helpless under the shadow of the bossy Lingard, far from the model of men who are ever ready to intrigue and fight. Dain Waris's intelligence and refined disposition are asserted rather than shown. There is no incident in the novel to illustrate his superior qualities. Dain Maroola is a more convincing character. He acts out his part consistently and successfully and we have no doubt about his intensely passionate nature, his love for adventure and intrigue.

Saveson has observed that there was a change in Conrad's view of primitive people between his first two novels and Lord Jim. As a proof, he points out the differences between

Dain Maroola and Dain Waris. In Lord Jim, as noted by Saveson, Conrad has assigned European stature to a native, Dain Waris, something that he could not do in his first two novels where "the Spencerian distinction between savage and civilized is carefully, even exquisitely maintained."[31] Dain Maroola and Dain Waris, as I have mentioned, are indeed intended to be different. But their differences are due to the varying roles they play in respective novels, not to any significant change in the author's view of the Malay race. Dain Maroola is more impulsive than Dain Waris because he has a more active role to play. He is put in a position where he has to act decisively. His role is that of a wandering prince who comes to rescue a lady in distress. He serves as a foil to Almayer's immobility. Dain Waris, on the other hand, is in a more subordinate position, as he is always shown in the presence of his father, the old Rajah. He is not allowed to make a major decision or act independently when his community confronts Gentleman Brown's surprising landing at Patusan. Consequently he appears to have a calm disposition. His followers say that he knows "how to fight like a white man" (p. 261). And Marlow claims:

> . . . he had also a European mind. You meet them sometimes like that, and are surprised to discover unexpectedly a familiar turn of thought, an unobscured vision, a tenacity of purpose, a touch of altruism.

> Of small stature, but admirably proportioned, Dain Waris had a proud carriage, a polished, easy bearing, a temperament like a clear flame. His dusky face, with big black eyes, was in action expressive, and in repose thoughtful. He was of silent disposition; a firm glance, an ironic smile, a courteous deliberation of manner seemed to hint at great reserves of intelligence and power. Such beings open to the Western eye, so often concerned with mere surface, the hidden possibilities of races and lands over which hangs the mystery of unrecorded ages. He not only trusted Jim, he understood him, I firmly believe. I speak of him because he had captivated me. His--if I may say so--his caustic placidity, and, at the same time, his intelligent sympathy with Jim's aspirations, appealed to me (p. 262).

From an aesthetic point of view this is an admirable description of a native prince. As Jim's "war comrade" and closest friend, Conrad apparently intended Dain Waris to be more intelligent and complex than other native characters. But this, in my opinion, is not adequately brought home to us. For one thing, we see too little of him. The action of the novel does not fully demonstrate him as the kind of character he was intended to be. Marlow, with all his intelligence and imagination,

was continually bewildered in his attempt to find a legitimate reason for Jim's extraordinary conduct. Yet he could easily claim for Dain Waris that: "He not only trusted Jim, he understood him." However, to assign a respectable stature to Dain Waris and to emphasize his friendship with Jim are in keeping with the thematic development of the novel. Their purpose is to deepen the feeling of the novel when Waris's tragic death occurs, and to make more acceptable Jim's willingness to die. It is my belief that the superiority of Lord Jim is due to the fact that it deals with a more complex and enigmatic character and has a more sophisticated narrative technique rather than to the supposed fact that Conrad changed his concept of primitive people, as claimed by Saveson.

The Bugis community in Patusan is obviously more civilized than the Malay settlement in Sambir, although both are based upon Conrad's experience at a European post in Dutch East Borneo.[32] But this fact does not affect these novels in any significant way, and it shows how flexible Conrad was in using the Eastern material. Sambir is a real world whose gloom and decay and sinister inhabitants are in accord with Almayer's and Willems's character and destiny. Patusan is a dream world which is used to illustrate Jim's overwhelming and enigmatic career. My feeling is that the different treatment of the Malayan races is due to the intrinsic need of each novel. Conrad's view of these people is essentially eclectic and non-commital. As Norman Sherry has

pointed out, even though Conrad has more admiration for the Bugis, his attitude towards them changes from one work of fiction to another. He does not always show them in a good light.[33]

Conrad's attitude towards the Arabs is simple and clear. He seems to have an ingrained distaste for them. They are presented as men of treacherous nature, like the great warrior Omar and the great trader Abdulla, who pursue their selfish ends with a fierce passion. They are people who, in Conrad's words, "did much of their travelling sword in hand and with the name of the One God on their lips."[34]

This is also an exact description of Syed Abdulla,[35] a major character in both Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands. Although Abdulla is a skilful and successful trader, his success is brought about not in a fair, respectable manner but in a mean, underhand way. He apparently serves as a foil to Lingard who seems to have little selfish purpose in his trade enterprises. Lingard has a ready concern for his fellow men, a quality not to be found in an Easterner. Almayer and Willems are also extremely selfish men, but they are not portrayed in such a bad light as Abdulla who is crafty and deceptive, calling upon his All-merciful Allah and quoting from the Koran at every turn to serve his own purpose. For Conrad the Arabs are not interesting people, but they are the sole opposition to the white man in his domination of the Eastern world, and they contribute largely to the tension

and conflict in Conrad's Eastern fiction.

Conrad's treatment of the Chinese characters is artistic rather than realistic. This is not to say that he did not have a good knowledge of the Chinese people. During his stay in Singapore and through his trade activity he must have had some direct dealings with them.[36] A. R. Wallace writes in his book: "By far the most conspicuous of the various kinds of people in Singapore, and those which most attract the stranger's attention, are the Chinese."[37] Wallace's account of the Chinese people on the island conveys the general impression that they were very hard-working, neat in appearance, and courteous and friendly with other people. None of these qualities is found in the Chinese appearing in Conrad's novels. This is mainly because Conrad believes that the object of art is "purely spectacular, a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like, but . . . never for despair!"[38] The Chinese are mostly businessmen or shopkeepers. Although some of them are very rich, their lives are not eventful and colourful enough for Conrad's taste. Taken individually, Conrad's Chinese characters are unrealistic and they are much smaller than life-size. Taken collectively, they form a symbol of human deterioration and decay. Jim-Eng is a social outcast like Almayer. He is described as Almayer's only friend in <u>An Outcast of the Islands</u>, and his function in <u>Almayer's Folly</u> is to foreshadow the inevitable plight of the white protagonist.

But, as a contrast, he endures his meaningless existence with calm resignation, while Almayer confronts his fate with the anguish of futile struggle. This is not to suggest that Conrad approved or disapproved a particular way of life, but to show his interest in different reactions by the people of different racial stocks and his concern with rootless men living in moral and cultural isolation.

The Chinese coolies portrayed in "Typhoon" have a symbolic significance. Collectively they symbolize man's reversion to savagery when he is confronted with death and loses his control in the destructive storm. They are used as a backdrop to dramatize Conrad's conviction that man needs stability in a world of sinister adversity. And on a realistic level, Captain MacWhirr's sagacity in dividing the money equally among the coolies rather than returning it to the Chinese officials shows the author's insight into the corruption of the Chinese bureaucracy of that time.

Mr. Wang in Victory plays a greater part than Jim-Eng does in the first two novels. Not only are more references made to him but he actively fulfils his role as an antithesis to Heyst.[39] Whereas Jim-Eng is described as a degenerate social outcast seeking his oblivion in opium, Wang is presented as a practical and resourceful man of instinct, though he "clothed himself in a mysterious stolidity" (p. 180). Wang was able to persuade a native woman to live with him as his

wife though the Alfuros, in their fear of the Chinese coolies on the island, had fenced themselves in. For his livelihood, he served Heyst as a housekeeper and abandoned him when he sensed the evil embodied in the invader, Mr. Jones. Later, he was well received by the natives and we may imagine him becoming their overlord. "He has preached to the villagers. They respect him. He is the most remarkable man they have ever seen, and their kinsman by marriage. They understand his policy" (p. 347). It is obvious that Conrad's treatment of these two major Chinese characters is solely for an artistic or thematic purpose. They had a similar background, both were at first coolies and later left behind on the island, "like a swallow left behind at the migrating season of his tribe" (Victory, p. 178). Yet Jim-Eng is a social outcast who absolutely refuses to have anything to do with the natives in An Outcast of the Islands (p. 182), and is a symbol of resignation and death in Almayer's Folly, whereas Wang is happy with a native wife and finds life purposeful in an active existence. This is not a case of inconsistency on the part of Conrad, for the main function of the two characters in their respective novels is to illustrate, positively or negatively, the fundamental weaknesses of the white protagonists.

5.

In summing up, a few interesting things may be said about Conrad's treatment of the Easterners. The Malays are apparently his first concern, and they are mainly responsible for the development of the plots in Conrad's Eastern fiction. The Arabs are dynamic and deceptive, and they form a strong opposition to the European domination of this area. The Chinese are chiefly used to illustrate and enhance the white man's position in a foreign land. And the Indians, although they are an important race in Malaysia, have no place in Conrad's scheme of things and are entirely left out.[40] It is therefore clear that Conrad's treatment of the Easterners is very flexible. It is more artistic than realistic. These Easterners are either much larger or smaller than life-size and they are not all realized characters. But the most striking quality about them is their credibility which is rooted in the specific roles they play. They are so powerfully conceived and consistently executed that once the reader steps into the somber world of Conrad's Eastern fiction, he accepts everything they do or say. This is a rare power that contributes substantially to Conrad's greatness as a literary artist.

Conrad was interested in the Easterners only in so far as they could be adapted to his artistic ends. His main concern was naturally with the white men who for a variety

of reasons got stranded in the tropics. Their homeless and rootless condition appealed to his imagination; and his sympathy with them reflected to some degree his own racial plight.

Early critics have often noted the freshness and originality in Conrad's first two novels, but as a rule they attribute these qualities primarily to the exotic elements of his narrative. Conrad's striking originality, in my view, lies not so much in his exotic settings and native people as in his new treatment of the white men. His white protagonists are not rational, courageous, and resourceful as they used to be in conventional novels. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is a classical example: a highly rational man who not only could survive but could become a master on the bleak island, purely through courage, endurance, and discipline. This is the typical Englishman of the traditional novel, a man who can control others because he can control himself. He is found in the novels of Stevenson and Kipling. But in the world of Conrad's Eastern fiction, the white men are weak, self-delusive, quarrelsome, and ready to betray their own kind for selfish ends. Moreover, Conrad was deeply fascinated by the private lives of these displaced white men, especially their sexual lives. It is therefore no surprise that his early novels are permeated by a sense of sexual morbidity, a subject that will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

AN OUTCAST OF THE ISLANDS: THE SETTING IN CONRAD'S EASTERN FICTION

1.

"The division of novelists into types or kinds is misleading; so many cannot be classed. No creative person is purely intellectual--one may, however, distinguish the intellectual novelist, building upon a framework of ideas, from the aesthetic-intuitive, working mainly on memories and impressions. In one case, the seat of integrity is the brain; in the other, feeling."[1] If we accept this general observation as true, Conrad may be placed, with fair accuracy, in the latter category of novelists. His work, as he professed again and again in his letters and prefaces, was founded upon the mysterious prompting of memory: "One's literary life must turn frequently for substance to memories and seek discourse with the shades."[2] The driving force behind his creation is reality, an actual contact with life that has given him unfailing sensations which, according to Conrad, "are the basis of art in literature."[3] Yet despite the solid basis of his work, its final effect is always elusive and ambivalent. Conrad, like all great imaginative novelists, had to transmute the actual experience into a work of art,

adding or distorting whatever he found necessary so as to enlarge and deepen the actual incidents in life. Art, for Conrad, is experience overcome, completed, objectified, and appraised, so as to let us see. Although Conrad's world is dark, remote, and nightmarish, it is real and poignant because it has been informed with passion and experience, and is possessed of conviction.

The close relationship between Conrad's work and his life has been often discussed. Richard Curle, who was an intimate friend of Conrad's during the last part of his life, has said: "Anybody who has closely studied his fiction must feel the touch of autobiography in these wonderful pages. There is a kind of finality about them, a kind of conviction that is obviously not the mere creation of an airy fancy."[4] Conrad himself has also said that "every novel contains an element of autobiography . . . since the creator can only express himself in his creation."[5] The most outstanding studies in this respect are E. W. Said's Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography (1966), and B. C. Meyer's Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography (1967). Yet neither critics nor biographers have adequately accounted for Conrad's fascination with the East, nor fully explained why the Eastern setting was so congenial to his creativity, Conrad having confessed that it was from the Eastern seas that he had carried away into his writing life "the greatest number of suggestions."[6] Two explanations have commonly been given for Conrad's interest in the East: first, his actual experiences

and second, the exiled nature of his existence in foreign lands. V. S. Pritchett, for instance, has said that "Conrad seems to have turned the Polish exile's natural preoccupation with nationality, history, defeat and unavailing struggle, from his own country to these Eastern islands."[7] I however remain unconvinced by these explanations. With regard to actual experiences, Conrad's life as a sailor in the Eastern waters was by no means more spectacular and memorable than his experiences in other seas or lands. As a matter of fact his four years' experiences in France prior to his coming to England were far more adventurous and romantic than those in the East, where he had a comparatively short sojourn. The remark that Conrad as a homeless exile found in the conquered native people a situation in which he could project his personal and racial plight is equally dubious. For Conrad's chief preoccupation, as the novels reveal, is with the Europeans, the superior conquerors of the land, rather than with the conquered native people. The central drama of these works is the agonized and futile struggle of the white individuals, not the national struggle of the Malays or the political intrigues of the native factions.

The relationship between a writer and his subject, though it seems natural, remains mysterious and intriguing. An inquiry into this relationship, it seems to me, is not only a legitimate but an important aspect of study in a writer's work. To find out possible reasons for a writer's special and persistent interest

in certain settings, situations, and characters is essential to an understanding of his art and his vision of the world. Whether the author is aware of it or not, his selection of subject matter from his experience is an act of deliberate choice rather than a chance occurence. A choice of any kind naturally involves a certain degree of judgement, moral or aesthetic or both, especially for a writer like Conrad who had seen most parts of the world and who had not started writing fiction until he was about thirty-four. Out of his varied and rich experiences, he chose in his early works to utilize his memory of the East, and throughout his writing career turned again and again to that part of the world for fresh inspiration. There must be something peculiar about the land that appealed so irresistibly to his imagination. Furthermore, perceptive critics like Woolf, Guerard, Hewitt and Moser have claimed that Conrad's early works are his most successful and significant. It is for these reasons that Conrad's Eastern fiction deserves our special attention. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Conrad's use of Eastern setting and to illustrate the unique qualities in this body of his work.

2.

A writer invariably tends to portray a world that is familiar to him, a world in which he feels at home and in which

he has complete confidence. The usual settings in English fiction are the country and the city. With these the English reader would feel comfortable as they resemble something already familiar to him through his personal experience. Conrad was among the first and remains the most important of English novelists who broke away from this tradition. Apart from his few political novels, the sea and the jungle are almost exclusively the settings of his work. It is mainly for this reason that he has often been called "the novelist of extreme situation," and that his early works were not readily accepted by the public.

The uniqueness of Conrad's settings accounts for some singular qualities in his Eastern novels. It is obvious that they do not have an organised social environment. They deal with man alone rather than with man in society, since the primitive society and the social experiences between the Europeans and the native people are not complex and enduring enough for an artistic investigation. Consequently the plots are very thin, and the individual characters with their thoughts and sensations become the centre of these works. Without a sophisticated society and significant social intercourse, a writer cannot look long and deep into human possibility. He cannot show a mode of life in the context of human relationship. It is therefore natural that Conrad's Eastern fiction, unlike the works of his eminent predecessors

and contemporaries, does not deal with social issues. Dickens is deeply concerned with social abuses, and with the desperate need for social reforms in his time. Eliot depicts an organic, human community in which every character plays an active part and his actions are in turn judged by his community. She is keenly interested in the motives of man's conduct and his relations with the moral world. Hardy sets his ill-fated characters in an agricultural setting menaced by the forces of social change, and illustrates how man, in his noble struggle and suffering, deserves a better fate than the one he receives. In the works of these three novelists there is a larger outer life that encloses the inner life of the individuals. The art of these novelists is to display human beings in the context of social life, and their aim is constantly to differentiate and discriminate between characters, with emphasis on their moral and intellectual growth as they search for self-improvement and self-fulfilment. These are not the concerns of Conrad. His characters loom large, but they are solitary men in a foreign land, who cherish unshared thought and feeling. There is no public opinion to guide their conscience and there is no commonly accepted code of conduct. Their life is one of constant regret, uneasy hope, and futile struggle. They all feel trapped in an abyss, and their sorrows lie in their inability or unwillingness to find their way home. Unlike Silas Marner, the self-imposed exile, who is eventually able

to return to society, Willems finds himself left outside the scheme of creation:

> Round him everything stirred, moved, swept by in a rush; the earth under his feet and the heavens above his head. The very savages around him strove, struggled, fought, worked--if only to prolong a miserable existence; but they lived, they lived! And it was only himself that seemed to be left outside the scheme of creation in a hopeless immobility filled with tormenting anger and with ever-stinging regret (p. 65).

Conrad's Eastern novels have a political flavour, but their comments upon imperialism are general rather than specific. Although they deal with political intrigues of the different factions, the actions of the novels do not lend themselves to a full political analysis. When we think of this body of Conrad's work we think of the strengths and weaknesses of Almayer, Willems, Lingard, and Jim. Their problems such as love, marriage, and loyalty have no social bearings. The economic forces, the class distinctions and religious barriers that usually underlie human relationships are not to be found in these novels. In this way, Conrad is able to reveal his characters to the core of their nature. Without social trappings, they are men with complete freedom and they themselves are to be responsible for

their ultimate destiny.

The reader experiences a different feeling when he moves into the world of Conrad from the familiar world of the traditional novelist. In the world of Dickens or Eliot or Hardy where man is essentially a social being, he experiences the feeling that human action is somehow a complete, interlocking whole, and that human life is a continuous, meaningful existence. In Conrad's Eastern fiction, human action is disjointed and abortive and human life is illogical, absurd, full of frustrations and bitterness. Here he witnesses a life that is in concord with the dark and menacing world of the jungle.

3.

The setting for Conrad's Eastern fiction, as pointed out by Norman Sherry, was based on his first-hand knowledge of a European trading post on the banks of the River Berau in Dutch East Borneo where he visited at least four times as a mate of the local ship Vidar from August 1887 to January 1888.[8] Conrad calls the river the Pantai and the settlement Sambir in both Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, and in Lord Jim the settlement is called Patusan.[9] The settlement, as portrayed in these novels, is a remote, restricted area situated on the bank of the sombre river amidst the dark menacing jungle, about forty miles from the sea. It is a place conducive to idle dreams

and dark intrigues, but unsuited to human life:

> Sambir was born in a swamp and passed its youth in malodorous mud. The houses crowded the bank, and, as if to get away from the unhealthy shore, stepped boldly into the river . . . . There was only one path in the whole town and it ran at the back of the houses along the succession of blackened circular patches that marked the place of the household fires. On the other side the virgin forest bordered the path, coming close to it, as if to provoke impudently any passer-by to the solution of the gloomy problem of its depths (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 65).

The very locality of the settlement helps to intensify the trying situations of the white men in Sambir. On the one hand, the unrelenting jungle symbolizes imprisonment, decay, and death. "They died helplessly, for into the tangled forest there was no escape" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 52). On the other hand, the river, though somber and treacherous, stands for life, because it provides the only means of escape. For instance, Willems, when abandoned by Lingard in the wilderness, "To the river . . . turned his eyes like a captive that looked fixedly at the door of his cell. If there was any hope in the world it would come from the river, by the river" (pp. 328-329). A great

part of the tension and emotion in both Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands arises from the protagonists' pathetic captivity and their agonizing hopes of escape.

Although both Patusan and Sambir are based on the same source, they have different functions in their respective novels. Patusan is used as a place for trial and action. Jim faced enormous difficulties and dangers during his early days in Patusan. Through his courage, intelligence, and integrity, he escaped from the Rajah Allang's camp, made friends with Doramin and won the latter's trust. When he later defeated the powerful Sherif Ali, he became virtually the ruler of the land, "a white lord" in the wilderness. So when Marlow came to see Jim two years later, the river was safe, and the antagonistic forces had vanished. The land was now peaceful, and the people were domesticated, if not exactly friendly. The violence, hostility, and injustice of the land, in Marlow's words, "belong already to ancient history" (p. 242). But Jim's hard-won self-assurance was destroyed by the arrival of Gentleman Brown, an embodiment of his past guilt and disgrace. Although Jim was courageous and brave, and although he had with almost superhuman power transformed an infernal hole into a haven, he was unable to face his past and to accept it as part of himself. For Conrad, the destructive elements which destroy the protagonist lie within rather than without.

Sambir, on the other hand, is used as a place for retreat and self-indulgence. It is suited for men of weak character who could not lead a decent and disciplined life in the outside world. Almayer followed Lingard to this place for an easy fortune. He was even prepared to deny his true feelings by marrying a native woman. But when the fortune was nowhere in sight, and life became a painful and humiliating existence as a result of the Arabs' opposition, he was not able to do anything in his wretched situation. The tragedy of Almayer is his complete dependence on others, and the irony of the novel lies in the discord between a man's enormous ambitions and his inability to act. Although Conrad strongly disapproved of Almayer's idle dreams and ambitions, he was sympathetic towards him because, in rendering Almayer's situation, he made him much more a victim of hostile circumstances than a man who initiates his own down-fall. In this way, Sambir also serves as an abyss and a man-trap. Almayer in moments of fear and exasperation felt himself "alone in this God-forsaken hole--in Sambir--in this deadly swamp" (An Outcast of the Islands, p. 296). And when Dain Maroola, in whom he had placed his last hope of success in his long contemplated expedition, was thought to be dead, Almayer suddenly realized that "for many years he had been falling into a deep precipice" (Almayer's Folly, p. 99).

Willems came to Sambir for refuge, after being fired by his employer for theft and turned out by his own family.

But as he stayed on he responded mysteriously to the murmurings of the dark forest. He explored the tangled jungle in great expectation. The strange but warm and perfumed atmosphere seemed to console his wounded pride. When he encountered Aïssa, an embodiment of the savage and sensual life of the jungle, he lost his control and surrendered himself to his primitive passions and desires. "The darkness of the night entered his heart, bringing with it doubt and hesitation and dull anger with himself and all the world. He had an impulse to shout horrible curses, to quarrel with Almayer, to do something violent" (p. 73). Consequently, he quarreled with Almayer and betrayed Lingard, his benefactor. The characters, both white and brown, who drifted to Sambir were angry men, ready to cut one another's throats. The somber and sinister jungle therefore resembles the dark desires and obscure angers of men. Nature here is not only an evil force in itself but a manifestation of the evil in man as well. Yet in spite of his different use of the Eastern setting to enhance man's nature at its best or at its worst, Conrad viewed this area as a place for unavailing struggle and death.

Such is the unique quality of Conrad's art--his uncommon ability to relate his characters to their environment. The land and the jungle are not merely the background, but rather they are integral parts of the thematic structure of the novels. They are functional rather than decorative, and they

are essential to the reader's understanding of the total meaning of Conrad's work. Life, as revealed in all Conrad's Eastern novels, is an illusion, and man lives alone in a world of "cruel and absurd contradictions." Man has his heroic dreams, his absurd follies and his dark desires. He can aspire to be a beautiful butterfly and degenerate to be an ugly beetle. He is marvelous in his infinite variety, but he is not "a masterpiece." Life does not last and death covers all. And man in the short span of his life acts, struggles and dreams. With these as the common themes of his early works, Conrad needs for his characters a setting which is mysterious, elusive, challenging and half-savage. Such a setting is a deliberate choice rather than a matter of chance.[10]

4.

Conrad's statement about the genesis of An Outcast of the Islands is a misleading one. In his Author's Note he attributed the novel to the suggestion and encouragement of Edward Garnett. As a matter of fact, he had started writing the story before he met Garnett. Their first meeting took place in London in November 1894,[11] but in a letter of August 18, 1894 to a close Polish friend, Marguerite Poradowska, Conrad wrote:

> I have begun to write, but only the day before yesterday. I want to make this thing very short--say twenty to twenty-five pages. . . . I am calling it "Two Vagabonds," and I want to sketch in broad outline, without shading or detail, two human wrecks such as one meets in the forsaken corners of the world. A white man and a Malay. You see that I can't get away from Malays. I am devoted to Borneo. What bothers me most is that my figures are so real. I know them so well that they fetter my imagination. The white man is a friend of Almayer; the Malay is our old friend Babalatchi before he arrived at the estate of prime minister and confidential adviser to the Rajah. There it is. But I have no dramatic climax. My head is empty and there is difficulty even in beginning! I shall tell you no more than this! I should like to give it up already.--Do you think that one can make a thing interesting without a woman in it?![12]

As indicated in the above letter, Conrad encountered difficulty at the very beginning of this second novel, and the difficulty steadily increased in the course of writing it. In a letter of September 8, 1894, again to Madame Poradowska, Conrad wrote: "The two vagabonds are inactive. I am not satisfied with myself--

not at all. I lack ideas. I have burnt a great deal. It's all to begin over."[13] And again referring to the writing of the story in a letter of December 27, 1894 to the same friend, he said: "You must be very happy. You see your work. I, I grope about like a venturesome blind man."[14] All these reveal that Conrad experienced real difficulties with the novel, quite contrary to the impression of easy execution conveyed in the Author's Note.[15]

The original title was changed, according to Conrad, because Mrs. M. Woods had just published a book called The Vagabonds.[16] But on a closer examination, one would incline to think that it was not because Mrs. Woods had accidentally stolen his title, but because he did not know exactly what to do with his two vagabonds as first conceived. What kind of relationship would he like to establish between them? What was the significance of this relationship? What roles were they to play in the story? All these, if we may judge from the letters, were very vague to him. The two vagabonds, a white and a brown, seemed to be intended as a contrast, but this is not the main preoccupation of the finished story. In a letter written on October 29 or November 5, 1894, Conrad told Madame Poradowska more about the story:

> First, the theme is the boundless, mad vanity of an ignorant man who has been successful but is

> without principles or any motive other than the satisfaction of his own vanity. Nor is he faithful even to himself. Whence the fall, the man's sudden descent into physical enslavement by an absolute savage woman. I have seen that! The catastrophe will be brought through the intrigues of a little Malay state, where the last word is poisoning. The denouement is suicide, still through vanity.[17]

At this point, Conrad seems to have a clearer idea about the story, but its theme and main events are now entirely concerned with the white vagabond. The Malay vagabond began to diminish in Conrad's imagination. He did not have as important a role to play as his white counterpart. This shift of interest and emphasis is worth noting. It reflects not only the working of Conrad's mind but also the limitation of his experience with Easterners. The change of the title was necessary to suit the development of the story. The original title is vague. The two vagabonds could easily refer to Willems and Almayer, if we did not know Conrad's intention as expressed in his letters. The present title is undoubtedly a better one, since Babalatchi failed to develop as a major character and as a vagabond he was not much worse than other Easterners like Omar, Lakamba, or Abdulla in the story.

All and all, Conrad is an intuitive writer and his main

concern, as I have said, is with the displaced Westerners. He is not an intellectual novelist who works according to a well-planned framework of ideas. It is therefore not surprising that the originally conceived short story turns out to be a full length novel, and that in the final version of the story there is no poisoning, and Willems is shot to death rather than committing suicide.

Although An Outcast of the Islands makes interesting reading, there are some weaknesses in the novel.[18] It is apparently too long for its subject matter. Willems, in spite of his hideousness, was certainly intended to be the leading character of the novel, but he is not complex enough to sustain interest in the narrative. There are some wonderful, isolated scenes, but the book seems to lack a central focus. This is partly, I think, because Conrad was not sure of its total aesthetic effect, and partly because the nature of the jungle setting makes human contact and confrontations laborious. An individual character appears in a scene, and usually the locale has to be fully described before that character meets another. Seldom more than two characters appear in the same scene. All the characters, both white and brown, and there are at least eight of them, seem to play an equal part, because they are all logically placed and developed, with their past history and present situation fully accounted for. The inevitable result is not only prolixity but also vagueness about the author's intention. Some scenes are portrayed

for their own sakes. They do not intensify the action, nor shed new light on the characters or situation. As a result we have the feeling that the scenes, characters and actions are not entirely integrated. The book could stand certain cuts without much damage being done to it as a whole. For instance, the first three chapters in Part IV could easily be omitted. The first two dealing with Babalatchi and Lingard are the worst. They are not only undramatic but also redundant, because what is said here about the two characters has been said in the early parts of the book. The third chapter of Part IV, dealing with Aïssa's confrontation with Lingard, carries no significance beyond the surface interest. Aïssa, while claiming to love Willems, displays all her sexual charms in her desire for Lingard. But our "Rajah Laut," though "aware of some emotion arising within him" (p. 249), is too strong and upright to be moved by a savage woman. But Aïssa's intensely sexual nature and Lingard's unflinching character have been evident all along. Their first encounter, taking up fifteen pages, tells us not much more than what we have already known of them. When one reads these pages one is bewildered by a sense of vagueness with regard to the author's artistic intention.

Conrad says that An Outcast of the Islands "is certainly the most tropical of my eastern tales," and that it is the tropical scenery rather than the story that engaged his imagination: "the story itself was never very near my heart."[19]

This is an understandable statement. The novel has no moments of warmth, affection or dignity. It consists of only three events: a theft, a betrayal, and a sexual affair. All of these are initiated by Willems, a vain, egoistical and self-asserting man. Conrad was of course not interested in the tropical landscape for its own sake, but rather he found in the squalid setting an expression of man's dark nature. Mother nature and human nature are one, and they exist in this novel as manifestations of each other.

A prominent image in Conrad's Eastern fiction is the isolated tall trees. On the surface, this seems to be of no particular interest, since the trees are the most natural part of the landscape. But on a careful reading, we will see that Conrad was consciously using them to reflect the white men's situation in the wilderness. In the opening scene of Conrad's first novel, the lonely alienated Almayer, after dreaming about his splendid future, is watching and contemplating the huge uprooted trees carried away by the swollen and furious river:

> One of those drifting trees grounded on the shelving shore, just by the house, and Almayer, neglecting his dream, watched it with languid interest. The tree swung slowly round, amid the hiss and foam of the water, and soon getting free of the obstruction began to move downstream again, rolling slowly over, raising

> upwards a long, denuded branch, like a hand lifted in mute appeal to heaven against the river's brutal and unnecessary violence. Almayer's interest in the fate of that tree increased rapidly. He leaned over to see if it would clear the low point below. It did; then he drew back, thinking that now its course was free down to the sea, and he envied the lot of that inanimate thing now growing small and indistinct in the deepening darkness. As he lost sight of it altogether he began to wonder how far out to sea it would drift. Would the current carry it north or south? South, probably, till it drifted in sight of Celebes, as far as Macassar, perhaps! (p. 4)

Later in the book, the big trees are described as the victims of the merciless, tangled creepers that "clung to the big trunks in cable-like coils, leaped from tree to tree . . . carried death to their victims in exulting riot of silent destruction" (p. 165). Of course one can look at these scenes as what they are--natural phenomena of the wilderness. But when we are invited to see them in close connection with Almayer's thought and life, there cannot be much doubt that they are meant to foretell and illustrate the final destiny of the protagonist.

In An Outcast of the Islands the big solitary trees assume

greater significance. Like those in Almayer's Folly, they are described in a state of abandonment, exile and imprisonment (p. 154). "They are born, they grow, they live and they die--yet know not, feel not" (p. 225). They appear in the midst of the luxuriant forest, "tall, strong, and indifferent in the immense solidity of their life" (p. 67), and look contemptuously upon the creepers at their feet. All these descriptions reflect Willems's complete isolation and his enormous pride, "the boundless, mad vanity of an ignorant man." Conrad's strong disapproval of man's pride is especially emphatic in a letter written on September 4, 1892 to Madame Poradowska:

> I am saddened by what you tell me of Jean (her nephew). You are thinking already of his future conquests and of the hearts he will break. How characteristic that is, individually and nationally! For my part, I think that, reared in that fashion, he will grow up and reach maturity without realizing the meaning of life and with a false notion of his place in the world. He will think himself important. One always thinks himself important at twenty. The fact is, however, that one becomes useful only on realizing the utter insignificance of the individual in the scheme of the universe. When one well understands that in oneself one is nothing and that a man is worth neither more nor less than the

> work he accomplishes with honesty of purpose and means, and within the strict limits of his duty towards society, only then is one the master of his conscience, with the right to call himself a man. Otherwise, were he more attractive than Prince Charming, richer than Midas, wiser than Doctor Faust himself, the two-legged featherless creature is only a despicable thing sunk in the mud of all the passions.[20]

What Conrad says in this letter about man's pride and his "false notion of his place in the world" can justly be applied to both Almayer and Willems. It is particularly noteworthy that Conrad links man's pride and self-importance with his immense passion, especially his sexual passion. It is therefore no surprise that in addition to man's pride and ignorance which brings about his isolation, the masculine trees also symbolize his maleness and sexual potency. Over and over again we are reminded of the trees' stillness, rigidity, and strength when Willems approaches Aïssa sexually. And at the same time, we are reminded of the entwined undergrowth and the predatory creepers, female images, that intensely surround and threaten the masculine trees in their silent and desperate struggle towards the life-giving sun. It is obvious that the struggle of jungle life is used as an embodiment of the battle of the sexes. Conrad's view of sexuality as a battle is explicit in the following description

of Aïssa and Willems:

> She moved a step forward and again halted. A breath of wind that came through the trees, but in Willems' fancy seemed to be driven by her moving figure, rippled in a hot wave round his body and scorched his face in a burning touch. He drew it in with a long breath, the last long breath of a soldier before the rush of battle, of a lover before he takes in his arms the adored woman, the breath that gives courage to confront the menace of death or the storm of passion (pp. 69-70).

In the brutal struggle between the individual trees and the inextricable creepers the strong trees are bound to die, while the luxuriant creepers belong to the "life of ages" (p. 154). So it is in the battle of the sexes: the woman is the victor and the man is doomed. Willems was vaguely aware of the vicious and menacing nature of tropical life which symbolizes woman and produces death, but his immense pride and sensuality overpower the feeling of his vulnerability. In other words his sexual passion makes him unable to resist the appeal of Aïssa, despite her savagery. It is in this context that their first meeting is related to the destructiveness of jungle life:

> He had been baffled, repelled, almost frightened by the intensity of that tropical life which wants the sunshine but works in gloom; which seems to be all grace of colour and form, all brilliance, all smiles, but is only the blossoming of the dead; whose mystery holds the promise of joy and beauty, yet contains nothing but poison and decay. He had been frightened by the vague perception of danger before, but now, as he looked at that life again his eyes seemed able to pierce the fantastic veil of creepers and leaves, to look past the solid trunks, to see through the forbidding gloom--and the mystery was disclosed--enchanting, subduing, beautiful. He looked at the woman (p. 70).

After he had surrendered himself to Aïssa, Willems felt trapped and frightened. He told Lingard: "She held me then. Held me like a nightmare that is terrible and sweet. By and by it was another life. I woke up. I found myself beside an animal as full of harm as a wild cat" (p. 270). He further said that her big, menacing eyes kept watching him day and night, following him "like a pair of jailers" (p. 271). And "there was no rest, no peace within the cleared grounds of his prison" (p. 332). The destructive and devouring nature of Aïssa's love is explicit when she is likened to a vicious "wild cat"

whose "words rang out shrill and venomous with her secret scorn, with her overpowering desire to wound regardless of consequences; in her woman's reckless desire to cause suffering at any cost, to cause it by the sound of her own voice" (p. 277). Unable to escape from her, Willems foresees himself eaten by "endless and minute throngs of insects." They "would swarm in streams, in rushes, in eager struggle for his body . . . till there would remain nothing but the white gleam of bleaching bones in the long grass" (p. 332). It is therefore clear that in Conrad's Eastern fiction the jungle setting with its vicious creatures serves both as a symbol of imprisonment and decay and as a symbol of sexual destruction for man.

Conrad sees no difference between the sexual passions of the savage and the civilized men. The masculine need to view woman as a sexual object is true for all men. This point is at least clear in Conrad's first two novels. And the sexual act carries a strong sense of finality, although the savage is not aware of it. Even though the love relationship between Nina and Dain Maroola seems to suggest some positive value in the novel, its destructiveness to manhood is also clear. Over and over again Dain's vitality is reduced to a state of immobility when he approaches Nina sexually. This is most evident in his hide-out, thinking about his destiny and his

love for Nina:

> If he saw her again he felt that death would be too terrible. With horror he, descendant of Rajahs and of conquerors, had to face the doubt of his own bravery . . . . He had not the courage to stir a limb. He had lost faith in himself, and there was nothing else in him of what makes a man. The suffering remained, for it is ordered that it should abide in the human body even to the last breath, and fear remained. Dimly he could look into the depths of his passionate love, see its strength and its weakness, and felt afraid (p. 168).

And their sexual consummation is described with a note of sadness:

> With a rhythmical swing of their bodies they walked through the light towards the outlying shadows of the forest that seemed to guard their happiness in solemn immobility. Their forms melted in the play of light and shadow at the foot of the big trees, but the murmur of tender words lingered over the empty clearing, grew faint, and died out. A sight of immense sorrow passed over the land in the last effort

> of the dying breeze, and in the deep silence which succeeded, the earth and the heavens were suddenly hushed up in the mournful contemplation of human love and human blindness (p. 173).

5.

Sexual love is an important subject in Conrad's Eastern fiction. He is one of the foremost English novelists to deal explicitly with sexuality.[21] But unlike most of them, Conrad does not deal with love's fulfilment or its relations with moral and intellectual growth. There is no courtship, no delineation of the gradual and insidious development of feeling between man and woman. And there is no love, as we know it, before or after marriage. Marriage for both Almayer and Willems is a wretched bondage. The love relationship between man and woman, as portrayed in these early works, does not endure since it is not conjoined with affection and admiration. It has only a physical basis; this brief sexual encounter has neither emotional value nor spiritual meaning.

It is precisely because of this negative attitude that in Conrad's early fiction sexuality is closely connected with the sordid life of the jungle and is equated with death. Feminine sexuality is expressed in the savage and the half-caste girls, and masculine lustfulness is found in the

degenerate outcasts, so that the reader cannot sympathize or identify with them. The hideousness of sexuality is also reflected in Conrad's handling of the incestous relations between father and daughter, as found in Almayer and Nina and Omar and Aïssa.[22] The noble and admirable characters, like Lingard and Jim, are beyond the destructive influence of femininity. Lingard, when under the sensual assault of Aïssa's superb sexuality, was "astounded but unflinching" (p. 253). And Jewel, who is sexually as appealing and desirable as Aïssa, could not touch Jim's final enigmatic destiny. It is therefore right to say that sexuality is the moral test for the strength and integrity of the male characters in Conrad's early works. Those who can control themselves in the face of sexual inducement are the strong and noble characters, and those who cannot are the weak and selfish men. This is not only true for the white outcasts like Almayer and Willems,[23] but also true for the egoistic Malays, like Arsat in "The Lagoon" and Karain in "Karain, A Memory." Arsat abandons his own brother and Karain betrays and kills his best friend. Each commits his unmanly act out of sexual passion.

Conrad's peculiar view of the awesome nature of woman is not only evident in his early works, but also in one of his letters. Writing to his Polish friend on March 10, 1896 (after the completion of An Outcast of the Islands), he said: "I am announcing to my dear Aunt Gabrielle--and to you both,

dear friends--and I do solemnly (as the occasion requires) that I am getting married. Perhaps nobody is more astonished than I am. But I cannot say that I am terrified, being, as you know, accustomed to lead a life full of adventure and to wrestle with terrible dangers. Besides I must add that my fiancée does not appear at all dangerous."[24] This is certainly a very unusual announcement of marriage. The occasion might be indeed solemn and require a touch of irony, but that it should call up all these fearful associations in his mind is a sign of abnormal fear.

Conrad's abnormality is further evident in incidents of his life. During his two-month stay in Mauritius he was secretly infatuated by a charming lively girl, Mademoiselle Eugénie.[25] This pretty flirtatious girl captivated the passion and imagination of the elegant and seemingly cynical thirty-one years old Captain who frequented her family but dared not show his true feelings. His timidity was revealed in his dismaying and abrupt proposal of marriage, delayed until two days before the departure of his ship--a conduct, as Bernard Meyer puts it, more like "a terror-striken schoolboy screwing up his faint courage to ask a girl to dance" than a grown man proposing marriage.[26] About seven years later when Conrad proposed to Jessie George in London, he also behaved in an extraordinary way. After his proposal had been accepted, Jessie noted on his face an "expression of acute suffering."[27]

Instead of taking a long drive into the country as they had planned, they returned to their separate homes in haste. "We parted hurriedly at my door, and he hastily re-entered the hansom, which drove rapidly away, urged to even greater speed by a hand waved frantically through the trap in the roof."[28] During the next three days there was no sight of him. Jessie felt humiliated. "I thought that perhaps he had already repented of his offer."[29] When he finally saw her again he demanded that they should be married in less than six weeks and go abroad.

Conrad's mysterious fear of sexuality is still more obvious in his evasive attitude towards his marriage. He appeared tense and nervous as the occasion approached. Before the marriage, he had told Jessie that "he had not very long to live and no intention of having children."[30] On the wedding day he was deliberately late for the ceremony. "He kept me waiting to be married just half an hour," Jessie recalls, "and even when his two friends, Mr. Hope and Mr. Krieger, did persuade him to make a move, he delayed still further in some futile argument with the cab-driver."[31] On the wedding night he kept her up to pack and to address the wedding announcements until two in the morning. Then he insisted upon going out to post the batch that night in spite of her protest. Early the next morning they left for Brittany. During the train journey to Southampton, they sat opposite

each other in "the most decorous fashion."[32] When they were passing through a long dark tunnel, there was a terrific detonation. Jessie was greatly frightened, but Conrad remained remote and unconsoling, "he had made no sound since."[33] On the Channel crossing our former marine master was very seasick.[34]

These facts of Conrad's life are confirmed by Jessie's recollection: "I remember him once telling me that almost directly after we were married (perhaps within two hours) he perceived what he had done, and got into a panic at the thought that he didn't know what it was to live with a woman."[35] More importantly, they help us to understand Conrad's unfailing interest in the East, since it was through the mysterious dark jungle and the intensely erotic native or half-caste girls that he could most satisfactorily express his peculiar view of sexuality.

This is, however, only Conrad's early view of sexuality and woman. In his later works, as George Thomson has acutely pointed out, women become the upholders of ideals and they serve as a source of reality,[36] as expressed in Mrs. Gould in Nostromo, Nathalie Haldin in Under Western Eyes, and Rita in The Arrow of Gold. Although they are as sexually attractive as the coloured girls, they cease to be merely sexual objects. Instead they become the idols of men's devotion and reverence, and through them men can find peace and salvation in their tragic existence. Since the demoniac nature of femininity has

been transformed into the angelic, the women who figure prominently in Conrad's later novels are both sophisticated and ethereal, and the actions of these stories are set in civilized environments. With this change of setting, there is also a change of Conrad's interest. He no longer explores the moral failures of the white men living in complete isolation. Instead he is more interested in certain issues of public concern, such as the nature and meaning of material progress, social systems and political revolutions. But it will be several years before Conrad turns away in his imagination from the dark jungle and savage women.

CHAPTER III

THE RESCUE: THE LIMITS OF CONRAD'S EASTERN EXPERIENCE

1.

The writing of The Rescue constitutes a strange case in the history of literary composition. Few writers have experienced so much agony and taken so much time to write a work of fiction. It is especially difficult to understand why this should be so, since the novel deals with love, fidelity, betrayal, and native intrigue in an Eastern setting, all themes that Conrad had already dealt with in his preceding two novels.

Conrad's difficulties with The Rescue have been explained in various ways, ranging from external factors to psychological problems to a change in Conrad's concept of literary style. John Gordan notes a number of circumstantial factors, such as ill-health, financial problems, and an uncertain prospect with regard to a job, that combined against Conrad during the time when he was first writing the novel, and further observes that Conrad's "desire to be popular may well have contributed to his difficulties in writing."[1] For Thomas Moser, Conrad was by nature not able to deal with sexual themes: "The sympathetic treatment of love between a white man and woman

is not congenial to the early Conrad's creativity."[2] Conrad abandoned The Rescue because "the subject was uncongenial, because he could not write the love story of Lingard and Edith, as he could not even begin the love affair between Stephen and Rita in The Sisters. There is something about the theme of love that elicits only bad writing from Conrad, something that frustrates his most strenuous efforts to create."[3] Wilfred Dowden, noting the unrelated images in Conrad's first two novels, suggests that Conrad's "difficulty with this novel may be attributed to his coming to a fuller awareness of the function of imagery. He realized that the creation of numerous unrelated images which do not support plot, character, or theme does not enhance the narrative."[4]

Of the three critical opinions mentioned above, Moser's is the most intriguing. With considerable evidence and much intelligent explanation, he illustrates seemingly the cause of Conrad's artistic decline: the uncongenial subject of love. Though Moser's thesis is interesting and at times illuminating, it is also a very limited one. It is scarcely conceivable that the difficulties of such a complex and mysterious process as literary creativity can be adequately explained by the type of subject matter alone. Moser also notes that "Conrad differs radically from other great modern novelists in his lack of understanding, in his almost belligerent lack of genuine, dramatic interest in sexual problems."[5] This

observation, in my opinion, is not very exact. Conrad's interest in sexual problems is very obvious in his early works and this interest, though expressed in a different way, remains profoundly alive throughout his writing career. To describe Conrad's treatment of sexual themes as a proof of his lack of understanding of sexual problems is certainly unfair. An artist is entitled to have his unique view of things and Conrad's peculiar view of sexuality is evident. (See my discussion in Chapter II.) In his early works, he was interested in the demoralizing effect of sexuality and in the irresistibility of sexual appeal rather than in sexual consummation and fulfilment. But this somewhat odd and negative attitude towards sexuality should not be interpreted as a lack of understanding of sexual problems on the part of Conrad. Moreover, except for The Nigger of the "Narcissus," the love theme is a prominent subject in all his important early works, "Heart of Darkness," Lord Jim and Nostromo, and in these novels it works out well enough.

Moser has also observed that "Conrad, unlike other modern writers, cannot attack the subject of sexual feeling directly."[6] This is an interesting remark but rather unfair. Moser here down plays Conrad's literary ability while it is not a question of ability but a question of attitude that really matters. It seems to me that a writer's peculiar treatment of a subject is determined in the last analysis not by his ability but by his unique temperament and by his

attitude towards that particular subject. We have to accept a writer on his own terms. Further more, the obliqueness of Conrad's art has often been noted. It was always his intention to reveal only part of the truth of life so as to make the rest appear more "splendid, inspiring or sinister." On the subject of love, it is the mysterious and tantalizing effect of a sexual situation upon the characters rather than its fulfilment that greatly fascinated him.

2.

Conrad began to write The Rescue after he had made an unsuccessful attempt at The Sisters, a story to be entirely different from his first two novels in terms of setting and characters. Whatever might be the reasons for Conrad's discontinuing The Sisters,[7] it is significant to note that at this point in his writing career he turned in his imagination to the West for fresh inspiration and for new materials. This change is of course a very subtle and mysterious one, because it is difficult to explain why and how a certain mood or a creative impulse moves a writer. But for Conrad whose writing is based upon the prompting of his memory, a possible reason might be found by looking closely at his first two novels. Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands deal with some of the same

characters in the same setting of Sambir. Their similarities are obvious. The two white protagonists in their respective novels are men of no particular interest as individuals. Conrad's concern with Willems, and the same may be said for Almayer, "was aroused by his dependent position, his strange dubious status of a mistrusted, disliked, worn-out European living on the reluctant toleration of that Settlement hidden in the heart of the forest-land, up that somber stream which our ship was the only white men's ship to visit."[8] In addition to their displaced situations, the most striking similarities concern their private lives. They are both the protégés of Captain Lingard, they both marry a native or half-caste woman not for love but for material gains, and they both face a tragic end: one dies in despair and disgrace and the other is shot to death. Both novels are concerned with man's idle dreams and illusions. The similarities between the native communities are also explicit. A state of warlike hostility, fostered by the Arab intrigues and the European interventions, exists between the Malay groups and it serves as a springboard for action in both novels. This close resemblance between these two novels in subject matter and in genesis is a strong indication that Conrad had at least temporarily exhausted his direct experiences and observations of the East. If he was to portray that part of the world again, he had to look at it from a new

angle, to introduce new material and to use a new technique.

After the completion of An Outcast of the Islands, Conrad also seemed to have been tired of dealing with the moral failure of the white men and their futile struggles in the sordid jungle; and the direct description of the somber landscape no longer served his artistic purpose nor interested him. This is hinted at in his dissatisfaction with his second novel,[9] in spite of the fact that it was well received by the critics. The seriousness with which Conrad took his art is evident from the very outset, even though he was an amateur writer. He was then still making every effort to get to the sea. But when a suitable position failed to arrive and when he gradually realized that "only literature remains to me as a means of existence,"[10] he was naturally more earnest and cautious with his third novel that would commit him to a new profession. Being dissatisfied with An Outcast of the Islands, and probably being aware of its close resemblance to his first novel, Conrad attempted something new with The Sisters, moving in his imagination from the dark world of the East to the sophisticated world of the West. Although he was not equal to the task, it is a significant attempt in the history of his writing life. Ford Madox Ford has observed that The Sisters was the first indication of the gradually waking desire that Conrad had to be a "straight writer," treating of usual human activities in cities and

countrysides, "as opposed to the relatively exotic novelist of the sea and the lagoon which fate, the public and some of his friends forced him to become."[11] The Sisters, even in its existing fragment, deals distinctly with man's frustrating search for ideals and perfection in a civilized and modern world, and with personal and family relationships that are not found in Conrad's first two novels.

When Conrad could not make any headway with The Sisters which, even in its unfinished form, has an air of ingenious invention,[12] he returned again to the familiar Eastern world which was still vivid in his memory. But his stay in the East was a short one, and as a seaman his Eastern experience was naturally very limited. As he said: "We had no social shore connections."[13] Since he had utilized his direct experience of the East in his first two novels, to write again a fiction about this world would certainly involve a great deal of literary invention that was not congenial to his temperament and creativity: "Only in men's imagination does every truth find an effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life. An imaginative and exact rendering of authentic memories may serve worthily that spirit of piety towards all things human which sanctions the conceptions of a writer of tales, and the emotions of the man reviewing his own experience."[14]

It is therefore right to say that for Conrad the first essential of a novel is truth that has its roots in real life, and that also stands in some personal relation with himself. He defined his creative process in 1924 in the Preface to his Shorter Tales: "However spontaneous the initial impulse, not one of these stories . . . was achieved without much conscious thought bearing not only on the problems of their style but upon their relation to life as I have known it, and on the nature of my reactions to the particular instances as well as to the general tenor of my personal experience."[15] He also confessed: "The sustained invention of a really telling lie demands a talent which I do not possess."[16] It is therefore not surprising that the first part of The Rescue, which deals with the sea, the ship and the seamen, came very easily to Conrad. It is also significant that during those difficult years (1896-1899) when Conrad was wrestling with the manuscript of The Rescue, he also turned out works which are generally accepted as his most accomplished fictions, The Nigger of the "Narcissus," "Youth," and "Heart of Darkness," all dealing directly with his personal experiences.[17]

3.

Conrad started "The Rescuer," as the new novel was originally called, in March 1896.[18] In a letter to

Mrs. Sanderson on April 6, he mentioned that he had written eleven pages.[19] On April 9 he told Edward Garnett that he had written "15 pages of the dullest trash!"[20] On the same day he sketched the novel for Mr. Unwin, his publisher: "If the virtues of Lingard please most of the critics, they shall have more of them. The theme of it shall be the rescue of a yacht from some Malay vagabonds and there will be a gentleman and a lady cut out according to the regular pattern."[21] In spite of some difficulties, Conrad made good progress with the novel, and on June 10, 1896, he was able to send the first part to Edward Garnett for advice: "I send you today a registered envelope containing all that there is of 'The Rescuer'. It is the whole of the first part. You will see I have given up dividing it into chapters--formally. I think I had better divide the thing into parts only. Say five. Then in places--where necessary and proper--a wider interval between the paragraphs will mark the subdivisions of the parts; this arrangement will give me more freedom I think."[22]

Thomas Moser's contention that Conrad was unable to deal with sexual themes is mainly based upon his findings in two books: The Sisters and The Rescue. The Sisters, published posthumously, is Conrad's only unfinished novel. The fragment, if it had developed, according to Moser, would have mainly dealt with the love affair between the idealistic, pensive Stephen and the fiery, lonely Rita, and also with the

incestuous relation between Rita and her old henpecked uncle, Ortega.[23] Since the work is just a fragment and Conrad himself said very little about its composition, speculations upon the reasons for its abandonment are bound to be inconclusive. But in the case of The Rescue, there is abundant evidence with regard to the devious course of its composition. If one will consider carefully what Conrad said about his problems with the novel in his letters, and will examine closely the structure of the novel itself, one will find that Moser's observations about Conrad's difficulties with The Rescue are not very satisfactory.

Tracing the writing of The Rescue, Moser says: "Though Conrad wrote Part I with relative ease between March and June, 1896, he then began to work with probably the greatest difficulty of his entire writing career."[24] He further observes that "the yacht people were the rock upon which 'The Rescuer' foundered."[25] When Conrad finished Part II more than a year later, Moser calls our attention to the fact that Conrad "evaded the yacht people and made Part II a retrospective account of Lingard's first meeting with the prince Pata Hassim, Hassim's loss of his kingdom, and Lingard's preparations for its recapture."[26] He finally observes that Conrad completely abandoned "The Rescuer" in 1899, at a point in the story when Edith Travers was completely in Lingard's hands, and when Conrad felt "the relationship between the hero

and the heroine to be a powerfully sexual one."[27]

It has been well known that Conrad first bogged down with Part II of The Rescue. It took him more than a year to write this part, and during this period he told us much about his creative difficulty and personal problems in his letters. Conrad's letters reveal that he was originally writing about the yacht people for Part II,[28] but it was not the yacht people, as Thomas Moser has suggested, that caused his total creative paralysis. Apart from his complaint about the difficulty of setting the yacht people on their feet,[29] there is no further evidence, external or internal, to show his particular difficulty with these people. Conrad always had a firm grasp upon his characters. It is Almayer and Babalatchi who were the driving force behind the creation of his first novel. And when he began An Outcast of the Islands in 1894, he wrote to Madame Poradowska that the characters and their moral plight were ready, but he had no plot. All he had were "two human wrecks such as one meets in the forsaken corners of the world. A white man and a Malay . . . . What bothers me most is that my figures are so real. I know them so well that they fetter my imagination. . . . I have no dramatic climax. My head is empty and there is difficulty even in beginning!"[30] In my opinion, Conrad's real difficulty with The Rescue lies in his search for a plot--the linking episodes that would illustrate his concept and feeling for

man and his ambivalent existence. At this stage of his development as a novelist, Conrad was still far from being inventive. We have already noted how thin the plot is in his first two novels. For Conrad, a convincing and congenial plot is one rooted in the incidents of real life. This is his strong literary conviction. To write a novel again about the Eastern world is obviously to overtax his limited Eastern experience. The writing of The Rescue proved such a baffling experience precisely because he was moving away, after Part I, from his direct or indirect experiences into an area of unreality and pure invention. Sending the manuscript of Part I to Edward Garnett on June 10, 1896, he wrote: "Probably no more will be written till I hear from you. . . . Meantime I live with some passing notions of scenes of passions and battle--and don't know how to get there. I dream for hours, hours! over a sentence and even then can't put it together so as to satisfy the cravings of my soul. I suspect that I am getting through a severe mental illness."[31] This quotation indicates his lack of linking episodes.

The most revealing disclosure of his difficulties with The Rescue is found in a letter to Edward Garnett on June 19, 1896:

Since I sent you that part Ist (on the eleventh of the month) I have written one page. Just one page. I went about thinking and forgetting--sitting down before the blank page to find that I could not put one sentence together. To be able to think and unable to express is a fine torture. I am undergoing it--without patience. I don't see the end of it. It's very ridiculous and very awful. Now I've got all my people together I don't know what to do with them. The progressive episodes of the story will not emerge from the chaos of my sensations. I feel nothing clearly. And I am frightened when I remember that I have to drag it all out of myself. Other writers have some starting point. Something to catch hold of. They start from an anecdote--from a newspaper paragraph (a book may be suggested by a casual sentence in an old almanack). They lean on dialect--or on tradition--or on history--or on the prejudice or fad of the hour; they trade upon some tie or some conviction of their time--or upon the absence of these things--which they can abuse or praise. But at any rate they know something to begin with--while I don't. I have had some impressions, some sensations--in my time:--impressions and sensations of common things. And it's

> all faded--my very being seems faded and thin like the ghost of a blonde and sentimental woman, haunting romantic ruins pervaded by rats. I am exceedingly miserable. My task appears to me as sensible as lifting the world without that fulcrum which even that conceited ass, Archimedes, admitted to be necessary.[32] (my italics)

When Conrad received Edward Garnett's enthusiastic letter, praising the writing of Part I, he replied on August 5, 1896:

> Your commendation of part I plunges me simply into despair--because part II must be very different in theme if not in treatment and I am afraid this will make the book a strange and repulsive hybrid, fit only to be stoned, jumped upon, defiled and then held up to ridicule as a proof of my ineptitude. You see I must justify--give a motive--to my yacht people[,] the artificial, civilized creatures that are to be brought in contact with the primitive Lingard. I must do that--or have a Clark Russell puppet show which would be worse than starvation. Now the justification that had occurred to me is unfortunately of so subtle a nature that I despair of conveying it in say 20 pages well enough to make

it comprehensible. And I also doubt whether it would be acceptable (if conveyed) to a single creature under heaven--not excepting even--especially!--you. Besides I begin to fear that supposing everything conveyed and made acceptable (which seems impossible) supposing that--I begin to fear that I have not enough imagination--not enough power to make anything out of the situation; that I cannot invent an illuminating episode that would set in a clear light the persons and feelings. I am in desperation and I have practically given up the book. Beyond what you have seen I cannot make a step. There is 12 pages written and I sit before them every morning, day after day, for the last 2 months and cannot add a sentence, add a word! I am paralyzed by doubt and have just sense enough to feel the agony but am powerless to invent a way out of it. This is sober truth. I had bad moments with the Outcast but never anything so so ghastly nothing half so hopeless. When I face that fatal manuscript it seems to me that I have forgotten how to think--worse! how to write. It is as if something in my head had given way to let in a cold grey mist. I knock about blindly in it till I am positively, physically sick--and then I give up saying--tomorrow! And

> tomorrow comes--and brings only the renewed and futile agony. I ask myself whether I am breaking up mentally. I am afraid of it.[33] (my italics)

I have quoted the above two letters at great length, because they were written at a time when Conrad was experiencing his worst creative paralysis and, more importantly, because they strongly indicate the "sober truth" of Conrad's difficulty with The Rescue: his powerlessness to invent "illuminating" and "progressive episodes" that would have advanced the plot. There is no evidence of doubt or difficulty with regard to the theme and the general subject of the novel which were quite explicit when it was first conceived and which remain basically the same in the finished version. As early as April 9, 1896, Conrad already had a general framework of the novel: the "primitive" Lingard was to be the main character and his story involved the rescue of a British yacht and a sophisticated gentleman and a lady. By September 6, 1897 when he was working on Part II, he already had all the ideas and general interest of the novel:

> The human interest of the tale is in the contact of Lingard the simple, masterful, imaginative adventurer with a type of civilized woman--a complex type. He is a man tenacious of purpose,

> enthusiastic in undertaking, faithful in friendship. He jeopardises the success of his plans first to assure her safety and then absolutely sacrifices them to what he believes the necessary conditions of her happiness. He is throughout mistrusted by the whites whom he wishes to save; he is unwillingly forced into a contest with his Malay friends. Then when the rescue, for which he had sacrificed all the interests of his life, is accomplished, he has to face his reward--an inevitable separation. This episode of his life lifts him out of himself; I want to convey in the action of the story the stress and exaltation of the man under the influence of a sentiment which he hardly understands and yet which is real enough to make him as he goes on reckless of consequences. It is only at the very last that he is perfectly enlightened when the work of rescue and destruction is ended and nothing is left to him but to try and pick up as best he may the broken thread of his life.[34]

This passage is an admirable and accurate summary of the novel in its final form, and it points to an important fact that in writing fiction interesting ideas alone are not enough, since ideas can only become effective and convincing in a work of

fiction when they are dramatized through a sustained plot in a believable human situation. Conrad apparently had no troubles with his characters and he was fully aware of "the human interest" when these characters of different backgrounds were brought into contact. But why and how these people should come together, and how the subsequent events should develop in a way so as to illustrate his preconceived ideas of certain types of men, all these are uncongenial to his uninventive faculty: "Now I've got all my people together I don't know what to do with them. The progressive episodes of the story will not emerge from the chaos of my sensations."[35] When we look closely at the construction of the novel itself, our judgement of Conrad's difficulty is greatly fortified.

Part I of The Rescue was finished in about nine weeks and, as an introduction to the novel, it is extremely well written. It vividly conveys the tropical atmosphere of the Eastern sea. The close interdependence between Lingard and his beautiful brig is powerfully portrayed, and together they present something noble and romantic in man's passions and in his concept of duties. The conversation between Lingard and Shaw about the power of love, and their allusions to the Trojan War are very interesting. This seemingly idle talk fits very well with the general theme of the novel. Conrad was very skilful in keeping the reader in a state of

expectation by dropping hints in the easy flow of his narrative that Lingard is at the threshold of a great enterprise. Despite his outward calm and confidence, we note that Lingard is very attentive and alert, wishing a breeze to come soon. When a rowboat approaches the brig in the night, reporting that a British yacht has gone aground in the shallows, Lingard is anxious to know the exact locality of the accident. He is much surprised and annoyed when listening to Carter's description of the setting in which the mishap occurred. But nothing is explicit, and the next thing we know is that Lingard has decided to rescue his fellow countrymen. Part I ends when his brig is approaching the stranded yacht. "It leaves off," as William Blackwood puts it, "at a most aggravating point just when the action is about to begin."[36]

Conrad's real difficulty began with Part II which took him about twenty months to complete. During the first few months of its composition, Conrad was working on the yacht people."It's a hell of a job," he said.[37] We do not know when Conrad changed his mind, but it is very likely that he must have done so some time before October 14, 1897, about fifteen months after he had started writing Part II, since on that day he was able to write Edward Garnett in a quite different mood: "I feel cheerful and have at last made a start with The Rescue."[38] Part II, as we now have it, does not mention the yacht people. Instead, it is a

retrospective account of Lingard's first meeting with the Malay Prince, Hassim, who saved his life, their sworn friendship, Hassim's loss of his kingdom and his exile with his sister, and the completion of Lingard's extensive and careful preparations to reinstate Hassim, leading up to the moment when he is told that a British yacht is stranded in the area where he planned to co-ordinate all his forces. With respect to the structure of the novel, Conrad was definitely right in making the change and in passing over the yacht people at this stage. With so little of the hidden action indicated in Part I, it is difficult to imagine how Conrad could go straight on to describe Lingard's involvement with the yacht people, especially his emotional entanglement with Edith Travers that apparently was uppermost in his mind, without first giving sufficient background information about Lingard's past activities and commitments. After all, the main tension of the novel is between Lingard's unusual passion of love and his romantic concept of duty.

About three months after Conrad had made a start in the right direction, he was anxious to send the nearly completed Part II to Edward Garnett: "I've been putting off writing so as to send you the MS. at the same time. But I meant to have a little more still, for you to see, so that you may judge of the way I take hold of the actual story."[39] Referring to Part II, Thomas Moser seems to suggest that

Conrad avoided the yacht people in order to deal with more congenial material: the Malay scenes and the native characters.[40] This observation is not very convincing since the native subject does not necessarily elicit good writing from Conrad. The pages dealing with Lingard and Hassim are rather melodramatic, and they read very much like a "traveller's tale" indeed. Let us examine the first conversation between Lingard and Hassim following the ambush by a native tribe:

> "I'll never forget this day," cried Lingard in a hearty tone; and the other smiled quietly.
>
> Then after a short pause--"Will you burn the village for vengeance?" asked the Malay with a quick glance down at the dead Lascar who, on his face and with stretched arms, seemed to cling desperately to that earth of which he had known so little.
>
> Lingard hesitated.
>
> "No," he said, at last. "It would do good to no one."
>
> "True," said Hassim, gently, "but was this man your debtor--a slave?"
>
> "Slave?" cried Lingard. "This is an English brig. Slave? No. A free man like myself."
>
> "Hai. He is indeed free now," muttered the Malay with another glance downward. "But who will pay the bereaved for his life?"

"If there is anywhere a woman or child belonging to him, I--my serang would know--I shall seek them out," cried Lingard, remorsefully.

"You speak like a chief," said Hassim, "only our great men do not go to battle with naked hands. O you white men! O the valour of you white men!"

"It was folly, pure folly," protested Lingard, "and this poor fellow has paid for it."

"He could not avoid his destiny," murmured the Malay. "It is in my mind my trading is finished now in this place," he added, cheerfully.

Lingard expressed his regret.

"It is no matter, it is no matter," assured the other courteously, and after Lingard had given a pressing invitation for Hassim and his two companions of high rank to visit the brig, the two parties separated (p. 73).

This is a piece of bad writing. Not only is the dialogue stiff and lifeless, but the tone is uncertain and confused. The rendering of Hassim is especially deficient. He appears unreal to us as a young native chief. Instead of being high spirited and daring, he is awkwardly weak and sentimental.

The best pages in this Part are undoubtedly those

dealing with old Captain Jörgenson, a defeated white man lost in the wilderness, who in some ways resembles Almayer in his pitiable situation. But he is a much more interesting character than Almayer. His extraordinary career and personality are depicted with such deep understanding and insight that our curiosity is greatly aroused when he is said, through Lingard's forceful persuasion, to "recross the water of oblivion to step back into the life of men" (p. 105). In my opinion, Part II as a retrospective account of Lingard's past and commitment is very necessary at this point in terms of plot development and motivations so as to set the characters and situation in the right perspective. It is not a retreat, neither is it an evasion of a difficult subject matter for an easy one.

Conrad started writing Part III, which picks up the narrative at the end of Part I, in the spring of 1898 and finished it in December of that year. This Part mainly concerns the yacht people. It begins with the confrontation between Lingard and Mr. Travers who from the start misjudges Lingard's character and mistrusts his good intentions. The rendering of the first encounter between these two white men of entirely different backgrounds, from their quiet confrontation to their open altercation, is very dramatic and convincing. But the most tenacious and effective writing in Part III is found in those pages which deal with the

mutual interest and admiration of Lingard and Edith Travers, and with the gradual capture of Lingard's mind and soul by this attractive woman. Lingard's first impression of Mrs. Travers is powerfully conveyed:

> He could not remember for the moment, but he became convinced that of all the women he knew, she alone seemed to be made for action. Every one of her movements had firmness, ease, the meaning of a vital fact, the moral beauty of a fearless expression. Her supple figure was not dishonoured by any faltering of outlines under the plain dress of dark blue stuff moulding her form with bold simplicity (p. 139).

The same vitalized prose can be seen in Conrad's depicting of Mrs. Travers's newborn feelings:

> She felt intensely alive. She felt alive in a flush of strength, with an impression of novelty as though life had been the gift of this very moment. The danger hidden in the night gave no sign to awaken her terror, but the workings of a human soul, simple and violent, were laid bare before her and had the disturbing charm of an

> unheard-experience. She was listening to a man who concealed nothing (p. 165).

The following passage describes Lingard's confused state of mind after he has seen Mrs. Travers for the second time on that day:

> Lingard looked downward where the water could be seen, gliding past the ship's side, moving smoothly, streaked with lines of froth, across the illumined circle thrown round the brig by the lights on her poop. Air bubbles sparkled, lines of darkness, ripples of glitter, appeared, glided, went astern without a splash, without a trickle, without a plaint, without a break. The unchecked gentleness of the flow captured the eye by a subtle spell, fastened insidiously upon the mind a disturbing sense of the irretrievable. The ebbing of the sea athwart the lonely sheen of flames resembled the eternal ebb-tide of time; and when at last Lingard looked up, the knowledge of that noiseless passage of the waters produced on his mind a bewildering effect. For a moment the speck of light lost in vast obscurity the brig, the boat, the hidden coast, the Shallows, the very walls and roof of darkness--

> the seen and the unseen alike seemed to be gliding smoothly onward through the enormous gloom of space. Then, with a great mental effort, he brought everything to a sudden standstill; and only the froth and bubbles went on streaming past ceaselessly, unchecked by the power of his will.
>
> "The tide has turned--you say, Serang? Has it--? Well, perhaps it has, perhaps it has," he finished, muttering to himself (pp. 199-200).

This scene is both realistic and symbolic, showing a man of action and purpose becoming indifferent to his much-cherished undertaking under the sensual spell of a beautiful woman. The turning of the tide marks a turning point in Lingard's life, and the ceaseless flow of the waters foreshadows the onrushing events over which he has no control. The vividness and forcefulness of these passages indicate that Conrad's imagination was quickened when he was rendering the relationship between Lingard and Mrs. Travers, and they contradict Thomas Moser's view that "the sympathetic treatment of love between a white man and woman is not congenial to the early Conrad's creativity."[41]

The scenes in Part III, however, are static, and there is no major incident until the end when Mr. Travers and D'Alcacer are kidnapped from the sandbank by the natives.

With the important background information about Lingard's past activities in the East and his commitment to the Malay Prince depicted in Part II, our curiosities are sufficiently aroused, and we at once realize Lingard's problems when the yacht runs aground at a spot where he is collecting all his forces for a big attack to recapture the prince's kingdom. But the action is not to take place. Part III ends when Lingard is going to bring Mrs. Travers back to his brig, with the intense political intrigues of the warlike natives in the background. Therefore Part III, like Part I, leaves off at a tense moment when an intelligent and elaborate episode becomes imperative. Here again we note that what baffled Conrad in this novel was not a lack of ideas or of right formulas of expression but a lack of a believable and coherent plot that would dramatize and enhance his ideas. This is also clear in a letter he wrote to Edward Garnett on March 29, 1898: "I am distinctly conscious of the content of my head. My story is there in a fluid--in an evading shape. I can't get hold of it. It is all there--to bursting, yet I can't get hold of it no more than you can grasp a handful of water."[42] Conrad's problems become more obvious when he writes again to Edward Garnett on August 3, 1898: "I am writing hopelessly--but still I am writing. How I feel I cannot express. Pages accumulate and the story stands still. I feel suicidal. . . . I am utterly out of touch with

my work--and I can't get in touch. All is darkness."[43] "Pages accumulate and the story stands still" is an apt observation about the whole novel. Almost every critic considering this novel has noted that too many pages are devoted to the lengthy, pointless conversations or to the undramatic descriptions that neither advance the action nor enhance the meaning.

After completing Part III, Conrad wrote about twenty-four pages of Part IV at the beginning of 1899. Then he postponed the novel indefinitely. He returned to it in 1916 and wrote one hundred and thirty-five pages of Part IV and then again laid it aside. He did not pick it up again until the summer of 1918 and completed it in May, 1919. During the last stage of its composition, Conrad revised and reduced the first three parts by several thousand words. But the general theme and the basic interest of the finished novel remain the same as they were from the beginning.

The Rescue, in its final form, is undoubtedly overwritten. Its length stretches beyond its interest. The plot is too thin and the actions are not fully motivated. The last three parts are about sixty pages longer than the first three. Of the last three parts, IV is the shortest, consisting of sixty pages, while the other two are about a hundred pages each. Although Conrad took so many years to finish this novel, he did not artistically overcome its most obvious flaw--

prolixity. The novel does not live up to its author's demand that it should not become "wearisome in the presentation of detail and in the pursuit of clearness."[44] Instead, it became more and more verbose in its narration and contrived in its arrangement of episodes.

Part IV is predominantly narration. It has no interesting incident. With Mr. Travers and D'Alcacer captured by Daman, Mrs. Travers is now entirely in the hands of Lingard. He first brings her to his brig and then takes her to Jörgenson aboard the Emma. Later they set sail together to the native settlement to negotiate the white prisoners' release. In all these scenes, we note Conrad's vigorous and illuminating prose:

> Lingard brought Mrs. Travers away from the yacht, going along with her in the little boat. During the bustle of the embarkment, and till the last of the crew had left the schooner, he had remained towering and silent by her side. It was only when the murmuring and uneasy voices of the sailors going away in the boats had been completely lost in the distance that his voice was heard, grave in the silence, pronouncing the words--"Follow me." She followed him; their footsteps rang hollow and loud on the empty deck. At the bottom of the steps he turned round and said

very low:

"Take care."

He got into the boat and held on. It seemed to him that she was intimidated by the darkness. She felt her arm gripped firmly--"I've got you," he said. She stepped in, headlong, trusting herself blindly to his grip, and sank on the stern seat catching her breath a little. She heard a slight splash, and the indistinct side of the deserted yacht melted suddenly into the body of the night (p. 207).

. . . . . .

Lingard, aware all the time of their contact in the narrow stern sheets of the boat, was startled by the pressure of the woman's head drooping on his shoulder. He stiffened himself still more as though he had tried on the approach of a danger to conceal his life in the breathless rigidity of his body. The boat soared and descended slowly; a region of foam and reefs stretched across her course hissing like a gigantic cauldron; a strong gust of wind drove her straight at it for a moment then passed on and abandoned her to the regular balancing of the swell. The struggle of the rocks forever overwhelmed and emerging, with the sea forever victorious and repulsed, fascinated the man. He

> watched it as he would have watched something going on within himself while Mrs. Travers slept sustained by his arm, pressed to his side, abandoned to his support (p. 245).

Here again we have a powerful description of Lingard's sensations under the enchanting spell of Mrs. Travers's intense sexuality. The confusion of his mind is indicated by his decision to leave his brig and strength behind, rowing around in a small boat "with a woman in tow" (p. 256).

Part V reads like pure rhetoric. It deals with all the major white characters on the Emma after the release of Mr. Travers and D'Alcacer. The situation is viewed from various angles and perspectives, but the numerous pages shed no further light on the characters. At this point in the story, we already know the emotional entanglement between Lingard and Edith Travers, Mr. Travers's arrogance and artificial dogmatism, D'Alcacer's cynicism and detachment from life, and Jörgenson's mistrustful indifference to human affairs. This Part is by and large a repetition of all these. The action is as immobilized as the derelict Emma, until the end of the Part when Carter reports in his letter that he, prompted by his strong sense of duty to protect the yacht, has opened fire upon the natives. This incident forces Lingard, with Mrs. Travers's consent, to

return the white prisoners to Daman so as to ensure his reputation and good faith with the natives. Lingard is now deeply involved with the yacht people and, under the sexual appeal of Edith Travers, has entirely forgotten Hassim's cause and his own solemn commitment. As a matter of fact, he never has a direct contact with Hassim again.

Part VI consists of a number of varied and interesting scenes, but the underlying motivating force is rather weak. It first deals with the confrontation between Jörgenson and Edith Travers, and then with the capture of Hassim and Immada by Tengga's fighters who are also preparing for the seizure of the Emma, the depot of Lingard's wealth and ammunition. Hassim asks his devoted follower, Jaffir, to bring his "emerald ring" to Lingard. The ring is a desperate request for help and a reminder of solemn promises and sworn friendship. Jörgenson sees that the ring can only reach Lingard in Belarab's camp through Edith Travers who, in her suspicion of Jorgenson's ill intention and in her desire to keep Lingard close to her, conceals the ring. Though the rest of the novel relies upon the ring to keep the narrative moving, this plot device does not intensify the action, nor enrich the meaning, nor arouse new expectations in the reader, because we know fairly well that the ring has lost all its original effects on Lingard. At this stage Lingard has completely lost touch with the

world and is willing to remain with Edith Travers as an immobile captive in Belarab's camp. It is only after the explosion of the Emma in which Jörgenson, Hassim, Immada, Tengga and Daman are all destroyed that Lingard is brought back to life again, but he finds it "colder and darker than the grave itself" (p. 444). After hearing the moving story of the dying Jaffir, Lingard wants to see Edith Travers once again. The move is seemingly prompted by his desire to see what she has to say regarding Hassim's ring. But it is not so. He says to her in their last meeting: "Haven't you understood long ago that if you had given me that ring it would have been just the same?" (p. 465) He is overpowered by his irresistible impulse to have another look at this extraordinary woman and to declare his undying love for her: "As long as I live you will never die" (p. 465).

The novel therefore is concerned with man's fidelity to his ideals and with the destructive power of woman. But this thematic relationship is not satisfactorily worked out. The incidents in the novel do not develop this relationship tenaciously and artistically. Though Virginia Woolf's observation that The Rescue is a "stiff melodrama"[45] may seem too harsh, the novel certainly leaves much to be desired. Instead of allowing Lingard to confront his fate, it makes him a victim of circumstances, helplessly buffeted by the onslaught of events which he can no longer control.

4.

There is abundant evidence that Conrad is a writer of memory. This fact accounts for his lack of inventive faculty. We have noted that the initial creative impulse for The Rescue came from the interests expressed by the critics in Tom Lingard. This may be the reason why the novel was originally called "The Rescuer," with the emphasis on the character. Lingard was definitely an unusual and dramatic man. His daring and adventurous activities as well as his reputation and influence in the Eastern world were all based upon the true facts in the life of a real man, William Lingard, as Norman Sherry has demonstrated.[46] But Conrad was more interested apparently in the sensual effect of a civilized and complex woman upon such a powerful and primitive man than in the daring deeds of an adventurer. It is precisely because Conrad was obsessed with the mysterious power of woman that he was led to literary invention and subsequently to his creative difficulty. Conrad had never met the real William Lingard on whom his Tom Lingard was modelled: "Old Lingard was before my time but I knew slightly both his nephews, Jim and Jos."[47] And Norman Sherry in his exhaustive research into the sources of Conrad's Eastern fiction has found nothing in

the life of young Lingard like the romantic affair described by Conrad. However, when he first visited Berau, Conrad witnessed the decline of the trading post founded by William Lingard and must have heard a lot about this great trader's reputation and activities from the seamen, otherwise he could not have kept so close to the basic facts in the life of the real man. That Conrad's creative energy generates from his memory is also revealed in the fact that the Lingard trilogy was written in reverse chronological order. The last of Lingard's experiences are the most recent in Conrad's memory and come to his pen first. Lingard is only a background character in Almayer's Folly which deals with the events during his last declining years at Sambir. In An Outcast of the Islands, Lingard is a major character and he is at the height of his power, reputation and achievement. In The Rescue Lingard is the predominating character, and his youthful passions come into full play. In other words, Conrad, when writing this trilogy, moved in his imagination further and further backward from the time and the activities that he had personally witnessed.

Although Conrad had a clear idea with regard to the general theme and interest of the novel, its "progressive episodes" were slow in coming. The turn and twist of the story depended upon his instant creative impulse, as he

advised Madame Poradowska: "Once the general idea is settled on, you must let yourself be led by the inspiration of the moment."[48] Conrad, for instance, certainly did not expect The Rescue to be such a long novel. By March, 1898, about a month after the completion of Part II, Conrad had sold his American serial rights to the novel for £250 to McClure of New York on the understanding that he had to finish the novel by the end of July of the same year at the latest.[49] But he was unable to do so. The novel was first said to be in five parts,[50] and later it was "planned in 4 parts. Its length is to be 85-100 thousand words."[51] But it eventually spread over to six parts and nearly 200,000 words.

In The Rescue, Conrad apparently wanted to do something new with the Eastern material. Lingard as a character is entirely different from Almayer and Willems, and this novel emphasizes the friendship and trust between the white man and the native in complete contrast to the preceding two novels which illustrate the inherent suspicion and hostility between the two races. The relationship between Lingard and Hassim seems to be the most ambitious attempt in Conrad's Eastern fiction to establish a significant human bond beyond racial and cultural barriers, and it obviously foreshadows the relationship between Jim and Dain Waris. This theme bulks large in the beginning but fades into the background as the novel progresses.

The fact that the Lingard-Hassim relationship increasingly diminishes during the course of the story is, in my opinion, the most serious fault of the novel, since so much conflict and feeling derives from this relationship. After the initial force that the Lingard-Hassim episode generates, the novel moves into an area of new subject and new interest that dominates and that seems to be independent of the initial episode. It is interesting to note that after Part III Hassim completely fades into the background and Lingard never has a direct communication with him again in the rest of the novel. As we have noted, Conrad's main interest in The Rescue is the emotional entanglement between Lingard and Edith Travers, but this interest need not have prevented the development and intensification of the Lingard-Hassim relationship which was the complicating force behind the plot. This failure to continue and develop the Lingard-Hassim relationship is not only a flaw in terms of motivations, but also a strong indication of Conrad's limited experience with Easterners.

Before the appearance of Marlow as an observer-narrator, Conrad could never penetrate into primitive society and reveal its true spirit. Jim is the only white character in Conrad's fiction who has reached the minds and hearts of the native people, and Marlow by following Jim's enigmatic destiny into the dense forests can report back to us his

first-hand knowledge about the natives. All the other white characters just remain on the fringe of the native community. This is especially true with The Rescue. The book consists of 469 pages, but less than 40 pages are devoted to the native people. Even in these few pages the scenes are entirely reported or recalled in retrospect. Conrad, due to his lack of first-hand knowledge of a native community, was not able to portray the native scenes directly. For instance, the conflicts of interest among the native groups and their intrigues are all summarily reported in Jörgenson's letter to Lingard. They seem to have little interest in themselves but serve to develop the plot. The narrative moves to and fro with the white characters from the brig to the yacht to the Emma. Even when it moves to the shore or to the jungle camp, it still focuses on the white characters who are already there. Conrad's difficulty in constructing this novel is tremendous, since the main scenes are set in three ships, one afloat, one stranded in the shallow sea, and one dumped in a lagoon where it is threatened by sudden attack from the natives. This kind of setting makes human contact and confrontation more laborious and difficult than the jungle setting does in An Outcast of the Islands. As a result, in The Rescue a series of fragmentary scenes replace a direct, consecutive narrative which is the traditional method of telling a story. This discontinuity

is a mark of Conrad's modernity and a good example of how the content determines the form in narrative literature. Without a well ordered and organized society, the characters with their thoughts and sensations, rather than the plot, become the main aspect of the novel. I suppose it is chiefly for this reason that Conrad, whether he was aware of it or not, gave up the original idea of dividing the novel into chapters which require rather a rigid pattern of development of the plot, and instead divided it into major parts. "This arragement," he declared, "will give me more freedom."[52]

The most substantial proof of the limit of Conrad's experience and observation of the East is the duplication of characters, events, and themes in his Eastern novels. Critics have often remarked that An Outcast of the Islands is, by and large, another version of Almayer's Folly, with a slightly different emphasis. This is perhaps unavoidable, since the two novels deal with some of the same characters in the same setting. But The Rescue, besides Lingard who has appeared prominently in An Outcast of the Islands, deals with an entirely different situation. Nevertheless The Rescue does not move beyond Conrad's interests and concerns in An Outcast of the Islands. The ideas of fidelity, betrayal, and rescue are very similar in both novels. The main interest in both is a love affair, though expressed in different ways, and both show the destructive

power of women: Willems under the sexual charm of Aïssa betrays his benefactor, and Lingard fascinated by Edith Travers's superb sexuality neglects his pledge and duty. The duplication of the native characters is more obvious. Despite their different names one will easily note that the aged Belarab is just as moody and indecisive as Lakamba, Tangga as energetic and diplomatic as Babalatchi, and the Arab Daman as cunning and deceitful as Abdulla. As a background, the function and pattern of the native intrigues and conflicts in The Rescue strongly resemble that in the two proœeding novels. Among the likeable native characters who claim our sympathy, Hassim apparently anticipates Dain Waris, Immada foreshadows Jewel, and Jeffir, the devoted servant of Hassim, is like Tamb' Itam in his absolute loyalty to Jim. But all the native characters in The Rescue are poorly portrayed. They are wooden and lifeless. They lack the kind of primitive vitality that is evident in their earlier counterparts. Let us note the powerful scene about Lakamba and Babalatchi in Conrad's first novel:

> Lakamba roused himself from his apathy with an appearance of having grasped the situation at last. "Babalatchi," he called briskly, giving him a

slight kick.

"Ada Tuan! I am listening."

"If the Orang Blanda come here, Babalatchi, and take Almayer to Batavia to punish him for smuggling gunpowder, what will he do, you think?"

"I do not know, Tuan."

"You are a fool," commented Lakamba, exultingly. "He will tell them where the treasure is, so as to find mercy. He will."

Babalatchi looked up at his master and nodded his head with by no means a joyful surprise. He had not thought of this; there was a new complication.

"Almayer must die," said Lakamba, decisively, "to make our secret safe. He must die quietly, Babalatchi. You must do it."

Babalatchi assented, and rose wearily to his feet. "To-morrow?" he asked.

"Yes; before the Dutch come. He drinks much coffee," answered Lakamba, with seeming irrelevancy.

Babalatchi stretched himself yawning, but Lakamba, in the flattering consciousness of a knotty problem solved by his own unaided intellectual efforts, grew suddenly very wakeful.

"Babalatchi," he said to the exhausted statesman,

"fetch the box of music the white captain gave me. I cannot sleep."

At this order a deep shade of melancholy settled upon Babalatchi's features. He went reluctantly behind the curtain and soon reappeared carrying in his arms a small hand-organ, which he put down on the table with an air of deep dejection. Lakamba settled himself comfortably in his arm-chair.

"Turn, Babalatchi, turn," he murmured, with closed eyes.

Babalatchi's hand grasped the handle with the energy of despair, and as he turned, the deep gloom on his countenance changed into an expression of hopeless resignation. Through the open shutter the notes of Verdi's music floated out on the great silence over the river and forest. Lakamba listened with closed eyes and a delighted smile; Babalatchi turned, at times dozing off and swaying over, then catching himself up in a great fright with a few quick turns of the handle. Nature slept in an exhausted repose after the fierce turmoil, while under the unsteady hand of the statesman of Sambir the Trovatore fitfully wept, wailed, and bade good-bye to his Leonore again and again in a

mournful round of tearful and endless iteration (pp. 87-89).

In The Rescue, the pages dealing with the native characters never reach such a height in intensity and illumination. The writing is flat and uninspired. The native characters bob in and out of the action in such a contrived and inconsequent manner that we doubt Conrad has a firm grasp upon them and the situation. Vernon Young has rightly pointed out the reason for this weakness: "None of the Malay characters in this novel has any dimension whatever if measured by the scale of Babalatchi, Lakamba, Abdulla and Aïssa--perhaps because, for this book, they were invented outright rather than remembered."[53]

As one would expect, Conrad relied heavily upon his reading when he came to create native characters. In his reaction to Hugh Clifford's harsh criticism of his inaccuracy in portraying the Malays and their way of life, Conrad wrote: "I am inexact and ignorant no doubt (most of us are) but I don't think I sinned so recklessly. Curiously enough all the details about the little characteristic acts and customs which they hold up as proof I have taken out (to be safe) from undoubted sources--dull, wise books."[54] Norman Sherry has skilfully demonstrated the devious way in which

Conrad utilized the travellers' books. Conrad's borrowings were extremely varied, ranging from small incidents and racial attitudes to historical backgrounds and complete characters.[55] But such borrowings do not always produce the desired artistic effect. Rather, Conrad's personal experience and observation is the fundamental basis of his art, as the native material in Almayer's Folly testifies.

5.

As a serious and conscientious writer, Conrad must create in his novel a world in which he himself could honestly believe. This is the reason that he relied so heavily upon his memory for his writing, and that his work and his life are so closely connected. Richard Curle, referring to Conrad's early works, said: "Anybody who has closely studied his fiction must feel the touch of autobiography in these wonderful pages. There is a kind of finality about them, a kind of conviction, that is obviously not the mere creation of an airy fancy. In his characters and in his landscapes one is conscious of an actual life, enlarged, as it were, through the vision of a great artist."[56] Conrad apparently felt very uncomfortable when he invented materials not connected with his own life or with the life

of other people that he knew. This is especially true at this early stage of his development as a writer. Without this intimate knowledge of life, no matter how powerful the initial creative impulse was, he had no sustained conviction that was needed to carry him through his work. Referring to his difficulty with The Rescue, Conrad wrote to David Meldrum, the literary advisor to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine on August 10, 1898: "Whole paragraphs, whole pages, whole chapters pass through my mind. Everything is there: descriptions, dialogue, reflexion--everything--everything but the belief, the conviction, the only thing needed to make me put pen to paper."[57]

Literary invention not only poses a great difficulty to Conrad's creativity, but also, in my opinion, accounts for his inferior writing. There is a curious unevenness in the qualities of his works, and it is significant that among his least successful novels are those whose origins and sources are most obscure.[58] This is not of course to claim that all great novels can be traced to the authors' own experiences, but it is abundantly clear that Conrad's best works are those most intimately connected with his life. As an imaginative and creative writer, Conrad of course felt free to bring together a variety of incidents and characters into one piece of fiction. But he must know that

they did actually exist in space and time, and especially that they had a close relationship to the life he knew personally. It is only through his strong conviction in these actual facts of life that he could rearrange and combine them in a work of art to reveal his profound insight into the complexity of human situations and his ambivalent concept of moral issues in an incomprehensible universe. As Virginia Woolf has observed: "If Conrad was to create, it was essential first that he should believe."[59] In The Rescue he tried to create a world that he did not sufficiently believe.

CHAPTER IV

"THE LAGOON" AND "KARAIN: A MEMORY": A WORLD OF ILLUSIONS

1.

The uneven quality of Conrad's fiction has caused endless critical speculations. In recent years, Conradian criticism has moved from his full-length novels to his shorter pieces in which, some critics claim, Conrad's true power lies. This new critical note was first struck by Marvin Mudrick when he wrote in 1966: " Conrad is not a novelist but a writer of novellas. His impulse exhausts, or only artificially protracts itself beyond their length: the length of a nightmare or of a moral test, not--as novels require--of history or biography. The enduring Conrad is the Conrad who learned his scope and his method without having yet decided to evade the force of his obsessions."[1] Lawrence Graver, following Marvin Mudrick's position, has written an extensive study of Conrad's short stories in which he also suggests that Conrad was not able to handle full-length novels.[2] Although Graver's study is well documented and intelligently demonstrates its points, I still have the feeling that the enduring Conrad lies in his

longer works. It is in the novels, like The Nigger of the "Narcissus," Lord Jim, and Nostromo, that Conrad fully displays the subtlety of his mind and the perfection of his art. However, one would readily agree that Conrad was one of the most important short story writers of his time. Although "The Lagoon" and "Karain: A Memory" which I propose to discuss in this chapter are not Conrad's finest works in this genre, they possess some unique elements which have not been adequately dealt with. Both stories have a Malayan setting and they are the only two pieces in Conrad's work that use a Malay as the protagonist.

2.

"The Lagoon" was written in August 1896 and published in The Cornhill in January of the following year. Conrad seemed to have mixed feelings about it. He told Edward Garnett on August 5: "I wrote the 'Outpost of Progress' with pleasure if with difficulty. The one I am writing now I hammer out of myself with difficulty but without pleasure. It is called 'The Lagoon,' and is very much Malay indeed."[3] About ten days later in a letter to the same friend he described the story as "a tricky thing with the usual river--stars--wind sunrise, and so on--and lots of second

hand Conradese in it."[4] Conrad's dissatisfaction with the story, whether he was aware of it or not, seemed to have stemmed from his fear that it duplicated the preceeding novels. He recalled later that the story was conceived "in the same mood which produced Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, it is told in the same breath (with what was left of it, that is, after the end of An Outcast), seen with the same vision, rendered in the same method."[5] The thematic affinity between An Outcast of the Islands and "The Lagoon" is very obvious. Although its protagonist is a native instead of a white man, the short story is concerned with a man's impulsive act of betrayal, his feeling of guilt and remorse, and the destructive power of woman. However, Conrad was delighted to learn that the story was well received, and he responded quickly to the favourable opinions. Writing to Miss Watson, Conrad said: "I am right glad to know you like 'The Lagoon'. To be quite confidential I must tell you it is, of my short stories, the one I like the best myself. I did write it to please myself,--and I am truly delighted to find that I have also pleased you."[6] Recent critics differ greatly in their opinions on the merits of "The Lagoon." In the view of Jocelyn Baines, "it is slight and of little interest."[7] Despite the fact that the story is the shortest of Conrad's

fictions, Lawrence Graver considers it overextended.[8] In Guerard's opinion, however, it is an important story in Conrad's development as a writer, since it shows for the first time the unique quality of Conrad's narrative.[9]

The story is a simple one. A white man comes to spend a night with his Malay friend, Arsat, in a hut on the lagoon. On his arrival, he finds that Arsat's beloved wife, Diamelen, has been fatally ill for five days. While the two men wait helplessly for her life to end, Arsat tells the white man the story of their great love. Some years ago, both Arsat and Diamelen were servants in a native court, Arsat as the Rajah's sword-bearer and Diamelen as a maid to the Malay queen. They fell passionately in love and, with the help of Arsat's devoted brother, they decided to run away from the royal palace. Unfortunately the royal guards quickly pursued the trio. Arsat's brother, in order to give more time for Arsat and Diamelen to escape, tried to keep the pursuing guards back by firing upon them. At last he called for help as he was being captured by the guards. At this critical moment Arsat failed to respond to his brother's call, and instead chose to escape with his girl in a canoe: "Tuan, I heard him cry. I heard him cry my name twice; and I heard voices shouting, 'Kill! Strike!' I never turned back" (p. 201). Ever since that time, Arsat has lived in self-mortification

in the small hut on the lagoon; and now, being freed by the death of his wife, he talks of returning home, probably to avenge the death of his brother.

"The Lagoon" is a moving story. It deals with the love for a woman and the love for a brother. Like Conrad's early fiction, the story dramatizes the causes of man's crime and remorse. Arsat's love for Diamelen confused his sense of loyalty and made him a traitor to his Rajah, his people, and his warrior's code. But he is not aware of this and still feels strongly the need for love. "There is a time," he says as he recounts his story, "when a man should forget loyalty and respect" (p. 196). His passion weakens him, making him half a man. "The other half," as his brother noted, "is in that woman" (p. 198). It was also because of his desire for the woman that Arsat deserted his brother in that fatal moment and left him to face their enemies alone. While the destructive nature of a man's passionate love for a woman is clear, the virtue of love between the brothers is not. Its ambiguity is indicated at the very beginning of Arsat's narration when he tells his white friend: "There's no worse enemy and no better friend than a brother, Tuan, for one brother knows another, and in perfect knowledge is strength for good or evil" (p. 195). The action of the story also illustrates this paradox. When Arsat confided in his brother

about his love for Diamelen, his brother first advised Arsat to be patient, but then laid the plan for abducting the woman. In the course of their flight, his brother took the lead, steered the boat, and eventually risked his life so that Arsat might escape. All these actions show that his brother's love for him is powerful and genuine. But ironically enough, his brother's love is also responsible for his crime and dilemma. Arsat recalls his brother's selfless devotion to him with warmth and affection. He talks about returning home. "In a little while," he says, "I shall see clear enough to strike--to strike" (p. 203). We wonder whether Arsat's love and commitment to his dead brother is in any way less foolish than his desire to escape with Diamelen into a world where there is no death.

"The Lagoon" is a well written story. Its events are related with intelligence and sensibility. The conflict between love and loyalty is a common literary theme, but few writers have treated this theme with such intensity in so short a space. Conrad is especially successful in his portrayal of Arsat who is the most credible, the most human in thought and feeling, of all Conrad's native characters. Though simple and naive like all the natives, he is intelligent enough to reflect upon his experience and to make decisions according to his feelings. He does not have the kind of

grotesqueness and ridiculous naivety of Karain, nor the idealized intelligence and civility of Dain Waris, nor the mature cunning of Babalatchi. Although he is as passionate as Dain Maroola, he lacks the kind of savagery that attends the latter's passion. His weakness is the weakness of a common man, and his final choice is true to human nature.

The ending of the story has a disturbing inconclusive quality. It is not surprising that it should have received abundant critical attention, for opinions differ sharply on the significance of Arsat's intended action implied at the end of the story. Some critics are firmly committed to the view that the final scene is a prelude to Arsat's act of redemption. Since Arsat says positively at the end: "We are sons of the same mother--and I left him in the midst of enemies; but I am going back now" (p. 203), there is a distinct possibility that he may prove his manhood by dying honourably. The conclusion therefore has a strong sense of salvation. On the other hand, some critics are of the opinion that the story ends on a bleak note. They observe that even if Arsat does return to his home land, he will receive little consolation from his subsequent action.[10] To my mind, the darker interpretation is more acceptable, and I think readers today will fully agree with Lawrence Graver's observation that: "By failing to understand the moral implications of

his fatal choice and by thinking that a simple act of revenge will provide final retribution, Arsat remains a permanent victim of his inadequate dream."[11]

This is however only one important aspect of the story. There is another that has not received adequate critical attention: the role of the unnamed white man in the story. Critics considering this character are as a whole of the opinion that his function is either vague or negligible. For instance, Lawrence Graver has pointed out that the white man "is another figure in the story worth watching," but his final judgement is that the white man is not an important character in his own right: "Finally his reflections emerge as pure rhetoric, and we learn nothing from him that we had not already learned from the omniscient narrator."[12] The failure to see the significance of the white man's role is to me particularly puzzling, since the white man and Arsat are the only two characters in the story, and each would be expected to contribute meaningfully to the context. The white man is the sole witness to the native's tragic existence. If his function is negligible, there is no justification for his presence in the story.

As far as the story goes, "The Lagoon" concerns Arsat's tragic life. Yet it is Conrad's only work of fiction that takes its title from a physical place.

The significance of its setting has often been

noted. The land of shallows and immobility symbolizes the empty and inert life of Arsat. The story, as Lawrence Graver says, is "an ironical description of a human situation."[13] This situation, to my mind, involves both Arsat and the white man, and each in his own way contributes to the main theme of illusion.

The white man is the first character to appear in the story. He is in a little boat with some natives, moving from the broad river, through the narrow deep creek, to the stagnant lagoon and its house on pilings where he confronts Arsat who is feared by the native crew. The journey is described in vivid and awesome detail:

> The white man turned to look ahead. The course of the boat had been altered at right-angles to the stream, and the carved dragon-head of its prow was pointing now at a gap in the fringing bushes of the bank. It glided through, brushing the overhanging twigs, and disappeared from the river like some slim and amphibious creature leaving the water for its lair in the forests.
>
> The narrow creek was like a ditch: tortuous, fabulously deep; filled with gloom under the thin strip of pure and shining blue of the heaven. Immense trees soared up, invisible behind the festooned

> draperies of creepers. Here and there, near the glistening blackness of the water, a twisted root of some tall trees showed amongst the tracery of small ferns, black and dull, writhing and motionless, like an arrested snake. The short words of the paddlers reverberated loudly between the thick and somber walls of vegetation. Darkness oozed out from between the trees, through the tangled maze of the creepers, from behind the great fantastic and unstirring leaves; the darkness, mysterious and invincible; the darkness scented and poisonous of impenetrable forests (pp. 188-189).

Clearly this also is a dark journey of quest and self-discovery, like Marlow's in "Heart of Darkness." As a matter of fact, the white man's journey to Arsat's hide-out and his concern with Arsat's moral situation strongly resemble Marlow's journey up the river and his intense interest in Kurtz. Marlow has extended his knowledge of humanity through his encounter with Kurtz. It is tempting to ask, what is the impact of Arsat's story on the white man?

The story opens on a note of contrast between these two characters. Arsat has lived with his wife in seclusion on the lagoon for years, while the white man leads an active life in the outside world. They represent not only two modes

of life but also two motives for human existence: love and wealth. We are told that the white man journeys up and down the river in pursuit of his desires. His friendship with Arsat is stressed, but with an ironical twist: "He liked the man who knew how to keep faith in council and how to fight without fear by the side of his white friend. He liked him--not so much perhaps as a man likes his favourite dog" (p. 191). However as the story progresses we learn of his sinister activity as a supplier of fire-arms. His friendship with Arsat grew up in a time of strife. Arsat says to the white man: "After the time of trouble and war was over . . . you went away from my country in the pursuit of your desires, which we, men of the islands, cannot understand" (p. 194). Arsat however understands one thing: "We are of a people who take what they want--like your whites" (p. 196). Arsat reiterates this point in his short narration. This is an unusual and courageous claim from a native, and its implication has a deeper significance than that of a casual remark. It throws much light upon the nature of the European activities in the East. But it seems to me that Conrad at this stage did not want to be too explicit in his indictment of the European exploitation of the native people. Consequently the white man is not given a name and the presentation of his character is rather oblique. None the less, Conrad's view

of the European as an exploiter and destroyer who harbours feelings of emptiness and death-likeness is expressively conveyed.

Some people have suggested that Conrad had a strong conviction about the positive values of the white man's "burden" in the East. This view does not conform to the general themes in Conrad's works. His treatment of the Europeans is by and large ironical rather than sympathetic. This is seen in his handling of the purposeful white character in "The Lagoon": the white man has voluntarily given Arsat's brother a gun and some powder, but he has no medicine when Arsat's wife badly needs it. In other words, he is more a destroyer than a saver of life.

The prevailing mood of the story is one of frustration and futility. This mood is conveyed to us more through the white man than through Arsat. Witnessing the death of Arsat's wife, the white man senses the unreality of his own existence. The earth for him becomes "a shadowy country of inhuman strife, a battle-field of phantoms" (p. 193). He longs for peace and death: "The white man gazed straight before him into the darkness with wide-open eyes. The fear and fascination, the inspiration and the wonder of death--of death, near, unavoidable, and unseen, soothed the unrest of his race and stirred the most indistinct, the most intimate of his thoughts" (p. 193). Arsat in all his simplicity and ignorance can talk

of his love, his regret, and his shame. But he also talks of his future action: "In a little while I shall see clear enough to strike--to strike" (p. 203). That he knows what he is going to do gives him a certain degree of relief, however foolish his decision may seem to us. It is the white man's passive reticence that we find particularly distressing. He is very thoughtful, but in spite of his superior knowledge he has no consoling word or advice for his native friend. His curious taciturnity may be explained by the fact that Arsat's extraordinary life has made him aware of the inadequacy of his own. Arsat says: "A man must speak of war and of love. . . . Therefore I shall speak to you of love" (p. 194). Although Arsat's love is a tragic one, it has a kind of power and grandeur that the white man seems to be lacking in his arid life. In Conrad's world, all Arsat's love and loyalty are illusions at the end, but they sustain the essential motives for his existence. By contrast, the white man's quiet pursuit of material gains in the wilderness is petty and meaningless.

3.

Shortly after Conrad had finished "The Lagoon," he wrote his first masterpiece, The Nigger of the "Narcissus." Then he started "Karain: A Memory." On February 7, 1897 he wrote to Edward Garnett: "I am thinking of a short story.

A Malay thing. It will be easy and may bring a few pence."[14] The story, as Conrad had anticipated, proved easy to write. It was finished in April, 1897 and was enthusiastically praised by its publisher. David Meldrum, forwarding the manuscript to William Blackwood, wrote: "Conrad is a capital man, and this is a capital story--extremely strong and good on the literary side. It is long, 11,000 words at most, but I strongly advise its acceptance. I hope it will strike you in the same light. It may bring us into touch with Conrad himself."[15] The story marked a turning point in Conrad's literary career. It is easy to imagine his excitement and satisfaction when he found himself accepted by Blackwood's Magazine. It was a great boost to his morale at a time when he badly needed public recognition. More importantly, the story led to Conrad's personal acquaintance with William Blackwood, the sympathetic and far-sighted publisher whose generous financial support and tolerance contributed to some of Conrad's best writings, including "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim. It is not surprising that years later Conrad wrote: "The story is mainly made memorable to me by the fact that it was my first contribution to Blackwood's Magazine and that it led to my personal acquaintance with Mr. William Blackwood whose guarded appreciation I felt nevertheless to be genuine, and prized accordingly."[16]

"Karain: A Memory" is fairly straightforward. Three gun-runners--the captain who is the unnamed narrator; Hollis, a young sailor; and Jackson--are trading fire-arms with Karain, the impressive native chieftain who is described with much pomp and dignity. The narrator notes the absolute loyalty, adoration, and even awe that the followers hold for their ruler. But all the time, day and night, the dashing warrior needs an old sword-bearer to stand behind him.

Karain comes aboard the narrator's ship every night when it is anchored at the port. He comes to exchange greetings with his white friends and to inquire about the western way of life. He shows a special interest in Queen Victoria. All goes well and the ship leaves and returns. But this time Karain does not show up. The chief men of Karain's court come to pay for the shipment of arms, and the white sailors learn that the old sword-bearer has died and that Karain has shut himself up and has not been seen since. Then on the third day in a storm, Karain suddenly appears aboard soaking wet. He is in great fear and fatigue. But under the protection and assurance of his white friends, he is calm enough to tell his story.

Before Karain built his little kingdom, he lived in Wajor where his brother was the ruler. It was a time of frequent local wars until the Dutch intervened. Pata Matara was a councillor and adviser to the Ruler, and a great friend

and war-comrade to Karain. Then Matara's beautiful sister ran away with a Dutch planter. Matara swore that the stain would be removed from his family by the death of his sister at his own hands. He began the search for his sister and the Dutchman, and Karain willingly accompanied his friend. During the long search, the sister's image became Karain's ideal, talking to him and consoling him at night by the fire. After many years of travel, hardship, and degradation, they found the couple. Matara asked his trusted friend to shoot the Dutchman while he stabbed his sister. But Karain shot and killed Matara in order to save the sister. Since then Karain had wandered in many places, pursued by the ghost of Matara, until he met the sword-bearer who had the power to ward off this dreadful apparition.

Now the old sword-bearer has died and the ghost of Matara has returned to haunt him again. Karain wants asylum in the West and asks his white friends to help him. The white sailors are at a loss as to what to do. Hollis finally decorates a sixpenny coin in ribbon and passes it off as a talisman. He then convinces Karain of its power and hangs it on his neck. The charm works and Karain's fears are removed immediately. He goes back ashore to his rejoicing people. The narrator remarks: "He left us, and seemed straightway to step into the glorious splendour of his stage, to wrap himself in the illusion of unavoidable success" (p. 52).

Seven years later, the narrator meets Jackson who has just returned to London. They talk about the Karain episode, and when Jackson tries to attach a deeper significance to Karain's experience, a significance deeper than that found in the prosaic life in London city, the narrator cannot believe him: "I think that, decidedly, he had been too long away from home" (p. 55).

Recent critics, as a whole, consider the story to be an important development of Conrad's narrative technique. Albert Guerard, for instance, has observed: "Conrad had discovered an 'I' in The Nigger of the "Narcissus"--a first-person narrator who is a member of the ship's crew--but this 'I' becomes a fairly direct projection of the author, and his vocabulary and manner are not Marlow's. To discover an engaged 'I' at all was certainly the one great stride to be taken. But the narrator of 'Karain' is much closer to Marlow the communicant and evasive reporter of lost souls."[17] Lawrence Graver, noting the presence of the "multiple consciousnesses" in the story, has also said: "By placing the Malay story in a complex narrative frame, Conrad attempts to give it a universality that 'The Lagoon' never achieves."[18] In my personal view, however, "Karain" is a less accomplished work than "The Lagoon." The most unsatisfactory aspect of the story is that its impressive and sophisticated frame is not

accompanied by a significantly complex content. Karain's tale of betrayal and remorse is not powerful and profound enough to justify the response of the white listeners. About half of the story is devoted to background description and to creating a vivid impression of Karain and his kingdom. Karain's confession, which apparently is the pivot of the story, is poorly written and consists of less than a third of the whole story.

Unlike Arsat's story of love and remorse, which is genuine and convincing in all respects, Karain's is rendered with force and artificiality. The native part of the story has a false note from the beginning. We learn that Matara's sister was extremely attractive, and that "she was a great and wilful lady" (p. 29). But the cause of her elopement is obscure. Although we are told that "she had been promised to another man" (p. 30), there was nothing unusual about such an arranged marriage in that part of the world. If the sister was intended to be an extraordinary Malay woman, the story has failed to convey this impression. The characterization of the Dutch planter is also weak. Like other white men in Conrad's Eastern fiction, he is arrogant and scornful in his dealings with the natives. But unlike them, he gives in easily to the pressure of the native people. He loves the native woman tenderly and, for the sake of her safety, departs from the village with her, leaving all his property behind. They remain

a happy couple to the end. In Conrad's work this is the only love-relationship between a white man and a native woman that has a happy ending.

If the cause of the elopement is weak, so is the motivation of Matara's search for his sister. Karain stresses the hardship and degradation that he and Matara underwent during the search. But the motivating force behind this great torment is weak. One can easily understand Matara's outrage at his sister's conduct, but when the search is said to be extended over several years and to cover many countries, it sounds like pure exaggeration. Certainly personal honour and social custom play a part: "The people were dismayed; Matara's face was blackened with that disgrace," and Matara talks about "cleansing the dishonour" (p. 30). But all these are not forcefully rendered. To my way of thinking, the main function of the episode is to forward the plot, though it also effectively illustrates the wilful and revengeful nature of the native people, and their intense hatred of the white men. In addition, the story is tinged at times with sexual jealousy and morbidity on the parts of Karain and Matara, but these are too faint to make an impact on the reader.

The most unconvincing part of the Malay story is the rendering of Karain's falling in love with Matara's sister. It is hastily introduced. Karain says that during the long search he slowly began to visualize the woman. She was so

tender, consoling and faithful to him in his weariness and hardship that he was passionately in love with her: "She soothed the pain of my mind; she bent her face over me--the face of a woman who ravishes the hearts and silences the reason of men. She was all mine, and no one could see her" (p. 36). It is generally believed that a native does not have a powerful imagination. In Conrad's early novels, the passionate side of the native people has to be prompted by the physical presence of the desired object, as expressed in the relation of Taminah and Dain Maroola. They cannot sustain for long "the faint and vague image of the ideal that had found its beginning in the physical promptings" (Almayer's Folly, p. 116). Even Dain Maroola, who had been in love and in physical contact with Nina, could not evoke her image in her absence: "Crouching in his shady hiding-place, he closed his eyes, trying to evoke the gracious and charming image of the white figure that for him was the beginning and the end of life. With eyes shut tight, his teeth hard set, he tried in a great effort of passionate will to keep his hold on the vision of supreme delight. In vain!" (Almayer's Folly, p. 166) With this knowledge in mind, it is difficult to believe that Karain, to whom the sister was a stranger, could have fallen in love with the image of an unknown woman. And if we are not fully convinced that Karain's love is genuine and uncontrollable, the killing of Matara becomes

very unacceptable indeed. It seems to me that the Malay part of the story has a strong air of contrivance.

As always with Conrad's work, the best writing is in the pages dealing with the white men and, in particular, with their reactions to Karain's experience. Listening to his story of murder and suffering, the narrator says:

> And I looked on, surprised and moved; I looked at the man, loyal to a vision, betrayed by his dream, spurned by his illusion, and coming to us unbelievers for help--against a thought. . . . I thought of his wanderings, of that obscure Odyssey of revenge, of all the men that wander amongst illusions; of the illusions as restless as men; of the illusions faithful, faithless; of the illusions that give joy, that give sorrow, that give pain, that give peace; of the invincible illusions that can make life and death appear serene, inspiring, tormented or ignoble (p. 40).

The narrator here apparently wants to enlarge the meaning of Karain's experience. This literary effect is what Conrad called the glow and the haze: "the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze."[19] Again, after witnessing Karain's fear of the apparition and

his desperate need of protection, the narrator comments:

> We looked at him, then looked at one another with suspicious awe in our eyes, like men who come unexpectedly upon the scene of some mysterious disaster. He had given himself up to us; he had thrust into our hands his errors and his torment, his life and his peace; and we did not know what to do with that problem from the outer darkness. We three white men, looking at the Malay, could not find one word to the purpose amongst us--if indeed there existed a word that could solve that problem. We pondered, and our hearts sank. We felt as though we three had been called to the very gate of Infernal Regions to judge, to decide the fate of a wanderer coming suddenly from a world of sunshine and illusions (p. 45).

The tone of the narrator, as some critics have pointed out, strongly resembles that of Marlow, the subtle observer of man's moral dilemma. But it is my feeling that the narrator's meditation upon Karain's problems is over-extended. Jim's enigmatic career has a strong human appeal, an appeal of a man's nobility and a life's importance in relation to the world. Consequently, in following Jim's unusual career,

Marlow's excitement, sympathy, bewilderment, and philosophizing have a solid foundation. Karain's situation is bizarre and ridiculous. Undoubtedly he is intensely serious. But his desperate need for self-preservation only makes him a coward. His problem does not appeal to the imagination of man. Despite the solemnity of his act of confessing, the narrator's sophisticated observations on the meaning of man's activity seem to be out of place.

Karain's experience is obviously real to him since he could undergo such an extreme fear and sorrow in life. But it is the white men's reactions to his experience that deserve our close examination, for if there is any ultimate meaning in the story, it must be expressed through the attitudes of these civilized witnesses. Jackson is very serious and he takes Karain's problem to heart. Hollis's attitude is apparently flippant and he seems to enjoy the exotic and comic aspect of the situation. The narrator has a mixed response. He feels puzzled and helpless, incapacitated by his common sense and knowledge of life. Lawrence Graver, noting the positive development of Conrad's narrative technique, says: "'Karain' shows that the use of several narrators can add moral complexity to a melodramatic situation."[20] In my opinion, this "moral complexity" is not shown in the story. Despite their different attitudes, none of the white men has any moral feeling for Karain's act of betrayal which is basically one involving

moral principles. Their common concern is whether their trick will work: "We did our best; and I hope we affirmed our faith in the power of Hollis's charm efficiently enough to put the matter beyond the shadow of doubt" (p. 51). Unlike the white man in "The Lagoon," who at least sees the truth in Arsat's remorse by agreeing with him that "we all love our brothers" (p. 202), the white men in this story can only resort to a lie in order to keep Karain in "the glorious splendour of his stage" and to wrap him "in the illusion of unavoidable success," thus alienating instead of involving the reader's sympathy in the protagonist's problem.

The theme of deception is common in Conrad's fiction. It occurs in "Heart of Darkness" when Marlow confronts Kurtz's Intended, and in "The End of the Tether" the whole story is constructed on this theme. Lying involves serious moral issues and illustrates the complexity and paradox of life; but in "Karain," lying is a trifling, light-hearted matter. Consequently the import of the story is very slight. Albert Guerard has rightly observed that Jim in his crime is "one of us," while Karain in his is only a ridiculous, superstitious native.[21] Since intellectual persuasion is futile, the white men contrary to their usual practice turn to charm and talisman. Any attempt to lift the savage above his superstition is unthinkable. As Hollis says to his buddies: "Those Malays are easily impressed--all nerves, you know . . ." (p. 47).

The uncertainty of the narrator's attitude adds to the confusion with regard to the final meaning of the story. He has been quite earnest and serious at first in his reaction to Karain's story. But he becomes playful and cynical at the end when Jackson tries to enforce the ultimate reality of Karain's experience. If the narrator sees little significance in Karain's experience, his serious meditation upon that experience seems to be false and uncalled for.

In the last analysis, there is something hollow about the story. Its intrinsic substance is not profound enough to sustain its sophisticated frame. Ultimately the trivial anecdote about Hollis's interesting "charm" is more impressive and memorable than the serious theme that the story is intended to carry. It is clear that Conrad has not successfully fused the serious and humorous aspects of the story into a work of art.

As always Conrad could judge his own work better than his early critics. "Karain" was highly praised when it was first published,[22] but Conrad himself was not satisfied with it. In a letter to Edward Garnett on March 24, 1897, he called it an "infernal story," and added: "I can't shake myself free of it, though I don't like it--never shall!"[23] Two days later, referring to the story in a letter to another friend, he said: "Lots of writing but not much else in it."[24] He declared many years later in his Author's Note that the story was

memorable to him mainly because it led to his personal acquaintance with William Blackwood. He had nothing significant to say about the story itself.

As we have noted in the previous chapter, Conrad was at his best when he wrote from the experiences of his own life. When he dealt with unfamiliar materials, melodramatic situations and inferior writing always resulted. It is therefore interesting that when he was criticized by Hugh Clifford for his inaccurate description of the native characters and their way of life, he ironically defended himself: "It is rather staggering to find myself so far astray. In 'Karain' for instance, there's not a single action of my man (and good many of his expressions) that cannot be backed by a traveller's tale."[25] This is a significant self-revealing disclosure, because the story, in spite of its technical complexity, reads very much like a traveller's tale indeed. Conrad himself has the last word: "There's something magazine'ish about it."[26]

4.

Referring to "Karain: A Memory," Conrad wrote in his Author's Note: "In that story I had gone back to the Archipelago, I had only turned for another look at it. I admit that I was absorbed by the distant view, so aborbed that I didn't notice then the motif of the story is almost identical with the motif

of 'The Lagoon.' However, the idea at the back is very different" (pp. vii-viii). This interesting statement defines characteristically Conrad's creative method: to work on the same material from another angle, to have "another look" at the gloomy, squalid landscape that has been depicted in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands. As in the novels, the dark, murmuring jungle and the shallow, sinister rivers are used in the stories to intensify man's dark desires and to symbolize the futility of his struggles. Although we learn little new about Conrad's pessimistic vision of man, it is in these two short stories that we first note his typical and most effective narrative technique: the telling of a story to an audience by a character within the story. This narrative technique is later more skilfully and elaborately used in "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim. But it is worth noting that at this stage Conrad is using the simple, naive native as the narrator who tells his own story to a superior audience. The main interest is not the story itself but the reactions of the intelligent audience. Consequently the reader's final feeling about the narrator's story is controlled by the responses and attitudes of the audience within the story. But in "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim the audience do not intervene between the narrator and the reader's feeling and imagination. Since the audience do not comment and react, except in an incidental way, the

reader responds directly to the intelligent, sensitive narrator who describes his reactions to the enigmatic career of another man. This development is a significant indication not only of a shift in Conrad's interest but also of his growing artfulness and innovation as a writer of fiction. Conrad is moving from the simple problems of the natives to the complex and ambivalent predicaments of the white men. In the native story, the reader may refer to the audience for moral judgement; but in "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim, while the reader is more intensely involved in the psycho-moral situation of the story, he has no conclusive moral guidance. He has to work out his own judgement. In other words, while Conrad is becoming more profound he is also becoming more evasive and aloof. But this subtlety has its roots in the Malay tales. It is in relation to the development of Conrad's narrative technique that these two stories are of special interest and significance.

Reading "The Lagoon" and "Karain: A Memory" together, the reader is inclined to feel that the main themes of the stories are very similar. Perhaps for this reason they are placed as far apart as possible in Conrad's first volume of short stories. Both stories deal with the power of woman, the destruction of manhood, and the subsequent feeling of remorse. The situations of the stories are exactly the same: Karain is haunted by the spirit of his war-comrade and best friend whom he has shot to death in order to save the woman

he desires; Arsat is obsessed by the image of his devoted brother whom he has abandoned in the midst of their enemies so that he can escape with the woman he loves. In structure, both stories have a similar frame that contains the painful life of a native. Both stories emphasize man's need of confession and the importance of friendship between races. Arsat says: ". . . for where can we lay down the heaviness of our trouble but in a friend's heart?" (p. 194) and the narrator of "Karain: A Memory" observes:

> There are those who say that a native will not speak to a white man. Error. No man will speak to his master; but to a wanderer and a friend, to him who does not come to teach or to rule, to him who asks for nothing and accepts all things, words are spoken by the camp-fires, in the shared solitude of the sea, in riverside villages, in resting-places surrounded by forests--words are spoken that take no account of race or colour. One heart speaks--another one listens; and the earth, the sea, the sky, the passing wind and the stirring leaf, hear also the futile tale of the burden of life (p. 26).

The white men in both stories play a similar role. They are not only the occasion for the natives to tell their painful

experiences, but their attitudes and reactions to the natives' lives become the most important part of the stories.

Despite these striking similarities, there is an important difference between the two native protagonists. This is their attitudes towards their acts of betrayal. Apparently they both suffer intensely from their impulsive acts, but for Arsat it is the feeling of guilt that torments him, whereas for Karain it is mainly a matter of fear. It is in this important difference that I feel Arsat, as a protagonist, is closer to Lord Jim than Karain, although some critics have suggested the reverse.[27] Because of their different attitudes, they take different courses of action. Arsat declines the white man's offer to take him away, for he must return to confront his enemies. Whereas Karain begs the white men to take him away: "To your land of unbelief, where the dead do not speak, where every man is wise, and alone--and at peace" (p. 44). Karain in his strong desire for self-preservation is a coward, in spite of all his majestic powers and formidable appearance. Arsat is simple but heroic. Even though we do not approve of his final action, we at least sympathize with him in his dilemma that seems to have no easy solution.

The theme of illusions is central to both "The Lagoon" and "Karain: A Memory." It has often been noted that Conrad revised the last sentence of "The Lagoon" when it was published as the final piece in his first volume of short

stories, Tales of Unrest, in order to strengthen the thematic unity of the five stories. In The Cornhill serial, the last line reads: ". . . he was still looking through the great light of cloudless day into the hopeless darkness of the world." The book version ends: ". . . he looked beyond the great light of a cloudless day into the darkness of a world of illusions." Thus "illusions" is the last word of the story as well as of the whole book. In "Karain: A Memory," the first story in the volume, the theme of illusions is more explicit. Karain apparently lives in a world of illusions which also forms the main substance of the narrator's meditation. Conrad's view of life as an illusion is a very consistent one. As early as May 15, 1890, several years before he published any works of fiction, he had summed up his feelings about human existence in a letter to Madame Poradowska: "A little illusion, many dreams, a rare flash of happiness; then disillusion, a little anger and much pains, and then the end--peace!"[28] This observation can be applied with fair accuracy to all the protagonists in Conrad's fiction.

But is there any important difference between the primitive people and the civilized white men in their confrontation with illusion? The answer for me is yes, although Conrad in one place seems to bind all men into a painful brotherhood of illusions:

> I am content to sympathize with common mortals, no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forests behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea. For, their land--like ours--lies under the inscrutable eyes of the Most High. Their hearts--like ours--must endure the load of the gifts from Heaven: the curse of facts and the blessing of illusions, the bitterness of our wisdom and the deceptive consolation of our folly.[29]

Though Conrad here emphasizes the common folly and illusion of all men, his fictional treatment of the native characters is quite different from that of the white men. They may all be intense egoists and the source of their moral corruption may be the same, but the natives are never allowed to be aware of the fact that they live in a world of illusions. Almayer and Willems, after a stormy life of frustration and bitterness, at least attain some self-knowledge in the end. For instance, after yielding again to Aïssa's intensely sexual seduction in the night, Willems emerges in this situation the following morning:

> He looked without seeing anything--thinking of himself. Before his eyes the light of the rising

> sun burst above the forest with the suddenness of an explosion. He saw nothing. Then, after a time, he murmured with conviction--speaking half aloud to himself in the shock of the penetrating thought:
>
> "I am a lost man."
>
> He shook his hand above his head in a gesture careless and tragic, then walked down into the mist that closed above him in shining undulations under the first breath of the morning breeze (p. 340).

Kurtz, Jim, and Lingard, who pursue their ego ideals with a noble purpose, have all experienced some sense of defeat and the unreality of their visions. Kurtz's last words, "The horror! The horror!" are a moral cry, a painful exclamation of his dark experience. They are uttered, as Marlow puts it, in a "supreme moment of complete knowledge" (p. 149). Jim at last realizes that there is nothing in this world worth fighting for, not even his life. And Lingard is eventually brought back from his world of romantic dreams to the cold and dark world of reality. They all in their varied ways arrive at a moment when they are made aware of their own limitations and of the futility of their strife. There are no such lucid and self-knowing moments in the lives of the natives, although they too must suffer and endure the burden of life. Arsat characteristically says at the end: "I can

see nothing" (p. 203). His situation strongly resembles that of Willems. But unlike Willems, he is not aware that he is "a lost man." Instead, he asserts: "In a little while I shall see clear enough to strike--to strike" (p. 203). And Karain apparently continues to live in his splendid world of illusions.

By refusing this self-knowledge to the native characters, Conrad's basic assumption is that the natives are culturally not able to understand the moral implications of their activities. They are not intelligent and imaginative enough to see their activities in terms of human relationship. They live in a world where there is no moral code or principles of conduct. They are men "who take what they want." Unlike the white protagonists who are able, despite their inadequate visions, to discover the spiritual values in their own forms of activity, the natives only know their own needs and desires. Since the motives that drive them about are simple and overt, their problems do not have a universal appeal; and since they are not capable of self scrutinizing, they remain unaware of the truth of their existence. Consequently no matter how painful their lives may appear to be, they fail to move the reader because they lack a sense of tragedy. As Conrad remarks: "What makes mankind tragic is not that they are the victims of nature, it is that they are conscious of it. To be part of the animal kingdom under the conditions of this earth is very well--but as soon as you know of your

slavery the pain, the anger, the strife--the tragedy begins."[30] The natives apparently are not conscious of the fact that they are the slaves of their natures. Whatever feeling a reader may have for them, he gets from the reactions of the white characters rather than from the natives' own experiences. Because of their lack of moral and psychological complexity, it is a serious disadvantage to use the natives as protagonists. Perhaps for this reason Conrad, who was primarily interested in the hidden motives and the moral ambivalence of man's action, could not write a fiction wholly concerned with the native people, despite his genuine sympathy for them.

CHAPTER V

LORD JIM: THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT OF CONRAD'S EASTERN FICTION

1.

Lord Jim is noted for its structural division into two parts: Patna and Patusan. Perhaps Conrad himself was chiefly responsible for the prominent attention paid by critics to this aspect of the novel, since he wrote in his Author's Note that his "first thought was of a short story, concerned only with the pilgrim ship episode; nothing more." It was later, when approached by William Blackwood for a story for Maga, Conrad "perceived that the pilgrim ship episode was a good starting-point for a free and wandering tale" (p. viii). Also in November 1900, in response to Edward Garnett's criticism of the novel, Conrad wrote: "You've put your finger on the plague spot. The division of the book into two parts. . . . I admit I stood for a great triumph and I have only succeeded in giving myself utterly away. Nobody'll see it, but you have detected me falling back into my lump of clay."[1] Being aware of what Conrad has said about the genesis of the novel and what he felt about its structural division, one is not surprised to find that many commentators have

observed that the novel begins superbly but slacks off. They are generally of the opinion that the first part dealing with Jim's introspective and ambiguous response to the Patna incident is Conrad's best writing, but the second part with his adventurous "second chance" in Patusan is an "eking out," which does not develop or enrich the central interest of the book.[2]

Although the Patusan material is entirely different, it is by no means a belated addition. As Alexander Janta has pointed out in his comparative study of Conrad's notebook and the beginning of the finished novel, when Conrad wrote the first words of the novel in his grandmother's album, "he already had an awareness of the entire scope of the two part story, comprising both the Patna episode and its consequence--Patusan."[3] But as an aesthetic-intuitive writer who worked without an elaborate plan, Conrad certainly did not know the exact nature of the development and conclusion of the novel. Thomas Moser has claimed that a crucial moment in the writing of Lord Jim "occurred shortly after a letter of February 12, 1900, in which Conrad states flatly that, with twenty chapters finished, he will need only two more to complete the story. Since Chapter Twenty concerns Marlow's visit to Stein, Conrad must still, at so late a date, not have decided to develop fully Jim's life in Patusan. It is hard to imagine how there could have been

a Gentleman Brown, or even Jim's death."[4]

Conrad first planned to finish the novel in September 1899,[5] and towards the end of 1899 he had become frequently apologetic in his correspondence with William Blackwood and David Meldrum for his "unduly lengthening contribution." He repeatedly assured them that Lord Jim would be completed by the end of that year,[6] since it was the publisher's desire to see an early conclusion of Jim so that the length of the story would be appropriate for Maga. Viewed in this light, the letter singled out by Moser is not the only one that indicates a crucial moment in the writing of the novel. But all these letters point to the fact that the course of Conrad's story was unpredictable and that writing was never easy for him. He experienced great difficulty in every thing he wrote, and this difficulty lay mainly in his desire to communicate intimately with the reader. He said in the famous Preface to The Nigger of the "Narcissus" in 1897: "All art . . . appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses . . . . My task, which I am trying to achieve, is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel--it is, before all, to make you see" (p. ix-x). Since this was the prime aim of Conrad's art he conceived his stories not as sequences of events properly recorded in their chronological

order, but as series of seemingly unconnected episodes arranged and expressed in such a way that they would give the reader an intellectual and emotional experience. The "unconventional grouping and perspective," as Conrad said, "are purely temperamental and wherein almost all my 'art' consists."[7]

Although Conrad was deeply interested in technical aspects of the novel, he was no pure craftsman. He chose to use the involved narrative method not because he wanted deliberately to be obscure and difficult but rather because he found the traditional way of telling a story inadequate to present his complex characters effectively. His innovation derived from his new insight into human relationships. As Ford Madox Ford, with whom Conrad had long discussions on the art of fiction, recorded: "For it became very early evident to us that what was the matter with the Novel, and the British Novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward. . . . You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past."[8] So even when Conrad was aware of the entire scope of his story, he was not sure of its final shape. The form of the story was fluid, depending upon the groupings which continuously shifted in order to bring forth the correct perspective,

and the desired emotional impact and significance of the various incidents. To understand Conrad's artistic aim and his creative process and the manner in which Lord Jim was first published is to better appreciate his endless anxiety in writing the novel.

Obviously serial publication posed a great threat to the final form of the novel. It is due to Conrad's integrity as an artist, as well as the publisher's tolerance and David Meldrum's literary foresight that Lord Jim is what it is today. David Meldrum wrote to William Blackwood on February 16, 1900: "On my return from Edinburgh I got a letter from Conrad that he was ill, and knowing the nervous condition of the man I delayed pressure on him to wind up 'Jim.' I am sorry that the length of 'Jim' doesn't suit Maga which I can well understand; but, on the other hand, it makes it a more important story--it is a great story now--and in the annals of Maga half a century hence it will be one of the honourable things to record of her that she entertained 'Jim.'"[9]

When Conrad wrote to Norman Douglas on February 29, 1908, advising him to try to "make a novel of analysis on the basis of some strong situation,"[10] Conrad was speaking from his own practice. This is especially true of Lord Jim, which is apparently built upon one "strong situation"--Jim's "jump." The first part of the story moves around this situation, showing various opinions on the event, especially Jim's own

attitude and reaction to his public disgrace. As Conrad has said elsewhere: "In most of my writings I insist not on the events but on their effect upon the persons in the tale."[11] The Patusan portion, though dealing with entirely new material, is a continued exhibition of Jim's case. There is virtually no division in the book. The unity of Conrad's art comes from perspective and arrangement of episodes. Lord Jim essentially concerns the life history of an enigmatic character. As Conrad said, it deals with "one situation, only one really from beginning to end."[12] The novel, however, embraces two sets of materials, a seaman's society and a native community.

2.

In all Conrad's Eastern fiction, the link between East and West is an important feature. But before Lord Jim this link is always unsatisfactorily presented. The white men and the natives cannot move beyond their mutual suspicion and hostility. Their relationships are slight and their involvements do not further reveal the kind of men they are. It is in Lord Jim that this link is effectively and harmoniously achieved.

We have a vivid presentation of the marine society in Lord Jim. Although this society is small, it comprises nationals

from many European countries. The white seamen in general are not a happy and decent lot. The omniscient author gives us an account of them when Jim leaves the hospital "at an Eastern port":

> Directly he could walk without a stick, he descended into the town to look for some opportunity to get home. Nothing offered just then, and, while waiting, he associated naturally with the men of his calling in the port. These were of two kinds. Some, very few and seen there but seldom, led mysterious lives, had preserved an undefaced energy with the temper of buccaneers and the eyes of dreamers. They appeared to live in a crazy maze of plans, hopes, dangers, enterprises, ahead of civilization, in the dark places of the sea; and their death was the only event of their fantastic existence that seemed to have a reasonable certitude of achievement. The majority were men who, like himself, thrown there by some accident, had remained as officers of country ships. They had now a horror of the home service, with its harder conditions, severer view of duty, and the hazard of stormy oceans. They were attuned to the eternal peace of Eastern sky and sea. They loved short passages, good deck-chairs, large native

> crews, and the distinction of being white. They shuddered at the thought of hard work, and led precariously easy lives, always on the verge of dismissal, always on the verge of engagement, serving Chinamen, Arabs, half-castes--would have served the devil himself had he made it easy enough. They talked ever-lastingly of turns of luck . . . and in all they said--in their actions, in their looks, in their persons--could be detected the soft spot, the place of decay, the determination to lounge safely through existence (pp. 12-13).

But this is not the whole picture. Wandering in their midst, there are men whose consciences are still alive, men like Archie Ruthvel who gives a lecture on "official morality" (p. 38), Captain Brierley who asserts the supreme importance of "professional decency" (p. 68), the French Lieutenant who expresses his strong belief in "personal honour" (p. 148), and Marlow's "privileged" friend who declares that "we must fight in the ranks or our lives don't count" (p. 339). All these scattered voices serve to form a kind of moral chorus which represents social values and ideals. The central force of moral values certainly resides in Marlow who represents the marine community, the values of "an obscure body of men

held together by a community of inglorious toil and by fidelity to a certain standard of conduct" (p. 50).

As a contrast to this active world where man faces many hardships and dangers, Conrad gives an ironical portrayal of Jim's native land where people live in a secluded world, complacent and untested. Jim's parsonage is an abode "of piety and peace" (p. 5). His home environment with the little church on the hill and the rectory below amidst the flower-beds and fir trees is a sort of idyllic garden, where nothing has penetrated sufficiently to disturb "the ease of mind" of a placid population. Jim's father, the old parson, living in this untroubled corner of the universe, can complacently talk of all the virtues of morality. As Marlow observes:

> The old chap goes on equably trusting Providence and the established order of the universe, but alive to its small dangers and its small mercies. One can almost see him, grey-haired and serene in the inviolable shelter of his book-lined, faded, and comfortable study, where for forty years he had conscientiously gone over and over again the round of his little thoughts about faith and virtue, about the conduct of life and the only proper manner of dying . . . . He hopes his 'dear James'

> will never forget that "who once gives way to temptation, in the very instant hazards his total depravity and everlasting ruin. Therefore resolve fixedly never, through any possible motives, to do anything which you believe to be wrong" (pp. 341-42).

Jim is caught up in these two worlds, a world of professional discipline and a world of rigid morality. Neither is imaginative or flexible enough to comprehend the true nature of Jim's problems. Perhaps no one except Marlow really attempts to understand Jim. He becomes an exile both from the marine society and from his home land where he feels he can never return. His father must have seen "it all in the home papers by this time. I can never face the poor old chap. I could never explain. He wouldn't understand" (p. 79). A great deal of the novel's emotion derives from the fact that not only was Jim difficult to understand but also he was constantly misunderstood.

Of all Conrad's Eastern fictions, Lord Jim is the only one rich in social texture. We know very little about the backgrounds of Almayer, Willems, and Lingard, the uprooted men without a tradition; but we are well informed of Jim's family, the conditions of his upbringing, and his professional training at sea. Although this information is presented in a fragmented manner, taken together it represents

a moral world in which Jim is deeply rooted and whose values he is expected to uphold. Moreover, as a marine officer he belongs in a stern tradition of duty. He is a champion of faith in the community of mankind. "We exist only in so far as we hang together," Marlow declares (p. 233). Perhaps this is part of the reason why Jim, while a distinct character in his own right, is presented as a symbol of English courage and honesty. As Marlow says of him: "I liked his appearance; I knew his appearance; he came from the right place; he was one of us. He stood there for all the parentage of his kind, for men and women . . . whose very existence is based upon honest faith, and upon the instinct of courage" (p. 43). Later Marlow is more specific in referring to Jim's symbolic features: "He dominated the forest, the secular gloom, the old mankind. He was like a figure set up on a pedestal, to represent in his persistent youth the power, and perhaps the virtues, of races that never grow old, that have emerged from the gloom. I don't know why he should always have appeared to me symbolic. Perhaps this is the real cause of my interest in his fate" (p. 265).

The first part of Lord Jim, centering around the Patna incident, shows Jim's case in a moral and social context. Its appeal lies in Jim's extraordinary notion about himself and the intolerable society in which he lives. "The mystery of his attitude," said Marlow, "got hold of me as though

he had been an individual in the forefront of his kind" (p. 93). He is a seaman exiled from the sea, a white man driven away from white society. His exalted egoism and his "acute consciousness of lost honour"[13] make him unwilling and unable to go home. He wanders about in the waterfront society, "like a ghost without a home to haunt" (p. 82). He drifts from job to job, abandoning career, security, even daily bread whenever the ghost from his past turns up. Eventually through Stein he is sent to Patusan, a native community in the wilderness.

Patusan is cut off from the rest of the world by thirty miles of forest. But it is so different from the outside world that Marlow compares it to a "distant heavenly body," and adds that if Stein had sent Jim "into a star of the fifth magnitude the change could not have been greater" (p. 218). However, for a reader coming from Conrad's first two novels, Patusan is a familiar place. It is another version of Sambir in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, with the same treacherous river and dark forest. The settlers in Patusan, like those in Sambir, are divided, and as always trade is the cause of the factional war between the native Malays and the immigrant Bugis. The Malay Raja terrorizes the surrounding countryside to force all produce from the interior to be marketed through his hands, but the more "intelligent, enterprising, revengeful" Bugis, under the

leadership of Doramin, challenge his monopoly. This trying situation, also like that in Sambir, is intensified by the arrival of an Arab half-caste, Sherif Ali, who leads a tribe of Dyaks and exploits the conflict for his own ends. As Marlow learns from Jim later "there wasn't a week without some fight in Patusan at that time" (p. 255). Although Conrad's knowledge of the native peoples could not move beyond these basic facts, the native materials in Lord Jim are much better imagined and are used for an intrinsic aesthetic effect.

In Conrad's early Eastern fiction, the native intrigue is the main cause of the white protagonist's downfall, and the sinister landscape is used to dramatize his fallen state. One serves to develop the plot, and the other to solicit emotion. Both are used to show the protagonist as a victim in an alien world. But both the native people and the locale are set apart from the protagonist who lives in a world of his own. His dealings with the native people are rare and scanty. He dreams and perishes alone, and his death has no effect upon the native life. Apparently Conrad's imagination was determined by the actual life of a place that he knew well. Although he was keenly interested in human drama, his approach was like that of an anthropologist, aiming at objective realities. On this account, in his first two novels much space is devoted to description of the landscape

and to delineation of the native characters who play as important a part as their white counterparts. In Lord Jim Conrad has mastered the art of the narrative and he can put his limited knowledge of the East to the best artistic use. As Cunninghame Graham observes: "When Conrad wrote Lord Jim he had come to his full powers. His experiences in the Eastern Seas had settled themselves in his mind, and from his stores he was able to handle and select."[14] Now the native material is so well imagined and under control that it completely fuses with the general design and the overriding theme of the novel. The objective reality of Patusan is not as important as the psychological consistency of Jim as a character. Unlike the native materials in the earlier novels which are important in their own right, nothing is important and meaningful in Lord Jim without being related to Jim's enigmatic career. Dain Maroola, Babalatchi, Abdulla, and Aïssa hold our imagination and interest as vivid individuals, but Doramin, Dain Waris, and Jewel exist only in their relations to Jim. Jim's character looms so large that everything is connected with him. It is therefore not surprising that in spite of the rich native milieu in Patusan, the natives have little direct dealings among themselves. For the reader, Patusan is a remote place where Jim is fully trusted and loved, and it ceases to exist when he ceases to be so. One can well imagine the kind of life in Sambir

without Almayer or Willems, but one can hardly visualize it in Patusan once Jim is gone.

Jim is a failure among the realists in the world of "order and progress." In order to present Jim the romantic dreamer as a success, Conrad has to depict Patusan as a dream world, a land under the moon where the natives are "like people in a book" (p. 260). Jim is shown as a mythical hero, unfailing and invincible. Among the natives, he is a "creature not only of another kind but of another essence" (p. 229). His arrival at Patusan is a great blessing to the native people and there is a legend among them that "the tide had turned two hours before its time to help him on his journey up the river" (p. 242). In Marlow's oral account of his one-month stay in Patusan, the scenes are mostly laid at night . Marlow's long talks with Jim take place "after we had watched the moon float away above the chasm between the hills like an ascending spirit out of a grave; its sheen descended, cold and pale, like the ghost of dead sunlight" (p. 245). His uneasy encounters with Jewel and with Cornelius also occur during the nights. Even in broad daylight when Jim takes him to see the Raja Allen or Jim's "historic hill," Marlow emphasizes the dream-like quality of Jim's world. He is more explicit about this in his description of his journey out: "At the first bend of the river shutting off the houses of Patusan, all this dropped out of my sight bodily, with its

colour, its design, and its meaning, like a picture created by fancy on a canvas, upon which, after long contemplation, you turn your back for the last time. . . . I have turned away from the picture and was going back to the world where events move, men change, light flickers, life flows in a clear stream . . ." (p. 330). Yet in spite of this world of shadow, Marlow has no doubt of Jim's true existence and his unquestionable success. "Jim by my side looked very stalwart, as though nothing--not even the occult power of moonlight--could rob him of his reality in my eyes" (p. 246). Perhaps for this reason Marlow can assert that "Jim, for whom alone I cared, had at last mastered his fate" (p. 324).

Since Patusan is presented by Marlow as a dream world, every thing is possible there, including Jim's heroic dream. We accept Jim's easy escape from the Rajah's stockade, his complete acceptance by the Bugis people, his fantastic victory over the forces led by Sherif Ali, his invulnerability in face of Cornelius's vicious threat and murderous plot, and his excessive romance with Jewel, "like knight and maiden meeting to exchange vows amongst haunted ruins" (p. 312). He is the champion of the poor and the oppressed, and an embodiment of justice. In short, he is presented as such a godlike figure that we are convinced of his own repeated claim: "Nothing can touch me." Marlow leaves Patusan after he has witnessed Jim majestically established in the hearts

of the native people. The aesthetic effect of this dream-like world is to put Jim's extraordinary success beyond a doubt. As the omniscient author observes at the end of Marlow's oral narrative: "Men drifted off the verandah in pairs or alone without loss of time, without offering a remark, as if the last image of that incomplete story, its incompleteness itself, and the very tone of the speaker, had made discussion vain and comment impossible" (p. 337).

3.

At the end of Marlow's oral narrative, we have seen Jim the disgraceful failure and Jim the brilliant success. The difference between failure and success is apparently great, but the essential Jim remains a mystery, because his real attitudes towards his failure or success and the true motives of his actions always elude us. We cannot point to the exact cause that impels Jim to Patusan, since we do not know exactly how he feels and thinks about his impulsive jump. In the words of George Thomson: "Does Jim reflect most on a crime committed or an opportunity lost? Does he reflect most on shame or guilt, on how the world sees him or on how he sees himself? These questions may be probed in some of the incidents but they are neither defined nor resolved by the plot."[15] In the same way, we cannot say why Jim will never leave Patusan. Is it

because of his responsibility or because of his self-indulgence? Is it a gesture of his inability to face the outside world or his proud disdain of it? We cannot be sure. But we see that in both failure and success, Jim is basically the same, proud and isolated in his milieu and inscrutable at heart.[16] It is significant that Marlow's last view of him is a white figure standing "at the heart of a vast enigma . . . a tiny white speck, that seemed to catch all the light left in a darkened world" (p 336).

The last episode of Jim's story is conveyed by another mode of narrative. Here Marlow began to write to a "privileged" friend more than two years later. Referring to the new method of narrative in the last nine chapters, R. G. Jocobs observes that it lacks authority, because "Marlow insists upon his expertise as a witness no longer. What he collects there is for the most part hearsay. . . . He can only repeat, 'They say.'"[17] My own feeling is just the opposite. It seems to me that Conrad is more brilliant and successful in presenting Jim's failure and death than in presenting his success in Patusan. Although it is through the eyes of the dying Gentleman Brown and the exiled Tamb' Itam, Jewel, and the unnamed Malay that Marlow, and so we the readers, have the last look at Jim, it is Marlow whose opinions eventually count because all points of views are presented to us through Marlow's point of view. As he says: "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" (p. 343). He frequently comments upon the others' points of view and arranges the details of the last event of Jim's life in such a way that he in effect controls our emotion and response.

Some new qualities are notable in the last portion about Patusan. It is more dramatic and lucid. Patusan is no longer a misty land under the moonlight, and its people no longer exist "under an enchanter's wand" (p. 330). Here events move and men change. The natives react realistically and forcefully to the surprise landing of Gentleman Brown. The village headmen meet at once to discuss the situation. Dain Waris, supported by Jewel, wants immediate and vigorous action to settle the business at hand. But his people are too much for him. They want to wait for the return of their white lord. Here again Marlow emphasizes Jim's unique position. Although Dain Waris can fight like a white man, "he had not Jim's racial prestige and the reputation of invincible, supernatural power. He was not the visible, tangible incarnation of unfailing truth and unfailing victory. Beloved, trusted, and admired as he was, he was still one of them, while Jim was one of us" (p. 316). The new situation also brings out the inherently deceitful and treacherous nature

of the native people. Kassim, the "accomplished diplomatist and confidant of the Rajah" (p. 364), who dislikes the Bugis and hates "the new order of things" created by Jim, begins at once to intrigue with Brown, hoping that with the new allies the Rajah's followers can defeat the Bugis. Kassim is as intelligent and energetic as the one-eye statesman Babalatchi. But Brown is more interested in what he has heard about Jim from Cornelius. "For doing a real stroke of business he could not help thinking the white man was the person to work with" (p. 369).

The encounter between Jim and Brown is the most dramatic moment of the whole book. Two characters of entirely different backgrounds and experiences confront each other. All along we have witnessed Jim's innocence and his potential nobility. Now a "show ruffian" who has bullied the world "for twenty years with fierce, aggressive disdain" sails into Jim's history (p. 354). Yet the subtlety lies in their similarities rather than differences. Brown is particularly intelligent and cunning in his insinuating of Jim's guilt:

> "Have we met to tell each other the story of our lives?" I asked him. "Suppose you begin. No? Well, I am sure I don't want to hear. Keep it to yourself. I know it is no better than mine. I've lived--and so did you though you talk as if you were one of

> those people that should have wings so as to go about without touching the dirty earth. Well--it is dirty. I haven't got any wings. I am here because I was afraid once in my life. Want to know what of? Of a prison. That scares me, and you may know it--if it's any good to you. I won't ask you what scared you into this infernal hole, where you seem to have found pretty pickings. That's your luck and this is mine--the privilege to beg for the favour of being shot quickly, or else kicked out to go free and starve in my own way" (p. 383).

This rough talk completely paralizes Jim's spirit. It has "a vein of subtle reference to their common blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common guilt, of secret knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts" (p. 387). Jim cannot fight with Brown, because he cannot judge Brown without judging himself. The feeling of his past guilt is still strong in him. It not only unnerves him at this critical moment but also distorts his judgement of men. When Jewel asks him if those white men are very bad, he says after some hesitation: "Men act badly sometimes without being much worse than others" (p. 394).

In a letter to William Blackwood on July 19, 1900, Conrad summed up the last portion of the novel very well:

"The end of Lord Jim in accordance with a meditated resolve is presented in a bare almost bald relation of matters of fact. The situation--the problem if you will--of that sensitive nature has been already commented upon, illustrated and contrasted. It is my opinion that in the working out of the catastrophe psychologic disquisition should have no place."[18] But these "matters of fact" are related with such intelligence and sensitivity that the reader is captivated and moved. Although in this last part the narrative style is lucid and straightforward and the Patusan landscape is clear and solid, the motivation of Jim's final act of giving himself up to Doramin remains ambiguous. Jim's three short answers to Jewel's questions, after Brown's treacherous act has destroyed the people's trust and confidence in their white lord, are most thought-provoking. They are: "There is nothing to fight for, nothing is lost" (p. 412), "There is no escape" (p. 412), and "Nothing can touch me" (p. 413). On the surface, all these answers are contrary to the actual facts. Apparently a great deal has been lost and Jim's life is at a stake. Certainly there is escape, as Jewel and Tamb' Itam prove. And of course he can be touched. But these eventualities are not the matters Jim is concerned with. We wonder what is his final view of himself and of the world at this critical moment of his life. Perhaps Marlow is right in saying that "of all mankind Jim had no dealings but with himself" (p. 339). Then what is the

significance of Jim's "last proud and unflinching glance" at all those faces? (p. 416) Why does he use his hand to cover his lips before he falls forward dead? What does he want to say at the last moment of his life? Some confession or indictment?

In discussing Jim's enigmatic character, critics have often pointed to Stein's famous speech: "A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns . . . . No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up" (p. 214). So, for some critics, Jim's extraordinary career in Patusan is an illustration of Stein's advice: to immerse himself in the "destructive element" of ego-ideal, "To follow the dream, and again to follow the dream . . ." (p. 215). Yet Stein's authority on the subject of Jim is certainly undercut by Marlow's insistence that Stein is a romantic himself. At the end of Stein's diagnosis on Jim's case, Marlow comments:

> The whisper of his conviction seemed to open before me a vast and uncertain expanse, as of a crepuscular horizon on a plain at dawn--or was it, perchance, at the coming of the night? One had not the courage

> to decide; but it was a charming and deceptive light, throwing the impalpable poesy of its dimness over pitfalls--over graves. His life had begun in sacrifice, in enthusiasm for generous ideas; he had travelled very far, on various ways, on strange paths, and whatever he followed it had been without faltering, and therefore without shame and without regret. In so far he was right. That was the way, no doubt. Yet for all that the great plain on which men wander amongst graves and pitfalls remained very desolate under the impalpable poesy of its crepuscular light, overshadowed in the centre, circled with a bright edge as if surrounded by an abyss full of flames. When at last I broke the silence it was to express the opinion that no one could be more romantic than himself (p. 215).

Marlow apparently shows respect for his "learned" friend, "a naturalist of some distinction," "one of the most trustworthy men I had ever known" (p. 202). Nevertheless, he is aware of Stein's limited outlook on life:

> "'Man is amazing, but he is not a masterpiece,' he said, keeping his eyes fixed on the glass case. 'Perhaps the artist was a little mad. Eh? What do

you think? Sometimes it seems to me that man is come where he is not wanted, where there is no place for him; for if not, why should he want all the place? Why should he run about here and there making a great noise about himself, talking about the stars, disturbing the blades of grass? . . .'

"'Catching butterflies,' I chimed in (p. 208).

This is not to say that we must reject Stein's opinions on Jim. His collection of butterflies and beetles, two symbols of human conditions, enhances the meaning of the book in a variety of ways. But it is a mistake to say that Marlow entirely agrees with Stein's judgement of Jim, primarily because to Marlow Jim is much more a positive character than Stein would allow. Stein's description of man and his dream is strongly fatalistic, if not wholly negative. To my way of thinking, Stein functions more as an agent of the plot than a philosopher interpreting the theme of the novel. What interests Marlow and the reader most is that Jim "had the gift of finding a special meaning in everything that happened to him" (p. 304), and yet that "special meaning" perpetually eludes us. We cannot say whether Jim's final surrender to Doramin is a suicide to satisfy his exalted ideal of conduct or a punishment for his excessive romanticism. Does his death redeem his former failure or repeat it? In most novels, a

judgement is arrived at with the death of the protagonist. Death is an end and a resolution to all the problems the protogonist raises. This is not the case with Lord Jim. Marlow declares at the end of the story: "I confirm nothing." The sceptical "privileged man" does not make any further remark. And the omniscient narrator never appears again. The novel, like Jim, "passes away under a cloud," its tensions unresolved. Its enduring interest lies in its problems rather than its solutions. So Lord Jim is a novel, to use Conrad's own words, "with an obscure beginning and an unfathomable dénouement."[19]

4.

The introduction of Marlow makes a distinct division between chapters Four and Five of Lord Jim in terms of narration. The first four chapters, told by the omniscient author, have all the marks of a traditional novel. Except for the first three paragraphs of Chapter One which depict the protagonist's physical appearance and vaguely touch on his hopeless situations in various Eastern ports and his unknown destiny in the virgin forest, the narrative moves in a straight chronological order: Jim's parentage, the conditions of his upbringing, two incidents in his sea training, his heroic dreams, the Patna voyage up to the

moment when the ship is suddenly jarred by a submerged wreck, and the courtroom scene with Jim in the witness-box in Chapter Four. Then the omniscient author leaves the book. From Chapter Five to the end, Marlow as an inner character takes over the narrative.

For the students of Conrad, Marlow is no stranger. He has appeared earlier in "Youth" and "Heart of Darkness." He has a mind so contemplative and analytic that we are deeply interested in whatever he says. In "Youth," Marlow looks back upon his younger days with a mixed feeling of regret and relief. In "Heart of Darkness," he gives a full account of his search for a profession and his encounter with Kurtz in the dark continent. In both stories Marlow is the main character. They are meditations on his unusual experiences. Both stories have a straight unbroken narrative order. There are no gaps or leaps in the time sequence, except those arising casually from the storyteller's later reflections on his experience. Marlow the narrator is confident of his perception and he has a consistent moral view of the world. In Lord Jim, Marlow's meditation is still the centre of the book, but it is a meditation on another man's experience rather than his own. Here the narrative world is broken up, mixed and regrouped into scattered fragments. The narrator is not so confident of his perception and his moral view keeps shifting as he follows the unusual life of the protagonist.

In the first four chapters, Jim is portrayed with deep irony. The omniscient narrator's attitude towards the protagonist is clear. He depicts the heroic dreams of a romantic youth who cannot live up to his glamorous vision of himself. "He stood still" in time of emergency, and later felt sulky and belittled the success of others. "He felt angry with brutal tumult of the earth and sky for taking him unaware" (p. 9), rather than blaming himself for not being able to rise to the exigencies of the situation. The description of another incident during Jim's early years at sea tarnishes his heroic image. Jim is described as "always an example of devotion to duty" and as "a man destined to shine in the midst of all dangers" (p. 6). But when he is disabled by a falling spar, he is said, while nursing his wound in his cabin, to have "felt secretly glad he had not to go on deck" (p. 11). He is also said to have dreamed best of his heroic deeds when the sea was calm and the ship went well. This ironical attitude persists until Jim appears in the witness-box from where Marlow takes over the narrative.

One is tempted to ask why Marlow should appear at this point in the story. Is the omniscient narrator becoming inadequate morally and aesthetically to continue the narrative? The answer is most probably yes. In a traditional novel, the omniscient author who represents the collective wisdom of the community naturally possesses a complete knowledge of his

characters and can judge them accordingly. This is the impression a reader has from the first four chapters of Lord Jim: an ironical exposition of Jim's character. But when the narrative moves to the point of Jim's ambiguous jump and to the complex questions his action raises, the single ironical view-point of the omniscient author becomes inadequate. Jim is too subtle a character to be judged outright. So Conrad artfully introduced Marlow as the inner narrator who not only solves an intrinsic difficulty facing the omniscient author but also brings Jim's problems to the reader with great force and intimacy.

The relationship between Conrad and Marlow has been abundantly discussed.[20] Marlow is naturally an extension of Conrad's mind. When Marlow told his listeners: "He [Jim] existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you" (p. 224), we are also aware that it is only through Conrad that Marlow exists for us. But as an inner narrator-character, Marlow is capable of moral growth and flexibility as he learns more and more about Jim and his problems. Marlow's initial attitude towards Jim is in accord with that of the omniscient author. It is apparently a continuation of the latter's attitude. Marlow feels that Jim, as a marine officer who had dishonoured the marine code of conduct and who has breached the solidarity of the human community, "had no business to look so sound" (p. 40). He is

so angry at Jim's unconcerned and easy manner that he wants "to see him overwhelmed, confounded, pierced through and through, squirming like an impaled beetle" (p. 42). But once he is involved in Jim's case, Marlow becomes interested in the elusive nature of the man. He sees there is something noble and lovable in Jim, and gradually feels compassion and sympathy for him:

> It is when we try to grapple with another man's intimate need that we perceive how incomprehensible, wavering, and misty are the beings that share with us the sight of the stars and the warmth of the sun. It is as if loneliness were a hard and absolute condition of existence; the envelope of flesh and blood on which our eyes are fixed melts before the outstretched hand, and there remains only the capricious, unconsolable, and elusive spirit that no eye can follow, no hand can grasp. It was the fear of losing him that kept me silent, for it was borne upon me suddenly and with unaccountable force that should I let him slip away into the darkness I would never forgive myself (pp. 179-180).

A change of attitude from apathy and irony to sympathy and compassion can only be convincingly developed in an inner

narrator-character whose knowledge and experience keep elucidating and correcting each other in the course of the novel. He may not be much wiser, but he certainly knows a great deal more about humanity at the end than at the beginning of the book. Such a change of attitude, it seems to me, cannot be effectively realized in the omniscient author whose attitude towards his character has to be consistent in order to achieve the credibility of artistry in the novel.

It is difficult to imagine how Jim's story could have been written without Marlow. There is a strong need for him in terms of the intrinsic significance of the novel. It is not for nothing that Marlow takes over the role of the narrator when Jim appears in the witness-box at the Court of Inquiry, because for the reader the central interest of the book is how to judge Jim, not only his first "jump" but also his subsequent actions. Jim's attitude towards the Patna incident is so evasive and complex that it is totally beyond the grasp of the Court of Inquiry that aims only at facts. Marlow humanizes Jim's case. He listens to various opinions on Jim from men of the same calling, and solicits the views of others. He tosses about these opinions, commenting and suggesting, but uncommitted himself. He raises many questions and doubts about Jim's conduct and turns his problems into a challenge to the reader's judgement.

To face this challenge is to immerse oneself in an intensely emotional and intellectual reading experience.

Marlow not only humanizes Jim's case, engaging the reader in his psycho-moral drama, but also provides artistic unity for the "free and wandering tale." As a seaman, it is natural that Marlow should attend Jim's trial, because the Patna affair was so "notorious" that "everybody connected in any way with the sea was there" (p. 35). The bulk of Jim's story is built upon the ingenious groupings of various opinions. Marlow in his active life as a sailor fully convinces us of the ways he gleaned these opinions. For instance, we never doubt the situations in which he met the French Lieutenant in Australia and the dying Gentleman Brown in Bangkok. His talks with these two men are the most effective and intense moments in the novel though both locations are far away from the central scenes of the drama. As a thoughtful and compassionate man, it is natural that Marlow should be actively concerned with Jim, since he repeatedly claims that Jim is "one of us." Consequently, when friendship and business should send him to Patusan two years later, he is able to witness first-hand Jim's life and achievement in the walls of the forest. It is therefore clear that the intrinsic material of the novel calls for an inner narrator like Marlow who provides the structural unity for the fragmentations of the settings, and who brings

to us, in a palpable and vivid manner, the enigmatic career of the protagonist.

5.

Lord Jim is a principal landmark in Conrad's literary career. It is his highest achievement in utilizing his Eastern materials. The novel is also noteworthy for its moral and psychological complexities and its technical excellence. The relationship between the content and the technique is the most delicate one in literary art. In novels of the highest artistic order, the two are inseparable: the nature of the content determines the kind of technique required and the kind of technique gives the content its unique significance. However, for some critics, Conrad is just an ingenious craftsman. His views of man and the universe are quite simple. For instance, David Daiches observes: "All Conrad's heroes and villians are highly simple persons, with few dominating virtues and vices: the subtlety is in the method, not in the subject to which the method is applied."[21] It is true that Conrad was deeply preoccupied with the technical aspect of his work. In a long letter to William Blackwood, as a response to George Blackwood's unfavourable remark on the first part of "The End of the Tether," Conrad expounded, rather heatedly, his narrative

method: "I know exactly what I am doing. Mr. George Blackwood's incidental remark in his last letter that the story is not fairly begun yet is in a measure correct but, on a large view, beside the point. For, the writing is as good as I can make it (first duty), and in the light of the final incident, the whole story in all its descriptive detail shall fall into its place--acquire its value and its significance. This is my method based on deliberate conviction. I've never departed from it." Then he went on to point out Lord Jim "where the method is fully developed," and to compare himself with modern artists like Wagner the musician, Rodin the sculptor, and Whistler the painter: "They had to suffer for being 'new'. And I too hope to find my place in the rear of my betters."[22] Although Conrad's preoccupation with technique is a fact, it is a mistake to depreciate his subject matter. However great a writer's technical ingenuity may be, he cannot turn plain and humdrum stuff into a profound work of art that will touch the hearts and the minds of his readers. As Conrad well observes: "Technical perfection, unless there is some real glow to illuminate and warm it from within, must necessarily be cold."[23] In Conrad's work that real glow comes from the significant and subtle issues embedded in his material.

The vitality of Lord Jim is primarily due to the fact that there is much "glow" in it. It has a mass of diverse and episodic detail that illustrates man in his utmost variety

and complexity. Every incident is assimilated into a pattern of overall significance centering upon Jim's life--a life obscure and enigmatic and yet one that persistently claims some importance in an indifferent universe. Jim lives intensely and nobly. His actions warm our hearts for the human possibility and his failures focus our minds on the human dilemma. Critics have often noted Conrad's pessimistic view of the world. Albert Guerard, for instance, reads the best Conrad as the work of "a tragic pessimist."[24] It is true that over and over again Conrad depicts life as an illusion by showing the futility of man's struggle, but there is nothing inherently depressing in his work. Life is a spectacle, he asserts, which might arouse any kind of emotion, but not despair.[25] He also said: "The aim of art . . . like life, is inspiring."[26] These are the feelings we actually derive from our reading of the novel. For a writer who had a never-waning interest in the motives that keep men alive and who always approached his task "in the spirit of love for mankind"[27] could not be a thorough pessimist. One can rightly say that Conrad was an optimist by instinct and a pessimist by conviction. He was at his best when he showed the tragic side of man's existence and at the same time insisted upon the positive meaning of his activity. In this respect, what he said of Anatole France can aptly be applied to himself:

He knows that our best hopes are irrealisable; that it is the almost incredible misfortune of mankind, but also its highest privilege, to aspire towards the impossible; that men have never failed to defeat their highest aims by the very strength of their humanity which can conceive the most gigantic tasks but leaves them disarmed before their irremediable littleness. . . . He wishes us to believe and to hope, preserving in our activity the consoling illusion of power and intelligent purpose.[28]

Conclusion

"The more I go, the less confidence in myself I feel. There are days when I suspect myself of inability to put a sentence together: and other days I am positively incapable to invent anything that could be put into a sentence. Gone are, alas! those fine days of Alm: Folly when I wrote with serene audacity of an unsophisticated fool. I am getting more sophisticated from day to day. And more uncertain! I am more conscious of my unworthiness and also of my desire of perfection . . . which is so unattainable."[1] Although Conrad wrote the above passage as early as 1896, after the publication of An Outcast of the Islands, it sums up very well the seriousness with which he took his art.

It is an exaggeration on the part of Conrad to state that he wrote his first novel "with serene audacity of an unsophisticated fool,"[2] but he was apparently becoming more and more conscious and self-demanding in his works after the second novel. His uncertainty and his desire of perfection increased so strongly that he had to put aside his next two novels, The Sisters and The Rescue. A reader can easily perceive the increasing subtlety of his art in his immediate subsequent works. This is especially well marked in the present study which confines itself to one

segment of Conrad's fiction that derived from the same source of inspiration. Although these works have similar themes of frustration and suffering, they depict a variety of human situations. Conrad skilfully utilized his Eastern experiences and observations to enlarge his vision of man from one fiction to another by revealing an increasingly complex and ambivalent moral world. In reading these novels, we have a unity of impression, but a unity holding comprehensive meanings.

A notable development of Conrad's sophistication is reflected in his moral assumptions concerning his characters. In Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, his views on the protagonists are simple and straightforward. In The Rescue and Lord Jim, his attitudes towards Lingard and Jim are complex and ambiguous. In the first two novels, he presents the folly of man's idle dream, greed, and dark desire. Almayer is introduced as a man "absorbed . . . in his dream of wealth and power away from the coast where he had dwelt for so many years, forgetting the bitterness of toil and strife in the vision of a great and splendid reward" (Almayer's Folly, p. 3). Willems is depicted as an extremely self-centered social outcast whose petty mind was continuously "weaving the splendid web of his future" (p. 11). Conrad's moral condemnation of them is obvious. They are idle and selfish men who refused to recognize the importance of honest work[3] and to take their place as responsible

members of the human community.

Lingard in The Rescue, Conrad's third Eastern novel in conception, is a more complex character. He has appeared in Conrad's first two novels where the protagonists are shallow, and Conrad's original conception of him follows the same pattern. He is first presented as Almayer's personal hero because of "the boldness and enormous profits of his venture" (Almayer's Folly, p. 8). Although he is merely a background character in Almayer's Folly, some characteristics stand out. He is arrogant, his main concerns in life being reputation and material wealth. "He spoke of his past life, of escaped dangers, of big profits in his trade, of new combinations that were in the future to bring profits bigger still" (p. 9). In persuading Almayer to marry his adopted daughter, he forestalls any possible objections from Almayer by stressing the importance of material value: "Nobody will see the colour of your wife's skin. The dollars are too thick for that, I tell you! And mind you, they will be thicker yet before I die" (p. 10).

In An Outcast of the Islands, he plays a greater role but remains essentially the same: extremely self confident, firm in purpose, and having a naive belief in what is good for others. His reaction to Willems's act of betrayal is typical. He never doubted his good intentions. When Willems confronted him with the protest: "Well, you came and dumped

me here like a load of rubbish; dumped me here and left me with nothing to do--nothing good to remember--and damn little to hope for" (p. 267), he never thought of the possibility of his responsibility for Willems's downfall. Instead he only thought of his good name: "You are not a human being that may be destroyed or forgiven. You are a bitter thought, a something without a body and that must be hidden. . . . You are my shame" (p. 275).

Lingard's responses to the human condition in The Rescue are complicated by subjective motives. He is more introspective and less confident of the correctness of his doings than in the previous novels. He is considerably puzzled by his own feelings and by his conflicting loyalties to a Malayan political cause and to the safety of his English compatriots. Although he thinks confusedly, he feels strongly about his moral obligation to others. His failures deserve our sympathy because his problems are weighty and also because he is a serious idealist. While Almayer and Willems are sunk in the mud of their desires, Lingard is, in Conrad's words, "undone by a glimpse of Paradise" (p. 449). This does not make him a more realized character than Almayer or Willems, but it does mean that he experiences a greater self awareness in this novel than in the other two. In the end he not only perceives the insignificance of his good name which he has so fiercely cherished and protected but also the darkness

of the world: "I have just come back to life and it has closed on me colder and darker than the grave itself" (p. 444).

With Lord Jim Conrad has reached the most complex vision of man and his place in the world. He is no longer interested in foolish dreamers after wealth, nor is he interested in the destructive power of woman. He is instead engrossed in the amazing range of man's capability and in the mysterious motives of man's action. Although Jim is in a sense a dreamer, his dream is of another kind that exalts the human spirit rather than stifles it. He is seemingly a simple man but the problems raised by his actions are complex and profound. He is at once dreamer, realist, coward, and hero, one who both upholds and violates the moral standards that give life its dignity and meaning and society its continuity and coherence. The duality of his personality and the contradictions implicit in his actions constitute the enigma of the novel. With Lord Jim Conrad's attitude towards life is considerably modified. Although he remains pessimistic and sceptical about man's activity, he becomes more courageous and profoundly human in his handling of man's dilemma.

Parallel to this increasing profundity in thematic content, there is an increasing subtlety in Conrad's artistry. The latter development is inevitable since the level of awareness of Conrad's fiction is so intimately bound up with

his technique. As his vision of human affairs becomes more and more complex, the conventional method of telling a story in chronological order becomes inadequate for his purpose. He needs a complex narrative frame in which he can fully explore the mystery of man's nature. In this frame, the time sequence is deliberately broken up and episodes are ingeniously arranged to present multiple viewpoints and a pattern of parallels and contrasts. This method first emerges in The Rescue, but it does not work out successfully. Nevertheless, the figure of Jörgenson is a significant development in this respect. His tragic fate foreshadows the outcome of Lingard's venture, and his role as an inner observer, who comments and questions the wisdom of Lingard's actions, anticipates the important part played by Marlow in Conrad's fiction. Such an involuted method is fully developed in Lord Jim where every character, even the most minor, is used to enlarge and deepen Jim's personality, and every action is keyed to some profound moral problem.

The most significant development lies in the way Conrad assimilated his Eastern material. From first to last Conrad viewed the Eastern setting with its dark jungle and sinister inhabitants as an area suitable for dramatizing the downfall of alien white men. But he was also deeply interested in the native way of life, with its cunning intrigues and folly. His keen observation and poetic insight into native mentality

enabled him to create such vivid characters like Babalatchi, Lakamba, and Arsat. He was especially fascinated by the mystery of tropical nature, and found the menacing jungle expressive of his peculiar view of sexuality. However his Eastern experience was limited, and the link between East and West was not satisfactorily worked out until he came to write Lord Jim. In Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, and The Rescue, the native material is an interest in its own right; it is not wholly absorbed into the thematic unity. In the Eastern short stories the case is similar, especially in "Karain: A Memory." In Lord Jim Conrad has mastered the art of writing fiction, and he displays a superb control of his material. Here episodes, scenes, and images are fully integrated to express the enigma of Jim's extraordinary character. The native material is interesting and significant only when it is related to his unusual career.

Coupled with this indissoluble imaginative unity, there is the vitality and precision of the language. Unlike Conrad's first novels where prolixity and redundancy of description impair the movement of the plot, Lord Jim is written with a sustained intensity that enables the reader to enter a world of human struggle and love where he begins, as Conrad intended, to hear, to feel, to see. It is the greatest achievement of Conrad's Eastern fiction, putting his experience, observation, and reading about the East to

the best artistic use. With Lord Jim, Conrad had almost exhausted his Eastern material. In the next novel, he felt "a subtle change in the nature of the inspiration"[4] and dealt with a new subject matter.

Two convictions emerge strongly in Conrad's Eastern fiction and are emphasized in this study. The first is that life is an illusion. Man by nature is not able to understand the true state of his existence. But unlike the passive pessimist or predestinationist, Conrad favours the man of action. His admirable characters are those who can act in a trying situation and who have a delight in their own capacities, although their actions invariably lead to despair and self destruction. It is only in action that man can retain his identity and find a sense of his independent existence.

The other conviction is that art must be deeply rooted in life. Conrad emphatically states: "Fiction is history, human history, or it is nothing. But it is also more than that, it stands on firmer ground, being based on the reality of forms and the observation of social phenomena, whereas history is based on documents, and the reading of print and hand-writing--on second-hand impression. Thus fiction is nearer truth."[5] This is no exaggeration. A reader can easily feel the immediacy and vividness of Conrad's reconstruction of experience. But what makes him a great artist is his

persistent urge to seek the meaning of that life he experienced and observed through the amazing power of his imagination and memory. Few writers loved life and the meaning of life with so much compassion and despair as he did. It is this uniting of actuality with ripest reflection that gives Conrad's Eastern fiction its strength and appeal.

Footnotes

Introduction

1. Conrad himself always thought of his writings as falling into certain groups or phases. See "Author's Note," Youth, Heart of Darkness, The End of the Tether, p. v; "Author's Note," The Secret Agent, pp. viii-ix; "Author's Note," Nostromo, p. xv.
2. See Norman Sherry, Conrad's Eastern World (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 18-32.
3. A Personal Record, p. 87.
4. "Author's Note," The Shadow-Line, p. vii.
5. Richard Curle, ed., Conrad to a Friend (New York: Russell and Russell, 1928), p. 153.
6. Edward Garnett, ed., Letters from Joseph Conrad (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merill Company, 1928), p. 63.
7. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Collected Essays I (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), p. 326.
8. "Author's Note," The Mirror of the Sea, p. viii.
9. "Author's Note," Typhoon and Other Stories, p. vi.
10. Glasgow Herald, 9 December 1897, p. 10.
11. Last Essays, p. 94.

12. J. A. Gee and P. J. Sturm, eds., Letter from Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 116.
13. "Author's Note," Nostromo, p. xv.
14. For an account of the sources of Conrad's Western fiction, see Norman Sherry, Conrad's Western World (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
15. "Author's Note," Under Western Eyes, p. viii.
16. It is interesting to note that only the Western fiction, commonly referred to as Conrad's political novels, has received separate critical attention and treatment, notably in Claire Rosenfield's Paradise of Snakes (1967), Avrom Fleishman's Conrad's Politics (1967), and Christopher Cooper's Conrad and the Human Dilemma (1970).
17. "Author's Note," Tales of Unrest, p. vi.

Chapter I

1. A Personal Record, p. 9.
2. Zdzislaw Najder, ed., Conrad's Polish Background (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 242, Note 3.
3. "The Jews in Joseph Conrad's Fiction," The Chicago Jewish Forum, XXII (1963), 36.
4. Conrad's Polish Background, p. 242.
5. Conrad the Novelist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 71.

6. "Introduction," Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 2.

7. Ibid., p. 2.

8. "The Trail of the Book-Worm," The Singapore Free Press, 1 September 1898, p. 142.

9. Hugh Clifford (1866-1941), a well-known colonial administrator, first served in Pahang, the most mountainous and forested of the Malay states, and was instrumental in bringing that native state under British protection. He later became the Governor of the Straits Settlements and received many titles and honours for his distinguished public services. He could read and speak the Malay language well. He has written numerous stories about the natives and their land in In Court and Kampong (1897), Studies in Brown Humanity (1898), and others. He was also the author of a translation into Malay of the penal code and with Sir Frank Swettenham the joint author of a dictionary of the Malay language.

10. "Art for Art's Sake," Two Cheers for Democracy (London: Edward Arnold, 1951), p. 101.

11. Studies in Brown Humanity (London: Grant Richards, 1898), p. 185.

12. William Blackburn, ed., Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1958), p. 34.

13. Conrad the Novelist, p. 72.

14. "Conrad Interview No. 3: Thomas B. Sherman," Conradiana, II, 3(1969-70), 122.

15. "Spencerian Assumptions in Conrad's Early Fiction," Conradiana, I, 3(1968-69), 29-40; and "Conrad's View of Primitive Peoples in Lord Jim and 'Heart of Darkness,'" Modern Fiction Studies, XVI (1970), 163-184. Referring to evolutionary theory, the former deals with the psychological differences between the primitive people and the civilized men, and claims Herbert Spencer's The Principles of Psychology (1888) and Alexander Bain's The Senses and the Intellect (1894) and The Emotions and the Will(1888) as unmistakable sources for Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands. The latter article, noting the difference in literary quality and moral perspective between Conrad's first two novels and Lord Jim, contends that there is a change in Conrad's view of primitive peoples and that this is to be attributed to the intellectual guidance of H. G. Wells and to a wide range of influences by anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers like A. R. Wallace, W. E. H. Lecky, St. George Mivart, and Edward von Hartmann. Saveson asserts that Conrad, through Wells, was familiar with the views of Intuitionists, the theory of the Unconscious, and the philosophy of German Pessimists, all current at this time.

16. G. Jean-Aubry, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters , Vol. I (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927), p. 279.
17. "An Observer in Malaya," Notes on Life and Letters, p. 60.
18. A Personal Record, p. 87.
19. Ibid., pp. 74-89.
20. Ibid., p. 9.
21. Conrad's Polish Background, p. 271.
22. Conrad seems to have a special interest in the destiny of half-cast girls. Jewel in Lord Jim is another example. But Jewel's function is entirely different. Despite her great sexual appeal, she could hardly touch Jim's enigmatic career. Her role in the novel is to enhance Jim's extraordinary character.
23. "Spencerian Assumptions in Conrad's Early Fiction," Conradiana, p. 31.
24. Conrad's Measure of Man (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), pp. 37-38.
25. "Joseph Conrad's Women," The Bookman, XXXVIII (January, 1914), 478.
26. "Conrad's Almayer's Folly: Structure, Theme and Critics," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XIX (June, 1964), pp. 11, 26.
27. When Dain was waiting for Nina in his hiding place, his sexual desire became so intense that he also had to swim in the cool creek. And "this did him good" (p. 169).

28. "Spencerian Assumptions in Conrad's Early Fiction," Conradiana, p. 30.

29. A Personal Record, p. 9.

30. Norman Sherry discusses the sources of Conrad's knowledge about the racial differences between the Bugis and the Malays in Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 157-8.

31. "Conrad's View of Primitive Peoples in Lord Jim and 'Heart of Darkness,'" Modern Fiction Studies, pp. 165-6.

32. See Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 119-38.

33. Ibid., p. 157.

34. "A Preface to Richard Curle's Into the East," Last Essays, p. 85.

35. Norman Sherry has given a full account of the real person with whom Conrad had some direct dealings (see chapters 5 and 6 in Conrad's Eastern World) but has revealed no mental characteristics of the real man, though these seem to be Conrad's main interest in the novel.

36. In a letter to Bertrand Russell on October 23, 1922, Conrad said that he always liked the Chinese people although a Chinese had made an attempt on his life. See The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell, Vol. II (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968), pp. 161-63.

37. A. R. Wallace, The Malay Archipelago (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 16.

38. A Personal Record, p. 92.

39. For a fuller discussion of this theme, see R. A. Greenberg, "The Presence of Mr. Wang," Boston University Studies in English, IV (1960), 129-37.

40. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the total absence of Indians in Conrad's Eastern fiction. Conrad must have had some contact with the Indians while he was in Singapore, especially during his stay in the hospital there. Several Indians appear as the main characters in Clifford's short stories. The Indian immigration became a significant feature in Malayan demography in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and by 1888, the year Conrad left that part of the world for good, there were about 120,000 Indians in Malaya. See K. S. Sandhu, Indian Immigration and Settlement, 1788-1957 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), p. 61.

Chapter II

1. Elizabeth Bowen, Afterthought: Pieces about Writing (London: Longmans, 1962), p. 196.
2. "A Familiar Preface," A Personal Record, p. xv.
3. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 156. In a letter to Edward Noble on October 28, 1895, Conrad also advised the budding novelist that "you must treat events only as illustrative of human sensation--as the

outward sign of inward feeling." See Life and Letters I, p. 183.

4. "Conrad in the East," Yale Review, XII (1922-23), 497.
5. "A Familiar Preface," A Personal Record, p. xvi.
6. "Author's Note," The Shadow-Line, p. vii.
7. The Living Novel (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), p. 145.
8. See Norman Sherry, Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 29-30.
9. For a full account of the accuracy of Conrad's description of the river Berau as reflected in these novels, see Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 119-38.
10. Perhaps this point will be clearer if we think of E. M. Forster's Italian fiction. The Italian setting in Forster's early fiction is used as a symbol to represent a moral world and a way of life which Forster himself approves and admires. He places his characters in a foreign land so as to enhance the human drama and, through his artistic and ironic handling of the incidents, to reveal the shallowness, hypocrisy, and selfishness of the urban English people, represented by the Sawstonians. Italy, with its beautiful landscapes, acts as a beneficial, liberating force for some self-discovering English characters. Yet Italy is not the only setting for this artistic purpose; in the later novels, the beautiful English countryside serves equally well. It therefore

strikes us that the Italian setting comes as a matter of chance and convenience--a direct, immediate result of Forster's Italian tour--rather than as an intrinsic, artistic necessity. We can easily note that Forster's beliefs in the beneficial influence of nature and in the nobility and virtues of the country folk are also effectively executed in his works like The Longest Journey and Howards End, both of which are set in England. Whereas for Conrad's pessimistically ambivalent view of man, there is no other setting more appropriate than the dark and mysterious landscape of the East in which to express the nature of man and dramatize his existence in an incomprehensible universe.

11. Edward Garnett, "Introduction," Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 2.
12. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, pp. 76-77.
13. Ibid., p. 78.
14. Ibid., p. 88.
15. In the "Author's Note," Conrad claims that An Outcast of the Islands belongs to those of his works that were never laid aside. "There was no hesitation, half-formed plan, vague idea, or the vaguest reverie of anything else between it and Almayer's Folly" (p. vii).
16. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, p. 84.
17. Ibid., p. 85.

18. An Outcast of the Islands has received a mixed reception at the hands of critics. Vernon Young considers it a more accomplished novel than Almayer's Folly. See "Lingard's Folly: The Lost Subject," The Art of Joseph Conrad, ed. R. W. Stallman (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960), p. 101. Douglas Hewitt dismisses it as a failure and does not discuss it at all in his well received book on Conrad. See Conrad: A Reassessment (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952), p. 5. Other critics like John Gordan and Wilfred Dowden consider that Conrad was feeling his way and experimenting in style and imagery. See Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), p. 194; and Joseph Conrad: The Imaged Style (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), pp. 21-29. In a recent article, R. Gekoski suggests that this novel would be more profitably read with Tom Lingard as its central character. He calls our attention to the lengthy treatment of Lingard, who is given as many pages as Willems, and he points out the importance of Lingard's attitude towards life and the motives of his action in the novel. See "An Outcast of the Islands--A New Reading," Conradiana, II, 3(1969-70), 47-58. Gekoski's observations are interesting, but we still feel that this is not our final impression of the book.

19. "Author's Note," An Outcast of the Islands, p. ix.

20. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, pp. 45-46.

21. Sexual passion is also an important subject in Hardy's fiction, and his treatment of this theme is by no means more explicit or "obscene" than Conrad's. Hardy however encountered critical condemnation for this. The unsympathetic criticism of Jude the Obscure, published in the same year as Almayer's Folly and a year before An Outcast of the Islands, caused Hardy to abandon the novel and return to poetry, while Conrad's books received enthusiastic praise from the critics. This difference in reception is a curious phenomenon of the Victorian world. It has often been noted that the Victorians showed strong disapproval of sexuality in literature, but it seems to me that it was the writer's attitude rather than his treatment of the sexual theme that incurred their particular censure. Hardy's view of sexuality is positive. If sexuality is not the most important and significant part of one's life, it is at least healthy, natural, and human. For Conrad, on the other hand, sexuality is ugly, dark, and destructive.

22. The incestuous relation between Almayer and Nina has been noted. But no critic has pointed out a similar relation between Omar and Aïssa. Omar, like Almayer, is excessively attached to his daughter, and his emotional

needs and his dependence on Aïssa are not just because of his physical handicap, his blindness. His sexual jealousy is hinted at in his irritation when Aïssa is away and demonstrated in his outrage when he knows that a white man is with her: "Why did he come to defile the air I breathe--to mock at my fate--to poison her mind and steal her body? She has grown hard of heart to me. Hard and merciless and stealthy like rocks that tear a ship's life out under the smooth sea" (p. 101). Later when Willems was sleeping on Aïssa's knees outside the hut, Omar, with a kriss between his lips, crawled out of the hut in a desperate attempt to murder him: "What was the impulse which drove out this blind cripple into the night to creep and crawl towards the fire?" (p. 148) The impulse, it seems to me, is more expressive of sexual jealousy than of racial hatred.

23. Thomas Moser has considered both Almayer and Willems as sexually incompetent men. He points out the incestuous love between Almayer and Nina, and suggests that Nina finally rejects her father "because she longs for a more vigorous sex-life." See Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 53. He also considers Lingard's comment that Willems "is not a man at all" as an explicit statement of Willems's lack of masculinity (p. 56). These two views, in my opinion,

are not exact. The relationship between Almayer and Nina, although it is depicted in an incestuous manner, cannot be considered as one between true lovers. Lingard's accusation about Willems, when examined closely in the context, obviously has a wider implication than the one offered by Moser. Also Conrad's own views of a person who has "the right to call himself a man" are quite different, as stated in a letter to Madame Poradowska on September 4, 1892, already quoted on pages 70-71. To my thinking, the true weakness in both Almayer and Willems is one of morality rather than sexuality.

24. Life and Letters I, p. 185.

25. For an account of Conrad's activity and his relationship with Mademoiselle Eugénie and her family in Mauritius, see G. Jean-Aubry, The Sea Dreamer, trans. by Helen Sebba (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967), pp. 139-45.

26. Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 74.

27. Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad As I Knew Him (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1926), p. 104.

28. Ibid., pp. 104-5.

29. Ibid., p. 105.

30. Ibid., p. 105.

31. Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad And His Circle (London: Jarrolds, 1935), p. 19.

32. Joseph Conrad And His Circle, p. 20.

33. Ibid., p. 20.

34. Ibid., p. 22.

35. Joseph Conrad As I Knew Him, p. 45.

36. For a perceptive discussion of the prominent role of women and their responsibilities for a new aesthetic effect in Conrad's later works, see George H. Thomson, "Conrad's Later Fiction," English Literature in Transition, XII (1969), 165-74.

Chapter III

1. Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist, p. 200.

2. Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline, p. 65.

3. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

4. Joseph Conrad: The Imaged Style, p. 197.

5. Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline, p. 128.

6. Ibid., p. 128.

7. Besides the well known theory of Conrad's inability to deal with the sexual theme as advanced by Thomas Moser, there is F. M. Ford's view that the abandonment of The Sisters was due to the disapproval and pressure of Edward Garnett who from the outset discouraged Conrad from continuing the story. See "Introduction," The Sisters (Milan: U. Mursia & Co., 1968), p. 15.

8. "Author's Note," An Outcast of the Islands, p. ix.

9. "It took me a year to tear the Outcast out of myself and upon my word of honour--I look on it (now it's finished) with bitter disappointment " (Life and Letters I, p. 183). In 1900 he called it "a heap of sand " (Ibid., p. 299). In the "Author's Note," Conrad confessed: "The story itself was never very near my heart " (p. ix).

10. Quoted by John Gordan, Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist, p. 20.

11. "Introduction," The Sisters, p. 12.

12. It is significant that no critics have discussed the possible sources of this unfinished story (except Bernard Meyer in Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography, pp. 49-50), and that Conrad has left us no words on the nature of its genesis or inspiration.

13. Conrad's Eastern World, Appendix E, p. 317.

14. A Personal Record, p. 25.

15. "Preface," The Shorter Tales of Joseph Conrad, p. vi.

16. "Author's Note," Tales of Unrest, p. vii.

17. In his recent study of Conrad's thirty-one short stories, Lawrence Graver considers that only the following pieces have brought Conrad classic standing: "Youth," "Heart of Darkness," "Typhoon," "The Secret Sharer," and "The Shallow-Line." See Conrad's Short Fiction (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 199. A glance

at this list will also remind us of the close links between Conrad's works and his life.

18. The exact day on which Conrad began this story is unknown but, according to John Gordan, he must have started it towards the end of March 1896. See Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist, p. 200.
19. Life and Letter I, p. 188.
20. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 49.
21. Life and Letters I, p. 164, Note 1.
22. Letters from Joseph Conrad, pp. 57-58.
23. Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline, pp. 59-60.
24. Ibid., p. 63.
25. Ibid., p. 64.
26. Ibid., p. 64.
27. Ibid., p. 65.
28. Letters from Joseph Conrad, pp. 61 , 63.
29. Ibid., p. 61.
30. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, pp. 76-77.
31. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 58.
32. Ibid., p. 59.
33. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
34. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, pp. 9-10.
35. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 58.
36. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 13.
37. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 61.

38. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 61.

39. Ibid., p. 124.

40. Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline, p. 64.

41. Ibid., p. 65.

42. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 135.

43. Ibid., p. 141.

44. "Author's Note," The Rescue, p. viii.

45. A Writer's Diary (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 27.

46. See Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 89-118.

47. Ibid., Appendix E, p. 317.

48. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, pp. 93-94.

49. Life and Letters I, pp. 230-31.

50. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 57.

51. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 9.

52. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 57.

53. "Lingard's Folly: The Lost Subject," The Art of Joseph Conrad, p. 106.

54. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 34.

55. See Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 139-70. Besides the two commonly known source books, Wallace's The Malay Archipelago (1894) and McNair's Perak and the Malays (1878), Norman Sherry has convincingly illustrated that Conrad also borrowed from the following books: Sir Edward Belcher's account of the voyage of H. M. S. Samarang, Sherard Osborn's My Journal in Malay Waters (1860), Spenser St. John's

Life in the Forests of the East (1863), and Frank S. Marryat's Borneo and the Indian Archipelago (1848).

56. "Conrad in the East," Yale Review, XII (1922-23), 497.

57. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 27.

58. The most extensive and authoritative studies of Conrad's literary sources are Norman Sherry's Conrad's Eastern World (1966) and Conrad's Western World (1971). Apart from the real William Lingard, Sherry has discovered nothing relevant to the main situation as depicted in The Rescue. And Sherry has not discussed the source materials for Victory. Both novels have been generally regarded as Conrad's less successful works.

59. Collected Essays I, p. 307.

Chapter IV

1. "Introduction," Conrad: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 10.

2. "Preface," Conrad's Short Fiction, p. vii.

3. Letters from Joseph Conrad, pp. 64-65.

4. Ibid., p. 68.

5. "Author's Note," Tales of Unrest, p. v.

6. Life and Letters I, p. 202.

7. Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 178.

8. Conrad's Short Fiction, p. 26.

9. Conrad the Novelist, p. 67.

10. The argument can be followed in these short essays: Gullason, Explicator, XIV (January, 1956), Item 23; Sickels, Explicator, XV (December, 1956), Item 17; Gleckner, Explicator, XVI (March, 1958), Item 33; McCann, Explicator, XVIII (October, 1959), Item 3; Owen, Explicator, XVIII (March, 1960),Item 47; Graver, Explicator, XXI (May, 1963), Item 70; and Williams, Explicator, XXIII (September, 1964-March, 1965), Items 1 & 51.

11. Conrad's Short Fiction, p. 29.

12. Ibid., p. 29.

13. Ibid., p. 26.

14. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 88.

15. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 1.

16. "Author's Note," Tales of Unrest, p. viii.

17. Conrad the Novelist, p. 90.

18. Conrad's Short Fiction, p. 30.

19. "Heart of Darkness," p. 48.

20. Conrad's Short Fiction, p. 39.

21. Conrad the Novelist, p. 91.

22. See S. H. Mitchell, "Conrad and his Critics: 1895-1914" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1962), pp. 59-63.

23. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 95.

24. Life and Letters I, p. 204.

25. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 34.

26. Life and Letters I, p. 234.

27. See Bruce Johnson, "Conrad's 'Karain' and Lord Jim," Modern Languages Quarterly, XXIV (March, 1963), 13-20, and Guerard, Conrad the Novelist, pp. 90-91.

28. Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, p. 10.

29. "Author's Note," Almayer's Folly, p. viii.

30. C. T. Watts, ed., Joseph Conrad's Letters to Cunninghame Graham (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), p. 70.

Chapter V

1. Letters from Joseph Conrad, p. 171.

2. These views can be found in Leavis's The Great Tradition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 190; Sherry's Conrad's Eastern World, p. 135; and Stewart's Joseph Conrad (London: Longmans, 1968), pp. 118-19.

3. "Tuan Jim: A Sketch," Lord Jim: An Authoritative Text, ed. Thomas Moser (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 281.

4. "Editor's Note on the Composition of Lord Jim," ibid., pp. 275-76.

5. Life and Letters I, pp. 278-79.

6. See Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, pp. 75, 77, 79.

7. Life and Letters II, p. 317.

8. Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 136-37.

9. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 86.

10. Life and Letters II, p. 68.

11. Joseph Conrad on Fiction, ed. W. F. Wright (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 181.

12. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 106.

13. "Author's Note," Lord Jim, p. ix.

14. See Joseph Conrad's Letters to Cunninghame Graham, p. 134.

15. "Conrad's Later Fiction," English Literature in Transition, XII (1969), 171.

16. Some critics, however, have noted that there is a change in Jim when he goes to Patusan. For Norman Sherry the change is a result of Conrad's shift of Jim's source from A. P. Williams to Jim Lingard, and it makes a weakness in the book as a whole, because Conrad knew little about Jim Lingard and had to make the latter source a composite one, drawing upon the inspiration of Rajah James Brooke of Sarawak for the success of his hero and upon travellers' tales for the incidents and details of his life. See Conrad's Eastern World, pp. 135-38. For J. I. M. Stewart, Jim is not so real to the reader in Patusan as he has been on board the Patna or before his judges, because there is a certain thinness in Jim's relations with the native people. See Joseph Conrad, pp. 118-19.

17. "Gilgamesh: The Sumerian Epic that Helped Lord Jim to Stand Alone," Conradiana, IV, 2(1972), 28.
18. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, p. 107.
19. Life and Letters II, p. 84.
20. In my opinion, the best discussion on this question is offered by John Palmer who observes that Marlow must be taken as a choral character in the fullest sense and "for all practical purposes the voice of Conrad himself." See Joseph Conrad's Fiction: A Study in Literary Growth (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 2. For an opposing view, see W. Y. Tindall, "Apology For Marlow," From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, ed. R. C. Rathburm and M. Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Mennesota Press, 1967), pp. 274-85.
21. The Novel and the Modern World (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 54.
22. Letters to William Blackwood and David Meldrum, pp. 154-56.
23. Life and Letters I, p. 270.
24. Conrad the Novelist, p. 55.
25. See A Personal Record, p. 92.
26. "Preface," The Nigger of the "Narcissus," p. xi.
27. Life and Letters II, p. 73.
28. Notes on Life and Letters, pp. 33-34.

Conclusion

1. Life and Letters I, p. 196.
2. Conrad said about his feelings and difficulties with his first two novels in a letter to Edward Noble: "It took me 3 years to finish the Folly. There was not a day I did not think of it. Not a day. And after all I consider it honestly a miserable failure. . . . It took me a year to tear the Outcast out of myself and upon my word of honour,--I look on it (now it's finished) with bitter disappointment" (Life and Letters I, p. 183).
3. Conrad's notion of the importance of work is particularly explicit in his article entitled "Tradition" which begins with a quotation from Leonardo da Vinci: "Work is the law. Like iron that lying idle degenerates into a mass of useless rust, like water that in an unruffled pool sickens into a stagnant and corrupt state, so without action the spirit of men turns to a dead thing, loses its force, ceases prompting us to leave some trace of ourselves on this earth" (Notes on Life and Letters, p. 194). For a discussion of the implications of work in Conrad's writings, see Gary Geddes, "Clearing the Jungle: The Importance of Work in Conrad," Queen's Quarterly, LXXIII (Winter, 1966), 559-72.

4. "Author's Note," Nostromo, p. vii.

5. Notes on Life and Letters, p. 17.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Conrad's Eastern fiction as a literary entity and attempts to establish its unique qualities. In the process it also investigates the sources of Conrad's creative power and reference is made to his letters and other writings. But essentially the aim is to make a close critical analysis of this body of Conrad's fiction.

The Introduction defines the three major segments of Conrad's works: the Eastern fiction, the sea fiction, and the Western fiction. It describes their specific concerns and special qualities and suggests the critical gains from examining Conrad's work in such groupings.

Chapter One, with Conrad's first novel Almayer's Folly as the basic text, examines Conrad's flexible and artistic treatment of the Easterners in terms of the intrinsic needs of the novel. In so doing, it corrects two extreme views of Conrad's handling of the Malays: one accusing him of wilful distortion and the other praising him for scientific accuracy.

Chapter Two deals with the nature and function of setting in Conrad's Eastern fiction, and shows in particular how the jungle setting of An Outcast of the Islands enhances the meaning of that novel. It discusses Conrad's negative view of sexuality and suggests his abnormal sexual attitudes as the

source of his unfailing interest in the Eastern material.

Chapter Three explains Conrad's difficulties with The Rescue. It points to the limits of Conrad's Eastern experience and suggests literary invention as the main cause of his creative difficulty. In his development as a serious and imaginative writer, Conrad found it essential to create in his novels a world in which he himself could believe. Actuality was the driving force behind his writing. In The Rescue, he invented a world in which he could not sufficiently believe.

Chapter Four analyses Conrad's two Eastern short stories, "The Lagoon" and "Karain: A Memory," and compares them as works of art. It shows how the Malay protagonists differ from their white counterparts in their reactions to experience in a world of illusions.

Chapter Five concerns Lord Jim, the greatest achievement of Conrad's Eastern fiction. The novel's moral and psychological complexities, its technical excellence, and its unity are stressed. The chapter also discusses the intrinsic need for Marlow as narrator, and illustrates how brilliantly Conrad, by introducing this internal storyteller, transformed material drawn from marine society and the native community into a work of high art.

The Conclusion surveys the steady development in thematic

complexity and artistic subtlety of Conrad's Eastern fiction, and notes his two basic convictions that life is illusion and that art has its basis in reality.