

JOSEPH CONRAD AS A NOVELIST OF SUBJECTIVE ADVENTURE

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JOSEPH CONRAD AS A NOVELIST OF SUBJECTIVE ADVENTURE.

I.

Joseph Conrad has arrived. There is no longer any question that he has made for himself a high and permanent place in the annals of English literature. In him we have the phenomenon of a foreigner writing English prose unexcelled for purity and beauty, and going one step farther in the advance of the English novel. Frank Pease, in the Nation for November 2, 1918, says: "Conrad is ... a 'change in the angle', a point of departure. We had grown tired of adventure without experience.In the art of Joseph Conrad we have adventure's coming of age" - and this without a single problem, in an era of problem novels. Let us see how his life prepared him for such an extraordinary achievement.

Joseph Conrad, whose real name is Feodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski, was born in the Ukraine on December 6th, 1857. His father was a Polish patriot, and for his actions in the ill-starred rebellion of 1862 was banished to Volgoda. His wife and children followed him into exile, but its hardships caused her death in 1865. Conrad was then sent to an uncle in the Ukraine, and spent five happy years with him. In 1869 his father was released, and took his son to Cracow. They had a brief period of intimacy, ended by the father's death in 1870, when Conrad was sent to the gymnasium of Ste. Anne.

About this time Conrad first alarmed his friends by his fixed determination to become an English sailor. Like so

many of his characters, he was the victim of an obsession, gained no one knew where. Poland was an inland country, he had never seen the sea, nor a ship, nor an Englishman, yet his ambition was clear and unwavering. His relatives considered it a mild form of mania, and engaged a tutor whose first task was to rid him of it. He made conscientious efforts for years, but nothing could alter the boy's resolution.

In 1874, he went to sea in a small French ship from Marseilles. Half of his desire was now realized - he was a sailor. Then in May, 1878, he landed in England, learned English rapidly and in the summer joined the crew of the 'Duke of Sutherland', an English sailor at last.

He made good at his profession, becoming a Master in the English Merchant Service in 1884, when he became naturalized. He continued to sail for ten more years, visiting the ends of the earth, seeing an infinite variety of sights, meeting an infinite variety of men. Then in 1894 ill-health compelled him to give up his profession. As an experiment, he sent to a publisher the manuscript of 'Almayer's Folly', which he had written in the leisure moments of five years. It was accepted - the current of his career was thus pointed out. He settled in rural England, and his subsequent history is chiefly the history of his books.

What a training for a great novelist! What diverse elements in the formation of character - the sorrows of Poland, the varied experiences of twenty years of sea life, with its strenuous demands on hardy manhood, its wealth of color and incident, its great silences, its time for reflection!

"Growing into youth in a land whose farthest bounds were held by unlawful tyranny, Conrad may well have contemplated the sea as the one unlimited monarchy of freedom, and, even although he were too young to realize what impulses those were that drove him, he may have felt that space and size and the force of a power stronger than man were the only conditions of possible liberty. He sought these conditions, found them, and clung to them; he found, too, an ironic pity for men who could still live slaves and prisoners to other men when to them also such freedom was possible. That ironic pity he never afterwards lost, and the romance that was in him received a mighty impulse from that contrast that he was always now to contemplate.

"He found, too, in her service, the type of man who most strongly appealed to him. He had known a world composed of threats, fugitive rebellions, wild outbursts of defiance, inefficient struggles against tyranny. He was in the company now of those who realized so completely the relationship of themselves and their duty to their master that there was simply nothing to be said about it Moreover, with his fund of romantic imagination, he must have been pleased by the contrast of his present company, men who by sheer lack of imagination ruled and served the most imaginative force in nature." (1)

Conrad, however, had all the imagination, romance and fervor of the Slavic temperament, and his sensitive mind received myriad impressions during his wanderings. Then, at maturity, he settled down to the quiet life of an English country gentleman.

(1) "Joseph Conrad" - Walpole, p. 9.

These impressions, contemplated and meditated upon, were to give to the world the wonders of a new creation.

Conrad has written two autobiographical books, "The Mirror of the Sea" (1906), and "A Personal Record" (1912). *The former* is a sort of prose poem about the sea, glorifying its beauty, its power, its demands upon the faithful men who love and serve it. It is beautiful and musical, but it serves our purpose only in revealing Conrad's love and appreciation.

"A Personal Record" gives us more intimate, though haphazard, glimpses of our author. In a whimsical, tender way, he touches lightly upon various phases of his varied life, describing his uncle, his youth, his tutor, the original of Almayer, Captain B, and others. Many of these people are plainly the basis of some of his characters; we at once surmise that the others too have a foundation in fact, and begin to appreciate his realism. His life, then, furnished him with an unlimited experience of incident and character which underlies all his literary work. *Outline of the Growth of the English Novel of Romance.*

II. The modern English novel has its origin in the distant past, when the story-loving instinct was satisfied with the great cycles of Romance of the Middle Ages, such as the "Charlemagne" and "Arthur" cycles. The Elizabethans went a step further, realism appearing in the work of Thomas Nash, "Jack Wilton", while Sidney and Lodge and Lyly formed the euphuistical school of romance.

Under the Stwarts, fiction lapsed somewhat, the chief examples being Mrs. Behn's "Oroonoko" and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's

Progress". Then came our first real novel in Dafoe's "Robinson Crusoe" and other books. The form was taken up and developed still further by Richardson, Fielding, Smollet, and Sterne, while Goldsmith contributed the "Vicar of Wakefield". (1766).

The next half-century is one of imitation of these writers, with the addition of novels of contemporary life, as exemplified by Cumberland, Frances Burney, and Maria Edgeworth.

Walpole's "Castle of Otranto" started the school of Gothic romances continued by Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe. Historical detail was brought in by Thomas Leland's "Longsword", and his imitators were Sophia Lee and Jane Porter. Jane Austen was unique in this age, with her novels of manners containing both destructive and constructive criticism. Scott, however, was a development, in his national historical romances. He was succeeded by Bulwer-Lytton, Thackeray, ("Esmond"), Kingsley, Cooper, and Emily Bronte.

From this romantic height there was a reaction to realism in the humanitarian novels of Dickens and Mrs. Stowe, the works of Thackeray, George Borrow, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade, and Charlotte Bronte, and the psychological novels of George Eliot and Meredith. The latter part of the century was marked by the naturalistic novels of Hardy and Zola. Then Stevenson ushered in a new period of romance. And the year after Stevenson died (1895), Conrad's first book, "Almayer's Folly", appeared.

W. L. Phelps says: "Conrad is the heir of Stevenson". (1)

(1) "Advance of the English Novel" - W. L. Phelps, p. 199.

He is, to the extent that he writes of strange events in strange, far-off lands. But he adds to romance, realism and the qualities of a psychological novel. His settings are romantic, his themes are subjective, and this unique combination is one of his contributions to the progress of the English novel.

Walpole says: "The whole history of his development is this determination to save his romance by his reality, to extend his reality by his romance." (1) To him "Realism is the study of life with all the rational faculties of observation, reason, and reminiscence - Romance is the study of life with the faculties of imagination. I do not mean that Realism may not be emotional, poetic, even lyrical, - but it is based always upon truth perceived and recorded - it is the essence of observation. In the same way, Romance may be, indeed must be, accurate, but its spirit is the spirit of imagination, working often upon observation and sometimes simply upon inspiration." (2) This is exactly what Conrad does - he views the events of his life in the spirit of imagination, sees their inner significance and potentialities, and gives us realism glorified by romance, romance enriched by creation of characters and scenes, so that neither the old realism nor the old romance can return in their entirety.

(1) "Joseph Conrad" - Walpole, p. 112

(2) "Joseph Conrad" - Walpole, p. 108.

ALMAYER'S FOLLY. (1895).

P L O T

The book opens with a picture of Almayer which strikes the keynote of the whole story:

"Leaning with both his elbows on the balustrade of the verandah, he went on looking at the great river that flowed indifferent and hurried - before his eyes. He liked to look at it about the time of sunset; perhaps because at that time the sinking sun would spread a glowing gold tinge on the waters of the Pantai, and Almayer's thoughts were often busy with gold; gold he had failed to secure; gold the others had secured - dishonestly, of course - or gold he meant to secure yet, through his own honest exertions, for himself and Nina. He absorbed himself in his dream of wealth and power away from this 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. They would live in Europe, he and his daughter. They would be rich and respected. Nobody would think of her mixed blood in the presence of her great beauty and his immense wealth. Witnessing her triumphs he would grow young again, he would forget the twenty-five years of heart-breaking struggle on this coast where he felt like a prisoner. All this was nearly within his reach. Let only Dain return!"

Almayer was the son of Dutch settlers in Java, and had come to Macassar a young man, to become a clerk with Hudig and Company. At once he began to hear of the powerful Captain

Lingard, called the "Rajah Laut", or King of the Sea. He had adopted a Malay girl captured in a fight with pirates, and vowed that he would marry her to a white man and leave all his money to her. His fortune was reputed immense, based on the trade from a river he had discovered.

In time Lingard noticed Almayer, and got him to become his supercargo. He became more and more friendly, and finally proposed that Almayer should marry his adopted daughter. Influenced alike by his threats and promises, Almayer agreed. The girl was pretty, with a veneer of shallow culture, but a savage at heart. They were married, and Almayer was given charge of the trading-station at Sambir on Lingard's mysterious river. He was to develop an enormous trade, while Lingard went in search of treasure.

Their plans miscarried. The Arabs found out the river, and there was soon unscrupulous intrigues and a fierce trade competition in which Lingard and Company were driven to the wall. Their banker failed, and all profits were used for the exploring craze. Almayer's only consolation was his little daughter - his wife and proved jealous, temperamental, and savage. But in time he sent Nina away with Lingard to be educated, and lived on hopes of a happy future - Lingard was sure of success in that expedition.

After ten years she suddenly returned from Singapore, a beautiful woman whose mixed blood made life there unbearable. Captain Lingard had never been heard of again, but Almayer kept on making plans, based on a supposed clew to his secret, and on

hopes of expansion due to British enterprise. He even began building a new house, "Almayer's Folly."

Nina led a quiet life, the centre of interest in the settlement. Her father made excursions into the interior, and her mother began to plague him incessantly to reveal the secret of the treasure to Lakamba, the Rajah. She also influenced her daughter by Malay tales of glory and adventure. Nina brooded much over what she had seen of life, and at last "To her resolute nature, however, after all these years, the savage and uncompromising sincerity of purpose shown by her Malay kinsmen seemed at last preferable to the sleek hypocrisy, to the polite disguises, to the virtuous pretences of such white people as she had the misfortune to come in contact with . . . she fell more and more under the influence of her mother . . . and she became gradually more indifferent, more contemptuous of the white side of her descent, represented by a feeble and traditionless father."(1)

Then Almayer found a friend - a Rajah's son, Dain Maroola. He came with trade proposals, and reconciled Almayer to Lakamba. Then, while the white man was building anew his old hopes, Nina and Dain fell in love. He was "the ideal Malay chief of her mother's tradition", and she seemed to live only when near him.

Dain, Almayer, and Lakamba fitted out an expedition to go to the interior, when Dain took a short trip to the river's mouth to visit his brig. He was attacked by the Dutch, and the brig captured, with its cargo of powder obtained by Almayer. He

(1) "Almayer's Folly" - p. 55.

fled back to Sambir, and sought refuge with Lakamba, After getting his promise of protection, he went to Nina and her mother with the tale of his disaster.

In the morning, the mangled body of a drowned man was found in the river, wearing ornaments apparently proving him to be Dain. Almayer was reduced to despair, and nearly went mad. Nina was torn between her love and a desire to relieve her father, but kept silent.

Then the Dutch officers came looking for Dain. They agreed to let Almayer off for his share if he would give him up. He promised, and after getting drunk, led them to the body.

Meanwhile Lakamba had gone on with preparations for Dain's escape, and Mrs. Almayer persuaded Nina that she must go with him - he would not go alone. Nina agreed to go, but wanted to tell her father. Her mother prevented her, threatening to betray Dain if she did, and Nina went to meet Dain, joyously. She felt no regret for the life she was leaving.

"It seemed so unreasonable, so humiliating to be flung there in that settlement and to see the days rush by into the past, without a hope, a desire, or an aim that would justify the life she had to endure in ever-growing weariness. She had little belief and no sympathy for her father's dreams; but the savage ravings of her mother chanced to strike a responsive chord, deep down somewhere in her despairing heart, and she dreamed dreams of her own . . . With the coming of Dain she found the road to freedom by obeying the voice of the new-born impulses. . . . she understood now the reason and the aim of life . . . and she

threw away disdainfully her past with its sad thoughts, its bitter feelings, and its faint affections, now withered and dead in contact with her fierce passion." (1)

But Almayer was to learn the truth from another source. A slave girl of the settlement had become infatuated with Dain, and spied upon his movements. She came and roused him from his drunken stupor with the news of Nina's flight. Guided by her instructions he went to the clearing where Dain and Nina were waiting. He would have shot Dain, had not the girl interposed, then ordered her peremptorily to leave. She refused, and the slow realization of this last disillusionment was almost too great agony. While they argued, the Dutch officers, led by the slave, were heard. Almayer could not bear to have white men find Nina with a Malay, so helped them to escape, protesting that he would never forgive Nina. He watched them set off at the coast, with bitterness in his heart, and then carefully obliterated all traces of Nina's footsteps.

He returned home, weary and broken. Never afterwards did he raise his voice, and "his face was like the face of a man that has died struck from behind - a face from which all feelings and all expressions are suddenly wiped off by the hand of unexpected death." (2)

(1) "Almayer's Folly" - p. 199.

(2) "Almayer's Folly" - p. 260.

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Atmosphere
ALMAYER'S FOLLY.

"Almayer's Folly" is romantic in being a tale of fierce love, intrigue, and disappointment in a far-off, strange land, but it is also a profound and convincing study of the experiences of certain human souls.

An important factor in producing the illusion of reality is the atmosphere of the story. Curle says (p. 30) "The stifling, moist and foetid smell of the jungle fills the book with a whispered tension. The poisonous breath of the river and of the rotting forests seems to have entered into the hearts of all the actors, and there is positive relief in the thought of Almayer's death The monotonous and oppressive atmosphere has an almost physical effect upon the nerves."

I, too, have this feeling, yet it is hard to explain just how he achieves the effect. He does not devote pages and pages to description, carefully filling in the background before beginning the story. He constructs the atmosphere bit by bit, detail by detail, and we cannot place our finger on one particular spot and say: "This is the place where he makes us feel it", any more than we can say that it is this tree, or that cloud, or yonder hill, that thrills us in a beautiful landscape.

By numerous deft touches, he gives us a vivid picture of Sambi~~r~~. Two branches of the river Pantai joined just below the settlement, flowing in a broad, muddy stream between high banks crowned with dense, silent forests. The settlement straggled along the river, consisting of many low mud huts, bamboo houses over the water, and the large compounds of Lakamba and of

Abdulla, the Arab trader. All was bustle at his wharf, while Almayer's compound, on the outskirts, was silent and deserted. Children swarmed on the one street, canoes were thick on the river. There was the stir of life, albeit leisurely life, while Almayer brooded alone in the quietness of his ruined warehouse.

Isolated examples will not show this - I repeat that the effect is cumulative - but the following helps to produce the illusion of desolation and decay. (p. 13) "He stepped cautiously on the loose planks towards the ladder. A lizard, disturbed by the noise, emitted a plaintive note, and scurried through the long grass growing on the bank. Almayer descended the ladder carefully, now thoroughly recalled to the realities of life by the care necessary to prevent a fall on the uneven ground, where the stones, decaying planks, and half sawn beams were piled up in inextricable confusion."

When we approach the atmosphere surrounding personalities, we find something even more subtle and elusive, but more valuable. It gives us the spiritual state of Almayer, - shows him planning and dreaming in an atmosphere of domestic unhappiness, material poverty, intrigue on the part of his neighbors, unsuspected love between his daughter and Dain.

The book opens with a shrill cry from Mrs. Almayer, and we are told that "It was an unpleasant voice.... with every year he liked it less." Then we are told of the gaunt, sparsely clad figure, dwelling apart in one of the huts, shrilling all day at her servants, occasionally coming to her husband trying to force from him the secret of the treasure, or pausing to smash

some of the furniture. Nina, beautiful and solitary, led a lonely life, eager for love or anything to live for. This is suggested.(p. 60) by the way she receives Almayer's warnings as to her suitor, Reshid, leading him to say: "Well! If the girl did not look as if she wanted to be kidnapped!"

"And he felt a nameless fear creep into his heart, making him shiver again."

There are many clever instances of the intrigue, treachery, and childishness of the Malays, especially the Rajah Lakamba and his minister, Babalatchi. Of him it is said (p. 48) "That gentleman - of Sulu origin - was certainly endowed with statesmanlike qualities, although he was certainly devoid of personal charms. This engaging individual often sidles into Almayer's garden in unofficial costume, consisting of a piece of pink calico around his waist. There at the back of the house, squatting on his heels on scattered embers did that astute negotiator carry on long conversations in Sulu language with Almayer's wife. What the object of their discourses was might have been guessed from the subsequent domestic scenes by Almayer's hearthstone."

The following (p. 115) is an excellent example of atmosphere.

"Almayer must die," said Lakamba decisively, "to make our secret safe. (i. e. connivance at gunpowder trade) 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 intellectual 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 armchair.

"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 Sambic the Trovatore fitfully wept and wailed, and bade good-bye to his Leonore again and again, in a mournful round of tearful and endless iteration."

There is also an illuminating passage (121-122) des-

cribing "Babalatchi's official get-up".

Chapter III contains the description of Abdullah's bid for Nina for his nephew. Almayer is insulted and furious, but is forced to be polite and deferential, showing his helplessness.

The old man's ignorance of Nina's love-affair is cleverly suggested before the scenes filled with the breath of primeval passion. Dain, on his return, says: (p. 14) "Nothing could have stopped me from coming back," said the other almost violently. "Not even death", he whispered to himself." Then Almayer at supper tried to enthuse Nina with his dreams of European bliss, and went to sleep (p. 23) "Undisturbed by the nightly event of the rainy monsoons, the father slept quietly, oblivious alike of his hopes, his misfortunes, his friends, and his enemies; and the daughter stood motionless, at each flash of lightning eagerly scanning the broad river with a steady and anxious gaze."

Surrounded by this atmosphere of uncongenial people and things, we have Almayer's mental atmosphere of gnawing discontent and never-dying hope. In the first scene, he is brooding alone, thinking over his wasted years, his failures, his unhappiness; but also planning a bright future to atone for it all. A little later he tries to cheer Nina by talking of Europe. He waits in a fever of impatience for the return of Dain, on whom the treasure expedition depends. This air of expectancy and eagerness surrounds the whole man, and makes his final disillusionment the more tragic.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

The psychological value of "Almayer's Folly" is in the portrayal of a man with an obsession, an "idée fixée", and his terrible soul struggles when he finds his desires frustrated.

Almayer was a man of one idea - the finding of a treasure on which he could retire to Europe with his daughter. It was hope alone which made existence at Sambir bearable. He had attached himself to Lingard, and married his ward solely as means to the end of getting rich - that was the passion of his life.

Many private expeditions had failed, so Almayer at length accepted the aid of Lakamba and Dain Maroola, for the price of supplying them with gunpowder. Dain took it to the river-mouth to his brig, and Almayer waits in a fever of expectancy. Everything depends on Dain. At last he returns, but as a fugitive. Telling Almayer nothing of his disaster, he makes plans with the women and Lakamba.

In the morning Almayer awakens to find everything strangely silent, and goes forth to find the whole settlement assembled around a disfigured corpse, said to be Dain. He refused to believe for a while, but at length Babalatchi convinces him. He has staked his all on Dain, and now Dain is dead.

(p. 129) "Almayer raised his hands to his head, and let them fall listlessly by his side in the utter abandonment of despair.

Babalatchi, looking at him curiously, was astonished to see him smile. A strange fancy had taken possession of Almayer's brain, distracted by this new misfortune. It seemed to him that for many years he had been falling into a deep precipice. Day after

day, month after month, year after year, he had been falling, falling, falling; it was a smooth, round, black thing, and the black walls had been rushing upwards with wearisome rapidity. A great rush, the noise of which he fancied he could hear yet: and now, with an awful shock, he had reached the bottom, and behold! he was alive and whole, and Dain was dead, with all his bones broken. A dead Malay: he had seen many dead Malays without any emotion; and now he felt inclined to weep, but it was over the fate of a white man he knew; a man that fell over a deep precipice and did not die. He seemed somehow to himself to be standing on one side, a little way off, looking at a certain Almayer who was in great trouble. Poor, poor fellow! Why doesn't he cut his throat? He wished to encourage him; he was very anxious to see him lying dead over that other corpse Was he going mad? Terrified by the thought he turned away and ran towards his house, repeating to himself "I am not going mad; of course not, no, no, no! He tried to keep a firm hold of the idea, not mad, not mad. He stumbled as he ran blindly up the steps repeating fast and ever faster those words wherein seemed to lie his salvation."

Nina was frightened by his appearance, and gave him gin. He soon became quiet, and said vacantly "Now all is over, Nina. He is dead, and I may as well burn all my boats." He then reproached Nina bitterly for being unfeeling, not sharing in his great disappointment. Then his heart was filled with tenderness, and he longed to see her miserable too, as proof of her affection. (p. 174) "The sense of his absolute loneliness came home to his heart with a force that made him shudder" - and then he found relief in tears.

Soon the Dutch officers came, and he entertained them. But (p. 159) "While they laughed, he was reciting to himself the old story: 'Dain dead, all my plans destroyed. This is the end of all hope and of all things.' His heart sank within him. He felt a kind of deadly sickness."

Learning the officers' errand, he played the ghastly trick of delivering up the body to them. Then he sat alone, drinking gin, until he sank into a drunken stupor. He dreamed strange things, and woke to find the slave-girl **Taminah** with her tale of Nina's escape with Dain. At first he was dazed. (p. 214) "For many years he had listened to the passionless and soothing murmur For so many years! so many years! And now to the accompaniment of that murmur he listened to the slow and painful beating of his heart. He listened attentively; wondering at the regularity of its beats. He began to count mechanically. One, two. Why count? At the next beat it must stop. No heart could suffer so and beat so steadily for long." Then he realized what she was saying - refused to believe - called Nina wildly, and set out for the hiding place he had been told of.

He would not believe it. This last stroke of Fate could not be true. That his daughter should be with a Malay - preposterous! He found them, threatened Dain, and ordered her to come at once.

(p. 233) "He opened his arms with the certitude of clasping her to his breast in another second. She did not move. As it dawned upon him that she did not mean to obey he felt a deadly cold creep into his heart, and, pressing the palms of his

hands to his temples, he looked down in mute despair."

He argued, but in vain, and finally threatened to give Dain up. Even when the Dutch were heard, he was obstinate, but was overcome by his pride. (p..243) "I cannot," he muttered to himself. After a long pause he spoke again a little lower, but in an unsteady voice, "It would be too great a disgrace. I am a white man." He broke down suddenly, and went on tearfully, "I am a white man, and of good family. Very good family," he repeated, weeping bitterly. "It would be a disgrace all over the islands - the only white man on the east coast. No, it cannot be - white men finding my daughter with this Malay. My daughter!" he cried aloud, with a ring of despair in his voice.

He recovered his composure after a while, and said distinctly: "I will never forgive you, Nina - never! If you were to come back to me now, the memory of this night would poison all my life. I shall try to forget. I have no daughter. There used to be a half-caste woman in my house, but she is going even now."

So he conducts them to the mouth of the river, sees them depart, still vowing that he will never forgive Nina. She tells him he speaks so because he loves her, and will never forget her. (p. 257) "If you have any pity for me," said Almayer, as if repeating some sentence learned by heart, "take that woman away" ... Inwardly he felt himself torn to pieces, but Ali saw on his features the hopeless calm which sightless eyes only can give."

(p. 259) "Now she was gone his business was to forget, and he had a strange notion that it should be done systematically

and in order. To Ali's great dismay he fell on his hands and knees, and, creeping along the sand, erased carefully with his hand all traces of Nina's footsteps. He piled up small heaps of sand, leaving behind him a line of miniature graves right down to the water. After burying the last slight imprint of Nina's slipper he stood up, and turning his face to the headland where he had last seen the pram, he made an effort to shout out loud again his firm resolve never to forgive. Ali, watching him uneasily, saw only his lips move, but heard no sound. He brought his foot down with a stamp. He was a firm man - firm as a rock, He never had a daughter. He would forget. He was forgetting already."

Then he went home, and to aid the forgetting, burnt his old house. Then he moved to the half-finished new house, lived with the Chinaman. He was haunted always by thoughts of Nina, she was with him night and day, until at last he found peace in death.

Hence we see that the main plot of the story is the spiritual disasters of Almayer. What happened is important only as showing the workings of his soul. There are other secondary subjective adventures - Nina's love, coming when she was sick of life and without a purpose, and causing her Malay blood to assert itself; and the love of Taminah, the slave-girl, which was unreturned and unsuspected. Jealousy turned it into hate, and she would have betrayed Dain, rather than let Nina have him. These studies of the two girls are vivid and convincing, but are not as important as that of Almayer. Conrad, in "A Personal Record", tells of the sight of the real Almayer, whom he had often heard of

before. He said that the name had haunted him, that he had heard it borne on a thousand voices. This quality he embodies in his book - the tragic figure of Almayer can never be forgotten.

AN OUTCAST OF THE ISLANDS (1896)

P L O T

"An Outcast of the Islands" is another story of Sambir, but although written after, it treats of events fifteen to twenty years before those in "Almayer's Folly". Almayer is still young, Nina is only a tiny child, Captain Lingard is still prosperous. All might have gone well had he not introduced a protégé who betrayed him.

Williams was the confidential clerk of old Hudig, in Macassar. He had been protected by Lingard as a boy, but had left his service when his trading instincts developed. Even then (p. 15) he tried to find out the secret of his old benefactor's river. He married a half-caste girl, really Hudig's daughter, because it seemed to please the old man. She was a colorless, characterless creature whom he bullied, but he consoled himself by parading his success before a crowd of satellites, and planning to be Hudig's partner.

Then, in a moment of madness, he stole money to pay card debts, and was insultingly dismissed by old Hudig. He was not at all remorseful, only annoyed at his loss of prestige. Then he went to his wife. He hated to reveal his fall to her, but condescendingly told her of the disaster and need for flight. To his amazement, she denounced him bitterly, and with her family, cast him off.

He felt very bitter against fate, and in this mood met Lingard, who told him that Joanna was Hudig's daughter. Williams

was furious, and when Lingard urged him to return to his wife, now repentant, he threatened suicide. Lingard took him on board, promising to settle his affairs once more, and went to Sambip.

Here Almayer was still flourishing, but there was great unrest in the Malay population. The old Rajah, Patalolo, was the friend of Almayer, while the adventurer Lakamba and his aide, Babalatchi, were planning to oust him. Lingard left Willcms with Almayer and went away.

There was nothing for Willcms to do, he did not like Almayer, and in his ennui, he fell madly in love with Aissa, the daughter of Omar the beggar. She returned his love, and for weeks he lived in a veritable cyclone of passion, the abject slave of the girl. His condition was observed by Babaltchi, who saw in him the means of fulfilling his designs. Aissa was consulted and secretly removed from him. He nearly went mad, and was told that he would never see her again unless he would pilot the ship of Abdulla, the Arab trader, from the river's mouth to the settlement. He consents, and when Lingard arrives, he finds the ship of his old rival there before him.

Almayer, already maddened by jealousy, tells him the story. He is even more angry, because Lingard has brought with him Willcm's wife and child, in hope of reconciliation. Now *Lingard* plans a terrible revenge for the breach of faith. He interviews Willcms, who gives his account of the story, says he is tired of Aissa, and begs to be given another chance. But the old man's doom is worse than death - Willcms must stay there, in that clearing. He has now been abandoned by the Malays, so the sentence

means perpetual imprisonment with Aissa. He loathes her now, and the climax of the book is in his mental tortures when Lingard leaves.

Meanwhile, Willams' wife has been giving a lot of trouble. She thinks her husband is away on a dangerous mission, and plagues the men with reproaches. Almayer, always jealous of Willams, is dissatisfied with Lingard's arrangements. He feels that there may be a change of heart, and tells Joanna the truth. She gets a boat, goes to the clearing, finds Willams, and is about to take him away when Aissa appears. Maddened by jealousy, ^{Aissa} ~~she~~ shoots him with his own revolver. Then she is overcome with grief, goes mad, and recovers to be a servant of Almayer's.

ATMOSPHERE

This book is harder to read than "Almayer's Folly". The characters and theme are unlovely, and do not appeal to our sympathies in any way, and the novel also suffers from long explanatory passages. In "Almayer's Folly", Almayer's bitter memories in the first scene serve to explain the situation. But here we are introduced to a number of characters in a short scene, followed by pages of biography and analysis. This is true of Willcums, Lingard, Babalatchi, Lakamba, Omar, Abdulla. ~~It~~ is no doubt necessary, but it changes the impression of the story. Instead of seeming the unfolding of the tale itself, it seems the telling of the tale long afterwards by a garrulous narrator. He says Willcums was going home, and tells us all about Willims, from A to Z. He shows us Babalatchi talking to Lakamba, and proceeds to give us their history. He has Abdulla come to Sambir, and tells his story. But once granted these explanations, the situation is compelling, vivid, and terrible.

Once more atmosphere plays an important part. There is first the atmosphere of Macassar, showing the successful Willcums moving in a circle of fawning admirers. Then the scene changes to Sambir. Curle says (p. 32), "As in 'Almayer's Folly', the teeming, patient, and silent life of the wilds weighs upon every person and thing, coloring the whole aspect of nature not only in a material but in a spiritual sense. (1) "An Outcast of the Islands" reeks of the dank undergrowth." This is especially true of the scenes describing Willims' first meeting with Aissa, his despair left alone in the forest, Almayer's pursuit, and

1. "Joseph Conrad." - Richard Curle. P. 32.

Joanna's attempted rescue.

The atmosphere of personalities is also vivid. There is an air of savage cunning and intrigue in all the Malays, savage love and hate. Lakamba and Babalatchi have long waited for a chance to get power by the overthrow of the white trader, and plan to use and desert Willems quite without mercy. The scene telling of the landing of Abdulla (101-108) is particularly rich in atmosphere, also old Omar's complaints and Willems frantic reunion with Aissa (88-95). That describing the attempted murder of Willems by the blind Omar (130-135) is redolent of cruelty, hate, and savage pride. The scene describing Lingard's midnight interview with Babalatchi (183-213) is full of sinister suggestions, as (p. 212) he wants Lingard to kill Willems.

"From under the house the thumping of wooden pestles husking the rice started with unexpected abruptness. The weak but clear voice in the courtyard again urged, 'Blow up the embers, O brother!' Another voice answered, drawling in modulated, thin sing-song, 'Do it yourself, O shivering pig!' and the drawl of the last word stopped short, as if the man had fallen into a deep hole. Babalatchi coughed again a little impatiently, and said in a confidential tone -

"Do you think it is time for me to go, Tuan? Will you take care of my gun, Tuan? I am a man that knows how to obey; even obey Abdulla, who has deceived me. Nevertheless, the gun carries far and true - if you would want to know, Tuan. And I have put in a double measure of powder and three slugs, Yes, Tuan. Now - perhaps - I go."

When Babalatchi commenced speaking, Lingard turned slowly round and gazed upon him with the dull and unwilling look of a sick man waking to another day of suffering. As the astute statesman proceeded, Lingard's eyebrows came close, his eyes became animated, and a big vein stood out on his forehead, accentuating a lowering frown. When speaking his last words, Babalatchi faltered, then stopped, confused, before the steady gaze of the old seaman.

Lingard rose. His face cleared, and he looked down at the anxious Babalatchi with sudden benevolence.

"So! That's what you were after," he said, laying a heavy hand on Babalatchi's yielding shoulder. "You thought I came here to murder him. Hey? Speak! You faithful dog of an Arab trader!"

"And what else, Tuan?" shrieked Babalatchi, exasperated into sincerity. "What else, Tuan! Remember what he has done; he poisoned our ears with his talk about you. You are a man. If you did not come to kill, Tuan, then either I am a fool or.... He paused, struck his naked breast with his open palm, and finished in a discouraged whisper - 'or, Tuan, you are.'" —
Scenes like this reveal character with unsurpassed vividness.

Willem's wife also contributes to the atmosphere. She is described (p. 21): "He would not look at her face, but he could see the red dressing-gown he knew so well. She trailed through life in that red dressing-gown, with its row of dirty blue bows down the front, stained, and hooked on awry; a torn flounce at the bottom following her like a snake as she moved

languidly about, with her hair negligently caught up, and a tangled wisp straggling untidily down her back. His gaze travelled upwards from bow to bow, noticing those that hung only by a thread, but it did not go beyond her chin. He looked at her lean throat, at the obtrusive collar bone visible in the disarray of the upper part of her attire. He saw the thin arm and bony hand clasping the child she carried, and he felt an immense distaste for these encumbrances of his life. He waited for her to say something, but as he felt her eyes rest on him in unbroken silence, he sighed and began to speak." —

Then she repented of her seeming harshness, and broke with her father, going in search of her husband and forgiveness. She was a disturbing element at Sambir. Almayer says of her, (p. 184) "You know, that woman is a perfect nuisance to me. She and her brat! Yelps all dayShe worries about her husband and whimpers from morning to night. When she isn't weeping she is furious at me I said something about it being all right - no necessity to make a fool of herself - when she turned on me like a wild-cat." —

Almayer is the other factor in Willem's environment. He is shown as a fond father, jealous of any rival in his patron's affections, becoming furious at Lingard's generosity. The first aspect is brought out in the scene where the distracted Willems comes looking for Aissa, giving veiled hints of trouble (p. 83). "Look how he runs away, dearest," he said coaxingly. "Isn't he funny? Call 'pig' after him, dearest, call after him."

The seriousness of her face vanished into dimples.

Under the long eyelashes, glistening with recent tears, her big eyes sparkled and danced with fun. She took firm hold of Almayer's hair with one hand, while she waved the other joyously, and called out with all her might, in a clear note, soft and distinct like the twitter of a bird:- 'Pig! Pig! Pig!'" —

His rage at Lingard's charities is shown. (p. 142)

"Yes! bat, dog, anything that can scratch or bite; as long as it is harmful enough and mangy enough. A sick tiger would make you happy, of all things. A half-dead tiger that you could weep over and palm upon some poor devil in your power, to tend and nurse for you. Never mind the consequences to the poor devil. Let him be mangled or eaten up, of course. You haven't any pity to spare for the victims of your infernal charity. Not you! Your tender heart bleeds only for what is poisonous and deadly. I curse the day you set your benevolent eyes on him. I curse it ... "

"Now then! Now then!" growled Lingard in his moustache. Almayer, who had talked himself up to the choking point, drew a long breath, and went on. His outraged dignity is almost comical as he tells of the attack by the natives.

So much for the atmosphere of the background. Willems himself, the central figure, has an air of irritating cock-sureness and self-conceit, shown in many ways. Then the scenes describing his love are tense, breathless, almost stifling, and almost gain our sympathy for the man by his sincerity. But our sympathy turns to disgust when his love fades, and, unrepentant and unremorseful, he tries to bargain with the man he has betrayed. Willems is a beast - Conrad leaves no doubt of that.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

The plot of an "Outcast of the Islands" is a series of subjective adventures, rising in intensity. The first is the fall of Willems, the clever, the successful, by over-playing his own cleverness. He had no sense of guilt, only of regret at his fall from power. (p. 19) "Idiotic indiscretion - that is how he defined his guilt to himself. Could there be anything worse from the point of view of his undeniable cleverness? What a fatal aberration of an acute mind." An added blow was the desertion of his wife - not that he cared for her, but he wanted her to care for him. (p. 26) "He felt as if he was the outcast of all mankind," and (p. 27) "For the first time in his life he felt afraid of the future, because he had lost his faith, the faith in his own success, and he had destroyed it foolishly with his own hands." He would not try to make amends, so the kindly old Lingard took him in hand once more.

Then came the weary days at Sambir, when the suspicious Almayer made no attempt to help his guest. Willems soon became despondent (p. 58), "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." In this mood he met Aissa, and immediately became her slave. This phase is perhaps not a subjective adventure, for his mind seemed to be dormant, - passion was the only feeling he knew. He fought against it after their first meeting, then surrendered himself to it, living the life of a savage in the woods for five weeks.

Then Aissa was removed from him, and he suffered the

acutest mental tortures. He comes to Almayer (p. 78) "At first," he whispered dreamily, "my life was like a vision of heaven - or hell; I didn't know which. Since she went, I know what perdition means; what darkness is. I know what it is to be torn to pieces alive. That's how I feel."

In this mood, he was sought by the wily Babalatchi, who reminded him of his outcast condition, spoke of the wealth to be won by alliance with Abdulla, and hinted that if he refused, Aissa might disappear forever. Willems gave in, despising himself as he did so, because he was the tool of savages. Then, when he saw Aissa again, veiled according to Moslem custom, he was furious. (p. 114) "Willems, looking at this strange, muffled figure, felt exasperated, amazed, and helpless This manifestation of her sense of proprieties was another sign of their hopeless diversity; something like another step downwards for him. She was too different from him. He was so civilized! It struck him suddenly that they had nothing in common - not a thought, not a feeling; he could not make clear to her the simplest motive of any act of his and he could not live without her. . . . He stood watching her, watching himself. He tingled with rage from head to foot, as if he had been struck in the face. Suddenly he laughed; but his laugh was like a distorted echo of some insincere mirth very far away."

However, his contempt for himself was as the slave of a passion, not as a traitor to a benefactor. In a few days the flame of his passion, already flickering, burned itself out, He found himself deserted by his Malay friends, and decided to

make terms with Lingard. He sent him a note requesting an interview, and Lingard came after three days.

They met at dawn outside a little hut, after Aissa had approached Lingard and secured the promise of Willem's life. The captain's rage at the man's cool effrontery forced him to knock him down. Even then he was brazen, and accused Lingard of insulting him, saying that he had magnanimously refrained from killing the old man.

Then he explained his position in a speech wonderful for its delineation of unmoral, conceited, selfishness. He excused himself for his theft at Macassar as "an error of judgment;" excused himself for his conduct to his wife - "She was nobody, and I made her Mrs. Willems." Then he excused himself for events at Sambir, (p. 243) "You don't know ... I wanted to pass the time - to do something - to have something to think about - to forget my troubles till you came back. And ... look at her ... she took me as if I did not belong to myself. She did. I did not know there was something in me she could get hold of. She, a savage, I, a civilized European, and clever! She that knew no more than a wild animal. She found it out, and I was lost. I knew it. She tormented me. I was ready to do anything. I resisted - but I was ready. I knew that too. That frightened me more than anything; more than my own sufferings; and that was frightful enough. I assure you Then Abdulla came, and she went away. She took away with her something of me which I had to get back. I had to do it. As far as you are concerned, the change here had to happen sooner or later, you couldn't be

master here forever. It isn't what I have done that torments me-- it's the why. It's the madness that drove me to it. It's that thing that came over me. That may come again some day."

Then he tells Lingard that he has come to hate Aissa, and that her eyes haunt him. (p. 245) "Look at them! They are big, menacing - and empty. The eyes of a savage; of a damned mongrel, half-Arab, half-Malay. They hurt me! I am white! I swear to you I can't stand this! Take me away! I am white! All white!"

When he heard Lingard's sentence, he was almost paralyzed for some time. He followed the old man vacantly to the loading place, then returned, to face his despair like a man in a nightmare. There was nothing there but silence and solitude. (p. 296) "His heart, in which nothing could live now but the memory and hate of his past. Not remorse. In the breast of a man possessed by the masterful consciousness of his individuality with its desires and its rights; by the immovable conviction of his own importance, of an importance so indisputable and final that it clothes all his wishes, endeavours and mistakes with the dignity of unavoidable fate, there could be no place for such a feeling as that of remorse."

He was immured there in a sombre clearing, fifteen miles from Sambir and forty from the sea, alone with the woman he detested. Pages 296 to 306 give a detailed analysis of his state of mind, his gruelling subjective experiences. He tried in vain to plan escape; he loathed Aissa, and repulsed her tenderness. Everyday he grew more desperate, embittered, resentful.

Poor Aissa was wretched too. (p. 353) "These two, surrounded each by the impenetrable wall of their aspirations, were hopelessly alone, out of sight, out of earshot of each other; each the centre of dissimilar and distant horizons, standing each on a different earth, under a different sky."

Finally Willems reached a passive state, where he had not even strength enough to plan revenge. (p. 309) "He was not indignant and rebellious. He was cowed. He was cowed by the immense cataclysm of his disaster Under the high and enormous tree he remained motionless, huddled up on his seat, terrified and still. He looked like a heap of soiled rags thrown over a lot of bones and topped by a mournful and fleshless head with a pair of big, shining eyes, that moved slowly in their sockets, wondering and stupid."

Then Joanna came. At first he thought she was a vision, final proof of his madness. Then he realized that she was real, must have come in a boat, and all his thoughts turned wildly to escape. He was impatient and angry with her demonstrations of affection and pleas for forgiveness. The main thing was to get her out of the way, then secure his weapon from Aissa. Then she saw Aissa - Aissa saw her, and there were scenes of violence, culminating in Aissa's shooting him. (p. 327) "Missed, by Heaven!...Thought so!" And he saw her very far off, throwing her arms up, while the revolver, very small, lay on the ground between them Missed! He would go and pick it up now. Never before did he understand, as in that second, the joy, the triumphant delight of sunshine and of life. His mouth was full of something

salt and warm. He tried to cough, spat out Who shrieks: In the name of God, he dies! - he dies! Who dies? - Must pick up - What? - Night .. Night already"

So died the scoundrel Willems, unrepentant, unfeeling, unlovely, surely as brutal a villain as literature possesses. Conrad has given us a wonderful study of evil and the workings of an evil mind, a study which is terrible and convincing. Perhaps for that very reason "An Outcast of the Islands" will never be a popular book, but it is a realistic portrayal of character, and as such will appeal to readers who can face unpleasant truths.

The only secondary subjective adventure worth mentioning is that of Captain Lingard. Aissa's sufferings can hardly be given that term; they were more like the dumb resentment of an animal when a caressing hand is removed. But to Captain Lingard, the treachery of Willems was an acute spiritual wound, affecting him even more deeply than the material losses involved.

He was a bluff old seaman, stern and uncompromising with his enemies, but always fair, and was possessed besides of fine qualities - was "pure in heart but profane in speech", and liked to be benevolent. His hobby and his treasure alike was the Sambir settlement. (p. 40) "You see, Willems, I brought prosperity to that place. I composed their quarrels and saw them grow under my own eyes. There's peace and happiness there. I am more master there than his Dutch Excellency down in Batavia ever will be when some day a lazy man-of-war blunders at last into that river. I mean to keep the Arabs out of it, with their

lies and their intrigues. I shall keep the venomous breed out, if it costs me my fortune."

He was proud, steadfast of purpose, and although some of his philanthropies had proved disastrous (as described by Almayer) he pinned his faith to the success of Sambir. But changes came. (p. 178) "It was only since his return to Sambir that the old seaman had for the first time known doubt and unhappiness. The loss of the "Flash" shook him considerably; and the amazing news which he heard on his arrival in Sambir, were not made to soothe his feelings." He loved the river, the people, every tree in the settlement; he loved the power and influence which were his from his mysterious river.

The news of Willems' conduct was therefore a double shock. (p. 181) "He wanted to think. He was very angry. Angry with himself, with Willems. Angry at what Willems had done - and also angry at what he had left undone. The scoundrel was not complete. The conception was perfect, but the execution, unaccountably, fell short. Why?Was it impudence, contempt, - or what? He felt hurt at the implied disrespect to his power, and the incomplete rascality of the proceeding disturbed him not a little.

Then, in a few days, when he received Willems' brazen message, and began to realize the consequences of Arab competition, his outraged goodness made him furious and revengeful. He would have killed Willems, but (p. 233) "He could not bear the idea of that man escaping from him by going out of life; escaping from fear, from doubt, from remorse, into the peaceful certitude of death." Then, when he thought to shrivel Willems with a look,

"Willems' eyelids fluttered, and the unconscious and passing tremor in that stiffly erect body exasperated Lingard like a fresh outrage. The fellow dared to stir! Dared to wink, to breathe, to exist; here, right before his eyes!"

He relieved his feelings by knocking Willems down, but they became worse as the interview progressed. (p. 239) "The anger of his outraged pride, the anger of his outraged heart, had gone out in the blow; and there remained nothing but the sense of some immense infamy - of something vague, disgusting, and terrible..... He himself felt an intolerable shame when looking at that creature before him. He felt somehow the responsibility for its continued existence..... "

His final attitude is summed up in his own words pronouncing Willems' doom. (p. 249) "Do not expect me to forgive you. To forgive one must have been angry and become contemptuous, and there is nothing in me now - no anger, no contempt, no disappointment. To me you are not Willems, the man I befriended, and helped through thick and thin, and thought much of 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."

Hence the book renders itself into a study of a breach of faith, in its effect upon the sinner and the man sinned against Willems remains impudent and detestable, but our hearts are touched by the sight of poor old Captain Lingard mourning over the ruins of his moral universe, which was founded on trust and fidelity.

THE NIGGER OF THE "NARCISSUS"

P L O T

The ship "Narcissus" was shipping a crew in the harbor of Bombay, for a homeward voyage. There were many different kinds of men represented, one of the most obnoxious being a down-and-out cockney, Donkin, with a predilection for mutiny. The last to join was James Wait, a gigantic, magnificent, insolent negro, with a hollow cough.

This negro, dying of consumption, is the central figure of the book. From the first he was very slack at his work, and at the end of the first week was taken to task by the mate. Then he explained that he was dying, which nonplussed everyone. He did not look sick, he seemed to cough when it suited him, and though he could not or would not do his work, he would not lie up. One day he would be all right, the next he would collapse. The men hated him, yet felt ashamed and showed him every possible kindness. All but Donkin - he reviled him to his face, and seemed to be the only person the negro liked.

He had a sinister and depressing influence on the fore-castle. Once a group of men were engaged in discussion outside, when Wait came out. "He seemed to hasten the retreat of departing light by his very presence; the setting sun dipped sharply, as though fleeing before our nigger; a black mist emanated from him; a subtle and dismal influence; a something cold and gloomy that floated out and settled on our faces like a mourning veil. The circle broke up. The joy of laughter died on stiffened lips. There was not a smile left among all the ship's

company." He upbraided them for disturbing his rest, but said it would not be for long - he would soon die.

Henceforth his approaching death was the central fact in the life of the crew. At first they were exasperated and incredulous. (p. 43) "We hesitated between pity and mistrust, while, on the slightest provocation, he shook before our eyes the bones of that bothersome and infamous skeleton. He was for ever trotting him out." On his account the men stopped their singing, laughing, and noise in moving about; they called the watch in whispers, did his work for him, waited on him - and were rewarded by reproaches and sarcastic remarks. (p. 45) "He had found the secret of keeping forever on the run the fundamental imbecility of mankind; he had the secret of life, that confounded dying man, and he made himself master of every moment of our existence. We grew desperate, and remained submissive." They even stole fruit for him, causing distrust on the part of the officers, to Donkin's delight. Finally luxurious quarters were fitted up for him in the deck cabin, though (p. 56) "He complained that he would have to die there alone, like a dog. We grieved for him, and were delighted to have him removed from the forecastle. We attended him as before . . . We spoke through the crack cheerfully, sometimes abusively, as we passed by, intent on our work. He fascinated us. He would never let doubt die. He overshadowed the ship. Invulnerable in his promise of speedy corruption, he trampled on our self-respect, he demonstrated to us daily our lack of moral courage; he tainted our lives."

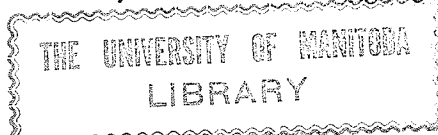
Thirty-two days out, a terrible storm arose. No one slept, and the captain would not leave the bridge. The fore-

castle was flooded, and all the men's belongings were washed overboard or ruined. The ship was in imminent peril of capsizing, and officers and men alike wanted to cut the masts to save her, but the captain was obdurate. He ship was the pride of his heart, and he wanted her to come through with her good name untarnished.

The men lay about the deck, half dead from fatigue and exposure, when someone suddenly thought of Jimmy. At risk of their lives they fought their way to the deck-house. They could hear him pounding on his door, and worked with superhuman frenzy to remove the wreckage and knock it in. They got him out, and with infinite toil got back aft, only to have him reproach everyone bitterly for their neglect, "now, after I got myself out from there."

For hours they lay shivering on the deck, while the fate of the ship hung in the balance, the only help being hot coffee prepared miraculously by the cook in his ruined galley. Through it all Old Singleton steered unwaveringly, and at last the storm subsided, the ship righted herself, and the men felt safe, though the ship was devastated. They were bitter at being forced to work at once, and became still more bitter when they saw the utter ruin of the forecastle.

The storm was over, and soon was as dim as a dream. A few facts only stood out - among them the noble part played by the crew. They became conceited, and the abominable Donkin began to work on their feelings, making them believe they were injured, slighted, wronged. In spite of their contempt for him, they were impressed by his oratory. As before, all hands



gathered in Jimmy's cabin, waiting on him. and Donkin one night got him to say that he really was not sick. Then the pious cook came and frightened him half to death with his talk of eternal punishment, and the terrified negro begged to be taken back to work.

The captain refused to let him - said he had been shamming sick until he saw the payable ^{man} ~~men~~, and gave orders that he was not to be allowed on deck till the end of the passage. Donkin seized on this order as pretext for a strike, and in the darkness just missed the captain with a belaying pin. Next morning the captain lectured the crew, and by his indomitable courage, subdued all, even Donkin.

There was also a change in the situation with regard to Jimmy. While he declared he was dying the men doubted; now he declared he was well, and they could see that he was dying. Singleton blamed him for the headwinds, according to an old superstition.

Donkin's malevolent soul now turned its wrath against Jimmy. He came to his cabin one night and taunted him cruelly with his dying condition. He got him worked up to a high degree of excitement which hastened his death; then he took the key and robbed the sea-chest.

Jimmy was dead, and the favorable wind came at last. The negro was buried, and the men were secretly relieved. Belfast, his special friend, however, was desolate. The rest of the voyage was uneventful, and the men came to port, went ashore, and followed their various inclinations.

ATMOSPHERE

"The Nigger of the Narcissus" is primarily an epic of the sea. It does tell of certain subjective adventures on board a ship, but its real object is to give a picture of the sea in its variant moods, of sailors and their life. This is accomplished with great vividness. Although I have never seen the sea, or a ship, I feel as though I knew them after reading this. The romantic element lies solely in the subject matter, - the sea, changing, merciless, beautiful, is ever romantic.

The book abounds with beautiful descriptions of the sea. For example (p. 35), "The passage had begun; and the ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet. Round her the abysses of sea and sky met in an unattainable frontier. A great circular solitude moved with her, ever changing and always the same, always monotonous and always imposing. Now and then another wandering white speck, burdened with life, appeared far off, - disappeared; intent on its own destiny. The sun looked upon her all day, and every morning rose with a burning, round stare, of undying curiosity. She had her own future; she was alive with the lives of those who trod her decks; like that earth which had given her up to the sea, she had an intolerable load of regrets and hopes. On her lived timid truth and audacious lies; and, like the earth, she was unconscious, fair to see - and condemned by men to an ignoble fate. The august loneliness of her path lent dignity to the sordid inspiration of her pilgrimage. She drove foaming to the southward, as if guided by the courage of a high endeavor.

The smiling greatness of the sea dwarfed the extent of time. The days raced after one another brilliant and quick like the flashes of a lighthouse, and the nights, eventful and short, resembled fleeting dreams."

The passages describing the storm are wonderful, conveying the impression of mightiness and terror. So also the calm which followed is well pictured.

The larger background is the sea; the actual stage is the ship, and the actors the sailors. Life on board ship is made real by constant carefulness of detail, while the character of the sailors forms a striking gallery of portraits. There is the stern and unflinching captain; Mr. Baker who said "Ough!" repeatedly; young Mr. Creighton; Old Singleton, the "sixty-year old child"; the impressive negro. James Wait; Belfast, Archie, Charlie, the pious cook, others less important, and the irrepressible Donkin. These men are characterized with clearness and vigor, and they are shown in action and under stress. Two examples will serve. "The nigger was calm, cool, towering, superb. The men had approached and stood round him in a body. He overtopped the tallest by half a head . . . He was naturally scornful, unaffectedly condescending, as if from the height of six foot three he had surveyed all the vastness of human folly and had made up his mind not to be too hard on it The disdainful tomes had ceased, and, breathing heavily, he stood still, surrounded by all those white men. He held his head up in the glare of the lamp - a head vigorously modelled into deep shadows and shining lights - a head powerful and misshapen with a tormented and flattened face - a face pathetic and brutal; the

tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of a nigger's soul." (1)

Also, of Donkin: "He stood with arms akimbo, a little fellow with white eyelashes. He looked as if he had known all the degradations and all the furies, - he looked as if he had been cuffed, kicked, and rolled in the mud; he looked as if he had been scratched, spat upon, pelted with unmentionable filth - and he smiled with a sense of security at the faces around. His ears were bending down under the weight of his battered hard hat. The torn tails of his black coat flapped in fringes about the calves of his legs. He unbuttoned the only two buttons that remained and everyone saw he had no shirt under it. It was his deserved misfortune that those rags which nobody could possibly be supposed to own looked on him as if they had been stolen. His neck was long and thin; his eyelids were red; red hairs hung about his jaws; his shoulders were peaked and drooped like the broken wings of a bird; all his left side was caked with mud, which showed that he had lately slept in a wet ditch . . . This clean white fore-castle was his refuge; the place where he could be lazy; where he could wallow, and lie, and eat - and curse the food he ate; where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he would find someone to bully and someone to wheedle - and where he would be paid for doing all this." (2)

The book abounds in conversations, and the vile cockney language of Donkin, the Irish brogue of Belfast, the Scotch of Archie, the stately English of Jimmy, add vastly to the atmosphere.

(1) P. 20

(2) P. 9.

In short, the atmosphere is one of honest men going about their work in their little world, the ship, disturbed only by the shadow of imminent death and by the agitator Donkin. They are shown as good comrades and faithful servants in the face of storm and wind, yet with all they are childlike.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

There is not in this book one outstanding subjective adventure; it is the story of one continuous subjective experience.

Enough has been quoted in the synopsis to show the powerful and depressing influence of the dying negro upon all the crew. They moved in an atmosphere of uncertainty and dread due to his presence. Then they began to blame him for the trouble that came to the ship. Old Singleton revived an old superstition that dying men always brought bad luck to ships. They knew that the first sight of land would draw the life from them, so produced head winds to delay progress and prolong life. But through it all they were patient, kindly, sympathetic, and more tolerant of each other because of the sick man among them.

"Jimmy's death, after all, came as a tremendous surprise. We did not know till then how much faith we had put in his delusions . . . A common bond was gone; the strong, effective, and respectable bond of a sentimental lie. All that day we mooned at our work, with suspicious looks and a disabused air. . . In going he took away with himself the gloomy and solemn shadow in which our folly had posed, with human satisfaction, as a tender arbiter of fate."(1)The men became querulous and impatient with each other.

Quite in accordance with Singleton's views, Jimmy had died in sight of an island. Even in death he was troublesome - the burial scene is impressive and rich in atmosphere. The body refused to slip over when it should - "he yet seemed to hang on to

(1) P. 194

the ship with the grip of an undying fear." (1) Only when Belfast shrieked "Jimmy, be a man . . go, Jimmy! Jimmy, go? go?" did he go to his rest. The sailors were profoundly impressed.

Other subjective experiences are the mutiny incited by Donkin, when the men allowed themselves to be led into disobedience by a man whom they openly despised. The negro created unrest and suspicion, a fruitful soil. The calmness and courage of the captain are also noteworthy, and strike a note of cool devotion to duty which is truly admirable. Also, the picture of Jimmy's sufferings when the cook talked of hell is moving and terrible.

But after all, it is not the events which matter in the "Nigger of the Narcissus", It is the story of a voyage, and the important things are the picture of sea-life, the characters of the men, and the atmosphere of uneasiness, unrest, fear, and gentleness surrounding the unfortunate Jimmy.

(1) P. 200

NOSTROMO (1903)

In "Nostromo" we have Conrad in a nutshell. It has his romance, his realism, his power of characterization, his atmosphere, his word-painting, and also the bewildering confusion that arises from his method of narration. It is considered his masterpiece by many critics, and is a marvellous achievement. Without ever setting foot in South America, he produces a novel which depicts life there with absolute conviction, creates a state and conducts us through it, creates characters and political situations and complex events typically South American, with an astonishing illusion of reality.

We can only deal in superlatives in describing this work. It is the longest, the most complicated, the most remarkable, and also the most difficult. Some critics consider it a colossal failure. However, the difficulty and confusion arise chiefly from the method of narration, which is especially perplexing. Conrad starts out with a description of Sulaco and the harbor, then plunges into an account of the revolution there. Then he has to retrace his steps to explain the past history of the characters, the causes and progress of the revolution; then he proceeds, pausing whenever necessary to tell of the different characters introduced, and at times showing us events through the eyes of other people, e. g. Decoud's diary and Captain Mitchell. But however confusing it is, we must admit that this method succeeds. We believe implicitly in Sulaco, the people, the revolution, whereas it all might have looked like melodrama if told in ~~controversial~~ style.

conventional

Costaguana is a typical South American Republic, unsettled, torn by faction, corrupt in politics, backward and unprogressive. It was divided into two provinces, separated by a chain of mountains, and the Occidental sea-board province was much ahead of the other. There foreign capital was making changes, the greatest of the "material interests" being the San Tomi silver mine, the property of the Gould family. It had been in the family for three generations, a constant source of trouble and worry. Charles Gould had been sent to England to school, and had received long letters from his father, whose every thought revolved about the mine. In time it came to be an obsession with the son too, and after his marriage he came back to Costaguana to develop it. The mine and its pernicious influence are the theme of the book.

By dint of hard work, American capital, and shrewd bribery, Gould developed the mine to produce fabulous wealth, bringing prosperity and security to the whole district. But little by little his mine came to mean more to him, and his wife less. She was a gracious lady, beloved by rich and poor alike, and queen of Sulaco society. The other chief figures are Don José Avellanós, a patriot and victim of the old régime; his daughter Antonia, a beautiful and clever girl; her lover, Martin Decoud, a dilettante Parisian; ^{journalist} Father Corbélán, a fanatical missionary; ~~Juan~~; Dr. Monygham, who had been a traitor under torture, and was trying to forget in a life of service and of devotion to Mrs. Gould; Captain Mitchell of the O. S. N. Company. In the lower strata are old Viola, an Italian patriot and inn-keeper, a protégé of Mrs. Gould; his wife,

Teresa; his daughters Giselle and Linda; and lastly, the incomparable Capataz de Cargados, nicknamed "Nostromo", who was treated like a son by the Violas, and was a strange mixture of ability and childlike vanity, having immense influence with the people.

Becoming tired at last of the everlasting intrigue and corruption of Costaguanero politics, Gould supported and elected President Ribiera of the Blanco party, who was to inaugurate an era of purity and progress. For five years all went well, then the forces of evil girded themselves, and the brothers Montero started a revolution. The loyal citizens of Sulaco were active in propaganda and sent General Barrios by sea to Cayba to relieve Ribiera, only to find too late that Pedro Montero was advancing upon them over the mountains and Sotillo, an ambitious adventurer, by sea.

The defeated Ribiera reached Sulaco as a worn-out fugitive, and the riot ensued which is described at the first of the book. The town was in imminent danger, the quarter's output of silver was at the wharf, and all feared the power the silver would give to the conqueror. So a plan was formed to send it away in charge of Nostromo and Martin Decoud, whose work as editor made his life forfeit. They were to go north and intercept a steamer which would take them to safety.

Nostromo was filled with pride at being given this dangerous mission, and in his zeal refused even to bring a priest for the dying ~~Seneca~~ ^{Teresa} - his presence alone could make one safe in the unsettled town. The account of the journey with the silver is

one of the most remarkable in the book, in its revelation of spiritual atmosphere and experience.

Out in the silence and blackness of the Golfo Placido, they became aware of a sound of sobbing, and dragged forth from hiding ~~Senor~~ ^{hide} Hirsch, a Jewish ~~trade~~ merchant who was in mortal terror. He had nearly died of fright during the riots, and had seized this desperate chance to escape from Sulaco. Nostromo wanted to kill him, saying there was "no room for fear on this lighter", but let the proper moment pass. Then, while they waited in breathless suspense, the sound of a steamer was heard - the steamer leaving ~~Sotillo~~ from Esmeralda.

Closer and closer it came, and the safety of the lighter depended altogether on the ~~silence~~ of its occupants. Presently it collided with the lighter, and a shriek from Hirsch announced the disaster. Those on the steamer dropped anchor, the anchor caught the unfortunate Hirsch and dragged him on board, while the damaged lighter moved on. It was now out of the question to go north as planned, but they finally managed to steer the lighter into a cove of the Great Isabel island. There they buried the silver, and decided that Decoud must remain there until the trouble blew over, while Nostromo set off in the lighter, sank it a mile from the mainland, and swam to shore.

Meanwhile Gould has been doing what he can to relieve anxiety and suffering, confident because back of him stands the mine. He knows it is the prize sought by invaders, and has the weapon of threatening to blow it up. Finally he decides to help stability by supporting a new and separate Occidental Republic.

Poor Hirsch had a very bad time of it. On being cap-

tured, he blurted out the truth, but Sotillo would not believe him because he did not want to. Failure would be too horrible. The transport landed, and some soldiers stole Captain Mitchell's watch. When he was brought to Sotillo, the latter decided to treat him with respect, until the old man's rage about his watch roused his cowardly spirit and made him bullying. Dr. Monygham was also arrested, and Hirsch examined in his presence. The doctor pretended to become confidential, and suggested that this was a ruse on Gould's part, that treasure is usually buried in the earth. He promised to try to make Gould speak, and left Sotillo penned up in the harbor. He was afraid to occupy the town for fear of Montero, this giving the people time to flee to the woods. But when Montero did appear, it was with a despicable band of ragged men, who were nevertheless received with joy by the fickle populace. He tried to make Gould surrender the mine, but was baffled by his threat to destroy it.

Sotillo was almost sick with fear and dread of Montero, and the thought that he might have sunk the coveted treasure maddened him. He worked himself up to a pitch of fury, then sent for Hirsch and tortured him. At length the poor wretch spat in his face, and in his rage he shot him. He was immediately sorry, and pretended that Hirsch had confessed.

Nostromo, after his long swim, slept for hours in the grasses. Awaking, he made his way by night to the wharves, and crept into the custom house. His vanity had collapsed, and he felt betrayed by his patrons. There he met the Doctor, who found the body of Hirsch, and told Nostromo that Sotillo knew all

about the sinking of the silver. He resolved that he would never betray it, and was furious to hear the Doctor say it would have been better to surrender the treasure. He was so angry he did not want to listen to the new plans for using him as a messenger to Cayta, feeling that he was being exploited by the great people, who cared nothing for him. However, he agreed to lie in hiding at Viola's, and suggested that the Doctor tell Sotillo the treasure was buried at the wharf.

He did this, and the agonized Sotillo went on dragging the harbor, instead of uniting with Montero, while Nostromo made a spectacular dash by rail and horseback to Cayta, five hundred and eighty miles away. He came back with the forces of Barrios, just in time to save the Doctor from hanging, and Gould from shooting. The invaders were routed, the new Republic was recognized, and the war was stopped by an international naval demonstration in the harbor.

On his way back from Cayta Nostromo had observed the little boat of the lighter floating near, and leaped off the ship to get it. He had never mentioned Decoud to anyone, as all took his death for granted. Now he found confirmation in a dark stain on the boat, and going to the island, found four ingots gone. He was already piqued by the careless way his services were regarded, the breach in the silver seemed to point to theft on his part, so he decided not to say anything, and to grow rich slowly. Poor Decoud had become half mad from solitude and sleeplessness; then, weighing himself down with the ingots, had pulled towards the setting sun and shot himself.

Mrs. Gould bought a schooner for ~~him~~, and he became "Captain Fidanza", prosperous and respected. However, the treasure was always on his mind, a curse. When a lighthouse was built on the island, he secured for the Violas the position of keeper.

The city became very prosperous, and the new republic flourished. But in time Gould became more and more engrossed in his material interests, his wife became sadder and sadder. The Doctor said that Fidanza was head of secret societies which might demand the wealth for the people, and prophesied that the mine would weigh as heavily on the people as misrule had ever done.

Linda Viola had grown up worshipping Nostromo, and hoping one day to marry him. Her father expected this too, but Nostromo fell in love with Giselle. When he came and asked for his bride, the father called Linda, and the suitor was too surprised to explain. He said nothing and continued to make love to Giselle secretly, though refusing her prayers for flight until he has removed all the treasure. After a visit to it one night he crept back in hope of seeing her once more, when he was shot by old Viola. On his deathbed he offered to tell Mrs. Gould the hiding place of the treasure, but she refused to hear. Then Nostromo died, and the despair of poor, passionate Linda was boundless.

ATMOSPHERE

"Nostromo" is Conrad's greatest achievement in the creation of atmosphere. He has constructed a country and a city and breathed life into them until they are as real to us as our own. There is a great deal of detailed description, but it is so distributed that it is never wearisome. We get the picture piece by piece, just as we become acquainted with actual places.

First we are given a picture of the harbor, the islands, and the mountains rising high behind the town. Then the scene changes to the wharf and the riot, and long passages explanatory of events come in. Presently we are introduced to the residential section of the town, the Casa Gould, the old Spanish houses, the cathedral, the Club, old Viola's house, the lower quarters, and the mine itself. The atmosphere of an old-world Spanish town is perfectly caught. But it is done gradually, and it is hardly before the end of the book that we realize everything. Quotations can give very little idea of the effect, but the following may help. "Mrs. Gould loved the patio of her Spanish house. A broad flight of stone steps was overlooked silently from a niche in the wall by a Madonna in blue robes with the crowned Child sitting on her arm. Subdued voices ascended in the early mornings from the paved walls of the quadrangle, with the stamping of horses and mules led out in pairs to drink at the cistern. A tangle of slender bamboo stems dropped its narrow, blade-like stems over the square pool of water, and the fat coachman sat muffled up on the edge, holding lazily the ends of halters in his hand." (1)

The atmosphere of Costaguana life is also admirably pictured. The people were lazy, fond of pleasure, fickle, and easily led, revelling in intrigue and submitting to corrupt rule. The upper classes lived aimless, empty lives, their rigid conventionality being shocked by the freedom of Antonia Avellos. They were also amazed at Mrs. Gould's travels with her husband, and at the strenuous activity of the foreigners in general. The lower classes lived happy, child-like lives in lazy content. "A multitude made^{of} green boughs, of rushes, of odd pieces of plank eked out with bits of canvas, had been erected all over it for the sale of cava, of fruit, of cigars. Over little heaps of glowing charcoal Indian women, squatting on mats, cooked food in black earthen pots and boiled the water for the maté gourds, which they offered in soft caressing voices to the country people. A race-course had been staked out for the vaqueros; and away to the left, from where the crowd was massed thickly about a huge, temporary erection, like a circus-tent of wood with a conical grass roof, came the resonant twanging of harp strings, the sharp ping of guitars, with the grave drumming throb of an Indian gombo pulsating steadily through the shrill choruses of the dancers." (1)

Or take this for colorful atmosphere. "Gamacho, Commandante of the National Guard, was lying drunk and asleep in the bosom of his family. His bare feet were turned up in the shadows repulsively, in the manner of a corpse. His eloquent mouth had dropped open. His youngest daughter, scratching her head with one hand, with the other waved a green bough over his scorched and peeling face." (2)

(1) P. 136

(2) P. 437

Against this native background moved the circle of the "material interests" - those connected with the railway, the mine, the shipping company. Charles Gould, the "King of Sulaco" was their leader, Mrs. Gould their queen, and her drawing-room the meeting place and council chamber of the whole colony. But this brings us to the atmosphere of personalities.

Nostromo is so filled with portraits that it is impossible to give adequate quotations. Even the mere mention of them indicates their variety and complexity, though not their power. First of all there is "our man", Nostromo, the magnificent Capitaz whose ruling passion was love of glory; there is Charles Gould, precise, business-like, mechanical; Mrs. Gould, gracious and sympathetic; old Viola, the taciturn ~~Corbaldino~~ ^{Corbaldino}, with a passion for the republican ideal of liberty; his scolding wife and lovely daughters; the two victims of ancient tyranny, Dr. Monygham, bitter and morose, Don José ~~Avellan~~ ^{Avellan}, hopeful of better things and busy with "Fifty Years of Misrule"; his daughter Antonia, stately and beautiful; her lover Martin Decoud, cynical and blasé; the grim, black-robed missionary, Father Corb^élan; the incorruptible Don Pépé, governor of the mine; the fussy Captain Mitchell; and the invaders, the cruel ~~Sotillo~~ ^{Sotillo} and mercenary Montero brothers. It is a marvellous aggregation of characters, ever-changing and developing.

Lastly, there is the general atmosphere of unrest and terror during the revolution, and the brooding, baleful influence of the silver mine over everybody and everything. It is all-pervading, ever-present, and hangs over the whole book like a dark cloud.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

The influence of the San Tome silver mine is the theme of Nostromo, especially as shown in its effect on Charles Gould and Nostromo. All the events of the plot are useful in illustrating this, and some are themselves subjective adventures, especially the hiding of the silver, the torture of Hirsch, and the sorrow of Linda Viola.

While Charles Gould was away in England at school, his father wrote him bitter, hopeless letters all about the mine which was the despair of his life. "To be told repeatedly that one's future is blighted because of the possession of a silver mine is not, at the age of fourteen, a matter of prime importance, as to its main statement; but in its form it is calculated to excite a certain amount of wonder and attention. In course of time the boy, at first only puzzled by the angry jeremiads, but rather sorry for his dad, began to turn the matter over in his mind in such moments as he could spare from play and study . . . In the end, the growing youth attained to as close an intimacy with the San Tome mine as the old man who wrote those plaintive and enraged letters on the other side of the sea By the time he was twenty Charles Gould had, in his turn, fallen under the spell of the San Tome mine. But it was another form of enchantment, more suitable to his youth, into whose magic formula there entered hope, vigor and self-confidence. . . . Mines had acquired for him a dramatic interest. . . . One of his frequent remarks was 'I think sometimes that poor father takes a wrong view of that San Tome business.'" (1)

Hence, on his father's death, he went to Costaguana with his bride, and threw himself into the work of developing it, not sparing himself, obtaining American capital, resisting government corruption. At first his wife was his confidante, his companion in all his arduous wanderings, but gradually he became more and more absorbed in the mine, less and less in her. His love for her never failed, but the mine came first. She too was "inspired with an idealistic view of success" (1), but gradually feared the mine.

When revolution threatened Sulaco, the main consideration was the safety of the mine. Gould never wavered, backed as he was by the power of tons of dynamite. He said, in answer to her request for news, "There were things to be done, we have done them, we have gone on doing them. There is no going back now. I don't suppose that, even from the first, there was ever any possible way back. And what's more, we can't even afford to stand still."

"Ah, if one only knew how far you mean to go," said his wife, inwardly trembling, but in an almost playful tone. "Any distance, any length, of course", was the answer, in a matter-of-fact tone which caused Mrs. Gould to make another effort to repress a shudder . . . "Ah, if we had left it alone, Charles!" "No," Charles Gould said moodily, "it was impossible to leave it alone." (2)

And Decoud, wishing to conceal the idea of the Occidental republic from Gould for a while, pleads that he is an idealist

(1) P. 74
(2) P. 234

on the subject of the mine. "He cannot act or exist without idealizing every simple feeling, desire, or achievement. He could not believe his own motives if he did not make them first part of a fairy-tale." (1)

As for Mrs. Gould, "The fate of the San Tome mine was lying heavily upon her heart. It was a long time now since she had begun to fear it. It had been an idea. She had watched it with misgivings turning into a fetich, and now the fetich had grown into a monstrous and crushing weight. It was as if the inspiration of their early years had left her heart to turn into a wall of silver bricks, erected by the silent work of evil spirits, between her and her husband. He seemed to dwell alone within a circumvalation of precious metal, leaving her outside with her hospital, the sick mothers and the feeble old men, mere insignificant vestiges of the initial inspiration." (2)

The first care was to save the season's output of silver. Decoud writes - "Don Carlos Gouda will have enough to do to save his mine . . . to which his sentimentalism attaches a strange idea of justice. He holds to it as some men hold to the idea of love or revenge. Unless I am much mistaken in the man, it must remain inviolate or preish by an act of his will alone. A passion has crept into his cold and idealistic life, a passion which I can only comprehend intellectually, a passion that is not like the passions we know, we men of another blood. But it is as dangerous as any of ours . . . His wife has understood it too. That is why she is such a good ally of mine... And he defers to her because he trusts her, perhaps, but I fancy

more rather as if he wished to make up for some subtle wrong, for that sentimental unfaithfulness which surrenders her happiness, her life, to the seduction of an idea . . . Don Carlos's mission is to preserve unstained the fair fame of his mine; Mrs. Gould's mission is to save him from the effects of that cold and overmastering passion, which she dreads more than if it were an infatuation for another women."¹ (1)

So throughout the troublous times of the revolution Gould remained calm and unwavering, strong in his fixed purpose. It was this purpose that sent Nostromo and Decoud on the expedition that was to end in death and disaster. It was this purpose which made Gould stand firm against the blandishments and threats of Montero and Sotillo. It was this purpose which produced success for the Occidental Republic by throwing on its side the weight of the "material interest" - which finally brought peace and prosperity - also a wider rift between Gould and his wife, and the threat of unrest amongst the people. Gould is a fine example of the constancy of the man of one idea.

Nostromo, too, is a man of one idea, but the vague, formless idea of personal prestige. Decoud said of him "The only thing he seems to care for, as far as I have been able to discover, is to be well spoken of.... His very words - 'To be well spoken of - Si, senor'?" (2)

His real name was Giovanni Battista Fianza, an orphan Italian boy who had become a sailor, and stayed off at Sulaco to better his fortunes. There he was the adopted son of the Violas

(1) P. 271

(2) P. 275

and proceeded to make himself invaluable to the shipping company, soon becoming "capitaz de cargadores", and very nearly bringing order out of the chaotic labor conditions. His qualities of courage and leadership soon made him remarked by the other concerns, and he was lent to the railway as camp master, and brought a prominent official in safety through many dangers. He acquired a great reputation among the upper classes, who called him "Nostromo", and their praise was music to his ears.

Among the lower classes also he was careful of his reputation. His everyday attire was gorgeous, and he kept himself poor by his generosity and love of gambling. For instance, he gave the silver buttons off his coat to his Morenita, to preserve his prestige before the crowd, and gave his last coin to an old beggarwoman, just because she would speak well of him.

To such a man, the charge of the lighter of silver was a glorious opportunity to win undying renown. Just as he was about to set off, he received the annoying summons to Teresa's death-bed, where he refused to fetch a priest. "They have turned your head with their praises," gasped the sick woman. "They have been paying you with words. Your folly shall betray you into poverty, misery, starvation. The very lepers shall laugh at you - the great capitaz." (1)

Nostromo stood for a time as if struck dumb . . . He descended the stairs backward, with the usual sense of having been somehow baffled by this woman's disparagement of this reputation he had obtained and desired to keep." (1)

When about to sail, he said goodbye, and hinted at the possibility of failure, telling the Doctor it was as if he were taking a curse upon him to take charge of the treasure, and that he would willingly stand aside for another.

Then came the terrible experience of drifting along with no wind in the most intense darkness. Nostromo was impressed with a sense of their danger, and of the comparative worthlessness of the treasure, but was determined to achieve fame. He pointed out their parts to Decoud, then said: "Well, I am going to make of it the most famous and desperate affair of my life, wind or no wind. It shall be talked about when the little children are grown up and the grown men are old. Aha! the Monterists must not get hold of it, I am told, whatever happens to Nostromo the Capataz; and they shall not have it, I can tell you, since it has been for safety tied round Nostromo's neck!" (1) To make things worse his latent superstition made him wonder if Teresa had anything to do with the lack of wind.

So they floated, in misery and suspense, until the irrepressible sobs of Senor Hirsch betrayed him. Nostromo wanted to kill him, fearing the influence of cowardice, but the right moment passed, the crash came, Hirsch screamed, and was dragged off. Then they sailed on in silence, made for the Great Isabel, and hid the silver there. Nostromo told Decoud he would think the silver safer if he had been alone. "Your reputation is in your politics, and mine is bound up in the fate of this silver!" (2)

(1) P. 296

(2) P. 334

Nostromo left Decoud, sank the lighter, and swam to shore, where he slept for a long time. He awoke in a changed world. He thought of his past life, with its splendors and triumphs, and "This awakening in solitude, but for the watchful vulture, among the ruins . . . was not kn keeping. It was more like the end of things. The necessity of living, concealed somehow, for God knows how long, which assailed him on his return to consciousness, made everything that had gone before for years appear vain and foolish, like a flattering dream come suddenly to an end." (1) Also, "But since it was no longer possible for him to parade the streets of the town and be hailed with respect in the usual haunts of his leisure, the sailor felt himself destitute indeed.....It may be said that Nostromo tasted the dust and ashes of the fruit of life into which he had bitten deeply in his hunger for praise... and muttered a curse upon the selfishness of all the rich people." (2) Then he reflected on the political situation, and saw his danger as a marked Ribierist due to his devotion to the rich people. "Everybody had given up, Even Don Carlos had given up. The hurried removal of the treasure out to sea meant nothing else than that. The capataz de cargadores, in a revulsion of subjectiveness, exasperated almost to insanity, beheld all his world without faith and courage. He had been betrayed." (3) And he felt that old Viola and Teresa had been right. Then came remorse for his last talk with her. "The magnificent Capataz de Cargadores, deprived of certain simple realities, such as the admiration of women, the adulation of men, was ready to feel the burden of sacrilegious guilt descend upon his shoulders." (3)

Then, by a sort of instinct, he went to the wharf, and encountered Dr. Monygham, who took him to see the body of Hirsch. This was an awful shock - he had thought of the man as drowned in the gulf. The Doctor went on to say that Sotillo knew the treasure was sunk and regretted that he had not captured it, or that it had been used to buy him off, and that if it turned up miraculously it would be given to him. This made Nostromo furious and injured. That his great mission was regretted! That no glory would come of it!

Then the Doctor urged him to undertake the ride to Cayta. Nostromo still felt betrayed, that he was merely a tool, and quarrelled with the Doctor. He was not allowed to see Gould - to whom could he tell the truth? But finally he went to hide meanwhile at Violas, where he heard of Teresa's death, and her message to him to save the children and the Blancos.. Partly to atone for his wrong to her, he decided to seize this new opportunity for fame, As to telling his secret: "It was impossible for him to do anything. He could only hold his tongue, since there was no one to trust." (1)

He accomplished the tremendous feat of the ride to Cayta and was returning home with Barrios, a marked man, when he leaped overboard to get the lighter's boat, and went to the island. He knew that Decoud was dead, and four ingots were missing. Then "the magnificent capataz de cargadores, victim of the disenchanting vanity which is the reward of audacious action, sat in the weary pose of a hunted outcast through a night

of sleeplessness as tormenting as any known to Decoud, his companion in the most desperate affair of his life. And he wondered how Decoud had died. But he knew the part he had played himself. First a woman, then a man, abandoned each in their last extremity, for the sake of this accursed treasure. It was paid for by a soul lost and by a vanished life. The blank stillness of awe was succeeded by a gust of immense pride. There was no one in the world but Giovanni Battista Fidanza, capataz de cargadores, the incorruptible and faithful Nostromo, to pay such a price.

He had made up his mind now that nothing should be allowed to rob him of his bargain. Nothing. Decoud had died But four ingots.. ...The treasure was putting forth its latent power. It troubled the clear mind of the man who had paid the price. He was sure that Decoud was dead. The island seemed full of that whisper. Dead! Gone!

Well, he had saved the children. He had defeated the spell of poverty and starvation. He had done it all alone - or perhaps helped by the devil. Who cared? He had done it, betrayed as he was, saving by the same stroke the San Tome mine, which appeared to him hateful and immense, lording it by its vast wealth over the valor, the toil, the fidelity of the poor, over war and peace, over the labors of the town, the sea, and the camps

"I must grow rich very slowly," he meditated aloud." (1)

From then on he was a changed man. He did not go back to work, and to Gould's offer of help said "My name is known from one end of Sulaco to the other. What more can you do for me?" (2/

But Mrs. Gould bought him the schooner, and he became Captain Fianza.

It was his vanity which had made him incorruptible; with the collapse of his vanity when he felt betrayed, there came the possibility of deceit. "Nostromo had lost his peace; the genuineness of all his qualities was destroyed. He felt it himself, and often cursed the silver of San Tome. His courage, his magnificence, his leisure, his work, everything was as before, only everything was a sham. But the treasure was real. He clung to it with a more tenacious mental grip. But he hated the feel of the ingots. Sometimes, after putting away a couple of them in his cabin - the fruit of a secret night expedition to the Great Isabel - he would look fixedly at his fingers, as if surprised they had left no stain on his skin." (1) Nostromo was the slave of the treasure, but he chafed under his slavery.

Then came the building of the lighthouse, the appointment of the Violas as keeper, and all the tragedy connected with his love. The malign influence of the treasure kept him in his deceitful course, not willing to carry off Giselle to happiness, until disaster resulted. It was fear of losing the treasure by being forbidden the island that had led to the deceit in the first place, and Linda's jealousy had much to do with the outcome.

Finally, on his death-bed he offered to confess to Mrs. Gould the hiding place of the silver. He said that he could not give back the treasure with four ingots missing, lest he should be accused of taking them, and then he was told it was of no importance! But she refused to hear, and the magnificent Nostromo

died with his secret kept, another victim of the San Tome mine.

Other examples of subjective studies are Decoud, whose one idea was love for Antonia, whom solitude drove to suicide; Linda Viola, for whom Nostromo was everything, and who was tortured by jealousy; Senor Hirsch, a tragic picture; Sotillo, obsessed by greed. But all have this in common - they suffer, more or less directly, through the influence of the silver.

LORD JIM (1900)

P L O T

Jim is an English clergyman's son who found a vocation for the sea by reading light literature. He went to a naval training school, then followed the sea, finding the life very different from his romantic imaginings. But he had a sensitive nature, unlimited confidence in himself, and a firm determination to distinguish himself.

He was injured in a storm, and invalided at an Eastern port, to escape from which he took the berth of chief mate on the "Patna", a rotten, decrepit old ship carrying eight hundred Arab pilgrims. On a calm night in the Red Sea the ship passed over some wreckage, just when Jim was enjoying the night with a feeling of unusual security. The bulkhead was broken in, and all that stood between the might of the sea was a sheet of rotten old iron, which bulged inwards. It seemed that the ship might sink at any instant, and there were only seven boats for eight hundred people. The captain and the engineers were mad with terror, and tugged at a boat with low comedy antics while Jim looked on disdainfully. His imagination was appalled by picturing the end of the ship, especially when he felt a squall coming. At length the others got the boat over, and called desperately for George, who had dropped dead of heart failure. Involuntarily Jim jumped, thus identifying himself with the three scoundrels. They were furious at having him, he was half mad, and they soon left him alone. At length they were picked up, and told a plausible story of the sinking of the "Patna", only to find on reaching port that she had

not sunk, but had been towed in by a French man-of-war.

An enquiry was held at once, from which all fled but Jim. He repented most bitterly having failed his romantic ideal, missed his chance, and saw some measure of expiation in undergoing the pitiless examination. At the inquiry he saw Marlowe, who was fascinated by the boy, and afterwards listened to his story. From this point, Marlowe is the narrator and interpreter of events.

He was interested in Jim, and saved him from suicide or madness in the awful remorse that tortured him, afterwards getting him a position far away. But after six months, someone turned up who knew Jim, and he disappeared. This happened time after time, until finally Marlowe picked up up at Bangkok, and took him to the benevolent trader Stein, who gave him charge of a post at Patusan, an obscure, remote inland settlement. Jim seized on this eagerly as his long desired chance for retribution.

There were three factions in Patusan - one headed by Doramin, an old friend of Stein; another by the weak Sultan Allang, another by Sherif Ali, an Arab robber. Jim landed there alone and fearless, in the midst of turmoils and unrest. He was first taken prisoner by the Sultan, then made a spectacular escape to Doramin, who received him at once by virtue of Stein's token. Then he went to live with Cornelius, Stein's previous agent, a vile Portugese who abused his stepdaughter. Jim defied fate there for six weeks, had his life saved by the girl, fell in love with her, and went to Doramin again. Soon he carried out an attack which routed Sherif Ali, made the Sultan humble, and established Jim as undisputed lord of Patusan, where

he proceeded to advance the cause of justice, mercy, and progress

He was successful, - but not quite satisfied. Always he longed for one chance to prove to himself that he was not a coward. After three years, a pirate crew intent on plunder came to Patusan in Jim's absence. They were surrounded, cut off from food, and could easily have been killed. The decision lay with Jim, and after talking to the pirate Captain, he decided to let them go unmolested. But Cornelius hated Jim bitterly, and led the pirates to a backwater from which they fired on the guard, killing Dain Waris, Doramin's son. The love of the people now turned to hate, and all Jim's carefully constructed power fell into ruins. Yet he saw in the disaster his chance for spiritual atonement. Disregarding the appeals of the girl, he went resolutely to old Doramin and let him shoot him, proving to himself that he was in truth a man and unafraid.

ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere in "Lord Jim" is of a different quality to that in the books already considered, due to the method of narration. The first four chapters are told in the third person, then Marlowe takes up the tale, and the rest of the book is written as if by someone who heard Marlowe talking after a dinner party, and got the last of the story by letter years after.

The first effect of this method is to detract from realism. Instead of a straightforward account of events, we have a story by a man who got it from Marlowe, who got it from Jim and others. We do not seem to look on the scenes themselves, but rather to look at them from afar through a telescope. The machinery of the method is always obtruding itself - Marlowe reaches for a cigar, the guests urge him to go on, he puts in personal opinions, and so on. This is at times rather maddening, - Marlowe becomes a nuisance when we are interested in Jim. The primary atmosphere, then, is that of men smoking on a verandah.

But although the method takes from realism, it adds to convincing power. It is told as all true stories are told, by men who were themselves on the scene, or had got facts directly from such men. This is the way in which Conrad would hear stories at sea, as Walpole suggests. One man starts to tell a story, and explains his sources. He mentions a certain man, the others do not know him, and he digresses to tell about him. He gives the facts as he knows them, and puts his own interpretation on them. He proves everything he says, makes us believe him. This method is especially valuable in getting at the truth of a

thing by looking at it through many eyes, and adds to the first part of the book.

In the latter part, however, Marlowe becomes objectionable. It was quite natural for him to be at the inquiry, and get Jim's story. but it is artificial for him to go off to visit Jim at Patusan, to visit the dying Brown, and to write such a very full and florid account of his findings to his unknown friend. The primary atmosphere here is a nuisance.

But there is also an atmosphere within an atmosphere. The first four chapters are typically Conradian - witness the description of a water-clerk's duties, Jim's training, the Eastern hospital; especially of the Arab pilgrims, the Patna, the officers and the scene of the disaster.

Takes this about the pilgrims - "They streamed over these gangways, they streamed in urged by faith and the hope of paradise they streamed in with a continuous tramp and shuffle of bare feet, without a word, a murmur, or a look back; and when clear of confining rails, spread on all sides over the deck, flowed forward and aft, overflowed down the yawning hatchways, filled the inner recesses of the ship - like water filling a cistern, like water flowing into crevices and crannies, like water rising silently even with the rim. Eight hundred men and women with faith and hopes, with affections and memories, they had collected there, coming from north and south and from the outskirts of the East, after treading the jungle paths, descending the rivers, coasting in prams along the shallows, crossing in small canoes from island to island, passing through suffering, meeting strange

sights, beset by strange fears, upheld by one desire." (1) Then follows a description of the party, and "Look at dese cattle," said the German skipper to his new chief mate."

And then - "The ship, lonely under a wisp of smoke, held on her steadfast way black and smouldering in a luminous immensity as if scorched by a flame flecked at her from a heaven without pity. The nights descended on her like a benediction." (2)

The descriptions of the disaster have an admirable atmosphere of rudely shocked security - Jim was dreaming dreams and looking at the moon while the half drunk engineer railed against the captain.

Then we are transplanted abruptly to the inquiry, where Jim is speaking, first to the court, and afterwards to Marlowe. From now on the atmosphere is simply that of personalities. Men telling a story do not as a rule describe the scenery or try to get subtle effects, but they do describe people. The rest of the book is filled with striking portraits, - the German captain; the engineer who saw the pink toads; Jim in all his moods; the kindly Stein among his butterflies; the immense and imposing Doramin; his motherly wife; the decrepit Sultan; Dain Waris; the abject Cornelius; Jewel; the villainous Brown. It adds to their vividness that we see them through the eyes of other people.

Marlowe's description of the skipper shows this. "He made me think of a trained baby elephant walking on hind legs. He was extravagantly gorgeous, too - got up in a soiled sleeping-

(1) P. 11
(2) P. 14

suit, bright green and deep orange vertical stripes, with a pair of ragged straw slippers on his bare feet, and somebody's cast-off pith hat, very dirty and two sizes too small for him, tied up with a manilla rope-yarn on the top of his big head." (1)

Hence, although the scenes are laid in tropical wildernesses much like those in "Almayer's Folly" and "Outcast of the Islands", the tropical atmosphere does not weigh heavily as in the other books. Its effect on people is unnoticed, ~~as~~ they do not describe it themselves. But the atmosphere of life and personality persists, built up by a painstaking addition of detail, just because Conrad is himself so interested in his people that he adds fact after fact just when it occurs to him, often irrelevantly, but with a wonderful effect of vigor.

(1) P. 32

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

The theme, the incidents, the interest in "Lord Jim" are all subjective. The first part of the book deals with the failure of a man tainted by cowardice to grapple with a sudden emergency, and his remorse; the second part deals with his search for atonement. Marlowe's interest in him, Jewel's love, Doramin's sudden fury, Cornelius's hate, are all subjective, but entirely subordinate to Jim's experiences.

The key to Jim's character is found in Stein's words. "I understand very well. He is romantic." (1) And the key to his later actions, "There is only one remedy. One thing alone can us from being ourselves cure 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 endeavor to do, he drowns - nicht wahr? .. 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 To follow the dream, and again to follow the dream - and so - usque ad finem?" (2)

Jim's initial love for the sea was based on light literature, and during his training he dreamed always of the time when he too would do heroic deeds. Then, too, the first bent of his cowardice appeared. A cutter was ordered to a rescue, and something held Jim back until it was too late to find a place. He was disappointed, but tried to console himself with thoughts of really big things. "When all men flinched, then - he felt sure -

(1) P. 197.

(2) P. 198

he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas the final effect of a staggering event was that, unnoticed and apart from the noisy crowd of boys, he exulted with fresh certitude in his avidity for adventure, and in a sense of many-sided courage." (1)

He found actual sea-life very different from his dreams, but kept on ~~hoping~~. That night on board the "Patna", with an unbroken peace on the sea, a new moon, silence on the ship, he felt a sense of unbounded security, while he dreamed his dreams. "He loved these dreams and the success of his imaginary achievements. They were the best parts of life, its secret truth, its hidden reality They carried his soul away with them and made it drunk with the divine philtre of an unbounded confidence in itself. There was nothing he could not face." (2)

Then came the crash. At first Jim did not realize any danger, until he spoke to the engineer and examined the rotten bulkhead. The end seemed inevitable. Then he was overwhelmed by the awful possibilities his imagination pictured. He felt that there was no use in waking the pilgrims, and watched in a dazed way the crazy antics of the terrified officers. At the back of his head he still had some hope, until he saw signs of a squall, when he felt trapped by fate. In a sort of frenzy he cut all the life-boats free, but still kept his distance from the men struggling so ignobly to get one off. He felt a "moody rancour" at this "element of burlesque in his ordeal" (3) But he kept aloof until he felt the first swell of the squall, which

(1) p. 7
(2) p. 17
(3) p. 97

seemed to knock over something in his head. Just at that moment the others got the boat off, began calling frantically to the man who had dropped dead, and the next thing Jim realized he was in the boat. But "there was no going back - it was as if I had jumped into a well - into an everlasting deep hole..?" (1)

At once his imagination created horrible pictures of the end of the ship, and when at last the lights disappeared, he felt relief. If the lights had remained, he would have swum back. The other men were furious because he had come, but his frenzied air frightened them. However, he felt desperate, and considered suicide. "He had found that to meditate about, because he thought that he had saved his life, while all its glamour had gone with the ship in the night." (2) What appalled him was his failure to live up to his romantic ideal. As he told Marlowe afterwards, "Ah? What a chance missed! My God, what a chance missed!" (3) If he had stayed with the ship, he would probably have saved his life, and his honour too. The thought of disgrace before the world scarcely bothered him; what ate like acid into his soul was his self-condemnation. He scarcely noticed that the others were making up a plausible excuse, "I knew the truth, and I would live it down - alone, with myself. I wasn't going to give in to such a beastly unfair thing. What did it prove after all?" (4)

Then came the exposure and the inquiry. Jim's first feeling was one of relief that his horrid imaginings had not been realized; the disgrace in the eyes of the world scarcely added to

(1) p. 103
(2) p. 119

(3) p. 77
(4) p. 122

his agony, except as it would affect his father. But he made of the inquiry the first step in regaining his confidence - he did not flee like the others, but remained to receive alone all the probings and scorn. There he met Marlowe, and his desperate attempts to clear himself in his own eyes are seen in his attempt to make Marlowe see the necessity for his action. The poor boy managed to convey the impression of his doubt and dread, while he himself is surrounded with an atmosphere of mental agony. But he still thought that "the proper thing was to face it out - alone before myself - wait for another chance - find out." (1)

However, after the enquiry was over and he was marked as a disgraced man, this element added to his torture. He was hopeless, desperate, reckless, grieved at his father's grief - and then Marlowe took him in tow. He soothed him in the first trying hours, partially restored his lost confidence, and got him a job where he could begin afresh. He was profoundly grateful "I'll show yet.... I always thought that if a fellow could begin with a clean slate.... and now you ... in a measure ... yes... clean slate?" (2)

But he found life hard just the same. He "made good" at his work, endeared himself to his employer, and then after six months, suddenly disappeared because a man who knew him had turned up, and assumed a confidential air. He got another job elsewhere, made himself invaluable, and again disappeared. There were many incidents of this sort, "all equally tinged by a high-minded absurdity of intention which made their futility profound and touch-

(1) p. 123

(2) p. 172

ing..... He was indeed unfortunate, for all his recklessness could not carry him out from under the shadow. There was always a doubt of his courage." (1)

At length Marlowe came on him in Bangkok, where a bar-room brawl had complicated Jim's exposure. By this time he was extremely sensitive about his secret, and Marlowe feared that he would become a common loafer with an ugly reputation. He realized that "What he wanted, what he was waiting for, was something not easy to define - something in the nature of an opportunity. I had given him many opportunities, but they had been merely opportunities to earn his bread." (2)

Then Stein proposed to send him to Patusam. "He left his earthly failings behind him, and that sort of reputation he had, and there was a totally new set of conditions for his imaginative faculty to work upon. Entirely new, entirely remarkable". (3) Jim was delighted with the prospect. The more they talked of danger and difficulties, the more eager he was to be off. We see this in his farewell to Marlowe. "One of his hands was rammed deep into his trousers' pocket, the other waved suddenly above his head. 'Slam the door' he shouted. 'I've been waiting for that. I'll show yet ... I'll....I'm ready for any confounded thing... I've been dreaming of it. Jove! Get out of this! Jove! This is luck at last. You wait. I'll'

"He tossed his head fearlessly 'It is not I nor the world who remember,' I shouted. 'It is you - you, who

(1) p. 152
(2) p. 187
(3) p. 203

remember.'

"He did not flinch, and went on with heat, 'Forget everything, everybody, everybody.' His voice fell ... 'But you,' he added." (1)

So Jim was dropped off at the river's mouth, and was taken up to Patusan in a canoe. He was tired but resolute, and "his opportunity sat veiled by his side like an Eastern bride waiting to be uncovered by the hand of her master." (2) The passed through diverse adventures, and soon won love, power, friendship, trust. He was almost satisfied. "Look at these houses; there is not one where I am not trusted. Jove! I told you I would hang on. Ask any man, woman or child. ' He paused, 'Well, I am all right, anyhow.'...."

"There was elation and pride, there was awe almost, in that low exclamation. 'Jove!' he cried, 'only think what that is to me Leave! Why! That's what I was afraid of. It would have been - it would have been harder than dying. No - on my word - don't laugh. I must feel - every day, every time I open my eyes - that I am trusted - that nobody has a right - don't you know? Leave? For where? To get what? " (3)

"Immense! No doubt it was immense and the seal of success upon his words, the conquered ground for the soles of his feet, the blind trust of men, the belief in himself snatched from the fire, the solitude of his achievement ... I can't with mere words convey to you the impression of his total and utter isolation." (3)

(1) p. 219

(2) p. 228

(3) p. 230

Yet Jim was not quite content, as we see when Marlowe's visit was ended. (p. 312) "You have had your opportunity, I pursued. 'Had I?' he said. 'Well, yes, I suppose so Yes. I have got back my confidence in myself - a good name - yet sometimes I wish ... No! I shall hold what I've got. Can't expect anything more.'" When Marlowe was off, he called back "Tell them .. and then, 'No, -nothing.'" His romantic dream was still incomplete. Marlowe watched him standing there, (p. 315) "the opportunity by his side, still veiled."

Then Brown appeared to wreak havoc, and the crash came. Jim decided to defy it. (p. 384) "The dark powers should not rob him twice of his peace". He went to his death unflinchingly, disregarding the love that alone remained to him. (p. 391) "He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven, and excessively romantic. Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! For it may well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he had beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side..... He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct."

In a sense, too, Marlowe's whole interest in Jim is a subjective adventure. His interest was first aroused by the contrast between Jim and the other "Patna" officers, which made him wonder how such a promising youth came to be associated with such scoundrels. His curiosity led him to investigate,. At first he wanted to get the truth for the honor of the craft of

seamen, then he tried to come to some decision about the case. He discussed it with the French officer who had towed in the "Patna". His opinion was that there is in all of us a taint of cowardice, (p . 135) "Each of them - I say each of them, if he were an honest man, would confess that there is a point - there is a point - for the best of us, there is somewhere a point when you let go everything. And you have got to live with that truth - do you see? Given a certain combination of circumstances, fear is sure to come. Abominable funk. And even for those who do not believe this truth, there is fear all the same - the fear of themselves." Also, Marlowe dwells long on the strange suicide of Captain Brierly, who conducted the inquiry, and seems to suggest that the reason was that his unbounded confidence in himself was shaken by realizing this truth, set forth in Jim, and he could not bear to live. Then Marlowe discusses Jim at length with Stein, and gets his opinion that he is romantic. And so on, through all his share of the story. Marlowe is probably Conrad himself, and his analyzing and reflecting upon a situation is the subjective adventure which is the foundation of the book.

THE SECRET AGENT.

The "Secret Agent" is a story of the London underworld of spies as Conrad imagines it. Mr. Verloc is the secret agent of a foreign Embassy; he apparently keeps a little shop where he deals in shady goods, but his real work is to organize social unrest which will inflame the Continent. For a long time he has been working quietly, making socialistic speeches, chumming with anarchists, and living in sleepy content with his wife Winnie, her mother, and her half-witted brother, Steevie. But one day his security was rudely awakened by a peremptory command to bring about an outrage at once, against the popular fetish, Science, in order to inflame people against anarchists.

Mr. Verloc was stunned and upset, and brooded for a month, before he thought of a plan. He decided to use Steevie, who had been taught to trust him implicitly. The boy's simple soul hated all forms of cruelty, to man or beast; Mr. Verloc worked this feeling to fever pitch, and persuaded him that all will be cured if he carries a thing which looks like an oil-can, and leaves it beside Greenwich Observatory. In trying to do this, Steevie stumbles and is blown to pieces.

Winnie Verloc's whole life has been one of sacrifice. She protected Steevie from a drunken father, and gave up a poor lover to marry the bovine Mr. Verloc, who could support her mother and brother also. She had denied herself children, lest Steevie should be slighted, and taught the boy to believe Verloc the best of men. She was delighted when her husband took

Steevie for walks, and sent him to the country to a friend. She had no inkling of the tragedy until a detective came with an address tag she had sewn in Steevie's coat. Then she listened to him talking to her husband, and learned the truth.

The rest of the book reeks with the atmosphere of horror. The tragedy is to her the crumbling of all her structure of sacrifice, a proof of the futility of her suppressed longings, smothered hopes, patience, care. She remains very quiet, after the first agony of realization, and when Verloc comes in and tries to defend his conduct, she preserves a stony indifference. Then her rage drives her quite involuntarily to stab him with a carving knife, and she has terror of hanging added to her troubles. She fled from the shop blindly, and soon met Comrade Ossipon, an amorous anarchist whose advances she had always repulsed. Now she tells him her story, and asks him to fly with her. He makes love to her, himself in mortal terror of a murderess, gets possession of her money, and then leaps from the moving train. That night she jumped overboard into the Channel.

ATMOSPHERE.

Such a story about modern twentieth-century London is wildly improbable, but the skill with which Conrad produces the atmosphere of this obscure phase of London life gives the picture convincing power.

As an atmosphere behind an atmosphere stands a grim sort of irony, as if the author were smiling sardonically as he writes. This pervades the entire book, after the manner of the following. (p. 13) "Undemonstrative and burly in a fat-pig style Mr. Verloc, without either rubbing his hands with satisfaction or winking sceptically at his thoughts, proceeded on his way But there was also about him. . the air common to men who live on the vices, the follies, the baser fears of mankind, the air of moral nihilism common to keepers of gambling hells and disorderly houses; to drink-sellers, and, I should say, to the sellers of invigorating electric belts and the inventors of patent medicines But of that last I am not sure, not having carried my investigations so far into the depths. For all I know these last may be perfectly diabolic. I shouldn't be surprised. What I want to affirm is that Mr. Verloc's expression was by no means diabolic." (p. 15) "A guilty-looking car, issuing from under the stones, ran for a while in front of Mr. Verloc, then dived into another basement; and a thick-set police constable, looking a stranger to every emotion, as if he too were part of inorganic nature, surging apparently out of a lamp-post, took not the slightest notice of Mr. Verloc. With a turn to the left Mr. Verloc pursued his way along a narrow street by the side of a yellow wall

which, for some inscrutable reason, had "No. 1, Chesham Square" written on it in black letters. Chesham Square was at least sixty yards away, and Mr. Verloc, cosmopolitan enough not to be deceived by London's topographical mysteries, held on steadily without a sign of surprise or indignation, " etc. Even in the tragic later scenes this spirit is found, relieving while it intensifies their horror.

The squalid atmosphere of mean streets is well done. Take this description of the shop (p. 1), "The shop was a square box of a place, with the front glazed in small panes. In the daytime the door remained closed; in the evening it stood discreetly and suspiciously ajar.

The window contained photographs or more or less undressed dancing-girls; nondescript packages in wrappers like patent medicines; closed yellow paper envelopes, very flimsy, and marked two and six in heavy black figures; a few numbers of ancient French comic publications hung across a string as if to dry; a dingy blue china bowl, a casket of black wood, bottles of marking ink, and rubber stamps, a few books, with titles hinting at impropriety; a few apparently old copies of obscure newspapers, with titles like "The Torch", "The Gong" - rousing titles - and the two gas-jets inside the panes were always turned low, either for economy's sake or for the sake of the customers."

Even more important is the atmosphere of personalities. There are numerous descriptions of Mr. Verloc, with his love of ease and his ponderous bulk, practically summed up in this sketch (p. 3). "His eyes werenaturally heavy; he had the air of

having wallowed, fully dressed, all day on an unmade bed."

(p. 3) "Winnie Verloc was a young woman with a full bust, in a tight bodice, and broad hips. Her hair was very tidy. Steady-eyed, like her husband, she preserved an air of unfathomable indifference behind the rampart of the counter."

Then there is the wheezy, patient mother with the swollen legs; the gentle, eager Steevie; the cynical Ambassador. Mr. Vladimir; the officials, Inspector Heat and the Assistant Commissioner; the Secretary of State and his eager young aide. The anarchists form another group, including the amorous Ossipon, Karl Gundt, the terrorist, Michaelis, the mountain of fat, and the Professor, a bomb-maker, in search of a "perfect detonator". The restaurant scene in Chapter IV has an admirable atmosphere of gruesomeness. The anarchists discuss the explosion, and fear that the Professor may be implicated. He feels immune from arrest, even if he was surrounded. (p. 75) "I am seldom out in the streets after dark," said the little man impassibly, "and never very late. I walk always with my right hand closed round the india-rubber ball which I have in my trousers pocket. The pressing of this ball actuates a detonator inside the flask I carry in my pocket. It's the principle of the pneumatic, instantaneous shutter for a camera lens. The valve leads up -"

With a swift, disclosing gesture he gave Ossipon a glimpse of an india-rubber tube, resembling a slender brown worm, issuing from the armhole of his waist-coat, and plunging into the inner breast pocket of his jacket. His clothes, of a nondescript brown mixture, were threadbare and marked with stains, dusty in the folds, with ragged buttonholes, 'the detonator is partly

mechanical, partly chemical,' he explained with casual condescension", and he went on to explain its defects and his plans for a perfect one.

The sketches of the others are good. (p. 47) "Michael- is, the ticket-of-leave apostle, was speaking in an even voice, a voice that wheezed as if deadened and oppressed by layer of fat on his chest. He had come out of a highly hygienic prison, round like a tub, with an enormous stomach and distended cheeks of a pale, semi-transparent complexion, as though for fifteen years an outraged society had made a point of stuffing him with fattening goods in a damp, lightless cellar."

(p. 48) "Karl Yundt, giggled grimly, with a faint black grimace of a toothless mouth. The terrorist, as he called himself, was old and bald, with a narrow, snow-white wisp of a goatee hanging limply from his chin. An extraordinary expression of malevolence/survived in his extinguished eyes." The conversation of these men further reveals the reckless group in which Verloc appeared to work.

The reader knows the truth about the bombing outrage long before Winnie Verloc does, which gives an air of suspense to the unravelling of the plot. Also, about all the last three chapters there is a brooding atmosphere of horror which is very powerful, very impressive, and very depressing. It is an inseparable element of Winnie's tragedy. In these words she first heard of her brother's death. (p. 252) "Of course, Blown to small bits; limbs, ground, clothing, bones, splinters - all mixed up together. I tell you they had to fetch a shovel to gather him up with!" Little wonder she was crazed with grief.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

There are two subjective adventures in this book - the rude awakening of Mr. Verloc from his slothful security, and the tumbling of Winnie Verloc's world after the outrage.

Mr. Verloc, fat, lazy, and stolid, had been a spy for years, drawing a salary from the Embassy while he pretended to be an anarchist shop-keeper. His activities had consisted mostly of making socialist speeches, and exposing^{to} his employers social unrest perfectly well known. Hence he was rudely shocked one day when he was ordered to bring about a bombing outrage inside a month, or be dismissed. Greenwich Observatory was suggested as its object, as an attack there would be proof of popular imbecility.

This was the first demand for specific action, and Mr. Verloc was greatly worried. That evening (p. 66) "Mr. Verloc felt the latent unfriendliness of all out-of-doors with a force approaching to positive bodily anguish. There is no occupation that fails a man more completely than that of a secret agent of police. It's like your horse falling dead under you in the midst of an uninhabited and thirsty plain. The comparison Occurred to Mr. Verloc because he had sat astride various army horses in his time, and had now the sensation of an incipient fall. The prospect was as bleak as the window-pane against which he was leaning his forehead. And suddenly the face of Mr. Vladimir, clean-shaved and witty, appeared enhaloed in the glow of its rosy complexion, like a sort of pink seal impressed on the fatal darkness. ... Discomposed and speechless with the apprehension of more such visions, he beheld his wife re-enter the room

and get into bed in a calm, business-like manner which made him feel hopelessly lonely in the world." She started to talk about Steevie, and he tried to prolong the conversation, dreading the dark. At length, (p. 70) "Comfortable, dear?" she asked, in a faint, far-away voice. "Shall I put out the light now?"

The dreary conviction that there was no sleep for him held Mr. Verloc mute and hopelessly inert in his fear of darkness. He made a great effort.

"Yes, put it out; " he said at last, in a hollow tone."

Then he decided to use the tool ready to hand in the person of the worshipping, adoring Steevie, and the disaster followed.

His first thought was one of rage against the Embassy, and he decided to make full confession to the police. He felt sorry for his wife, but could not understand what the loss of Steevie meant to her. He himself felt the need of comfort and consolation, and he was quite hurt by her stony grief. But he went on with a tirade against the Embassy, making much of his own value and daring. He begged her to calm herself, to trust him, and urged her to have a good cry when she went upstairs. He himself ate heartily of roast beef. When she came down dressed for the street, he was astounded, and made her stay. His vanity was deeply hurt by her attitude, and he reproached her bitterly for it, saying she had killed Steevie as much as he, by bringing him to Verloc's notice. But he decided to "make up" and called her coaxingly. Then he saw her coming toward him with the knife, guessed her purpose, thought of escape, but could not move, and (p. 316) "expired without stirring a limb, in the

muttered sound of the word 'Don't' by way of protest.

This is a powerful study of self-satisfaction and self-centredness. The final scene, showing his indifference to the catastrophe, and his selfish talk before his suffering, silent wife, is very intense.

Winnie Verloc is one of the most powerful and tragic figures in all of Conrad. Hers was a life of sacrifice and devotion to others, yet her sacrifice was in vain and her end miserable. She is Conrad's pessimism at its darkest.

Her youth was spent in a lodging house, in drudgery and misery. From her earliest years she was Steevie's protector from his father's cruelty. When she grew up, she gave up her lover because he was poor, and married Mr. Verloc because he was well-to-do and could provide for Steevie. He was gentle and loveable, and she lavished all her tenderness on him, finding satisfaction for her drab existence and childlessness in seeing him comfortable. (p. 209) "She saw him amiable, attractive, affectionate, and only a little, a very little, peculiar. And she could not see him otherwise, for he was connected with what there was of the salt of passion in her tasteless life - the passion of indignation, of courage, of pity, and even of self-sacrifice."

She was delighted with Mr. Verloc's interest in Steevie, and pleased that he took him away for a holiday. Her first uneasiness was caused by Inspector Heat, who brought the tag from Steevie's overcoat. He was just beginning to talk about a "bomb affair", and produced a newspaper, when Verloc came in. They retired together, she listened, and learned the ghastly truth. At once she seemed to become crazy - snatched up the

paper, tore it, and then remained rigid. (p. 254) "The palms of her hands were pressed convulsively to her face, with the tips of the fingers contracted against the forehead, as though the skin had been a mask which she was ready to tear off violently. The perfect immobility of her pose expressed the agitation of rage and despair, all the potential violence of tragic passion, better than any shallow display of shrieks, with the beating of a distracted head against the walls, could have done."

She shuddered at the sight of her husband, told him she never wanted to see him again, and remained oblivious to his monologue. The events of her sordid life, glorified only by love for Steevie, passed through her mind. (p. 296) "His loss had the bitterness of defeat, with the anguish of a baffled passion.... Moreover, it was not death that took Steevie from her. It was Mr. Verloc who took him away." (p. 296) "And she thought without looking at Mr. Verloc, 'This man took the boy away to murder him. He took the boy away from his home to murder him. He took the boy away from me to murder him!'" (p. 297) "Then after he had murdered the boy, he had come home to her. Just came home like any other man would come home to his wife...."

She concentrated on this thought while Verloc was talking about his plans - and suddenly she realized that with Steevie's death the need for her to stay there was gone. (p. 362) "She had her freedom. Her contract with existence, as represented by that man standing over there, was at an end. She was a free woman." So she abruptly went upstairs and dressed for the street, with no other thought than getting away. (p. 305) "For she did not exactly know what use to make of her freedom. Her

personality seemed to have been torn into two pieces, whose mental operations did not adjust themselves very well to each other."

Mr. Verloc would not let her go out. He said her place was there that evening, and (p. 367) "I can't let you go out, old girl," he added in a softened voice.

Mrs. Verloc's mind got hold of that declaration with morbid tenacity. The man who had taken Steevie out from under her very eyes to murder him.... would not allow her to go out. Of course he wouldn't. Now he had murdered Steevie he would not let her go. He would want to keep her for nothing," and she began to make insane plans to dash past, while her silence roused Mr. Verloc to angry reproaches.

She did not hear him. Her mind was filled with a horrible picture of Steevie being blown up. After this, (p. 313) "Anybody could have noted the subtle change on her features, giving her a new and startling expression, ... Mrs. Verloc's doubts as to the end of the bargain no longer existed; her wits no longer disconnected, were working under the control of her will." Her husband called her, she moved towards him, picking up the carving knife as she went. Her face became exactly like Steevie's, she stabbed her husband, and her face became natural again."

(p. 316) "She was giddy but calm. She had become a free woman with a perfection of freedom which left her nothing to desire and absolutely nothing to do, since Steevie's urgent claim on her devotion no longer existed." Then she became aware of a peculiar ticking sound, not the clock, and was horrified to see blood, and a deadly fear possessed her. The blood turned her

obscurely prompted blow into murder. (p. 321) "Mrs. Verloc, who always refrained from looking deep into things, was compelled to look into the very bottom of this thing. She saw there no haunting face, no reproachful shade, no vision of remorse, no sort of ideal conception. She saw there an object. That object was the gallows. Mrs. Verloc was afraid of the gallows."

She saw dreadful visions of gallows, tried to imagine an execution, but was sure of only one thing, the detail always given in newspaper reports. (p. 322) "It came with a cruel, burning pain into her head, as if the words, 'The drop given was fourteen feet', had been scratched on her brain with a hot needle. 'The drop given was fourteen feet'."

In desperation she left the house, determined to drown in the river, but soon realized she could never walk that far. The awful refrain still sang in her brain. She staggered, and was saved from falling by Ossipon, who believed Verloc dead in the accident, and immediately began to make love to the rich widow. She thought he understood the situation, proposed flight, and poured out her pent-up resentment against Verloc. She had money; so he agreed - and then Mrs. Verloc remembered she had forgotten to shut her door, and dragged him back to the shop. There she saw a light, and ordered him to put it out. He made the ghastly discovery - she explained her reasons, and he became terrified of her. But he concealed his fear, got her money, and then deserted her. All that was known of her fate was an obscure newspaper paragraph telling of a suicide in midocean. And Ossipon was ever after haunted by the words of the heading "An impenetrable mystery

seems destined to hang forever over this act of madness or despair."

No discussion, no quotaion can give any idea of the horror and the gripping force of this book, especially of the last three chapters. I have never read anything to surpass it. All the atmosphere, all the other characters, are merely necessary for the plot or the situation resulting in the catastrophe. The book is built up on these two subjective adventures - the shock to Verloc's security and the collapse of Winnie's ~~modern~~ world. It is a depressing book, a powerful book, a great book, with a wonderful insight into the human soul.

UNDER WESTERN EYES

P L O T

"Under Western Eyes" is intensely subjective, being really the story of the trials of a soul. It is told by an English language teacher, under whose "western eyes" the final stages of the drama were acted. The first part of the story, the reasons for it all, he got from the diary kept by the hero.

Razumov is an orphan student at St. Petersburg, without a friend or relation, though he has reason to believe Prince K. his father. He is lonely, ambitious, studious, and taciturn, but his very taciturnity gained him a reputation for depth of character.

One night he returned to his rooms, to find there another student called Halden, a well-known radical. He told Razumov that he was the man who had assassinated an official that morning, threw himself on his protection, and said that he had the highest opinion of his character. Razumov was furious at being implicated, saw ruin ahead of him, but promised to aid Halden to escape. Locking the door he went in search of a certain driver. He found this man drunk in a stable, was unable to rouse him, and vented his wrath by beating him furiously. Then, after more mental struggles, he gave Halden up to the police through Prince K -.

Halden was tried and executed, but no peace came for Razumov. He felt that his future was ruined anyway, that he himself was suspected. He was haunted by visions, and could not study. Worst of all, he was often approached by well-known

radicals with offers of sympathy or help which infuriated him. Finally he was sent for by Councillor Mikulin, whose guarded attitude made him very uneasy. He at last consented to go to the Russian colony at Geneva, and act as a spy.

Among the Russians there were Natalie Haldén and her mother. The girl is gentle and trustful, and ready to worship Razumov as the only friend her brother ever mentioned. He puzzled her and the other revolutionists alike by his grimness and peculiarity. Soon Sophia Antonovna got a letter from St. Petersburg telling that Ziemianitch, the drunken driver, had hanged himself, and that no doubt he had betrayed Haldén. This made Razumov perfectly safe forever, but then he realized that he loved Natalie. When he realized his love, he could no longer live his lie, and as a form of expiation, confessed everything to her and then to a group of revolutionists. Two of them made him harmless by bursting his ear-drums, making him quite deaf. While wandering dazed about the streets he was run over by a tram-car and injured. Then he was taken back to Russia by a poor woman whom he had befriended slightly, who cared for him as he slowly died.

ATMOSPHERE

In this book there is less and less of the atmosphere of externals, but the atmosphere of personalities and the spiritual atmosphere is stronger than ever.

The scene of the first part is laid in Russia, but there is little description to localize the tale. However, the following is valuable. (p. 32) "Razumov stamped his foot, and under the soft carpet of snow felt the hard ground of Russia, inanimate, cold, inert, like a sullen and tragic mother hiding her face under a winding sheet - his native soil! - his very own - without a fireside, without a heart!

He cast his eyes upward and stood amazed. The snow had ceased to fall, and now as if by a miracle he saw above his head the clear, black sky of the northern winter decorated with the sumptuous fires of the stars. It was a canopy fit for the resplendent purity of the snows.

Razumov received an almost physical impression of endless space and of countless millions. He responded to it with the readiness of a Russian who is born to an inheritance of space and numbers. Under the sumptuous immensity of the sky, the snow-covered, the endless forests, the frozen rivers, the plains of an immense country, obliterating the landmarks, the accidents of the ground levelling everything under its uniform whiteness like a monstrous blank page awaiting the record of an inconceivable history."

The restraint and unrest of Russia are suggested by the assassination of the official, the visit of the police to Razumov's rooms, his summons to Councillor Mikulin, and the des-

criptions of the revolutionary students.

The atmosphere of personalities is not so strong because of the pre-eminence of Razumov, but we have clear pictures of Halden, the clear-souled idealist; madcap Kostra, who stole money for Razumov; Prince K - who tried to show his affection for Razumov; General S - with the awful eyes, and Councillor Mikulin, the inscrutable. But all are dwarfed by the lonely and suffering Razumov.

The externals of Geneva matter not at all. There was a garden opposite the Halden house, there was a river and a lake, there was a Chateau - these are almost the only impressions I get. But here, where the narrator tells what he himself saw or could easily understand, there are many striking personalities.

Natalie Haldin is radiant with youth, has "trustful eyes", and watches tenderly over her prostrated mother. Both had idolized Victor Haldin, and were very much upset by his tragic death.

At the head of the Russian colony was Peter Ivanovitch, a feminist and ex-convict who lived in the Chateau of Mme. de S. He wore a heavy beard and black glasses, and patronized everyone in a deep voice. Mme. de S.- was like a "galvanized mummy", who believed in spiritualism. As a sort of companion in her house lived a poor Russian lady, Tekla, a victim of tyranny, who acted as secretary to Peter Ivanovitch and took continual rebuffs with patience.

Another group was composed of Jules Laspara, a tiny dwarf who knew many languages, and his two tall, untidy daughters.

Visiting revolutionists were Sophia Antonovna, also a victim, a great propagandist, and Nissita Nacatar, a fat man with a squeaky voice who had a great reputation as a killer. Such were the people upon whom Razumov was to spy.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

This title includes practically the whole book. It is throughout the story of the struggles of a soul caught in the net of circumstances.

It was not his fault at all. He had never mixed up with politics in any way. (pp. 15) "He was aware of the emotional tension of the time; he even responded to it in an indefinite sort of way. But his main concern was with his work, his studies, and with his own future.

Officially, and in fact without a family ... no home influences had shaped his opinions or his feelings. He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea. His closest parentage was defined in the fact that he was a Russian... This immense parentage suffered from the throes of internal dissension, and he shrank mentally from the fray as a good-natured man may shrink from taking definite sides in a violent family quarrel." His only hope of happiness lay in winning distinction in the government service. The very day of the assassination he decided to try for a silver medal which would help him.

Going home to start his essay, he was amazed to find Haldin, who was almost a stranger. He was astounded at Haldin's tributes to his character, but when he said "It was I who removed De P- this morning," (p. 15) "Razumov kept down a cry of dismay. The sentiment of his life being utterly ruined by this contact with such a crime expressed itself quaintly by a sort of half-derisive mental exclamation, 'There goes my silver medal!'"

He could not speak, but Haldin took this for emotion, and went on to give the details, explain his ideas about Russia,

his hatred of the necessity for crime, and finally, his plan of escape. Razumov was all the while tortured by visions of his ruined life, but curtly agreed to help.

Driven by rage and fear, he went forth to find Zienia-Witch, a sledge-driver. He found him drunk in a stable. Then (p. 29) "a terrible fury - the blind rage of self-preservation possessed Razumov," and he beat the man with a fork handle till it broke.

On the street again, his mind was a turmoil of rage against Haldin, fear for present and future. He thought about the state of Russia, and concluded that for her the paternal form of government was best. Then (p. 35) "he had a hallucination of seeing Haldin lying before him just as he had left him lying on the bed." Soon he said "I shall give him up" (p. 35) and argued to himself that it would not be betrayal, since there was no moral bond whatsoever. But he longed for the sanction of another mind, and in his great isolation almost decided to go back to Haldin, confess all, and find in him at last a comrade soul. The next instant, however, he thought of Prince K-. and went to him. He was soon taken to General T - and in his examination felt the first breath of official suspicion, in spite of his action. He told of Haldin's plan, and steps were taken to prepare for his arrest.

He went back to his rooms, told Haldin briefly that all was arranged, and endured torture until the hour of departure, listening to Haldin, talking wildly himself, almost giving himself away. At last Haldin went, and Razumov tried to study.

But it was a vain effort. All sorts of doubts, fears,

memories, came crowding in upon him, and he was almost delirious until one o'clock, when he said "It is done". Then he went to bed and slept a troubled sleep.

The description of this midnight betrayal is a tremendous thing. No quotation is possible; but Razumov's distress, Haldin's calmness, beautiful character, and trustfulness, form a contrast and a combination strong and gripping as anything in literature.

Next day he tried to go to lectures as before, but his mind was dazed. Haldin's arrest was now known and he was enraged by the sympathy of certain revolutionary students, who told him that Haldin had a deep appreciation of his character. Later he found that the police had searched his rooms, and was firmly convinced that he was a suspect.

The following day he went to lectures again, and was approached by "madcap Kostura", a rich young student, who urged his sympathy and his desire to help the cause in any way - with money if necessary. Razumov hurt him by his contempt, and once more felt rage that through Haldin his future was destroyed, his existence blighted. An official summons recalled to him again the irony of fate, and he was faced again by the phantom of Haldin. He was afraid of being confronted by Haldin, but was sent before Councillor Mikulin. Here he acted very queerly, talking about being misunderstood, about Haldin's belief in God, noticing details like a ring, wondering about Haldin's soul, railing against Haldin. Finally Mikulin told him he was a marked man, an object of curiosity. Again he railed at the situation, said he would retire, but was recalled by Mikulin's

"Whereto?" Once more he was appalled by the fact of his loneliness, and answered angrily. Mikulin arranged for future meetings through Prince K-, and Razumov, after an illness, returned to the university. He was still annoyed by the concern of Haldin's friends, was furious and boorish all the time, and even doubted whether he had done right. He felt safe from Haldin only at home, but could not study. (p. 300) "Everything abandoned him - hope, courage, belief in himself, trust in man. His heart had, as it were, suddenly emptied itself. It was no use struggling on. Rest, work, solitude, and the frankness of intercourse with his kind were alike forbidden to him. Everything was gone. His existence was a great, cold blank, something like the enormous plain of the whole of Russia levelled with snow and fading gradually on all sides into shadows and mist."

It was a relief to be summoned once more by Mikulin, who (p. 304) "saw great possibilities of special usefulness in that uncommon young man, on whom he had a hold already, with his peculiar temperament, his unsettled mind, and shaken conscience, and struggling in the toils of a false position." Razumov was asked to go to Geneva as a spy, made perfectly safe by the "revolutionary self-delusion which credited Razumov with a mysterious complicity in the Haldin affair." He agreed, and while waiting the right time was warned of danger by a "thinking" student whom he thanked mockingly. To improve further his position as an accredited patriot, he reminded Kostra of his offer of money. The poor boy was just then "hard up", but stole from his father, and drove Razumov miles on his journey. Next morning he flung the money out of the window.

He went to Geneva, and was received by Peter Ivanovitch and the others, who believed in him while they were puzzled by his bitterness, his boorishness, his taciturnity. Soon he met Nathalie Haldin, who had idealized him from her brother's description as an "unstained, lofty, and solitary existence."

Razumov was inwardly furious at this fresh reminder of his great betrayal, and his agitation was taken for emotion. They met several times, the girl always talking to him as a friend of her brother's. The events of the plot show Razumov as he appeared to others, ironic, unhappy, and bitter. Then came the end, as before indicated.

The account of their last interview, of his confession, is far too long to quote, but is the most dramatic in the book. He explains everything in his diary, afterwards sent to her. (p. 354) "The most trustful eyes in the world, he said of you when he was as well as a dead man already. And when you stood before me with your hand extended I remembered the very sound of his voice, and I looked into them - and that was enough. I knew that something had happened, but I did not know then what... But don't be deceived, Natalie Viktorovna. I believed that I had in my breast nothing but an inexhaustible fund of anger and hate for you. I remembered that he had looked to you for the perpetuation of his visionary soul. He, this man who had robbed me of my hardworking, purposeful existence. I, too, had my guiding idea.... But enough of that. Hate or no hate. I felt at once that I could never succeed in driving away your image. I would say, addressing that dead man, "Is that the way you are

going to haunt me?" It is only later on that I understood - only today, only a few hours ago. What could I have known of what was tearing me to pieces and dragging the secret forever to my lips? You were appointed to undo the evil by making me betray myself back into truth and peace. You! And you have done it in the same way, too, in which he ruined me; by forcing upon me your confidence. Only what I detested him for, in you ended by appearing noble and exalted. But, I repeat, be not deceived. I was given up to evil. I exulted in having induced that silly, innocent fool to steal his father's money..... I had to confirm myself in my contempt and hate for what I betrayed. I have suffered from as many vipers in my heart as any social democrat of them all - vanity, ambitions, jealousies, shameful desires, evil passions of envy and revenge. I had my security stolen from me, years of good work, my best hopes, Listen - now comes the true confession. The other was nothing. To save me, your truthful eyes had to entice me to the very edge of the blackest treachery. And do you know what I said to myself? I shall steal his sister's soul from her.....If you could have looked then into my heart you would have cried out in terror and disgust...

But I foresaw difficulties. Then Sophia Antonovna... appears suddenly with that tale from St. Petersburg....The only thing needed to make me safe - a trusted revolutionist forever.... Who would believe anything against me? I said to myself, 'Let's put it to the test, and be done with it once for all.' I trembled when I went in (to see Mrs. Haldin) but your mother hardly listened to what I was saying to her, and in a little while

seemed to have forgotten my very existence. There was no longer anything between you and me. You were defenseless - and soon, very soon, you would be alone For days you have talked with me, opening your heart..... It was as if your pure brow bore a light which fell on me, searched my heart, and saved me from ignominy, from ultimate undoing. And it saved you too. Pardon my presumption, but there was that in your glances seemed to tell me that you - your light! your truth! I felt that I must tell you that I had ended by loving you. And to tell you that I must first confess. Confess, go out - and perish.

Suddenly you stood before me! You alone in all the world to whom I must confess. You fascinated me - you have freed me from the blindness of anger and hate - the truth shining in you drew the truth from me. Now I have done it; and as I write here I am in the depths of anguish, but there is air to breathe at last - air! I suffer horribly, but I am not in despair. There is only one thing more to do for me. After that if they let me - I shall go away and bury myself in obscure misery. In giving Victor Haldin up it was myself, after all, whom I have betrayed most baselyOnly don't be deceived, Natalie Viktorovna, I am not converted. Have I then the soul of a slave? No! I am independent, and therefore, perdition is my lot!"

Then he went out to confess to the revolutionists, fearless, unflinching, resolved to purify his soul by fullest expiation. He hardly cared what they did to him. As he said (p. 363) "Today, of all days since I came among you, I was made

safe - and today I have made myself free from falsehood, from remorse - independent of every single human being on this earth.'"

Then this purified soul was deafened, injured, and finally found refuge and care at the hands of one as lonely and loveless as himself.

"Under Western Eyes" is a one-man book. The experiences of the minor characters pale into insignificance beside those of Razumov. In a sense, the shocked trustfulness of Nathalie and her mother is also a subjective adventure, but of a passive kind. Also, the old teacher's unspoken love for Nathalie and his observation of the events, are subjective too, and his personality colors the narrative. But the motif of the book is the moral consequences of the betrayal.

C H A N C E (1914)

P L O T

Once more, Conrad uses the personal narrative form. The story is told by some man unknown, who got part of it from Marlow, and part from another seaman, Powell, both of whom had been onlookers at different stages.

The book consists of two parts, - "The Damsel" and "The Knight". The first tells of the childhood and miserable girlhood of Flora de Barral. Her father was a very ordinary business man, who had taken advantage of "thrif^t" being a popular fetish to float a great many alluring and worthless enterprises. All that he did was receive the money which the public were too eager to entrust to him. His wife and daughter lived a lonely life in a gorgeous, gloomy mansion, until Mrs. de Barral died. Then Flora was entrusted to a haughty governess, who insisted on expensive lodgings at Brighton. There she became intimate with friends of her mother, a respectable, athletic family, the Fynes. Her life was a little lonely, but she was happy enough. Her governess was elegant and capable. Charley, her supposed nephew, was a charming companion, and above all, she clung to her belief in her clever, mysterious father.

Then came the financial crash which proved de Barral to be a foolish visionary, and went him to prison. The governess broke the news to Flora in a most brutal way, almost driving the girl mad. She found refuge with the Fynes until an uncle came to take her away.

For several years she lived a wretched life with her

relatives, coarse, low-class people who taunted her with her poverty and subjected her to everlasting spiritual tortures. Many times she fled to the sympathetic Fynes, but always was induced to go back. Finally the situation became unbearable, and the Fynes were asked to take her for good.

They found her a situation as companion to an old lady, but she soon tired of the girl who was not cheerful and looked at her in a peculiar way. Then she became governess in a German family, where the husband made love to her, causing her to be dismissed in a terrible scene. Once more she came to the Fynes, who took her down to their country cottage.

By this time the poor girl was in despair, and longed for death. Mrs. Fyne's brother, Captain Anthony, also came to visit there after many years' absence, and found little sympathy or common ground with his sister. Flora had gone out one day to commit suicide, and been prevented by Marlow. She determined to try again, but was joined by Captain Anthony. He found out her desperate frame of mind, and was shocked to think that the world could use a girl so harshly. She aroused his protective, pitying, instincts, and he offered to marry her. She could not believe that anyone could love her, or overlook her disgrace, but finally consented, and they left for London without telling anyone. The Fynes were greatly perturbed at Flora's disappearance, still more so at the news of their engagement, and Mr. Fyne at once set off to stop it. Misinterpreting a letter Flora had written to his wife, he ~~told~~ Captain Anthony that she was marrying him simply as a refuge, and that it was unfair of him to take such an advantage. This worried him greatly, and he told

Flora, that he could not let her go, must take care of her, but would not let her buy shelter from him at the cost of her soul. So he will marry her to have the legal right to protect her. Thus, when Flora was on the point of finding an answering passion she was chilled by the belief that Anthony married her only from pity.

They were married, and on the day of old de Barral's release took him on board the "Ferndale" and sailed. The old man was quite unrepentant, ~~thinking~~ that all would have been well if he had only had more time. He was quite indignant, too, at Flora's marriage, and became obsessed with the idea of saving his girl from Anthony. So began a strange, miserable existence for all on board the ship. They tried to keep up the appearance of happy family life, but Captain Anthony became worn and haggard from the misery of his self-denial, and Flora was wretched when she realized her love for him and dared not tell him. Conditions were becoming intolerable for both, and they had almost decided to separate, when one night young Powell, the mate, discovered the old man attempting to poison the Captain. This decided Anthony, and he told Flora he would have to let her go. She then acknowledged her love for him, and shortly after the old man drank the poisoned glass himself. She never knew the truth but thought he had died in his sleep. They lived very happily for several years until the "Ferndale" went down in a storm, carrying Captain Anthony with her. Flora grieved for four years and then became engaged to Powell.

ATMOSPHERE

The primary atmosphere here is that of a story being pieced together. Marlow and his friend go into a restaurant, where they get talking to Powell, who tells then how chance got him his first berth on the "Ferndale". This reminds Marlow of what he knows of Captain Anthony's wife, and he tells his friend the story of what he saw, with what he got from the Fynes and Flora herself. Then he cultivates Powell, finds out the rest, and is taken to see Flora herself. This, too, he reports to his friend, who in turn gives it all to us, with Marlow's comments. Hence we have a general atmosphere of veracity, albeit of confusion also, and get the story through the eyes of several people.

The atmosphere of personality and the spiritual atmosphere are all important here. The scenes are familiar ones, and nature has no influence.

Fyne was (p. 38) "an enthusiastic pedestrian.... A serious-faced, broad-chested little man..... who held very solemn views..... The only evidence of imaginative faculty about Fyne was his pride in his wife's parentage.... 'My wife's sailor-brother' was the phrase. He trotted out the sailor-brother in a pretty wide range of subjects.... Once I remember 'my wife's sailor-brother Captain Anthony' being produced in connection with nothing less recondite than a sunset. And little Fyne never failed to add: 'The son of Carlton Anthony, = the poet you know'. He used to lower his voice for that statement."

Mrs Fyne was also very solemn, very healthy, and a pedestrian too. (p. 43) "A something which was not coldness, nor yet indifference, but a sort of peculiar self-possession, gave

her the appearance of a very trustworthy, very capable and excellent governess; as if Fyne were a widower and the children not her own but only entrusted to her calm, efficient, unemotional care." She always had a lot of young girl-friends as disciples. The Fyne children were also serious and healthy; the Fyne dog alone was unruly, and created humorous scenes by his untimely barking.

De Barral, as he appears in the latter part of the story, is a little, silent man with crafty eyes, nursing a grievance against those who ruined him in his glorious Past. (p. 81) "he was a clerk in a Bank, like thousands of others.... Then one day as though a supernatural voice had whispered in his ear, or an invisible fly had stung him, he put on his hat, went out into the street and began advertising. That's absolutely all there ~~was~~ to it. He caught in the street the word of the time and harnessed it to his preposterous charit." Through the magic power of Thrift, the public poured money into his lap, and he let it "without system, plan, foresight, or judgment." He did not get celebrities for his directors - he had no real imagination. (p. 84) "Wrapping himself up in a deep and imbecile secrecy he had gone in for the most fantastic schemes: a harbor and docks on the coast of Patagonia; quarries in Labrador - such like speculations. Fisheries to feed a canning factory on the banks of the Amazon was one of them. A principality to be bought in Madagascar was another." Of course, the crash came in the end, but he believed that he would have come out all right, given more time and money. Only at the trial did he seem to

realize what a power he had been. (p. 87) "He had bought for himself out of all this wealth streaming through his fingers neither adulation nor love, neither splendour nor comfort. There was something perfect in his consistent mediocrity." Then he was sentenced to seven years in prison, just when his imagination began to wake up. He spent his time planning to recover his old position, and came out a peevish, irritable old man.

Flora's governess is another good portrait. She was a disillusioned, embittered woman of forty, infatuated with Charley, a boy of twenty-three. She tried to hold him by promises of securing Flora and her money. Then when the crash came, she let loose the venom of years on the girl.

Flora's relatives were coarse people. moral savages. The uncle was an "odious person", whose motive in taking her was a hope of sharing de Barral's supposed plunder. (p. 173) "The wife of the 'odious person' was witless and fatuously conceited. Of the two girls in the house, one was pious and the other a romp; both were coarse-minded, - if they may be credited with any mind at all. The rather numerous men of the family were dense and grumpy, or dense and jocose. None in that grubby lot had humanity enough to leave her alone."

Marlow, as the chess-playing friend of Fyne, is an ordinary, sensible man; Powell is a nice young man, a common type. There are other minor characters, such as the crew of the "Ferndale" drawn with customary vividness, thus completing the background against which Flora and Captain Anthony acted their strange romance.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

This book is made up almost entirely of subjective adventures. Marlowe's connection and interest in the case is one; the Fynes' anxiety over Flora's disappearance is another, as well as their objection to the marriage; also young Powell's experiences on the ship. But the important ones are those which made Flora de Barral a hunted creature, and those which rescued her from her martyrdom.

She was happily busy with a drawing lesson when her governess and Charley burst in on her like invaders. Involuntarily she screamed, and stood as if rooted to the carpet while the woman poured forth a torrent of venomous invective. The poor girl heard herself reviled, her father abused, until her appealing cry roused the young man to take her tormentor away. The two adventurers then left the house, and Flora rushed wildly across the street to the kindly Fynes, where she collapsed. Her little world had fallen in ruins, and she begged Mrs. Fyne to assure her that she and her father were not the odious things she had heard. After a time she subsided into a pale stupor, and went away with her plebeian uncle.

At the hands of him and his charming family, she suffered continual taunts, abuse, bullying. (p. 173) "She did not know how to defend herself from their importunities, insolence, and exegencies. She lived amongst them, a passive victim, quivering in every nerve, as if she were flayed." After a terrible quarrel over some cheap lace mislaid by her cousin, she came rushing wild-eyed to the Fynes, almost distracted with

misery. Next day her uncle came for her, and only induced her to go back by a hint that refusal might be bad for her father. She went away, white-faced and silent as ever.

In a few weeks she was back again, brought by a cousin who requested the Fynes to keep her. Conditions had become intolerable to everyone. Then came the unsuccessful venture as companion, adding to her sense of uselessness and hopelessness. The violent ending of her position as governess in Hamburg upset her still further, destroying her innocence and belief in human goodness.

Then, as Miss Smith, she visited the Fynes in the country, where Marlow saw her one day walking perilously near the edge of a cliff, and found her angry and reckless. Then she disappeared the day after Captain Anthony went away, and it was in the discussion that followed that Marlow learned her previous history. Then he accompanied Fyne to London on his mission to stop the match, and talked to Flora outside the hotel where Fyne was engaged with the Captain. Here he learned the recent events from her. As he said (p. 326) "I had been allowed to look through the half open door, and I had seen the saddest possible desecration, the withered brightness of youth. A spirit neither made cringing, nor yet dulled, but as if bewildered in quivering helplessness by gratuitous cruelty; self-confidence destroyed, and instead, a resigned recklessness, a mournful callousness ... the passive anguish of the luckless." She had gone to the cliff to commit suicide. (p. 212) "I went up there for - for what you thought I was going to do. Yes, I climbed

two fences. I did not mean to leave anything to Providence. There seem to be people for whom Providence can do nothing.... One reaches a point where nothing that concerns one matters any longer?" But what had restrained her was the Fyne dog. It insisted on following her, and she was afraid that it would either be killed too or else howl dismally at the edge. Then she heard Marlow's shout, which destroyed the suicide pose of her mind, and she decided to wait till the next day; When the dog deserted her for Marlow she was deeply hurt, and wanted to try again, but was too tired. And that night Captain Anthony came.

She took no notice of him, nor he of her, at first. But her tragic, fragile beauty attracted him, left alone as he was by his uncongenial relatives. One day she set out again for the cliff, resolved never to come back, when he joined her. She did not speak to him, but he kept on, talking in a friendly way. Then suddenly she burst into tears. He was moved by her distress, but kept on talking about the peace of the sea, his friendlessness, etc. Next day he went walking with her again, and said he was going to take care of her. He pitied her, but (p. 235) "It was not pity alone, I take it. It was something more perverse, spontaneous, and exciting. It gave him the feeling that if only he could get hold of her, no woman would belong to him so completely as this woman?" As he urged the advantages of life with him, she ran away. She could not believe he loved her, that anybody could love her. She broke away and went indoors, but he ordered her to come to the garden again. She said "It's no use," (p. 238) and he rejoined: "No use! no use!

You dare stand there and tell me that - you white-faced wisp, you wreath of mist, you little ghost of all the sorrow in the world. You dare! Haven't I been looking at you? You are all eyes. What makes your cheeks so white, as if you had seen something?... Don't speak. I love it... No use! And you really think I can now go to sea for a year or more, to the other sides of the world somewhere, leaving you behind!" She came out again, but it was with the desperate intention of ending everything in the darkness. Captain Anthony was forgotten, but he was there, and prevented her once more from suicide, and overcome her resolution. She told Marlow (p. 244) "If you will have it that he saved my life, then he has got it.... I have given him what he wanted - that's myself." She hardly knew her own feelings - everything had been so sudden, but told Marlow that Anthony had been "most generous", and begged him never to tell him of her suicidal intentions.

Meanwhile Fyne was talking to Captain Anthony. He told him that all the girl cared for was her martyr-father, and was marrying him to escape from her troubles. (p. 264) "I told him it was a shame, even if the girl did make eyes at him - but I think with you that she did not. Yes! a shame to take advantage of a girl's distress - a girl that does not love him in the least". The words "unfair" - "advantage" - haunted Anthony. They roused his vanity, his magnanimity, his nobility, and he decided on his strange arrangement. (p. 353) "And unless some day you find you can speak No! No! I shall never ask you. For all the sign I may give you may go to your grave with un-

sealed lips. But what I say you must do!" Flora on her part (p. 358) "discovered in herself a resentment of this ultimate betrayal..... With a sort of mental sullenness she said to herself, 'Well, I am here. I am here without any nonsense. It is not my fault that I am a mere worthless object of pity.'" When they were married she said (p. 359) "Neither am I keeping back anything from you." She had said it! But he in his blind generosity assumed that she was alluding to her deplorable history."

He fitted up luxurious quarters, demanded that she bring her father straight on board, and otherwise prepared (p. 356) "an impossible existence..... which on board ship, at sea, en tête-a-tête for days and weeks and months together, could mean nothing but mental torture, an exquisite absurdity of torment." So it was. De Baral was unrepentant, enraged at being taken from the world where he had hoped to become great again. He was also furious with his daughter, the one point of contact with the world left him for so long. He decided that she had been trapped, referred to Anthony as "the jailer", and (p. 396) "His fixed idea was to save his girl from the man who had possessed himself of her unfairly while he, the father, was locked up," and harped upon it incessantly.

So the strange trio went their unhappy ways, the old man plotting in secret, Flora silent and wretched, Anthony thin and haggard. (p. 433) "Anthony discovered that he was not the proud master but the chafing captive of his generosity.... And it must also be said, in order not to make Anthony more stupidly

sublime than he was, that the behaviour of Flora kept him at a distance. The girl was afraid to add to the exasperation of her father..... out of deference for that exaggerated sentiment she hardly dared look otherwise, than by stealth at the man whose masterful compassion had carried her off. And quite unable to understand the extent of Anthony's delicacy, she said to herself that he 'didn't care'... .. Nothing assured him that his person could be attractive to this or any other woman. And his proceedings were enough in themselves to make anyone odious.... She must fatally detest and fear him..... and yet somehow he resented this very attitude which seemed to him completely justifiable. Surely he was not too monstrous (morally) to be looked at frankly sometimes. But no! She wouldn't. Well, perhaps some day - Only he was not going ever to attempt to beg for forgiveness Never! Never!"

After the attempt on his life, he told Flora that he had decided he would have to do the impossible thing and let her go. He felt (p. 450)"disarmed before the other's mad and sinister sincerity." There was no time for reflection or pride. Her love revealed itself in a thrilling cry, as she said "But I don't want to be let off?"

So they were reconciled, and young Powell was left alone with de Barral. The old man was amazed at what he had seen. He railed against her, saying finally (p. 454)"She has been leading me on until she has fairly put my head under the heel of that jailer, of that scoundrel, of her husband - Treachery! Bringing me low. Lower than herself. In the dust. That's what it

means. Doesn't it? Under his heel!" Then, turning quickly, he drank the poison himself and fell dead.

So the way was cleared for happiness, and the joy of life in the following years restored Flora to health and confidence. The workings of Chance had brought good fortune to the luckless one in the end.

This book suffers from the defects of Conrad's method in a certain confusion, many digressions, obscuring of the main plot by interest in the narrators. But it also has its advantages. It has an atmosphere of truth, due to everything being verified, and shows Conrad's fondness for analyzing facts and viewing them in the light of many opinions. The picture is a composite one as seen through the eyes of the Fynes, Marlow, young Powell and Flora herself.

V I C T O R Y (1915)

This is a book which most of Conrad's admirers wish he had left unwritten. In it he returns again to the Malay Archipelago, the scene of former triumphs. Yet, this time he fails to convince us. He is careless of atmosphere. and though his characters are vividly drawn, the psychology of the villains is incredible. W. L. Phelps says: "The story 'Victory' reads as though it were intended to gain for its author a wider audience, as though he had tried to write in a 'popular' manner. Despite many fine passages of description, it is poor stuff, and its author should be ashamed of Mr. Jones. who belongs to cheap melodrama." (1) I believe that the workmanship here is as good as usual, but the hypotheses of the story are so incredible that it becomes an elaborate fairy tale unworthy of consideration with worth while books.

However, disregarding this, we see that this book too is the tale of a subjective adventure, and as such must be considered for our purpose.

(1) W. L. Phelps: "Advance of the English Novel" - p. 21.

P L O T

Baron Axel Heyst was a wanderer in the Malay Archipelago a man whose philosophy of life was to avoid action and motion. He was generally popular, however, with all acquaintances except Schomberg, a German hotel-keeper of Sourabaya. This man hated him bitterly because Heyst would not patronize him.

During his wanderings Heyst was moved to give a loan to Morrison, a ship-owner in desperate straits. The man was overwhelmed with gratitude, and insisted that Heyst become his partner, till the debt was paid. He also induced him to enter a coal company, which made great plans and began to develop the island of Samburan. Then Morrison went to England on business, caught cold there, and died. The Company failed, and Heyst stayed on alone at the deserted mine. Schomberg's evil tongue had been busy during the whole partnership, and now he accused Heyst of causing Morrison's death.

Heyst was unconscious of this hatred, and when he presently came down to Sourabaya, stayed at Schomberg's hotel. There he attended a concert given by a European ladies' orchestra, and struck up an acquaintance with a girl whom he saw being bullied. He chivalrously offered her help, and learned that she was a penniless orphan, persecuted by the amorous Schomberg. Soon she threw herself on his protection, and he, finding his pity becoming a deeper feeling, carried her off to Samburan.

There they lived happily for several months, Heyst finding life richer and fuller through this first affection he had known, Lena coming to love him with a passionate adoration. Then one afternoon Wang, the Chinese servant, announced a boat's arrival

Schomberg had been almost mad with rage when he found his prey escaped with his supposed enemy. He almost lost his reason. Presently a new trouble came, in the shape of two adventurers, Jones and Ricardo, with an ape-like servant, Pedro. They stayed at his hotel and set up a gambling parlor, threatening him with murder when he protested. Schomberg was anxious to get rid of them, anxious to be revenged on Heyst, and persuaded them to go to Samburan to get a huge treasure concealed there by the piratical Heyst. As Jones hated women he was not told about Lena.

It was their boat which came into Heyst's Arcadia, containing the three wretches almost dead of thirst. He revived them, gave them a bungalow, and treated them with great courtesy. That night Wang stole his revolver.

For several days Jones and Ricardo played the part of convalescents, and did not explain their purpose. Heyst was uniformly polite, and did not attempt any precautionary measures except keeping Lena indoors. Then one morning in his absence Ricardo came to look at the girl, and tried to overpower her. She saw in her attraction for him a means of proving her devotion to Heyst, and pretended to ally herself with the newcomers. When Heyst returned she let the man out by a window.

That morning Wang decided he was on the losing side, and resigned, going to the native half of the island. The strangers then insisted that Pedro cook for all, and Ricardo eat with Heyst. In the afternoon Heyst and Lena went to interview Wang, to try to get the revolver or shelter with the natives, but were unsuccessful.

That evening Ricardo dined with them, and pretended surprise at seeing Lena. Then he told Heyst that it was time to in-

terview Jones about their object. Before going with him Heyst warned Lena to dress in black and hide in the forest.

Jones told him flatly that they wanted the treasure and would not believe there was none until Heyst mentioned Lena. Then he believed at once, finding the explanation for several peculiarities about Ricardo's conduct. As he drove Heyst before him, he vowed vengeance on the love-sick Martin.

On arriving at the bungalow, Heyst was shocked to find Lena still in the dining room, with Ricardo at her feet. She had waited there for him, and induced him to give her his deadly knife, thinking it the only weapon the villains had. Jones shot, Ricardo escaped, and Heyst entered feeling utterly betrayed. But his reproaches were checked by the rapturous look on Lena's face, while she explained what she had done. Then she collapsed, for Jones' shot had pierced her breast, and died in a few minutes in the arms of the man whose love she felt was at last secure.

Just then Captain Davidson came in, arrived just too late. Jones finally got Ricardo, then fell over the precipice himself, Wang shot Pedro, and Heyst burned himself with his house.

ATMOSPHERE

Unfortunately, the primary atmosphere here is one of incredibility. This is partly due to the mixture of narrative methods. Part I, giving the setting and early history, is told by a citizen of Sourabaya from his own observation and that of Captain Davidson. The other parts are told by a ubiquitous, omniscient third party, without explanations, only the last scene having the authority of Davidson. Thus an attempted proof is worse than no proof at all.

There is very little of the eastern atmosphere here, and it is mainly incidental, not a vital element. The atmosphere of personalities and the spiritual atmosphere are the things which count.

First there is Heyst himself, a tall, bold man with red military moustaches, with an unfailing politeness and a certain grandeur of manner. Then there is Schomberg, the vitriolic Teuton, (p. 19) "A big, manly, bearded creature of the Teutonic persuasion, with an ungovernable tongue which surely must have worked on a pivot," as we see in his fiery conversations. He also had a wife, (p. 37) "Her hair was very elaborately done with two ringlets on the left side of her scraggy neck; her dress was of silk, and she had come on duty for the afternoon She sat there in the smoke and noise like an enthroned idol, smiling stupidly over the billiards from time to time, speaking to no one and no one speaking to her." Lena is characterized chiefly by a beautiful voice and fathomless grey eyes. Mr. Jones was a tall, corpse-like man with a perpetual sneer. Ricardo was short, fat, and cat-like. Pedro was almost like an ape. Wang, the

Chinese, was noted for appearing suddenly and vanishing.

If it were only convincing, the atmosphere of horror about the interviews of the villains with Schomberg would be very good. Ricardo had been fairly petrified with tales of their awful life, full of passages like this (p. 140): "The honourable Antonio pitches forward - they always do, towards the shot; you must have noticed that yourself - yes, he pitches forward on to the embers, and all that lot of hair on his face and head flashes up like a pinch of gunpowder. Greasy, I expect; always scraping the fat off them alligators' hides - "

Only on the island is nature more than the background. (p. 355) "She looked around; and as if her eyes had just been opened, she perceived the shades of the forest surrounding her, not so much with gloom, but with a sullen, direct, menacing hostility." There is also the thunderstorm lowering appropriately while the tragedy occurs, and the blackness of the forest colors everything with its sense of vastness and mystery.

Throughout this book also there is a prevailing atmosphere of pessimism. Not only do the good perish with the bad, but there are many cynical statements made both by Heyst and the author. On p. 199 Heyst refers to life as the "Great Joke". P. 214 the author refers to "the fatal imperfection of all the gifts of life, which makes of them a delusion and a snare." Also (p. 216), "His resentment was not against the girl, but against life itself - that commonest of snares." (p. 95) "For every age is fed on illusions, lest men should renounce life early and the human race come to an end." Perhaps the saddest part of all is that just as Heyst began to appreciate life, it was ruined through no fault of his.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

There are three subjective adventures - Heyst's awakening from passive existence to life and love; Schomberg's hate; Lena's sacrificial devotion.

Heyst was the son of a disillusioned philosopher, who taught him that life was tolerable only through avoiding action and emotion. Believing this, he wandered through the tropical belt till he was thirty-five. Then he happened to meet the despairing Morrison, and moved by a pitying impulse, he was drawn unwilling into a life of action and human companionship. However, he came to be very fond of his generous, kindly partner, and was deeply touched by his death.

He lived on in loneliness for months, until the desire for change caused him to hail Captain Davidson. At Schomberg's hotel he saw the girl being pinched by the brutal Mrs. Zangiacomo, and moved by the same impulse as when he saw Morrison, he offered his help. At first his feeling was only curiosity and pity, but in a few days he found many attractions in the pale, quiet girl, and arranged their flight to the haven of Samburan.

There his happiness grew each day, though his life-long attitude of aloofness prevented his love from being very deep. Another jolt to this attitude came one day when he mentioned Morrison, and she told him all the wretched slander Schomberg was spreading about his death. Heyst found that he really did care what people thought, and was deeply pained to see that the girl only half doubted the story. It rankled in him ever after, and the knowledge that people would misinterpret his actions hampered him when he might have secured their safety from Jones and Ricardo.

This danger advanced him another step on the road to human sympathy. The knowledge of his helplessness to protect Lena was bitter to him, and his sole thought was her safety. He loved her better than ever before, but his habitual restraint kept her from realizing this. (p. 247) "The sceptical carelessness which had accompanied every one of his attempts at action, like a secret reserve of his soul, fell away from him. He no longer belonged to himself. There was a call far more imperious and august."

When he believed Lena false, it seemed as though his father had been right, and that active life was only a delusion. Then came her moment of victory, when he realized how fine her soul was, and what she had done for him. In the realization of what he had gained and lost so soon, he came into his fullest life, and then lost the desire to live any life but that. But before he died, Heyst the dilettante, had come into his own.

Lena's experience is of a much more primitive nature. She had been a friendless, hounded creature, bullied by her employer, tormented by the courtship of the odious Schomberg. Along had come a courtly gentleman, offering help, and she threw herself upon him without shame, or fear, or anything except gratitude. Soon she loved him with a passion for service mingled with her adoration. (p. 202) "She felt in her innermost depths an irresistible desire to give herself up to him more completely, by some act of absolute sacrifice." (p. 345) "Behind the readiness of her answering smile there was a fund of devoted concentrated passion, burning with the hope of a more perfect satisfaction." (p. 355) "She would try to rise above herself,

triumphant and humble, and then happiness would burst on her like a torrent flinging at her feet the man whom she loved."

She thought she had found her chance when Ricardo's visit informed her of the mission, the danger to Heyst and her own power. She determined to deceive Heyst and to use her own attraction for Ricardo to save them both.

This determination sustained her throughout the trying day, and led her to disobey the orders which would have ensured a happy ending. She played with Ricardo skilfully until she got the knife, and just then Heyst and Jones arrived.

(p. 406) "She spoke with an accent of wild joy: 'I knew you would come back in time. You are safe now. I have done it! I would never, never have let him - ' Her voice died out, while her eyes shone at him as when the sun breaks through a mist. 'Never get it back. Oh, my beloved.'" And (p. 467) "'I know no shame. I was thanking God with all my sinful heart for having been able to do it - for giving you to me in that way - oh, my beloved - all my own at last!'"

Then she collapsed, after a few more explanations.

(p. 410) "Exulting she saw herself extended on the bed, in a black dress, and profoundly at peace; while, stooping over her, with a playful smile on his lips, he was ready to lift her up in his firm arms and take her into the sanctuary of his innermost heart - forever! The flush of rapture flooding her whole being broke out in a smile of innocent, girlish happiness; and with that divine radiance on her lips she breathed her last, triumphant, seeking for his glance in the shades of death."

Schomberg, the author of all their misfortune, is a fine study of hate, though the first part is hard to understand. Even with our bias against the Teuton it is difficult to conceive of a man so mean that he deliberately and constantly slanders a good man merely because he is not a patron. Yet such was Schomberg, and the spreading of this slander became almost an obsession.

He detested the colorless little woman whose soul he had killed, and became infatuated with the girl of the orchestra. He took her terror for shyness, and had no doubt she would soon give in, when suddenly she disappeared with the hated Swede.

His vanity refused to let him see the truth. He was sure that the Swede must have used strange and terrible means to get her away. He raved against Heyst day in and day out, and while this was amusing for some weeks, at last it grew tiresome to most. (p. 97) "Schomberg had Heyst on the brain. Even the unsatisfactory state of his affairs he referred to some subtly noxious influence of Heyst. It seemed to him that he could never be himself again until he had got even with that artful Swede. He was ready to swear that Heyst had ruined his life."

Then came the advent of the murderous card-sharps, who soon made Schomberg's misery complete. Then one day he found that their long stay was due to Jones' laziness and lack of a suitable project. He at once let loose his scandalous tongue, and drew a picture of Heyst as a gorged blood-sucker, with a great deal of plunder. Ricardo was convinced, and Schomberg accomplished both his vengeance and his deliverance.

It would seem as though Schomberg won. He did avenge himself for all his fancied wrongs. But after all, the girl persisted too, and he still wanted to possess her. His passion was as sincere as it was ignoble, so doubtless he would be haunted ever after by a species of remorse. Nevertheless, it looks as though the malign fates alone triumph - the final holocaust is like that in Hamlet, and virtue is indeed its own and only reward.

THE SHADOW LINE (1917)

This book has been likened to the "Ancient Mariner", being the story of a ship haunted throughout a voyage by her late captain, a voyage in which her new captain attains his maturity. It is perhaps the easiest of Conrad's books to read, as it is told simply in the first person, without much comment or explanation. Its interest lies solely in the subjective adventure.

P L O T

A clever chief mate on an Eastern steamer one day became utterly disgusted with his existence, and suddenly resigned. He had no plans, but went to stay at an Officers' Sailors' Home in a little town. Here he found out that the Harbor Office wanted a Captain for a ship at Bangkok, and he was induced by old Captain Giles to apply. He was accepted at once, and left for Bangkok the same night, in a daze at the sudden change in his fortunes.

He found the ship everything he could desire, and got her history from Burns, the disappointed chief mate. Her captain a violent, morose old man, had recently died, after almost wrecking the ship through his hatred and bad temper, and had been buried at 8°20'. Burns had brought the ship into harbor, and had done business with the officials. He was obviously hurt at not getting the command, but was impressed by the new Captain's firmness.

Owing to fâkish terms made by Burns, the ship was held up for days in the pestilential harbor of Bangkok, and many of the

crew took sick. Ransome, the steward, a great soul with a weak heart, proved invaluable at this time. Even Burns became sick, and was terrified of being left behind. He kept raving, too, about the old Captain and his curses, blaming him for all the trouble.

The Captain made every effort to get out to sea, and finally got free of entanglements. The Harbor Doctor pronounced their supplies complete, and the Captain hoped that fever would be helpless in the pure ocean air. At last they put off and got to the river's mouth, but here a dead calm overtook them, while sickness broke out again. The Captain felt safe, backed by his stores of quinine, but Burns kept muttering about the old Captain ambushed at the entrance to the Gulf, saying he would do some beastly trick at 8°20'. More and more men took sick, and then one day the Captain made the appalling discovery that his quinine bottles contained something else. Burns said the old Captain must have sold it.

The situation was now truly awful - a ship load of sick men, the sport of fitful breezes, with no quinine. Ransome was still wonderfully helpful, all the men plucky, while Burns in his delirium urged that they mustn't let him get one man. At last they did get some wind and made progress. When the Captain suggested a change of course, Burns insisted that the only way was to face the old ruffian. Then, with not a fit man on board ship, a terrible rainstorm approached.

Except in "Typhoon" Conrad has written no better description of a storm than this. We feel to the full the blackness, the horror, and the helplessness of the men, in which

Ransome was as ever their good angel. There was a terrific downpour then calm and darkness again. Burns was on deck and said (p. 198) "Skulking's no good sir, you can't slink past the old murderous ruffian. It isn't the way. Boldness is what you want. Show him that you don't care for any of his damned tricks. Keep up a jolly old row." Then presently he broke out into awful peals of laughter, urging the men to join him. (p. 203) "Well, then, - laugh! Laugh, I tell you! Now then - All together. One, two three - laugh!"

Whatever the cause, soon after a breeze sprang up, and the ship with her crippled crew, made steady progress. Burns too, was better, and had no recollection of his fever obsession. Steered by the strongest of the poor invalids, the ship at last made port. Captain Giles told the captain that he looked older, and he himself felt sure that during the voyage he had passed the shadow-line between youth and maturity. Ransome felt that his heart had been over-strained, and resigned to take a rest. The Captain hated to part with him, and watched him disappear with regret for the man who had stood by him faithfully during his trial.

ATMOSPHERE

Of external atmosphere there is very little in this book. Though the scenes are laid on 'board ship', there is not the pervading sense of sea-life, as in the "Wigger of the Narcissus". The spiritual atmosphere of horror and surprise is what counts.

Even the atmosphere of personality is vague here. The dominant character is the dead Captain, wicked, hateful, malignant, who would have destroyed both ship and men if possible and promised a bad time for the new captain. The living characters are shadowy - the Captain is a worthy young man; Burns is a peppery fellow with red whiskers; Ransome is embodied helpfulness; the crew are so many puppets. Captain Giles, Captain Ellis, and the people at the Officers' Sailors' Home are well-drawn, but they have nothing to do with the main plot.

It is useless to give quotations describing the voyage. It takes the full account to give the right impression. However, some idea of the calm and the storm may be given.

(p.147) "The Island of Kohring, a great, black, upheaved ridge amongst a lot of tiny islets, lying upon the glassy water like a triton among minnows, seemed to be the centre of the fatal circle. It seemed impossible to get away from it. Day after day it remained in sight. More than once, in a favorable breeze, I would take its bearing in the fast-ebbing twilight, thinking that it was for the last time. Vain hope. A night of fitful airs would undo the gains of temporary favour, and the rising sun would throw out the black relief of Kohring, looking more barren, grim, and inhospitable than ever."

Then came the hush and the blackness. (p. 115) "Sud-

denly - how shall I convey it? Well, suddenly the darkness turned to water. This is the only suitable figure. A heavy shower, a downpour, comes along, making a noise. You hear its approach on the sea, in the air too, I verily believe. But this was different. With no preliminary whisper or rustle, without a splash, and even without the ghost of impact, I became instantaneously soaked to the skin."

And underlying everything else, there is here an atmosphere of sincerity and good faith. It is the confession of a plain man, told in plain language, just as he remembers it, reinforced by extracts from his diary. The very simplicity of the telling makes the facts more striking. He does not try to explain them; he insistently avows his contempt for Burns' ideas, yet, we think that after all Burns may be right. The story is strange and unusual, but it demands belief.

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

The entire book is subjective, centering around one thing. The chief mate felt a strange restlessness, gave in to it, and was involved in strange tricks of Fortune.

He had been quite satisfied with his life. Then (p. 6) "Suddenly I left all this. I left it in that, to us, inconsequential manner in which a bird flies away from a comfortable branch. It was as though all unknowing I had heard a whisper or seen something. Well,- perhaps! One day I was perfectly right, and the next everything was gone - glamour, favour, interest, contentment - everything. It was one of those moments, you know. The green sickness of late youth descended on me, and carried me off."

Then he went ashore, and fell in with the prosy Captain Files. The old man worried him into making the steward confess he had a letter from the harbor officials, and then persuaded him to apply for the position. Before he quite realized it, he was a Captain, and was amazed at the increased deference he met

He was in a state of dazed suspense during the whole trip to Benkek, wondering if his ship would be worthy (p. 81) "But directly my eyes had rested on my ship all my fear vanished. It went off swiftly like a bad dream..... and I felt a momentary shame at my unworthy suspicions.

Yes, there she was. Her hull, her rigging, filled my eye with a great content. That feeling of life - emptiness which had made me so restless for the last few months lost its bitter plausibility, its evil influence, dissolved in a flow of joyous emotion."

Then came the series of troubles, the delay, the fever, the calm, renewed sickness, and finally the discovery that there was no quinine. This is the height of misfortune, when the Captain felt the foundation of his security slip away. The storm was another terrible experience, in which Burns' awful laugh marks the climax and turning point. After it, conditions improved. 'p. 43) "By the exercising virtue of Mr. Burns' awful laugh, the malicious spectre had been laid, the evil spell broken, the curse removed." And Burns, recovered, no longer blamed the old captain for anything!"

When the ship reached port, the Captain said: (p. 253) "No, not tired. But I'll tell you, Captain Giles, how I feel. I feel old, and I must be. All of you on shore leave look to me like a lot of skittish youngsters that have never known a care in the world." It was indeed true. He had passed the shadow-line."

NOVELS BY CONRAD AND HUEFFER.

THE INHERITORS (1901)

This novel is published under Conrad's name, but there is little external evidence of his collaboration. It has neither beauty of style, nor atmosphere, nor insight into life. We might call it a prophecy of German desire for world power, but probably nothing of the kind was meant. We simply do not know why this book was written.

It is an extravagant story about a race of people from "the fourth dimension", who come to earth and live with ordinary mortals. They are distinguishable only as possessing greater cleverness and ruthlessness. They carry out an elaborate scheme to ruin the Prime Minister of England, and at the close of the book are about to inherit the earth.

ROMANCE (1903)

This book is very different and very much better. Conrad's influence is decidedly marked in its beauty of style, richness of coloring, exquisite atmosphere and romantic spirit. It is the story of an Englishman, John Kemp, who fled from home to Jamaica and Cuba. There he met a beautiful Spanish girl, with a huge fortune, and passed through terrible misfortunes and adventures winning her love and delivering her from danger. There are plots, and dangers, and villains, and pirates, and escapes, and captures, colored by a spirit of adventure and youthful love. It is a very interesting book, but as it is not purely Conrad's, we must leave it.

SHORT STORIES

A large and important part of Conrad's work is his short stories. I must confess that I like them better than the novels. They have all the richness, the color, the atmosphere, the psychology of the novels, without the confusion that sometimes marks the longer works.

There are six volumes of short stories (see Bibliography). They share in the characteristics of the novels, and like them, are nearly all subjective adventures. Perhaps the most famous is "Typhoon" (also published separately). It is the most tremendous description of a storm in literature, and shows how its fury was overcome by the unimaginative, stupid devotion to duty of Captain McWhirr. "Outposts of Progress" shows the change wrought in two white men in charge of an African trading post. It culminated in a quarrel over a lump of sugar, in which one killed the other, then committed suicide. "The Duel" is the story of two French officers who fought duels for fourteen years. One imagined that the other had insulted him, and pursued him relentlessly until both were Generals. Then the other won, and ended the quarrel by giving him his life. "The Secret Sharer" is the confession of a sea-captain who concealed a murderer on his ship and helped him to escape, and has a wonderful atmosphere of suspense. "The Informer" is an anarchist tale. "An Anarchist" is the story of a Frenchman who got a reputation for violence in a birthday celebration, and was hounded into a life of crime. "To-Morrow" is a story of hope deferred too long. All are very fine cross-sections of life, and will surely find the highest place among the short stories of the world.

Conrad's Characteristics as a Novelist of Subjective
Adventure

A. Material

I. Setting

The settings of Conrad's novels vary. There are two whose scenes are laid in England - "Chance" and "The Secret Agent". "Under Western Eyes" deals with Russia and Geneva, and is the only one even remotely connected with the scenes of his childhood. "Nostromo" deals with South America. The "Nigger of the Narcissus" and the "Shadow-Line" are tales of the sea. "The Arrow of Gold" is a Spanish story. All the others deal with the Malay archipelago. The short stories follow practically the same course, with the addition of France and Italy as scenes. Thus it appears that Conrad writes mainly of the life and places he knows personally, though "Nostromo" a work of pure imagination, is the equal of any.

Perhaps his most valuable books in the sense of those which are most distinctly a contribution to literature, are those which reveal to us the unknown life of the sea and of the far East. There are people who would confine Conrad to being a modern Smollet and the "Kipling of the Malay Archipelago", but we would not willingly let die anything he has written. For after all, his province is the human heart.

II. Characters.

(1) There is an infinite variety in Conrad's characters but many of them have one thing in common - the obsession of an "idée fixe". This type of mind seems to have a special appeal for Conrad. There is Almayer, with his mania for getting

rich; Jim, with the one idea of retrieving his lost honor; old de Barral, intent on saving his daughter; Schomberg, determined on revenge; Nostromo, with an insatiable thirst for popularity; Charles Gould, wrapped up in his mine; Winnie Verloc, whose sole aim was Steevie's good; the whole crew of the "Harcissus", oppressed by Jimmy's imminent death. They are abnormal people, perhaps, but Conrad succeeds in making them real people too. And after all, they are but exaggerated examples of what we all know - the ruling passion which marks the difference between existence and life.

(2) As a corollary to this fact is the one that so many of his characters are isolated figures. In the "Atlantic Monthly" for February, 1917, H. T. and Wilson Follett write:

"No one else has written with so profound a sense of the awful privacy of the soul, the intense palpitating secrecy which underlies even the most placid and composed phenomena of the everyday world.

"To be a historian of hearts, in the sense of feeling the isolation and secret, mysterious beauty of each individual adventure, is to be almost necessarily a historian of the lonely. And instinctively he chooses from the medley of lives those that are most detached --- from participation in the lives of civilized man. In the earlier stages of his work, his bent was towards the man cut off by his own act; in the later stages, to the man cut off by his own nature."

Thus we see Willems cut off by his acts, also Razumov, and Jim, and Winnie Verloc through her sacrifice; while Almayer was lonely through his passion for wealth. ~~Heyst~~ through his

cynical philosophy, Anthony and Flora through the circumstances of their lives, Mrs. Gould through her husband's change of nature; Aissa, by her alien race. Conrad's view is summed up in "Outcast of the Islands", p. 224: "the tremendous fact of our isolation, of the loneliness impenetrable and transparent, elusive and everlasting, and of the indestructible loneliness that surrounds, envelops, clothes every soul from the cradle to the grave, and, perhaps beyond."

(3) Another thing we notice about his material is the predominance of male characters in all the books. In two of them - "The Nigger of the 'Arcissus'" and "The Shadow-Line" there is not a single woman character. This is doubtless due to their being novels of sea-life, and therein, I think, lies the explanation of the general fact. Conrad followed the sea so long, a man's man, living a man's life, that he came to know men as few other novelists have known them, and conversely to have little acquaintance with women. His women are all just women - feminine, sympathetic and tender, but all much alike. His men, on the other hand, while essentially manly, are different, striking, and powerful. What pale ghosts Mrs. Gould, Winnie Verloc or Nina seem beside Jim, Razumov, Almayer, Captain Anthony Willems!. This is because his characters are drawn from life. We guess it in many cases; he tells us about the original of Almayer in a "Personal Record".

III. Plots

Of this material, Conrad makes varied use, but nearly all the plots have one thing in common - the element of subjective

adventure, especially as seen in a conflict of some kind. Nearly all his chief characters are seen battling in an unequal struggle with some idea or situation. As Curle says, "That is Conrad's system of developing his characters. He likes to show us them battling with some definite catastrophe or idea. His people are faced with monstrous propositions." (1) For instance, Jim battles with the problem of atoning for a moment of cowardice. Razumov is faced by an impossible situation not of his own making; Aissa was bent on holding her foreign lover; Nina had to choose between her father and her mother's people; Nostromo had to uphold his reputation; Winnie Verloc was faced with the fruitlessness of years of sacrifice; Flora de Barral's problem was to find a living in an unfriendly world, and so on.

(2) Due to this characteristic, is the fact that Conrad's plots have little action or movement. They give pictures of souls, and the movements of the body are incidental. This is especially true, I think, of "Under Western Eyes". I wondered which would be the effect of dramatizing certain chapters, for instance, the long one describing the meeting of Razumov and Nathalie. It is a very long chapter, but I am sure the recorded speeches and actions of the two people could have been performed in about one minute. The only notable exception to this rule is "Nostromo", which has an intricate plot (when one gets it untangled).

What the people feel and think is more important than what they do. Nevertheless, under the influence of their thoughts and feelings, they do experience real adventures, such as Razumov's when caught in the net; Flora's precipitate

(1) Curle: "Joseph Conrad" - p. 94

marriage; the hiding of the silver in Nostromo.

B. Method:

I. Direct Narrative as Proof:

Next we ask ourselves, How does he write about these things? His first care is to make us believe in the unusual people and things he describes. As one means to this end, he has often adopted what I call the "documentary evidence system", giving proof for everything he says. In "Lord Jim", Marlow tells the story, and has obtained all his facts first-hand, or from people who were on the scene. In "Chance", his friend tells what Marlow told him after piecing the story together. "The Shadow-Line" is a confession, reinforced by a diary. "Under Western Eyes" is based on personal observation and on Razumov's diary. "Nostromo" is largely based on Captain Mitchell's story, also Decoud's diary. "Victory" is told by a man who saw much of what he describes, and knew the characters well. The "Nigger of the Narcissus" is narrated by one of the crew. The other novels do not state their proofs, but are marked by an earnestness, a careful attention to detail which demand belief. It is as if the novelist said: "You must believe me, because I saw this, or I have the word of a man who saw this, or experienced it;" or else, "Do I not sound like a truthful man?" It must be admitted that this method is often exasperating and confusing, but it is nevertheless ~~confusing~~ *convincing*.

II. Use of Atmosphere.

As well as giving proofs, Conrad demands belief by creating the very atmosphere of what he describes, both of people

and places. Much has been said about this in passing, and now we can judge of the effect. Curle says "Indeed. Conrad's theory would seem to be this, that without atmosphere there can be no such thing as veritability. He imagines a definite scene and situation, a definite group of figures, and he has to make them as alive to us as they are to him..... His figures are as much part of his atmosphere as is the external world.... The creation of one mood. And though his moods do vary enormously, they always aim towards a similar effect - the fixing in the minds of his readers of that illusion which he has in his own mind" (1) This is especially true of "Almayer's Folly", "Outcast of the Islands", "Lord Jim" and "Nostromo", though atmosphere plays an important part in every book.

In this connection, I might mention the prevailing note of sadness running through all of Conrad's books, which produces in many people the feeling of gloom and depression. He has often been called a pessimist. However, although he does believe that the universe is merely spectacular, a moral end in itself, he really is not a pessimist. He himself says: "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas, so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, on the idea of Fidelity." (2) And G. B. Donlin - "Mr. Conrad renders homage to a few august or simple moods of the human spirit: to courage, on the one hand, and to loyalty, on the other; to that unheroic adequacy to the day's work which is the cement of society. He likes to see these primitive virtues given their freest play in

(1) Curle: "Joseph Conrad" - p. 75

(2) Conrad: "Personal Record" - p. 20

a primitive world. He delights to show how the wild places of the earth work upon and alter our conventional attitudes and judgments. Such as survive the test are men. But even so, they must be prepared to get along without the rewards. In Mr. Conrad's pages people never win happiness by deserving it. His veracity will allow nothing of the sort. If, living in such a universe, Mr. Conrad is not a pessimist, I suspect it is largely because he finds people acquitting themselves with a decent show of courage... " (1)

John Freeman says "That the noblest fail, that ~~Hagg~~^{Hagg}, and Nostromo, and Captain Whalley die, while worse men live on, is surely not now to be taken as evidence of their creator's cynicism or disabled faith. Though the noblest fail, that they are the noblest, that they are the object of their author's patient honor, remains indisputable. The strife, the assertion, the being - there is the triumph of that inward eternal radiance of which an imaginative writer must needs be the prophet, if he is not himself to be false to his high calling. In the case of Mr. Conrad's work, it is honor that endures and defeats the night of blackness." (2)

Notably, nearly all his tragic situations arise from a breach of the law of Fidelity - Razumov played false to his human instinct; Jim violated the trust placed in a ship's officers; Verloc abused the confidence of a child; Willems cheated his employer; Almayer sold his ideals, and so on. This atmosphere of gloom is intended to emphasize Mr. Conrad's view of life.

(1) G. B. Donlin: "The Dial" - September, 1916

(2) John Freeman: "The Modernists"

III. Characterization:

In creating the atmosphere of character, Conrad avails himself of every method, from "thumb-nail sketches" like that of Verloc, to full-length portraits, with detailed analysis, descriptions, and conversations. Curle says: "Nowhere more decisively than in his drawing of character does Conrad reveal his tremendous grip on reality. Not only are his people drawn with rare imagination, but with a ceaseless detail which is ever awake to uphold, like Atlas, the structure of his visionary world.... Such realism knows nothing of the eccentric or typical view of character so common amongst our English writers The figures of Conrad live because the fires of their existence burn inwardly. They are projected once and for all from the mind of their author, and thereafter they have no need to call upon him for help..... That is the realistic gift - a thing as perfect in its illusion as is the perspective of a masterly painting."

C. Results:

With such material and such handling of it, what are the outstanding features of the result?

(1) First, his work has Romance, not only the romance which surrounds all strange or unusual lives, but the romantic heart of youth, which delights in wonder and beauty and mystery everywhere, and performs strange deeds in pursuit of a purpose. But added to Romance we have Realism. In reading Conrad, we are looking at real people, living in a real world, grappling with real problems, even though the people and the world, and the

(1) Curle: "Joseph Conrad" - p. 92

problems are unlike anything we have ever seen before. This adds tremendously to the value of his work, and removes him from the class of romancers whose work interests but never convinces us, because at the back of our minds we keep assuring ourselves, "It's only a story". And not only does he achieve realism, but achieves it in that most difficult of fields - the field of subjective adventure, which he has described with a power equal to that of the most eminent psychological novelists.

Conrad has given a new contribution to the development of the English novel, combining the psychological power of a Hardy with the romantic skill of a Stevenson, the insight of a George Eliot with the observation of a super-Kipling. In addition to this he has enriched our literature with deep and sympathetic studies of little known corners of the earth, marked by vivid pictures and haunting descriptions, the whole written in an English style unsurpassed for beauty. These qualities are slowly but surely winning him his place in the sun, even though he is still alive.

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