

TIME IN THE NOVELS OF JOSEPH CONRAD:

THEME, SYMBOL, AND STRUCTURE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Christopher Petty

Department of English
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

1983

TIME IN THE NOVELS OF JOSEPH CONRAD:

THEME, SYMBOL, AND STRUCTURE

BY

CHRISTOPHER PETTY

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

© 1983

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVER-
SITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to
the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this
thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY
MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the
thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.

To the memory of my father,
who first recommended that I
read Conrad and who
understood Stein's motto,
usque ad finem

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to Professor John Teunissen both for introducing me to many of the connections between literature and other disciplines on which this dissertation depends and for supervising its writing with concern and patience. I also wish to thank Professor Evelyn Hinz for encouragement along the way.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Notes	17
Chapter One: Early Novels	19
Notes	38
Chapter Two: <u>Lord Jim</u>	40
Notes	78
Chapter Three: <u>Nostramo</u>	82
Notes	116
Chapter Four: <u>The Secret Agent</u> and <u>Under Western Eyes</u>	118
Notes	157
Chapter Five: <u>Chance</u>	160
Notes	199
Chapter Six: <u>Victory</u>	202
Notes	236
Chapter Seven: Last Novels	240
Notes	263
Conclusion	265
Notes	269
Bibliography	270

INTRODUCTION

When, in 1928, Wyndham Lewis referred to Joseph Conrad as one of the "time school" of modern novelists, his comment was meant as a severe reproof.¹ Since then, most informed readers of Conrad's work have recognised the validity of Lewis's claim, if not its motivation. Any litany of the great modern novelists in English—James, Joyce, Faulkner, Woolf, Wolfe, to name only the most obvious—suggests a continuity of fictional assumptions, and the most pervasive of these assumptions is that the substance with which the writer must grapple is time itself. Conrad's association with this list thus becomes almost a badge of artistic respectability.

For these and other modern novelists, time is not only a "theevish progresse to eternitie" which lays waste human beauty and endeavours but which can in some measure be defeated in the act of writing itself; it is also a ghostly inhabitant of and threat to the palace of fictional artifice. Rather than lamenting passing time elegantly and elegiacally, the modern writer is therefore likely to develop a fictional strategy designed either to defeat it or at least to liberate his readers from its clutches by creating for them a world which is in some sense timeless—a world which expands the sensations of the moment to include those of the past (Virginia Woolf) or which images an epic past in a mundane present (James Joyce). He is also likely to suggest that the traditional linear model of time, in which an experience happens and is then over, is

inadequate and to examine this proposition thematically and through the organization of his text, as Marcel Proust and Lawrence Durrell do in their different ways.

The precursor of all these novelists was Lawrence Sterne, who challenged the authority of some of the cosier assumptions about the relation between the substance of living and its artistic recreation by developing a kind of literary extension of Zeno's paradox: "I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelvemonth; and having got, as you perceive, almost into the middle of my fourth volume—and no further than to my first day's life—tis demonstrative that I have three hundred and sixty-four days more life to write just now, than when I first set out; so that instead of advancing . . . I am just thrown so many volumes back."² If indeed experience grows at such a rate, then a fiction which endeavours to contain it is an impossibility—and Sterne thumbs his nose at the absurdity of it all by threatening to dismember chronological sequence at every opportunity. The problem which Sterne outlines is of course perennial and not confined to pseudo-autobiography: how to compress the passage of time and make effective use of a limited range of events meant to symbolise more than themselves? Sterne gives himself up to the arbitrariness of daily life by claiming that he has refused to compress; but even such a conscientious arranger of events as Henry James is driven to admit that "This eternal time-question is . . . for the novelist always there and always formidable; always insisting on the effect of the great lapse and passage, of the 'dark backward and abysm,' by the terms of truth, and on the effect of compression, of composition and form, by the terms of literary arrangement."³

The sheer technical difficulty of dealing with the passage of time

was, if not ignored, at least accepted as an inherent awkwardness of fictional form by most of the novelists writing between Sterne and James. What triggered the development of the "time school" of writers was the confluence of, on the one hand, a renewed recognition of the strictly artistic difficulties of dealing with the time problem and, on the other, the discovery of a growing body of philosophical and psychological examinations of the nature of time.⁴ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many of the novelists who used the forms of fiction to challenge standard notions of the ordering of fictional time also reflected an awareness of new and not-so-new theories of how time functioned in the external world: James Joyce made use of Viconian theories of cyclicity and Jungian archetypes; Lawrence Durrell wrote a series of novels "whose form is based on the relativity proposition" with "Three sides of space and one of time";⁵ while Samuel Beckett created a series of timeless limbos in which the characters parody Newtonian temporal precision by their frequent pointless references to their timepieces.

Despite Wyndam Lewis's readiness to lump him with his infamous contemporaries, more recent critics have paid little attention to Conrad's use of time compared to that expended on the other writers I have mentioned. Hans Meyerhoff and Georges Poulet both ignore Conrad in their treatments of human time and time in literature. Shiv Kumar and Margaret Richardson barely mention Conrad in their otherwise wide-ranging analyses of Proustian and Bergsonian influences on the modern novel. A. A. Mendilow, in the most extensive treatment of temporal organisation in the novel, regards Conrad as a remarkable pioneer, but has little to say about the relationship of the techniques he pioneered to the substance of the novels. Of the general

studies of time in fiction only David L. Higdon's Time and English Fiction gives an extended treatment of one of Conrad's novels.

Most of the better-known books on Conrad, on the other hand, do stress the importance of time in his work, but none of them provides a really extensive commentary on the subject. Edward Crankshaw's pioneering Joseph Conrad: Some Aspects of the Art of the Novel (1936) devotes a chapter to Conrad's use of time and to analogies between his narrative techniques and film, music, and the graphic arts, although he does little to recognise the thematic importance of time in the novels; Paul Wiley in Conrad's Measure of Man (1954) develops at length the writer's use of the Eden myth, but he does little with the technique of the novels; Albert Guerard's Conrad the Novelist (1958) carefully dissects the chronological shifts in Nostramo but treats Conrad's time scheme mainly as an effective impressionistic technique; Frederick Karl devotes a chapter of A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad (1960) to "Time in Conrad." He mentions possible influences on Conrad, makes detailed charts comparing the sequential order of events with their novelistic order, and makes some valuable comments on the importance of the chronology. Thomas Moser, Royal Roussel, and Ian Watt have all provided useful although less substantial comments on the topic in their respective books.

The most pointed commentary, however, apart from Karl's chapter, has come in articles by W. B. Stein (the early Malayan novels), Avrom Fleishman (The Secret Agent), R. G. Stallman (The Secret Agent), Harriet Gilliam (Under Western Eyes), and Ben Kimpel and T. C. Duncan Eaves (Nostramo). There have also been a few excellent general articles on time in Conrad, two doctoral theses on the topic, and one doctoral thesis comparing Conrad's use of time with that in Woolf, Joyce, and Huxley.

While it would obviously be unfair to claim that the topic has been neglected, most of the commentary I have mentioned does one of three things: it demonstrates the sheer complexity (or awkwardness) of Conrad's narrative technique; it attempts to show echoes of some philosophical or other thinker; or it argues that his characters are affected by the twentieth-century "terror of time". My major aims in the study that follows, however, are to demonstrate the frequency and relevance of images and symbols of time in Conrad's novels, to examine more fully than has been done previously the complex ordering of temporal sequence in his work, and to suggest the interpenetration of theme and technique which marks his greatest work. Thus I will lay particular stress on those novels in which Conrad fuses together a symbolic presentation of a character's attitudes through images of time with a narrative order which mimics or underscores the thematic substance through its reshaping of "normal" sequential chronology.

There is no single attitude to time which dominates all of Conrad's fiction; indeed any full response to Conrad's use of time must involve a determined eclecticism on the part of the reader. There are, however, attitudes and motifs which recur in different permutations. The first is the general assumption that men (Jim, Nostromo, Heyst), political groups (the anarchists in both The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes), and even whole nations (notably Russia) betray their fundamental assumptions about themselves through their attitudes towards time. The second is the assumption that Victorian attitudes—or at least the more optimistic of them—towards progress and history are false: the world does not automatically develop into a better and more rewarding place through the play of economic forces, nor is there a linear movement from past to present. In place of these attitudes Conrad offers the possibility that history

may be cyclical, entropic, or simply incoherent. The third is that evolution is not necessarily completed or irreversible. Although he satirizes racial Darwinism, Conrad seems to suggest that it is possible to be "ahead" of the rest of humanity, spiritually and morally at least, or even behind everyone else. The fourth is that time is in some sense (as Heraclitus suggested) a river which men can fall out of (Nostromo, Decoud, Razumov) or, less often, into (Heyst, Anthony). Finally Conrad recognises the traditional disparity between time as lived (existential time) and time as registered by the external world (clock or public time).

Conrad uses repeated patterns of behaviour, of mythic reference and of imagery to develop these abstractions in fictional form. For example, watches and clocks may break down at central traumatic moments; the introduction of mechanical devices such as railways, steamships, and trams may suggest a change in the cultural structuring of time; even clothing occasionally gains a symbolic value. Physical movement and direction (the direction of Jim's travels or Almayer's intended journey) act as symbolic referents. Pictures, statues, and pictorial imagery tend to be used to suggest stasis. Throughout the novels, furthermore, Conrad makes extensive use of mythological references from both classical and Judeo-Christian sources. Frequently he suggests that Western man, in trying individually or communally to create a new and felicitous reality, betrays his failure to do so through conscious or unconscious reference to the type of all such felicity—the Garden of Eden. Less often he uses the Creation, the Apocalypse and the Deluge—or at least imagery associated with these biblical events—to dramatise radical changes in the temporal structure of a character's life. Specific classical myths are used occasionally either for their own resonances or simply to impart a particular kind of

generic key signature, and words and phrases with theological overtones often imply ironic parallels with scriptural events.

The source of Conrad's religious imagery lies, fairly obviously, in the "absurd oriental fable" which the novelist claimed to have left behind at the age of fourteen.⁶ Similarly, we may assume that his education contained a classical component from which he would have gained a knowledge of mythology.⁷ It is less easy though to identify intellectual influences on his attitude to time. Conrad was not, at least in the sense that one might apply the term to George Eliot or Henry James, an intellectual novelist, and he showed little enthusiasm for following up contemporary fashions in thought.⁸ At the same time, he was not immune to the process of transmission of ideas which takes place in educated circles. One influence which he may well have received at second hand was that of Charles Darwin. Modern commentators have gone out of their way to insist that Darwin did not discover evolution, merely the most plausible means to explain its workings;⁹ nevertheless, Darwin's name remains a convenient synecdoche for the assumptions which he popularised. Without Darwin's influence Conrad would probably not have created the reverse evolution theme ("Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world") in "Heart of Darkness". Despite Margaret Church's dismissal of him from the Bergsonian canon, Conrad also seems to have influenced in his creation of "static" and "living" characters by the French philosopher's attitude towards time. As in the case of Darwin's ideas, it is not really necessary to prove Conrad's acquaintance with particular works (although his French would certainly have been good enough to allow him to read Bergson in the original). There are other possible philosophical influences: John Saveson makes great play with the importance of

Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and the English associationist philosophers in Conrad's vision of the world. Certainly the popular image of Schopenhauer as "the great pessimist" seems to have influenced the creation both of Heyst himself and of his father in Victory, but when Saveson points to the influence of Henry Maudsley on the animalistic imagery through which the three villains in that novel are created, he is on much shakier ground. Animal imagery has been used by generations of writers to satirise vicious human characteristics, and "influence" here becomes impossible to pin down. It is almost as difficult to prove the influence of political theories upon Conrad's creation of anarchism as a philosophy opposed to temporal logic in The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes. Our knowledge of possible factual sources for Conrad's political novels has been increased by the researches of such critics as Norman Sherry, but it is difficult to prove how much of Conrad's apparently well-informed presentation of the inner workings of anarchism is simply the result of intellectual osmosis.

Finally there is the influence of other novelists. Conrad seems to have read most of his major contemporaries, and he even wrote a series of critical essays on such figures as Henry James, Guy De Maupassant, and Stephen Crane. Although he was sometimes overly polite about works he had read and at other times downright unreliable, we have some clues about literary influences. He enjoyed Proust, that most time-dominated of novelists, but seems to have read him only late in life.¹⁰ He certainly read Wells, and the term "fourth dimensionist" in The Inheritors may well owe something to Wells's protagonist's description of a world, millions of years into the future, running down. Conrad also claimed a long acquaintance with James's novels, although it is difficult to discover specific examples of the influence of the elder novelist on the younger.¹¹

Whatever influences there may have been, Conrad quickly developed a range of techniques through which to express his sense of the limitations of normal chronology as an artistic technique. Conrad himself says little about his own techniques; his most-quoted comments generally had to do with the difficulty of the artist's task in doing justice to the complexity of the moral universe. We do, however, have Ford Madox Ford's description in Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance of the joint aims which he and Conrad set themselves: "We agreed that the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind. . . . Life does not say to you: In 1914, my next door neighbour, Mr. Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted it with Cox's green aluminium paint."¹² On the contrary, Ford goes on to explain, we pick up information haphazardly, and any attempt to tell a story must reflect this random scattering of information. We must therefore expect an honest narrator or narrative to twist about in the currents of time in order to describe the events of any one moment. An excellent example of this type of thing is the opening chapter of Nostramo. There, out of an attempt (ostensibly) to describe the topography of Sulaco, a whole potted history of the place and some of its leading inhabitants develops. Large sections of Chance are also organised in this fashion.

The technique certainly works as a means of plunging us into the reality of another culture or even into the mind of an individual. But as a theory about the necessary verisimilitude of fictional form, this assumption of Conrad and Ford is of limited value. After all, the telling of a story demands all kinds of compression and limitation of events. Why should we then expect the fictional world to provide us with a naturalistic paradigm of the way in which we pick up information in real life? Like

the stream-of-consciousness technique, there is nothing automatically valid about distributed exposition; after all, as Johnson pointed out, "Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination."¹³ If our perception of it is so flexible, any effective manner of temporal presentation will probably be recognised as true to our experience.

The actual range of time-effects Conrad uses is much wider than is suggested in Ford's description of their joint fictional assumptions. First of all, Conrad, like any other novelist, compresses and expands time at will. In the scene in The Secret Agent in which Winnie Verloc murders her husband, the action mimics her sense that "only three minutes had elapsed from the moment she had drawn the first deep easy breath after the blow" until the moment that she tries to run out the door. Using the opposite technique, Conrad covers Jim's whole career as a water-clerk and his eventual ennoblement in Patusan in about fifteen lines of text, and an even longer period in Axel Heyst's life in the first few pages of Victory.

The second technique is that implied in the description by Ford of the way in which we learn about events. Conrad makes extensive use of what is often called "time looping". Time looping is the movement backwards—or less often forwards—from the narrative present of the novel, and the temporary continuance of the narrative in that other time continuum with an eventual return to the narrative present. This shift may be managed by a narrator within the textual frame (an excellent example is the "would" scene in Lord Jim, where, as Marlow begins to speak, the narrative present gradually becomes transformed into an undefined time in the past and finally into one specific telling of the tale), or it may be brought about by an unidentified narrative voice, as in Nostramo.

There may even be time-loops within time-loops; once again, Nostramo provides us with examples.

The third of these techniques is the shifting of a section of the narrative out of its "natural" (that is, sequential) position; in Under Western Eyes, for example, the first part of the book ends with a question put to Razumov by Mikulin. There is no attempt at a transition (indeed the narrator goes out of his way to tell us that he will not invent one); we are simply shifted to Geneva a few months later. It is Part Four of the novel and nearly two hundred pages later before we learn the answer to Mikulin's question and are allowed to learn of the events which lead to Razumov's leaving Russia.

Fourth, Conrad uses a device which David Leon Higdon has defined as "barrier time."¹⁴ Barrier time, as Higdon uses the term, occurs in fictional structures in which we either know the end of events before their beginning (Higdon uses Thornton Wilder's The Bridge of San Luis Rey as an example) or are told that events must be completed within a set space of time (Higdon's examples are drawn from fairy tales and popular T.V. thrillers in which disaster will result if—let's say—a bomb is not defused within fifteen minutes). The second of these types of barrier time is of little use to Conrad who seems deliberately to avoid techniques designed to increase traditional dramatic tension. Conrad does, however, make frequent use of the first type. Thus we are told of Jim's success in Patusan before we learn of the means by which he achieved that success; we are also warned of the facts of his death before we discover how he met his fate. In Nostramo, we learn of the eventual prosperity of Sulaco even before we see the conclusion of Nostramo's historic ride which saves the province from anarchy. At the beginning of Almayer's Folly we meet Almayer

waiting for the fruition of his dreams of wealth through the agency of Dain Waris before we discover the genesis of that dream.

It is out of these basic elements combined with such non-temporal techniques as describing a scene from two points of view separated by an interval of time (a frequent technique in Chance) that Conrad builds larger scale effects such as the "spatialising" of time which takes place in Lord Jim, Nostramo, and, to a lesser degree, The Secret Agent, Chance, and Victory.

In analyzing these temporal themes, symbols, and narrative techniques in detail, my intention is not simply to isolate and annotate them but rather to show how these different elements combine into a narrative strategy which contributes to the success of the novel. I have therefore dealt with Conrad's novels individually and sequentially, stressing the ways in which he reworks, modifies, and expands early themes and techniques in his mature fiction. In order to keep the main line of my argument clear I have given little attention to the short stories, which seldom have themes which are germane to this discussion. I have given proportionally less attention to the early novels (in which Conrad outlines themes which are to become more important) and to the late novels where much of his imaginative energy seems to evaporate. Among the major novels, my discussion of The Secret Agent is comparatively brief because my argument has been largely anticipated by some of Conrad's major critics.

The first chapter outlines Conrad's interest in temporal themes in the early novels where, in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands he provides the prototypes of those individuals in later novels who "fall" out of time. In "Heart of Darkness" we also find an awareness of the internal and psychological dimensions of time which Conrad was not to surpass in later works, and in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" the beginnings of a stress

on the temporal aspects of political and social stances.

The second chapter, on Lord Jim, argues that Conrad achieves an early but effective marriage of theme and technique. Jim's lack of self-knowledge is symbolised through his attempts to avoid the mechanisms of time, and the basic structure of the novel suggests the faultiness of his notion of futurity. His future tends to repeat the past, bringing not a new chance but a new test. Marlow's telling of the tale, furthermore, dramatises Jim's lack of understanding by showing the reader that the events of the protagonist's life cannot be "tidied away" once they are over but rather that they gain a new existence in men's minds. Even a retreat to a place apparently outside time (Patusan) does not allow Jim to escape from his own character (which is, as Novalis reminds us, fate).

The third chapter stresses Conrad's line of development after Lord Jim. In Nostramo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes, he gives his major attention to social groups rather than individuals, suggesting in particular the relationships between attitudes to time and concepts of history and political development. Nostramo is the story of a land almost without a history: lacking a history, Costaguana relapses into a pattern of development which is cyclical or revolutionary and which even modern economic development cannot halt. The narrative organization dramatises this social reality by effectively abolishing history within the ordering of events. The characters, while less important than in Lord Jim, tend to abuse the concept of history or to lose touch with time—perhaps as a result of the prevalent social reality. The text not only describes but also reflects in its organization the motivation of Nostramo whose fall out of time brings betrayal of a trust and his death.

In The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes, the fourth chapter suggests,

Conrad continues to explore the temporal attitudes of groups and nations. The plot of The Secret Agent centres on a symbolic but pointless attack on time by a fake anarchist: not only does this attack motivate subsequent events but it also impedes the forward movement of the text, suggesting that a "hole" in time has indeed been created. The genuine anarchists, meanwhile, although they support a radical inversion of historical imperatives, are in practice as attached to their own "scurvy, shabby, mangy bit[s] of time" as anyone else. In Under Western Eyes, Conrad examines much more closely than in the previous novel the clues which its attitude to time gives us about the real nature of anarchism. In doing so he suggests an underlying homogeneity between the anarchists and their opponents, the Russian autocrats: both groups are essentially hostile to Western notions of history. The protagonist's attitude to time is, it seems, partly a result of political pressures. After his betrayal of Haldin, Razumov loses touch with time as he had earlier conceived it: culturally he learns to accept the "blank page" of history; personally he is emotionally "arrested" at the moment of betrayal.

The fifth chapter recounts another major shift in Conrad's direction as a writer concerned with temporal themes. In Chance he turns his attention once again to the workings of time in the lives of individuals and in their relationships. Almost all the characters (with the exception of Marlow and of Powell) seem to have distorted attitudes to time, and the central characters, Flora de Barral and Roderick Anthony, have both accepted a static and immature personal role. Only through their release from stasis (ironically through the agency of the destructive de Barral) can they begin to live freely. Conrad refracts events through the Judeo-Christian myth of Eden and the Roman myth of Flora to reinforce our recognition of this process of release. He also presents these events through one of his most

complex narrative formats. The shape of the plot seems designed to underline Marlow's role as a detective of the human psyche and to involve the reader in the unfolding of event and motive; at the same time it does little to dramatise the predicament of the protagonists.

The sixth chapter, on Victory, argues that Conrad creates in Axel Heyst a kind of quintessence of those earlier figures who dropped out of the current of time through some sort of personal flaw. Heyst retreats to his island because as a man of the "last age" (the future) he can find no suitable role in the present. In a tale which at times shifts into allegory he becomes locked in conflict with another future-directed individual who provided a dark reflection of himself. His sceptical distance from reality is finally lessened by a woman who, as a representative of the feminine principle, is symbolically timeless. As in Chance, Conrad makes extensive use of mythical motifs (mainly from the Bible) to underscore the meaning of events. Although the narrative technique of Victory is comparatively simple, by "spatializing" events Conrad draws thematic parallels between chronologically separated incidents.

Chapter seven outlines the temporal themes in Conrad's last novels and suggests that despite their interesting qualities the critical tendency to dismiss them as minor work is largely justified. The temporal order of The Shadow Line seems benevolent and forgiving compared to earlier works: we see the young captain being redeemed from his callow notion of his place in the universe by an encounter with the forces of cosmic chaos. The young hero of The Arrow of Gold, like Heyst, comes into contact with a female figure who, like Lena in Victory, is clearly meant to represent the feminine principle. Unfortunately the presentation of this encounter is not integrated into an effective thematic structure as in the earlier novel.

The Rescue also has an air of awkwardness in its handling of its thematic materials. Conrad revises the well-meaning but bungling Lingard and attempts to turn him into a man of the heroic age confronted with a woman who, like Heyst, is ahead of her time. Once again though, there is something rather desultory about Conrad's creation and animation of these figures.

NOTES

¹Wyndham Lewis, Time and Western Man (1927; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1927), pp. 63-64.

²Lawrence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman (1767; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1960), pp. 230-31.

³Henry James, Preface to Roderick Hudson (1882; rpt. New York: Scribner's, 1907), pp. xv-xvi.

⁴David Daiches in The Novel and the Modern World, rev. edn. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 7-8, 15-16, gives a useful summary of the intellectual background to the increased consciousness of literary time in the twentieth century.

⁵Lawrence Durrell, Balthazar (1958; rpt. London: Faber, 1972), p. 7.

⁶The comment is made in a letter to Edward Garnett, February 23, 1914. See Edward Garnett, ed., Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895-1924 (Indianapolis; Bobbs-Merrill, 1928), p. 245.

⁷See the detailed account of Conrad's classical education in Gustav Morf, The Polish Shades and Ghosts of Joseph Conrad (New York: Astra Books, 1976), pp. 73-76.

⁸Bernard Meyer in Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), p. 10, quotes Conrad as telling a friend who had tried to interest him in Freud, "I have no wish to probe the depths. I like to regard reality as a rough and rugged thing over which I can run my fingers--nothing more."

⁹Milton Millhauser, "'In the Air,'" in Darwin 2nd ed., ed. Philip Appleman (New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 27-31.

¹⁰Frederick Karl, Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), pp. 874, 879.

¹¹Elsa Nettels in James and Conrad (Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1977), provides an interesting discussion of the two writers and suggests a number of thematic and generic parallels in their work.

¹²Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth, 1924), pp. 180-81.

¹³Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," in Johnson on Shakespeare, ed. Walter Raleigh (1908; rpt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 27.

¹⁴David Leon Higdon, Time and English Fiction (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 9-10.

Chapter One

EARLY NOVELS

Conrad commenced as novelist, according to his own account, quite abruptly, without apprentice work in the form of short stories, without membership in or contact with any literary group, and apparently without any recognition that he was changing the course of his career as merchant seaman.¹ Nevertheless, the growth in the technique and range of his work between Almayer's Folly (1895) and "Heart of Darkness" (published in serial form in 1899) suggests a much greater commitment to artistic self-exploration than he was generally prepared to admit.² What is more, even in these early novels we can recognise both the characteristic themes Conrad is later to develop (the isolated individual, political scheming, sexual love as a destructive element, the positive values of hard work and membership in a community) and also elements of the techniques--notably those involving the use of time--which are to dominate his later work.

Both Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands (1896) present images of white men brought low by involvement in a native culture and dramatise the results of well-meaning interference (Lingard's) in the lives of others. The two books are related, further, by their use of overlapping casts of characters (An Outcast is what in Hollywoodese is known as a "prequel" to the earlier novel) and, more importantly perhaps, by their early recognition that attitudes to time can become structural metaphors for human beliefs and behaviour. The protagonists of these novels display either through word or deed attitudes towards time which Conrad means us to recognise as sentimental, self-indulgent, or dishonest.

In Almayer's Folly, furthermore, he creates a fictional structure which, through its manipulation of time, parodies the temporal expectations of the central character.

Almayer is the first of Conrad's protagonists to drop (or be dropped) out of the current of "normal"--that is, Western--time values and to be forced to respond to another kind of temporal vision. Unlike later characters such as Jim and Heyst, however, Almayer in leaving European society has in no sense renounced the values of his cultural background; indeed, his whole life in Sambir is lived in an extended calculation of how long it will take him to make his fortune and escape from exile in this world of unstructured and unsatisfactory events to the realities of Europe or Macassar.

W. B. Stein has claimed that Almayer's Folly dramatises the conflict between Western and Malayan visions of time.³ Certainly the distinction between Almayer's essentially forward-directed energies and the attention to present realities of the Malayan natives and Arab traders is clear. But what is most immediately asserted in the novel is not a clash of cultural values but an internal conflict within Almayer himself. He is brought before us on the first page as one who prefers "a dream of a splendid future" to "the uncertain realities of the present."⁴ The "folly" of the title refers immediately and literally to his building of a new house on the supposition that the rumoured British Borneo Company will require lodgings for its agents (a supposition based on flimsy evidence) and metaphorically to the irrationality of his hopes for riches (based on almost equally flimsy suppositions). His tenuous visions are undercut by the river which, in the first few lines of the novel is described as having "a glowing gold tinge" but which also brings him the supposed body of Dain Waris.

Almayer's inability to live in the present is the prime cause of his failure to evaluate correctly situations and people. Obsessed with his dreams of wealth he fails to allow for the possibility that Dain's motivation is not what it seems and even to recognise the irony in his partner's comment that his ship is "where no Orang Blanda can lay his hands on her" (p. 13). For similar reasons, he does not stop to consider the question of his daughter's enthusiasm for the grandiose future he has created for her. Although his grief when she deserts him is genuine enough, part of his anger results from what he sees as a betrayal of his long-term vision of happiness by her shorter-term calculations of felicity: "you have torn my heart from me while I dreamt of your happiness. . . . While you were caressing my cheek you were counting the minutes to the sunset that was the signal for your meeting with that man—there!" (p. 189).

Throughout the novel the river acts as a symbolic reproof to Almayer's misdirected energies. In the opening section, he responds to the traditional temporal iconography of flowing water as a symbol of time by following a dead tree on its journey down-river, but instead of looking forward, he uses the image to look backwards: "Almayer's fancy distanced the tree on its imaginary voyage, but his memory lagging behind some twenty years or more in point of time saw a young and slim Almayer...coming to woo fortune in the godowns of old Hudig" (pp. 4-5). The main plot of the novel is concerned with Almayer's desire to penetrate up-river with Dain Maroola to discover and exploit the gold mine whose existence Lingard had asserted. By going up river (symbolically back in time) he will be able to rediscover his lost youth through the transforming power of gold: "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 of

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" (pp. 3-4). Not surprisingly, the journey up-river never comes to pass, and Nina and Dain Waris depart down river to live out their lives in the main stream of time, leaving Almayer to vegetate in the timelessness of an opium stupor.

Like Almayer, Willems in An Outcast of the Islands is introduced to us "weaving the splendid web of his future."⁵ As Almayer's Folly is dominated literally and symbolically by the river, so Conrad uses the almost equally traditional metaphor of life as a journey as an organising structure in An Outcast. Initially, by embezzling his employer's money, Willems steps off "the straight and narrow path of his peculiar honesty . . . with an inward assertion of unflinching resolve to fall back again into the monotonous but safe stride of virtue as soon as his little excursion into the wayside quagmires had produced the desired effect" (p. 3). Conrad varies the metaphoric perils which lie off the beaten track of virtue when he later describes Willems as having "strayed among the brambles of the dangerous wilderness which he had been skirting for so many years" (p. 21).

By accepting exile in Sambir, Willems actualizes the metaphor of straying into the wilderness (or, considering the terrain, into a quagmire). Since his exile is temporary, according to Lingard, Willems can regard it as very much a "temporary excursion." What changes his attitude is an encounter on a pathway—more unlikely than it initially sounds, since the settlement has very few paths. After meeting Aissa, he begins to use his relationship with her as the main means of measuring his progress along life's road. He leaves the aggressive, forward-looking world of the Europeans and becomes a fixture in the slower-moving and more subtle world of the Arabs and Malays.

When Willems responds to the blandishments of this new world by deciding to betray Lingard and Almayer, the imagery in which he expresses his sense of guilt brings together the idea of the road and time itself: "he became aware of the passing minutes, every one of which was like a reproach; of those minutes that falling slow, reluctant, irresistible, into the past, marked his footsteps on the way to perdition." For the first time he begins to wonder, "Was he not, perchance, on a false track?" (p. 142). Up to this point he has regarded himself as deliberately choosing the right road for his own best interests; now he must question his own sense of direction. Unlike the normally passive Almayer, Willems is a man of action and sees life as something to be filled with activity. His punishment for betrayal, permanent exile, is defined by Lingard with the choice of going "fifteen miles up, or forty down [river]" (p. 277). Now he, like the despised Almayer, must remain outside the currents of time, unable to make his own road and vulnerable to the dictates of the river.

Our image of Willems is modified somewhat by Conrad's apparent recognition that his protagonist is not alone in his solipsism. Lingard, in a lengthy passage in Part III of the novel, is also described as one of those who "go straight towards their desire, to the accomplishment of virtue--sometimes of crime--in an uplifting persuasion of their firmness." Conrad continues, "They walk the road of life, the road fenced in by their tastes, prejudices, disdains or enthusiasms, generally honest, invariably stupid, and are proud of never losing their way" (p. 197). Willems is less principled than his benefactor, but Conrad's extension of the dominant road/path image to take in Lingard's assumptions about himself suggests that what the novelist is criticizing is a general Western attitude towards time, in particular its blind concern with futurity and lack of response to the

present. In this sense the aggressive Willems and the passive Almayer are tarred with the same brush.

Conrad also relates the two men to each other and to Lingard through the role he assigns them in a very different kind of temporal symbolism, implied in Almayer's Folly and developed in An Outcast of the Islands—a symbolism which reflects Western assumptions about the nature of power and responsibility. As background figure in the first of these two novels and foreground figure in the second, Lingard partly creates the world he inhabits. Although the Malays initially set up the settlement of Sambir themselves, Lingard soon intrudes and virtually wills it into a social and economic reality—all the time with the best of intentions: "Knowing nothing of Arcadia—he dreamed of Arcadian happiness for that little corner of the world which he loved to think all his own." He resolves "to make them happy whether or no" and becomes judge as well as creator: "His trade brought prosperity to the young state, and the fear of his heavy hand secured its internal peace for many years" (An Outcast, p. 200). Clearly Conrad wants us to recognise in Lingard a kind of parody of the God of the Old Testament, protecting but judging his people and demanding adherence to no other than himself (he successfully manages to keep the Arab traders out of "his" river, until Willems' betrayal).

If Lingard is God, then presumably Almayer should be identified as a new Adam, put into the economic Eden of Sambir and told to dress and keep it. Lingard even provides Almayer with a wife (his own adopted daughter) and the means (trade goods) by which to exploit this new world. Willems' role in this replay of Genesis is not hard to imagine—especially when Almayer pictures him "ranging over the islands and disturbing the harmony of the universe by robbery, treachery, and violence" (p. 209). Even before this, describing to Lingard the events which have occurred in the latter's

absence, Almayer depicts Willems as "leading that hellish crowd" in the attack on his compound and adds, "You would have been proud of your old favourite" (p. 164). Earlier in the novel Almayer has warned his rival "you ought to be destroyed with a stick--like a snake" (p. 93), and Lingard, in his final scene with Willems, underlines the earlier image by noticing "a bone sharp and triangular like the head of a snake [his Adam's apple?] dart up and down twice under the skin of his throat" (p. 258).

Literally as well as symbolically, Willems plays both the roles of "old favourite" and outcast. Although his original position in Macassar may not appear to a reader to have been particularly blissful, Willems himself remembers it as a garden of delights "where there was trade and houses and other men that could understand him exactly, appreciate his capabilities; where there was proper food and money; where there were beds, knives, forks, carriages, brass bands, cool drinks, churches with well-dressed people praying in them" (p. 329). What's more, while in Macassar, he has been the favoured son-in-law of yet another God-like figure--Hudig. Although it is Hudig who casts him out, Willems vents his spleen on Lingard, introducing the forces of disorder into his benefactor's neatly-organised universe.⁶

Literally, Willems' action in bringing Abdulla, the Arab trader, into the river changes the balance of the economic forces Lingard has created. But Lingard's reaction to these events suggests that he feels something more fundamental is taking place. Sitting alone in Babalatchi's hut waiting for daybreak and the opportunity to enact justice upon Willems, the tough and generally unimaginative old seaman begins to feel that the situation "tasted distinctly of sulphurous fumes from the deepest hell." The coming dawn, furthermore, suggests to him that "a new universe was being evolved

out of sombre chaos" (p. 236). After his interview with Willems, he thinks, "How dark it was! It seemed to him that the light was dying prematurely out of the world and that the air was already dead" (p. 275).

Nor is this solely Lingard's perception of events. After he leaves Willems, the latter watches what seems to be the final disintegration of the universe, a disintegration described with an apocalyptic energy prophetic of the sea storm in a much later novel, The Shadow Line: "From under his feet a great vapour of broken water floated up, he felt the ground become soft—melt under him—and saw the water spring out from the dry earth to meet the water that fell from the sombre heaven....fire and water were falling together, monstrously mixed upon the stunned earth" (pp. 283-84).

By apparently bringing together the theological beginning and end of the universe, Conrad is not necessarily trying to force undue importance into the rather sordid tale of Willems' downfall. On the contrary, he is using the Eden myth (as he is later to do in Nostramo, Chance, and Victory) to suggest the impracticality of the desire to create a golden age or protected place outside the normal workings of time and the arrogance of human attempts to do so.⁷

Lingard's quixotism, his desire to be a righter of wrongs, is an object of satire in all three of the novels in which he figures. When Almayer roundly if unfairly blames his benefactor for all the ills that have befallen him, he reminds Lingard that by continually picking up waifs and strays he brings into peril the legitimate objects of his protection: "What about the half-starving dog you brought on board in Borneo in your arms. It went mad and bit the serang....The best serang you ever had" (p. 161). This is the same Lingard who in The Rescue will boast that he is the only one who can "pick up the big end" of the enterprise of toppling a native government,

and who does so, bringing death and destruction in his wake. Recognising Lingard's limitations, we may begin to wonder if his anger at Willems' "distortion of the harmony of the universe" is anything more than a kind of mental bombast.

Even in these early novels, Conrad begins to realize that the "time" which the novelist has most readily at his disposal is the time scheme of the fiction itself, and although Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands lack the technical subtlety of the later novels, they do both re-structure the "real" chronology of the fictional world to make dramatic points. David L. Higdon has described Almayer's Folly as a prime example of "barrier" time. As Higdon points out, much of the first part of the novel consists of a series of flashbacks leading up to the nominal present of the story, the moment at which the action proper begins with Almayer looking out over the river.⁸ This technique allows the compression of the central action into a day and a half; the rest of the novel is memory and afterthought. More important, it suggests something of the priorities of Almayer's existence. For him the present barely exists. He has his memories of past glory and his hopes for future success; the present is merely to be lived through as quickly as possible.

An Outcast of the Islands makes extensive use of time looping and of barrier time. The most obvious use of barrier time occurs with the lengthy explanation of what leads up to Willems' request for a gun at the beginning of Chapter 6 (Part 1, 63-79). At the beginning of the novel there is a series of flashbacks combined with generalised sections for which no specific time locus exist. This section serves to fill in Willems' past history. The time scheme in An Outcast seems designed more for the general creation of dramatic tension than to reflect anything in particular about the protagonist. Thus we hear about the whole process of the betrayal through Almayer's

rambling account of the events to Lingard. Presumably Conrad feels that the overthrow of such a pompous figure sounds even more farcical than it really was when relayed through the mouth of the victim himself. But the time techniques in the second novel are basically those of an effective popular novelist.

The Nigger of the "Narcissus" (1898), Conrad's first major success, does not show any advance in the effective use of novelistic time. In fact it is one of the most chronologically direct of Conrad's works with only one time-shift--the movement after the opening section into a generalised description of life aboard ship ("The days raced after one another, brilliant and quick like the flashes of a lighthouse, and the nights, eventful and short, resembled fleeting dreams.")⁹ This section then develops into a specific scene (the discussion by the crew of the qualities which make up a gentleman) in which Wait, already sick, is disturbed by the noise. Then there is a flash-back to the beginning of the voyage to explain how this state of events came to be.

Although the major themes of the novel have been widely recognised, the fact that one of those themes has a temporal dimension has not. Donald J. Torchiana, in one of the best readings of the text, argues that the novel hints at its content through its title. Conrad chose the name Narcissus to identify a vessel whose physical shape and personnel were compounded of several ships he had worked on in order to underline what is suggested in the story: that the actions of the crew are emotionally and psychologically narcissistic and that their apparent tenderness towards Jimmy contains a "latent egotism." In showing anxiety about his survival, they are really expressing fears about their own. Wait, Torchiana says, "trails at sea, in a metaphorical sense, the clouds of what Conrad takes to be an inglorious, sentimental, liberal-minded London."¹⁰

The ethos which Conrad implicitly criticises is, at least as far as he is concerned, a shore-based one. Although he tends to mock the sentimental preference for the sea over the land displayed by Tom Lingard and, later, by Roderick Anthony, Conrad comes perilously close to expressing similar feelings himself. But although *Torchiana* does not stress the fact, the misguided liberalism and philanthropy of the "shore" world are described quite specifically as modern tendencies. The narrator comments, "Through him [Wait] we were becoming highly humanised, tender, complex, excessively decadent--as though we had been over-civilised and rotten, and without any knowledge of the meaning of life" (p. 139). This kind of "over-civilization" and excessive development of sensibility points forward towards that later example of over-civilized man--Axel Heyst. With Heyst, of course, it is a universal scepticism rather than a universal tenderness which develops out of his modernity.

The sailor at least affected by the modern disease of (self-) pity is Singleton, repeatedly described not only as the oldest sailor on the ship but also as the survivor of a past age: "Old Singleton, the oldest able seaman in the ship, set [sic] apart on the deck right underneath the lamps, stripped to the waist, tattooed like a cannibal chief all over his chest and enormous biceps....With his spectacles and a venerable white beard, he resembled a learned and savage patriarch, the incarnation of barbarian wisdom serene in the blasphemous turmoil of the world" (p. 6). As the survivor of a bygone age and bygone virtues, he makes a natural contrast to Wait, Donkin, and indeed to the weak and unreliable tendency which can be observed in the whole crew during the calm and near-mutiny. Singleton is given further authority through his oracular pronouncements--notably that Wait will die in the sight of land and thus release the ship from the calm which has proved much more destructive than the storm.

His timelessness--that is, his ability to be unaffected by mundane progression or modernity--is suggested through Conrad's deliberate creation of him as a classic emblem of time itself: "Alone in the dim emptiness of the sleeping forecastle, he appeared bigger, colossal, very old,; old as Father Time himself, who should have come there into this place as quiet as a sepulchre to contemplate with patient eyes the short victory of sleep, the consoler." Paradoxically though, Conrad continues, "Yet he was only a child of time, a lonely relic of a devoured and forgotten generation" (p. 24). Tempting as it may have been, Conrad (unlike some of his readers?) avoided letting Singleton become simply a symbolic counterweight: he remains ignorant, unlettered, "a ready man with a vast empty past and no future."

Living in a timeless ritual of work and debauch, he is aware initially of what we as readers also recognise in him--qualities of courage and continuity. It is he after all who uncomplainingly steers the ship through the storm and who acts as an implied reproof to any possible weakness on the part of the rest of the crew. Yet this feat, this sign of his heroism, is also the means by which his mortality and temporality are brought home to him. Walking into the forecastle after the storm, he collapses and mutters that he is getting old. The narrator comments, "And like a man bound treacherously while he sleeps, he woke up fettered by the long chain of years. He had to take up at once the burden of his existence, and found it almost too heavy for his strength" (p. 99). By his collapse he surely suggests what Conrad ruefully implies throughout the story: the loss of a harsh but courageous ethic and its replacement by a modern and sentimental one. Singleton does of course recover. Later in the novel, during the confused debate among the sailors, he is described as "a statue of heroic size" (p. 129). But the display of a flaw in him foreshadows

his diminution at the end of the novel into the "disgusting old brute" that the pay clerk sees (p. 169).

The Youth volume, put together to capitalise upon the success of The Nigger, shows a continuing concern with time, at least as an overall structuring principle of literature. The three novellas in the volume-- "Youth," "Heart of Darkness" and "The End of the Tether"--seem to represent three ages of man. The major problems faced by the protagonists are characteristic of their three stages of development: the young Marlow of "Youth" must respond to or deal with mainly physical problems (indeed, he actually compounds those problems towards the end of the story by deliberately losing touch with the captain's boat); the mature Marlow of "Heart of Darkness" must respond to physical, moral, and psychological difficulties --and here the physical problems (rescuing the steamer, making his way up river) are clearly the least of his difficulties; the aging Captain Whalley of "The End of the Tether" must face the physical difficulties of his blindness, the moral problem of his guilt, and the psychological problems of dealing with Massy. While the encounter with the "flabby devil" of the Congo may be a physically and morally exhausting experience for its protagonist, at least the Marlow of that story has a sense of some sort of psychological drama being played out of which he is an essential part. The dominant mood of "The End of the Tether" is that of a game being played for much smaller financial and psychological stakes: Whalley's old friend Elliot retreats quickly from him lest he be asked for a loan; Massy schemes to get another two hundred dollars out of Whalley; Sterne tries to curry favour with Massy and Van Wyck; eventually Massy wrecks the ship for the insurance money. At every turn Whalley is faced with vindictiveness and pettiness: the correlative to his increasing visual limitation is a world lacking in richness and range.

Although the narrator of "Youth" makes great play with apostrophes to time and experience and "The End of the Tether" is intermittently concerned with the "progress" from sail to steam in the East, of the three stories only "Heart of Darkness" is clearly designed to explore themes of man's relationship to time and to make use of the fictional order of time for dramatic purposes. Indeed, Conrad seems to have gone out of his way in "Heart of Darkness" to suggest his areas of concern in the opening section.

The novella opens with Marlow and a group of friends on board a cruising yawl near the mouth of the Thames. The two images which dominate the scene are the setting sun ("the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by a touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men") and the river ("The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks").¹¹ The mention of the river provokes the anonymous narrator into fantasizing about the variety of men who have sailed from the river through the ages, "hunters for gold or pursuers of fame."

These two images present opposing or alternate visions of time and history: one is an image of death and of the running down of the world; the other is an image of continuity, courage, and endurance. Various commentators have recognised that the description of the explorers and buccaneers who set out from the Thames sets the key signature of the rest of the story.¹² The importance of the sun image, however, has not generally been noted, although Ian Watt has pointed out that the "cold sun" concept reflects both scientific discoveries about the probable end of the universe (reflected in H.G. Wells's The Time Machine) and also the characteristically late-Victorian fear that civilisation might prove a very transient thing.¹³

Marlow notes, "Light came out of this river...a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker—may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling" (p. 49).¹⁴

As the opening section of "Heart of Darkness" develops, Marlow expands on the idea of the "darkness" which existed before the "light" of civilization. Some of those who had to face the darkness were the early Roman soldiers and colonists ("They were men enough to face the darkness") who came to Britain. Their situation quite clearly acts for him as a parallel to his own experience in the Congo, and it allows him to approach that experience indirectly by talking about the river of his adventure even before he mentions where it is: "It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me—and into my thoughts" (p. 51).

The relationship between the extent of Marlow's navigation and the depth of his experience makes an equation which is to function throughout the rest of the story. The equation is the traditional one, Journey=Spiritual Quest, and when Marlow describes for his listeners the imaginary young Roman ("Land in a swamp, march through the woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed all around him") his interest in historical recurrence has more to do with the spiritual challenge always faced by civilized men confronting the unknown than it does with the similar physical miseries which both Marlow and his precursor must face.

Despite the power of the opening images of the story, Marlow's quest turns out to have little to do with principles either of entropy or continuity. Admittedly, a principle of continuity—in a general moral sense rather than a temporal one—is asserted by his eventual espousal of the values of work rather than those of the rapacious ivory traders. The stress

laid on the torn and restitched book left behind by the young Russian (it is, after all, a book about seamanship) suggests the passing on of professional ideas from generation to generation. At the same time the image of Brussels as a near-necropolis, with its seedy clerk, "slightly cracked" doctor, and deathly-hued secretaries suggests a Europe at the end of its tether, an image reinforced by the dubious symbols of colonial exploitation, a Europe morally, if not physically, entropic.¹⁵

But it is the journey up-river itself—frequently-delayed—which is the central fact in Marlow's experience and the sign of Conrad's awareness of time as a living medium. Most of the novels of this period in which time plays a major role make use of the idea of futurity. There are the more-or-less utopias, Jefferies' After London (1884), Hudson's A Crystal Age (1887) and Morris's News from Nowhere (1890); there is also Wells's The Time Machine (1895), which offers a series of glimpses of later and later stages in the world's development. What man develops into may not be entirely impressive, but the evolutionary theme which touches most of these books contains primarily a curiosity about how man will develop.¹⁶

Conrad chooses the opposite route for his exploration into what man is and can become. He sends Marlow backwards in time, spiritually at least. Marlow himself comments, "Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings" (pp. 92-93). Later he adds, "We were wanderers on prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet" (p. 95). Conrad is clearly fascinated that a point exists on the earth at which the imperatives of evolution have been denied.

More than the terrain itself, it is its human inhabitants who seem in their own reality to challenge the validity of those "moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner,

a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal" (p. 114). Even more than their primitiveness, what impresses Marlow is the reflection of his own spiritual reality in their world, the "thought of [his] remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar" (p. 96). What the natives on the banks of the river are screaming is, however, incomprehensible to him and the "pilgrims" because "we were too far gone and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign--and no memories" (p. 96). The phrase "too far gone" suggests a slight wistfulness on Marlow's part about the evolutionary reality which has shifted the white men off the banks and away from the camp fires on to the boat. The night of early humanity has given way to the full daylight of civilisation.

Or has it? Despite the barriers of culture and language, Marlow is forced to realise, "if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you--you so remote from the night of first ages--could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything--because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage--who can tell?--but truth--truth stripped of its cloak of time" (pp. 96-97).

This gradual admission of a continuity of experience which should have been destroyed by evolutionary distance is a characteristic of the late nineteenth and of the twentieth century.¹⁷ In recognising that "the mind of man is capable of anything--because everything is in it," Conrad rejects a mechanical Darwinism in favour of a prefiguration of the psychological assumptions of the twentieth century. Marlow's reaction seems to anticipate--in general terms at least--Jung's theory of the collective

unconscious. Jung himself uses a Darwinian metaphor to justify his own essentially anti-Darwinian insights:

Just as the human body represents a whole museum of organs, each with a long evolutionary history behind it, so we should expect to find that the mind is organised in a similar way. . . . [The] immensely old psyche forms the basis of mind, just as much as the structure of our body is based upon the general anatomical pattern of the mammal. The trained eye of the anatomist or biologist finds many traces of this original pattern in our bodies. The experienced investigator of the mind can similarly see the analogies between the dream pictures of modern man and the products of the primitive mind, its "collective images," and its mythological motifs.¹⁸

But Marlow's recognition of the "kinship" between himself and the natives is more than an academic abstraction. The journey up-river with its series of trials and perils and the eventual penetration to what Marlow has grumpily described as Kurtz's fairy-tale castle is a powerful example of the night-sea journey, one of the mythological motifs which Jung mentions. As readers we vicariously suffer through Marlow's temptation and resistance, and we follow his return to civilisation with his hard-won knowledge of himself. In travelling to what he earlier describes as "the furthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience" Marlow goes as far as it is possible for him to go in exploring not only the river but also the reaches of his own mind—including those areas which according to the assumptions of evolution should have become fossilised. In fact, as he shows, those areas are not fossilised but exist in suspension in the phylogenetic unconscious awaiting the stimulus to provoke them into life.

Because "Heart of Darkness" is so satisfying as a story, it gives the impression at first of being technically artless. In fact, though, the time shifts within the tale are essential parts of its experience and reinforce the reading I have been suggesting. My stress on Marlow's experience rather than Kurtz's is fairly typical of modern readers; after all, the actual

scenes involving Kurtz take up only a small percentage of the text. At the same time the tale is set up in detective story fashion with Marlow gradually penetrating closer to the source of and answer to the mystery, and early readers generally responded to Conrad's stress upon the "ineffable" quality of Kurtz's experience.¹⁹

To deflate the mystery, however, Conrad provides a series of—to coin a term—flash-forwards. There is the initial glimpse, even before Marlow crosses the channel, of the fate of Fresleven (pp. 53-54), his predecessor (literally); there is also the much more complex shift forward beginning on page 113 in which Marlow, after his helmsman's death, attempts to define Kurtz's uniqueness ("The man presented himself as a voice."). The frame narrator briefly reminds us of the scene on board the yawl and of Marlow's audience, and then returns to Marlow's account of his lie to Kurtz's Intended and finally back again to Kurtz, his character, and his writings.

There are two major effects of these temporal shifts. One is in some measure to deflate the mystery of Kurtz since he is already pinned down by Marlow's analysis before we actually meet him. This also has the effect of shifting attention from Kurtz himself to the intricacies of the controlling voice which is gradually and subtly revealing him to us. The second effect is to encourage us as readers to look for principles of historical and geographical recurrence. In being repeatedly reminded of the listeners on the boat, we are never allowed to forget that the tale Marlow is telling is not an exercise in the exotic but something which develops out of Conrad's initial vision of the peaceful late-nineteenth-century Thames. Although Conrad certainly makes effective use of themes relating to his protagonists' experience of time in others of the early novels, it is only in "Heart of Darkness" that the time theme produces a really urgent exploration of cultural and individual assumptions.

NOTES

¹See the account in Jocelyn Baines, Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography (1960; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1971), pp. 132-34.

²As Baines points out (p. 178), Conrad tended to exaggerate his lack of concern for artistic form. By most standards he was well read, and in Polish, French, and German as well as English. As the son of a literary father he would have had some experience of the intensity of literary commitment even before the beginning of his own career as a writer.

³W. B. Stein, "Almayer's Folly: The Terror of Time," Conradiana, I (1977), 27-34.

⁴Joseph Conrad, Almayer's Folly, Vol. XI of The Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 3. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

⁵Joseph Conrad, An Outcast of the Islands, Vol. XIV of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 11. All further references will be to this edition and will be acknowledged by page numbers in parentheses.

⁶Lingard has managed to keep the trade with the settlement to himself by avoiding telling others of its whereabouts. Since Willems knows the configuration of the river, he can guide Abdulla past the shoals. There are, perhaps, parallels between this situation and Satan's penetration of Eden in Paradise Lost.

⁷Paul Wiley, Conrad's Measure of Man (1954; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. 40, recognises the Edenic parody but regards the Arabs as the Satanic horde.

⁸Higdon, p. 95.

⁹Joseph Conrad, The Nigger of the "Narcissus", Vol. XXIII of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 30. All further references will be to this edition and will be acknowledged by page numbers in parentheses.

¹⁰Donald J. Torchiana, "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': Myth, Mirror, and Metropolis," Wascan Review, 2 (1967), 29-41; rpt. in The Nigger of the "Narcissus", ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 275-87.

¹¹Joseph Conrad, "Youth," "Heart of Darkness," The End of the Tether," Vol XXI of The Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 46. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

¹²See for example Donald R. Benson, "Heart of Darkness: The Grounds of Civilization in an Alien Universe," TSLI, VII (Winter, 1966), 339-47; rpt. in Heart of Darkness, rev. ed., ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 210-11.

¹³Ian Watt, "Heart of Darkness and Nineteenth-Century Thought," Partisan Review, XLV (1978), 109-13.

¹⁴An example of this type of attitude can be seen in Richard Jefferies' After London (1885) in which after some unnamed catastrophe the natural world obliterates most evidence of civilization.

¹⁵The parallels between "Heart of Darkness" and the colonialism theme in Conrad and Ford's The Inheritors (1901) have been widely noted. The Inheritors is generally assumed to be a satire on King Leopold of Belgium (the Duc de Mersch) and his exploitation of the Congo (Greenland). See Baines pp. 290-92, for Conrad's attitude to this work.

¹⁶One contemporary who wrote of a fictional journey in the opposite direction was Mark Twain. His A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court (1889) is a dual-edged satire on "Merrie England" and on modern reliance on technology. Justin Kaplan, in his introduction to the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971) argues, however, that Twain's book like the futuristic romances was based on "the vistas of time opened up by evolutionary thought" (p. 15).

¹⁷Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Beach of Falesá" (1893) deals with an atavistic reversal somewhat similar to Kurtz's. Ian Watt in Conrad in the Nineteenth Century (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), p. 43, also suggests a similarity between the plot of Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888) and "Heart of Darkness." Neither story, however, has the psychological intensity of Conrad's.

¹⁸Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in Man and His Symbols, ed. Carl Jung and M.-L. von Franz (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 67.

¹⁹See for example Edward Garnett's review of the book, reprinted in Norman Sherry, ed., Joseph Conrad: The Critical Heritage (London, Routledge, 1973), pp. 131-33.

Chapter Two

LORD JIM

The five years after the publication of Almayer's Folly were immensely productive ones for Conrad. Apart from Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, The Nigger of the "Narcissus", and the Youth volume, he also published a volume of short stories, Tales of Unrest (1896), and collaborated with Ford Madox Ford on The Inheritors (1901) and Romance, which was not finished until 1903.¹ Lord Jim, which he may have begun as early as 1896 and which was eventually published in Blackwood's magazine between 1899 and 1901, was initially intended (however unrealistic this expectation may now seem) as a short story.² The disparity between Conrad's initial conception of it and its eventual length and scope suggest something of his later difficulties in controlling the shape of his fiction, and also perhaps its malleability to different critical responses. These responses are potentially endless: is Lord Jim triggered by Conrad's guilt at leaving his homeland, or is Jim an "existentialist" hero? should our stress be upon Marlow's moral education rather than Jim's lack of it? isn't the important thing the effect of the narrative form on the reader's sensibilities or that perennial modern theme, the difficulty inherent in communication itself? and what about the impressionistic technique of the novel?³

Many of the questions about theme and technique raised by a reading of Lord Jim may be answered by a recognition of the central importance of Conrad's use of time. Although most critics of the novel have recognised the subtlety of Conrad's use of narrative time and elaborate schemes have

been produced to demonstrate the difference between the "real" order of events and their narrative order, little attempt has been made to relate Conrad's distortion of the chronological order of events to the thematic substance of the novel or to recognise in the characters' attitudes to time an essential part of that thematic substance.⁴

The character whose attitudes matter most is of course Jim himself who carries to an extreme the general assumption of Western men that time is a linear process.⁵ Jim does not formulate his attitudes in formal philosophical terms, but in his actions and through his muttered or breathless responses to Marlow's questions he suggests that disagreeable events can be left behind and that the future holds the possibility of a new beginning, a "second chance," to make up for the opportunity for heroism which he has bungled. Unfortunately for him, events in the world of the novel tend to follow a cyclical (or at least repetitive) pattern. Conrad seems to accept a basic experiential thesis: that time contains only a limited number of permutations and that similar patterns of events will therefore recur in everyone's life. In one sense of course Jim is right: second chances do occur, but there is no guarantee that one is bound to succeed at this second attempt.

Although Jim consciously looks towards the future for some sort of redemption, his actions and appearance suggest that he really lives in a kind of perpetual present. His moral evasions about the moment of his failure leave him trapped in the boyish self which was unable to react to a crisis. Although Jim has similarities with others of Conrad's dreamers (notably the forward directed Almayer), he is distinctly the most subtle character Conrad has yet created. In order to reflect the nature of Jim's



evasions, Conrad develops the time-shift, used effectively but occasionally in his earlier novels into a technique the fluidity of which almost defies analysis.⁶ At the same time, the discontinuities of the narrative form act as a subtle counterpoint to the process of discovery of Jim's story undertaken by Marlow.

The Patna episode, as Conrad himself admitted, was the central event around which the novel was created.⁷ It is central not only in the order of composition but in that its resonances become the impelling force behind Jim's actions throughout the remainder of the novel. Even more, it is central to the ethical and temporal structures of Lord Jim since it suggests what man can expect of the process of living in time and how he must react towards time. The reader's judgement of the ethical possibilities of the situation must affect his reading of the novel as a whole as well as his response to Jim's complaint that the event was not quite "fair". Let us take a closer look at this central incident of the novel.

Marlow remarks in "Youth" (with which Conrad had originally intended Lord Jim to be published) that "there are voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence,"⁸ a symbolic principle which he exploited in half a dozen novels and short stories beginning with The Nigger of the "Narcissus". The voyage of the Patna seems also to illustrate this principle, and the "symbol of existence" it contains is, initially at least, a reassuring one. The rhythm of life at sea, regular and natural, is imposed upon that larger rhythm of life which is represented by the journey of the pilgrims to Mecca; mechanical and diurnal aspects of time seem to harmonise with those of spiritual and cosmic time: "Every morning the sun, as if keeping pace in his revolutions with the progress of the pilgrimage emerged with a silent burst of light exactly at the same distance astern of the ship, caught up

with her at noon, pouring the concentrated fire of his rays on the pious purposes of the men, glided past on his descent, and sank mysteriously into the sea, evening after evening, preserving the same distance ahead of her advancing bows" (p. 16). The temporal rhythm of the Patna's voyage becomes a measure of progress in both material and spiritual senses, and the turning of the propeller and the sound of the patent log as it rings "a single tinkling stroke for every mile traversed on an errand of faith" (p. 19) are man-made correlatives to the spiritual progress. Perhaps, however, the very perfection of this harmonious progress (the only intrusive element is the vulgarity of the white crew) should have a premonitory effect, acting to arouse the reader's suspicions. Conrad, furthermore, rather pricks the bubble by ironically contrasting the calm of the voyage and the sense of bravado it arouses in Jim: "'How steady she goes,' thought Jim with wonder, with something like gratitude for this high peace of sea and sky. At such times his thoughts would be full of valorous deeds: he loved these dreams and the success of his imaginary achievements. They were the best parts of his life" (p. 20). On a second or later reading of the novel, one tends to remember why Jim is on the bridge dreaming valorous dreams. He has not undertaken the voyage through any desire to be part of a harmoniously voyaging human community; on the contrary, his shipping as mate is the response to a process of events which begins with his being lamed on board his last ship and enjoying the feeling of being out of the gale (p. 11). Jim is subsequently attracted towards, and finally succumbs to "the eternal peace of Eastern sky and sea" with its promise of "short passages, good deck-chairs, large native crews, and the distinction of being white" (p. 13). Indeed, for a man full of brave dreams, Jim seems to have chosen to stay in the place where they are least likely to be realised.

The progress of the ship, while appearing to symbolise a perfected harmony between man, his moral aims, and the mechanical tools he uses, involves a kind of cosmic irony since it is progress towards an event which will underline the wry juxtaposition of the ship on a holy voyage and the man fleeing from engagement with life: an event, furthermore, which acts as a test of the dreams induced by peace. The holing of the ship is described from the point of view of the crew as a disruption of rhythms which they themselves have come to regard in supra-personal, almost cosmic, terms. "Had the earth been checked in her course?" the omniscient narrator asks, speaking for them. In experiential rather than absolute terms that is precisely what has happened: the normal diurnal movement of their little world has been halted and a kind of temporal interregnum results, precisely defined ("twenty-seven minutes by the watch"), in which the quality of each of their lives is tested.

In this test, the subjective perspective of the white officers—and most of all of Jim—is challenged by the more objective, or at least unsympathetic, vision of the rest of the world. By the standards of this world nothing can outweigh Jim's lack of resolve at the crucial moment, a moment which is, to Jim, somehow outside the normal continuum of structured and predictable events. Jim's habit of regarding this point in time as somehow not quite real and of complaining that the test he has undergone is less than fair is symptomatic of basic failure of comprehension. However much one may sympathise with Jim's private misery, surely the reasonable attitude is Marlow's. When Jim complains that "there was not the thickness of a sheet of paper between the rights and wrongs of this affair" he answers: "How much more did you want?" (p. 130). Marlow realises that real problems (as opposed to grandiose dreams) are always "unfair"; Jim avoids this truth by temporally displacing the Patna event, placing it

in an order of reality which can never recur: "These things happen only once to a man" (p. 91).

Jim's response to the puzzling dichotomy between his personal experience and the "fact" of the event as defined in terms of log books and official reports is to attempt to avoid the fact altogether. One stratagem involves denying that the experience is completely real, as has already been suggested, claiming that he has been "tricked" (p. 95). A second stratagem is shown in his readiness to act with equanimity after the testing event: Jim not only shows physical courage of a kind by sitting in the life-boat clutching the tiller for six hours but acts with moral courage in facing the tribunal. Unlike his colleagues he refuses to run away, be bribed away, or fall sick; he even attempts to turn passive courage into a kind of triumph by insisting that "They all got out of it one way or another, but it wouldn't do for me" (p. 79). A third stratagem is involved in his attempt to break the hold of the experience by spelling it out in its dimensions of space and time: "The facts that those men were so eager to know had been visible, tangible, open to the senses, occupying their place in space and time, requiring for their existence a fourteen-hundred-ton steamer and twenty-seven minutes by the watch; they made a whole that had features, shades of expression, a complicated aspect that could be remembered by the eye, and something else besides" (pp. 30-31). For Jim the process of definition is simply a means of moving beyond definition to the "something else besides"--the personal and unique element in the experience, that mysterious something which will, he hopes, justify his leap from the ship. Yet his very exactitude in attempting to placate the lovers of facts and discover the "something else besides" is his undoing: "He wanted to go on talking for truth's sake, perhaps for his own sake also; and while his utterance was deliberate, his mind positively

flew round and round the serried circle of facts that had surged up all about him to cut him off from the rest of his kind" (p. 31). Rather than breaking the facts' hold upon him, his appearance before the court only strengthens them. A final stratagem is to induce forgetfulness of the actual moment of his leap. When he describes it to Marlow his words are, "I had jumped . . . it seems" and he then claims, "I knew nothing about it till I looked up" (p. 111). His forgetfulness about the climactic moment of the affair contrasts fairly obviously with his ability to remember everything else in great and suffocating detail.

A fact may reasonably be defined as an interaction between, or conjunction of, space and time. It is not, therefore, surprising to discover that the attitudes which characters take to facts in this novel are almost always a guide to their responses to time. Jim's failure in the face of facts, his ability to delude himself, has been generally recognised as contrasting with the readiness of the unexceptional (and unromantic) French lieutenant to define the world he inhabits by facts. He explains stolidly how the nature of the damage to the ship's hull demanded that it be taken in tow stern foremost; how the dangerous tow lasted thirty hours and necessitated the presence of two quartermasters with axes at the ready; how precisely twenty-five minutes were taken to unload the ship (his phrase, "watch in hand," echoes the court of enquiry's "twenty-seven minutes by the watch"); and how his ship left two hours later. The most regrettable fact about the whole affair was that he did not have his normal glass of wine with meals while in charge of the derelict (pp. 139-42).

This acceptance of facts sets up the basic ethical polarity of the novel: Jim whose denial of facts suggests an avoidance also of time is placed in schematic opposition to the lieutenant whose readiness to accept

definition by events leads us to suspect that he is also ready to accept the processes of time. The contrast is initially developed through the contrasting appearances of the two men. Unlike the youthful cleanly-dressed Jim, the lieutenant is middle-aged and (literally) scarred by life. While Jim is "in immaculate white from his head to his shoes" (p. 3), the lieutenant wears a creased uniform with tarnished shoulder-straps (p. 143). His clothes are those of a man who has had to work for a living in a world which does not sustain illusions.

The contrast is amplified by the lieutenant's casual remark, "How the time passes"—which may refer to the three years since the Patna incident or simply to the time he has spent talking to Marlow. Marlow recognizes that the remark is "commonplace" but claims that "its utterance coincided for me with a moment of vision." This epiphany ("one of those rare moments of awakening when we see, hear, understand, ever so much") involves a recognition of the nature of time. "Time had passed indeed: it had overtaken him and gone ahead. It had left him hopelessly behind with a few poor gifts; the iron-grey hair, the heavy fatigue of the tanned face, . . . one of those steady, reliable men who are the raw material of great reputations, one of those uncounted lives that are buried without drums and trumpets under the foundations of monumental successes" (pp. 143-44). Marlow's vision is far from cheerful: the time which has overtaken the foreign officer has been cruel in its workings. Jim, on the other hand, has seemingly managed to avoid time; but his avoidance results from a self-centred denial of the weight of experience. While the lieutenant is apparently bowed and betrayed by time, his life has a tangible value: the value of one who, to use another phrase of Marlow's has "fought in the ranks." Jim's "whiteness" meanwhile begins to seem like that of a sepulchre.

Jim's avoidance of facts, his unreadiness to be defined by space and time, results, furthermore, in a lack of spiritual growth and development which is symbolised by the lack of change in his appearance. Marlow repeatedly notes that his protégé never seems to grow any older. On the occasion of their first lengthy conversation he is described as having "blue, boyish eyes" and "a young face" (p. 78). Marlow's friend, the man to whom he sends Jim for work, wonders that "Jim kept his freshness in the climate" (p. 187). Even after several years of wandering from job to frustrating job, it is still Jim's boyishness which affects Marlow: Jim, after his interview with Stein, is described as like "a youngster on the eve of a long holiday with a prospect of delightful scrapes" (p. 234). Nor does the fight for survival in Patusan take away his exuberance. Marlow describes him as he saw him last: "He was like a figure set up on a pedestal, to represent in his persistent youth the power, and perhaps the virtues, of races that never grow old, that have emerged from the gloom" (p. 265). A few pages later Marlow remarks again "it's extraordinary how very few signs of wear he showed" (p. 269). The verbal seal is set upon Jim's eternal youth by Jewel's habitual address to him--"Boy!"

At first reading, Jim's youth may seem to be a sign of his heroic qualities: avoidance of aging is traditionally a gift of the gods. Indeed, the visual reference involved in Marlow's comparison of Jim to "a figure set up on a pedestal" is (presumably) that of a Greek statue of an athlete, timeless and incorruptible in its beauty and designed not to represent ordinary humanity, but a paradigm of perfected humanity. Gifts of the gods have a habit of back-firing, however, and Jim's eternal youth precludes moral development. More mundanely, Jim's immaculate "monumental" quality, as has already been suggested, hides a subtle interior corruption.⁹ The first time he sees Jim, Marlow complains that he had "no business to look so sound" (p. 40).

LEAF 49 OMITTED IN PAGE NUMBERING.

Marlow's opinion admittedly varies: at times he is prepared to admit that Jim is of the right sort" (p. 78) but he eventually has to avert his eyes from the "subtle unsoundness of the man" (p. 89). The unsoundness is of a man who on the simplest level will not face facts, preferring instead a never-never land existence—which he to some degree finds in Patusan.

The attempt to be "boy eternal" is underlined symbolically by the direction of Jim's wanderings. When the omniscient narrator describes Jim in the opening paragraphs of the novel it is as a "seaman in exile from the sea" who "retreated in good order towards the rising sun" (pp. 4-5). The direction of Jim's movement is not casually chosen: indeed, John Gordan suggests that Conrad transferred the scene of the enquiry into the desertion of the Jeddah (upon which the Patna story was based) from Singapore to Bombay in order to increase the dramatic extent of Jim's retreat.¹⁰ Deliberately or otherwise, Jim is moving as far away as possible from the home to which he can never return. But he is also moving, even less consciously perhaps, towards the apparent source of time itself in an attempt to turn back or at least halt the clock and avoid the responsibility of continued growth through temporal experience. Tony Tanner suggests a psychological dimension to Jim's movements, his flight is "towards the rising sun, a regressive progress, an effort to bury himself in that primordial peace which precedes birth and succeeds death."¹¹ Tanner may be right; but it is not necessary to interpret Jim's behaviour in neo-Freudian terms in order to understand it. It is not death and dissolution which Jim desires so much as a release from the painful facts of chronology: not primordial peace, but immediate release from the temporal responsibilities of adulthood.

Needless to say, the contrast between Jim and the French lieutenant is

not simply a question of one representing "right" and the other "wrong". Marlow, who seems to represent ordinary humanity--worthy, but aware of its weaknesses--looks a little wryly at both men, being irritated by Jim's vapourings but also by the limitations of sensibility of the Frenchman who, despite his ready physical courage, lacks the subtler moral courage that would allow him to consider the possibility of loss of honour. He shrinks away from Marlow's suggestion that he take a lenient view of Jim's cowardice like a Victorian maiden confronted by an indecent word, and, Marlow notes, "the blight of futility...had fallen upon our conversation" (p. 148). To describe Jim and the French lieutenant as the ethical poles of the novel is then to recognise (as I think Conrad means us to) the necessity of finding a point of balance somewhere between these two powerful pulls--Romantic self-delusion and pragmatic limitation of vision.¹²

The desire to frustrate or deny time (and therefore the facts which are a condition of temporal process) which we have seen expressed in Jim's continuing youth and the direction of his flight is finally complemented by Stein's sending him to Patusan which is, it seems, outside normal chronological processes altogether. Jim leaves the continuum of "ordinary" time, the continuum in which he can be blamed for failure, by being sent "outside the sphere" of normal human activity to "a star of the fifth magnitude," believing that he can "shrug off his earthly failings" and start anew (p. 218). Stein's belief about the rightness of what he is doing is echoed by Jim's own sense that he is disencumbering himself of past failure: "I feel as if nothing could touch me. Why! this is luck from the word Go. I wouldn't spoil such a magnificent chance" (p. 241). Marlow himself comments in recognition of Patusan's separation from the normal world: "The stream of civilisation...branches east and south-east,

leaving...an insignificant and crumbling islet between the two branches of a mighty devouring stream" (p. 226). The repeated stream image suggests that it is not so much civilisation (for which a stream is an awkward image) which has passed Patusan by but time itself, traditionally represented in Western thought and literature by a flow, generally of water.¹³

The a-temporal quality of Patusan has been recognised, obliquely at least, by several of Conrad's critics. Elliot B. Gose, in an archetypalist reading of the novel, claims that Jim leaves the normal chronologically-ordered world and retreats into the "collective unconscious" of Patusan. Tony Tanner demonstrates that the ship-master's misuse of language ("ascend" to Patusan; "situated internally") provides hints about the unreal or psychologically timeless quality of the place. C. B. Cox notes that the Patusan section of the novel shows a stylistic change: Conrad moves away from the ironic and realistic modes of the first half of the novel to experiment with epic, romance, and tragedy, as if this were a world bound by rules less rigid than those of the outside.¹⁴

While there undoubtedly is a modification in the tone of the second half of the novel which has produced these critical responses, part of the difficulty in evaluating this tonal shift is that so much of our information comes from Jim himself. Indeed part of the point of this section seems to be to demonstrate Jim's ability to transform facts imaginatively. Recognising this, Marlow notes: "there [in Patusan] was a totally new set of conditions for his imaginative faculty to work upon" (p. 218). At the same time Marlow's own description of the country when he pays Jim a visit provides substantial reinforcement for the latter's vision of events. It is important to remember that, whatever the symbolic possibilities of Patusan, on the most immediate level Conrad is demonstrating

the genuine difference between the timeless world of the primitive and the chronologically-ordered world of civilised man—a difference already hinted at in Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands.

To recognise this difference is not of course to presume that the primitive scheme of values is superior. Marlow's comments at the conclusion of his visit to Jim once more suggest that he has drifted into a world of radically different ethical and spiritual processes; but his version of the contrast between the two worlds is rather less sanguine than Jim's. He describes Patusan as "a picture created by fancy on a canvas," a place "with its life arrested," a world with "the ambitions, the hates, the hopes . . . suspended in their expression." He continues: "I had turned away from the picture and was going back to the world" (p. 330).¹⁵ Marlow's recognition that the pictorial quality of Patusan suggests only its suspended animation, its state of lifeless stasis, develops into a comparison of the village to an enchanted land: "But as to what I was leaving behind, I cannot imagine any alteration. The immense and magnanimous Doramin and his little motherly witch of a wife...Tunju Allang, wizened and greatly perplexed; Dain Waris, intelligent and brave...Tamb' Itam, surly and faithful...They exist as if under an enchanter's wand. But the figure round which all these are grouped—that one lives, and I am not certain of him. No magician's wand can immobilise him under my eyes. He is one of us" (pp. 331-32). On the most literal level Marlow is recognising a simple psychological fact: that memory deals in static images. Yet his separation of Jim from the static background of the picture suggests his realisation of the symbolic quality of the scenario he has set up and his recognition that Jim does not quite fit in.

This fairly explicit suggestion that Jim has wandered by chance into

a fairy-tale world can be supported by a schematic reading of his life there. The "picture" contains most of the familiar motifs. Stein is the wise guide, or the guardian of the gate to this hidden land. He gives Jim a token (the ring) which will introduce him to the "good" king Doramin, to ensure whose throne he must defeat the "bad" king (Sherif Ali) and assert his dominance over a third king, Rajah Allang. Waiting for Jim as a reward is Jewel, watched over by a corrupt and (literally!) crooked stepfather—and so on. Jim's own heroic status is continually stressed: the natives rely on him, tell exaggerated tales of his deeds, and express implicit faith in his judgements. As Jim himself had said on first hearing of Patusan, "It's like something you read of in books" (pp. 233-34).

The symbolic pattern is fairly clear; what is not immediately clear is the attitude Conrad has towards Jim's new-found heroic status. Elliot Gose sees the archetypal pattern of heroic growth in the Patusan section and claims that "the Patusan section is informed by the possibility that one man's imagination can determine his fate."¹⁶ I disagree. The separation of this world is as illusory, for Jim at least, as his sense of idyllic order on board the Patna. Patusan itself may be frozen into a kind of immobility outside time, but, as Marlow points out, the "magician's wand" cannot immobilise Jim, cannot turn him into an integral part of this world. If Patusan, to change the metaphoric stress, is a kind of Eden, Jim himself is not a new Adam, but one already fallen, one who like Nostromo has "tasted the dust and ashes of the fruit of life".

Not only does Jim not "fit in" to this world, but he is a hero who ironically brings disaster on the simple people he is trying to protect. Gentleman Brown's ambitions are initially fairly modest: he expects food and perhaps money from the village. It is only when he realises the moral

authority which Jim has achieved and the economic order which is the result of his protection that the more demonic element of his ambition is brought out and that his determination to destroy Jim finds vent in the gratuitous murder of Dain Waris. Jim, fleeing from definition by Western ethical order, has interfered in the history of an Eastern society; describing how he has destroyed the old system of trade by extortion he remarks, "I've changed all that" (p. 333). His well-meant reforms recoil upon his own head because it is the very trust which the people have developed in Jim's infallibility which makes them vulnerable to Brown.

Not only is Jim's heroic status ironic in its results, but his vision of Patusan as a world outside time is misleading. Another test comes, another gap in the daily round, to remind him that even "stars of the fifth magnitude" are affected by time. The nature of this test, although it is presented in more subtle terms than the test of his courage on the Patna, also involves the possibility of betraying a dependent community. Jim's inability to face the moral menace represented by Brown is in practical terms even more culpable than his earlier failure to face his responsibilities as a seaman. Both the Patna episode and Jim's response to Brown are put in better perspective by remembering that the desertion from the ship was not the first but the second of Jim's failures of nerve. The first such incident involved his inability to reach the training ship cutter in time to help in the rescue of two men thrown overboard in a collision. Conrad is, it seems, deliberately ambiguous about the reasons for this. There is little direct suggestion of fear; rather Jim seems to fall prey to a kind of inertia as a reaction to the expenditure of energy around him: "The air was full of flying water. There was a fierce purpose in the gale, a furious earnestness in the screech of the wind, in the brutal

tumult of earth and sky, that seemed directed at him and made him hold his breath in awe. He stood still. It seemed to him he was whirled about" (p. 7). Jim's actions on board the Patna have a similar quality of inertia. Conrad stresses that the thing which horrifies Jim is the confusion which will result from the sinking: "He was not afraid of death perhaps, but I'll tell you what, he was afraid of the emergency. His confounded imagination had evoked for him all the horrors of panic, the trampling rush, the pitiful screams, boats swamped" (p. 88). His dislike of the actuality of an emergency, the struggle and confusion, is complemented by a continuing belief in his own ability to perform well in the right kind of emergency. Talking to Marlow about the Patna incident he cries out: "Ah! what a chance missed! My God! what a chance missed!" (p. 83). He recognises that the opportunity to put into practice his heroic dreams has arisen but decides that he has been "taken unawares" or "tricked" (p. 95). Having decided that "these things [tricks of fate] happen only once to a man" (p. 91) he resolves to wait for "another chance" (p. 132). As he had earlier decided after the cutter incident that "he could affront greater perils. He would do so--better than anybody" (p. 8) so he now makes a forecast of his own future behaviour which is to ring ironically through the remainder of the novel: "Some day one's bound to come upon some sort of chance to get it all back again. Must!" (p. 179).

On the level of simple psychological realism the similarity between the two episodes is important since it stresses a basic continuity in Jim's character. He is not, as an innocent reading of the novel might suggest, a brave—or at least typical—young man taken unawares by a situation which would try anyone; he is an incurable Romantic, living continually in dreams of what might be or should be, promising himself that next time when the

real test comes he will be ready, but lacking the nerve to face those dreams when actualised in the present.

More importantly, for the purposes of this study, however, the similarity between the two episodes shows Jim's tendency to look to the future for redemption of his faults in some dramatic fashion rather than to the past for moral lessons. This is the point of Marlow's remark that he "made so much of his disgrace while it is the guilt alone that matters" (p. 177): despite the fact that Conrad claims in the "Introduction" (written later) that "no Latin temperament would have perceived anything morbid in the acute consciousness of lost honour" (p. ix), it is precisely Jim's failure to recognise that the guilt cannot be expiated in any melodramatic fashion which leaves him, despite the adventures which have (he feels) cleansed his disgrace, morally vulnerable because morally uncertain. This tendency to ignore the present in favour of a hypothetical future links Jim with the much cruder figure of Almayer, whose "dreams" are mainly financial.

The complaints about the fairness of the situation which we have seen Jim making in the two earlier failures must echo in the reader's mind as he encounters the third of Jim's testing situations. While the Gentleman Brown episode is in one sense a sudden emergency (Jim could not have expected it), it is one which leaves him reasonable time for thought and is thus more "on the square" than were the other two incidents. Despite the greater amount of time he has to work with, Jim still manages to make a foolhardy decision—or at least fails to take all necessary precautions. The pressure in this case is admittedly a more subtle one than he has met before, and it is not immediately obvious what the more courageous decision is: whether to kill the raiders or let them go on their way. Ultimately, however, it is not the difficulty of the decision which causes

Jim's defeat but Brown's ability to manipulate him in a manner which directly results from those patterns of psychological and moral stasis which we have already discovered.

Brown's status in the novel seems at first to be that of demonic antagonist to the heroic Jim. Conrad refers to his "satanic gift of finding out the best and weakest spots in his victims" (p. 385) and mentions that he called himself the "Scourge of God" (p. 370). Returning to the earlier symbolic reading of Patusan as a fairy land or new Eden, Brown becomes a tempter figure. The problem in this kind of interpretation is that the novel seems to develop into an allegory with Jim himself as a Christ-like or Adamic victim destined to fall before irresistible evil. It has already been demonstrated, however, that while Patusan may be in some sense unfallen, Jim himself is not: the scenario is ironic in its effects. What is more, if Jim's fall is inevitable--that is, if he is innocent of his own fate--the subtle moral probing of the first half of the novel becomes pointless. In fact, behind the black/white (or brown/white) allegorical opposition of the two men lies a degree of underlying similarity to which Brown appeals. Conrad is, I suspect, coming close to allegorical parody--a parody which is designed to represent not reality but Jim's simplistic vision of the world. It is of course Brown who recognises the potential similarity between the antagonists, not Jim.

While Brown remains on any reading of the novel a figure of "motiveless malignity", he is powerless without a vulnerable soul to work upon: he is, after all, trapped and outnumbered.¹⁷ Jim's soul is vulnerable for two reasons: in the first place, his failure in the earlier "tests" suggests an inability to advance morally, to use the lessons derived from facing one situation as a guide to future conduct; secondly, his refusal

to admit the truth of his failure suggests that he has a suppressed sense of guilt. Brown manages to strike at both of Jim's vulnerable spots. His appeal to him is couched in terms of a bluff frankness, and the choice he asks from Jim of "a clear road or a clear fight" (p. 338) appeals to the latter's sense of schoolboy chivalry. Brown's appeal to a similarity of experience (he chooses the example that in saving one's own life one does not care who else dies) leaves Jim defenceless. Unable to condemn his own past failures, he is also unable to condemn those of other men. In terms of the time symbolism of the novel, Jim's inability to deal with Brown results from that moral and psychological stasis which has affected his earlier actions.

Recognising this, we may see with Marlow "a sort of profound and terrifying logic" (p. 342) in the nature of Jim's punishment. In psychological terms, the logic involves the necessary results of a fixation upon past events; in moral terms, Jim's inability to face up to Brown is a logical result of his lack of personal growth since jumping from the Patna. But there are resonances in Marlow's phrase which take us beyond the question of the practical weaknesses in Jim's character. Here is the complete passage:

You must admit that it [the story of Jim's downfall] is romantic beyond the wildest dreams of his boyhood, and yet there is to my mind a sort of profound and terrifying logic to it, as if it were our imagination alone that could set loose upon us the might of an overwhelming destiny. The imprudence of our thoughts recoils upon our heads; who toys with the sword shall perish by the sword. This astounding adventure, of which the most astounding part is that it is true, comes on as an unavoidable consequence. Something of the sort had to happen...it has happened—and there is no disputing its logic. (p. 342)

Marlow seems to be suggesting here a general law of existence: that there is a correlation between what one can conceive of as happening and what

actually happens. Thus it is perhaps Jim's fondness for daydreams which brings him inexorably face to face with real opportunities for heroism—although it is this same fondness for dreams which leads him to conceive of actions in vague and heroic terms and thus makes it difficult for him to deal with unheroic actualities. In attempting to state a general principle, Marlow takes on an uncharacteristically hieratic tone, ironically misquoting the biblical warnings against living by the sword (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10)¹⁸ to suggest that Jim's self-betrayal through imagination is not even dignified enough to merit the term "live"; Jim can only "toy" with his destiny.

Marlow's attempt here to fumble his way towards the discovery of an underlying logical process behind the puzzling actualities of life is amplified by something he has said earlier in the novel. Before he knows of the final "logical" events of Jim's life, indeed at the time of his visit to Patusan when Jim's powers are at their height, Marlow has an interview with Jewel who will not believe him when he says that Jim is "not good enough" for the outside world; he then pauses in his recollections and tries to express to his listeners something of his belief that "Truth shall prevail." But the only law he can discover in human fate is the law not of Justice but of chance or fortune: "It is not Justice, the servant of men but accident, hazard, Fortune--the ally of patient Time--that holds an even and scrupulous balance" (p. 320).¹⁹ He then proceeds to consign Jim's fate to chance: "Well—let's leave it to chance, whose ally is Time, that cannot be hurried, and whose enemy is Death, that will not wait" (pp. 320-21). This passage has either been ignored or regarded simply as rhetorical filler by many of the novel's critics. Douglas Hewitt, for instance, describes it as "vague and pretentious."²⁰ This response

is understandable since Marlow's words do not seem to have any immediate relation to specific events, and since what he says hardly fits with the image of Marlow as a pragmatic contrast to the romantic Jim.

It may seem odd to suggest a relationship between two passages, one of which asserts a law of logic, the other a law of chance. In fact both search for a moral order in events, and together they provide a structural critique of Jim's failure to respond positively to life. "Fortune" in the sense that Marlow uses it here is not merely the commonplace excuse which men give for their behaviour nor some kind of external force such as the Greek moira; it is instead a balancing force. It acts as a balance in our lives simply because through the apparently random workings of "patient Time" a given number of unpleasant events will affect everyone. Some men accept these random challenges (the French lieutenant, for example, or Stein); others, like Jim, fail to respond to their allotted quota of disaster. Furthermore (although Marlow does not say so here), everyone in the novel has been given a psychological flaw and so is vulnerable to certain specific threats. The French lieutenant will not face the possibility of cowardice in himself. Brierly (also physically brave) is so threatened by the moral anarchy represented by Jim's faithlessness that he commits suicide. Marlow's own weakness involves his tendency "to run up against men...with hidden plague spots...and loosens their tongues" at the sight of him (p. 34). In this sense the very existence of Jim's tale depends on fortune.

The logic of Jim's life, the cards which Fortune deals him, makes him, as has already been demonstrated, vulnerable to situations which are emotionally and morally confusing: situations in which there is a conflict between duty (to the standards of seamanship or the safety of the Patusan

villagers) and impulsive need (to secure his own safety or act generously towards an enemy). These are situations which recur through "patient time" but Jim (as has already been demonstrated) avoids recognising the fact, avoids recognising that life's real tests have precisely this random and confusing quality; instead he thinks of life as an extension of the "light holiday reading" (p. 5) which initially attracts him to the sea. This failure to recognise the recurrent pressures in his own life leads Jim to the insistence that if there is another test it will have to be fair this time, "on the square". In fact the random, but loosely cyclical mechanisms of time bring round a test which is much less "on the square" than the Patna episode since this time it is a test of moral rather than physical fibre. Jim's failure then is not one of simple moral or physical cowardice; nor is it solely a result of the self-sustaining emotional immaturity which has been discussed earlier. A further major strand in Jim's moral makeup is an intellectual failure: a refusal to recognise the "logic" of his own life (as, for example, Marlow has in his rueful recognition of his vulnerability to those who wish to unburthen themselves).²¹ It is worth remembering, incidentally, that Jim has shown himself to be a courageous human being in his behaviour in Patusan--fighting off assassins, storming Sherif Ali's stronghold, risking being poisoned once a month by Tunku Allang for the sake of his people. Heroism, unfortunately, is no defence against a culpable self-ignorance, and while Jim feels that he has made his own fate--"I feel that if I go straight, nothing can touch me" (p. 325)--he does not realise that his fate has been made for him.

Thus we may say that Jim's responses to the world are habitually symbolised through his attitude to time, an attitude which is uncertain,

confused, and inconsistent. He attempts on the one hand, consciously, to believe in a time which is linear, which will, therefore, allow him to escape from those events in his past which he does not wish to face. On the other hand, he senses that something has been lost and that "one's bound to come upon some kind of chance to get it all back again." In practice, however, despite his assumption that time is linear, Jim is not moving forward or living in time in any real fashion, since his desire to escape from an unpleasant past results in his emotional development being thwarted. In practice he inhabits an order of time which is stagnant. These three orders of time which affect Jim may be summarised as time sequential, time cyclical, and time static. Because of his intellectual and spiritual uncertainty, his attitudes to time are ambiguous, and he is unable to face up to the moral responsibilities imposed by any of these modes of time. If he were secure (we may suppose) in the traditional, linear, Western vision of time, he would be more capable of facing present problems since he would genuinely have left his past behind. If, on the other hand, his recognition of the cyclical nature of time went deeper, he would recognise a pattern in the painful incidents he encounters and would discover the shape of his destiny. If, finally, his static response to time as lived were the external sign of a determination to live in a creatively-realised present, he would be free of the guilts which pursue him to destruction. In practice, Jim is destroyed by "patient time" whose mechanisms he has refused to acknowledge.

Jim's misunderstanding of the temporal demands of his world, his repeated failure to live up to the demands which are made of him, is reflected in and complemented by the reader's experience of the novel--that is, by its narrative structure and strategy. The form of the novel is "imitative" in

that the structuring of events and experiences, in particular the manner in which they are chronologically distorted or displaced, produces a recognition in the reader of those facets of Jim's character which he has been brought to recognise through the more conventional means of dramatic interaction, symbolic projection, and discursive commentary.

Despite the reader's tendency, in retrospect, to regard Lord Jim as "Marlow's" narrative, his tale is contained within a third-person omniscient "frame" which introduces us to Jim and, incidentally, to Marlow. This frame narrative (there is not an identifiable narrator) helps to form the reader's initial attitudes towards and expectations of the central character. The anonymous voice of the frame narrator also sets the initial tone of the novel—an ironic tone in which Jim's pretensions and those of the world in general are undermined. The narrator comments, for example, after describing the various lures with which ship-chandlers catch their prey: "It is a beautiful and humane occupation" (p. 4). Jim's father is one who "possessed such certain knowledge of the Unknowable as makes for the righteousness of people in cottages without disturbing the ease of mind of those whom an unerring Providence enables to live in mansions" (p. 5). Jim himself, son of a parson, is described as developing a "vocation" for the sea. The word vocation punningly points up the contrast between the facility of Jim's motives in deciding to go to sea and the sense of being called to a religious life which is one of the original meanings of the word.²² This insistent irony is important since it sets the tone under which we are to see Jim's exploits. Jim himself may play-act; even Marlow is confounded and confused occasionally by Jim's mixture of truth and subtle dishonesty; but behind it all Conrad means us to feel pressure of the initial sardonic vision.

The ironic voice is, furthermore, a summarising voice. The narrator moves, in a couple of paragraphs, over the whole range of Jim's experience. He begins with a picture of Jim in typical stance and then goes on to describe the life of a water-clerk, Jim's progression from job to job, and his eventual status among the Malays as "Tuan Jim" (pp. 3-5). Already one's natural tendency to expect a process of gradual chronological exposition is being undermined; instead, Jim's life is opened up with deliberate cursoriness for our inspection, and the urbane narrative voice seems to invite us to join in the implied criticism of Jim's "exquisite sensibility" as it is displayed in his inability to hold down a job for any length of time. The initial tendency of the narrative is thus towards what might be called "spatial form":²³ that is, the various stages of Jim's life are perceived by the narrator not as a sequence but a two-dimensional pictorial composition in which different moments can be placed side by side. The effect of this remains to be considered, but this technique lasts for only a few paragraphs before the narrator moves back to Jim's youth and his decision to go to sea. From this point the narrative becomes conventionally sequential once more.

Yet we do not cease to be conscious of the narrator's control over narrated events. The first specific event in the novel (the saving of lives by the boys on the training ship) is narrated by an odd verbal trick which necessarily reminds us of this control. The narrator moves through a series of descriptions of Jim's behaviour in the imperfect tense beginning with: "On the lower deck in the babel of two hundred voices he would forget himself and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature". After a paragraph of descriptions of his imaginary adventures, the mood changes: "Something's up. Come along" Then the tense changes to

simple past ("He leaped to his feet.") and to a description of the rescue (pp. 6-9). This is, initially, puzzling and irritating to the reader. Indeed he may be forgiven for assuming that this commotion is part of one of Jim's day-dreams since there is no attempt to mediate between the general and typical scene of the dream and the individual moment of the event. In fact the awkward transition does serve a purpose: the reader's comfortable vicarious indulgence in Jim's life is interrupted suddenly and dismayingly by a change in narrative direction just as Jim's real life in the novel is interrupted by the unexpected. He is warned (as Jim himself should be) of the distinction between dreams and reality which the narrative seems initially to confuse. The "imitative" quality of the narrative is, here, fairly direct; but it should warn us that the work as a whole is more subtly an analogue to Jim's moral experience.

This omniscient narrator also introduces the first major time-shift in the novel by moving directly in the opening words of chapter four ("A month or so afterwards, when Jim...") from the moment of collision to the scene in the court of enquiry, thus creating a basic uncertainty which is not to be resolved for several more chapters about what has happened to the Patna. Thus the habitual strategy of narrative uncertainty—the withholding of a vital piece of information—is, like the tendency to spatialise events and the confusing of the specific with the general, initially a function of the frame narration rather than of Marlow's tale. Marlow himself is introduced only towards the end of the chapter as "a white man who sat apart from the others with his face worn and clouded" (p. 32) and with eyes which met Jim's. As a transition to the Marlow section of the narrative, the narrator once more (as in the training-ship episode) uses a "would" construction which gradually develops into a specific situation:

And later on, many times, in distant parts of the world, Marlow showed himself willing to remember Jim,

to remember him at length, in detail and audibly.

Perhaps it would be after dinner, on a verandah draped in motionless foliage and crowned with flowers, in the deep dusk speckled by fiery cigar-ends. The elongated bulk of each cane-chair harboured a silent listener. Now and then a small red glow would move abruptly, and expanding light up the fingers of a languid hand, part of a face in profound repose, or flash a crimson gleam into a pair of pensive eyes overshadowed by a fragment of an unruffled forehead; and with the very first word uttered Marlow's body, extended at rest in the seat, would become very still, as though his spirit had winged its way back into the lapse of time and were speaking through his lips from the past.

Chapter V

"Oh yes. I attended the inquiry," he would say.
(pp. 33-36)

The technique used here is more subtle than in the earlier "would" construction. After the initial statement of Marlow's readiness to remember Jim, the scene is set in gradually more specific detail. Conrad holds on to the "would" right until the end of the descriptive passage and indeed renews it in Marlow's first words. But while the grammatical structure (use of the imperfect tense) points in one semantic direction, the increasing clarity of the description points in another: the general and hypothetical description has become anchored at one point in space and time, and Conrad continues to treat the narrative (as indeed he must if the story is to take a specific verbal form) as though it dealt with one particular telling of the story before a particular group of listeners, one of whom is the "privileged listener" of the final section of the novel.

Conrad's technique here has a very different effect from that of the earlier "would" transition between the teller and the tale—or, more accurately, between two modes of "telling". Quite apart from Conrad's technical adroitness, the form of this transition also provides him with a means of manipulating our attitudes toward Jim. The fact that, as the

omniscient narrator insists, Marlow is ready to remember Jim's story "many times, in distant parts of the world" is, on the most obvious level a tribute to the latter's continuing fascination. It is, furthermore, a means of reassuring the reader that the tale is worth the telling: that behind Jim's rather mawkish personality and determined sophistries lies something worthy of discovery.²⁴ What is more, the recognition that the particular rehearsal of the tale which we are privy to is only one of many (presumably more-or-less similar) has the effect of suggesting that Jim's life has become more important as a source of fictional possibilities than it is as a series of real events. Marlow, after all, does not simply relate facts but offers comments and suggestions as to how those facts are to be interpreted, suggests the moral standards by which Jim's actions are to be interpreted, and tries to mediate between Jim's experience and that of his listeners: in other words, Marlow acts as a creative artist.²⁵ From time to time he breaks the frame of the narration, reminding his listeners that they are listening to a tale: "He existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you. I've led him out by the hand; I have paraded him before you" (p. 224).

The result of this is that for the reader there is an unusually wide degree of separation between his sense of the existence of a fictively "real" Jim and the tale which is told about him. One is encouraged to recognise this at the end of Marlow's tale when he makes it clear that Jim's life is still in progress. The end, admittedly, is enigmatic, but the omniscient narrator notes of the listeners' response: "Its incompleteness itself, and the very tone of the speaker, had made discussion vain and comment impossible. Each of them seemed to carry away his own impression" (p. 337). The tale, although its subject is still in existence, has become

something one can "carry away." One of the results of this separation of a "real" event from its retelling is that the reader is brought to recognise the essential malleability of time. The major events of Jim's life, from his desertion of the Patna to Marlow's visit to him in Patusan take about five years but are telescoped into the length of an after-dinner tale. Thus the very existence of the tale as a discrete object produces an uneasy awareness in the reader of the flexibility of time and of the contrast between the transitoriness of events as lived and their continuation through the retentive power of memory. One of Jim's painful discoveries is of the manner in which events persist in memory, and indeed seem to gain a life of their own. We, as readers, share in this discovery as we see Marlow repeatedly pick the memories of those he meets, gradually building up a picture of the supposedly finished event.

Recognition of this relationship, played out upon the reader's pulses by the very act of his hearing the story, is reinforced by the ordering of events within the tale. Although we have talked of its independence, it is an independence shaped by the personality of its teller. Although there were complaints at the time of the novel's publication about the lack of verisimilitude of its technique (how could anyone go on telling a story for so long, or remember events in such detail?—questions which Conrad felt compelled to answer good-humouredly in the 1917 "Author's Note"), the modern reader used to Faulkner, Ford, Joyce, or Virginia Woolf is likely to find Marlow's casual and hesitant circling of the facts of the case (especially in the first chapters of his narrative) reasonably close to his expectations of the way a tale should get itself told. One event recalls another in a fashion which suggests a formalised expression of the stream of Marlow's consciousness: mention of Brierly's discomfort at Jim's behaviour brings

out the whole story of his suicide, together with an explanation of what happened to his first mate and even to his dog; this reasonably logical associational chain is further encrusted with such details as an account of the first mate's successor (even down to the pattern of the man's suit and his manner of parting his hair) and a brief history of the ship of which the first mate eventually gains command (pp. 58-65).²⁶

There are other lengthy asides which almost achieve the status of short stories: the tale of Chester and Robinson (again, with its own interpolated anecdotes); the encounter with the French lieutenant; and that with the Patna's second officer. Marlow even interrupts the tale of what went on in the courtroom to mention his sense of guilt at not taking a letter to his chief mate whose jealousy of his wife was excessive. While one may admire this technique as exemplifying that process of psychologically realistic exposition which Ford and Conrad worked out together, Marlow's account of his discovery of the facts of Jim's case also functions as a means of enacting metaphorically the nature of the latter's crime and punishment.

Although Marlow has been present at the enquiry and continues to see Jim at more-or-less regular intervals over the next few years, his understanding of the Patna case and of Jim's eventual fate must be pieced together from a series of chance encounters with the French lieutenant, Gentleman Brown, Jewel, and 'Tamb' Itam—to name only the most obvious informants. If complaints are to be made on the matter of verisimilitude it is surely less on the grounds of his stamina as a story-teller than on his serendipitous habit of running across the people he needs to meet.²⁷

Marlow seems to recognise this and remarks half-apologetically (with reference to his meeting with the French lieutenant): "Indeed this affair,

I may say in passing, had an extraordinary power of defying the shortness of memories and the length of time: it seemed to live, with a sort of uncanny vitality in the minds of men, on the tips of their tongues....Has it not turned up tonight between us?" (pp. 137-38). The fact that the story has developed a life of its own, that it is in the habit of turning up in separate geographical locations at various times, suggests that for Marlow himself (as, it has already been suggested, for the listener/reader) the story has a life of its own. The story is, in fact, not unlike that half-sunken derelict which, it is presumed, holed the Patna: it too drifts about the Eastern seas, intruding itself familiarly into a variety of lives.

The survival of the tale may be interesting and even puzzling to Marlow; but for Jim it acts as a practical and metaphoric contradiction of his expectation of the way that events exist in time. Jim tends to think of events as things which can be left behind, pinned down through factual description or exiated through a "second chance". Unfortunately for him, events persist through communal memory. As the reader discovers this through following the tortuous process by which Marlow puts together the different fragments of Jim's experience, so Jim himself discovers it through repeated brushes with those who know something of his past. In this way the structure of the narrative reinforces Jim's growing sense that the event is following him from place to place, forcing him to make repeated fresh starts, and thus dramatically correlates his sense that freedom can be found only "outside" the normal world.

A further dimension is added to the narrative structure when one realizes that Marlow is not deliberately trying to tell a complex tale, and that he attempts to make things easier for his audience. While going through the sensation of sharing in Marlow's random discovery of pieces of the jig-saw puzzle, the listener/reader is allowed to gain a more straightforward

knowledge of the events than Marlow himself had at the time. The important meeting with the French lieutenant, for example, is described after the account of the first day of the enquiry even though it did not take place until three years later, thus effectively accounting for that portion of the event which neither Jim, Marlow, nor the court of enquiry could have known about in any detail. Although it is convenient for the reader to be given the information about how the Patna was towed to port and unloaded, it hardly affects the nature of Jim's crime which is the event in the narrative foreground; what it does, of course, is to provide a contrast of values and modes of behaviour. The result of Marlow's casual juxtaposition of the two events is thus very much like that of an omniscient narrator who manages to describe two roughly contiguous scenes in different places. In more subtle fashion, Brierly's suicide is described while Marlow's account of the trial is in progress, again allowing the reader access to a contrast in patterns of behaviour which implicitly condemns Jim's baseless pride in his own standards, the pride which makes him turn up at the enquiry but does not give him courage to act.

Even when there is no obvious dramatic function to be served—indeed even when the element of dramatic discovery is threatened by it—the novel is perverse in its retention or disclosure of pieces of information. It has already been pointed out that the opening paragraphs of Lord Jim provide a kind of synoptic overview of the protagonist's life and that the omniscient narrator creates the first of those leaps forward which assume the existence of an action before it is actually recounted. This process of "time-looping" is seen for the second time when at the beginning of chapter sixteen, before we learn anything of Jim's series of failures to adjust to life, Marlow tells his audience: "The time was coming when I

should see him loved, trusted, and admired, with a legend of strength and prowess forming round his name as though he had been the stuff of a hero" (p. 175). Not only this, but he summarizes the years of Jim's eclipse ("There had been, as you know, a period of probation amongst infernal ship-chandlers, during which he had suffered and I had worried about—about—my trust you may call it") before the chapters which expound the painful truth behind this generalization. Similarly, despite the claim sometimes made that the second half of the novel is more chronologically straightforward than the first, a parallel effect is achieved by Marlow's account in chapter twenty-four of his visit to Patusan two years after Jim's arrival when he has already achieved success. The details of how Jim actually made his way in Patusan are then relayed through the fictive present of Marlow's visit which contains half a dozen flashbacks. Again we have the synopsis before the details. Finally this technique is used to recount the last days of Jim's life from a vantage point after the event. Marlow's letter to the "privileged listener" enclosed with the extended narrative of Jim's final adventure gives the game away: "I shall never hear his voice again" (p. 252). Even without this, we would learn of Jim's death from Jewel's words at Stein's house which contain the emotional if not the physical truth of the situation: "He has left me...you always leave us--for your own ends...It would have been easy to die with him--He would not" (p. 256).

A rather schematic outline of the narrative strategy such as the one I have provided may suggest that the dramatic tension of the novel is deflated by this technique. In practice this is not the case since one tends not to remember the "apogee" of the timeloop when reading the detailed account of the events which approach it. In any case, the real tensions of the novel are not factual but emotional, moral, and existential: it is the how

and why rather than the what of Jim's life which matters. As a means of discovering this "how" and "why" Conrad has created what is essentially a spatial narrative.

The spatial quality of the narrative results from Marlow's tendency to put emotionally-related events "side by side," together with his continual cuts backward and forward between events occurring at different times.²⁸ Like the spatial technique of the first few paragraphs of the novel, although rather less obviously, this allows the reader to take a critical overview of the events. The value of this second major narrative strategy (the first being the fragmentation and continuity of events which reflects Jim's experience of the results of the Patna debacle) is underlined by Marlow's own comments about the necessary direction of his narrative. At an early point in his story, Marlow warns the reader about Jim's obtuseness in the face of fate. He has spoken of beginning life again with a "clean slate," and the older man breathes life into the cliché by a metaphoric extension of it: "A clean slate did he say? As if the initial word of each our destiny were not graven in imperishable characters upon the face of a rock" (p. 186). Conrad's pessimism has become a major critical theme in recent years, perhaps as a response to the earlier vision of the man of "a few simple notions".²⁹ It is a mistake, however, to recognise in Marlow's words a theory of predeterminism--especially since his whole judgement of Jim is based upon the belief in free will. The point Marlow is making is that individuals, despite their freedom, do not normally change very dramatically, and that the character of one's youthful acts tends to define the direction of one's life: that is, to return to his metaphor, such an act writes "the initial word of each our destiny." As a forecast of the direction of Jim's life Marlow's words are amazingly accurate: Jim's behaviour does follow a repeated pattern.

It has already been demonstrated that Marlow's remarks about the "logic" of Jim's life (pp. 342-43) represent an attempt to discover a structure in the ethical order of the novel. The description of the "characters upon...a rock" is, I suggest, a complement in structural terms to the logic which fulfils itself in the events of the story. As Marlow's description of, and commentary upon Jim's behaviour reinforces his thesis that "our imagination alone could let loose upon us the might of an overwhelming destiny," so the combination of his ordering of the events together with that of the omniscient narrator suggests the impossibility of starting with a "clean slate". The characters are initially written upon the rock by the hand of the frame narrator who both describes the first significant action in Jim's life (his failure to reach the rescue boat in time) and provides an outline of the rest of his life. Not only is the first word of Jim's destiny written, but the narrator lightly pencils in the remainder of the "sentence" (the pun is unavoidable) of Jim's life. The tendency to rough out events in advance is continued in Marlow's portion of the narrative where his time-looping effectively re-engraves the characters of Jim's life, defining its inevitable direction before it is "lived" by the protagonist. This may also explain the necessity of the frame narrative: the first (and presumably objective) "engraving" of the facts of Jim's life makes Marlow's later gloomy comments more acceptable since they are based upon a foundation of events which we have already encountered. Thus Marlow's encouragement to the reader to see the novel as the logical outcome of truths of character already written is reflected in and enacted by the spatial structure of Lord Jim: the use of synopses and time-loops reflects his belief that events always exist in potentia; the "what," to return to my earlier terminology, of Jim's life is already written; it is up to the reader to

decipher the "how" and "why" from the events presented to him.

The structure of the novel thus functions simultaneously in a variety of ways. On the most basic level, the frame narrative encourages the reader to look with an ironic eye at the facts of Jim's life, to distance himself from them to some degree. It thus modifies the more personal and uncertain vision of Marlow. Marlow's tale, by the very fact that it is a tale about a man whose life is still in progress (until we share in the account of Jim's death sent to the "privileged man" more than two years later) encourages a recognition of a major theme in the novel: the relationship between "real" and remembered events. More importantly, Marlow's technique of recounting the story of Jim's life in a form which is fragmented and chronologically discontinuous symbolises the very nature of the latter's crime—that it can never be completely put into the past or regarded as "over". At the same time, Marlow has reorganised his material into a kind of dramatic continuity which enables one to judge Jim. This technique, together with his use of time-looping and the frame narrator's use of synopsis, allows us to see Jim's life in spatial terms where it gains that quality of inevitability which Marlow's commentary upon events has encouraged us to recognise by more direct means; thus the narrative strategy exhibits that lack of moral growth and development in Jim which we simultaneously recognise through the ethical structure of the novel.

The congruence between theme and structure which I have been attempting to demonstrate suggests that Lord Jim is a more integrated work of art than has normally been admitted. Not only do elements of the narrative technique harmonise with the total effect of the novel but many of Marlow's statements begin to make much better sense if seen as part of a perceptive commentary on Jim's life rather than as the meandering of a rather muddled narrator.³⁰

There is a further problem which my reading of the novel helps dispose of: one of the more frequent complaints made about Lord Jim is that the second half of the novel is unduly protracted and that the substance of the story comes in the first half of the book.³¹ Consideration of the treatment of time in the novel allows at least a partial answer to this charge: Conrad, as an important part of the ethical symbolism of the novel, is attempting to present in his treatment of Patusan a world fundamentally different from the outside world, different both in reality and in Jim's perception of it. To achieve this end and to represent Jim's escape to a different order of reality he must demonstrate at length his new-found heroic status. At the same time, he must provide the reader with sufficient material to allow him to judge the truth of Jim's account of Patusan and Marlow's more sceptical response to it. The Patusan section is not an irrelevant final paragraph preceding the postscript of Jim's death, but an essential part of the whole communication since it represents the most dramatic example of Jim's self-deception. Conrad's decision to give such weight to the final section was not then a casual desire to lengthen the story but was a necessary artistic decision.

NOTES

¹Conrad also formed a number of literary friendships in this period, notably with Wells, James, Crane, Cunninghame Graham and Ford.

²See the account of the growth of the text in John Dozier Gordan, Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist (1940; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), pp. 150-73, 259-68, and Eloise Knapp Hay, "Lord Jim: From Sketch to Novel," Comparative Literature, XII (1960), 289-309; rpt. in Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Lord Jim", ed. Robert E. Kuehn, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 14-34.

³Gustav Morf, The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad (London: Sampson Low, 1930) pp. 163-66; Royal Roussel, The Metaphysics of Darkness (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 85 and passim; Paul S. Bruss, "Lord Jim: The Maturing of Marlow," Conradiana, VIII (1976), 13-26; C. B. Cox, Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination (London: Dent, 1976), p. 29; Albert J. Guerard, Conrad The Novelist (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 126-27.

⁴Among the more illuminating discussions of the narrative technique of Lord Jim are those by Thomas Moser in Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 41-42; Guerard, pp. 126-27; Tony Tanner, Conrad: "Lord Jim" (Woodbury, N. Y.: Barron's, 1963), p. 11. Joseph Warren Beach in The Twentieth Century Novel (New York: Appleton-Century, 1932), pp. 362-63, and Frederick R. Karl in A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad (New York: Noonday, 1960), pp. 75-76, examine the chronological distortion. See also Dwight W. Purdy, "The Chronology of Lord Jim," Conradiana, VIII (1976), 81-82, for an examination of Conrad's care in organising the "real" chronological structure of the novel, and Watt, p. 304, for complaints about the insufficiency of the time allowed for Jim's series of jobs.

⁵Jim is of course in respectable company. Early Christian theologians went out of their way to insist that Christianity was different from most other religions in that the coming of Christ was a unique event, although popular religious thought tended to look back towards older, cyclical models. From the seventeenth century onward, the dominant philosophical assumption was also that time was a linear process. See Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return (New York: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971) pp. 142-147.

⁶As Ian Watt has noted, even Beach's schema (which is much more detailed than Karl's) fails to allow for minor time shifts and for the superimposition

of events from different times (Nineteenth Century, pp. 291-92).

⁷Introduction to Lord Jim, Vol. XXI of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. viii.

⁸Youth, p. 9.

⁹It is not stretching metaphorical relationships too far, I think, to see a contrast between Jim on his pedestal and the French lieutenant's fate: "buried . . . under the foundation of monumental success."

¹⁰Gordan, pp. 62-63. Despite Gordan's cogent arguments which depend mainly on physical details (the use for instance of the word "gharry" and the mention of castle marks), Norman Sherry in Conrad's Eastern World (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966) insists without attempting to refute Gordan that the port must be Singapore (p. 174). Furthermore Conrad himself confuses matters: the list of ports at which Jim was known as a water clerk—"Bombay...Calcutta...Rangoon...Penang...Batavia"—certainly represents a movement Eastwards (together with a zig-zag from north to south). But if the enquiry was in Bombay (within the terms of the novel) then it seems unlikely that Jim would have returned to the town where he was best known to look for work. In any case, Jim's first job was not as water-clerk but as assistant to the owner of a rice-mill (Marlow's friend). Did he then go to some point further east or west before beginning the series of jobs as water-clerk? If the second job (and first as water-clerk) is in Bombay, and it is "seven hundred miles south of the place where he should have been in clover" (p. 189), then Marlow's friend was presumably growing rice somewhere near the Khyber Pass. The choice of Singapore as the site of the Enquiry would still leave this and other factual problems and would also mean that Jim's movement eastwards began with a lengthy trip westwards.

¹¹Tanner, Conrad: "Lord Jim", p. 18.

¹²Baines (p. 296) expresses a fairly commonly held attitude when he suggests that the French lieutenant is one of the moral touchstones for Jim's character. It is worth remembering, however, that at one point in their conversation the French lieutenant seems to be on the point of revealing something about his own past: "Take me for instance—I have made my proofs. Eh bien! I, who am speaking to you, once . . ." (p. 147). This "something" is presumably an example of cowardice.

¹³See J. B. Priestley, Man and Time (1964; rpt. New York: Dell, 1968), pp. 26-37, for a variety of illustrative quotations.

¹⁴Elliot B. Gose, "Pure Exercise of Imagination: Archetypal Symbolism in Lord Jim," PMLA, LXXIX (1964), 137-47; Tanner, Conrad: "Lord Jim," p. 46; Cox, p. 41.

¹⁵See Erik K. Hatch, "Tuan Jim as Artist Manqué," Conradiana, IX (1977),

255-68, for an interesting extension of this line of argument.

¹⁶Gose, p. 137.

¹⁷So, presumably, is Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost.

¹⁸All biblical references are to the King James version.

¹⁹The image of the balance of fortune is reminiscent of the figure traditionally used to represent legal justice. This may be taken originally from an Egyptian model. See New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, ed. Robert Graves (London: Prometheus Press, 1968), p. 41. The traditional image of Fortune, however, is the Latin Fortuna, who turns the wheel of the year. For a discussion of her precursors see Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, Vol. 1 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971), pp. 125-26.

²⁰Conrad: A Reassessment, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1969), p. 38.

²¹While to condemn Jim for lack of knowledge of himself and the order of his fate may seem unfair, it is a perfectly normal concept in tragedy—as, for example, in Oedipus Rex or King Lear. Dorothy van Ghent provides a discussion of this tragic dimension in her "Lord Jim" in The English Novel: Form and Function, (1953; rpt. New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 229-44. Conrad may also have found metaphors for Jim's behaviour in the teachings of the Catholic Church: the terms "culpable ignorance" (normally of a doctrine) and "sins of omission" are a part of traditional Catholic theology. Jim's failure to deal effectively with Brown is precisely a sin of omission, while his self-ignorance, in a world without external moral sanctions, implies ontological culpability.

²²Presumably Conrad's choice of a pilgrimage as the site of Jim's downfall is not accidental. The French lieutenant, incidentally (whose vocation is genuine), is described as a "quiet village priest" (p. 130).

²³The first major attempt to use this distinction in a literary sense was Joseph Frank's "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," Sewanee Review, LIII (1945), 433-50. Frank, however, is mainly concerned with setting up an aesthetic based on this concept and does not mention Conrad. Frank's article (which was an attempt to undermine the distinction presented in Lessing's Laocoön between "time" and "space" arts) has produced a number of responses. See W.J.T. Mitchell, Critical Enquiry, 6 (1980), pp. 539-67, for a sophisticated response to some of the criticism of Frank's theory.

²⁴E. Stegmaier in "The 'Would-Scene' in Joseph Conrad's 'Lord Jim' and 'Nostromo'" [sic] Modern Language Review, 67 (1972), 517-23, ignores the training-ship episode altogether and comes to conclusions radically different to mine about the second "would" scene: "This repeated confrontation with Jim's problem . . . makes his [Marlow's] attempt to understand

Jim's character and career look somewhat questionable" (p. 521).

²⁵Marlow himself speaks of Patusan as containing "fit materials for a heroic tale" (p. 226), as if the choice of events were his. C. B. Cox regards Marlow's role as that of surrogate novelist: "Like a novelist, Marlow wonders where next to send his hero . . . Marlow will transform him first into a water-clerk and then into the hero of Patusan. His fictional roles shrink or expand . . . through Marlow's manipulation" (p. 25). But see Hatch, op. cit. for the view that it is Jim who is the artistic creator of his own life.

²⁶Karl, A Reader's Guide, p. 77, comes to a similar conclusion: "Conrad was approximating what became in other hands the stream-of-consciousness technique."

²⁷Randall Craig in "Swapping Yarns: The Oral Mode of Lord Jim," Conradiana, XIII (1981), 181-93, argues that Conrad draws on the tradition of the oral tale to create a more intimate contract between narrator and reader than would otherwise be the case. Craig's comments on the multi-layered quality of the text and on the sense that Marlow's telling of the tale is process rather than product parallel my own.

²⁸For Ford Madox Ford's much-quoted comments, which do something to explain the reasons for this technique, see A Personal Remembrance, pp. 180-82. Strictly speaking, it could be argued, the physical nature of print prevents genuine simultaneity of events, and Conrad does not attempt "cross-cutting" between events happening at the same moment as in the county fair scene in Flaubert's Madame Bovary—which is one of Frank's major examples.

²⁹See for example Roussel, passim.

³⁰This is Hewitt's attitude: "The effect of muddlement which is so commonly found in Lord Jim comes in short, from this—that Marlow is himself muddled" (p. 37).

³¹See F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (1948; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, : Penguin, 1972), p. 218; John Palmer, Joseph Conrad's Fiction (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press), p. 38. Conrad himself regarded the division of the book into two parts as a "plague spot" (Garnett, Letters, p. 171).

Chapter Three

NOSTROMO

In the three novels which follow Lord Jim, Conrad moves in a direction radically different from that which might have been expected. Instead of developing further as an historian of fine (or at least self-deluding) consciences, in Nostramo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes he challenges the reader's preconceptions about "history" in its more conventional senses. Rather than taking for granted the essential sanity of the public world as he does in Lord Jim (where Marlow can make ready assumptions about the moral standards and behaviour of his listeners), Conrad undermines the reader's faith in human institutions through works which encourage a general political scepticism. "Heart of Darkness" had earlier exposed the excesses of European colonialism, but these later novels challenge the cultural complacency of readers "moored with two good addresses . . . a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another" much more single-mindedly, mainly because there is less pressure to focus on the psychological explorations of a single character. Only Razumov in Under Western Eyes goes through a process of self-exploration in any way equivalent to Marlow's in "Heart of Darkness".

Although Conrad continues to treat a character's attitudes towards time as an epitome of his response to personal and societal responsibilities, he begins to put more stress than he has previously on the temporal attitudes of groups—especially the temporal attitudes inherent in political ideologies. Behind the immediate reality of late nineteenth and early

twentieth-century politics, which he delineates clearly, there exist, Conrad suggests, assumptions about the nature of political change which relate more closely to ancient theories of cyclicity, belief in a Golden Age, or fear of the millennium than they do to scientific and economic theories about society.

Nostramo (1904) dramatizes the reality of life in a South American republic during a crucial period in its history. While the novel contains memorable characters, their existence seems contingent upon that of the political structure in which they find themselves; in fact Conrad's main concern is with the community and the state or polis which is treated as though it had a life independent of the individuals who seem (temporarily) to control it. The dominant feature of the state of Costaguana (at least from a European perspective) is its lack of temporal and political definition. Nostramo, furthermore, raises questions about the nature and meaning of history in a country where the political structure does not contain the accretions of political experience.

As in Conrad's earlier novels, the narrative structure of Nostramo reflects its thematic concerns. The ethical order—or rather disorder—of the novel is dramatised through an organisation which not only suggests to the reader his immersion in a complex and alien environment but also undermines his sense of the historical progress which the novel ostensibly describes. Furthermore the chronological displacement of events adds to our understanding of the central character since it furnishes an understanding of his motives fuller than that created through the incidents in which he is involved.

What one immediately notices about the novel is its sheer mass of geographical and historical detail. We are presented, it seems, with a

fictional world which has both breadth and depth. The novel's geographic canvas includes Europe and North America as well as Costaguana itself. Combined with this breadth of general reference is a more precise examination of one locality: Sulaco and its environs. Both The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes make an impressive attempt to render the experience of living in a particular city or cities—the mixture of cosiness and irrationality in London and the contrast between the cold brutality of St. Petersburg and the bourgeois comfort of Geneva—but Nostramo goes much further in its meticulous recreation not only of a town but also of its port and hinterland.

Conrad is equally concerned to insist that this fictional land has a history. Although the central events of the novel cover only a few days, a much longer period of fifteen years or more (from Gould's return to Sulaco to Nostramo's death) is covered more selectively, while the events of fifteen or twenty years before Gould's arrival are more lightly sketched in. This recent history, furthermore, is modelled in depth by the variety of perspectives which we are given: through the eyes of Dr. Monygham, of Avellanos, of Gould himself, of Decoud and Viola, we gain partial (and perhaps partisan) glimpses of a past in which the name of Guzman Bento and an account of his misdeeds together with suggestions of other revolutions and bloodbaths are repeated.

The "present" of the novel is treated even more precisely with the central events of the riots, the saving of the silver, and the eventual departure of Nostramo for Cayta being described in almost suffocating, hour-by-hour detail. Whatever we do not manage to pick up through Decoud's letter to his sister or through the omniscient narrator is filled in by Captain Mitchell's account of the events to a hypothetical visitor who

arrives several years later.

It is not surprising in the face of this embarras de richesse that a good deal of criticism of the novel has concerned itself with aligning the various accounts of the events both with each other and with real events (the life and exploits of Garibaldi in particular) which are used as a backdrop.

Thus, to supplement the novel itself, we have a number of paraphrased "histories" of Sulaco.¹ While such studies have a fascination of their own (how many children did Lady Macbeth have, anyway?) and while they reveal something of the care Conrad took in planning the novel, they all have to make a basic admission: that the apparently reassuring flow of factual detail is often contradictory or misleading.

While Conrad's occasional confusion about the geography of Sulaco may produce a sense of disorientation in the reader, the problems raised by historical inexactitude are much greater.² Some of the apparent factual contradictions may be the result of simple carelessness on Conrad's part. There is, for example, the rather irritating problem of trying to reconcile the fact that the celebration at the beginning of work on the railway is described in chapter five as taking place eighteen months before Ribiera's escape from the rebels (that is, the narrative present of the novel);³ later, Nostramo tells Decoud that "a couple of years before" he spent a whole Sunday exploring the Great Isabel—the first Sunday after he brought the British railway magnate through the mountains for the previously mentioned celebration. What is surely more deliberate is Conrad's habitual vagueness on more central topics such as how long the Goulds have been in Sulaco, how long the mine has been in operation, and how long it is between Guzman Bento's reign of terror and the return of more stable

government under Ribiera. These are not the kind of questions about which a novelist is necessarily forced to be precise. The factual precision of parts of Nostramo, however, combined with its occasional reference to events in the outside world force such questions upon the reader's attention and create a disparity between his sense of an intensely realised present and a surprisingly vague past.

Uncertainty about the historical facts of this fictional world is, furthermore, complemented by Conrad's treatment of the concept of history within Nostramo. "History", of course, as Hegel realised, has two separate meanings: it refers both to what has happened and to the narration of what has happened.⁴ If history in the first sense is anecdotal and uncertain, history in the second sense is made to seem absurd.⁵ Written history, the attempt to impose some sort of retrospective order on events, is represented in Nostramo by Don José Avellanos' Fifty Years of Misrule. The pathetic attempt at understanding the forces of political destiny represented by Avellanos' book—it is, after all, a history of mis-rule—is doomed to failure and to a destruction whose symbolism approaches the overtness of allegory. During the riots, Decoud sees "the sheets of 'Fifty Years of Misrule' which we have begun printing on the presses of the Porvenir ["Future"], littering the Plaza, floating in the gutters, fired out as wads from trabucos loaded with handfuls of type, blown in the wind, trampled in the mud".⁶ Captain Mitchell, the character most addicted to seeing events as "historic" (that is, having a place in some sort of scheme of things) is, meanwhile, patently ridiculous: since he constantly inflates the commonplace to the epoch-making, he renders ridiculous the word he is so fond of using.

There are other characters too who, while they do not discuss history,

do predicate their actions upon historical assumptions. Their attitude towards history, however, is invariably solipsistic. Viola, the embittered old republican, stands aside in scorn from the democratic movement in Sulaco. For him, all political actions must be judged by the august standards of Garibaldi's career, and his concern for the past produces disdain for the present.⁷ Cardinal Corbelán is also concerned with past glories, but his interest in the past is largely a means of bringing pressure to bear on the present: he wants to regain control of confiscated ecclesiastical lands and properties through reference to the previous dignity of the church. A third example of an egotistical use of the past is provided by Pedrito Montero: nourished upon romances of the French Second Empire, he aims to recreate that world. His concern with transporting the mores of a decadent phase of European society to a new world is both more ridiculous and more sinister than the simple-minded villainy of his brother and Sotillo. What all these characters have in common is an interest in history not as an objectively-understood process of events but rather as self-justification or a support for private passions.

A major result of the uncertain or deliberately blurred chronology of Nostramo and its parody of both conscious and unconscious responses to history is that, despite the mass of historical particulars provided, the reader's sense of the reality of historical structure within the novel is undermined. This anti-historical, or at least a-historical, pressure is reinforced, furthermore, by the novel's narrative structure. Quite apart from the problems involved in correlating the sets of facts gained through the statements of different characters, simply discovering what happens to the principal characters and the approximate order in

which it happens is, because of the chronological dislocation of events, a major task at a first reading of the novel. The narrative voice moves backwards and forwards in time and changes its angle of vision with dazzling, even vertiginous, ease and frequency. Sometimes the shift from one time or place to another serves to make fairly blunt ironic contrasts. There is for example the carefully-engineered transition in chapter five from the day of the riot on which Ribiera barely escapes death to the occasion eighteen months earlier when he had presided at the ceremonial dinner for the railway (p. 34). But it is difficult to assign as deliberate a motive to the dozens of shifts of direction which take place in the early part of the narrative.

Conrad's primary concern here seems to be to create the illusion that the story is told by a narrator—although this supposed narrator is given no formal existence within the fictional frame—who drifts loquaciously from one point to another, unconcerned with precise sequence. While the immediate result of this technique is to create confusion in the reader's mind, it is not, I suggest, an irresponsible confusion. Instead, as Jocelyn Baines points out, the structure of Nostramo makes a comment upon the events it rehearses: "The elimination of progression from one event to another...has the effect of implying that nothing is ever achieved. By the end of the book we are virtually back where we started; it looks as if the future of Costaguana will be very similar to her past."⁸

The fact that "nothing is ever achieved" must be seen as a radical denial of Western expectations about history, especially in a novel which is so ostensibly historical in its format. Although there have always been dissenting opinions, the dominant theory of history in modern times

has been that it charts man's progress; Costaguana's history on the other hand seems to move in a circle.⁹ Conrad's deliberate undermining of the historical expectations of his audience does not of course necessarily represent an attack upon theories of history in general; rather, he is attempting to present political chaos in the particular fictional world he has created by a kind of synecdoche. "History"—that is, the human attempt to come to terms with and understand the past—stands in the novel for the whole complex of intelligent and balanced responses to one's own society and culture upon which political stability depends. In rejecting history—a rejection epitomised by the characters, symbolised by the action, and enacted through the structure of the novel—Costaguana is also rejecting the possibility of a civilised present and an assured future.

At first glance this reading of the synecdochic role of the idea of history seems not to fit with the political realities of the novel. After all, it could be argued, there surely is a degree of progress from the political chaos of the early and middle sections of Nostromo to the greater prosperity and order of the final section which is set several years later. This response (that of characters such as Mitchell within the novel) ignores some basic realities, including the real role of the mine in "civilizing" the province, a role rather more ambiguous than is admitted by the backers of the project.

The original mood of Costaguanan politics is set by the incident which opens the narrative--Ribiera's escape from his pursuers. This escapade, however, is not meant to be seen as an isolated one, and Ribiera's escape is introduced (ostensibly at least) only as evidence of a general principle: "The political atmosphere of the Republic was generally stormy in these days. The fugitive patriots of the defeated party had the knack of turning up

again on the coast with half a steamer's load of small arms and ammunition." Ribiera's desperate state, it is suggested, is merely one example of the undignified but temporary eclipse of the defeated party. The repetitive nature of this political process is also suggested in the description of the death of Ribiera's mount: "the animal [Ribiera's mule] . . . expired under him at the end of the Alameda, where the military band plays sometimes in the evening between the revolutions" (p. 11).

The absurd hyperbole of this remark and the scarcely less overt irony of the narrator's revelation of the habit of defeated politicians of returning in force should not blind us to the recognition that Conrad is presenting here one of the political axioms of the novel. Revolution, apparently, is a semi-permanent state, and indeed the word "revolution" when applied to the politics of Nostramo is a barely dead metaphor since the flux of events is almost continuous.¹⁰ This idea is reinforced later in the novel with the reference to the government of Gould's father's day as "an ordinary Costaguana government—the fourth in six years" (p. 53).

The development of the mine and the attendant economic growth of Sulaco seem at first to have put a spoke in fortune's wheel. The benefits are most immediate for the native population who work in the mine. They come to regard it, the first completed symbol of Western order and efficiency, as some sort of benevolent deity.¹¹ Gould himself comes to be known as the "King of Sulaco" (p. 93) and Don José Avellanós is fond of referring to the mine as an "imperium in imperio." The private kingdom has its governor (Don P  p  ) and its spiritual leader (Father Rom  n) and is even capable of providing its citizens with a degree of protection from harassment by the authorities of the greater kingdom of which it is a part: "A peaceful cholo wearing these colours [the uniform of the mine]

. . .was somehow very seldom beaten to within an inch of his life on a charge of disrespect to the town police; neither ran he much risk of being lassoed upon the road by a recruiting party of lanceros" (p. 97). Gould's subjects eventually repay this protection by rescuing him from death at the hands of Montero (p. 477).

The characters in Nostramo themselves recognise that the coming of the mine represents an hiatus in the political processes of the province and are fond of regarding the years immediately prior to and including Separation as, in Captain Mitchell's phrase, "the dawn of a new era"—although the political star of that dawn (Ribiera) meets the normal fate of Costaguana politicians. Apart from the paternalistic protection which it is able to extend to its workers, the effects of the mine are primarily economic. Gould believes however that the economic forces he has brought into play will have political consequences by acting as a brake upon revolutionary activity: "Only let the material interests once get a fair footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions in which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder" (p. 84). Gould may be right, but in the meantime he is quite prepared to make whatever compromises are necessary with the political powers in the province.

Yet even the economic progress which the mine provides is regarded by some characters in the novel as double-edged. One dissonant voice is that of Dr. Monygham who expresses his suspicions by complaining several years after Gould's optimistic forecast of political stability that "the time approaches when all that the Gould concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back" (p. 511). Nor is Monygham being especially prescient:

there are definite hints in the last chapters of Nostramo that some new and presumably even bloodier political conflict is in the offing—perhaps in the form of an attempt to annex the remainder of Costaguana to Sulaco.

Gould's intention had been to make the politics of Sulaco subordinate to economic processes. In fact what takes place is almost a reversal of his aims: the mine becomes instead a means of continuing and exaggerating the process of continual revolution which characterises the political life of the country. One reason for this is that no economic force is capable of overcoming the cultural instability of the land. A more serious reason is that the mine, whatever its benevolent aspects, tends very readily to become an agent of that instability. The attempt, which lies at the centre of the novel, to protect the silver illustrates how the mine becomes a pawn—albeit an oversized one—in the schemes of politicians. Nostramo's rather melodramatic description of the silver as "a deadly disease" (p. 264) begins to seem justified when one realises that it is mainly the silver which brings the armies of Sotillo and Montero into the province.

With Separation the de-stabilising role of the mine grows even more important as it develops from agent to source of a new political divisiveness. It is of course the economic power of the mine which ensures the former province's continuance as an independent political entity. Not content with separation from Costaguana, Cardinal-Archbishop Corbelàn and Antonia are found conspiring towards the end of the novel with political refugees and with various secret societies to annex the remainder of Costaguana using the material power of the mine as their weapon. At the same time the existence of the mine accelerates the economic development of Sulaco and brings about the class conflicts which go with it. The

existence of the secret society of which Nostromo is a part with "a . . . somewhat hunchbacked little photographer, with a white face and a magnanimous soul dyed crimson by a bloodthirsty hate of all capitalists, oppressors of the two hemispheres" (p. 528) as its president suggests that Sulaco has begun to feel the pains of class antagonism. The mine, as part of this process, has lost its original paternalistic aspect and become the external symbol of modern capitalism. As Monygham sneers, "Do you think that now the mine would march upon the town to save their Señor Administrador? Do you think that?" (p. 511).

The language associated with the growth of the mine—pompous and rather religious in tone—helps to point up the falsity of Gould's initial expectations. In reopening the mine, he was initially impelled by "a vague idea of rehabilitation" (p. 74): he hoped to justify his father's concern with it and perhaps also to give new life to the province. This latter aim is fulfilled, and the vague term "rehabilitation" is replaced in the political dialogue of the novel by "regeneration": "the Five-Year-Mandate law" notes the narrator, "became the basis of that regeneration, the passionate desire for which had been like the elixir of everlasting youth for Don José Avellanos" (p. 144); a new loan and a new railway are "regenerating transactions"; even the sceptical Decoud is partly deluded by the cant of his own article on "the regeneration of Costaguana" (p. 153). The word itself has unavoidable and religious connotations relating to the idea of a spiritual re-birth.¹² As the source of this regeneration, Gould has the resonances of a Christ figure who has redeemed Sulaco into a new era of material prosperity through the agency of the mine.

Even leaving aside the vulgarity with which the characters adapt spiritual terminology to material ends, the repetition

of the word "regeneration" by the narrator must be seen as an ironic tactic. After all, it is difficult in practice to discover the difference between revolution and regeneration in Nostromo: where the men of violence maintain a belief in revolution, the idealistic Avellanos has "many years of undiscouraged belief in regeneration" (p. 149). While the Goulds discuss the "paradise of snakes" they have created (i.e. the mine) the troops have just left in defence of the Five-Year-Mandate of regeneration carrying with them "an improved model of a military rifle . . . just discarded for something still more deadly by one of the great European powers" (p. 149).

The fact that the province needs defence in the first place is largely the result of the reopening of the silver mine. Previously "even the revolutions . . . had respected the repose of the place" (p. 36). The defence of the mine now demands not only the province's military involvement but also an acceleration of armaments, thus turning a brutal but limited conflict into an equally brutal but much more deadly one. "Regeneration" begins to look like revolution writ large, and the renewed life which Gould's actions have breathed into the province takes on the smell of death.

Yet the role of the mine in the province is not entirely harmful. Against Gould's readiness to make political compromises we must balance Emilia Gould's evident delight in the casting of the first ingot of silver—although Conrad admits that its worth is, in part, derived from her optimistic interpretation of the physical product of the mine: "by her imaginative estimate of its power she endowed that lump of metal with a justificative conception, as though it were not a mere fact, but something far-reaching and impalpable, like the true expression of an emotion or the emergence of a principle" (p. 107). One of the more positive passages in

the novel, furthermore, is that which details life at the mine in its early days and Gould's own reaction ("it came to his heart with the peculiar force of a proclamation thundered forth over the land and the marvellousness of an accomplished fact fulfilling an audacious desire") to the sound of his creation (pp. 99-105). Conrad makes use of the chronological fluency of the novel to place this description of the mine's more positive aspects before Don Pepe's more sceptical remark about the "paradise of snakes" which the Goulds have disturbed in order perhaps to discourage premature (and hostile) judgements of the mine's effects.

Just as it is difficult to regard the outside world's economic influence as completely harmful, so its cultural intrusion is seen as in many ways justifiable. The land itself is described as "waiting for the future," and one reason it is waiting is that it seems both literally and symbolically to have lost touch with the materials of its past. An instructive emblem of this fact is the stone shield above the town gate which is described thus: "a grey, heavily scrolled, armorial shield of stone with the arms of Spain nearly smoothed out as if in readiness for some new device typical of the impending progress" (p. 173). Sulaco has lost its old colonial identity (represented by the arms of Spain) and is just beginning to find a force sufficiently strong to replace it.

What this force represents is illustrated even more dramatically by a passage close to the beginning of the novel in which Conrad juxtaposes two figures.

The big equestrian statue of Charles IV at the entrance of the Alameda, towering white against the trees, was only known to the folk from the country and to the beggars of the town that slept on the steps round the pedestal, as the Horse of Stone. The other Carlos turning off to the left with a rapid clatter of hoofs on the disjointed pavement—Don Carlos Gould, in his English clothes, looked as incongruous, but much more

at home than the kingly cavalier reigning in his steed on his pedestal above the sleeping leperos, with his marble arm raised towards the marble rim of a plumed hat. (pp. 48-49)

The ironic iconographic comparison of live horseman and petrified caballero, of modern progress and ancient pieties, points up the change in values which has affected the province. From the practical perspective of the beggars it is not even the rider which is of importance but the horse itself. In an immediate sense the tableau acts as a dramatisation of Gould's title—King of Sulaco. Nevertheless it is not Gould himself nor the coming of the mine which has demoted the statue from royal image to anonymous stone horseman. This, judging by the attitude of the countryfolk and the beggars, must have happened long ago. The statue's loss of intrinsic meaning is further stressed by the response of Pedrito Montero's troops when they enter the town: it looks to them like "a saint in a big hat" (p. 385).

Eventually the live horseman and all that he stands for overcome any lingering concern for the dead rider, and Captain Mitchell reports (to his hypothetical visitor) the fate of the statue after Separation: "The equestrian statue that used to stand on the pedestal over there has been removed. It was an anachronism. . . There is some talk of replacing it by a marble shaft commemorative of separation." The "marble shaft" complete with "angels of peace at the four corners and bronze Justice holding an even balance, all gilt, on the top" (pp. 481-82) is precisely that "new device typical of the impending progress" whose creation has been forecast earlier. While Conrad does not encourage us to shed any tears for the demise of the "saint in the big Hat," the image which is intended to replace it—bronze Justice and a gilt balance—is a decidedly tawdry symbol of the Golden Age which Mitchell believes has been ushered in.

Conrad's treatment of the effects of one culture's intrusion into another and of the interaction of two attitudes to time, traditional and modern, is balanced and fairly subtle. Rather than making simplistic moral judgements, he tends to qualify ironically our first impressions: the reader's initial response to the royal statue is likely to be sentimental, and his reaction to Conrad's implied comparison of it to Gould is likely to be in favour of the former. But the fact that its import is so easily forgotten by the local people suggests that the loss of the last vestiges of a colonial culture and its replacement by a new form of colonialism represents only the displacement of one set of imposed values by another. Similarly—and more importantly—Conrad manages to recognise that the coming of the mine is both good and bad; that the initial "paradise" of the gorge was, after all, a "paradise of snakes"; and that the mine, even unworked, was always a temptation towards evil.

This habit of ironic balance makes interpretation rather awkward for anyone who wishes to read Nostromo as a political tract.¹³ Nor is it easy to read the novel, as one might at first be tempted to do, as a contrast between a "good" instinctual/primitive time sense and a "bad" European/American time sense. Conrad's treatment of the effects of the mine and of outside influences generally makes it clear that what is happening is rather an exaggeration of an already corrupt political/temporal structure through more sophisticated means. If there is a lesson to be drawn at all, it is that there is a kind of hopelessness about all action in Sulaco since the pitfalls involved in walking even an honourable path are too numerous to be avoided.

A frequent critical complaint is that Nostromo lacks the detailed character development of Conrad's other novels, and any discussion of

its political dimension may seem to provide ammunition for this complaint by downplaying the importance of individual characters within the political process.¹⁴ Admittedly, Nostramo does not exhibit that concentration upon the mental gymnastics of a single, intellectually ingenious, character which we find in Lord Jim or Under Western Eyes: indeed, three out of the four characters I wish to discuss (Gould, Holroyd, Decoud, and Nostramo) seem almost unconscious of their own mental processes. Nevertheless they are important to the novel, and Conrad refuses to let them off the hook of moral responsibility by suggesting that they are completely controlled by external events. What happens instead is that his treatment of these characters shows the novel's subtle interplay between public and private worlds, between political process and moral response.

The lack of positive moral and intellectual pressures in Sulaco—the kind of pressures which, in Conrad, are typically found on board ship—results in the creation of ripe examples of Conrad's favourite human foible: unrestrained egotism. The tendency of minor characters such as Montero, Corbelán, and Viola to show an egotism symbolised by a solipsistic attitude to time has already been suggested. Major characters in Nostramo are similarly but more subtly corrupted, and their flawed attitudes to time result in serious consequences: two of them die during the course of the novel and a third undergoes a spiritual death for reasons symptomised by their temporal disfunctions. Although their egotism is exaggerated or exposed by the course of economic and political events in Sulaco, it would be unfair to claim that they are corrupted by the mine; rather the mine is a catalyst, encouraging the creation of spiritual grotesques.

What Gould, Holroyd, Decoud, and Nostramo have in common is that

they are all outsiders or intruders and are therefore capable of regarding Sulaco as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Holroyd, off-stage for most of the novel, regards Costaguana both as another addition to his financial empire and also as a fruitful field for (Protestant) missionary endeavours. Nostromo and Decoud have remained in the country mainly because it serves their private ambitions: Nostromo wants to get rich and to make a name for himself; Decoud wants Antonia and readily admits that his desire for her is the lever behind his political schemes. Even Gould, technically a native Costaguanan, has returned to his country to fulfill a private obsession. Conrad stresses Gould's real alienation from the land of his birth by pointing out that "He looked more English than the last arrived batch of young railway engineers, than anybody in the hunting field pictures in the numbers of Punch reaching his wife's drawing room two months or so after date...he...went on looking thoroughly English even on horseback" (pp. 47-48).

Like many of the other characters in the novel, Gould is an idealist whose ideals have become perverted. His readiness to commit himself to the mine itself as a kind of redemptive force becomes an all-consuming passion which turns him into a sterile (his marriage, not surprisingly, is childless) and cold figure. In the person of Charles Gould, Conrad centres his most trenchant criticism of the idea of action. He describes the underlying motive behind Gould's turning towards the mine after his father's death thus: "This consideration [his father's death], closely affecting his own identity, filled his breast with a mournful and angry desire for action. In this his instinct was unerring. Action is consolatory. It is the enemy of thought and the friend of flattering illusions. Only in the conduct of our action can we find the sense of mastery over

the Fates. For his action the mine was obviously the only field" (p. 66).

Gould's instinctive but dangerous desire for action is reflected in his attitude to time. He is set in a pattern of behaviour which is inherently future-oriented: although he must live in the present, he has lost his ability to respond to it except in terms of future expectations. Actions which he considers degrading (the need to grease the palms of local officials, for example) are carried out because he is able to consider them only a means to future success. In terms of his own life, he is always impatient with the present: as we see him in the novel he is always in a hurry, always on the point of rushing off for the mine (pp. 69, 112, 505). Gould, one suspects, is suffering from an extreme case of what modern psychologists have come to call "deferred expectations."

While Gould's response to time has political ramifications (the qualities which limit him as a human being make him a successful entrepreneur), it is essentially personal: he never theorises or philosophises about time and indeed seems unready to consider the repercussions of his actions. Holroyd's response to time, in contrast, is both instinctual and theoretical, personal and impersonal. The impersonal and theoretical side of his attitude to time is shown in something he says to Gould about the future of Costaguana: "Of course, some day we shall step in. We are bound to. But there's no hurry. Time itself has got to wait on the greatest country in the whole of God's universe. We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics, and religion, from Cape Horn clean over to Smith's sound, and beyond too, if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole" (p. 77).

The political matrix of this speech is, of course, the theory of manifest destiny—and, incidentally, Holroyd uses the word "destiny".

twice within the succeeding paragraph. While this is the kind of self-exposure which makes one admire Conrad's political astuteness, more immediately important is the way in which the political response represents a misguided attitude to time. The almost comic arrogance of Holroyd's political assumptions is a result of the belief that the United States, as part of its more general superiority to the rest of the world, is beyond the mechanisms of time—or at least those mechanisms of time which constitute history.¹⁵ In terms of the processes of history, his optimism seems unwise.

Gould, meanwhile, is by no means convinced of the wisdom of Holroyd's attitude. He seems to assent to his backer's point of view because he needs Holroyd's support but also because he is certain about the sanity of his own attitudes: "Nobody else's vast conceptions of destiny could diminish the aspect of his desire for the redemption of the San Tomé mine. In comparison to the correctness of his aim, definite in space and absolutely attainable within a limited time, the other man appeared for an instant as a dreamy idealist of no importance" (p. 78).

Although Holroyd's attitude to time is conditioned by external pressures—he is after all almost a parody of the American man of affairs—it is also personal and instinctual. The chief engineer of the railway points out the source of Holroyd's buoyancy and at the same time suggests one of the links which joins Holroyd and Gould together: "They understand each other's imaginative side. One is thirty, the other nearly sixty, and they have been made for each other. To be a millionaire, and such a millionaire as Holroyd is like being eternally young. The audacity of youth reckons upon what it fancies: an unlimited time at its disposal; but a millionaire has unlimited means in his hand—which is better. One's time

on earth is an uncertain quantity, but about the long reach of millions there is no doubt" (p. 317). Holroyd's belief that the United States is outside time is thus complemented (at least according to this observer) by a belief that he himself is in some measure in control of time. Because he sees himself as unaffected by time, all his investments, including that in Costaguana, are in a sense investments in eternity. Gould has jocularly referred to him earlier in the novel as though he were God—although from Gould's own standpoint he is more of a deus ex machina—and a part of Holroyd's investment in the future is his desire to see the religious conversion of the Sulacans to a "purer form of Christianity" (that is, Protestantism).

While in some ways Holroyd seems to be an heroic, even superhuman figure, his financial arrogance involves, more vulgarly, a belief in the possibility of buying time. In his hubris he expects to control events without being controlled by them. While Holroyd behaves as though he were trading in eternities, Conrad notes wryly that he is "the same to whom the doctors used the language of horrid and veiled menaces" (p. 76). In reality he is very far from immortal. His tendency, like Gould, to see life as a continual process of thrusting forward towards a goal also reflects ironically upon his pretensions to deity: his version of eternity is only the present writ ever larger. Unlike God, he is in no sense outside the mechanisms of time.

The wrong-headedness of the attitudes to time (and of course to life in general) of both Gould and Holroyd is expressed in the novel through the responses of Emilia Gould. She meditates towards the end of the story upon the results of her husband's actions and her own: "Had anyone asked her of what she was thinking, alone in the garden of the Casa, with her

husband at the mine and the house closed to the street like an empty dwelling, her frankness would have had to evade the question. It had come into her mind that for life to be large and full, it must contain the care of the past and of the future in every passing moment of the present. Our daily work must be done to the glory of the dead, and for the good of those who come after" (pp. 520-21). Mrs. Gould's vision of time is a kind of moral corollary of Bergson's experiential theory of durée: she believes that time as lived should consist of a rhythm of human concerns which overlap each other as do the sense impressions of Bergson's temporal continuum. More simply, time should be experienced holistically (in this sense we, like God, are capable of experiencing more than one moment in time) rather than unidirectionally.

Nor is the problem merely an abstract one. Gould's peculiar form of egotism has blighted his life with physical and emotional sterility. Although he loves his wife in his own fashion, his attachment to the mine is a "subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was no longer the mistress of his thoughts" (p. 365). She, in turn, is forced to console herself with the emotionally crippled Monygham. Her frustrated maternal instincts (their marriage is childless) find an outlet in her response to the silver. The imagery used to describe the casting of the first ingot even suggests the birth of a child: "She had seen the first spongy lump of silver yielded to the hazards of the world by the dark depths of the Gould Concession; she had laid her. . . hands upon the first silver ingot turned out still warm from the mould" (p. 107). There is a similar perverse maternal quality in her attitude to her husband. At moments of tenderness she tends to think of him as a "poor boy" (pp. 62, 71, 521) and even at one point smooths his cheek "as if he were a little boy".

(p. 208). Emilia Gould's words suggest, although affectionately, a recognition of her husband's irresponsible emotional immaturity. Although apparently more hard-headed, he is like Lord Jim in his inability to develop as a result of the pressures of time; despite his continual attempt to push forward through time, he remains at an emotional stasis, unable or unready to face the results of his actions. Indeed his emotional petrification suggests the literal state of the statue to which he is compared (pp. 48-49).

While Emilia does criticise Holroyd's attitudes directly, the most telling criticism she provides is an unconscious one and is dramatised through their contrasted attitudes to the statue of the Madonna at the top of the staircase in the Casa Gould. Emilia is linked, factually, imaginatively, and thematically with the statue by the narrator. When she first moves into the house, the Madonna is one of the things she most likes about her new home (p. 68); later, on her return from Europe, it "seemed to welcome her with an aspect of pitying tenderness" (p. 505)—presumably because Gould is once again leaving for the mine. Emilia herself, on her early journeys with her husband has "her face powdered white like a plaster cast" (or a plaster saint?) and is followed by a muleteer with "his hat set far back, making a sort of halo for his head" (pp. 86-87). Furthermore, she is treated by the other characters in the novel as though she were a plaster saint: Viola regards her as a "benefactress" (he uses the spectacles she has given him to read his Bible), and his daughter looks upon her as an "angel"; more explicitly Monygham's devotion to Mrs. Gould suggests the kind of worship normally accorded statues of the Virgin: "the sight of that woman. . .suggested ideas of adoration, of kissing the hem of her robe" (p. 513).

Holroyd, meanwhile, looks "awfully solemn" at the sight of the statue. His reaction to it is, most obviously, that of a Puritan to the fact of idolatry. Mrs. Gould reminds us, however, that there is more than one kind of idolatry: "Mr. Holroyd's sense of religion . . . was shocked and disgusted at the tawdriness of the dressed-up saints in the Cathedral—the worship, he called it, of wood and tinsel. But it seemed to me that he looked upon his own God as a sort of influential partner, who gets his share of profits in the endowment of churches." He too, she points out ironically, has a religion, the "religion of silver and iron" (p. 71). Emilia Gould's criticism of his perversion of Christianity into a kind of celestial profit-sharing suggests a deep-rooted antipathy between the two characters, or at least between that portion of their minds which is brought to the surface by the sight of the Madonna.

In suggesting a sympathetic relationship between Emilia Gould and the statue, Conrad is also associating her with a holistic and rhythmical vision of time, that of traditional, pre-reformation, Western society. Sulaco, behind Europe in everything else, is also behind Europe in its attitudes to time, and still retains something of this older attitude. As the novel repeatedly insists, the social organisation of Sulaco is old-fashioned, even feudal: men still plough with oxen and wooden ploughs (p. 87), and the interior is unaffected by the gradual modernizing of the coast towns. The Madonna is directly associated with traditional temporal rhythms because the main measure of passing time in rural areas of Roman Catholic countries was the ringing of the Angelus bell three times a day to call the faithful to worship. The Angelus itself describes the descent of the angel Gabriel to Mary, and the daily activity thus contains regular reminders of the opening act of the Christian drama. This also means

that the perception of time is modified: each day lived within this religious pattern is not a discrete entity but the ritual repetition of Christ's incarnation.¹⁶

More exact means of measuring time were to a large degree the result of the industrial revolution and its need for a means of measuring the hours of labour other than by the rural formula of "dawn to dusk". As Gerald Whitrow explains, the growth of capitalism produced not only new means of measuring time but a different attitude to its value: "The linear concept of time was fostered by the mercantile class and the rise of money economy. For as long as power was concentrated in the ownership of land, time was felt to be plentiful and was associated with the unchanging cycle of the soil. But with the circulation of money, the emphasis was on mobility. The tempo of life was increased, and time was now regarded as something valuable that was felt to be slipping away continually. . . Men were beginning to believe that 'time is money' and that one must try to use it economically."¹⁷

This latter attitude to time is of course epitomised in Holroyd's behaviour. He is prepared to deal with his investment in Sulaco himself—perhaps as a kind of hobby—but he devotes precisely twenty minutes a month to the affairs of this far-off country (p. 116), twenty minutes representing, presumably, the amount of time it is "worth". His subordinates are a little surprised at even this expenditure of time: in their terms of reference, even twenty minutes of attention is excessive for something so trifling. When Holroyd visits Sulaco it is his first holiday for many years and is undertaken at the instigation of his doctors (p. 70): even then he makes the visit to the mine an excuse for the holiday, as if leisure were something slightly sordid, needing to be

redeemed by a solid financial motive.

Thus we may recognise in Holroyd's "awfully solemn" glance at the statue of the Madonna a response of instinctive hostility—cultural rather than religious—to a vision of reality and a way of looking at time which he does not share. Within the novel, the traditional, rhythmic, cyclical attitude to time (which is already being undermined: the "wild" Indians who work the mine are neatly organised into shifts, and the railroad crosses the land) has its most emphatic symbolic representative in the person of Emilia Gould. Her personal vision of time as requiring the integration of past, present, and future (as opposed to one which is relentlessly linear and future-oriented) has already been outlined. While she is able to express her feelings about her husband's misguided attitude to time, if only to herself, her only overt reaction to her half-conscious hostility to Holroyd's attitude is to feel protective towards the statue which symbolises her own understanding of time.

Just as Nostramo encourages us to see Holroyd and Gould as "paired" characters, paired that is by having an enterprise in common together with attitudes to time which are similar, so too Decoud and Nostramo are "paired", rather more arbitrarily this time, by their journey in the lighter, which is the indirect cause of the destruction of them both. But they are alike in more serious ways too, and, even before the lighter episode, Nostramo has, for reasons which are not entirely clear to Decoud, come to regard him as a friend (p. 248). One reason which Decoud suggests is that "[Nostramo] like me has come casually here to be drawn into the events for which his scepticism as well as mine seems to entertain a sort of passive contempt" (p. 246). Decoud is however projecting on to Nostramo qualities of character which are his own. What Decoud considers scepticism

(Nostramo's love of reputation and readiness to consider his own qualities of personality as having a cash value) is in fact its opposite: an intense naïveté.

Nevertheless, there are more genuine similarities between the two men. Both are psychologically and culturally isolated. Decoud, the sceptic, has never been truly at home anywhere. Even his affectations are rootless, and the would-be Frenchman has "a Frenchified—but most un-French—cosmopolitanism" (p. 152). Nostramo is almost equally rootless, a sailor who has left the sea, an orphan, and a displaced Italian.

Because of this underlying similarity between the two men, the odd conjunction of two temperamental opposites in a dangerous situation is less arbitrary than it at first seems. There is of course a perfectly good reason within the story for their journey: Nostramo as the incorruptible servant of the state must save the silver, and Decoud must save himself. Yet their journey, in the dark, with a cargo of precious metal, surely cries out for interpretation on a symbolic level. One element in this symbolic pattern is their isolation in the "black poncho" of the Gulf. Whatever its necessity in terms of the mechanics of the plot, the Gulf acts as a concrete metaphor for the moral isolation which has characterised both of their lives up to this point. There is of course an element of cooperation in their journey, but because of the darkness and the necessity for silence both men are effectively alone and are forced back upon their own thoughts. Decoud develops an increasing sense of unreality, and Nostramo becomes steadily more irritated at the weight of responsibility he is expected to bear.

Although the men are isolated from the community and each other, they nevertheless carry with them the fate of the community. If the rebel

forces capture the silver they will have the means of pursuing the war and making their own fortunes; if they fail, they may well be deserted by their unruly forces. Sotillo in particular shows by the ruthlessness of his actions a repeated awareness that his fate is bound up with that of the silver: in his keenness to find it he neglects to take rudimentary precautions for his own defence. But the urgency with which the silver is removed testifies also to its symbolic importance for the leaders of Sulaco. If the rebels capture even one load of the silver, they will have asserted ownership over the province and the mine, and, as Dorothy van Ghent points out, Conrad makes full use of the folkloristic and mythical connotations of precious metals to suggest the identity of the treasure with the life of the community.¹⁸

With the silver, as representatives of the community, are Decoud and Nostromo. Odd couple that they first seem, they nevertheless act as a metonymic extension of social and economic relationships in the community. Nostromo has long been—in one of his many roles—protector of the silver; moreover he is involved in just about every episode connected with the safety of the community. His choice as conductor of the silver is thus an extension of our expectations. As he bitterly complains, it is "siempre Nostromo" (p. 461). Decoud himself, by bringing a cargo of rifles to Sulaco and then taking on the role of "journalist of Sulaco" has, willy-nilly, become a focus for the political hopes of the country. If Nostromo is the active body of the community, Decoud is its mind. To recognise, as Claire Rosenfield does in the two men, something similar to the "culture heroes" of epic is also to understand that their eventual failure is not merely a private tragedy but a challenge to the integrity of the community.¹⁹

Neither man theorises about time, and neither seems especially conscious of it (although Nostromo does complain occasionally about the fact

that time is passing him by without reward). Yet the traumas which both men undergo after the loss of the lighter result from a process best described as a fall out of time, similar to that which Razumov undergoes in Under Western Eyes. This "fall" is signalled initially by their loss of sensation in the Gulf: "The change from the agitation, the passions and the danger, from the sights and sounds of the shore, was so complete that it would have resembled death had it not been for the survival of his [Decoud's] thoughts. In this foretaste of eternal peace they floated vivid and light" (p. 262). The boat itself moves only as fast as "a crawling beetle tangled in the grass," and time seems to cease as their movement is suspended. Indeed in one sense time does cease, since the measure of change by which we normally recognise the existence of time has ceased. This fall out of time is both Conrad's way of artistically justifying his characters' relapse into varieties of solipsism and also, paradoxically, of symbolising their rebirth.

Decoud, alone on the tiny island, is "reborn" into a new world of unfeatured dullness and obstinate silence, a world in which "the affectations of irony and scepticism have no place." The emotional isolation of the journey through the Gulf is translated into a physical isolation, and it is this isolation which destroys Decoud since he cannot bear solitude, a state "which only the simplest of us are fit to withstand." Eventually, his inability to act breaks down Decoud's sense of individual reality: "After three days of waiting for the sight of some human face, Decoud caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality. It had merged into the world of cloud and water, of natural forces and forms of nature. In our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which

we form a helpless part. Decoud lost all belief in the reality of his action past and to come" (p. 497). Decoud represents in graphic form a favourite Conradian type: the isolated individual. In particular he has some of the lineaments of the later and more serious-minded Axel Heyst in whom inability to act is a philosophically-determined condition rather than a contingent state. Within the novel, Decoud's lack of certainty about his own reality puts him at the opposite pole from Mrs. Gould, the only major character with an assured sense of her own existence within a temporal continuity.

Decoud's problem in fact is that as a sceptic, one who refuses to take anything seriously, he can discover no intrinsic value in his own existence. Under normal conditions he gains a sense of individuality through social contracts which reassure him that he is what he thinks he is and through activity. Without people, and without structured activity, he falls apart. To put it another way, he commits suicide because he cannot face up to structureless time.

Nostramo too goes through a process of rebirth, beginning in the darkness of the Gulf and being completed during his lengthy sleep in the fort. Conrad is fairly explicit about the change which takes place within him: "Nostramo woke up from a fourteen hours' sleep and rose full length from his lair in the long grass. He stood knee-deep among the whispering undulations of the green blades with the lost air of a man just born into the world. Handsome, robust, and supple, he threw back his head, flung his arms open, and stretched himself with a slow twist of the waist and a leisurely growling yawn of white teeth, as natural and free from evil in the moment of waking as a magnificent and unconscious wild beast. Then in the suddenly steadied glance fixed upon nothing from under a thoughtful

frown, appeared the man" (pp. 411-12). Nostromo's physical isolation, unlike Decoud's, is temporary: within a day of his return he has been sent off on the desperate ride to Cayta, his status in the community once again confirmed. But the animalistic imagery of the passage above suggests that Nostromo has regressed. He is—although not necessarily entirely consciously—trying to reverse evolution, to turn his internal clock backwards in order to avoid the responsibilities and balanced judgments required of civilised man.

The reason for Nostromo's regression is his sense of betrayal, a sense which grows during the perilous passage on the lighter and is accelerated by his meeting with Monygham a short time after his awakening. Nostromo is angry because Monygham shows so little interest in the fate of the silver; Monygham of course takes it for granted that the treasure is sunk. This incident epitomises for Nostromo the manner in which he has been treated, and indeed his annoyance is in many ways justified. Nostromo's exploitation does not take the form primarily of economic oppression; his indispensability presumably means that he can command a fair price for his services. What is more the Europeans regard Nostromo as "incorruptible" and as an indispensable part of the economic and political success of the province. The word "incorruptible" (apart from its ethical meaning) implies that Nostromo is like those metals (silver for instance) which do not decompose: he too is expected not to be subject to the ravages of time but to be precisely the same from day to day, year to year.

But this is part of the problem. The admiration of the Europeans for him is the admiration one has for a reliable piece of merchandise or a useful tool, and, like a tool, Nostromo is frequently "leant". (as the narrator notes) to the other Europeans by Captain Mitchell. His reification

takes another more subtle form too. Like Mrs. Toodles in Dickens' Dombey and Son, he is deprived of his own name—Fidanza—in favour of one foisted upon him by his employers, a name that is as Viola's wife complains "properly no word" (p. 23), a name which literally translated means simply "our man." It is not, incidentally, until Nostromo has burnt his boats by becoming a thief that the narrator begins to refer to him by his true name.

Nostromo's indispensability is presented not only through the words and actions of the main characters; it is also enacted in the structure of the novel. We continually run into Nostromo at important moments in Sulaco's history—guarding Ribiera from the mob, keeping an eye on Viola and his family, acting as camp-master for the railway company, guiding Sir John into Sulaco, conveying messages to Hernandez, finally making the all-important ride to Cayta. Conrad even asserts Nostromo's omnipresence by having him turn up in the text even when he is not performing any particular function: he drifts into sight for example as the party leaves the yacht (p. 115) and later as Decoud and Antonia talk (p. 161). So central is Nostromo to the telling of the story that Conrad even manages to build a lengthy section of the narrative out of the mere mention of his name. Monygham's disagreement with the common estimate of Nostromo's worth—"It was impossible . . . to throw doubt upon that statement, unless, indeed, one were a bitter, eccentric character like Dr. Monygham" (p. 44)—acts as a means of introducing the whole complex narrative web of the Goulds' relationship with Sulaco.

Perhaps even more important in effecting our understanding of Nostromo is the suggestion enforced upon the reader through the novel's chronological structure, that Nostromo and his behaviour are predictable. Early in the novel we are assured that Giorgio's hotel escaped damage in the riot

through Nostromo's intervention (p. 15) before the fact of that intervention is described (p. 20-21). Similarly, the safe arrival of Sir John (with Nostromo's aid) is described (p. 35) before we hear Nostromo's promise to transport him safely (p. 43). The most blatant example of this chronological reversal is Captain Mitchell's mention of the famous ride to Cayta—upon which the present existence of an independent Sulaco depends—several pages before he describes seeing and hearing Nostromo board the train which is to take him to the railhead (p. 483). This reversal in fictional presentation of the normal order of action and result, together with the pervasive presence of Nostromo throughout the novel, is a reflection of the "blanco" view of events. Nostromo is, apparently, such a stable force in the uncertain world of Sulaco that his deeds can be assumed in advance to be successful. It is precisely this fact of being taken for granted, a fact enacted for the reader through the narrative structure, which annoys Nostromo in his conversations with Decoud and Monygham and which causes his defection from the standards of behaviour which he has previously followed.

The fact that Nostromo's rebirth takes place after the lighter episode is a powerful hint that he too, like Decoud, needs the reassurance of a diurnal pattern of normality to confirm him in his own existence. Having lost touch with the realities of day-to-day existence, the temporal exigencies which impose a curb upon his magnificent egotism, he discovers knowledge of a primal kind. He is described as having "tasted the dust and ashes of the fruit of life into which he had bitten deeply in his hunger for praise" (p. 416). The biblical image through which his disillusionment is described enforces the earlier description of Nostromo as a new Adam ("a man just born into the world . . . natural and free from

evil"), but the Adamic parallel is of course ironic. However justified Nostromo's resentment of the Europeans is, his new innocence is a corrosive force involving the loss of that naïve egoism which has been his salient quality. Impelled by the primitive anger of his sense of betrayal he continues to act with the animal cunning which causes his death. He is shot down in the night like a prowling beast.

The death of Decoud and the eventual downfall of Nostromo result ostensibly from a disorientation triggered by a loss of diurnal reality. On a deeper level, though, their problem is a lack of that internal fortitude which is capable of imposing a sense of structure upon time. (Gould and Holroyd have an opposite problem: an excessive desire to control time.) Thus there is really nothing erratic or "unfair" (Jim's term) in their deaths: the fate of both men is a logical outcome of the characters which they have developed. Furthermore their eventual fate is not an entirely private matter. Precisely because Decoud and Nostromo have already been established as representatives of the community, their failure to survive their "test" must be regarded as a challenge to those community standards which inhere in them. Nostromo's character, after all, however much naive egoism it may contain, has in part been created by the expectations foisted upon him by his European patrons. More subtly, the underlying cause of Decoud's death is his having been caught up in what he himself calls the "opera-bouffe" world of Costaguanan politics. If the two men are indeed "culture heroes," their fate suggests an essential rottenness in the culture they represent.

NOTES

¹Ben Kimpel and T. C. Duncan Eaves, "The Geography and History in Nostramo," Modern Philology, 56 (1958), 49-54; Hartley S. Spatt, "Nostramo's Chronology: The Shaping of History," Conradiana, VIII (1976), 37-46; Guerard "summarises" the novel but begins in the narrative present and avoids any reference to Costaguana's past.

²See W. R. Martin, "Charting Conrad's Costaguana," Conradiana, VIII (1976), 163-68.

³Antony Price in Chronological Looping in Nostramo (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Library, 1973), pp. 7-11, points out the general difficulty of dating events during the revolt because of the contradictory nature of the information provided.

⁴Quoted in George Dennis O'Brian, Hegel on Reason and History (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 11. The distinction has become a commonplace. See for example Ronald Nash, Preface to Ideas of History, Vol. 1 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969.)

⁵One sceptical voice which may have affected Conrad's concept of history is that of Thomas Carlyle to whose Frederick the Great he alludes familiarly in a letter to Edward Garnett (Letters, p. 213). In "On History" in Carlyle: Selected Works, Reminiscences and Letters, ed. Julian Symons (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 47-58, Carlyle argues that the tendency of history is to classify the unclassifiable and to pretend to have discovered causal chains where none exist. Mitchell is perhaps the character in Nostramo most affected by this tendency. Ernest Bevan, Jr., expands on the scepticism^{which} which Conrad treats the concept of history in "Nostramo: The Permanence of the Past," Conradiana, X (1978), 63-71.

⁶Joseph Conrad, Nostramo, Vol. IX of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 235.

⁷Conrad may have been thinking of Carlyle's assumption in On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History that history is the study of the lives of great men, although the idea had wide currency in the nineteenth century and, at a popular level, into the twentieth. E. H. Carr in What is History? (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), p. 53,

comments, "The editor of a series of popular history text-books, started after the Second World War, invited his authors 'to open up a significant historical theme by way of the biography of a great man'; and Mr. A. J. P. Taylor tells us in one of his minor essays that 'the history of modern Europe can be written in terms of three titans: Napoleon, Bismarck, and Lenin'".

⁸Baines, p. 362.

⁹The dissenting voices have included those of Schopenhauer, Spengler, and Toynbee.

¹⁰Irving Howe comments on the cyclicity of Nostramo in Politics and the Novel (1957; rpt. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), p. 101: "Though Conrad would have been alarmed to hear this, Nostramo verifies, in the limited way a novel can verify anything, Leon Trotsky's theory of "the 'permanent revolution.'"

¹¹"They invested it with a protecting and invincible virtue as though it were a fetish made by their own hands. . . . It never entered the alcalde's head that the mine could fail in its protection and force" (p. 398).

¹²The OED stresses the idea of spiritual rebirth, as the basic meaning of "regenerate" (1971). If Gould is in some sense a Christ figure, then it hardly seems surprising that Nostramo who is one of the main means by which he rises to power should be called "Gian' Battista." His surname, "Fidanza", in Italian means "Trust" or "Confidence."

¹³As Howe tends to (p. 105) in arguing that the novel provides a fictional premonition of Batista's rise to power in Cuba. See also Laurence Lerner's comment in "Conrad the Historian," The Listener (April 15, 1965), p. 556: "Conrad here produced the finest Marxist novel ever written."

¹⁴John Palmer (p. 149) makes the most damning claim: "The novel fails repeatedly to dramatise the issues with which it is centrally concerned."

¹⁵One source of Holroyd's assumption is the commonplace supposition among early American Colonists that their situation in the wilderness was a typological replay of that of the Jews in the Old Testament: they were, in Cotton Mather's words "a Colony of Chosen People." See Marcus Cunliffe, The Literature of the United States (1954; rpt. with revisions Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1968), p. 28.

¹⁶In that it repeats symbolically a sacred act, the Angelus is a ritual, just as the keeping of the Sabbath is. See Eliade, pp. 22-23

¹⁷The Nature of Time (1972; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1975), p. 19.

¹⁸"Nostromo" in Joseph Conrad, ed. Frederick R. Karl (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), pp. 45-46, 57.

¹⁹Rosenfield, pp. 59-63

Chapter Four

THE SECRET AGENT AND UNDER WESTERN EYES

The terrorist and the policeman both come from the same basket. Revolution, legality—counter moves in the same game; forms of idleness at bottom identical.

—The Professor in The Secret Agent

I have decided to treat The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes together since both have plots which deal with anarchist violence and protagonists who are double agents. Conrad's concern with this new area of subject matter in the years following the writing of Nostramo is suggested by the fact that two of the tales in A Set of Six (1908) are directly concerned with anarchist themes. One of these two stories, "The Informer," deals with a double agent who, like Razumov, betrays himself through love of a girl and contains a character (the Professor) who also turns up in The Secret Agent (1907). The protagonist of the other story, "An Anarchist," is an unusually straightforward example of that typically Conradian character—the basically decent individual who becomes involved in a course of action which seems to force itself upon him in a moment of weakness.

Both novels are political fictions in a more overt—although not necessarily more profound—sense than is Nostramo. Neither The Secret Agent nor Under Western Eyes (1911) offers anything to distract us from the progress of the political fable. There is none of the exotic quality which at first seems to temper the moral immediacy of Nostramo; both novels deal instead in the gritty realities of European urban life. Nor is the

difference merely one of setting. Both The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes are primarily novels of interview and dialogue: there are few if any of the visually impressive and symbolically effective set scenes (the passages which describe the gulf, the street battle, the voyage by Decoud and Nostromo, Decoud's experience on the Isabel, the descriptions of the mine before and after its exploitation) which crowd the pages of Nostromo. At the risk of over-simplifying, they are novels in which sound rather than sight is the dominant sense. What is more, the existence of a powerful narrative voice in these two later novels signals a movement away from literary impressionism towards a more structured artistic stance in which the reader's participation in creating the experience of the novel becomes unnecessary.

Despite these differences in technique, Conrad is concerned in The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes, as he is in Nostromo, to symbolize the irresponsibility or moral dishonesty of political groups through the attitudes to time of their adherents. A major difference in the two later novels is that Conrad examines the shortcomings of identifiable political organisations rather than those of a whole society. Despite his habitual readiness to see all ideologies as motivated by egotism or personal inadequacy ("The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds."¹) these two novels show a greater understanding than is present in Nostromo of the manner in which ideologies are predicated upon assumptions about the nature of time. While the major focus of both The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes is upon the revolutionaries, a major ironic recognition in both cases is that the forces of reaction or law and order are in fundamental senses similar to those they oppose. Once more it is through common attitudes to time that this congruence is established.

In neither novel does the political concern overcome Conrad's interest in the human comedy. As in Nostramo, politics and personality are seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive—as indeed we might expect from Conrad's comments on "personal impulses." But individual lives not only epitomize the ideological structures of which they are a part; they also function independently. The instinctive time sense of individuals in The Secret Agent in particular often contrasts with their conscious political attitudes. While the ironic tone and structure of The Secret Agent discourage involvement with any individual character, the focus of Under Western Eyes is as much on the protagonist as on the political fable. As in Lord Jim, the central character betrays the inadequacy of his response to moral stress through his attitude to time. Both novels, furthermore, demonstrate a concern with what might be called existential time: that is, the experience of time as lived as opposed to our intellectual apprehension of it.

Finally, as in earlier novels, time is important in these two works as dramatic process as well as thematic product. In both novels the chronological shaping of the plot provides an effective counterpoint to the events which take place within the fiction. Central to the experience of The Secret Agent are the "holes in time and place" which the plot contains, while the single chronological gap in Under Western Eyes enacts for the reader the dilemma of the central character.

My consideration of The Secret Agent is necessarily brief since it is the only one of the major novels which has been fairly widely recognised to be "about" time. Articles by Avrom Fleishman and R. W. Stallman (closely echoed by Claire Rosenfield in her archetypalist study of Conrad) argue that

a central theme of the novel is the attempt to destroy time itself in the symbolic guise of Greenwich observatory. Fleishman suggests that the substance of the plot is an attempt to destroy the historical order of time by blowing up the first meridian but believes that "the novel proposes a vision of time beyond history." Stallman agrees with this general argument and suggests ingeniously that time itself is the "secret agent" of the title, continually betraying human hopes and intentions.²

At the centre of any discussion of the time theme in The Secret Agent must be the gloating explanation of the planned outrage by Vladimir, Verloc's new contact at the embassy: "'Murder is always with us. It is almost an institution. The demonstration must be against learning—science. But not every science will do. . . .The whole civilised world has heard of Greenwich. . . .Yes,' he continued with a contemptuous smile, 'the blowing up of the first meridian is bound to raise a howl of execration'" (pp. 33-35). While this action is not initiated by the terrorists, it does provide a neat symbolic correlative to their aim of bringing to an end history as we know it. Karl Yundt for example provides a prophecy of apocalyptic violence in which he suggests saving the world by destroying it: "'I have always dreamed,' he mouthed fiercely, 'of a band of men absolute in their resolve to avoid all scruples in the choice of means, strong enough to give themselves frankly the name of destroyers, and free from the taint of that resigned pessimism which rots the world'" (p. 42).³

The terrorists themselves may posit a future beyond time, but, as Fleishman and Stallman both point out, their rhetoric is hollow since all of them are irrevocably bogged down in temporal realities, from the fake anarchist Verloc calculating how much time he will have left after his release from prison (pp. 247-48) to the Professor, genuine enough in his

fanaticism, who, as Ossipon reminds him, is as dependent upon his "scurvy, mangy, shabby little bit of time" as anyone else (p. 306).⁴ The only one of the revolutionaries who is genuinely above time is Michaelis, who works away at his autobiography not caring "whether the sun still shone on the earth or not" (p. 120). His belief in an ideal future dominates his life and he tries, as Claire Rosenfield suggests, "to live his timeless future in a timed present."⁵ In his lack of concern with normal temporal realities Michaelis is rather like his patron, the old lady who "had that sort of exceptional temperament which defies time with scornful disregard, as if it were a rather vulgar convention submitted to by the mass of inferior mankind" (p. 104). In both cases, however, the ironic narrative tone suggests that what we are dealing with is not transcendence but unawareness of time.

Stallman goes on to illustrate the circularity of the plot which, he claims, enacts the theme of the destruction and confusion of time itself: "The confused chronology of narrated events, by their disarrangement from time, effects a structure which is at one with the theme." Even more ambitiously he argues that plot, symbolism (in particular that of the circle), and Conrad's own commentary with its mention of the "sudden holes in space and time" which life contains (p. 85) combine to create a kind of meta-theme of cosmic proportions: the effect of the novel is to create a recognition of the unpredictability of time as lived.⁶ Nevertheless, he, like Fleishman, manages to conclude on a positive note, claiming that "the nihilism of The Secret Agent ends in a covert affirmation of the supremacy of life."⁷

If there is a weakness in such highly sophisticated treatments of the novel it lies in the fact that far from being, as Stallman suggests,

"cryptographic" the time theme is so very accessible. Most accessible of all is Vladimir's insistence that Verloc should "Go for the first meridian" (p. 37). It is questionable, however, whether these words can bear the weight which has been put upon them, since what Vladimir is really concerned with is an attack not upon a public symbol of time but upon an epitome of scientific progress. What is more, the attack, as Vladimir insists is entirely symbolic, pointed in its very pointlessness: "What is one to say to an act of destructive ferocity so absurd as to be incomprehensible, inexplicable, almost unthinkable; in fact mad?" (p. 33). Since Verloc's intention is to have Stevie leave the bomb against the Observatory wall (p. 235) it is doubtful indeed whether any serious damage would have been done. Indeed the irony is that an effect equal to that intended is achieved by Verloc's failure and Stevie's disintegration.

To assume a fictional metaphysics out of an act around which Conrad spins so many ironic layers (a reactionary diplomat encouraging a fake revolutionary to set a token explosion to encourage governments to suppress real revolutionaries) seems then rather unwise. One of the justifications of symbolic treatments of literature is (presumably) that characters in fiction, like real people, may be supposed to reveal elements of their personality through actions or words not designed towards that end. Such at least is the assumption of post-Freudian thought. The attempt to blow up the Observatory does not result from any need conscious or otherwise, and the fact that it symbolically fulfils a part of the anarchists' aim is rather too contrived to be effective.

A further problem with Stallman's argument is, as Martin Dillon complains in an unpublished dissertation, that he fails to differentiate clearly between different kinds of time. By identifying the source of time with Greenwich Observatory, Stallman misinterprets Conrad by assuming

that the Observatory has more than a symbolic importance. To Conrad, Dillon insists, "Greenwich time is a fiction, one of the illusions which aids in regularising human experience;" it is not "real" time in any useful sense of the word.⁸ Needless to say, even a serious attack on the Observatory will have no effect upon the timing of human affairs. It is not history which is being attacked but rather the comforting illusions with which we attempt to structure life.

Nevertheless Stallman's perceptive analysis of the structure of The Secret Agent is still, I feel, valid as is his belief that the structure of the novel reflects its theme. The theme which is being reflected, however, is rather less cosmic in its implications than Stallman suggests. Although the "circularity" of the narrative form—by which he means its enclosedness—tends to suggest the frustration and muffling of action, the gaps in the chronological order of events enact a different kind of experience. While the terrorists as revolutionists have an ordered theory of history leading towards the "Future of the Proletariat" (the title of the organisation) and while the police have, as Heat habitually boasts, an equally organised theory of terrorist behaviour, there nevertheless occur "in the close-woven stuff of relations between conspirator and police . . . unexpected solutions of continuity, sudden holes in space and time" (p. 85). The explosion, never treated except through flashbacks, is precisely such a hole, being completely unexpected by both sides in the game. What is more it effectively blows a hole in the continuity of the novel, dramatically enacting the shock it causes to the hubris of both groups. That this "hole in space and time" is caused by an attack on the source of scientifically-determined time is a neat—perhaps over-neat—symbolic ploy, but it is no more than that. The novel itself does not represent an attack

on Time Absolute as Stallman suggests but on the attitudes to time which epitomise individuals and groups in the novel, in particular the assumption that time can be structured according to human assumptions.

The world of Under Western Eyes, while physically larger than that of The Secret Agent, is even more morally claustrophobic. The ruthless game which is played out in the latter novel by police, terrorist, and, to some degree, foreign agitator (Vladimir) takes place against a backdrop of comparative normality. Conrad's vision of London is gloomy and habitually ironic, but there is a sense that people continue to live out their lives, unaffected by the plots and counter-plots—except of course when the explosion impinges violently on their lives. Indeed it is the imperviousness of ordinary people which horrifies the Professor: "They swarmed numerous like locusts, industrious like ants, thoughtless like a natural force, pushing on blind and orderly and absorbed, impervious to sentiment, to logic, to terror, too, perhaps" (p. 82). The Russia of Under Western Eyes is in contrast pared down to only two forces, that of the autocrats—who fulfil the function of both police and agitator—and that of the terrorists. Both sides tend to conceive the population at large as a shapeless mass to be either ignored or manipulated.

This limitation of the action to two participants allows Conrad to develop more explicitly than in The Secret Agent the assumption that the forces of law and order and the terrorists who oppose them are really birds of a feather, both functioning outside the ethical framework of normal society. Our sense of such a norm in Under Western Eyes is created by the narrator's comments, while the events are made believable (in "Western" terms) by their displacement into a land without the checks and balance of British legality.

As dramatic symbol of the near-identity of police and terrorist in Russia, we have Nikita, nicknamed Necator or "killer," a revolutionary but also a police spy. Razumov, the central character—who, incidentally, seems to penetrate Nikita's mask and is in turn distrusted by him— is only a more morally subtle version of the agent provocateur. His refusal to ingratiate himself with the terrorists together with their obtuseness about the young man who (as we recognise) is continually on the point of telling the truth about himself is an effective means of symbolising the essential similarity between the two groups: the double agent scarcely needs a mask or a disguise in a world where the lineaments of the terrorist are almost indistinguishable from those of the counter-terrorist.⁹

Conrad disclaims in the Preface to Under Western Eyes any concern with the details of Russian politics, preferring to treat "the psychology of Russia itself" and to "express imaginatively the general truth which underlies [the novel's] action."¹⁰ Without denying for a moment the accuracy of Conrad's claim that the importance of the novel lies in its expression of "general truth," it can reasonably be argued that his treatment of the two political groups is not only imaginatively convincing but far more ideologically astute than has been generally admitted. A major means by which Conrad delineates the two groups is through their attitudes to time: both anarchist and autocrat deny the habitual Western concept of time as developmental, that is as providing a structure for change. (From the hourglass to the atomic clock, methods of calculating time are, after all, measures of physical change.) The two groups, furthermore, are hostile both to Western political liberalism and to Marxism—which are structured upon European cultural suppositions about time. Instead of coming to terms with philosophies of change, they display a stubborn impracticality

about politics (at least from the point of view of a Western observer), one group attempting a cataclysmic change which ignores the rhythms of political growth, the other seeking permanently to freeze events in their present state.

As in The Secret Agent and the short stories of A Set of Six, the first group are designated "anarchists"—Conrad's habitual term for terrorists or revolutionaries. The word seems a little outmoded now, and has been since anarchism ceased to be a major force after the Russian Revolution demonstrated the success of "scientific socialism" or Marxism. But during the years prior to the writing of Under Western Eyes there would have been reason enough to fear anarchism. A series of assassinations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries together with a couple of spectacular riots had made the term "anarchist" anathema to the average householder.¹¹ Indeed the term "anarchist" had become (as "communist" was to become in the United States in the nineteen-fifties) a blanket term of abuse suitable for application to any vaguely radical political activity. Conrad, however, was not solely concerned with topicality. The fact that his revolutionaries are anarchists rather than Marxists is important in that it allows him to depict an attitude to time which is quite different from that of Marxism and which becomes the major symbolic means by which he undermines the political position of the terrorists in Under Western Eyes.

Marxism as a "scientific socialism" is distinguished from the "utopian socialism" of other and more sentimental minds by the historical determinism which it assumes.¹² Rather than expecting a gradual social amelioration through the efforts of individual reformers, it argues that events must and will follow a certain pattern because of the dialectical play of

economic forces. As Michaelis puts it in The Secret Agent, "History is dominated and determined by the tool and the production—by the force of economic conditions. Capitalism has made socialism, and the laws made by the capitalism for the protection of property are responsible for anarchism" (p. 41)—although Michaelis adds a new element, anarchism, to the dialectical process.

In this respect at least, Marxism is very much a product of Judeo-Christian patterns of thought: like Christianity it accepts that events are necessary and that they take place in a predetermined order. As Mircea Eliade puts it in The Myth of the Eternal Return, "For Marxism, events are not a succession of arbitrary accidents; they exhibit a coherent structure, and, above all, they lead to a definite end—final elimination of the terror of history—salvation." In Eliade's terminology this also means that Marxism is like Christianity in assuming an eschatological theory of history. Events not only take place in a necessary order but they also lead inevitably towards a millennium in which profane time will effectively cease: "Just as the contemporaries of a 'dark age' consoled themselves for their increased sufferings by the thought that the aggravation of evil hastens final deliverance, so the militant Marxist of our day reads, in the drama provoked by the pressures of history, a necessary evil, the premonitory symbol of the approaching victory which will put an end forever to all historical 'evil'."¹³

But this belief in the workings of history is not held by Conrad's anarchists. Their attitudes, on the contrary, are, if not anti-historical, at least a-historical. A typical response is that of Natalia Haldin when the narrator points out that other countries also have tragic pasts. She sneers, "There are nations that have made their bargain with fate. . . .We

need not envy them" (p. 114). The bargain with fate is (presumably) the acceptance of an imperfect democracy which will bring about a gradual amelioration of the social order. Natalia's rejection of the historical assumptions of Western liberalism is not perhaps surprising. Theories of gradual reform make little sense in the context of a country where, as Natalia later insists, "There is nothing to reform" (p. 133). What is more surprising is her insistence, earlier in the novel, that Russia cannot be expected to develop along the lines of dialectical materialism: "You think it is a class conflict, or a conflict of interests, as social contests are with you in Europe. But it is not that at all. It is something quite different" (p. 104). Natalia, admittedly, is not part of the central revolutionary group. But even Peter Ivanovitch, their leader, is equally scathing about Western liberal-democratic notions of political change: "There yawns a chasm between past and future. It can never be bridged by foreign liberalism" (p. 211). He, like Natalia, also makes it clear that he has no interest in Marxist theories of class conflict, vehemently rejecting what he calls the "dregs" of a people, but believing that "The peasantry of a people is not its dregs; neither is its highest class—well—the nobility" (p. 211).

The two kinds of political development which are rejected by Natalia Haldin and Peter Ivanovitch—ordered change through time (liberalism) and violent change through class conflict (Marxism)—both involve a belief in linear time and therefore in the possibility of progress or development through time. In rejecting these political stances the anarchists seem to be suggesting their preference for some kind of cataclysmic spiritual transformation of Russian society, a transformation which will overleap the progressive changes which take place in Western society. The nature of this

process—Natalia Haldin's "something quite different"—is never defined, but we may at least guess its nature through a consideration of the assumptions about time which underlie anarchism.

Peter Hughes suggests that one of the basic differences between different types of political movements—a distinction which cuts across our modern Right/Left axis of political response—is that between those who seek to turn society back to the standards of a golden age and those who instead insist upon looking forward towards a millennium.¹⁴ Marxism, it has already been suggested, is firmly planted (like Christianity) in the second of these groups. Anarchism is at first sight rather more difficult to place within such a polarised structure. On the one hand anarchists, like most revolutionists, have tended to look "forward" towards the fulfilment of their aims; on the other hand the structural assumptions behind their ideology seem to encourage them to face backward towards an idealised past. As George Woodcock has pointed out in his study, Anarchism, "In its attitude towards social development anarchism often seems to float, like Mohammed's coffin, suspended between the lodestones of an idealised future and an idealised past. The past the anarchist sees may not be the golden age of Hesiod and Plato, but it resembles that antique vision; it is a kind of amalgam of all those societies which have lived—or are supposed to have lived—by cooperation rather than by organised government. Its components come from all the world and from all history."¹⁵

Despite the internal division in anarchist thought to which Woodcock points—anarchism is, as he makes clear, a useful term for a congeries of beliefs rather than the title of a formal ideology—the assumptions of anarchists have in practice depended more on the memory of a golden age than on the prefiguration of an idealised future. One symptom of this is the attitude of the anarchist towards the primitive: "The Marxist rejects

the primitive as representing a stage in social evolution already past; for him, tribesmen, peasants, small craftsmen, all belong with the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy on the scrap heap of history. . . .The anarchists, on the other hand, have placed great hopes in the peasant. He is near to the earth, near to nature, and therefore more 'anarchic' in his reactions."¹⁶ Peter Ivanovitch's fondness for the peasantry is thus understandable, although his readiness to bracket them with the aristocracy is more suspect.

The assumption of anarchism is, of course, that the peasant will not be content to remain a landless serf. Sir Isaiah Berlin in an essay on one group of anarchists, the Russian populists of the eighteen-seventies, identifies the controlling myth behind a movement which attempted to put into practice theories about the potential of the peasantry: "The motley variety of revolutionary types . . . were all dominated by a single myth: that once the monster was slain, the sleeping princess—the Russian peasantry—would awaken and without further ado live happily for ever."¹⁷ This belief in the essential integrity of the peasant is perhaps one of the reasons for the habit of Conrad's fictional anarchists of mentally genuflecting to what Haldin calls "the bright Russian soul" (p. 30), no matter how tarnished that soul may be in reality. Ironically it is Razumov's encounter with the "bright soul" of Ziemianitch which finally ties the balance for him against Haldin and his ideology.

A further contrast between Marxist and anarchist ideas about time and change lies in the attitude of the two groups towards the future. While Marxism aims at a definable—although in practice only vaguely defined—future society, anarchism tends not to believe that history will come to a close as Marxists suggest it must with the revolution and the

withering away of the state:

Thus we see Proudhon in the Philosophie du Progres insisting that the presence of equilibrium is the inevitable complement to the unending movement in the Universe. Progress is indefinite, but it has no end, nor, in the ordinary sense, does it appear to have a goal; it is "an incessant metamorphosis," a negation of the absolute, "the affirmation of universal movement, and in consequence the negation of all immutable forms and formulae, of all doctrines of eternity, permanence, or impeccability, of all permanent order, not excepting that of the universe, and of every subject or object, spiritual or transcendental, that does not change." The formula is almost Heraclitean, and it suggests the flux of never-ending change rather than the dialectical forward movement of the Hegelians and the Marxists; it suggests a world in which history loses its rigidity in the interflow of balancing forces; it suggests contradiction as a positive and productive element, and equilibrium as a dynamic condition in a world that changes constantly and never reaches the stillness of perfection because imperfection is a cause and a consequence of its everlasting movement.¹⁸

If anarchism is a-historical, as Woodcock suggests, it is so, in large part at least, because it is based upon internal rather than external politics, upon a belief in the energy of the human spirit rather than a blind faith in the efficacy of class conflict. Peter Kropotkin expresses this belief when he writes, "Neither the crushing powers of the centralised State nor the teaching of mutual hate and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with all the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it had been nurtured by our preceding evolution."¹⁹ Kropotkin's comment suggests that anarchism is always capable of coming into existence as a political force fully formed because it is always present as an instinctual force in men's hearts. Again, the obvious contrast (as Kropotkin realises) is with Marxism which believes that an historical game plan must be followed. In

practice of course neither the Chinese nor the Russian revolution went by the book, and Marx had to be reinterpreted by Lenin and Mao-Tse Tung to justify this deviation from scriptural authority.

What is remarkable is that the autocrats in Under Western Eyes have a sense of history—or, more precisely, a hostility towards it—similar to that of the terrorists. Admittedly, it is different to talk about the autocrats' beliefs or assumptions since there is even less direct transmission of their thoughts than there is of the terrorists', and much of what we know about them must come from Razumov. This is less of a problem than it might first seem, since the arguments he produces under the pressure of extreme emotional disturbance presumably represent received rather than original opinions.

Razumov's gradually growing assurance as he walks home through the snow as to what he must do develops, the narrator notes, out of the "one great historical fact of the land" (p. 34), and it is concern for this fact which the young man uses as his justification for the act of betrayal. This phrase is impressive enough, but what Razumov means by "historical" is not what is generally meant by the word. History, it is made clear, does not carry for him the denotation of a factual series of events; rather the appeal to history is a mental stratagem designed to avoid what the Western mind habitually means by the word. Razumov's concern for history has developed through meditation not on structure but on lack of it:

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. It covered the passive land with its lives of countless people like Ziemianitch and its handful of agitators like this Haldin—murdering foolishly.

It was a sort of sacred inertia. Razumov felt a respect for it. (p. 33)

History in the Western sense of the term—that is, the disinterested attempt to discover a form or shape in the random events of the past—has yet to come into existence in Russia. Instead the country's state of self-knowledge is symbolised by the muffling and obliterating blanket of snow which, like the page of a book, has yet to be written on. The "great historical fact of the land" towards which Razumov mentally defers, is we may interpret, Russia's very lack of those elements which allow history to be written, certainty about facts and freedom of intellectual enquiry. The only "historical fact" about Russia is, paradoxically, its imperviousness to historical enquiry, an imperviousness apparently even greater than that of Sulaco.

Razumov's words clearly represent an attempt to rationalize those very qualities which Conrad himself hated about Russia. In "Autocracy and War" he describes it thus: "There is an awe-inspiring idea of infinity conveyed in the word Néant—and in Russia there is no idea. She is not a Néant, she is and has been simply the negation of everything worth living for. She is not an empty void; she is a yawning chasm open between East and West; a bottomless abyss."²⁰ The near-hysteria of this polemic is reflected within the more controlled terms of Razumov's meditation. At a level beyond the purely political, the phrase "sacred inertia" is challenge to concepts of individual and national consciousness which have become dominant in the twentieth century through the works of Henri Bergson. To Bergson, as the title of one of his books suggests, it is "Creative Evolution" which lies at the centre of human development. Statis of any kind is impossible and (as an intellectual concept) dishonest: "The universe is not made, but is being made continually."²¹

The autocrats wish to retain this state of affairs in which change

is almost impossible. Their dislike of rebellion (which would not only alter the course of events but also exist as an unshakeable historical fact) is expressed in its crudest form by General T--'s outburst (p. 51). Razumov, who even in the act of betrayal does not cease to regard himself as a thinker, is rather more ready to analyse—or perhaps create—reasons for his belief. Revolution, he decided, is unnatural since it will disturb the "sacred inertia of the land." He mentally separates himself, nevertheless, from the most hidebound of the reactionaries because he cannot believe in the need for a condition of complete stasis; rather he will await the "travail of maturing destiny" which he sees as an alternative to "revolutions with their passionate levity of action and their shifting impulses" (p. 33). He still believes in the "logic of history." but what this logic will produce is not a radical alteration of the present but rather a kind of apotheosis of it. This apotheosis will come about through "the great autocrat of the future" (p. 35). If there is to be a future age of gold it will come about not through any play of economic or political forces but through the fiat of one man.

To listen to the rhetoric of both sides, autocrats and anarchists, is to discover an essential similarity between them. Razumov, as spokesman of reaction, uses the phrase "travail of maturing destiny" to suggest an organic political process at work in Russian life. Underlying the metaphor (presumably of childbirth) is the traditional personification of Russia as a mother, a personification which he has already made use of in picturing his country as "a sullen and tragic mother hiding her face under a winding sheet" (p. 33). Such organic images are, for the autocrats, a convenient means of suggesting that the anarchists wish to alter or abort this natural process of growth. But the anarchists too

seem to believe that their kind of revolution is an organic process. Nathalie Haldin, for example, in trying to explain her views to the narrator insists, "We Russians shall find some better form of national freedom than an artificial conflict of parties—which is wrong because it is a conflict and contemptible because it is artificial" (p. 106).

This organic imagery—valuable perhaps precisely because of its imprecision—is one of the attributes of Russian life which leads the narrator to regard all of their political rhetoric as "mystic phrases [which] clothe a naive and hopeless cynicism" (p. 104). But the term "mystical" is even more aptly applied to language used by both the autocrats and the anarchists which suggests that they see political acts in religious terms. This language is the major means by which Conrad reinforces our image of the two groups as having placed themselves outside the normal currents of time.

Among the autocrats both the aging General T— and the young apostate Razumov phrase their opposition to revolution in religious terms. General T— complains, "Pray tell me what honour there can be as against rebels—against people that deny God himself—perfect unbelievers!" If rebellion is a form of heresy, return to the political fold must approximate to religious conversion. This is certainly how Razumov (or the narrator interpreting his thoughts) regards his decision to betray Haldin: "Like other Russians before him, Razumov, in conflict with himself, felt the touch of grace upon his forehead." Even his belief in the secular "autocrat of the future" takes on a distinctly Messianic tone: "The grace entered into Razumov. He believed now in the man who would come at the appointed time" (p. 34). The language of the two men is only marginally metaphorical, since church and state in Russia (in reality and in the

novel) were so closely intertwined. Metaphorically or not, the autocrats assume almost unthinkingly that the state, like the church, is a source of absolute truth and that any change must involve a threat to the integrity of this truth—or, in religious terms, heresy. To a believer in a revealed religion backed up by a sacred text and unalterable moral laws such a belief in the necessity of secular and political stasis—"sacred inertia"—is not unreasonable.

But while the autocrats condemn the anarchists in terminology borrowed from Christianity, the latter show even more of a tendency to describe their existence and destiny in religious terms. The major difference is that while the tone of the autocrats suggests that they speak as the priesthood of an established church, the language of the anarchists tends to create an image of an underground or persecuted church. Miss Haldin, upon hearing of her brother's arrest and death, immediately thinks of the prototype of all betrayals: "'Even among the apostles of Christ there was found a Judas,' she whispered to herself, but with the evident intention to be overheard by me" (p. 115). Her rather histrionic comparison of her brother to Christ is less surprising when we remember that he himself comes close to the assumption of deity. He preaches to Razumov for example in language recalling one of the parables, "You see the guests for the feast of freedom must be sought for in byways and hedges" (p. 56) and promises that a "new revelation"—in which he will presumably have a hand—will come out of Russia (p. 22).²²

If the revolutionaries are a sect like the early Christians, their priest and leader, as the narrator sardonically remarks, is Peter Ivanovitch, who is not only the "Arch-Patron of revolutionary parties" (p. 173) but also a believer in "the cult of the woman" which he practises "under

the rites of special devotion to the transcendental merits of . . . Madame de S--" (p. 125). The name of this most catholic of prelates recalls that of the apostolic leader of the early Christians, while his patronymic suggests either the "voice crying in the wilderness" or the author of the apocalypse.

Peter Ivanovitch does in fact carry out, or at least parody, the roles suggested by his name. As Peter he is not only an accepted spiritual leader but the architect of his church's expansion: it is he, incidentally, who seems to have the chief responsibility for planning the invasion of the Balkans, which is the only practical outcome of the emigrés' plotting. The description of his wandering in the wilderness is reminiscent of the deprivations of John the Baptist: "He lived on wild berries and hunted for honey. His clothing dropped off him gradually. His naked tawny figure spread tales of terror through whole districts" (p. 122). Later in the novel the narrator notices that his appearance "suggested a monk or a prophet, a robust figure of some desert-dweller" (p. 329). The "prophet" enacts the role of John the Divine by producing his own revelation, "the story of his life written by himself and translated into seven or more languages." If his own prophecies are not enough there are always those of Madam de S--, who borrows liberally from a variety of biblical sources in creating her version of the apocalypse: "Her carmine lips vaticinated with an extraordinary rapidity. The liberating spirit would use arms before which rivers would part like Jordan, and ramparts fall down like the walls of Jericho. The deliverance from bondage would be effected by plagues and by signs, by wonders and by war" (p. 223).

Conrad's treatment of Peter Ivanovitch is of course heavily ironic. The "Arch-Patron" of revolution is in reality less a patron than a

pensioner; the believer in the cult of woman exploits and bullies those whom he affects to deify; and the prophet/ascetic is a lazy voluptuary.²³ Similarly, the vatic Madame de S--, his deity-cum-follower, is a sham, motivated, as the narrator makes clear, far more by spite against those whom she feels have denied her her inheritance than by a genuine sense of outrage at the existing social order.

Nevertheless, the fact that others among the anarchists make use of religious language in contexts where our response is not automatically sceptical suggests that Conrad's aim is not simply to expose charlatans through a contrast between appearance and action. In particular Sophia Antonovna, the most impressive of Conrad's revolutionaries, seems to enact in reality the roles which Peter Ivanovitch only plays at. (The delightful irony is that within the terms of the novel Peter Ivanovitch's artificial and self-serving "cult of woman" seems to be partly justified.) Sophia explains to Razumov how she has been "for twenty years . . . coming and going, looking neither to the left nor the right" (a reference, perhaps, to Proverbs 4:27 or Joshua 1:7). Unlike Peter Ivanovitch she is a genuine missionary-teacher, sacrificing her whole life to the cause and warning Razumov that he in turn will have to "trample down every particle of [his] own feelings" (p. 245)—an attitude encouraged by Christianity. She also has a vision of the future which, like that of Madame de S--, is apocalyptic: "Crush the Infamy. A fine watchword! I would placard it on the walls of prisons and palaces, carve it on hard rocks, hang it out in letters of fire on that empty sky for a sign of hope and terror—a portent of the end . . ." (p. 263). As a sign, perhaps, of her authenticity as a revolutionary, the vision of the Millennium Conrad puts into her mouth is more forward-looking than that of Madam de S--: the latter

takes her language from the Old Testament, while the former chooses imagery closer to that of Revelation.

Although the anarchists' use of religious imagery to describe their aspirations is not automatically to be regarded—except in the cases mentioned—as an unconscious parody of the genuinely religious, it does tell us more about them than they realise. What is most revealing is that in their adoption of the language of Christianity to the purposes of radical politics it is the millennial element in religion which predominates. This, it has already been suggested, is one of the elements borrowed by Marxists from Christianity, and its attraction for them is fairly predictable: the millennium, after all, is the point in spiritual history at which the established order is overturned and a new order established. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume that the anarchists too have adopted an historically-determined view of moral/political events. But this is to misread the situation: the anarchists' use of millennial language signals not a repudiation of the a-historical element in their thinking but a reinforcement of it.

Although Christianity places the Apocalypse at a particular moment in time (it must take place after certain spiritual events have come to pass), the form in which the Apocalypse is described in Revelation is that of a vision. Vision is of its nature a-temporal: mystical experience frequently involves a loss of the sense of passing time. What the mystic sees (as well as how he sees it) also tends not to be set within a temporal matrix; that is, vision seldom relates to the immediate circumstances of the present.²⁴ Thus Revelation, as a religious vision, exists in two dimensions: the temporal (it is a vision of the last things); and the a-temporal (our imaginative apprehension of it is as a vision). It

is the latter dimension which attracts the anarchists since it reflects their own notion of political redemption. It has already been suggested that anarchists (real and fictional) tend not to believe that political change will be brought about by an historically predictable process of struggle. The cataclysmic end of mundane reality promised by Revelation reinforces their sense that political redemption is immanent for the faithful, not needing to be planned or studied for. All that matters is, as Peter Ivanovitch suggests, a fanatical belief in "a force that would move heaven and earth" (p. 129), or as Haldin apparently believed, "the power of a people's will to achieve anything" (p. 133).

Thus the religious language of the two groups, autocrats and anarchists, reflects two kinds of religious experience, religion as an organised formal structure and religion as irrational or ecstatic experience. The narrator refers to both attitudes as "mystic". While the autocrats seem to aim at a political stasis even beyond the stasis of established Christianity, the anarchists live in a perpetual mystical present, waiting for a cataclysm which will bring an end to history. Conrad treats both attitudes with a degree of sympathy—it is difficult, after all, not to feel sorry for the narrator, shut out by his very reasonableness from the ecstatic involvement with something outside themselves that the anarchists have—but expects his reader to be sceptical about the poses adopted by both groups. In practical terms quite obviously the irrationality of the two groups, an irrationality exposed through their language, has horrifying results.

As Conrad uses the attitudes to time taken by political groups as a means of epitomising their irrationality, so too he exposes the pretensions of the individuals who make up those groups by focusing upon their

responses to time. As in earlier novels, to pervert or deny the movement of time is to lose touch with the reality of experience. Most obvious in attempts to achieve timelessness is Madame de S--, whose name of course suggests, as the narrator notes, that of the eighteenth-century blue-stocking and friend of Voltaire, Mme de Staël. Her attempt to recreate the salons of her famous namesake is, in its shoddiness, rather reminiscent of Pedrito Montero's attempt in Nostramo to recreate the life of the French Second Empire. Rather than being the glittering centre of an even more glittering world, Mme de S-- lives in a decaying old mansion playing hostess to the corrupt, the sadistic, and the decrepit.

While her life-style is a half-conscious throwback to an admired past, her physical persona represents an attempt to deny the passage of time. Conrad's description of her make-up and behaviour is Dickensian in its intensity, reminding one of the earlier novelist's treatment of Mrs. Skewton in Dombey and Son. Madame de S-- has a death-like immobility and a smile "which made him [Razumov] think of a grinning skull"; she is also "a galvanised corpse," an "ancient painted mummy" (p. 215), "a wooden figure" (p. 222), and "a wooden or plaster figure" (p. 225). The dishonesty of using make-up, and the gap between intention and result in its use are of course traditional subjects of satire. But Conrad is not only mocking vanity; he is also delineating the spiritual petrification (most of the phrases quoted insist on her lack of movement) which results from an attempt to deny the natural processes of time.

The use of stasis in both the political and personal spheres in Under Western Eyes acts as a controlling image of spiritual sickness. And once again the obvious contrast is with the dynamic idea of time expressed in Bergson's works, where genuine stasis is almost inconceivable.²⁵ Peter Ivanovitch, Madame de S--'s consort and the other major object of satire

in the novel, displays a very different kind of denial of temporal development. His most famous exploit involves his escape from prison and his trek across Russia to eventual freedom. After setting off across the steppes he manages, in the space of a few weeks, to regress to a state of barbarism. Indeed so close does he come to the status of an animal that he even loses the faculty of speech. At the same time the regression is not complete. The "new" Peter Ivanovitch has developed a split personality: "For it was as though there had been two human beings indissolubly joined in that enterprise. The civilized man, the enthusiast of advanced humanitarian ideals thirsting for the triumph of spiritual love and political liberty; and the stealthy, primeval savage, pitilessly cunning in the preservation of his freedom from day to day, like a tracked wild beast" (p. 122).

His behaviour, like Madame de S--'s, has parallels in Nostramo. Both Nostramo and Peter Ivanovitch, after a fairly self-assured existence, are projected into a world which makes unexpected moral demands upon them. Both spoilt aristocrat and reliable sailor become fugitives, and for both men discovery of a primitive interior self is a necessary means of survival.²⁶ Both Nostramo's regression and his eventual acceptance back into the community take place much more quickly than Peter Ivanovitch's. The latter goes through a much more melodramatic process of reintegration or redemption in a description reminiscent of the iconographic clichés of post-revolutionary Russian poster art: "My fetters . . . were struck off on the banks of a stream, in the starlight of a calm night by an athletic, taciturn young man of the people, kneeling at my feet, while the woman like a liberating genius stood by with clasped hands" (p. 124). The comparison between the two situations goes even further: while Peter Ivanovitch literally loses the chain which binds him—of whose symbolic

associations he is well aware—Nostromo, lacking such a dramatic moment of reintegration, is perpetually bound by the "fetters" of the silver he has stolen.

The title habitually given to Peter Ivanovitch is "the heroic fugitive," and the story he tells is the primary evidence of his heroism. We may however be rather more sceptical about what he tells us than those who read the story "written by himself and translated into seven or more languages" (p. 120). His regression to savagery, like Nostromo's, is a half-deliberate attempt to avoid the responsibilities of civilized man. Whatever the pressures which turn him into a beast, it is a role which he seems to enjoy: "His temper grew savage as the days went by, and he was glad to discover that there was so much of the brute in him." At the same time the civilised human being in him, never quite lost, watches the "beast" with interest: "The wild beast was making its way instinctively eastward to the Pacific coast, and the civilised humanitarian in fearful anxious dependence watched the proceedings with awe." His hostility to humanity, Conrad makes clear, is less the result of instinctive animal behaviour than of a sophisticated and neurotic unreadiness to trust others: "In the wary primeval savage this shyness might have been natural, but the other too, the civilised creature, the thinker, the escaping 'political' had developed an absurd form of morbid pessimism, a form of temporary insanity, originating perhaps in the physical discomfort of the chain. These links, he fancied, made him odious to the rest of mankind" (pp. 122-23). Like Nostromo (with his "fetters" of silver) Peter Ivanovitch is cut off from the sympathy of mankind; but like Nostromo too he creates his own temporal alienation as a means of avoiding the complex moral demands made by one's humanity. To make oneself into a beast is, as Johnson reminds us, to avoid the pain of being human.

The truth of Peter Ivanovitch's life is hidden behind the mask which he like other characters in the novel seems to affect: "He had one of those bearded Russian faces without shape, a mere appearance of flesh and hair with not a single feature having any sort of character. His eyes being hidden by the dark glasses there was an utter absence of all expression" (p. 120). Conrad also uses featurelessness to suggest something slightly sinister in Razumov: "It was as if a face modelled vigorously in wax . . . had been held close to a fire till all sharpness of line had been lost in the softening of the material" (p. 5). The lack of facial definition of these two characters may be a suggestion of their linkage with the equally faceless and undefinable experience of Russia itself which it is part of the novel's aim to create.

A more immediate result in Razumov's case is that his age, like that of other characters in the novel, is uncertain. The narrator notes, "At that moment [his first meeting with him] it occurred to me that Razumov's face was older than his age" (p. 181). The age of Tekla, the dame de compagnie, is also confused by her appearance: while she has the figure of a young girl and "teeth, splendidly white and admirably even" she also has the face of an older woman (pp. 145-46). Sophia Antonovna meanwhile has white hair but an unwrinkled face (p. 263). Unlike Mme de S--, of course, these characters make no deliberate attempt to deny their age. Instead the manner of their lives seems to lead to a kind of dislocation of their internal clocks. Association with the "timeless" terrorist cause—or perhaps simply with Russia itself—apparently causes a disruption of even the individual sense of time.

The individual whose time sense is most profoundly distorted is Razumov himself. Although Under Western Eyes is rather reminiscent of

Nostramo in its symbolising of political attitudes through attitudes to time it is even more like Lord Jim in that its protagonist is a man who tries—unconsciously perhaps—to manipulate time to his own ends, and whose downfall is signalled by a recognition that such manipulation is bound to fail. The major difference between Jim and Razumov is that Conrad does not treat the young Russian as an aberration in a world where the rules of conduct are fairly clear; instead the narrator regards his moral failure as an epitome of the distortion of all values which typifies Russia.

At the opening of the novel, Razumov is a man of some intelligence, attempting to lead an orderly life. He is not ready, like most of his compatriots, to accept the chaos which exists around him. Where order does not exist he attempts to impose it, and he is used, as a student, to the attempt to trap ideas and experience upon a page.²⁷ Even under great pressure his desire for order is evidenced by his writing the journal which the narrator uses as the basis for the Russian portion of the novel. At the moment when Haldin intrudes upon him he has gone home planning "four hours of good work" for the prize essay which he wishes to write. His mood of easy assurance is rather similar to that of Jim in his delight at the steady movement of the Patna just before she is struck. At the same time, Razumov is not an ivory-tower intellectual nor a dreamer (like Jim) but "one of those who keep an instinctive hold on normal, practical, everyday life" (p. 10). The main flaw in his armour is the fact that he is both literally and metaphorically alone—"as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea" (p. 10). His lack of parentage means that there is a sense of artificiality about even his plans: he remembers bitterly that last year's winner of the prize

he is aiming for had at least a family to share his joy with. It also means that he has no sense of human continuity to act as a reinforcement to his individual existence. Lacking parents, "his closest parentage was defined in the statement that he was a Russian" (p. 11).

Razumov's life is, then, prior to Haldin's interruption, one of structured time and dependence upon a grasp of recurrent physical realities.²⁸ His initial response to the fact of betrayal is to insist to himself on his way back to his rooms that "Nothing would change . . . The sense of life's continuity depended upon trifling bodily impressions. The trivialities of daily existence were an armour for the soul" (p. 53). Shortly after Haldin has left his room he picks up a book but discovers that he lacks the concentration to read it. An hour or so later he tries to write something, but as the man has lost his moral integrity so the student has lost his intellectual integrity and what he produces are a series of received intellectual clichés:

History not Theory
Patriotism not Internationalism
Evolution not Revolution
Direction not Destruction
Unity not Disruption

(p. 66)

Two days later he resumes attendance at the University but fails to get any work done, discovering that "his new tranquillity was like a flimsy garment" (p. 71). The once-eager student, covering pages with notes, having been exposed to the "blank page" of Russian experience—the shapelessness and nullity which lies at the heart of Russian life—can no longer shape his thoughts on paper.

Razumov's immediate attempt to return to diurnal routine is hardly surprising in a man concerned for the maintenance of order and ready to do almost anything to ensure its continuance. Routine for him has something

of the significance which activity has for Decoud: both terms represent means of structuring time to retain the illusion of selfhood in an unsympathetic world. What is wrong with Razumov is not, of course, his desire for such a structure; his problem lies in his failure to realise that such a structure can make sense only within an existence which is—to use the Existentialist term—authentic. Razumov's life has lost its quality of authenticity through his betrayal of Haldin, and no amount of concern for the immediacies of existence can shore up the shaky edifice of his selfhood.

The first indication that the act of betrayal will continue to affect him comes about through a tiny but symbolically important event. When he looks at his watch after Haldin has left his room in order to keep track of the latter's assignment with the police, he drops it. With the sudden extinction of one of the trivialities of daily existence and, more importantly, the temporary loss of time itself, he also loses the sense of continuity on which he prides himself. Without his watch, he "looked wildly about as if for some means of seizing upon time which seemed to have escaped him altogether" (p. 65), but is reduced to relying upon the striking of the town clock to assure him that the moment of the arrest has passed.

From this point onwards time in a very real sense "escapes" Razumov. It has already been suggested that the immediate result of his actions is that the once reliable student finds his work meaningless and loses the sense of steady progress towards a meaningful goal. Furthermore, the temporal structure of life itself as well as that of his work becomes suddenly uncertain. Awakening the next day, he feels alienated from his former self and suddenly aged: "The light coming through the window seemed

strangely cheerless, containing no promise as the light of each new day should for young men. It was the awakening of a young man mortally ill, or of a man ninety years old" (p. 68). The first thing he notices is that his watch still has both hands "arrested at twelve o'clock"—half an hour before Haldin's capture. His use of the word "arrested" with reference to the watch suggests a compulsive inability to dissociate the deed from its chronological reminder.

Razumov's mind itself is, like his watch, "arrested at twelve o'clock" during the rest of his story. This is made clear when after remaining inactive during the day after the betrayal, he is awakened from his torpor the next night by the town clock: "In the calm of the hard frost outside, the clear-cut strokes of the town clock counting off midnight penetrated the quietness of his suspended animation" (p. 70). External, "real," time has not ceased to exist, but Razumov has lost the ability to make constructive use of it. A new pattern, that of the night of betrayal, has imposed itself upon him, swamping the old pattern of a time-scheme organised around units of study.

When leaving the Prince, who has helped him to resolve the problem created by Haldin, Razumov congratulates himself with the thought that "Such dangerous situations did not occur twice in the course of one life" (p. 52). Strictly speaking he is right. What he fails to realise, however, is that the event is not done with any more than Jim's failure of nerve on board the Patna is. As Jim's life becomes dominated by the memory of "twenty minutes by the watch" so Razumov's existence is henceforward controlled by the temporal pattern of the night of betrayal. What is more, because Razumov is concerned with a precise chronological moment (that of Haldin's arrest) rather than an amount of time (like Jim's twenty minutes),

the most basic of all human cycles must daily impress memory of his behaviour on his mind. Eventually even those elements in Haldin's behaviour which he has not experienced intrude themselves upon his daily life: "One afternoon, quite casually, he happened to glance at his watch. He laid down his pen slowly. 'At this very hour,' was his thought, 'the fellow stole unseen into this room while I was out. And there he sat quiet as a mouse—perhaps in this very chair'" (p. 300). Not surprisingly, at the end of the novel he must run out to meet his own fate at the exact hour of twelve o'clock: "He was the puppet of his past because at the very stroke of midnight he jumped up and ran swiftly downstairs as if confident that, by the power of destiny, the house door would fly open before the absolute necessity of his errand" (p. 362). It is a typically Conradian irony that Razumov has allowed events to intrude upon and control him precisely because he has undertaken a course of action designed to avoid that possibility.

The shift in Razumov's sensibility after the act of betrayal is symbolised (like Nostromo's) by a process of rebirth into a changed world. The process, as has already been demonstrated, had begun in the few hours after Haldin's arrest, but is later accelerated when, after his initial interview with Councillor Mikulin, he goes through a lengthy illness which involves a period of darkness and loss of orientation. The effect of this illness is, immediately, therapeutic: "[It] removed him to a great distance from the perplexing actualities . . . he seemed to himself to be existing languidly somewhere very far away from everything that had ever happened to him" (p. 298). Upon recovery, he discovers, however, that things have changed: "When he had got back into the middle of things they were all changed, subtly and provokingly in their nature:

inanimate objects, human faces, the landlady, the rustic servant-girl, the staircase, the streets, the very air" (p. 298). It is not of course the external world but its observer which has changed. As in trying to defend himself from intrusion he had lost the valuable ability to structure time, now he loses his other emotional strong point: faith in the reality of everyday things.

There is in this, as in the later events of Razumov's life, a kind of poetic justice. Indeed this is perhaps the closest of all Conrad's novels to the ethical economy of Greek tragedy. Just as Oedipus, who has prided himself upon his ability to "see" into things, is punished by loss of sight so Razumov, who as a student and thinker depends on language, is deprived of the hearing which allows participation in discourse. Before this final purgation takes place, however, he goes through a period of suffering in Geneva. One reason he can find no peace in Switzerland is suggested by the narrator's description of a Swiss couple: "I observed a solitary Swiss couple whose fate was made secure from the cradle to the grave by the perfected mechanism of democratic institutions in a republic that could almost be held in the palm of one's hand" (p. 175). The conjoined senses of "perfected mechanism" and "palm of one's hand" create the image of a watch, epitome of Swiss industry and symbol of Western temporal order. The former Razumov—the man who existed before the Haldin incident—might have been expected to react favourably to a sight reflecting European logic and precision. Now instead he is annoyed by the tepidness of Swiss life. This reaction is expressed through his vision of Lake Geneva as an imitation oil-painting: "The whole view with the harbour jetties of white stone, underlining the dark front of the town . . . had the uninspiring quality of a very fresh oleograph. Razumov turned his

back upon it with contempt. He thought it odious—oppressively odious—in its unsuggestive finish: the very perfection of mediocrity attained at last after centuries of toil and culture" (p. 203). Razumov, by accepting the Russian experience of mystical involvement in autocracy, can no longer find joy in this European world of ordered individualism and assured political values. Instead he has accepted the "blank page" of Russia as a preferred image of spiritual rectitude: better blankness than artificial precision. Immediately after this mental rejection of the "oleograph" he walks from Switzerland proper into the Chateau Morel, a Russia in miniature.²⁹

Razumov is eventually released from his limbo-like existence outside a personally-meaningful time scale. Knocked down by the tram car after being deafened by Nikita, he falls out of his dream-like existence, "smashing himself into a world of mutes" (p. 370). In the process of his suffering he escapes both from the material control of the autocrats and also from the psychological control of the Haldin incident. The "puppet of his past" has managed to break the strings of his bondage, quite literally colliding with an embodiment of the mechanically-ordered and chronologically exact (the tram runs to a schedule) Western world which he has found so repulsive earlier.

Albert Guerard regards both The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes as "transitional books in the overall movement from an eccentric to a highly popularised art."³⁰ Part of his complaint is that these two novels lack the subtle interplay between theme and technique which characterises the early Conrad. As Stallman and Fleishman have already realised, The Secret Agent does not fit Guerard's claim that it is an efficient piece of realistic fiction—and no more; they recognise in it a fine example

of Conrad's ability to reflect thematic preoccupations in the chronological structure of the plot. My reading of Under Western Eyes thus far suggests that it is a much more politically profound novel than The Secret Agent. Although many of the ethical recognitions which lie behind the two novels are similar—in particular Conrad's sense that the two ends of the political spectrum have much in common—these recognitions are enacted dramatically, imagistically, and symbolically on a much more profound level in Under Western Eyes than they are in The Secret Agent. In particular the use of a powerful and morally sympathetic central character adds greatly to our ability to focus on the political complexities of the work. At the same time it must be admitted that Under Western Eyes does not make use of its own chronological structure in the richly exploratory fashion of Lord Jim and Nostramo, nor even in the rather less complex but highly effective manner of The Secret Agent. In fact it must count as one of Conrad's most straightforward narratives, containing as it does only one major time shift, that after Mikulin's question to Razumov, "Where to?" Even then the answer to this question is hardly a mystery in the reader's mind in the same sense as Jim's actions after the Patna is holed or Verloc's before the Greenwich explosion.

Yet Mikulin's question, the shifts in time and space which follow it, and the eventual chronological looping in part four of Under Western Eyes back to Razumov's life between the question and his eventual appearance in Geneva do serve a purpose other than that of piquing the reader's curiosity. Mikulin's question is provoked by Razumov's saying that it is his intention to retire. His immediate meaning is that he wishes to leave the room. But the metaphorical sense of the word "retire" also comes into play: what Razumov really wants to do is to shuck off the complexities of

this new world of political gamesmanship and to return to his secluded life as a student. Mikulin, wiser than the young man, asks a question which as the narrator notes is not "merely topographical" (p. 293). He is of course questioning Razumov's ability to escape not from the place but from the events of which he has become a part. At first it seems that Mikulin's question is not to be answered immediately, since both scene and narrator change in part two. In fact it is this very chronological/geographical shift which answers Mikulin's question.

When, in part two, we once more meet Razumov, now in the outside world and in a new environment, we may for the moment assume that he has indeed found a means of retirement. After all, Geneva has traditionally been a kind of political sanctuary, as the references to Rousseau and Voltaire in the novel remind us. This assumption, however, is fairly short-lived. Although it is not until he writes the sheaf of papers which are to be sent to Russia (while sitting under a statue of Rousseau!) that we are completely certain about his new role in life, it has already become obvious by his attacks of guilt and self-loathing that he has not escaped the burden of his past. And this is surely the point of the time-shift. Conrad does eventually provide us with an account of the exact course of events which lead to Razumov's presence in Geneva, but this is scarcely necessary in terms of the moral dynamics of the novel. The time shift has already enacted for us a truth which the protagonist must learn: one cannot escape one's guilt by leaving behind its place of origin. Razumov's discovery is thus rather similar to Jim's, although the young Russian has to contend not with individuals who know portions of his past but rather with the inescapable influence of a whole culture.

Although Razumov has come to a part of Europe very different from

his home, in a sense he has never left Russia. From Russia proper he comes to "La Petite Russie" (p. 107) and discovers indeed a Russia in miniature. If anything, the emotional excess of Russia itself is exaggerated here since little Russia is a kind of hothouse—Conrad refers to Nikita as the "perfect flower of the terroristic wilderness" (p. ix)—populated almost entirely by exotic exiles. Little Russia thus has all the hysteria and irrationality of Russia without, to continue the metaphor, the soil of day-to-day Russian reality which gives its growth some excuse. The time-shift thus provides a sardonic answer to Mikulin's "Where to?" by showing that there is indeed nowhere for Razumov to go to and at the same time suggests that the qualities which we associate with Russia are portable. As the narrator claims (with a presumably conscious echo of Christ's words to his disciples in Matthew 18:20), "Wherever two Russians come together, the shadow of autocracy is with them" (p. 107).

Under Western Eyes shows the convergence of two kinds of thematic concern with time, the political and the personal. Lacking the habitual ironic stance of The Secret Agent in dealing with the political world, it attempts the far more subtle technique of allowing the political types to defeat themselves out of their own mouths rather than the narrator's. Conrad's recognition that political attitudes are a function of (often unconscious) assumptions about time results in his characters' rhetoric being at least as important as their actions in displaying such assumptions. Politics, for both major political groups in the novel, is predicated on the unspoken belief that time is static, and the temporal disorientation which such political perversity produces extends into the private lives of the characters—or at least the anarchists. As in Nostramo, their temporal disfunctions reflect distortedly the irresponsibility of the political milieu they inhabit, Peter Ivanovitch's cultural

regression and Madam de S--'s nostalgia for the past and attempt to conceal her age, for example, acting as a clumsy parody of the anarchists' political belief in a golden age. The tragic results of attempting to live an orderly life in a world dominated by political fanaticism are shown in the fate of Razumov whose private attempt to live a life of temporal structure is defeated by the structurelessness of the Russian ethos and whose loss of personal integrity in this process is signalled by the collapse of his ability to structure time usefully. It is Conrad's ability to unite the two worlds of public politics and private conscience in interlocked patterns of temporal symbolism which makes Under Western Eyes a more politically subtle novel than Nostromo, although one which is not less concerned with human realities.

NOTES

¹Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent, Vol. XIII of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 81. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

²Robert Wooster Stallman, "Time and The Secret Agent," in The Houses that James Built (Michigan: Michigan Univ. Press, 1961); rpt. in Joseph Conrad, ed Frederick R. Karl, pp. 59-61; Avrom Fleishman, Conrad's Politics (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 187-214; Claire Rosenfield, Paradise of Snakes (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 79-122.

³David Daiches claims, "The most disturbing parts of the book are not those dealing with the anarchists and their ideas—Conrad's contempt for them is too great for him to take them seriously, and they are mere caricatures" (p. 56). Conrad is much closer to reality than Daiches realises, at least in his creation of the Professor. Paul Avrich in "Conrad's Anarchist Professor: An Undiscovered Source," Labor History, 18 (1977), 395-402, reprints an article about a "Professor Mezzerooff" taken from a nineteenth-century anarchist magazine called The Alarm (Conrad's The Gong?). Mezzerooff boasts that he can make explosives out of tea and food items and claims always to carry tri-nitro-glycerine about with him: "I won't stop until every workingman in Europe and America knows how to use explosives."

⁴Stallman, p. 80; Fleishman, p. 211.

⁵Rosenfield, p. 87.

⁶The circle is, of course, a traditional emblem of perfection, and it is typical of the mordant irony of The Secret Agent that the character most addicted to circles is the simple-minded Stevie. Although Conrad describes Stevie's circles as "a rendering of cosmic chaos," his description also suggests the intersecting circles of the mandala, a traditional symbol of spiritual perfection (p. 45). As Fleishman notes, "The circle . . . is contrasted with the triangle, the delta of Verloc's code designation, which becomes the sign of enclosure and secrecy," and he points to examples of imagery involving the triangle (pp. 197-98). The triangle has a number of traditional connotations: according to Edward F. Edinger in Ego and Archetype (1972; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin, 1974), p. 216, to the alchemists it represented fire and also the "trinity of spirit." Verloc is a fire-raiser in both the metaphorical and literal senses, and he brings about the destruction of the one character who has a sense of internal harmony.

⁷Stallman, pp. 73, 81.

⁸Martin Dillon, "The Meaning of Time in the Development of Conrad's Fiction," Diss. State University of New York, 1967, pp. 233-34.

⁹Razumov is of course a rank amateur compared to the professional Verloc; he is accepted by the emigres in Geneva not because he works hard at perfecting his role (as does Verloc with his oratorical abilities) but because they want to believe in him.

¹⁰Joseph Conrad, Under Western Eyes, Vol. XXII of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. vii. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

¹¹See for examples the summary of this period's political activity in George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1970).

¹²The distinction comes from Friedrich Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 615-22. Engels' distinction between the two systems is expressed in part at least through the contrasts in their attitudes towards time and history: "[Utopian Socialism] is the expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as absolute truth is independent of time, space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident where and when it is discovered" (p. 615); scientific socialism on the other hand "present[s] the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period and therefore, also . . . its inevitable downfall" (p. 622).

¹³Eliade, p. 149. Bertrand Russell in History of Western Philosophy (1946; rpt. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p. 361, provides a neat table of correspondences between Marxist and Judeo-Christian thought.

¹⁴Peter Hughes, Spots of Time (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1969), p. 63.

¹⁵Woodcock, p. 25.

¹⁶Woodcock, p. 26.

¹⁷Sir Isaiah Berlin, Introd. Roots of Revolution, by Franco Venturi (London: Wiedenfield and Nicholson, 1960), p. xxviii.

¹⁸~~W~~Woodcock, p. 30.

¹⁹Quoted in Hughes, p. 30.

²⁰"Autocracy and War" is printed in Notes on Life and Letters, Vol. III of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1925), p. 100.

²¹Creative Evolution, trans. A. Mitchell (N.Y.: Holt, 1911), p. 255. The clearest general outline of Bergson's ideas on durée and stasis is in An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. T. E. Hulme, introd. Thomas A. Goudge (1903; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), pp. 24-27.

²²Luke 14: 16-24.

²³Almost all the anarchists in The Secret Agent are heavily dependent on women: Verloc on Winnie; Ossipon on the succession of servant girls whom he exploits; Yundt upon the "blear-eyed old woman" he has enticed away from a friend (p. 52); and Michaelis upon his protectress. The exception is the Professor, who in terms of his activities is the most genuinely revolutionary of the group.

²⁴Margaret Church in Time and Reality (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 9, notes that for the mystic, as for the Neoplatonist, the distinctions between past, present, and future have no validity.

²⁵"There is, beneath these sharply cut crystals [sense perception] and this frozen surface, a continuous flux. . . . There is a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it" (op. cit. p. 25).

²⁶James Baird in Ishmael (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), pp. 9-11, distinguishes between "authentic" and "academic" primitivism. Peter Ivanovitch's cliché-ridden description of his travels seems to draw more on the tradition of literary primitivism going back to Rousseau, who was also an early source of anarchist ideas, than it does on any authentic contact with his own primitive nature.

²⁷Eloise Knapp Hay in The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 292, notes that Razumov's name suggests the Russian razumet ("to understand").

²⁸Harriet Gilliam, "Time in Conrad's Under Western Eyes," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 31 (1977), 421-39, has come to conclusions similar to mine about Razumov's fall into time and the paradigmatic pressure of the night of his betrayal of Haldin. She, however, regards Haldin's entry into Razumov's life as the intrusion of chronos in its destructive aspects.

²⁹Conrad's attitude towards the Chateau may be reflected in its name: morel (originally French) is a kind of nightshade or deadly fungus.

³⁰Guerard, p. 218.

Chapter Five

CHANCE

Chance (1913) represents a shift away from the primarily political themes of The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes back to the dominant subject of the earlier novels: the isolated individual. This shift is not only thematic but also symbolic and imagistic. Conrad abandons the questioning and satirizing of political forces and institutions through their attitudes to time which had characterised the novels immediately preceding Chance. Instead he uses temporal symbolism to examine individual weakness and irresponsibility, focusing on a wide range of characters all of whom in some way affect his protagonist. Combined with this renewed concern with moral isolation is a narrative structure whose chronological complexities seem designed to create a sympathetic perspective upon the central character. While Conrad's success in this attempt is arguable, the narrative structure does succeed in using motifs borrowed from popular detective fiction to enforce upon the reader what the narrator already knows: that understanding a fictional character involves active participation in the text. What is lacking in Chance, despite the richness of the temporal symbolism and the boldness of the narrative structure, is a reflection of one in the other. The shape of the narrative does not, as in some of the earlier novels, effectively dramatise the character or behaviour of the protagonist.

The title, Chance, makes explicit in this novel an element which is always implicit in the ethical order of Conrad's world. The epigraph

from Browne is admittedly double-edged, but Marlow, the narrator, loses few opportunities to remind us of the erratic workings of fate. It is, according to him, "chance" which orders the two cardinal incidents in the novel: Flora's spiritual rape which destroys her sense of personal integrity; and Powell's recognition of de Barral's treachery which, in turn, allows Anthony to heal Flora's psychic wound. It is also, presumably, "chance" that Anthony—whom Flora meets accidentally—is precisely the kind of person who will believe Fyne's lie about Flora's motives and yet accept her under those terms, and "chance" too that the Fynes are limited enough in their perceptions that they automatically assume the worst of Flora.¹

Chance may be the efficient cause of events in the novel but Conrad makes no attempt to use it as a cause for existential despair. However fortuitous their conjunctions may be, the characters themselves are as responsible for their actions as those in Conrad's other novels. What they have in common is a readiness to falsify the normal response to life in a temporally-ordered universe. Diffuse as Chance may first seem, it is the effect, direct or indirect, of these characters upon the largely passive protagonist which puts the plot into motion, and we must first attempt to tease out the complex threads of her relationships.

The initial source of Flora's later inadequacies is her governess, the latest in a line of characters who try, with varying degrees of subtlety, to defeat the mechanisms of aging. Resentful of her own lack of personal fulfilment and conscious that she is no longer young, she has a "vivid sense of lost opportunities." While she sees time, in sentimental and contradictory terms, as something which can both be "lost" and also, to some degree, staved off by the devices of cosmetics, her young

lover does not share her delusions: "Youth," Marlow reminds us, "believes in the absolute reality of time."² The governess's taste for young men is itself a kind of cosmetic device, one of the means by which she attempts to deny her own advancing age. At the same time, the very existence of the young man is necessarily temporary since her main hold over him is the "enormous bribe" of eventual marriage to Flora. Thus the unthinking young girl is both the means by which the governess maintains her hold upon her "nephew" and the means by which she will eventually lose him. Knowing this and having seen her own youth vanish in service to a succession of younger women, her diatribe against Flora is, as much as anything else, a punishment for the latter's youth and freshness.

The governess may be prime mover of the events which follow, but the immediate sources of Flora's emotional misadventures upon the Fern-
dale are the obtuse Mrs. Fyne and her brother, the idealistic Roderick Anthony. To understand their behaviour in this novel where no action is inconsequential, we must examine their father since his attitudes are reflected in distorted form in his two children. One of the first characters we are introduced to by Marlow is "the late Carleon Anthony, the poet." Anthony, senior, is presented as a paradoxical—or perhaps simply hypocritical—figure. In public life he plays the part of the quintessential Victorian poet by attempting to wed the new philosophy which calls all in doubt (evolution) to traditional values: "[He] sang in his time of the domestic and social amenities of our age with a most felicitous versification, his object being, in his own words, 'to glorify the result of six thousand years' evolution towards the refinement of thoughts, manners, and feelings.'" In his private life, meanwhile, "that same Carleon Anthony showed traces of the primitive cave-dweller's temperament"

(p. 38). The poetic evolutionist seems to find no need to correlate public attitudes towards time with private ones, becoming, when the mood suits him, a notably unpoetic primitivist.³

The hypocrisy inherent in his responses towards time and progress is not limited to the contrast between public and private attitudes but reveals itself even in the rhetoric he uses to justify his public utterances. With reference to Anthony's time-scheme for human development, Marlow admits in bewilderment, "Why he fixed the term at six thousand years I don't know" (p. 38). Conrad, I suspect, is less puzzled than his narrator, and we may hazard a guess at the reasons for Anthony's choice of such a period of time as the limit of the evolutionary process. Although by the early nineteenth century pioneering scientific geologists such as Lyell had reinforced the suspicion of numerous earlier thinkers that the age of the earth must be measured in millions rather than thousands of years, another tradition still extant defined the age of the earth both exactly and briefly. About 1650 Archbishop Ussher codified earlier calculations and decided that the earth was created on October 23, 4004 B.C. at 9 a. m. Thus "six thousand years" is a good round figure with which to describe the age of the earth at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴

Ussher, of course, was not an evolutionist: indeed his time scheme was worked out by careful calculations of the age of biblical figures together with a correction of four years to allow for the mis-dating of Christ's birth.⁵ But Anthony's use of this time scheme as the basis for a panegyric on evolution suggests that he is not really an evolutionist either, but rather one who tries to straddle the ideological fence (and presumably avoid offending his public) by using the modish term "evolution" in a rhetorical context which denies its revolutionary force. The

phrase "evolution towards the refinement of thoughts, manners, and feelings" comes close to being nonsensical. "Evolution," properly speaking, is a process of physiological adaptation by an organism to external conditions; if anything is refined it is the effectiveness of its survival mechanisms. This process has nothing to do with "thoughts, manners, and feelings," and the scientific hypothesis is reduced in Anthony's phrasing to a pallid metaphor with which to compliment his literary audience, since it is they who (presumably) have gone through this process of "evolutionary" refinement.

Anthony, senior, of course, whatever his emotional and intellectual inconsistencies, cannot directly affect Flora since she never meets him. Marlow reminds us, however, of "the variety of ways the ingenuity of the late bard of civilisation would be able to invent for the tormenting of his dependents" (p. 62), and it is through its unfortunate effect on his children that Carleon Anthony's influence makes itself felt in Chance.

The "daughter of a domestic tyrant" (p. 62) reacted to her bondage by throwing herself into Fyne's arms on the assumption, Marlow suggests, that "A civil servant is . . . the last human being in the world to preserve those traits of the cave-dweller from which she was fleeing" (p. 39). She too becomes a writer of sorts and, in her own way, as modish and inconsistent a one as her father. At the time of Flora's elopement, Mrs. Fyne is writing—presumably in reaction to her father's tyranny—a feminist tract whose theory, as summarised by Marlow, is "that no consideration, no delicacy, no tenderness, no scruples should stand in the way of a woman . . . taking the shortest cut towards securing for herself the easiest possible existence" (p. 59).

Her hostility towards men is expressed obliquely in her belief that

"the best, the nicest men, remained boys all their lives. She was disappointed not to be able to detect anything boyish in her brother" (p. 155). Fyne himself meanwhile fulfils—indeed surpasses—her wishes by remaining at an even earlier stage of emotional growth. Marlow comments, "I've never seen such staring solemnity as Fyne's except in a very young baby" (p. 155). The daughter of the would-be social evolutionist seems to want to deny to men the benefit of the normal process of emotional evolution. By insisting that men are, properly speaking, only oversized boys, she is able to deny their importance in the improved social order which she is working out with the succession of girl-friends whom she regards as disciples.

Like her father before her she too is inconsistent in the dogma that she promulgates. While he made use of the popular scientific jargon of evolutionism, she takes over the popular political cant of feminism. As Anthony, senior, articulates the concept of evolution in a context which emasculates it, so too his daughter twists the progressive notion that women's rights and expectations should be equal to those of men into a theory that women have the right to be more ruthless than their male oppressors. Her doctrine has at its core an ethic as primitive as her father's private indulgence in "the primitive cave-dweller's temperament." As Marlow comments in reference to her theories, "It was not political, it was not social. It was a knock-me-down doctrine—a practical individualistic doctrine" (p. 59).

Flora, as one of Mrs. Fyne's disciples, has presumably been affected by this doctrine, and despite her own irritation, Mrs. Fyne is initially forced to defend to Marlow the girl's sudden departure. That Flora should accept this encouragement to moral anarchy and, at the same time, leave

her mentor hoist with her own petard is a nice irony; unfortunately Flora herself is the eventual dupe of the attitudes she has ingested. One reason for the casual tone of her eventual letter to Mrs. Fyne is surely that she has taken her at her word: why should a solitary female not exploit—or at least pretend to exploit—a convenient male? What she cannot predict is that the tough-minded Mrs. Fyne will prove vulnerable to more commonplace views of human relationships when her own brother is involved.

In leaving the circle of Mrs. Fyne's influence, Flora flees to that of Roderick Anthony who, like his sister, proves to have been affected by the discrepancy between his father's poetic pronouncements and his behaviour. In response to Carleon Anthony's tyranny, he "ran away in conventional style, and, as if disgusted with the amenities of civilisation, threw himself, figuratively speaking, into the sea" (p. 39). His figurative leap into the formless and timeless sea is a direct parallel to the reference, a few lines later, to his sister "throwing herself into the arms . . . of the pedestrian Fyne." The symbolic contrast between the choice of elements (Fyne's oft-stressed pedestrian habits encourage us to see him as a kind of natural outgrowth of the earth) prefigures the directions of the emotional development of brother and sister: while Mrs. Fyne develops a brutal practicality, Roderick Anthony becomes ridiculously idealistic.

Although Anthony's choice of escape route may seem more attractive than his sister's, he too inherits his father's tendency to avoid directly confronting existence in a temporal world. While Mrs. Fyne in a sense fulfils her father's half-hearted evolutionary theorisings by becoming a new woman, uniting herself to a "new" man (Fyne is as earnest and as

unimaginative in his social attitudes as his wife), and having a brood of precocious children, Anthony symbolically rejects the concept of evolutionary progress by retreating to the source of life. That it is a retreat is suggested by Marlow's description of him as "a hermit withdrawn from a wicked world" (p. 221). Accidentally or otherwise, Marlow's comment reminds us of Anthony's namesake, the classic example of the anchorite. Roderick Anthony, like anyone in retreat from the world, looks for a source for his sense of circumambient evil by blaming it on the machinations of "the shore gang." In his private moral geography the sea then becomes the abode of the good, and Anthony's response to Franklin's attempt to discover the nature of his relationship with Flora is to give the chief mate "an unexpected lecture upon the wickedness of the solid world surrounded by the salt, uncorruptible waters on which he and his captain had dwelt all their lives in happy innocence" (p. 271).

Marlow's patently ironic tone at this point in the novel suggests Conrad's rather sardonic attitude to this thirty-five year old innocent. Anthony's act of running away to sea and subsequently avoiding the land, natural though it may be in view of his past, represents a kind of temporal regression: the sea is, after all, not only the source of life but also in classic Freudian theory the symbolic arena of birth or rebirth.⁶ Although Anthony's rebirth is not enacted through any sudden and dramatic symbolic process (as are Nostromo's and Decoud's) he has, like these characters, fallen out of time and been reborn into a world of simplified emotions. Like Lord Jim he has retreated into innocence, but it is a culpable innocence, a half-conscious means of avoiding the complex moral judgements of maturity. While Jim attempts to avoid exposure to evil by moving out of its path, the less subtle Anthony reifies

the concept of evil and effectively insulates himself from it by regarding it as a "shore" phenomenon. Not surprisingly, his reaction to learning of Flora's misery and (according to Flora) the legal persecution of her father is to spirit both of them away to the security of the ocean. Ironically, the subtle corruption of Anthony's sexual self-denial and de Barral's plotting surpass anything hatched by "the shore gang." The peace and security of the ship itself, here, as elsewhere, the pivotal element in Conrad's moral universe, is breached by the introduction into it of the unnatural emotional triangle of Anthony, Flora, and de Barral; this breach is graphically illustrated when a collision is narrowly averted after Powell mistakes the sleeping arrangements of his captain.

A second strand in Anthony's behaviour is also a reaction to—or against—his father. Educated at home by him, Anthony has come to accept as literal truth the chivalric stance struck by the poet. When confronted by the almost impossible demands placed upon him by his relationship with Flora he attempts to enact in the real world his father's literary stereotype: "All the supremely refined delicacy of tenderness, expressed in so many fine lines of verse by Carleon Anthony, grew to the size of a passion filling with inward sobs the big frame of the man who had never in his life read a single one of those famous sonnets singing of the most highly civilized chivalric love. . . .The father, fastidious, cerebral, shrinking from all contacts, could only sing in harmonious numbers of what the son felt with a dumb and reckless sincerity" (p. 332). Roderick Anthony, ignorant of the literary sources of the beliefs he has picked up through a kind of ethical osmosis, is compelled to play out the role of the courtly lover, a role dishonest and artificial in its

original mediaeval manifestation and doubly so in Carleon Anthony's modern sentimental use of it. Conrad ironically recognises Roderick Anthony's posturing in the titles of the two parts of the novel: "The Damsel" and "The Knight."⁷ In his treatment of Flora, the basic immaturity which we have already recognised in Anthony is thus complemented by his unconscious adherence to an archaic system of values which makes him feel that he must accept the forms of marriage even if denied its content.

The governess, Roderick Anthony, and Mrs. Fyne all affect Flora's life directly, Carleon Anthony indirectly; but the most pervasive influence is that of Flora's father, who is reminiscent of earlier Conradian characters in that he continues to live out a role which experience has shown to be inadequate. The de Barral we meet in the "present" of the narrative—that is as a passenger of the Ferndale—is defined in large part by his imprisonment, an imprisonment which affects him without altering his basic emotional make-up. By an irony which would be tragic if it were treated more seriously, de Barral gets what he asks for in the lawcourt (where, Marlow comments, "Comedy finds its last refuge in our deadly serious world"): time! The "time" he gets is not of course of the kind he wants; indeed Marlow's main complaint about the sight of a prison is that it signifies unstructured time, time slowed down by the prisoner's excessive awareness of it: "You do indeed seem to feel along the very lines and angles of the unholy bulk, the fall of time, drop by drop, hour by hour, leaf by leaf, with a gentle and implacable slowness." In this unnatural concentration upon the motions of time, emotions too are falsified: "The people outside disperse their affections, you hoard yours, you nurse them into intensity. What they let slip, what they forget in the movement and changes of free life, you hold on to, amplify,

exaggerate into a rank growth of memories" (p. 354). Even more, perhaps, than Razumov or Madame de S—, de Barral represents the epitome of the temporal attitudes which Bergson attacks: the "movement and changes of free life" are precisely what Bergson regards as reality.

The contrast between the "rank growth of memories" induced by imprisonment and the healthy "movement and changes of free life" is delineated in Marlow's comparison of emotions with clothing. In his initial description of the released convict, de Barral, he notes, rather enigmatically, "You come out [of prison] in the same clothes, you know." A few lines later he explains this unexpected sartorial reference: "One comes out of prison in the same clothes one wore on the day of condemnation. . . . Oh they last! They last! But there is something which is preserved by prison life even better than one's discarded clothing. It is the force, the vividness of one's sentiments" (p. 354). The implied metaphorical relationship between sentiments and clothes suggests that attitudes, like clothes, may grow stale and dated even though they are preserved.⁸

Certainly de Barral's attachment to his daughter—his only real emotional tie—has become threadbare during the course of his seven years' imprisonment. The period of his greatness during which he had imagined a glorious future for Flora has been transformed by the passing of time into "a long yesterday, a yesterday gone over innumerable times, analysed, meditated upon for years" (p. 357). Tenderness has been replaced by a watchful jealousy which sees Flora's marriage as a flaw in their perfect father-daughter relationship. At this point in the story, de Barral makes one small, unconsciously symbolic gesture reminiscent of Marlow's original equation between clothes and sentiments: he takes off

his hat, "a tall hat. The hat of the trial. The hat of the thumb-nail sketches in the illustrated papers" (p. 362). This badge of his role in society has maintained its emblematic importance as a symbol of authority through all the years of imprisonment. His removal of it now signifies a recognition that that authority is baseless since it cannot prevail even over his own daughter.

The seven year prison term which creates de Barral's sense of angry impotence is his equivalent of Nostromo's fourteen hours' sleep after coming ashore and Razumov's mystifying illness, since for him the years in jail are not "real" time but a temporary hiatus in the process of living. His first words to Flora on coming out of prison are not a greeting but a complaint: "What has done for me was envy. Envy" (p. 355). He speaks as if he is continuing a conversation which has been briefly interrupted and which can now be resumed. This refusal to accept the reality and length of the interruption is symptomatic of a deep-rooted inability to accept his own fallibility. After his angry outburst at Flora's marriage, he returns to the topic of his lost financial empire, insisting that "The same sort of thing can be done again"—if not by de Barral himself then by someone acting under his instructions. Even his plan to murder Anthony seems to be motivated as much by a belief that he will be able to use his son-in-law's money to build another empire as it is by simple hatred (p. 387). Marlow had earlier suggested that de Barral's trial had overtones of humour; his behaviour after release from prison clearly exemplifies Bergson's theories of the comic. Bergson claims that comedy results from "automatism established on life and imitating it," in other words from the imposition of a mechanical in place of a living response.⁹ De Barral's attempt to repeat an earlier (and

flawed) pattern of behaviour with no allowance for changed circumstances represents an intellectual version of such automatism.

Like Nostromo and Razumov, de Barral has difficulty in accepting that both he and the world have changed and that the intellectual and emotional baggage he has brought with him from the other side of the "gap" in time is insufficient to handle this altered reality. At the same time, the problem of adjustment de Barral faces is more mundane and yet more emotionally painful than those faced by Conrad's earlier flawed but heroic protagonists. He must come to terms with a responsibility new in Conrad's emotional universe—or at least largely ignored since Almayer's Folly—the necessity of casting loose a grown child. Despite the fact that de Barral functions as the evil genius of the second half of the novel, Conrad manages to treat him with a measure of compassion, implying through the temporal symbolism associated with him that his behaviour is the result of his inability to achieve a graceful passage to middle age and that this failure is in large part due to the temporal disruption produced by imprisonment.

The artistic focus and actual victim of the failings of the other characters, epitomised in their perverse responses to time is, of course, Flora. The immediate reaction of many readers is, I suspect, either to respond sentimentally to her or to dismiss her as a stock fictional figure: the betrayed or abused ingénue. While neither of these responses is entirely unfair, Conrad's careful delineation of Flora's emotional states suggests that he means us to see more in her than a mere peg upon which to hang the action. Although she displays the fact rather less obviously than the other characters, she too is out of step with the temporal reality in which she must live. Conrad's reason for stressing the emotional

assault on Flora by her governess is that he means us to see in the incident the seed of his protagonist's later flaw: a major result of the attack is that she becomes emotionally arrested at that traumatic moment in her life.

Despite the variety of subsequent unpleasant experiences which she undergoes, Flora fails to grow emotionally. She remains a permanent sixteen. Her response to life is to retreat into a kind of spiritual coyness and to refuse to take her own or anyone else's existence completely seriously. The casual fatalism which leads her to consider suicide on several occasions also leads her to accept Anthony's proposal without a full recognition of the commitment involved. While this may seem a harsh analysis of an innocent victim, one must remember that the misunderstanding between her and Anthony stems initially from the letter she wrote Mrs. Fyne, a letter which was, as she eventually admits, "foolish" in its tone.

Flora's relationship with Anthony represents a conjunction of inadequacies: both have chosen half-consciously a path of culpable immaturity. Not surprisingly, Flora's decision to enter Anthony's temporally regressive world is repeatedly described through images which stress her passivity. We see their initial meeting through Marlow's sympathetic eyes (although he is, of course, repeating Flora's account of the event):

"That girl was, one may say, washing about with slack limbs in the ugly surf of life with no opportunity to strike out for herself when suddenly she had been made to feel there was someone beside her in the bitter water" (p. 222). The metaphor of life-saving is a fairly natural one for the sailor, Marlow, to use; but Anthony's own words at the time shift the metaphor while retaining the nautical tone: "You are on a lee shore and eating your heart out with worry" (p. 223). While a lee shore can be used

to shelter a ship from the wind, it is obvious in context that Anthony sees Flora's ship as being stranded out of the wind. A little later the same day he invites her to "trust yourself to me—to the sea—which is deep like your eyes" (p. 227). In obliquely offering himself as the wind which will fill her sails (Anthony is presumably unconscious of any sexual innuendo) or more directly as the sea which will receive her, Anthony seems to be arrogating to himself the powers of an elemental force while reversing the normal submerged metaphor of ship as woman.

This attempt—imaginatively at least—by Anthony to shift their relationship onto a heroic or mythical plane is undercut, however, by Flora's own imagistic conception of her relationship to the sea which suggests not swimming or sailing but casting herself into it. When she visits the Ferndale, she catches sight of herself in a mirror looking "distant, shadowy, as if immersed in water" (p. 265). On the wharf, on her way back to the city she sees a sheet of water and thinks of drowning herself (p. 336). Later, when her father tempts her to run away from the cottage Anthony has rented for them between voyages, Flora brings the two images together: "She went to a shabby bit of mirror on the wall. In the greenish glass her own face looked far off like the livid face of a drowned corpse at the bottom of a pool" (p. 384).

Anthony himself, despite his rhetoric and Flora's vision of him as a "sustaining whirlwind" (p. 336) is also described by Marlow as searching for a watery grave as he looks into Flora's eyes during their confrontation in the hotel: "He plunged into them breathless and tense, deep, deep, like a mad sailor taking a desperate dive from the masthead into the blue unfathomable sea so many men have execrated and loved at the same time" p. 332).¹⁰ Flora's metaphorical drowning in Anthony's world is hardly

surprising: she has already shown herself vulnerable to his enveloping emotions. But Anthony too by his previous action in "[throwing] himself, figuratively speaking, into the sea" establishes himself not as the natural force which his own rhetoric suggests but as the prey of natural forces: rather than being monarch of the sea, Anthony is, like Flora, a fugitive upon it. Anthony's original flight, I have already argued, represents a symbolic rejection of the demands of a land-based existence by means of a return to a primal and pre-conscious arena of existence. In taking Flora to sea with him he is not rescuing her from her past or encouraging her to achieve greater emotional maturity but rather giving her the opportunity to shelve her personal problems in the morally aqueous environment he offers her.

At the centre of the moral experience of Chance, therefore, there lies a mutual betrayal in which the central characters reinforce each other's entry into a kind of spiritual and ethical never-never land, an environment in which time and growth are suspended. On the literal level of the novel, Conrad makes it perfectly clear through Powell's limited vision of events that the sea is neither secure nor immune to the moral contagions of land-based existence. It is Powell who, on joining the ship, feels "a most soothing certitude" (p. 273) but discovers, like Jim in the earlier novel, that the "unchangeable, safe sea sheltering a man from all passions, except its own anger" (p. 292) is an illusion, as is the "fairy tale" existence he assigns to Anthony and Flora (p. 228).

Symbolically, the inadvisability of the protagonists' desire to retreat to a life of ideal innocence is reflected in a series of ironic references to the prototype of all states of innocence: the Eden myth. Anthony's claim in his lecture to Franklin that they have up to now lived out their

lives in happy innocence in the closed world of the ship, floating on the "salt, uncorruptible waters" is apparently justified—although it is difficult to believe that the Conrad who wrote The Nigger of the "Narcissus" expects us to be unaware of the degree of dissension normal in any enclosed society. The entry of Woman into this apparently ideal world both destroys Anthony's own confidence and integrity and weakens the unity of purpose of the crew: at the wedding it seems to the young couple as if "both had taken a bite of the same bitter fruit" (p. 342); and the crew seem to have been poisoned by the same fruit as they learn to resent Anthony and his wife.

Although the young couple need no serpent to tempt them to this fruit, the serpent indeed does enter in the form of de Barral, repeatedly characterised as being thin, stiff-lipped, cold-eyed and having a gliding walk. Although he is generally categorised by onlookers only as "a queer fish" (pp. 285, 294) [Leviathan?], the crew instinctively avoid him "as though he had been the devil" (p. 351). Even Anthony, thinking about de Barral's release from prison, imagines him as having "been down to the nether regions" (p. 347). De Barral himself modifies the traditional iconographic role of the serpent when he twice complains about being "under the heel" of Anthony (pp. 298, 433).

Since the myth is used ironically, both the order of events and their outcome are reversed. Like the original serpent, de Barral acts in such a way as to bring about a "fall" into knowledge or understanding, but since the immediate result is the growth of sexual consciousness in the young couple, this is clearly meant to be a fortunate fall. The real "fall" has already taken place in the sense of fear and shame which has entered the young couple's relationship with their misunderstanding of

other's motives. Paradoxically, de Barral's actions achieve a redemptive effect both in the relationship between the young couple and in Anthony's relationship to his crew and thus help to restore the primal paradise.

Clear as the elements in the Eden myth are, there is also another pattern of mythic reference to be seen behind the lineaments of Anthony's relationship with Flora. In Roman myth, at least according to Ovid's Fasti, Chloris, "a nymph of the happy fields," is metamorphosed by Zephyrus, the west wind, into Flora, the goddess of flowers. Zephyrus makes amends for his rape of the nymph by marrying her and allowing her to enjoy perpetual spring.¹¹ Flora de Barral too undergoes a metamorphosis from the anonymous "Miss Smith" to the wife of Captain Anthony. As a sailor Anthony is of course dependent on the winds rather than being their master, but, as has already been suggested, his rhetoric works to establish him as a kind of natural force. What's more, he meets his Flora while she is "roaming" outdoors and pursues her—although with steady deliberation rather than with the amorous energy of a mythic hero. Anthony makes Flora his wife and carries her off to a ship whose name, the Ferndale, suggests a state of permanent greenery (perpetual spring?). Visually, too, Flora certainly fits her role as goddess of flowers: when Marlow sees her outside the hotel where Fyne and Anthony are in conference, she is wearing "a white straw hat of a good form and trimmed with a bunch of pale roses" (p. 199), and she wears the same floral decoration on her first visit to the Ferndale. At the climactic moment of the tale, her colouring is described as "whiter than lilies" (p. 427).

Despite this series of visual and situational correspondences, one aspect of the original myth is lacking: its sexual energy. Throughout most of the story, Anthony's relationship with Flora remains incomplete,

frozen into a perpetual state of becoming like the famous pictorial version of the myth in Botticelli's Primavera.¹² In the picture, the metamorphosis is incomplete; in the story, Flora remains partly trapped in her old role as faithful daughter, while Anthony is, like the lover in Keats's "Cold Pastoral," apparently never to enjoy his promised bliss. The completion of this temporarily frozen action must await the defeat of de Barral when past and present are brought together as if there had been no interim stage. Flora feels "in the close communion established again with Anthony . . . as on that night in the garden—the force of his personal attraction" (emphasis added), and they leave the stateroom for the stern-cabin, Anthony "burdened and exulting" (pp. 428-31). After this episode they seem to gain the freedom of elemental forces as they sail "all around the world for near on six years" (p. 437).

The conjunction of Ovid's amorous tale and sacred scripture may at first seem a little odd, but as warrant for such syncretism Conrad might have cited Milton (whom he knew well enough to quote in the epigraph to Victory). In Book V of Paradise Lost, Milton describes the softness of Adam's voice when he tries to awaken Eve as "mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes"—presumably to suggest a powerful erotic component in their relationship.¹³ The overtly sexual nature of the Flora/Zephyrus myth, despite its delayed resolution in the story, also allows Conrad tactfully to underscore what Marlow ponders in rather clumsy rhetoric, that if "two beings thrown together, mutually attracted, resist . . . the embrace . . . then they are committing a sin against life" (pp. 426-27).

Both myths are effectively resolved at the same time with de Barral's defeat. What is more, both mythic patterns dramatize a release from a static time frame into the living reality of human life, or to use

Bergsonian terms, from stasis into durée. One of the inheritances of the biblical expulsion from Paradise is the acceptance by Adam and Eve that they must now live in a world of mundane time. As Mircea Eliade points out, such a belief is not confined to Judaism and Christianity; and one of the outcomes of paradisaic myths generally is that men are no longer immortal.¹⁴ In the moral world of Conrad's novels, however, the acceptance of the fallen world of mortality is generally a positive thing, embodied most effectively in the contrast between the immaculate and apparently immortal Jim and the time-worn French lieutenant. Flora and Anthony are released from their false Eden into a reality in which he dies six years later, but a reality which has allowed for growth and maturity. Similarly the eventual completion of the iconographically-frozen action of Ovid's story enacts the release from a frustrating and dehumanising relationship into a type of the sacred marriage of mythical beings. The Roman myth not only reinforces the erotic component in Flora's and Anthony's relationship (whereas the Eden myth lays more stress on their knowledge of each other); it does something to soften the apparent injustice of the brevity of their happiness. God-like, Anthony eventually leaves Flora and is apotheosized in her memories of him and in Powell's.

There is of course also a psychological element in the resolution of Chance, and Conrad makes it fairly clear through the visual similarities between Anthony and de Barral (Powell at first mistakes him for the captain) that Anthony is not really defeating an external adversary but a malevolent "secret sharer" of his own soul. Although de Barral calls Anthony his "jailer" (p. 307) it is clear that he himself is the jailer (Anthony tends to remain cooped up below to avoid meeting him on deck)

and that Anthony's eventual defeat of him represents a victory over those elements in his own character which are regressive or which encourage false notions of chivalry. In defeating de Barral, who lives largely in the past, Anthony is rejecting the blocking mechanisms in his own psyche which prevent him from living effectively in the present, and he thus, despite his superficial similarities with them, achieves a release denied to Jim and Razumov.

Although I have taken it for granted thus far in my discussion that Flora's character and concerns, and to a lesser degree Anthony's, lie at the thematic centre of Chance, the reader's experience of the protagonists and their relationship with the other characters is by no means as straightforward as my description of the symbolic structure of the novel would suggest. Two major factors complicate the chronological structure of the narrative with questionable effects on the impact of the novel. One is Conrad's decision to make Marlow into a much more complete narrator than he was in (say) Lord Jim, another novel in which Marlow encounters a vulnerable character at different stages in his or her progress and in which the story has to be completed by a second installment of narrative after a gap of time. The other is an internal contradiction in the nature and function of the narrative which has been generally ignored by critics of the novel but which creates a new kind of artistic contract between author and reader.

The Marlow of Chance is in many ways different from the Marlow of "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim: in the intervening years he has become verbose, sometimes tedious, and half-heartedly misogynistic. Most of all, he has turned into an unusually helpful narrator. In his apparent urge to tell the whole truth about Flora's life, Marlow intrudes into the

motives of characters whom he hardly knows and speculates on elements in the plot (the scenes between the governess and her nephew for example) which he cannot possibly know about. Conrad's awareness of such awkwardnesses leads to his having Marlow repeatedly explain how and why he gained individual pieces of information. Unfortunately Marlow tends to protest too much, and his explanations serve only to remind us of several stages by which the story was transmitted, detracting from his claims of frankness and honesty by pointing up the possibility of error in the process of transmission.

What is more, Marlow's reminders to us of exactly how he learned of a given event or scene tend to bring to the forefront of the novel a fact we might otherwise forget: that it is structured upon several temporal levels and that other recitals of parts of the story lie behind Marlow's own lengthy telling of the tale. Such a patchwork technique is not of itself new in Conrad's novels; indeed the obvious comparison is once again with Lord Jim, where Marlow acts as the focus for half a dozen different accounts of parts of Jim's life. The transmission of information in the earlier novel, however, is much more direct. Marlow is present at Jim's trial, sees him several times over the next few years, gets him jobs, and finally makes a visit to him in Patusan. During the same period he has the encounters with the French lieutenant, Chester, and Brierly from which he builds up his knowledge of elements he does not know in the story; after Jim's death Marlow speaks to Stein, Jewel, and Tamb' Itam; later still he meets the dying Brown. Marlow's knowledge of Flora in Chance is in comparison slight: he meets her briefly at the Fynes', again outside the hotel, and finally at the end of her "adventure." Much of his second-hand knowledge about her turns out, furthermore, to be third

or fourth-hand. The Fynes are repeating what Flora herself and her mother have told Mrs. Fyne, and Marlow's other main source, Powell, learns much of what he knows from Franklin and (presumably) the ship-keeper. What complicates the reader's sense of the novel's chronology even further is that the different accounts of Flora's life tend to overlap so that scenes are often repeated from different points of view and forward momentum is lost.

While the apparatus of the novel has been admired by technicians as adroit as Henry James (although his praise is double-edged), modern critics have tended to question whether Chance is really the better for its chronological complexity. Albert Guerard and Frederick Karl have compared the narrative technique of Chance, to its detriment, with that of Absalom, Absalom! where, they argue, the complex transmission of plot information serves a useful purpose. Chance, they complain, has a convoluted structure which can only muffle and confuse the essentially simple story which is told through it.¹⁵

Those who attempt to defend the multiple chronological layering of the novel's narrative structure generally claim that the method of transmission of the narrative adds to the clarity or complexity of Flora's experience. The best defenses of the narrative method have come from Joseph Warren Beach, Frederick Karl, and Robert Hudspeth. Beach sees Chance as epitomising the technique of effective presentation through projection of the reader into the impressionistic flux of the novel which Conrad and Ford had outlined early in their careers and which Conrad practised with success in Lord Jim. Karl, despite his general scepticism about the novel's success, argues for the "ingenious development of character that results from refracted time sequences." Hudsbeth claims that Karl's

comment is useful but "limited" and develops his own theory of Conrad's use of time in Chance on the basis that the author meant exactly what he said when he claimed in the introduction that "my intention was to interest people in my vision of things which is indissolubly allied to the style in which it is expressed."¹⁶

Hudspeth argues, furthermore, that both the ethos of the novel and its narrative structure are organised around an artistic paradox: that Conrad insists on the need to understand the protagonist (Hudspeth gives most of his attention to Flora) yet realises the difficulties which inhibit such understanding, not least the problem that "the people who are directly involved in an action cannot understand its meaning or importance." The novel's complex chronological strategies then develop out of these demands which Conrad makes of his text:

To pierce the ambiguity of Flora's life he creates a time structure of intricate flashback scenes designed to make all past events in Flora's life contemporaneous; he deftly controls the development of the plot so that the final revelation of Flora's remarriage is concealed until the novel's end; he uses the effects of time on Flora and de Barral to illustrate the limitations on the ability of one person to understand another; and finally, he combines the time structure and the narrative points of view to complete the perspective which the reader must have to understand Flora.¹⁷

The first part of Hudspeth's argument sounds rather similar to that which I have put forward with reference to Lord Jim; unlike Jim, however, Flora is not treated with habitual irony, and the technique helps to create a sympathetic understanding of her rather than undercutting her moral pretensions. Although Hudspeth sounds in his summary as though he is describing a spatialising effect in the narrative, the examples he gives are of double vision of events—essentially a development in

detail of Karl's argument for the value of refracted time sequences. Conrad does indeed control carefully the "final revelation of Flora's re-marriage"; whether it is a useful exercise as Hudsbeth claims is more doubtful. His third argument, which runs parallel to my earlier comments on the relationship between Flora and her father, seems valid. Unfortunately Hudspeth does not attempt to show that this element in the novel's theme is indeed enacted through the chronological structure of Chance. He is right once more to point to Marlow's role as both sympathetic to and temporally removed from Flora's experience in a way that none of the more intimately involved characters is, although this reading ignores the less positive aspects of Marlow's character.

Although Hudspeth recognises that Conrad has structured Chance around an artistic paradox, he fails to realise that the main narrative—Marlow's narrative—also contains an internal contradiction. This contradiction provides an alternative, or perhaps complementary, explanation of the chronological confusion of the text. At the same time it functions as a means of defining or dramatising the kind of interaction Conrad expects between reader and text.

A major reason for the awkwardness of the narrative is that Marlow's tale contains two contrasting patterns of narrative expectation. He begins to tell his story in an artless fashion and, ostensibly, attempts to continue to do so. Very soon, however, Marlow discovers that this is all but impossible and so weaves into his narration a pattern of planned and organised disclosure of events which, after the first few chapters, becomes predominant. Out of the interaction of and contrast between these two modes of "telling" he develops an insecurity about his own role in the narrative. Marlow's redefinition of his own role as both observer

and participant leads him both to discover an effective stance from which to narrate the story and to offer the reader a participatory role borrowed from the structures of popular fiction.

The first narrative mode, in which Marlow apparently tells his auditor what he knows of Captain Anthony, dominates the opening chapters of the novel. After the first chapter, which contains the meeting of Marlow and the "frame" narrator with Powell and the latter's description of the fortuitous manner by which he came aboard the Ferndale as second mate, Marlow allows his casual admission that he knows something of Captain Anthony to develop into a fairly lengthy description of the Fynes (his link with Anthony whom he has never met) and his association with them. This account, Marlow's meeting with the anonymous "girlfriend," and her disappearance take up the second chapter. It is only at the beginning of chapter three that we (and Marlow) find out her real identity from Fyne. Thus far Marlow has had to make only one or two attempts to make straight the meandering path of his narrative: he has had, for example, to explain who Carleon Anthony was in order to justify Mrs. Fyne's desire to escape from him. With his discovery of Flora's identity, however, the narrative begins to take on a definite shape, and it is the shape of Flora's life rather than Anthony's which dominates the remaining chapters of Part One.

In redefining the direction of his narrative, Marlow must become more deliberate than he has been in his disclosure of information. He breaks the narrative of Flora's life as told by the Fynes to insert a lengthy account of de Barral's life and fortunes in order to establish not only who Flora is but also why she deserves our sympathy. As he continues to relay to his listener what the Fynes told him about Flora

he eventually gives up all pretence of repeating the story in the disjointed fashion in which he first heard it and admits that "in order to be consecutive in my relation of this affair I am telling you at once the details which I heard from Mrs. Fyne later in the day, as well as what little Fyne imparted to me with his usual solemnity during that morning call" (p. 107). By the end of chapter three, Marlow's control over the narrative is such that he is able to overcome any lingering sense of technical awkwardness as he transfers our point of view temporarily to that of the Fynes and leaves us with them as onlookers at the scenes being played out in Brighton as Flora's governess plots with her nephew. Marlow's role during these first few chapters has thus changed from that of a casual anecdotalist to that of a deliberate if not omniscient novelist.

These two narrative modes result, we might say, in two different kinds of chronological distortion—assuming, that is, that we take as a norm a spontaneous and sequential narrative. In the first mode, the distortion is accidental: we are to learn the details of Flora's life in a jumbled and idiosyncratic fashion because that is how Marlow learned them. In the second narrative mode Marlow does produce a fairly sequential version of Flora's life (although he still has to backtrack to explain who and what her father was) but only at the cost of extensive rearranging: that is, by distorting not the time scale of the fiction for which he is the mouthpiece but the time scale of the process of his own discovery of the facts. "Innocent" narration results in chronological distortion of the fiction; "planned" narration in the distortion of the narrator's own experience.

A third factor, however, complicates this version of the shape of

the narrative, limiting the apparent emergence of Marlow as pseudo-novelist and altering the smooth transition between narrative modes. When he begins to tell the tale to his auditor, Marlow may know that his eventual narrative subject is to be Flora; what he cannot possibly know is the end of her story. Despite the growing measure of his apparent control over the narrative, he is forced to admit the limitations of his knowledge at the end of Part One where he offers as conclusion only his own prophecy that Flora "went as far as she was able—as far as she could bear it—as far as she had to" (p. 253). In a general sense he is right, but Marlow has no real idea how "far" the flaws in their understanding of each other will take Flora and Roderick Anthony. His expectations, therefore, at the end of Part One are modified by his discovery of the events which take shape as Part Two, just as ours are. It is only while recounting this second part to his auditor some time after the recital of Part One that Marlow can be said to be in full control of his narrative. Despite his growing assurance in dealing with the materials of the story in Part One, Marlow's assumption of omniscience must then be seen as illusory.

A major result of the gap in Marlow's knowledge is that while he repeatedly insists on the efficiency and accuracy with which he has transmitted the events of the story, his description of his feelings at the time he first learned of those events reveals a puzzled attempt to define the significance of the scenario in which he has become involved. This attempt at definition begins initially with his discovery that Flora is missing. Since he has no idea who she is or why she might be missing, he is understandably unsure how he should respond to this odd event. Wandering through the countryside with Fyne, searching for Flora, Marlow is "possessed by a mood of profound self-derision" at having become involved

in the Fynes' problems, and he is inclined to look for "the comic relief of an absurdly dramatic situation" in the sound of Fyne's voice. As he and Fyne head homewards after their nocturnal ramble, Marlow asks his companion for clarification of the generic nature of their quest, making explicit in the process his own sense of being involved in "an absurdly dramatic situation": "I begged sarcastically to know whether he could tell me if we were engaged in a farce or in a tragedy." Fyne's insistence that Flora is not "mad" but only "very highly strung indeed" apparently convinces Marlow that she is capable of deliberate self-destruction, and he asks himself again, "Was it a tragedy?" This time he provides the definitive answer to his own speculation by setting Flora's actions in the context of immediate physical realities: "'Nobody ever got up at six o'clock in the morning to commit suicide' I declared crustily. 'It's unheard of! This is a farce.'" Despite his immediate retrospective comment to his auditor, "As a matter of fact it was neither farce nor tragedy," Marlow continues to refer to Flora's story as both a farce and a comedy and finally concludes towards the end of the novel that he has really been involved in a "tragicomedy" (pp. 272, 310).¹⁸

Marlow's generic confusion is understandable. The mysterious disappearance of a possibly suicidal character may well suggest that she has come to a tragic end—at least in the colloquial sense of the word "tragic." At the same time, to be forced to negotiate strange countryside late at night—"We crept and tumbled and felt about with our hands along the ground. We got wet, scratched, and plastered with mire all over our nether garments" (p. 53)—is to be reminded of the classic confusions and calamities of dramatic farce. If, as Marlow claims, the events are neither farce nor tragedy but the mixed form of tragi-comedy, the reader is left, like Marlow,

uncertain about which set of emotional responses he should bring to bear on the text.

An answer to this question is given, in part at least, as Marlow's literary vocabulary allows him to offer both for his own benefit and for ours an alternative response to the events in which he is involved. During his discussion with Mrs. Fyne of courses of action to be taken, he refers to the elopement as "the affair of the purloined brother" (p. 148). His use of this phrase suggests an awareness of a literary model of a kind rather less respectable than the traditional ones of comedy and tragedy. Marlow is thinking of course of the detective story, a genre virtually invented by Poe—one of whose most famous stories is "The Purloined Letter"—and popularised in the late Victorian period by authors such as Conan Doyle.¹⁹ This reference is reinforced later in the novel when Marlow describes himself as an "investigator" of the events of the story, while admitting that such activity is an "old-maiden-lady-like" occupation (p. 326).

Marlow's interest in his own investigative role in the story is complemented by his auditor's attempt in turn to assimilate the tale—or at least Marlow's part in it—to models he recognises:

"You are the expert in the psychological wilderness. This is like one of those Redskin stories where the noble savages carry off a girl and the honest backwoodsman with his incomparable knowledge follows the track and reads the signs of her fate in a footprint here, a broken twig there, a trinket dropped by the way. I have always liked such stories. Go on."

Marlow smiled indulgently at my jesting. "It is not exactly a story for boys," he said.

(p. 311)

The literary reference this time is to a type of plot popularised by James Fenimore Cooper. The auditor's aim, it is clear, is to poke fun at Marlow's rather self-conscious psychological astuteness by metaphorical comparison

of it to another kind of unlikely virtuosity. Jocular though his tone is, the speaker, like Marlow himself earlier, is beginning to suggest that the latter's real function in the narrative is that of detective, although not of the parlour variety and, equally, not one concerned with purely factual discoveries.

Even without his own and his auditor's verbal hints, elements in Marlow's behaviour give him the classic outlines—or perhaps the clichéd ones—of the detective of popular fiction. In Part One he tramps through the countryside looking for clues to Flora's disappearance, and he questions the Fynes; in Part Two he describes how he tracked Powell to the secluded inlet near Flora's cottage. Perhaps even more to the point he has something of the passionate but disinterested concern for the truth which W. H. Auden identifies as a necessary component of the fictional detective. To complete the picture, the two main milieux of the story, the Fynes' country cottage and the Ferndale, mirror the closed and comparatively innocent societies typical of detective fiction.²⁰

At the same time, the comparison should not be pushed too far. The "crime" properly speaking in Chance is only attempted and is out of its place (by the normal standards of detective fiction, that is) in the story, concluding rather than initiating Marlow's enquiries.²¹ What is more, de Barral's "crime" as we have already established, effectively reverses the moral dynamic of detective fiction: rather than destroying a world of assumed innocence, it acts as the means by which the breach in the world is healed.²²

The relationship of Chance to detective fiction, is then (as the auditor suggests in his description of Marlow as an "expert in the psychological wilderness"), metaphorical. Although Marlow does function from

time to time as a sleuth of the traditional kind, his real role is that of detective of the human psyche. The illusory crime which he begins to investigate—Flora's disappearance—acts both as a means for Conrad to shift Marlow from physical to psychological investigation and also as an emblem of the complex crime against Flora's sensibilities which is the real subject of the novel and behind which there lies not one but a whole series of villains. That Flora should vanish is hardly surprising: Marlow's descriptions of her as "shadowy" and her own fascination with drowning are a response to the habit of others of taking her for granted. Even the name the Fynes give her, Miss Smith, seems designed to assure her anonymity. Similarly, the other crime in Chance, de Barral's bungled attempt to murder Anthony, while it is a symbolic extension of his snake-like qualities, also functions as an emblem of a state of affairs which has already come to pass: the poisoning of relationships on board the Ferndale as a result of Anthony's pseudo-marriage.

As chief narrator and, as I have already indicated, restructurer of the tale, Marlow quite naturally carries part of the burden of the reader's involvement in the events of the novel. Even if he were less concerned than he is about the people he encounters, Marlow would find it difficult to avoid probing and evaluating the things which happen to him. By turning Marlow into a detective or investigator of those events, Conrad enlarges his narrator's role into that of a surrogate consciousness for the reader. If we trust Marlow, it is not only because he repeatedly tells his importunate auditor (and us) that he knows more than he is prepared to reveal at the moment, but also because his method of narrating the story leaves us little choice. The repetition of key scenes from different points of view in Chance encourages us to feel that the novel is not progressing

forward in stages, each new scene or event taking precedence in our consciousness over what has gone before. Instead, at least until the final scenes, the narrative remains in a state of permanent suspension. Nothing is resolved, and there is always the possibility that some new version of what has happened will be given and will cause us to alter our judgement upon characters and events.

Robert Hudspeth has argued that the "spatial" quality of Chance allows us to develop sympathy for Flora by seeing the events in her life as contemporaneous. While this may be true, the suspended or spatial narrative also induces a degree of anxiety in the reader, an uncertainty in the face of the psychological mystery with which he has been presented. Marlow is the necessary stabilising force in the fictional flux, persuading us that events are moving towards some sort of climax or resolution. The chronological structure of the novel is then the major means by which Conrad encourages us to accept Marlow's investigatory role, a role which develops initially at the time of his involvement in Flora's life out of confusion about his place in the story which is developing and which is enforced upon him in the act of narration out of his ignorance of the conclusion of the events which he is recounting.

There is, however, a problem in this reading of Marlow's role as detective of the psyche. As an honest detective in both the physical and psychological realms of the tale, he must avoid the tendency to jump to conclusions about what events mean, preferring instead to piece together the clues he is given. On the whole this is what Marlow does in Part One. We watch an initially bemused observer being gradually drawn into the web of Flora's relationships and, in attempting to make light of his own confusion, being forced into a more active participation than he has desired.

In Part Two there is an apparent shift in attitude: his lengthy hypothesis about what went on between Anthony and Flora in the hotel room at the beginning of this section suggests that he has made a transition to a more imaginative—but also perhaps more irresponsible—attempt to understand events.

Initially, we are inclined to respect the narrator's right to draw such a hypothesis. Marlow's guess is an informed one based upon the likely response of a known organism to a stress which can readily be computed. From what Marlow knows about Flora, he assumes that she is incapable of real emotional candour; from what he knows of Anthony, he guesses that he is incapable of listening to her with intelligent discrimination: "He had not training in the usual conventions, and we must remember that he had no experience whatever of women" (p. 262). Since he has spent the previous day talking to the Fynes and has just come down on the train to London with Fyne, he can also be assumed to have a good idea of the stimulus involved in the experiment: Fyne's need to tell the truth as he sees it. Not only does this hypothesis continue and extend the process of imaginative insight which we have seen at work in Marlow, but it also acts as a subtle metaphorical reflection of a standard scene in detective fiction: the recreation of the crime by the apparently omniscient detective. Marlow's understanding of the shifting patterns of human consciousness, of the relationship between self-righteous resentment, unrealistic idealism, and guilty self-doubt is seen at its best in these pages of the novel.

The problem lies not in the hypothesis itself but in the context in which it is made. Marlow's acceptance of the role of detective in Part One is justified by the fact that (although we do not initially know this)

he is genuinely ignorant of the outcome of the events of which he has been a part and must therefore, like the reader, attempt to puzzle a meaning out of them. Ostensibly this role seems not to have changed by the time he tells his auditor the second part of the story. Indeed the introductory section of Part Two with Marlow tracking down his quarry (Powell) in best boys' adventure story fashion seems designed to reinforce the reader's tentative vision of him as a detective. The trouble is that the hypothesis which follows this introduction, a hypothesis which illustrates the natural development of Marlow from physical to psychological investigator, is essentially dishonest since he already knows—as much as he ever is to know—what went on in the hotel room. He no longer has any real need to act as psychological detective since his act of physical detection in running Powell and Flora to earth obviates any further need to guess at their story. His tracking down of motive and response in this and later scenes is therefore as misleading as was his pretence of omniscience in Part One.

Indeed Marlow hints at the real extent of his knowledge when, a few pages later, he comments on his own sense that he is a shaper of events for others' consumption rather an uncertain receptor like the reader. He is comparing Powell's sense of wonder at the events which he saw unfolding on the Ferndale with his own:

Yes, I marvelled more since I knew more of the girl than Mr. Powell—if only her true name; and more of Captain Anthony—if only the fact that he was the son of a delicate erotic poet of a markedly refined and autocratic temperament. Yes, I knew their joint stories which Mr. Powell did not know. The chapter in it he was opening to me, the sea-chapter, with such new personages as the sentimental and apoplectic chief-mate and the morose steward, however astonishing to him in its detached condition, was much more so to me as a member of a series, following the chapter outside the Eastern Hotel in which I myself had played my part.

(p. 309)

While the Marlow who listens to the various sub-narratives which make up the story is prone to musing on his own role as surrogate novelist, the Marlow who tells the story has already taken over this role in Part Two as he transforms the "chapters" of fictional reality into the far more complex chapters of the narrative. Like a novelist, he offers different views of the same events and coyly holds off resolution of our suspicions about the young couple's relationship until our curiosity is satisfied and their problem is solved in the penultimate dramatic scene.

But if this is the real function of Marlow in the second part of Chance, why does Conrad create the illusion of his narrator's ignorance by the use of unnecessary hypotheses and deliberately limited angles of vision? While Part One of the novel contains a similar contrast in modes of presentation, there the contrast develops naturally out of Marlow's increasing confidence in the direction of his narrative, and the more assured of the two stances becomes predominant. In Part Two the tentative quality of the narrative remains pronounced, and Marlow's decision to tell much less than he knows leaves him (and Conrad) open to charges of artificial manipulation of the reader's expectations. One possible explanation is that this suppression of full knowledge is an attempt to create the kind of perspective on characters outlined by Karl and Hudspeth. Certainly the seminal scene in the hotel room is replayed later in the novel. Since the first version of it remains hypothetical, however (that is, it never comes into sharp focus), it is difficult to argue that the second version represents a modification of an initially less perceptive version.

The apparent difficulties which Marlow creates for us in Part Two can, nevertheless, be interpreted not as a dishonest device to impede the

reader's understanding, but rather as a means of enhancing that understanding. Thus far I have been arguing for the importance of Marlow's role as detective within the story, mainly with reference to Part One: he, I have suggested, acts as a kind of extension of the questioning response of the reader. While Marlow does not completely abdicate this role in the second part of Chance, part of his function is transferred to the reader himself. When Marlow begins to tell his tale it is after having been caught off guard by Powell who happens to remind him of his own limited knowledge of the Fynes and Anthony. This accounts for his initial uncertainty as to the direction of the narrative. In contrast, when he recounts the second part of the story, Marlow has had time to reach fairly definite conclusions about the motivation of his characters; what is more, at this second "telling" the reader now shares the limited knowledge which Marlow had at the first "telling." He can therefore follow Marlow as he speculates about what might have happened. When Marlow refuses fully to define the shape of events in Part Two either by speculation or by recounting events from a deliberately limited point of view (the ship-keeper's vision through a series of doorways of Flora and Anthony for example) the reader is forced to take over the role of detective of the psyche. In chapters one to three of Part Two he must make a series of guesses or assumptions which are not to be proved or disproved until the explanations of chapters four and five. In other words, the reader is put in very much the same position in the first chapters of Part Two as Marlow was in Part One.

The narrative technique of Part Two is thus not a contradiction of the expectations we are encouraged to develop in Part One about how we are to read the story but rather an extension and development of those

expectations. In largely transferring the investigative function from narrator to reader, Conrad has discovered an effective means of forcing the latter to realise what the former has known all along: that the point of the tale lies not in revelation of a central fact about the characters (the climax is after all deferred until the last possible moment) but in the gradual attempt to piece together motivation and response, in the process of the story rather than its product. In other words, the experience of the novel, as so often in Conrad, lies in its telling.

While the narrative structure of Chance is audacious in its ability to encourage the reader's participation in mentally shaping the events of the tale, it has a major limitation: it does not reflect or expand upon the thematic preoccupations of the novel as does the technique of Lord Jim, Nostramo, and to a lesser degree, The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes. Admittedly, the particular relationship of reader to text which I have discussed does reflect a story which is more inward, more difficult to pin down than most of the earlier novels. At the same time there is little sense that only this particular story can be told in this way: comparisons with Lord Jim—thematically the most similar of the earlier novels—are instructive. Both novels use a "spatialising" narrative technique, but while the difficulty we have in completing Jim's story is a reflection of his sense that events can be put behind one, the difficulty we have in defining Flora's story has to do with the limitations of the observer, not any quality in Flora herself which is reinforced or contradicted by the narrative form.

Interesting though this shift towards greater concern with the observer than the observed may be, it does suggest a slackening of Conrad's confidence in his ability to create character. Flora, quite simply, is

less interesting than any of Conrad's earlier protagonists. The fact that she does not act but is generally acted upon (at least until the final scene) makes her a poor candidate for the kind of psychological exploration which the text allows. Despite the devices for creating psychological perspective which other commentators have outlined and despite the ingenious use of the structures of detective fiction, the complex time scheme of Chance fails to illuminate an essentially dull heroine. The exhumed Marlow, despite having grown somewhat querulous with age, tells his tale with more cunning than of yore; the tale itself reveals no loss of Conrad's earlier ability to epitomise the moral flaws and failings of his characters through complex patterns of temporal symbolism; but tale and telling fail to complement each other in the effective manner of Conrad's earlier novels.

NOTES

¹Bruce Harkness, in "The Epigraph of Conrad's Chance," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (1954), 209-22, follows F. R. Leavis (The Great Tradition) in claiming that the title is ironic: "the importance of accident is minimal": His argument is rather perverse, however, not only because accidents such as Powell's happening to see de Barral's actions through the skylight do occur, but also because Conrad seems to suggest elsewhere (especially in Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes) that man is measured by his ability to respond to "chance" events.

²Joseph Conrad, Chance, Vol. II of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 101. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

³The name Carleon, his interest in evolutionary themes, his appearance ("a massive implacable man with a handsome face"), and his temperament all suggest that Anthony senior is modelled on Tennyson.

⁴Whitrow, p. 24.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, trans. Joan Riviere from Revised Edition (1924; rpt. New York: Pocket Books, 1973), p. 168.

⁷Julie M. Johnson in "The Damsel and Her Knights: The Goddess and the Grail in Conrad's Chance," Conradiana, XIII (1981), 221-28, argues that the titles are not ironic but that Conrad drew on Arthurian legend to create a quest for three "knights": Anthony, Powell, and Marlow. Flora, in this reading, is a Grail figure and fertility goddess. Although ingenious, Johnson's argument has to strain to fit the three men into their roles.

⁸Since, as has already been suggested, Conrad knew Carlyle's writings, he may have been thinking of the structural metaphor which the latter uses in Sartor Resartus. Carlyle's Philosophy of Clothes argues that attitudes and institutions, like clothes, wear out and have to be replaced. In "Heart of Darkness," Marlow refers to principles as "Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags—rags that would fly off at the first good shake" (p. 97). The connection between the two writers seems seldom to have been noted, although

Fleishman regards Carlyle as one of Conrad's "organicist" predecessors and points out the similarity of their attitudes to work (pp. 62-64, 73-74), and Watt points out the "Heart of Darkness" parallel, suggests similarities between the pessimism of the two men, and identifies Carlyle's On Heroes as a possible source of the Novalis quotation used as an epigraph to Lord Jim, (pp. 40, 149-51, 153).

⁹"Laughter," in Comedy, ed. Wylie Sypher (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 81. During one of his perorations, Marlow asks his listener, "But don't you know that people laugh at absurdities that are very far from being comic? Didn't you read the latest books about laughter written by philosophers, psychologists?" (p. 283). Wolfgang B. Fleischmann in "Conrad's Chance and Bergson's Laughter," Renascence XIV (1962), 66-71, notes Marlow's comment and relates it to Bergson, but claims that the humour in Chance results mainly from the inappropriateness of the character's laughter.

¹⁰Although Conrad referred to Moby-Dick as "a strained rhapsody with whaling for a subject and not a single sincere line in the 3 vols of it" (Karl, Three Lives, p. 615), this description of Anthony's dive may have been influenced by Chapter 15 of Moby-Dick (1851; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1961): "this absent-minded youth, by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts . . . at last . . . loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature" (p. 162). The leap that Melville's youth is tempted towards is, however, philosophical rather than amorous.

¹¹My summary draws on Sir James Frazer's translation of the Fasti (London: Heinemann, 1939), pp. 275-77.

¹²See Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance rev. edn. (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 113-17, for a detailed analysis of the metamorphosis.

¹³Merrit Y. Hughes, ed. (New York: Odyssey Press, 1962), lines 15-16.

¹⁴Eliade, p. 91.

¹⁵Henry James, "The New Novel," in The Art of Fiction and Other Essays, ed. Morris Roberts (New York: O.U.P., 1948), pp. 204-07; Guerard, pp. 269-71; Karl, A Reader's Guide, p. 242.

¹⁶Beach, p. 362; Karl, A Reader's Guide, pp. 79-81; Robert N. Hudspeth, "Conrad's Use of Time in Chance," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XXI (1966), 283-89.

¹⁷Hudspeth, p. 285.

¹⁸Gary Geddes in an interesting discussion of Chance in Conrad's Later

Novels (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980), pp. 35-57, considers the generic question and concludes that although it uses an ironic romance pattern, it is essentially a comedy.

¹⁹Poe's story is in Selected Writings, ed. David Galloway (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), pp. 330-49. An even better known story, "The Fall of the House of Usher," may have provided Conrad with Roderick Anthony's first name.

²⁰W. H. Auden, in "The Guilty Vicarage," Harper's Magazine, CXCVI (May, 1948), pp. 406-12, provides a brief poetics of the detective novel and mentions these elements as typical.

²¹Max Byrd, in a wide-ranging discussion of literary variants of the detective story, "The Detective Detected: From Sophocles to Ross MacDonald," The Yale Review, 64 (1974), 72-83, notes the difficulty of modifying the classic pattern of unmasking: "A reversal in which the criminal is unmasked at the beginning, or even in the middle of the mystery, would be pointless and deflating" (p. 72). Although he does not mention Chance, Byrd reads "Heart of Darkness" as a kind of detective story in which Marlow "discovers his own capacity for the crimes that Kurtz has committed" (p. 74).

²²Auden claims that the typical milieu of detective fiction is "Eden-like" (p. 408).

Chapter Six

VICTORY

At first reading, Victory (1915) seems to represent a rejection of the thematic and stylistic concerns of Chance and a return to an earlier and simpler format. The ironic narrative voice which introduces the novel is reminiscent of that found in the introductory section of Lord Jim, but the exotic setting and the situation of a culturally-isolated individual evoke memories of Almayer and Willems as well as Jim. At a second reading one realises that Victory is closer to its predecessors, the novels of Conrad's maturity, than it had first appeared to be. Despite the exotic setting and the occasionally rather languid mood, Heyst faces a dilemma common to many of Conrad's characters: how to structure one's life in a temporally-determined universe.

This classic problem of existence is conceived in peculiarly modern terms in Victory. To fail to live within the structures of time is normally in Conrad a sign of limitation of moral scope. Unlike earlier characters (with the possible exception of Decoud) Heyst finds himself "out of time" with the motions of the world not through a moral flaw or a psychological inadequacy but rather because he is infected with the modern disease of intellectual scepticism—a scepticism which is respected if not completely shared by Conrad.¹ In a schematic reading of the novel, Heyst's adversary, "plain Mr. Jones," is an equally modern phenomenon who provides a distorted reflection of Heyst's own scepticism. At the same time the protagonist is also in conflict with a more intimate adversary. By an ironic stroke of fate, Heyst, who is habitually imaged as a

man of the future, is paired with a woman "older than time" who challenges his sense that he is beyond the concerns of the present and provides him with a victory of sorts over his scepticism.

What makes Victory a difficult and confusing work is that the ethical conflict I have outlined, while presented at times with schematic clarity, is filtered through two symbolic patterns, one psychological, the other generic. Each of these symbolic patterns adds its own dimension of meaning to the text. Each furthermore functions as a means of creating temporal perspective: the psychological pattern suggests the timelessness of Heyst's inner conflict; the generic, which encourages us to read the story as romance rather than novel, its immense age. Ultimately, I will suggest, these patterns are complementary not contradictory.

Although Victory is not as audacious in its narrative structure as Chance, it does make effective, if only occasional, use of distortions of strict chronological order to give point to the scattered events of Heyst's life. And whereas much of the narrative complexity of Chance seems wasted on a rather dull protagonist, Conrad's selective exploitation of spatial and other techniques within one of his most structurally intelligible tales is justified by the complexity of Victory's central character.

Heyst is initially presented in a rather circuitous manner as a series of possibilities rather than as a complete human being. The nicknames which he attracts—"enchanted Heyst," "hard facts Heyst," "the Enemy," "the Spider," "Hermit"—relate to the various roles he has adopted during his stay in the East, and they encourage us to see him as a palimpsest, a parchment upon which his contemporaries can each write his own version of him.² Although Heyst's series of roles is partly created for

him by the sailors, traders, and drifters of the East who provide an audience for his transformations, it is also partly created from within. Quite simply, he does not seem to have a dominant personal trait, and he is apparently willing to slip from one role to another. This chameleonic or protean quality, whatever its other functions in the tale (gossip plays an important part in the main action), identifies Heyst, more than any of Conrad's other characters, as a prototypical modern, half-brother perhaps to Hesse's Steppenwolf and descendant of the kind of character Strindberg wants us to expect in the foreword to Miss Julie:

In regard to the drawing of the characters, I have made my people somewhat "characterless" for the following reasons. In the course of time the word character has assumed manifold meanings. It must have originally signified the dominating trait of the soul-complex, and this was confused with temperament. Later it became the middle-class term for the automaton, one whose nature had become fixed or had adapted himself to a particular rôle in life. In fact a person who had ceased to grow was called a character, while one continuing to develop . . . was called characterless. . . . Because they are modern characters living in a period of transition more feverishly hysterical than its predecessor at least, I have drawn my figures vacillating, disintegrated, a blend of old and new. . . . My souls (characters) are conglomerations of past and present stages of civilisation, bits from books and newspapers, scraps of humanity, rags and tatters of fine clothing patched together as is the human soul.³

For Strindberg, lack of definition of "character" in a fictional figure represents a necessary challenge to the traditional concept of the ego and also a sense (rather similar to that expressed by Bergson) that real existence involves a "conglomeration of past and present" rather than the homogeneous persona (the "automaton") which most of us assume as a convenient means of confronting the world. Conrad on the other hand is less enthusiastic about such psychological flexibility. Although he undermines the moral stress of those who by design (Razumov) or through pressure of events (Gould) become automatons, he also treats Heyst's refusal of such

a persona with some irony. Through the eyes of the unidentified narrator we see Heyst change from drifter to "the Enemy rushing all over the Archipelago, jumping in and out of local mail-packets . . . organizing with all his might" (p. 25)—and subsiding equally quickly into inertia with the failure of the Company.

The major source of Heyst's apparent lack of definition is his father: even more obviously than Roderick Anthony, he is the victim of paternal influence. Although more dignified, Heyst senior is, like Carleon Anthony, an inconsistent figure. Basically he is a pessimistic and sceptical philosopher, reminiscent, as several commentators have noted, of Schopenhauer:⁴ "The elder Heyst had written of everything in many books—of space and time, of animals and of stars; analysing ideas and actions, the laughter and the frowns of men, and the grimaces of their agony" (p. 218). Like Schopenhauer he writes aphorisms (a volume entitled Storm and Dust); like Schopenhauer too, it is sex, he feels, which lies at the root of the whole tragi-comedy of optimistic continuance of the race: "Of all the stragems of life the most cruel is the consolation of love—the most subtle too; for desire is the bed of dreams" (p. 219).⁵ At the same time there is little in Victory to suggest that Conrad means us to take Heyst senior's strictures very seriously. On the contrary, as Bruce Johnson has pointed out, the plot seems designed to illustrate the inadequacy of pessimism as a philosophy to live by.⁶

The important thing is not, however, that this philosophy is "wrong" in terms of the ethos of the novel but rather that it is self-contradictory. When Heyst senior advises his son to "look on, make no sound," the stoicism and disinvolvement he advocates is surely in itself a valid stance with which to confront the world; but Conrad shows the dishonesty

of this piece of advice when he describes its author as "the man who had spent his life in blowing blasts upon a terrible trumpet which had filled heaven and earth with ruins, while mankind went on its way unheeding" (p. 175). It may be possible for mankind as a whole to ignore the trumpeter of doom; it is not possible, however, to cultivate a sceptical distance from reality if one finds oneself in the position of the trumpeter.

This is part of the problem with Heyst's attitude to life: he has not learned to be completely self-contained. Another problem, equally important in the resolution of the plot and in the pattern of temporal symbolism associated with it, is that Heyst is a rather incomplete follower of Schopenhauer. One aspect of the great pessimist's philosophy which he has ignored is its attitude to history. History, Schopenhauer says, is not, as Hegel claimed, a teleological process; there is no master plan for the betterment of the world being enacted through historical events. What is more, history is only a pseudo-science since the historian cannot make valid general judgements from a congeries of specific events. The only rule which can be learned from the study of history is that "in all these endless changes and their confusion we have always before us only the same, even, unchanging nature, which today acts in the same way as yesterday and always This identical element which is permanent through all changes consists of the fundamental qualities of the human heart and head—many bad, few good."⁷ One of Heyst's difficulties in dealing with the world is that he feels he has moved beyond human passions and has difficulty in understanding such manifestations in others: he is equally baffled by Jones's motiveless malignity and by Lena's self-sacrificing love.

Initially, Heyst tries to accept what he sees as the substance of

his father's philosophy. Conceiving life in the classic image of a stream but feeling alone on its bank, "in his pride he determined not to enter it" (p. 176). In context the stream refers primarily to pointless human activity, but the description of "fatuously jostling, nodding, spinning figures hurried irresistibly along" (p. 172) encourages us also to recognise it as the classic image of time borrowed from Heraclitus. Unfortunately, Heyst's detachment is not perfect: while his father inveighs against mundane reality, he takes part in it. Once drawn into the stream (accepting human reality at the same time as he falls into time) he cannot divest himself of his belief in the pointlessness of all human activity. To continue the image, he cannot swim. As Conrad has reminded us in an earlier novel, to swim one must "to the destructive element submit [one]self" (Lord Jim, p. 156). His inability either to maintain a stoical indifference to life's demands or to face them wholeheartedly combined with his difficulty in recognising the timelessness of human passion results in Heyst's failure to act at important moments in his life. It is not (as the sceptical reader might assume of Jim) mere cowardice or weakness which holds Heyst back; instead his peculiarly modern malaise keeps him from what Conrad calls "the mere way of it, the trick of the thing" (p. x). The agony of his position is that (again unlike Jim) he understands it so well.

Not surprisingly for the son of a Schopenhauerian father, as a young man Heyst has come to the East. At first he seems to have escaped the demands of modern life. He even spends several years among a tribe of New Guinea savages. Heyst is however no primitivist: whatever his motives, he returns to civilisation and thereafter remains within what the narrator describes as a "magic circle" centred upon a point in North Borneo. The use of the phrase "magic circle" and the narrator's casual mention of

Heyst's attempts to "break out" of it indicate that the man who has fled from Europe has encountered another kind of entrapment. Heyst may be "enchanted" with the East because it represents an alternative to the dull and painful reality he has left behind him, but the enchantment is that of an outsider, one who is not really engaged in useful activity. Conrad suggests that for those making a living in the East it is Europe which is the "enchanted" domain, the place removed from diurnal reality. Thus the narrator remarks, in explaining the lack of general concern about Morrison's death, that going to Europe "was nearly as final as going to heaven. It removed a man from the world of hazard and adventure" (p. 23).⁸

The events of the early sections of Victory expose the irony of Heyst's actions by showing his fall into mundane time—that is into a world dependent upon diurnal routine. His involvement with Morrison is the first stage in this process, although since Morrison is the most dilatory and ineffectual of traders Heyst is able to maintain his illusion of drifting. The creation of the Tropical Belt Coal Company (Morrison's attempt to repay Heyst for his generosity), however, enmeshes him much more tightly in the mechanisms of time. Whatever others may see in the Company, Heyst regards it as "a step forward in the general organisation of the universe" (p. 6). In practical terms, of course, the development of coal outcrops signals the imminent replacement of sailing vessels and the consequent shift of commercial emphasis from an ancient craft dependent on weather and skill to a modern technology capable of running to exact schedules and defying the whims of nature.⁹ Symbolically, we may suggest, the coming of steam power represents the intrusion of Western and mechanical notions of Time into a world which still believes in cyclic rhythms.

Heyst's hubris in thinking he can change the "general organisation

of the universe" is neatly punished with the liquidation of the Company, although it seems as though the commercial failure has allowed him to step out of the stream of time as easily as he fell into it. With the end of the Company, Samburan loses its temporary status as the "central spot of the Eastern hemisphere" (p. 23). The geographical realignment also brings about a temporal realignment as the island relapses into primal solitude. As Mary B. Goens suggests, Heyst "thinks of time marching on rather than spiraling," but the return of the jungle (which has to be periodically cleared to make human life possible) represents the reversion to a cyclical order.¹⁰ At the same time the description of Heyst's helmet seeming "to swim in a green sea[in] the living depths of the tropical vegetation, which is more jealous of men's conquests than the ocean" (p. 29) encourages us to believe that he has readily accepted a role as the animate portion of the island, becoming in the process "a hermit in the wilderness" (p. 31).

Heyst's meeting with Lena, however, shows that the transformation into hermit, like the earlier transformation into entrepreneur, is not permanent, perhaps because it is not entirely sincere. On meeting the girl he must once more face the possibility of forming a personal tie: it is, the narrator notes, the "same sort of impulse" which leads him to approach the suffering Lena as had earlier led him to cross the street to accost Morrison. The link is made even clearer when the act is described as "another sort of plunge" than his earlier plunge after the "submerged Morrison" and as "likely to lead to a very different kind of partnership" (p. 77). Despite the narrator's insistence on the difference between the two situations, the use of the word "partnership" should remind us that Heyst's involvement with Lena is not only the result of sexual attraction but also the

factual and symbolic renewal of his "partnership" with the human race—a partnership which, intellectually at least, he has done his best to abrogate. In their different ways, it is of course "partnership" in the human race that most of Conrad's earlier protagonists—Jim, Decoud, Razumov, Anthony—have tried to disavow.

Through a chain of coincidences ("chance") including Schomberg's mixture of lust and malice, Lena does indeed prove to be the link which once more ties Heyst to the world he despises. The link takes the shape of the trio of Jones, Ricardo, and Pedro, and in describing these unexpected visitors as "the envoys extraordinary of the world we thought we had done with for years and years" (p. 349) Heyst recognises their symbolic importance, an importance underlined by Jones' description of himself as "the world itself come to pay you a visit" (p. 379). With the intrusion of the world—or at least a sample of its less pleasant aspects—into the isolated reality of Samburan, a whole new series of partnerships is implied or created. Jones himself insists that he and Heyst "belong to the same social sphere" (p. 378); Ricardo, meanwhile, tries to enlist Lena's help on the grounds that they are "born and bred alike . . . not tame . . . chucked out into this rotten world of 'yporcrits'" (p. 297); even Pedro is given an implied partnership with Wang by taking over his job. Heyst fights a rearguard action, insisting that Wang's mysterious reference to "two" (Ricardo's attempted rape of Lena) can only mean one thing: "We know what the word two means, don't we Lena? We are two. Never were such a lonely two out of the world, my dear!" (pp. 315-16). Despite this attempt to imply that his relationship with Lena is the pivotal one in his life, he eventually becomes the "secret sharer" of Jones's sexual malice as the two men stalk, spy upon, and finally fire at the tableau of Ricardo

and Lena. There is a certain poetic justice in this punishment for Heyst's attempt to isolate his society of two from society at large: at the moment of Lena's death he is separated from her not only physically but psychologically since he is unable to retain faith in the twoness which he has so repeatedly stressed.

Although Jones suggests a social parity between himself and Heyst, the connection between them goes deeper than cultural externals. One similarity which reinforces the reader's suspicion of some sort of psychological bond between the two men is that they are both out of step with the patterns of temporal reality. Heyst, I have already suggested, is running away from time by trying to avoid the confusion of life's "stream." He suggests another mechanism for avoidance when he tells Davidson, "I thought that intelligent observation of facts was the best way of cheating the time which is allotted to us" (p. 54). Jones on the other hand seems determined to get ahead of time. Although he tells Schomberg that he comes from "a good many places" he is in fact traveling west. In answer to the latter's query whether his purpose is "sport" he replies, "Yes. Sort of sport. What do you say to chasing the sun?" "Chasing" time is, however, associated with another, complementary attitude towards it. When Schomberg later asks why he bothers to fleece the hotel's customers of small amounts of money, Jones explains that "one must do something to kill time. Killing time was not forbidden" (p. 113). In his determined pursuit and destruction of time, Jones is, one might say, a Lord Jim in reverse. While Jim's flight from time leaves him looking permanently youthful, Jones's pursuit of it may be symbolised by the narrative insistence on his skeletal thinness and his "used-up, weary, depraved" appearance (p. 102); that he is last seen as "a heap of bones in a blue

silk bag" (p. 411) is only poetic justice for one who has attempted to force time onwards to its inevitable end.

Yet Jones, like Heyst, has his contradictions, and, it could be argued, is in turn destroyed by them. "Killing" time, despite its verbal violence, is generally a passive act (and in fact sounds rather like Heyst's "cheating" time). Indeed Ricardo's great fear is that his principal will fall into one of the fits of depression or passivity in which he refuses to do anything at all for days on end (p. 151). It is mainly the desire to avoid such a possibility which leads Ricardo to agree to Schomberg's suggestion that he should persuade Jones to attack Heyst. Ironically, once given the chance to act decisively, Jones proceeds to do the very thing Ricardo has feared: much to his lieutenant's annoyance, he repeatedly puts off any final confrontation with Heyst and even declares a kind of truce. Through his vacillation (which allows Ricardo to make his own plans for Lena and himself) he loses not only the treasure but also his life.

Both killing time and chasing it, however, involve a form of arrogance, an arrogance made clear in Jones's claim that while he wishes to plunder the east coast of Africa, "it will have to wait until he is ready for it" (p. 154). This boast echoes the words of another of Conrad's egotists, Mr. Holroyd, who insists in Nostromo that "Time itself has got to wait on the the greatest country in the whole of God's universe" (p. 77). Jones apparently feels that in his role as spiritual rebel he can put his hand upon the axle of the world and spin it as he chooses; failing this he will make do with turning "Axel" Heyst to his will.

Despite the overt antagonism between the two men, however, the temporal symbolism associated with Jones reveals him to be not Heyst's opposite but his distorted reflection. Heyst feels that his scepticism has put him

"ahead" of the times: "I am so recent that I may call myself a man of the last hour—or is it the hour before last?" (p. 359). But Jones's desire to "chase the sun" and to kill time also pushes him ahead of time, although in a behavioural rather than a philosophic sense: his wasted, skeletal appearance suggests one who has played cavalierly with his own allotment of time in the conviction that he is somehow beyond it. Heyst regards himself as socially impotent because he has evolved further than others, but Jones too has evolved, although along different lines, leaving behind normal notions of morality in the process.¹¹

Although the stage is set—or rather cleared—by the beginning of Part Four for a struggle between these two individuals, the conflict

does not really materialise. Instead what makes up much of the action of this section of the book is Heyst's conflict with Lena, already delineated in Part Three. As with the Heyst/Jones relationship, the differences between them are represented mainly through their attitudes towards—or, more precisely, their unconscious assumptions about—time. Just before he comes to the conclusion that he is a "man of the last hour," Heyst muses, "I wonder, Lena . . . whether you are just a little child, or whether you represent something as old as the world" (p. 359). The "something as old as the world" which Lena represents, is, we may suggest, the archetypal feminine, the complex of ideas and images traditionally associated with woman and habitually represented verbally and iconically by polarised or simplified epithets.¹² As several commentators have noted, Lena's original names, Alma (soul or fostering) and Magdalen represent two of the opposing patterns of behaviour by which men have traditionally tried to define woman.¹³ By calling her "Lena" Heyst seems to accept the duality normally implied by the name "Magdalen"

(or Magdalena). Strictly speaking the biblical "Mary called Magdalene" was the woman whom Christ healed of seven devils (Luke 8:2), she followed him, and he eventually revealed himself to her at the resurrection. Traditionally, however, she has also been identified as the "sinner" (Luke 7:37-50) who anointed Christ's feet, and the name Magdalen has become synonymous with prostitute.

"Lena" then suggests both the spiritual and the sensual, and should represent a symbolic acceptance by Heyst of both aspects of his mistress's personality. But does it? Despite his apparent acceptance of Lena, Heyst seems unable to come to terms with the kind of reality she represents. The obvious awkwardnesses and misunderstandings which continue to exist between them even after they have known each other for some time may be sexual in origin ("He used to come out of her very arms with the feeling of a baffled man"), but they are also, at least in part, a result of his suspicion of her instinctive reactions to life. The conflict is between one who, whatever confusion she may feel about specific issues, is capable of regarding life under the aspect of eternity, and one who feels himself to be historically determined. Lena's readiness to sacrifice herself is a result of her belief that life has a value and that a victory, even at the cost of her own death, is still worth winning. Heyst on the other hand, because he feels that life is basically absurd, is unable to stoop for his weapons and is resentful when Lena does so—even though her intention is to save his life: "No doubt you acted from instinct. Women have been provided with their own weapon. I was a disarmed man" (p. 404).

Not surprisingly perhaps, his suspicion of her in the concluding scene of the story reaches a peak at the moment when she shows herself to

be most completely the image of the archetypal feminine as accepted into Christian thought. As George F. Reinecke has pointed out, the final scene in which the serpentine Ricardo is shown caressing Lena's foot ("the venom of the viper in her paradise, extracted, safe in her possession—and the viper's head all but lying under her heel") inevitably recalls Genesis 3:15 and reminds us that the Virgin Mary is regarded typologically as a second Eve.¹⁴ That the woman-hating and death-loving Jones should be horrified by the scene is not surprising: Lena strikes at his very assumptions about life. It is one of the sad ironies of Victory, however, that Heyst can see in this traditional icon of woman's role in bringing about the redemption of man only an image of betrayal. At this moment of self-sacrifice he assumes that Lena is playing the role of the Magdalen as it is popularly interpreted—that is, she is betraying him sexually. What Heyst fails to realise is that Ricardo's kissing and caressing of Lena's foot acts as a visual reversal of the other role traditionally ascribed to the biblical Magdalene in which she anoints Christ's feet. In this role reversal, she becomes the Christ figure accepting homage and offering forgiveness: What Heyst should see then is Lena acting in a way which reinforces the spiritual connotations attached to her name (the Hebraic Magdalena means "elevated"). The Christ-cum-Magdalen image combines with the Virgin Mary icon to form a multilevelled symbol of Lena's role in the story as representative of a life-giving feminine principle to which Heyst is unable to respond as he should.

Heyst's conflict and failure is then a dual one. He cannot outface a real threat to his safety because he cannot convince himself of its reality. Persuaded, philosophically, that he lives "on a shadow inhabited by shades" (p. 350), he is horrified to find that his visitors "persist." As he explains to Lena, "They have no right to be—but they

are. They ought to have aroused my fury. But I have refined everything away by this time—anger, indignation, scorn itself" (p. 329). He has not learned the lesson that history has to teach of the persistence of psychological and moral patterns, and he is equally unable to believe in—or at least take seriously—the potential for generous self-sacrifice represented by Lena. Neither instinctive evil (Jones and crew) nor instinctive good (Lena) should exist in the cerebral future which Heyst has tried to will into existence in the present. The drunken McNab who calls him a "utopist" is quite correct; and for Heyst, to believe in an ideal future is to fail to commit himself to an imperfect present.

The ethical structure which I have outlined, symbolised by a clash of attitudes towards time, represents, however, only a part of the experience of reading Victory. In particular, such a summary gives no hint of the radical shift in style and structure which takes place in the course of the novel. The first half of Victory treats mainly of a social environment in which Heyst's hermit-like existence is examined only briefly. The stress upon the senior Heyst's philosophy and Heyst's own scepticism leaves open the likelihood that philosophy is to play the major role in this novel that politics does in Nostramo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes or at least the minor role that business does in Chance—that is to provide an intellectual or practical structure against which the moral stances of the characters are set in relief.

This initial expectation is, however, undermined in the second half of Victory which is set almost entirely upon Samburan. Parts Three and Four seem to represent a dramatic shift in the kind of book Conrad is writing. Although the narrative voice remains the same (creating, if one wishes to complain about it, all kinds of lacunae in the transmission of

the text), it ceases to be amused, sceptical, and analytic and becomes instead sympathetic and omniscient. A similar physical shift takes place in Lord Jim, but Jim's experiences in Patusan continue to be relayed through the sceptical Marlow, and even Jim himself recognises the difference between this world and the one he has left. After the shift of scene to the island in Victory, even the tempo of the book slows down. Very little actually happens in the latter half of the book, at least until the last few pages; instead there are seemingly interminable conversations and analyses of strategy. The generally naturalistic and modern tone of the first two parts is replaced by a near-allegorical conflict whose significance Conrad is unusually insistent in demanding that we recognise. Finally, the love relationship between Heyst and Lena seems to lose thematic momentum as Conrad shifts uneasily between oblique attempts to show the inadequacy of their relationship and clumsy hints at its transcendence.

It is both the substance of Parts Three and Four and Victory's awkward discontinuity of style which leads Albert Guerard to dismiss it as "Conrad for the high schools and the motion pictures." Thomas Moser and Douglas Hewitt are equally sceptical about the direction of the book's development. R.W.B. Lewis, Paul Wiley and Gary Geddes (among others) are more generous in their evaluations. Both Wiley and Lewis recognise the shift from realism to allegory, Lewis suggesting that Victory provides a kind of experiment in how far a fiction can move in that direction. Geddes stresses but does not detail what he calls the romance element.¹⁵ Both romance and allegory, I suggest, are present in the second half of the book, and both are essential means of developing the theme. Since the nature of that theme has already been considered in some detail, I propose

rather to examine the ways in which the romance and allegoric modes act as an ironic commentary on Heyst's idea that he is "ahead" of the rest of the world and underscore the gap in his Schopenhauerian vision of the world.

The allegorical quality of Victory relates especially to its setting (an island outside the normal shipping lanes with no intrinsic importance except that given to it by the action) and to the situation of a man tempted by a trio of evil adversaries described by Schomberg as "a spectre, a cat, an ape" (p. 148) and by Heyst as "evil intelligence, instinctive savagery, . . .and brute force" (p. 329). The temptation, naturally enough, is to read the second half of Victory as a psychological allegory which pits opposing forces in the psyche against each other.

Richard E. Butler, in his article "Jungian and Oriental Symbolism in Joseph Conrad's Victory," does exactly that. Lena, he argues, is the anima figure to whom Heyst turns as an alternative to the philosophy of alienation from humanity imposed upon him by his father. At the same time the crack in his consciousness caused by this emotional awakening also leaves him vulnerable to the promptings of his "shadow" self—in Butler's reading, Jones. Heyst's very nobility "depends for its purity upon repression." It is precisely the repressed, unpleasant elements in his psyche (the three men are initially discovered under the jetty) which are personified in the trio of visitors.¹⁶ If there is an obvious problem in Butler's reading it is that he all but ignores Wang and fails to make anything of the obvious symmetry of the two groups of three people—Heyst, Lena, and Wang versus Jones, Ricardo, and Pedro—involved in the conflict.

Yet Conrad goes out of his way to suggest the importance of this symmetry: Heyst's battle must be, as he knows, with Jones; Lena's is with

the instinctive Ricardo; and Wang ends up killing Pedro, who was earlier "the prime inducement which had led Wang to purloin the revolver" (p. 311). This structure of two opposed but "doubled" groups suggests surely that the psychological allegory, if it exists, has to do with each group containing fragmented parts of one whole (intelligence, passion, and force, perhaps) rather than with Heyst facing one such group. The conflict, perhaps, is between these isolated qualities in the "good" individual and twisted reflections of those same qualities in the "evil" intruders. This patterning is much closer to classical psychology (reason, will, sense) or to Freudian psychology (superego, ego, id) than it is to Jung. Furthermore, such a reading recognises the conflict which takes place between the "number one" of each group (Wang's term for Heyst) and the number two. As I have already argued, Heyst's inadequacies are exposed as much by his relationship with Lena as by his conflict with Jones—a conflict which in any case ends in a truce which unites them against the apparent amours of their respective companions.

In any event, the effect of the psychological allegory is to detract from the contemporaneity of the conflict. Influential as contemporary and recent philosophies may have been on Conrad (John Saveson, for example, argues that Victory represents a repudiation of Schopenhauerian attitudes by those of Nietzsche),¹⁷ his readiness to turn immediate social reality into psychological allegory involves a recognition of the dependence of all behaviour upon subconscious promptings. As Conrad comments on Heyst's attraction towards Lena, "The use of reason is to justify the obscure desires that move our conduct, impulses, passions, prejudices and follies, and also our fears" (p. 83). That the self-consciously modern Heyst is not ruled by a purely rational principle not only undercuts his intellectual

pretensions but also denies his pretence of being "ahead" of the rest of the race. The mind itself, to quote an earlier Conradian hero, "is capable of anything—because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future" ("Heart of Darkness," p. 96). The allegoric quality of the second half of Victory, we may suggest then, is not a sign of Conrad's loss of control over his material but rather a deliberate attempt to insist upon the timelessness of Heyst's drama and to stress the essential inwardness of his conflict.

There is also a second factor involved in the stylistic shift between Parts Two and Three of the story—a factor which again demonstrates Conrad's desire to extend the psychological dimensions of the action. Albert Guerard, looking for a stick with which to beat it, calls Victory "a popular romance"; if instead of using "romance" as a term of abuse we accept it as a valid critical term, then Guerard may be found to have judged fairly accurately.¹⁸

The term "romance" in its original usage was either a technical description of mediaeval and renaissance adventure stories or a generally pejorative description of amorous literature (Pope's "twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt"). Although nineteenth-century American writers such as Hawthorne, Cooper, and Brown attempted to use "romance" as an alternative to "novel" it has become widely accepted only since its popularization by Northrop Frye in Anatomy of Criticism and later works. According to Frye, romance is essentially a quest literature involving a dialectical conflict between a hero and his enemy. Since it is a mythic, pre-generic pattern (as are comedy, tragedy, and irony) we should expect to find similar motifs repeated in different examples from different periods. Frye conflates mythical theories taken from Frazer and Jung and argues both that the structure of romance pits a hero associated with

"spring, dawn, order, fertility, and youth" against an enemy representing "winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life" and that "the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment which will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality."¹⁹

The mixture of ritual and archetypal elements allows Frye an impressive range and flexibility of reference, especially when combined with his theory of mythical displacement ("the adaption of myth and metaphor to canons of morality or plausability"),²⁰ and most commentary has been content further to organize the thematic patterns which Frye has discovered.²¹ Kathryn Hume, for example, points to the similarities between Frye's quest structure and that outlined by Joseph Campbell in The Hero with a Thousand Faces; furthermore she codifies Frye's general romance pattern according to the eight possible types of hero and the six possible fates which await him, thus producing an exhaustive (and exhausting) total of forty-eight major plot configurations.²²

One reason for the popularity of Frye's theory is that it provides us with what Humpty Dumpty might have called a "portmanteau" structure: not an archetype but a means of relating archetypal fragments within the fiction. Jung himself used the term archetype to refer to literally dozens of images and symbolic situations, and he claimed that "There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the forms of images filled with content, but at first only as forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action."²³ For my purposes it will be sufficient to expand the thematic range of romance a little further than Frye does and define it

as any mythic narrative "displaced" into fictional form whether or not the complete outlines of a quest tale (or any other standardized narrative pattern) can be discerned.

The generic status of the second two parts of Victory is announced fairly directly at the beginning of Part Three through Heyst's recognition of the similarity between his own situation and what Northrop Fry describes as the "canonical" image of romance in Western culture, the story of Adam and Eve.²⁴ In a brief scene, Heyst is described as meditating "among the bones buried so kindly in the grass of two seasons' growth." (The "bones" are the remains of "that once sanguine enterprise," the Tropical Belt Coal Company.) There he comes to the conclusion that "There must be a lot of the original Adam in me after all." What has prompted Heyst's musings, it is quickly made clear, is the memory of "Action—the first thought, or perhaps the first impulse on earth," action epitomised by Adam's act of naming "the animals of that paradise which he was so soon to lose" (pp. 173-74).

The construction of this section of Victory is rather loose, and it is not clear whether the action into which Heyst has inadvisedly fallen is that of becoming involved in Morrison's schemes (the dead bones of which surround him) or of rescuing Lena. Indeed, since Conrad encourages us to regard the latter act as reflection and extension of the former, it scarcely matters. More to the point, we do not know whether Heyst conceives of his state upon Samburan as like that of Adam in the garden or Adam expelled from the garden. In many ways the island does seem to be a kind of Garden of Eden created by modern commercial enterprise: it has a convenient supply of food and other necessities left behind by the company; furthermore since the menial work is done by Wang, Heyst and Lena do not have

to do anything very active towards their own support. Wang, admittedly, is an addition to the original biblical story, but he is repeatedly described as noiseless and almost invisible. The only other inhabitants of Samburan are the Alfuro natives who have erected a barricade which effectively divides them from their white neighbours and underlines the isolation of the latter.

Despite this appearance of primal harmony, it is in every sense a fallen world which Heyst inhabits. The original Adam to whom he compares himself is the Adam who has perversely rejected his birthright by biting into the forbidden fruit. For Heyst the forbidden fruit is action. That he has "fallen" into paradisaal surroundings makes the irony of his situation only the sharper. Just as Adam gives a name to Eve only after their sin (the last of his acts of naming the inhabitants of the Garden), so Heyst welcomes Lena into his world by giving her a new name. Although a serpent certainly comes to Samburan in the form of Jones, the conversation in which he describes himself as having been "coming and going up and down the earth" (pp. 317-18) borrows from the Book of Job rather than from Genesis. A further biblical analogy is drawn into the scheme of reference when Lena comments to Heyst as they sit on a hill-side, "It seems as if everything that there is had gone under." He responds by agreeing that it "Reminds you of the story of the deluge" (p. 191). Finally, when Schomberg offers Jones and his companions "a pillar of smoke by day and a loom of fire by night . . . to steer by" (p. 168), he links Heyst to yet another Old Testament figure: Moses. Although these references undercut the Edenic pretensions of Samburan, they do not conflict with Heyst's original role as Adam. In typological terms the flood and recreation of the world is a reflection of the original act of creation and represents God's

renewal of his covenant with man; the temptation of Job provides another example of an exceptional individual who, like Noah but unlike Adam, accepts God's will; Moses of course in leading the Israelites out of the land of Egypt offers them a form of redemption. All three Old Testament figures, furthermore, can be regarded as "types" of that "second Adam" who "to the fight/And to the rescue came."²⁵

Thus Conrad means us, I suspect, not to see Heyst or his situation as a reflection of any one biblical figure or situation (as has generally been the case with his ironic use of the Eden myth in earlier novels) but rather as a kind of collation or multi-levelled analogue of a whole series of major biblical figures. Heyst is neither Adamic nor—that perennial favourite—a Christ figure (although his surname rhymes with Christ and his first name translates as "one around whom the world turns"); instead he is the protagonist of Judeo-Christian romance, an archetypal hero/dupe both blessed by God and tested beyond what most mortals could bear.²⁶

The distinction between romance dependent upon Christian myth and romance drawing upon other sources is fairly fluid: indeed Northrop Frye, upon whom I have been leaning fairly heavily so far, treats Romance generally as a "secular scripture"—even when its sources are sacred. If we do recognise Victory as a romance, or at least as novel shading into Romance, then we can also accept as reinforcement of this assumption the widely-noted similarities between Heyst's enchanted isle and that of The Tempest. While it is tempting but probably unrewarding to search for verbal echoes (it would be surprising if a writer who carried a volume of Shakespeare in his pocket did not manage to echo him occasionally), the situational similarities are limited. Both Heyst and Prospero are isolated from the mainstream of affairs; both are faced with a threat to the peaceable kingdom

they have established, when a boatload of men arrives at their island; both have familiars of a kind. But similarities between the plots—despite the ingenuity of Donald Dike—do not go much further.²⁷ Above all, Heyst's "magic" is ineffectual; Prospero's is potent.

Much more influential, I would argue, than direct verbal and situational influences are those of tone. Shakespeare's last plays are frequently referred to as "romances," admittedly with something of the condescension which marked early uses of the term. In fact, though, the mixture of wondrous deeds, unexpected deliverances, surprising revelations, and youthful love and idealism which typifies Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest is endemic to Romance. The Tempest is perhaps at the more self-conscious and sceptical pole of Romance (Frye puts it in the fifth phase which is characterised by "a contemplative withdrawal from or sequel to action rather than a youthful preparation for it"): but then so is Victory. Indeed what Victory gains from The Tempest is the ability to retain something of the optimism and freshness of romance even within its enervated, fin-de-siècle, emotional range.

Victory also borrows tonally—although this connection has been largely ignored—from Milton's Comus, the source of its epigraph.²⁸ Comus, like The Tempest, has a plot which revolves around enchantment, and we are reminded that Heyst initially claims to be "enchanted" by the islands (p. 6), is regarded by Wang as "bewitched" (p. 307), and is in danger of being "put to sleep for days" by the "incantations or philtres" of Lena (p. 317). Whatever ingenious thematic parallels may be drawn between the two works, it is once more, I suggest, the tone of Comus and its underlying generic structure which most obviously affect Victory. Masque is, after all, the most unrealistic of literary and dramatic forms, shading at one end of

its structural spectrum into music and dance. Furthermore, rather than attempting subtle revelation or interplay of character it is a celebratory and ritualistic medium with the allegorized forces of evil (satyrs) being defeated by the allegorized forces of good (often courtiers, or in the case of the modestly-staged and bucolic Comus, country-dancers). Masque is thus essentially a romantic genre, dependent for its success upon archetypal confrontation rather than presentation of a realistic social milieu. There is no contradiction therefore between the tonal echoes of the masque, Comus, and the masque-like Tempest (Prospero even produces a brief masque in Act IV); both encourage us to examine Victory according to canons other than those of strict mimetic accuracy.

In describing the second half of Victory as a romance reliant upon a Christian symbology, one is not thereby denying the existence of patterns of symbolism shared with romance as a whole. Certainly the story contains numerous elements of the standard (according to Frye) questor-romance: there are a hero, a heroine, and a villain, all clearly delineated in their roles; there are the search for a treasure and the penetration of a hidden fortress; the centre of the action is described in terms which suggest that it is symbolically the centre of the universe; and the hero achieves spiritual insight through his trials.

The problem is that the motifs I have listed are all inverted or distorted. Heyst is a remarkably bloodless hero, rescuing Lena, rather reluctantly, but lacking the practical ability to protect her. It is Jones rather than Heyst who hears the "call to adventure" and sets out on the quest for a hidden treasure, while Ricardo is attracted to the exploit partly by his knowledge of Lena's existence. Jones eventually does penetrate the island-fortress of Samburan, but not until he has been rescued

from near death by a life-giving stream of water produced by his nominal enemy. Meanwhile Heyst's role has shifted from hero to evil king or tyrant—at least from the perspective of his visitors. (Jones assumes that he cannot have come by his wealth honestly.) Heyst's relationship to his real "hidden treasure," Lena, also begins to seem like that of a father rather than a lover as he plots to keep her out of sight of their visitors. Samburan itself is described in terms which suggest that its symbolic function is that of omphalos or world-navel: the prospectus of the Tropical Belt Coal Company turns it into "the central spot of the Eastern Hemisphere with its name engraved in enormous capitals. Heavy lines radiated from it in all directions through the tropics, figuring a mysterious and effective star—lines of influence or lines of distance or something of that sort" (pp. 23-24). The existence of the neighbouring volcano adds to the numinous aura of the island, but the importance given to it by the Company prospectus is surely meant to be seen as fraudulent. Finally, while Heyst does indeed achieve insight of a kind reflected in his last words to Davison, "Woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love—and to put its trust in life!" (p. 410), it is too late to be much use to him.

Through the ambiguity of the conclusion, with Lena achieving a "victory" of a sort and also through the (presumably conscious) ironic inversion of the structures of romance, Conrad may be trying to incorporate the second half of his book into the novelistic mainstream where victories (Jim's or Razumov's for example) tend to be partial. Nevertheless, the romantic substructure still acts as a means of justifying the overtly allegorical plot of the second half of Victory where the critical claim that "[in Romance] every typical character tends to have his moral opposite

confronting him, like black and white pieces of a chess game" can readily be validated.²⁹ By the interplay between novelistic and romance elements, Conrad is attempting, I suspect, to universalize the theme of a modern man trapped by his own preconceptions, or (to let go the spatial metaphor) to offer us what he had earlier called "truth stripped of its cloak of time" ("Heart of Darkness", p. 97). Romance is stripped of its cloak of time, since even when its setting is modern the shape of the plot and the motifs and images through which that plot functions date back to antiquity. Furthermore, if we accept the premise that romance is an archetypal format, the conflicts being played out by the characters are not rooted in the experience of a particular time and place but are those which must always be fought out in the individual human psyche. Thus a consideration of the romance elements in Victory reinforces the conclusion reached through examination of the allegorical element: that Heyst, despite his self-conscious modernity, is unable to escape timeless elements within himself and others, those irrational passions which eventually cause his destruction. Furthermore these structural ironies reflect the basic thematic irony already suggested—Heyst's failure, despite the Schopenhauerian influence of his father, to take into account Schopenhauer's warning about the real lesson of history: Eadem sed Aliter.³⁰

Despite his continuing concern with temporal symbolism as a means of defining and explaining his characters, Conrad seems to have called a halt in Victory to the kinds of exploration of the contradictory responsibilities of the narrator which, I have argued, characterise Chance and create its chronological complexity. The querulous but self-questioning Marlow of the earlier novel has been replaced by an unidentified narrative voice which acts as a "frame" for the tale relayed mainly by the unperturbable

(not to say dull) Davidson. Even the measure of narrative complexity imposed by this method of transmission is, in practice, a little suspect. We are meant (presumably) to believe that the distraught Heyst has confided the whole emotionally complex tale of Parts Two (the first half at least) Three, and Four to Davidson after Lena's death and before his own suicide. Even if we accept this unlikely feat—compared to which Marlow's telling of Jim's story at one sitting is child's play—we still have to ask how Heyst could have discovered the exact details of the conversations between Jones and Ricardo and Ricardo and Lena. Conrad can overcome such awkwardnesses only by avoiding reminding his audience of the supposed method of transmission. So successful is he that one reads the last three sections of the novel as an omniscient narrative.

In one way, however, Conrad's narrative technique in Victory is innovative, even experimental. Rather than "getting in" his protagonist with a thick brush in the early section of the work and then moving back and forth chronologically to show how he became what he was--the technique of Lord Jim, Nostromo, Under Western Eyes, The Secret Agent, and (to a lesser degree) Chance--Conrad carefully avoids giving us a clear initial view of Heyst.³¹ Although Part One is concerned with Heyst and his actions, it is Heyst seen from the perspective of an amused outsider. Actions are described externally; Heyst is allowed only a rather static series of emotional states; and there is no real attempt to present the process of his thoughts. Much of the time Heyst's actions are filtered through one or more observers, and it is in this first section of Victory that Conrad introduces us to the variety of epithets by which these observers attempt to define Heyst.

The distance which Conrad maintains from his material in this opening section of the novel allows him to treat in summary fashion not only Heyst's

early life in the East, his meeting with Morrison, and their joint involvement in the Tropical Belt Coal Company, but also his abscondence with Lena. Since Davidson also mentions the possibility that Schomberg has begun to allow gambling at his hotel, Part One of Victory, although the shortest of the four parts, contains the germ of everything described in Part Two. Part Two, in turn, describes both Heyst's meeting with Lena and Schomberg's with Jones—the two encounters which precipitate the disaster of Part Four.

Parts Two and Three both have fairly straightforward structures: both contain retrospective passages (more lengthy in Part Three) about Heyst's father, and there is a "time loop" in Part Two which summarises Schomberg's fearful relationship with his guests in the first few weeks of their stay, but otherwise they proceed in a fairly direct sequential fashion. Part Three is essentially a day in the life of Heyst and Lena, a day which begins normally enough and is perhaps meant to stand as synecdoche for their life together but which is rudely interrupted with the arrival of Mr. Jones and his confrères. As in Part Two, there is a kind of balance between two relationships—Heyst and Lena, Jones and Ricardo—which interlock in the middle of this section with the arrival of the strangers. Heyst's lengthy colloquy with Lena in the first half of Part Three neatly contrasts with the midnight conference of Jones and Ricardo.

Part Four is somewhat more complex in its structure. Like Part Three it contains the action of a single day, a day on which Heyst battles (spiritually at least) with his enemy, Lena attempts to aid him, and both die together with the trio of intruders. The only elements treated out of chronological order are Heyst's two conversations with Jones, a necessary aberration since they take place while the focus of the narrative is on Lena (Heyst first confers with Jones while Ricardo is attempting to

rape Lena). Unlike the chronological loop involving Schomberg in Part Two, where the technique is essentially that practiced in earlier novels such as Lord Jim, Nostramo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes, Heyst's conversations with Jones are described by him to Lena and are not re-created in the narrative present. Conrad is simply responding to the necessities of narrative organisation rather than making a strategic use of the chronology of the fiction.

Conrad does, however, make effective use in Victory of a technique we have already seen in Lord Jim and Nostramo: the summarising or forecasting of an event before it is described in detail in the narrative present. The brief synopsis in Part One of the events leading up to Heyst's departure with Lena for Samburan might seem at first to detract from the dramatic tension of Part Two, just as Marlow's meeting with 'Tamb' Itam and Jewel threatens to undercut our interest in the final harrowing scenes of Lord Jim. In fact this is not the case. Victory, like Lord Jim, depends much more upon the display of those characteristics of its protagonist which have already been demonstrated than upon the discovery of new and surprising elements in him. Thus, whether or not Heyst's rescue of Lena was inevitable, it is made to seem so, following—at least in its initial synoptic form—close upon the heels of the much more detailed description of his rescues of Morrison. At the same time, the form of this second of Heyst's human encounters remains surprising. As Davidson remarks, "he never talked of women, he never seemed to think of them, or to remember that they existed" (p. 42). Heyst's early adventurous exploits and his later hermit-like existence make him almost a parody of the silent man of action—or inaction. One result then of Davidson's second-hand account of the incident in Part One is to make us realise that the Heyst who has been

so generously endowed with descriptive epithets is still an unknown quantity. We read on both to seek the solution to the practical mystery (how and why) and also to plumb the greater mystery of the motivation for Heyst's behaviour. Davidson's brief summary has in fact increased the dramatic tension of Victory.

Despite the generally effective narrative method of Victory, and the use of what Frederick Karl has called a "circling" technique in the early chapters, the story seldom achieves that fluid impressionistic shifting between different time-frames that we have come to expect of Conrad. Karl claims that "There is frequent juxtaposition of two different times in the past or of past with present time; so that Heyst as he was and Heyst as he is, are both simultaneously before the reader." As example he gives chapter three of Part Two where Heyst's contemplation of action in the present is juxtaposed with his repudiation of it in the past.³² An even better example is the opening chapter of Part Three (which Karl mentions but does not examine in detail): the chapter begins with Heyst meditating alone on his island at some undetermined point in time, moves (via mention of the word "action") to his last day with his father, and then shifts (through reference to his father's household effects) back to the island at the time when the ill-fated Tropical Belt Coal Company is going out of business. The purpose of this manoeuvre is clear: to knit together the concept that personal failure results from any involvement in action with a vivid practical example of the truth of the theory.

At the same time the narrative movement acts as an implicit criticism of Heyst's existential stance. His melancholy is contrasted with Wang's intensely practical response to the failure of the Company: Wang, one of the coolies, decides to stay on the island since he has found a wife and

(quite literally) to cultivate his garden. This concertina of past scenes then acts as prologue to Heyst's arrival with Lena, an event which is thus linked structurally, as it has earlier been linked imagistically and thematically, with Heyst's inability to enter into "action" wholeheartedly. This is the kind of "spatial" technique which is displayed in more compressed form at the end of chapter five of Part One of Chance where, in a section of little more than a page, Marlow knits together four different moments in Flora's experience—all united in that they echo the theme of her brutalisation. There are fewer than half a dozen examples in Victory of such techniques—certainly insufficient to justify Karl's claim for its ubiquity.

The opening section of Victory does, however, reveal a spatial technique of a different kind. The voice which introduces the tale is habitually ironic and indicates an amused distance from the proceedings which follow by playing punningly with physics and economics: "The world of finance is a mysterious world in which, incredible as the fact may appear, evaporation precedes liquidation. First the capital evaporates, and then the company goes into liquidation. These are very unnatural physics, but they account for the persistent inertia of Heyst. . . .An inert body can do no harm to any one." (p. 3). Both the tone of this voice and its introductory function are reminiscent of the narrative voice which introduces Lord Jim. Despite the claim that he is "inert" the narrative voice moves Heyst through a variety of postures (Manager, Eccentric, Voyager) just as Lord Jim's narrator encourages us to see his protagonist in a series of different roles (Water-Clerk, "Tuan," Parson's Son, Cadet). There are of course differences: the opening section of Victory is rather more whimsical than that of Lord Jim. The narrator seems determined to

wring every ounce of humour out of his series of scientific and economic puns, and the chapter is not pulled together at the end by a detailed and fully-dramatised scene as is the corresponding chapter of the earlier novel. The final thumb-nail sketch offered of Heyst is in fact the rather humorous incident of his offering to quench the thirst of a notorious local drunk. Yet despite the apparently loose movement of this section, Conrad is encouraging us to examine Heyst's life spatially: that is, he sets side by side (as much as is possible in a sequential order of words) a series of typical scenes from his protagonist's early and middle life, and encourages us to make connections.

The effect upon the reader of the spatial treatment of Heyst's early career is, however, quite different from the similar treatment of Jim's. The first words of Lord Jim introduce us to Jim in his role as over-sensitive water-clerk, while the last scene of the chapter leaves us with the boy who failed the first "test" of his life (the rescue of the training-ship-cadet) through a morbid shrinking from the confusion of action. We are encouraged not only to recognise a similarity between the two roles but also to expect perhaps that the display of further instances of Jim's habitual behaviour will make up the substance of the novel. The effect of Conrad's setting side by side a variety of different scenes from Heyst's life, on the other hand, is to create an enigma. What, we may wonder, is the connection between the passive, hermit-like Heyst of the opening paragraphs, the active, entrepreneurial Heyst who encourages the creation of the Company, the drifter who nevertheless has the courage to spend several years among a rather dangerous group of natives, and, finally, the "utopist" of McNab's parting (and inebriated) comment? The confusion, admittedly is that of the narrator; but it is also transmitted to the reader who has

been thrown into the flux of Heyst's doings. In fact the connection between Heyst's various roles is, I suggest, his scepticism: since he really believes in nothing, he has no difficulty in adopting a series of different personas. Conrad's casual juxtaposition of these roles effectively expresses his recognition of Heyst's lack of any sense of value or direction in his life.

Despite such techniques it is difficult to justify Frederick Karl's claim that "Nowhere else does time enter so essentially as character, as influence, and, finally, as the very stuff of the novel's being."³³ Time is used, as I have demonstrated, as a major means of symbolising the intellectual and moral conflicts of the fiction; Conrad also uses a-temporal structuring devices—psychological allegory and romance—to project the contemporary situation of the protagonists. At the same time we do not have the sense, as we do, for example in Lord Jim and Nostramo, that Conrad has extended these symbolic structures into the very fabric of the text.

NOTES

¹As Katherine Haynes Gatch has pointed out, in "Conrad's Axel," Studies in Philology, XLVIII (1951), 98-106, Heyst's first name links him to the hero of Villiers de L'Isle Adam's drama, "Axel," which epitomises fin-de-siècle renunciation of life's passions. (Quoted in Baines, p. 479.)

²Joseph Conrad, Victory, Vol. XV of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1925), pp. 7, 8, 21, 25, 31.

³August Strindberg, Foreword to Miss Julie, in Six Plays of Strindberg, trans. Elizabeth Sprigge (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 64-65.

⁴Richard E. Butler, "Jungian and Oriental Symbolism in Joseph Conrad's Victory," Conradiana, III (1971), 37; John E. Saveson, Conrad: The Later Moralists (Amsterdam: Rodopi N. V., 1974), pp. 116-17. Bruce Johnson, in Conrad's Models of Mind (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1971), disagrees: "The old philosopher's vision is thus not really Schopenhauerian . . . because unlike Schopenhauer he cites no authority for any value except disengagement. Schopenhauer's metaphysics, with its dependence on will as the irreducible ontology of man, made the sympathetic penetration of maya, of appearance, a prime moral authority" (p. 165). Johnson may have a point, but the external similarities between Heyst senior and Schopenhauer remain.

⁵Heyst turns to this passage in his father's writings as he rests after his expedition up the mountain—an expedition which Conrad uses to bring out the subtle sense of failure in Heyst's relationship with Lena and thus the apparent truth of his father's comment.

⁶Johnson, p. 160.

⁷Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Kegan Paul, 1906), Vol III, pp. 220-27.

⁸Conrad's attitude, or at least his narrator's, seems to have changed somewhat from that expressed in Lord Jim where the East is emphatically presented as a place where one can "loung[e] safely through existence" (p. 13).

⁹Despite the fears of a new order expressed by the characters, as

Robert Dana Foulke points out in "Life in the Dying World of Sail, 1870-1910," Journal of British Studies, 3 (1963), 105-36, the change from sail to steam was not as dramatically abrupt as is often supposed, partly because of the inefficiency of early technology. Gerald S. Graham in "The Ascendancy of the Sailing Ship 1850-85," Economic History Review, second series, IX (1956), 75, explains that because of the problem of fouling early steamships were less reliable on long voyages than sailing ships.

¹⁰Mary B. Goens, "The 'Mysterious and Effective Star': The Mythic World-View in Conrad's Victory," Modern Fiction Studies, 13 (1967-68), 460.

¹¹As John Palmer has pointed out, Conrad creates the three intruders in an "evolutionary continuum": Pedro, the savage; Jones "with his super-refined decadence"; and Ricardo lying half-way between the two. Although Palmer argues for a parallel "civilised continuum," he fails to realise that its three members are Heyst, Lena, and Wang—an identification which further reinforces the underlying allegorical structure (pp. 192-94).

¹²My definition draws on Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972) pp. 5, 7, 15-16.

¹³Karl, A Reader's Guide, p. 261; Palmer, p. 177; R. W. Stallman, "The Structure and Symbolism of Conrad's Victory," Western Review, XIII (1949), 150. Bruce Johnson, however, comments that both names undoubtedly mean "less to the reader than their portentous use might imply" (p. 167).

¹⁴See George F. Reinecke, "Conrad's Victory: Psychemachy, Christian Symbols and Theme," in Explorations of Literature, ed. Rima Drell Reck (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1966), p. 77.

¹⁵Guerard, p. 255; Moser, pp. 137, 141; Hewitt, pp. 103-04; R.W.B. Lewis, "The Current of Conrad's Victory," in Joseph Conrad, ed. Karl, pp. 109-19; Wiley, pp. 150-51; Geddes, p. 47. Half at least of Guerard's claim is technically correct: Victory has been filmed three times, and a fourth attempt is "in developmental stage." See Wallace W. Watson, "Conrad on Film," Conradiana XI (1979), 211.

¹⁶Butler, 42-43.

¹⁷Saveson, p. 119.

¹⁸Guerard, p. 272.

¹⁹Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 187-93.

²⁰Anatomy, p. 365.

²¹One dissenting voice has been that of Evelyn Hinz in "Hierogamy versus Wedlock: Types of Marriage Plots and Their Relationship to Genres of Prose Fiction," PMLA, 91 (1976), 900-13. She argues that Frye's choice of the questor myth as the Romance norm results in his ignoring themes of marriage (normally the conclusion of Romance), despite the fact that they too often depend upon a clearly-articulated archetypal structure. Her arguments depend in part upon the theories of the cultural anthropologist Mircea Eliade, who distinguishes between modern man's definition by history and ancient man's desire to escape from it by means of ritual acts. Marriage, or at least the sexual act, she argues, is a means by which modern fictional protagonists attempt to assert their communion with an a-historical cosmos.

²²"Romance: A Perdurable Pattern," College English, 36 (1974), 129-46.

²³"The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," in The Portable Jung, ed Joseph Campbell (1971; rpt. Harmondsworth; Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), p. 66.

²⁴Anatomy, p. 188.

²⁵John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Praise to the Holiest in the height," quoted in Earl R. Miner ed., Literary Uses of Typology (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press), p. 381.

²⁶The biblical imagery in Victory has been widely recognised. See especially, Wiley, pp. 155-57; Moser, pp. 123-24; Seymour L. Gross, "The Devil in Samburan: Jones and Ricardo in Victory," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 16 (1961), 81-85; Reinecke, pp. 70-80; Wilfred T. Dowden, Joseph Conrad: The Imaged Style (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 156-66. Wiley examines the "paradisaical allegory" at the centre of the novel. The three villains are an "unholy trinity" who invade an already fallen Eden. Jones's Satanic pride reflects Heyst's defiance of life. In this modern "Fall," evil is frustrated by woman (Lena). Moser labels "Heyst as Adam, Mr. Jones as Satan, and Lena as Eve" but claims that this process of identification does not "give meaning to the characters." Gross notes Jones's demonic sources in the Book of Job and claims that Ricardo and Jones represent two different Satanic traditions—Jones, negative, intellectual evil; Ricardo, "the demon of murder, pillage, and rape." Lena is "Redemptive Love" and triumphs over the tragedy which takes place on the literal level of events. Reinecke discovers a "Prudential psychomachy" (which he distinguishes from conventional literary allegory) being acted out. Heyst represents rational excess; Lena, the emotions; Jones and Ricardo, their evil opposites. Jones's name suggests "Davy Jones," and his dressing gown, "the tarnished empyrean blue of a fallen Miltonic angel." Like Gross, Reinecke notes Lena's role as Mary, the second Eve; he too regards her as a life force. Dowden recognises most of the typological possibilities (Heyst as Adam and Christ; Samburan as the garden of Eden and the promised land; Jones/Ricardo/Pedro as an unholy Trinity) but regards Victory as "a reductio ad absurdum of Christianity." New Testament echoes make Heyst into an "ineffectual son of God" who wars against a Manichean god of darkness and evil (Jones). The ending is apocalyptic.

Inevitably, my analysis echoes these critics at some points. All of these interpretations, even Reinecke's, are essentially allegorical in that they are attempting to prove the existence of a specific pattern of correspondences. My stress, however, is upon the structural qualities of Romance reflected in the (admittedly rather confused) biblical imagery.

²⁷"The Tempest of Axel Heyst," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 17 (1962), 95-113. See also David Lodge, "Conrad's 'Victory' and 'The Tempest': An Amplification," Modern Language Review, LIX (1964), 95-99, and Adam Gillon, Conrad and Shakespeare (New York: Astra Books, 1976), pp. 85-116.

²⁸Robert Secor, in The Rhetoric of Shifting Perspectives: Joseph Conrad's "Victory", Pennsylvania State University Studies, No. 32 (Pennsylvania, 1971), notes the connection and makes imagistic connections between the two works (pp. 65-68).

²⁹Frye, p. 195.

³⁰Schopenhauer, p. 227.

³¹As Frederick Karl notes in A Reader's Guide, p. 248.

³²A Reader's Guide, pp. 250-51.

³³A Reader's Guide, p. 88.

Chapter Seven

LAST NOVELS

That Conrad's later novels show a decline from the works of his maturity ("Heart of Darkness" to Under Western Eyes) has become a critical cliché, and one which I have already suggested should be questioned. Nevertheless, although one may try to rescue Chance from critical neglect and Victory from misreadings by pointing out Conrad's use of a symbolism and a plot strategy based on an awareness of time, the later novels—The Shadow Line (1917), The Arrow of Gold (1919), The Rescue (1920), The Rover (1923), and Suspense (1925) offer fewer opportunities for such salvage work. The Shadow Line has gained deserved recognition as a minor classic; The Arrow of Gold is probably the worst of Conrad's completed works, if only because it pretends to so much; The Rescue is a rehash of early work, but worth more attention than it has been given; The Rover is—to echo Albert Guerard's comment on Victory—Conrad for the high schools and the motion pictures; and Suspense, admittedly unfinished, shows little sign of living up to its title.

Passing over the psychological speculation about the reasons for Conrad's decline, and ignoring, for the moment, the stylistic flaws through which it is evidenced, two facts become clear.¹ One: Conrad has dived back into the materials of his own past—however romanticized or transmuted—in a way that he has not since the Youth volume. This fact is most obvious in The Shadow-Line and The Arrow of Gold at whose basis in autobiography Conrad hinted broadly.² Less obviously, in The Rescue, Conrad returns to a story which he had been unable to finish early in his career and makes use once

again of characters and scenes from the Malagon period of his life. Two: where he does not take a personal step backwards, he distances events in time either by writing formal historical novels (The Rover and Suspense) or a work (The Arrow of Gold) set back in time a half century. In both cases temporal distance seems to be used for its anaesthetizing or deadening effect: it avoids the painfulness of immediately-rendered experience. If indeed on a personal level time has come to represent for Conrad a means of holding experience at a distance, it is hardly surprising that when he attempts to use it as a basis for symbolic structures or narrative effects he should seem clumsy or uncertain.

For the most part the heroes in Conrad's earlier fiction have been flawed, and he has used their attitudes towards time as a means of symbolising these flaws. The Shadow-Line is quite different in that the young captain's major weakness is uncertainty about his relationship to the world, a limitation hardly surprising in one so young. Certainly his failure to check the contents of the quinine bottles in the medicine chest cannot be regarded—despite his own sense of guilt—as equivalent to the justifiable guilt of the young captain in "The Secret Sharer" at having introduced a potentially divisive element into the ship.

Not surprisingly, therefore, time plays a new role in this work, a role more positive than that Conrad allows in his earlier fiction. Rather than being betrayed by his own attempts to manipulate the temporal structure of reality (like Jim), the unnamed young man, by surviving his nightmare journey—and thus learning to cope with unstructured time—is apparently admitted to the fraternity of those who have come through. And "coming through" in this sense means not only discovering his own strength but also learning something about his relationship to the temporal structures of reality.

The opening paragraph of the novel announces its subject as a rite of passage with a directness unusual in Conrad; specifically, it is a passage out of the "enchanted garden" of youth into (presumably) a region of greater maturity. The garden is not imaged as a static, Edenic entity but rather as a transitional gathering place containing a series of paths along which all men must travel. Upon entering the garden "one closes behind one the little gate of mere boyishness," and having traversed it one recognises ahead "a shadow-line warning one that the region of early youth too must be left behind."³ Conrad's dedication of the book to his son Borys "and all others who like himself have crossed in early youth the shadow-line of their generation" makes explicit one immediate source of his renewed concern with youthful self-discovery, but the novel is in no way delimited as an allegory of war.

The narrator's decision to leave his ship at an unnamed Eastern port takes him at one bound out of the comfortable but rather mechanically-determined world of his ship (he comments that she would have been "if not for her internal propulsion, worthy of any man's love") and out of a life which has become "a dreary, prosaic waste of days" (p. 7). Unable to go home (to Europe) immediately, he is forced into an even more dreary institution than the ship: the Officers' Sailors' Home. The sense of stagnation and underlying corruption which infests the Home is perhaps proleptic of the diseased calm of his later voyage. Indeed the early part of the novel dramatises the narrator's apparent inability to make the choices which will get him out of this series of situations in which he is unable to use time effectively into an environment in which the "flow" of time once again becomes a living metaphor.

In the Home his fate is taken out of his hands by a serendipitous

process (Giles's interference), and he is transported to the unnamed ship which must be sailed from Bangkok to Singapore. He accepts the new command and discovers that his new ship is "one of those craft that in virtue of her design and complete finish will never look old." The transition which the narrator makes is then from an overtly modern ship to a timeless one and from a piece of machinery to something conceived as alive: "a harmonious creature . . . an Arab steed" (p. 49). His experience on board the ship represents, we may suggest, a rejection of his individually-determined notion of time and his initiation instead into a vision of time which is dynastic, cosmic, and absolute.

The initial hint as to this change is his recognition, on entering the ship, of his own part in the dynasty of men who have ruled the ship. Seeing himself in the saloon mirror, he realises that "this quietly staring man whom I was watching . . . had his place in a line of men whom he did not know" (p. 53). Conrad's ethic is habitually one of suppression of the importance of the individual in favour of the group, at least on board ship: as early as "Heart of Darkness" the frame narrative suggests that individual historical events gain their importance from being placed in a context of communal achievement, while the Marlow of Lord Jim stresses the importance of "fighting in the ranks." At this moment in The Shadow-Line, the brash young man who has casually thrown up a job and just as casually accepted his new responsibility is challenged by this sudden recognition of his place in a continuity of achievement.

The dominant temporal experience of the book is, of course, loss of time—or at least loss of that measure of change by which we recognise time. Initially, the young captain's new command is kept in port by business complications. Once out at sea, the ship, which seems so perfectly

designed to sail, doesn't; or at least its movement is so slow as to be imperceptible. With loss of motion even the basic visual distinctions of the world seem to break down: "It was impossible to distinguish land from water in the enigmatic tranquillity of the immense forces of the world" (p. 76). Loss of motion means of course loss of the ship's basic function, and for the young man with his first command the experience seems to be entirely negative: the chance to prove himself has been lost; the beautiful ship has become a diseased hulk. Yet the effect of his perilous journey is to lead him towards a confrontation with the most basic realities of his being.

This is made especially clear through his diary entries. Initially he responds to monotony with a recognition of the "curiously mechanical" quality of time: "The sea climbs and descends, the night sways over our heads as if somebody below the horizon were turning a crank" (p. 97). Equally resentfully, he begins to recognise an absolute and cosmic time outside himself for which the attributes of the external world are symbols: "As I emerge on deck the ordered arrangement of the stars meets my eye, unclouded, infinitely wearisome. There they are: stars, sun, sea, light, darkness, space, great waters; the formidable Work of the Seven Days, into which mankind seems to have blundered, unbidden. Or else decoyed. Even as I have been decoyed into this awful, this death-haunted command. . . ." (pp. 97-98). His garbling of the order of creation within the seven days (actually six) suggests his irritation at what is to him still an externally-imposed and mechanical temporal pattern. Reality is a trap, just as the ship is a trap, and, he seems to suggest the microcosmic voyage of the ship is a synecdoche for the macrocosmic voyage of mankind.

Although for Conrad the experience of being becalmed was a normal

part of a nautical life, the situation of the young captain inevitably reminds us of the calm in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner." The Mariner too looks on the world with a jaundiced eye, and only when "a spring of love" gushes from his heart and he is able to bless the sea creatures is his torment ended.⁴ Conrad's protagonist, on the other hand, is blessed in spite of himself. What happens with the coming of the storm is that he comes to an experiential recognition of the creational act which had earlier seemed to him to be merely the setting in motion of a vast but sterile cosmic machine.

The last section of the voyage is in fact treated as a symbolic falling apart of the old world and the creation of a new one. Although the description is reminiscent of the apocalyptic conclusion of An Outcast of the Islands, the eventual result is to reassure the young man of his own identity. The process begins when after fourteen days of monotony he notes that "There is something going on in the sky like a decomposition, like a corruption of the air, which remains as still as ever I feel as if all my sins had found me out." His early life (that is, before the voyage begins) is "infinitely remote, a fading memory of light-hearted youth, something on the other side of a shadow" (p. 106). A darkness which prefigures the end closes in on the ship, and the terminology which the young man uses (although his fear is, ostensibly, of the ship's foundering) is apocalyptic: "When the time came the blackness would overwhelm silently the bit of starlight falling on the ship, and the end of all things would come without a sigh, stir, or murmur of any kind, and all our hearts would cease to beat like run-down clocks" (p. 108). The hallucinatory compression of these lines (the narrator has, after all, been without sleep for days) not only makes the coming story a type of apocalypse

but also sets against cosmic time the pathetic quality of human attempts to measure the unmeasurable ("clocks") and finally links all human time to the running down of the human heart and man's consequent fragility, of which the outwardly robust Ransome is a vivid example.

As the darkness increases, he comments, "Such must have been the darkness before creation. It had closed behind me. I knew I was invisible to the man at the helm. Neither could I see anything. He was alone, I was alone, every man was alone where he stood" (p. 213). What breaks the tension is rain—but more than rain: "Suddenly the darkness turned into water" (p. 114). The downpour of course suggests the deluge, sign of God's punishment of human wickedness, but also image of a new covenant. Perhaps even more important here, it also suggests a falling apart or mixing of the primal fabric of reality: two of the traditional four elements change places and the captain notes that his helmsman looks like "a fish in an aquarium." When he realises finally that "The last gleam of light in the universe had gone" it is clear that the narrator has been symbolically (and literally from his point of view) transported back to a period before what he had earlier described sarcastically as "the formidable Work of the Seven Days." He is now indeed in what a younger Conrad had called "the night of the first ages" ("Heart of Darkness," p. 96).

Translation into primal chaos is not however meant to be seen as a punishment for the captain. Neither is there any reason to believe that Conrad means us to see him as (like Noah) a culture hero. His recognition is a purely personal one, and presumably for the rest of the crew this has simply been another bad storm. What the young man learns from his exposure to a time scale outside that of diurnal human reality, a time

scale always present, symbolically at least, at sea, is something of the limitations and the littleness of his own experience.

The young protagonist of The Arrow of Gold is, once more, pseudo-autobiographical; and he too must face a test of sorts. The test he faces is one of sexual passion rather than vocational competence. Once more there is very little sense that he is trying to come to terms with anything in himself other than his extreme youth: indeed love and duty (his arms-smuggling) walk in hand.

Like The Shadow Line, the general mood of The Arrow of Gold is of stasis. Most of the exciting events happen off stage. M. George keeps insisting that while he is paying court to Rita his real life is lived elsewhere, smuggling guns to the Carlists, but on the evidence of the text it is very difficult to believe. It is one thing to create (as in The Shadow Line) a mood of stagnation as index to human capacity for passivity and weakness, but another to create a similar mood while insisting upon the dynamism of events. One practical problem is that Conrad is not very good at dealing with the neo-Jamesian witty-cum-sensitive passages of dialogue which make up much of the text, and, in retrospect, the book relapses into a series of longueurs.⁵

That Conrad means the book to be more than the tepid record of a love affair is made clear by the adjectival insistence with which he treats repeated images. Indeed it is difficult to miss the recurrent pictorial metaphors through which both Rita and the other characters are created. Rita is compared to "an object of art from some unknown period."⁶ More specifically, she has the face of a "woman sculptured on immemorial monuments" (pp. 66-67), and a neck "like a column" (p. 92). Theresa, in contrast, is depicted as two-dimensional, "flat without detail, as if cut out of black paper" (p. 154), and reminiscent of "a strange head painted by El Greco"

(p. 157). M. George also describes a tableau involving himself, Rita, and Blunt as "an illustration to a nursery-book tale of two venturesome children's escapade . . . under the gaze of a man of the world who lived by his sword" (p. 149).

Not only real people or scenes but also imagined situations are habitually expressed as artistic constructions. When George first hears of Rita through the descriptions of Blunt and Mills, he imagines for himself "a figure which had only a floating outline, now invested with the grace of girlhood, now with the prestige of a woman." The picture then solidifies: "She was being presented to me now in the Bois de Boulogne at the early hour of the ultra-fashionable world (so I understand) on a light bay bit of blood attended on the off side by that Henry Allègre on a powerful dark brown weight carrier; and on the other by one of Henry Allègre's acquaintances. . . .And so that side of the frame was not permanent" (pp. 31-32). Dona Rita uses the same image of the mind containing a kind of frame within which images form when she comments about Henry Allegre, "When he faced the world he also masked it. He was big enough for that. He filled the whole field of vision for me" (p. 80). The same image is repeated a few pages later when George refers to the "passage across my field of vision" of a minor character (p. 86).

Even the conduct of one's life tends to be treated as an artistic act. One of George's artist friends, for example, describes him as "trying to put a special vibration and his own notion of colour into his life; and perhaps even to give it a modelling according to his own ideas. And for all you know he may be on the track of a masterpiece" (p. 160). This same Wildean conceit of life imitating art is reflected in Rita's description of Blunt's affectations: "His self-command is the most admirable

worldly thing I have ever seen. What made it beautiful was that one could feel in it as tragic suggestion as in a great work of art" (p. 211).

Despite the portentously obvious quality of these repeated images (I have quoted only the most striking examples), Paul Wiley and Gary Geddes have been the only critics to take them seriously as a guide to the meaning of the work. Wiley disagrees with the generally low critical estimate of The Arrow of Gold and argues that it is a satire on a rigidly aesthetic philosophy. The static, iconic quality of the imagery is meant to reflect the fact that Rita's problem is precisely that everyone sees her as a picture (that is, as Henry Allègre has created her) and that she has not been prepared emotionally to deal with the complexities of the real world. Geddes regards Rita's pictorial qualities as a sign that she has been turned into an expensive art object which everyone wants to exploit.⁷ It is difficult, despite Wiley's ingenuity, to regard the novel as a satire. Apart from anything else, it is too diffuse: the satirical elements, if they exist, are not sufficiently clearly delineated. What is more, why, if Rita is the one who has suffered from Allègre's artistic impositions, should most of the other characters also be in the habit of talking in pictures?[?] Geddes on the other hand is mainly concerned to show that this novel, like Conrad's earlier work, is carefully structured around recurrent images and symbols.

Wiley does however comment that "a goddess or an art work, being out of time has no past," making an equation between religious and secular icon which, I think, comes closer to the novel's meaning than do satiric interpretations.⁸ Apart from the artistic images, the most predominant pattern in the novel treats Rita as a figure of eternal woman. According to Blunt, her lover, Allègre, described her as having "something of the woman of all

time" a phrase echoed by Mrs. Blunt later in the book (p. 181) and by George, who calls her "the woman of all time" (p. 244) and, later, "all the women in the world" (p. 300). George (p. 101) and Mills (p. 104) also both describe her as being "as old as the world." Rita herself repeats the same phrase (p. 102).

The repeated references to Rita as a piece of sculpture reinforce our perception of her as being somehow outside normal diurnal reality. Even the descriptions of her appearance tend to concentrate upon her hair and her ornaments, suggesting something marmoreal about the human being within. One female figure which brings into focus the "sculptured" quality of Rita and the description of her as an "impassive statue in the desert in the flush of dawn" (p. 101) is the Sphinx. The timelessness and inscrutability popularly associated with the Egyptian Sphinx is partly a result of the great age of the statue and the blurring of its features resulting from abrasion by the elements. But the creature on which the statue is based is a mythical being, best known for the part it plays in the Oedipus myth. Oedipus answers the creature's riddle—a riddle about human lifespan—and saves the city of Thebes. Although the stress in Conrad's (presumably conscious) use of the Sphinx image is on the timeless quality it imparts to Rita, the other aspect of the Sphinx—its role as destroyer—also survives in the qualities ascribed to her: she acts as the focus of the jealousy between M. George and Blunt and at times is in danger of becoming a cliché of the femme fatale. From George's point of view in describing her, the specifics of Rita's life scarcely matter; what she embodies is a timeless principle of woman, or, in more modern terms, the archetypal feminine.⁹

Rita does of course have a history—indeed we learn more of her past

than we do of George's—but George nevertheless insists that "the Rita that haunted me had no history; she was but the principle of life charged with fatality" (p. 268). He manages mentally to create an image of Rita even before he sees her, "now invested with the grace of girlhood, now with the prestige of a woman" (p. 31). Part of her importance for him is precisely as a projection of part of his own reality, in fact an anima figure (which is essentially what the archetypal feminine is). If Rita is meant to be seen as an anima figure, some aspects of her become less mysterious—notably her sudden vanishing after George's brush with death in his duel with Blunt. Mills offers the suggestion that she has left because "this world is not a world for lovers" (p. 350). More to the point, George has gained from Rita whatever she has to offer: the callow youth who was insecure in the presence of Mills and Blunt in the book's first scene has fought a duel with one and now deals with the other as an equal. The boy who played lawless games has now learned to take chances with little hope of reward, in the process losing his boat and almost losing his friend and mentor. Rita vanishes at that point in the action when George has reached a measure of maturity and no longer needs her as a spiritual foil or guide to his inner life.

This is not of course the first time that Conrad has attempted to create a female figure who resonates on frequencies other than those of the present. Axel Heyst questions whether Lena is not "something as old as the world" (p. 359), and indeed she seems to play out the complex role of the archetypal feminine in Victory. Lena, however, is given a symbolic function which reflects her actual function in the fiction: that of potentially fructifying contrast to the life-denying Heyst. The symbolic set-pieces through which Conrad asserts her role may not be entirely effective (as effective, say, as the subtler hints by which Mrs. Gould is given a

similar role in Nostromo), but they do not clash with our sense of her immediate reality in the work. Rita's symbolic role, in contrast, seems to be willed into existence by Conrad's repeated references to her universality. From the reader's point of view, even through the admiring eyes of M. George, she seems to have little life or energy, and it is difficult to take her seriously even on the basic and literal level of the story.

It is, perhaps, misleading to call The Rescue a "late" novel, since, as Conrad admits in the introduction, he "laid it aside at the end of the summer of 1898 and it was about the end of the summer of 1918 that [he] took it up again." Although this is the last of Conrad's tales of Tom Lingard, in fictional chronology it is the first, showing the "Rajah Laut" at the age of thirty-five before his encounters with Willems or Almayer. The casual mention in the first few pages of An Outcast of the Islands of Lingard's once having "rescued, as rumour had it, the yacht of some big-wig from home, somewhere down Carimata way" suggests that Conrad saw the three Lingard books as having a continuity: it is, of course, "down Carimata way" that the action of The Rescue takes place.¹⁰

Although Conrad referred to the book half-seriously as an adventure story for boys, it, like most of his later works, is rather deficient in action. The subtitle is helpful: The Rescue is indeed A Romance of the Shallows. The mood is set by the opening paragraphs which describe Lingard's brig: "On the unruffled surface of the straits the brig floated tranquil and upright as if bolted solidly, keel to keel, with its own image."¹¹ The ship, "a helpless prisoner of the shallow sea," is reminiscent of the ship in The Shadow-Line which "seemed to stand as motionless as a model ship set on the gleams and shadows of polished marble" (p. 76)—and once again the model seems to be the Ancient Mariner's ship. This condition of stasis

is temporary, but despite the fact that a number of things happen in The Rescue the general tone of the book is weary and rather flat: despite the urgency which the characters should feel, they have time for endless conversations and subtle misunderstandings.

Behind the exotic trappings and the more varied range of characters, the ethical structure of The Rescue is rather like that of Victory—in reverse.¹² Edith Travers has Heyst's role, and Tom Lingard, Lena's. Edith is, like Heyst, a sceptic. Originally romantic, she marries after having come to the conclusion that great passions are an impossible ideal. Mr. Travers attracts her precisely by his impenetrability, but she discovers that behind the busy facade he is a nonentity. By the time she meets Lingard she has come to accept quiet desperation as normal. As a woman of the modern age, she is Axel Heyst's female counterpart. Indeed the imagery through which she imagines herself goes one step further than Heyst's description of himself as "a man of the last age" and may even owe something to the description of the dying earth in H. G. Wells's The Time Machine: "She saw herself standing alone, at the end of time, on the brink of days. All was unmoving as if the dawn would never come, the stars would never fade, the sun would never rise any more; all was mute, still, dead—as if the shadow of the outer darkness, the shadow of the uninterupted, of the endless night that fills the universe had stood arrested as if to remain with her forever."¹³

Lingard, equally clearly, is a man who defies modernity. Passionate and self-willed, he lives out the life of a sixteenth-century buccaneer. He responds to Mr. Travers' accusation that he is an adventurer with an angry "I am an adventurer" (p. 134). To the natives he seems superhuman: they call him "Rajah Laut" or king of the seas. Even the whites refer to

him as "King Tom." He accepts both names as his due and takes as his device "a sheaf of conventional thunderbolts . . . between the two capitals T.L." Lingard explains to Carter that "It's supposed to be the ship's name between my initials—flash of lightning—d'you see? The brig's name is Lightning and mine is Lingard" (p. 32). Although human in his flaws, Lingard nevertheless tries to play God (the thunderbolts suggest Zeus) by interfering in Malay politics, behaving as if he were living still in an heroic age.

Part of Travers' initially hostile reaction to Lingard is the result of the latter's physical appearance. Lingard's clothes owe little to contemporary fashion, and in fact he has an old-fashioned, vaguely piratical air. He is bearded, and when first seen wears "a grey flannel shirt and . . . white trousers . . . held by a blue silk scarf wound tightly round his narrow waist" (p. 9). Conrad comments that "the negligent masterfulness of his tone and pose were very distasteful to Mr. Travers who, having made up his mind to wait for some kind of official assistance, regarded the intrusion of that inexplicable man with suspicion" (p. 122). Others do not regard him with such scepticism. D'Alcacer remarks to Edith Travers, "If she [Immada] is a princess, then this man is a knight. . . .A knight as I live! A descendant of the immortal hidalgo errant upon the sea" (p. 142). Edith later dreams of him "in chain-mail armour and vaguely resembling a crusader" (p. 458).

If, as his actions, his language, and his clothing suggest, Lingard is a man who has fallen out of his own age, he has managed to find one of the few places in the world where he can play out his dreams. One of the difficulties in interpreting The Rescue, however, lies in the uncertainty of Conrad's attitude towards his protagonist: are we meant to see him as heroic dreamer or heroic bungler? Conscious atavism is normally an attribute

of minor characters in Conrad (Pedro Montero in Nostramo, for example), but Lingard is not sufficiently sophisticated to be deliberately atavistic or primitivistic. He is simply playing out the role which comes naturally to him. When, for example, Shaw gives a garbled version of the story of Helen of Troy ("In the Morayshire, I remember, we once had a passenger—an old gentleman—who was telling us a yarn about them old-time Greeks fighting for ten years about some woman. The Turks kidnapped her, or something.") Lingard responds to his mate's literal-mindedness with "I have read the tale in a book. . . .I have read the tale. She was very beautiful" (p. 22). While Shaw automatically assumes that events can have only a literal historical existence, Lingard assimilates the myth to his own reality, accepting the heroic tale without much surprise. And it is the mention of Helen which sets the emotional key-signature of the rest of the book. Shaw blusters, "Ten years of murder and unrighteousness! And for a woman! Would anyone do it now? Would you do it sir? Would you---" (p. 23). Lingard is precisely the one who would "do it": he destroys his friends, his enemies, and his plans because of his fascination with Edith Travers. Although the hint that we should identify Lingard as a modern Paris and Travers (presumably) as Menelaus is fairly strong, the myth, as so often in Conrad, is restructured ironically. Lingard's readiness to be distracted from his political and military schemes parallels the choice which Paris makes in rejecting Hera's gift (political power) and Athena's (military success) in favour of Aphrodite's. What's more, he, like Paris, brings destruction on his own (on at least his adopted) people. Striking as the similarities are, it is the contrasts with the mythical story which are most noticeable: Travers shows little interest in pursuing his wife, but then he scarcely needs to, since, at the moment in the story when

Edith seems most ready to give herself to Lingard, he lets her go "as though she had suddenly stabbed him to the heart" (p. 395). The myth is primarily important to Conrad, I suspect, not for what it tells us about human relationships but (as with the Floramyth in Chance) for the a-temporal dimension it gives to the Edith-Lingard relationship.

This a-temporal quality represents a symbolic union between the future and the past. Lingard, it has already been suggested, is unselfconsciously archaic in his attitudes. Edith is at the opposite end of the chronological scale. The first real encounter between them comes after Edith's recognition that she is "at the end of time." Not only has she reached an evolutionary and philosophical plateau, but she has also recognised that the darkness which surrounds her is a fit emblem of the spiritual deadness which she has gradually created within herself: "[the days] had led her on and on, to this evening, to this coast, to this sea, to this moment of time and to this spot on the earth's surface where she felt unerringly that the moving shadow of the unbroken night had stood still to remain with her forever" (p. 152). At this crucial moment in her life, she remembers Lingard and Immada, who "outlined themselves before her memory with the clear simplicity of some immortal legend." Recognition of the "truth of [Immada's] sensations" makes Edith feel that "she also could be equal to such an existence; and her heart was dilated with a momentary longing to know the naked truth of things; the naked truth of life and passion buried under the growth of centuries" (pp. 152-53). It is at this point that Lingard breaks into her reverie, speaking to her from the dinghy under the ship's side.

The encounter is reminiscent of that between the young captain in "The Secret Sharer" and Leggatt. In both cases the character on deck needs some kind of intrusion: Leggatt arrives to provide the young captain with the

kind of test of his professional skills and personal integrity which he has been instinctively expecting; Lingard is the embodiment of the world of passions which Edith, like Heyst, feels she has progressed beyond but whose existence she would like once more to admit. Both intruders come out of the water, a symbolic point generally well taken by critics of "The Secret Sharer."¹⁴ Lingard too is, we may suggest, the embodiment of repressed parts of Edith's psyche. She accepts what he has to tell her, and he, for his part insists "You would understand! You! You!" (p. 161).

But Edith also simultaneously recognises Lingard's otherness. Just as Lena challenges Heyst's self-conception, so too Lingard causes Edith to doubt the contract she has made with external reality. His story of the plot to replace Hassim on his throne is "as startling as the discovery of a new world" (p. 162), and the main psychological action of the remainder of the book consists of her attempt to liberate herself from the old one. Unfortunately, the new world proves incapable of replacing the old since she cannot persuade herself completely of its reality.

The figure through which Edith's alienation from the colourful reality around her is presented is the classic one of life as a stage show or pageant. Describing her departure, with Lingard, from Belarab's stockade, she comments, "It seemed to me that I was walking on a splendid stage in a scene from an opera, in a gorgeous show fit to make an audience hold its breath. You can't possibly guess how unreal all this seemed, and how artificial I felt myself. An opera you know . . ." She assumes that Lingard doesn't know; and when he tells her about an opera he has seen, she condescends, "How it must have jarred on your sense of reality." In fact it has not. He responds, "I assure you that of the few shows I have seen that one was most real to me. More real than anything in life." The

difference between their responses to opera is that Lingard allowed himself to be carried away by the spectacle, whereas Edith has never managed to lose herself in a dramatic fiction (pp. 301-02).¹⁵ A few minutes later she explains herself more fully: "Do you know the greatest difference there is between us? It is this: That I have been living since my childhood in front of a show and that I have never been taken in for a moment by its tinsel and its noise or by anything that went on on the stage" (p. 305).

If Lingard has been "taken in" by appearances it is partly because he has created a world for himself in which the florid dramatic gestures of opera do not seem oversized. Few operas have plots more unlikely than the tale of his doings on the Shore of Refuge. Because he has lived out a life on an heroic scale he is perfectly ready to accept heroic fictions (the tale of Helen of Troy, for instance) as just as real as his own existence. At first it seems as though Edith has been prepared to give his version of reality a favourable hearing: she dresses in Malayan clothing and even suggests that she should call him "King Tom." Unfortunately, her scepticism is too strong for the world around her. She depends on Lingard's presence for her continued belief in the solidity of external reality. Deserted by him (as she feels), alone on the deck of the hulk with Jorgenson she "admitted the reality of those things no longer a mere pageant marshalled for her vision . . . but she did not feel it in her soul" (p. 367); in an image reminiscent of Razumov's disgusted glance at Lake Geneva she decides that "The opposite shore of the lagoon had resumed its aspect of a painted scene that would never roll up to disclose the truth behind its blinding and soulless splendour" (p. 369). It is in this mood that she is sent by Jorgenson to Lingard with the talismanic ring.

Most critical attention has been focused on Lingard and upon his readiness to be decoyed or diverted by passion from the attainment of his grandiose schemes.¹⁶ But the central action of the book is surely equally concerned with Edith Travers' Heyst-like inability to forget her own consciousness of the world as an exterior construct of the human mind. The overall cause of Lingard's betrayal of his friends is his attraction to Edith, but the efficient cause is her failure to present him with the "charm of great power," Hassim's ring. As she is rowed to shore in the darkness, she goes through an experience similar to that of Nostromo and Decoud on the Golfo Placido: like them, she has "no sense of motion"; she too is "tired of thinking" and takes refuge in the idea that the whole experience is no more than a "strange dream" (p. 319). Tom admittedly is in no mood for confidences ("Jorgenson. Who's Jorgenson? You came to me because you couldn't help yourself"); and Edith decides to humour "a mood in which he wanted to preserve the moments that would never come to him again on this earth" (p. 418). Nevertheless the underlying cause of her strange decision not to carry out her mission is a sense that such melodramatic actions as the presentation of a ring cannot possibly affect the course of events: "It hung there secret, hung against her heart, and enigmatic. What did it mean? What could it mean?" (p. 403).

Edith's failure is a failure on a grand scale: her inability to believe in the heroic reality of which she has become a part represents a failure of the modern consciousness. Her husband, however, is reminiscent of those earlier figures (Pedrito Montero, Mme de S--, or Carleon Anthony) whose inadequacy or personal weakness is betrayed through their attitudes to time. Neither a timeless romantic like Lingard nor a sceptical modern like his wife, he is a man of affairs ruled by the clock and by his sense

of the fitness of things. This might seem at first glance to link him to a figure like Holroyd who has precisely twenty minutes a month to devote to the affairs of Costaguana, but Travers is much less full-blooded in his enthusiasms than that exponent of militant Protestantism and expansive capitalism. His complusiveness and self-centredness bring him much closer to De Barral and earlier Conradian grotesques.

His greatest annoyance at being kidnapped is that his watch has been broken by his captors: "I had just then pulled out my watch. Of course it flew out of my hand but it hung by the chain. Somebody trampled on it. The hands are broken off short. It keeps on ticking but I can't tell the time." D'Alcacer asks if this means that Travers has continued to wind it up every evening and he admits, "Why! I suppose I have . . . It isn't so much blind habit as you may think. My habits are the outcome of strict method. I had to order my life methodically. . . . There were never any empty moments in my day. And now this!" (pp. 336-37). The individual winding up a broken watch out of force of habit seems to have strayed out of an Absurdist drama (Pozzo in Waiting for Godot is similarly time-obsessed and is punished by the loss of his watch). Travers is a parody of Western notions of time as a measurable commodity; without the means of measuring the commodity he is lost. He is also unconsciously ironic in his confusion between "empty moments" (that is, temporal intervals) and the real emptiness of all his moments. His life has been full of incident and activity but devoid of any real passion.

What makes him a malicious rather than a comic and pathetic figure is his interest in the larger reaches of time. Despite an external political liberalism which leads him to take a trip to expose the abuses of the Dutch colonial system (he seems mainly concerned about its inefficiencies

and deviations from international treaties), he is, in reality, a racial Darwinist. At the end of a peroration on colonial history, he suggests, "And if the inferior race must perish, it is a gain, a step toward the perfecting of society which is the aim of progress" (p. 148). Travers' comments refer to the Malays and (presumably) other colonised races, but he is catholic in his sense of racial superiority. Later he claims that the "horrible waste of time" (being stranded and then kidnapped) cannot matter to D'Alcacer, "being a Spaniard." Furthermore he misinterprets D'Alcacer's stoical acceptance of fate: "He is a mere Spaniard. He takes this farcical conspiracy with perfect nonchalance. Decayed races have their own philosophy" (pp. 270-71). Not surprisingly, the worst thing he can find to say about Edith is, "The matter with you, Edith, is that at heart you are perfectly primitive" (p. 270).

In his determination to use time, Travers is a kind of antitype to Jones in Victory, who is equally determined to waste it. Within The Rescue, his concern with watches links him by contrast with Jorgenson. In a darkly comic scene at the beginning of the section entitled "The Claim of Life and the Toll of Death" Jorgenson asks Edith for King Tom's watch, insisting that "There's precious little time left now!" (p. 363). Edith is puzzled but gives him the watch anyway. Later she sees him sitting on deck apparently playing with several pieces of rope. He is in fact timing fuses for the eventual conflagration. His "time" is measured by the approach of his private apocalypse rather than by the artificially-imposed divisions of Western time on which Travers depends or the timeless present in which Belerab and other Malays live.

The Rescue, for all its diffuseness, is Conrad's last effective attempt to measure the private and cultural aspirations of individuals

through their attitudes to time. The book makes little attempt to use its own structure as a means of reflecting the aspirations of its characters (although the final time-jump of thirty-six hours allows for a measure of dramatic objectivity in looking back at the melodramatic climax). With The Rover and Suspense, Conrad seems (paradoxically, perhaps, since they are historical novels) to have lost interest in the themes which have dominated his earlier fiction. It is perhaps unfair to make judgements of any kind on the unfinished Suspense, but The Rover, although adequate enough of its kind, is a fairly conventional historical novel. Conrad uses occasional flashbacks, but they are mainly a means of filling in necessary information rather than making a dramatic or artistic point.

NOTES

¹See particularly Thomas Moser, pp. 3-9 and passim and Guerard, pp. 254-60, for analysis of the decline in Conrad's later work. The concluding chapter of Palmer's Joseph Conrad's Fiction summarises the major arguments in the decline theory. The most substantial response to these arguments has been Geddes' Conrad's Later Novels.

²Recent research has tended to downplay the autobiographical element. The duel is almost certainly fictional (and an attempt to conceal an actual suicide attempt); there may never have been a real "Rita" in Conrad's life; and there is not even any certainty about the gun-running episode. See Karl, The Three Lives, pp. 158-74.

³Joseph Conrad, The Shadow-Line, Vol. XVII of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 3. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

⁴Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads 1798, ed. W.J.B. Owen (1967; rpt. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978),

⁵Elsa Nettels (p. 225) argues that M. George "comes closest to the experience of James's characters who enter a sophisticated world in ignorance of its conventions and intrigues."

⁶Joseph Conrad, The Arrow of Gold, Vol I of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 36. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

⁷Wiley, p. 166; Geddes, pp. 123-24.

⁸Wiley, ibid.

⁹As Neumann points out, the image of the archetypal feminine, in addition to its positive aspects, contains a "negative elementary character" in which woman is seen as destroyer (pp. 147-49). See also M. -L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in Man and His Symbols, pp. 177-88, for a discussion of the positive and negative aspects of the anima.

¹⁰An Outcast, p. 14.

¹¹Joseph Conrad, The Rescue, Vol. XII of the Canterbury Edition (New York: Doubleday, 1924), p. 5. All further references will be to this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

¹²Wiley (p. 182) makes the comparison between Edith Travers and Axel Heyst.

¹³Chapter 11 of The Time Machine describes a stage in the Earth's history in which night and day ceases, the sun fails to set, and the planet no longer rotates.

¹⁴See, for example, R. W. Stallman, "Conrad and 'The Secret Sharer,'" Accent IX (1949), 131-42; rpt. in The Art of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium, ed. R. W. Stallman (Michigan: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1960), p. 281: "Leggatt's emerging in a sudden glow from the 'sleeping water' seems very much like the flash of an idea emerging from the subconscious mind. . . . That dark glassy sea mirrors the captain's alter ego."

¹⁵As Geddes suggests, p. 159.

¹⁶See Wiley, p. 181; Moser, p. 148; Nettels, p. 110.

CONCLUSION

In an essay on the development of the novelistic consciousness of time, John Henry Raleigh makes the following comment:

It is a truism that both the form and the content of the novel are bound up, more than is the case in any other of the major literary forms, with the dialectic between man and time and/or history. Upon this primordial fulcrum, which leans, in one direction, toward the private, the individual, the subjective and, in another and opposite direction, toward the public, the collective the objective, the novel rests, achieving grandeur, like all art, only insofar as it maintains an equivocal synthesis, constantly breaking down and knitting together, between the diametrically different but interacting areas of human experience.¹

The form of Raleigh's statement is itself an implicit response to the difficulty of making precise distinctions between the different kinds of time involved in reading a novel. There is, first of all, the writer's own attitude towards time as expressed through characterization, dialogue, and the variety of other elements which make up a literary structure. Second there is the choice he makes about how to order these events: Seymour Chatman in an article on the novel and film makes a useful distinction between the "real" order of fictive events ("histoire" or "story-time") and the order in which those events are presented in the text ("discourse-time").² Third, there is the relationship of the temporal order of the text to the world of the reader, the way in which the novelist seems to be not only creating characters who relate to time in ways which are effective or ineffective, transparent or symbolically subtle, but also challenging or questioning our own metaphysical assumptions about the temporal

order and meaning of the reality we inhabit. Such a division—although it tends to break down in practice—provides at least a means of coming to terms with Joseph Conrad's achievement as a novelist concerned with human time.

The first of the three areas of concern I have outlined contains its own inherent problems. The obvious question is whether we are discussing a topic which has any reality other than that of an artificial rhetorical framework. J. B. Priestley, for example, bluntly disclaims the possibility of the existence of a "time" novel: "A novel or a play cannot really be about time. . . . but only about the people and things that appear to be in time. Some novelists or dramatists may be unusually aware of time, but they have to write about something else."³ One might question the most literal level of this statement: some science fiction, for example, is surely "about" time more than it is about the characters who play out the the time theme.⁴ Priestley is probably right though if he is implying that to talk intelligibly about time involves a readiness to hypostatize what Bergson calls durée and to pretend that a single reality exists behind the multiple series of sensations and events which make up the experience of living. Clearly too, at any level beyond that of parable, a fiction can enact events only through the behaviour of the characters.

The justification for discussing the temporal dimension of Conrad's fictional world is, however, fairly straightforward. Although the specialized consciousness of the importance of fictional time is, I have suggested, a modern phenomenon, writers have traditionally visualised time through metaphors and emblems: the panoply of grim reapers, hourglasses, sundials, and Januses which (say) poets of the Renaissance drew on to express ideas of mortality and change were metaphysically impure but artistically necessary means of dealing with a complex phenomenon. What is more, despite

Priestley's complaint, at the level of common experience most people do feel time as a minatory presence or as something which can be weighed or measured. Ossipon, in The Secret Agent, draws on this everyday sense of time as substantial when he warns the Professor that he too must depend upon his "scurvy, mangy, shabby little bit of time" (p. 306).

It is perhaps impossible to pursue beyond a certain point the question of whether Conrad is attempting to use time as thematic substance in his novels or whether, as Priestley would have it, time is merely a symbol or structural metaphor for attitudes and assumptions which are not, strictly speaking, temporal. In practice, I have accepted Priestley's assumptions by arguing that fear of engagement in life (Heyst), moral immaturity (Jim), or ambition (Razumov) result in attitudes towards time which are enacted literally or symbolically within the novels. At the same time, however, it is difficult to talk about the life experiences of these and others of Conrad's characters without describing their behaviour as a response to time conceived in substantial terms. They "retreat" from time (Roderick Anthony), "lose touch" with time (Decoud, Nostromo, De Barral), or "fall out" of time (Almayer, Willems); similarly, national groups (Russia and Costaguana) are apparently without history because they lack an ordered response to time. The distinction I have made between time as thematic substance and time as symbol becomes then increasingly difficult to support in practice—especially since all human activity is in some sense activity within time and therefore perhaps a judgement on one's relationship with time.

The second of the three areas of fictional response to time which I distinguished initially is more accessible to discussion since it is less in danger of crossing the boundary between artistic creation and the experience of living. Conrad as much as any other modern writer rearranges

the "histoire" of his plots into a discourse time of great complexity. His purposes and the degree of his success in achieving them vary. Lord Jim and Nostramo are the most completely integrated of the novels in that their organizational structure is predicated upon the need to recreate for the reader on the one hand the life experience of a protagonist, on the other the accumulated experience of a nation. While these are the most obvious reasons for the shape of the discourse time, in each case Conrad manages to make his plot structures serve several purposes at once. Mere versatility is itself, however, no guarantee of artistic success: of the later novels, Chance has the most complex narrative structure. The complexity, I have suggested, exists for a purpose in that it is a means of encouraging our sympathetic involvement in the unfolding of events. At the same time, behind the multi-levelled structure lies an experience which—at least in comparative terms—remains banal. In a novelist as concerned with time as Conrad, it is hardly surprising that his greatest overall achievements (Lord Jim and Nostramo) should be those works which most perfectly meld temporal theme and technique.

The third of my areas of discussion shifts into the field of metaphysics. Indeed, J. M. Kertzer, in an article on Conrad's use of thematic time, describes it as a "metaphysics." The main problem, however, in attempting to argue for a sustained vision of life expressed through a response to time is that Conrad himself is more concerned with the integrity of a specific fictional world than he is with fitting his own ideas into some sort of schema. Kertzer argues (as I have) for the existence of repeated imagistic patterns (for example, of falling); while these certainly exist, it is dangerous to assume that their meaning and context is the same in very different works. While Kertzer makes some excellent comments on

individual texts, his taxonomic approach to the experience of these different works collapses necessary distinctions.⁵

In comparison with other writers of the "time school" Conrad seems fairly unconcerned with influencing his readers to accept a particular image of temporal reality. There is nothing in his novels which is the equivalent of Stephen Dedalus's comment about the "nightmare" of history. Although I have suggested some fairly clear examples of Bergsonian influence, neither does Conrad seem at all concerned, to mimic Bergson's sense of what reality is like in the organization of his text. His interest in the philosopher is external: his characters enact—or fail to—attitudes to life which reflect Bergson's metaphysic. Similarly, although traces of other philosophic influences may be found, there is little sense that Conrad is developing a thesis which is meant to affect the whole way we perceive reality—as, for example, Joyce does in Ulysses.

Despite its ubiquity, Conrad's use of time is then not ideologically-based, but artistically necessary. As an empiricist of the imagination he discovers within the mechanisms of time means by which to dramatise or more fully realise the moral realities which his characters must face. As a conscious artist, a symbolist who in his most famous manifesto rejects Symbolism, he creates powerful structural metaphors for his characters' behaviour through their responses to time. As a writer concerned that every element of his text should function as part of an overall effect, he explores the possibilities inherent in the relationship between the time in which his characters live and his own manipulation of that time.

NOTES

¹"The English Novel and the Three Kinds of Time," Sewanee Review, 62 (1954), 428.

²"What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)," Critical Enquiry, 7 (Autumn, 1980), 122.

³Priestley, p. 98.

⁴Obvious examples would be Robert Heinlein's "All You Zombies-" and "By His Bootstraps," where the concern for character is, in any case, minimal.

⁵"Joseph Conrad and the Metaphysics of Time," Studies in the Novel 11 (1979), 307-17.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Works by Conrad

- Conrad, Joseph. Canterbury Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad. 26 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1924.
- Aubry, G. Jean, ed. Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1927.
- Blackburn, William, ed. Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958.
- Curle, Richard, ed. Conrad to a Friend: 150 Selected Letters from Joseph Conrad to Richard Curle. 1928; rpt. New York: Russel and Russell, 1968.
- Garnett, Edward. Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895-1924. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928.
- Gee, John A., and Paul J. Strum, trans. and eds. Letters from Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 1880-1920. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.
- Randall, Dale B. J., ed. Joseph Conrad and Warrington Dawson: The Record of a Friendship. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968.
- Watts, C. T., ed. Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham. Cambridge: The University Press, 1969.

Works by Other Writers

- Carlyle, Thomas. Selected Works, Reminiscences and Letters. Ed. Julian Symons. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere." In Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads, 1978. Ed. W. J. B. Owen. 1967; rpt. Oxford: OUP, 1978, pp. 7-32.
- Durrell, Lawrence. Balthazar. 1958; rpt. London: Faber, 1972.
- Jefferies, Richard. After London and Amaryllis at the Fair. 1885; rpt. London: Dent, 1948.

- Melville, Herman. Moby Dick or The White Whale. 1851; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1961.
- Milton, John. Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books. Ed. Merrit Y. Hughes. New York: Odyssey Press, 1962.
- Ovid [Publius Ovidius Naso]. Fasti. Trans. Sir James George Fraser. London: Heinemann, 1939.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. Selected Writings. Ed. David Galloway. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1980.
- Sterne, Lawrence. The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. 1767; rpt. New York: New American Library, 1960.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. The Beach of Falesá. In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Stories. Ed. Jenni Calder. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1979.
- Strindberg, August. Foreword to Miss Julie. In Six Plays of Strindberg. Trans. Elizabeth Sprigge. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1956.
- Twain, Mark. A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court. Introd. Justin Kaplan. 1889; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1971.
- Wells, H. G. The Time Machine and The War of the Worlds. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1968.

Secondary Sources

Studies of Conrad

- Andreach, Robert F. The Slain and Resurrected God: Conrad, Ford, and the Christian Myth. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1970.
- Avrich, Paul. "Conrad's Anarchist Professor: An Undiscovered Source." Labor History, 18 (1977), 397-402.
- Baines, Jocelyn. Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography. 1960; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.
- Beach, Joseph Warren. "Impressionism: Conrad." In his The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique. New York: Appleton-Century, 1932, pp. 337-65.
- Benson, Donald R. "Heart of Darkness: The Grounds of Civilization in an Alien Universe." TSL 7 (1966), 339-47. Rpt. in The Nigger of the "Narcissus". Norton Critical Edition. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton, pp. 210-17.
- Bevan, Ernest, Jr. "Nostramo: The Permanence of the Past." Conradiana, 10 (1974), 63-71.

- Boyle, Ted E. Symbol and Meaning in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad. The Hague: Mouton, 1965.
- Bradbrook, Muriel C. Joseph Conrad: Poland's English Genius, Cambridge: The University Press, 1941.
- Bruss, Paul S. "Lord Jim: The Maturing of Marlow." Conradiana, 8 (1976), 13-26.
- Butler, Richard E. "Jungian and Oriental Symbolism in Joseph Conrad's Victory." Conradiana, 3 (1971), 36-54.
- Cox, C. B. Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination. London: Dent, 1974.
- Cox, Roger L. "Conrad's Nostromo as Boatswain." Modern Language Notes, 74 (April 1959), 303-06.
- Craig, Randall. "Swapping Yarns: The Oral Mode of Lord Jim." Conradiana, 13 (1981), 181-93.
- Crankshaw, Edward. Joseph Conrad: Some Aspects of the Art of the Novel. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1976.
- Daleski, H. M. Joseph Conrad: The Way of Dispossession. London: Faber, 1977.
- Davidson, Arnold E. "Delimiting Victory: The Ending of Conrad's Last Major Novel." Modern British Literature, 3 (1978), 88-100.
- Dike, Donald A. "The Tempest of Axel Heyst." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 17 (1962), 95-113.
- Dillon, Martin. "The Meaning of Time in the Development of Conrad's Fiction." Diss. State University of New York, 1967.
- Dowden, Wilfred T. Joseph Conrad: The Imaged Style. Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1971.
- Fleischmann, Wolfgang B. "Conrad's Chance and Bergson's Laughter." Renaissance, 14 (1961), 66-71.
- Fleishmann, Avrom. Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967.
- Ford, Ford Madox. Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance. London: Duckworth, 1924.
- Gatch, Katherine Haynes. "Conrad's Axel." Studies in Philology, 48 (1951), 98-106.
- Geddes, Gary. Conrad's Later Novels. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980.
- Gekowski, R. A. Conrad: The Moral World of the Novelist. London: Paul

- Elak, 1978.
- Gilliam, Harriet. "Time in Conrad's Under Western Eyes." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 31 (1977), 421-39.
- Gillon, Adam. Conrad and Shakespeare. New York: Astra Books, 1976.
- Goens, Mary B. "The 'Mysterious and Effective Star': The Mythic World-View in Conrad's Victory." Modern Fiction Studies, 13(L(1967-68)), 455-63.
- Gordan, John Dozier. Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1940.
- Gose, Elliot B., Jr. "'Cruel Devourer of the World's Light': The Secret Agent." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 15 (June, 1960), 39-51.
- . "Pure Exercise of Imagination: Archetypal Symbolism in Lord Jim." PMLA, 79 (1964), 137-47.
- Gross, Seymour L. "The Devil in Samburan: Jones and Ricardo in Victory." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 16 (June, 1961), 81-85.
- Guerard, Albert. Conrad the Novelist. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958.
- Guetti, James. "'Heart of Darkness': The Failure of Imagination." In his The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967, pp. 46-68.
- Gurko, Leo. Joseph Conrad: Giant in Exile. New York: Macmillan, 1962.
- Harkness, Bruce. "The Handling of Time in the Novels of Joseph Conrad." Diss. University of Chicago, 1951.
- . "The Epigraph of Conrad's Chance." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 9 (December 1954), 209-22.
- Hatch, Erik K. "Tuan Jim as Artist Manqué." Conradiana, 9 (1977), 256-68.
- Haugh, Robert F. Joseph Conrad: Discovery in Design. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. Joseph Conrad: Language and Fictional Self-Consciousness. Lincoln, Nebraska: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979.
- Hay, Eloise Knapp. "Lord Jim: From Sketch to Novel." Comparative Literature, 12 (1960), 289-309. Rpt. in Twentieth-Century Interpretations of "Lord Jim". Ed. Robert E. Kuehn. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969, pp. 14-34.
- . The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Hewitt, Douglas. Conrad: A Reassessment. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Bowes and

- Bowes, 1969.
- Hudspeth, Robert N. "Conrad's Use of Time in Chance." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 21 (1968), 283-89.
- Johnson, Bruce. Conrad's Models of Mind. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- Johnson, Julie M. "The Damsel and Her Knights: The Goddess and the Grail in Conrad's Chance." Conradiana, 13 (1981), 221-28.
- Kaehele, Sharon, and Howard German. "Conrad's Victory: A Reassessment." Modern Fiction Studies, 10 (1964), 55-72.
- Karl, Frederick. A Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (The Noonday Press), 1960.
- , ed. Joseph Conrad: A Collection of Criticism. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.
- , ed. Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.
- Kertzer, J. M. "Joseph Conrad and the Metaphysics of Time." Studies in the Novel, 11 (1979), 302-17.
- Kimpel, Ben, and T. C. Duncan Eaves. "The Geography and History in Nostramo." Modern Philology, 56 (1958), 49-54.
- Kirschner, Paul. Conrad: The Psychologist as Artist. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968.
- Kotzin, Michael C. "A Fairy-Tale Pattern in Conrad's Nostramo." Modern British Literature, 2 (1977), 200-14.
- La Bossière, Camille R. Joseph Conrad and the Science of Unknowing. Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1979.
- Leavis, F. R. "Joseph Conrad." In his The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad. 1948; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972.
- Lerner, Laurence. "Conrad the Historian." The Listener, April 15, 1965, pp. 554-56.
- Lodge, David. "Conrad's Victory and The Tempest: An Amplification." Modern Language Review, 59 (1964), 195-99.
- Lordi, R. J. "The Three Emissaries of Evil: Their Psychological Relationship in Conrad's Victory." College English, 23 (November 1961), 136-40.
- Lyngstad, Sverre. Time in the Modern British Novel: Conrad, Woolf, Joyce, and Huxley. Diss. New York University, 1960.

- Martin, W. R. "Charting Conrad's Costaguana." Conradiana, 8, (1976), 163-68.
- Meyer, Bernard. Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967.
- Miller, J. Hillis. Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, pp. 13-67.
- Morf, Gustav. The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad. London: Sampson Low, 1930.
- , The Polish Shades and Ghosts of Joseph Conrad. New York: Astra Books, 1976.
- Moser, Thomas. Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957.
- Nettels, Elsa. James and Conrad. Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1977.
- Palmer, John. Joseph Conrad's Fiction: A Study in Literary Growth. New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1968.
- Price, Antony. "Chronological Looping" in "Nostromo." Kuala Lumpur: Univ. of Malaya Library, 1973.
- Purdy, Dwight W. "The Chronology of Lord Jim." Conradiana, 8 (1976), 81-82.
- Reinecke, George F. "Conrad's Victory: Psychomachy, Christian Symbols and Theme." In Explorations of Literature. Ed. Rima Drell Reck. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1966, pp. 69-80.
- Rosenfield, Claire. Paradise of Snakes: An Archetypal Analysis of Conrad's Political Novels. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Roussel, Royal. The Metaphysics of Darkness. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971.
- Said, Edward. Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966.
- Saveson, John E. Conrad: The Later Moralists. Amsterdam: Rodopi, N.V., 1974.
- Secor, Robert. The Rhetoric of Shifting Perspectives: Joseph Conrad's "Victory". Pennsylvania State University Studies, No. 32. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1971.
- Sherry, Norman. Conrad's Eastern World. Cambridge: The University Press, 1966.
- , ed. Joseph Conrad: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge, 1973.

- Spatt, Hartley S. "Nostramo's Chronology: The Shaping of History." Conradiana, 8, (1976), 37-46.
- Stallman, Robert W. "The Structure and Symbolism of Conrad's Victory." Western Review, 13 (1949), 146-57.
- . "Conrad and 'The Secret Sharer'" In The Art of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium. Ed. Stallman. East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1960, pp. 275-88.
- Stegmaier, E. "The 'Would-Scene' in Joseph Conrad's 'Lord Jim' and 'Nostramo'" Modern Language Review, 67 (1972), 517-23.
- Stein, William Bysshe. "Conrad's East: Time, History, Action, and Maya." TSLI, 7 (1965), 265-83.
- . "Almayer's Folly: The Terror of Time." Conradiana, 1 (1968), 27-34.
- . "Conrad's World-Word of Time." In Aspects of Time. Ed. C. A. Patrides. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1976, pp. 114-25.
- Tanner, Tony. "Nightmare and Complacency: Razumov and the Western Eye." Critical Quarterly, 4 (1962), 197-214.
- . "Butterflies and Beetles—Conrad's Two Truths." Chicago Review, 16 (1963), 123-40.
- . Conrad: Lord Jim. Woodbury, N.Y.: Barron's, 1963.
- Teets, G., and H. E. Gerber. Joseph Conrad: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him. De Kalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971.
- Thornburn, David. Conrad's Romanticism. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974.
- Torchiana, Donald J. "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': Myth, Mirror, and Metropolis." Wascana Review, 2 (1967), 29-41. Rpt. in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus.' Norton Critical Edition. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton, 1979, pp. 275-87.
- Van Ghent, Dorothy. "On Lord Jim." In her The English Novel: Form and Function. 1953; rpt. New York: Harper, 1961.
- Warren, Robert Penn. Introduction to Nostramo. New York: Modern Library, 1951. Reprinted from Sewanee Review, 59 (1951), 353-91.
- Watson, Wallace. "Conrad on Film." Conradiana, 11 (1979), 209-27.
- Watt, Ian. "Heart of Darkness and Nineteenth-Century Thought." Partisan Review, 45 (1978), 109-13.
- . Conrad in the Nineteenth Century. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979.

- Whitehead, Lee M. "Alma Renamed Lena in Conrad's Victory." English Language Notes, 3 (September, 1965), 55-57.
- Wiley, Paul. Conrad's Measure of Man. 1954; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1966.
- Wright, Walter F. Romance and Tragedy in Joseph Conrad. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- Yelton, Donald. Mimesis and Metaphor: An Enquiry into the Genesis and Scope of Conrad's Symbolic Imagery. Studies in English Literature, No. 39. The Hague: Mouton, 1967.
- Young, Vernon. "Trial by Water: Joseph Conrad's The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'." Accent, 12 (1952), 67-81.
- Zabel, Morton. "Chance and Recognition." In The Art of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Symposium. Ed. R. W. Stallman. East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, pp. 19-35.
- Zuckermann, Jerome. "Contrapuntal Structure in Conrad's Chance." Modern Fiction Studies, 10 (Spring, 1964), 49-54.
- General Literary Studies
- Allen, Walter. The English Novel: A Short Critical History. 1954; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973.
- Auden, W. H. "The Guilty Vicarage." Harper's Magazine, 196 (May, 1948), 406-12.
- Baird, James. Ishmael: A Study of the Symbolic Mode in Primitivism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956.
- Booth, Wayne. The Rhetoric of Fiction. 1961; rpt. Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1973.
- Byrd, Max. "The Detective Detected: From Sophocles to Ross MacDonalD." The Yale Review, 64 (1974), 72-83.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. The Literature of the United States. 1954; rpt. with revisions, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1968.
- Daiches, David. The Novel and the Modern World. Rev. edn. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. 1957; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971.
- Hinz, Evelyn. "Hierogamy Versus Wedlock: Types of Marriage Plots and Their Relationship to Genres of Prose Fiction." PMLA, 91 (1976), 900-13.
- Howe, Irving. Politics and the Novel. 1957; rpt. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970.

- Hume, Kathryn. "Romance: A Perdurable Pattern." College English, 36 (1974), 129-46.
- James, Henry. Preface to Roderick Hudson. 1882; rpt. New York: Scribner's, 1907.
- . "The New Novel." In The Art of Fiction and Other Essays. Ed. Morris Roberts. New York: OUP, 1948.
- Johnson, Samuel. "Preface to Shakespeare." In Johnson on Shakespeare. Ed. Walter Raleigh. 1908; rpt. Oxford: OUP, 1965.
- Scholes, Robert, and Robert Kellogg. The Nature of Narrative. New York: OUP, 1966.
- Schorer, Mark. "Technique as Discovery." Hudson Review, 1 (1947), 67-87.
- Schorer, Mark, ed. Modern British Fiction: Essays in Criticism. New York: OUP, 1971.
- Schroder, Maurice. "The Novel as a Genre." Massachusetts Review, 4 (1963), 291-308.
- Rahv, Philip. "Fiction and the Criticism of Fiction." Kenyon Review, 18 (1956), 276-99.
- Studies of Time in Literature
- Chatman, Seymour. "What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)." Critical Enquiry, 7 (1980), 121-40.
- Church, Margaret. Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1963.
- Frank, Joseph. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature." Sewanee Review, 53 (1945), 433-50.
- Harrison, James. "Destiny or Descent: Responses to Darwin." Mosaic, 14 (Winter, 1981), 108-23.
- Higdon, David. Time and English Fiction. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Kumar, Shiv. Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel. Glasgow: Blackie, 1962.
- Lewis, Wyndham. Time and Western Man. 1927; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.
- Kermode, Frank. The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction. 1967; rpt. Oxford: OUP, 1979.
- Mendilow, A. A. Time and the Novel. 1952; rpt. New York: Humanities Press, 1972.

Meyerhoff, Hans. Time in Literature. 1955; rpt. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968.

Miner, Earl, ed. Literary Uses of Typology. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977.

Mitchell, W. J. T. "Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory." Critical Enquiry, 6 (1980), 539-67.

Ong, Walter J., S. J. "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision." Comparative Literature Studies, 3 (1966), 1-20.

Raleigh, John Henry. "The English Novel and Three Kinds of Time." Sewanee Review, 62 (1954), 428-40.

Studies of Time in Other Disciplines

Baker, Herschel. The Race of Time: Three Lectures on Renaissance Historiography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.

Bergson, Henri. An Introduction to Metaphysics. Trans. T. E. Hulme. 1903; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill (The Liberal Arts Press), 1955.

----- . Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness. Trans. F. L. Pogson. 1910; rpt. London: George Allan and Unwin,

----- . Creative Evolution. Trans. Arthur Mitchell. New York: Holt, 1911.

----- . The Creative Mind. Trans. Mabelle L. Andison. 1946; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

----- . "Laughter." In Comedy. Introd. Wylie Sypher. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956.

Buckley, Jerome. The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966.

Carr, E. H. What is History? 1961; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977.

Cleugh, M. F. Time and Its Importance in Modern Thought. London: Methuen, 1937.

Eliade, Mircea. The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History. Bollingen Series 46. 1954; rpt. New York: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971.

Hegel, G. W. F. Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History. Trans. Robert S. Hartman. 1953; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1981.

Hughes, Peter. Spots of Time. Toronto: CBC Publications, 1969.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry. Trans. Edward Allan McCormick. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962.

Millhauser, Milton. "'In the Air.'" From Chapter 3 of Just Before Darwin. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1959; rpt. in Darwin. Norton Critical Edition. Ed. Philip Appleman. New York: Norton, 1979, pp. 27-31.

Nash, Ronald. Ideas of History. Vol 1. New York: Dutton, 1969.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. The Use and Abuse of History. Trans. Adrian Collins. 2nd ed. 1957; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill (Libera Arts Press), 1978.

----- . Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book For Everyone and No One. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. 1961; rpt., Hollingsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1978.

O'Brian, George Dennis, Hegel on Reason and History. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975.

Patrides, C. A. The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

Poulet, Georges. Studies in Human Time. Trans. Elliot Coleman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956.

Priestley, J. B. Man and Time. 1964; rpt. New York: Dell, 1968.

Stace, W. T. Time and Eternity: An Essay on the Philosophy of Religion. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1956.

Toynbee, Arnold. A Study of History. Abridged by D. C. Somervell in 2 vols. 1946; rpt. New York; Dell, 1971.

Whitrow, G. J. The Nature of Time. 1972; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1975.

Wind, Edgar. Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance. Rev. ed. New York: Norton, 1968.

Miscellaneous

Berlin, Sir Isaiah, introd. Roots of Revolution. By Franco Venturi. London: Wiedenfield and Nicholson, 1960.

Edinger, Edward F. Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche. 1972; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin, 1974.

Engels, Friedrich. "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific." In The Marx-Engels Reader. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1972.

Foulke, Robert Dana. "Life in the Dying World of Sail, 1870-1910." Journal of British Studies, 3 (1963), 105-36.

- Freud, Sigmund. A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Trans. Joan Riviere from revised edition. 1924; rpt. New York: Pocket Books, 1972.
- Grahame, Gerald S. "The Ascendancy of the Sailing Ship, 1850-85." Economic History Review, 2nd series, 9 (1956), 74-88.
- Graves, Robert. The Greek Myths. Rev. edn. 2 vols. 1968; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.
- Jung, Carl G. "Approaching the Unconscious." In Man and His Symbols. Eds. Jung and M.-L. von Franz. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- . "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious." In The Portable Jung. Ed. Joseph Campbell. 1971; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1980.
- Neumann, Erich. The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype. end ed. Trans. Ralph Manheim. Bollingen Series 47. 1963; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972.
- New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. Trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames. Introd. Robert Graves. 1968; rpt. London: Hamlyn, 1973.
- Russell, Bertrand. History of Western Philosophy. 1946; rpt. London: Allen and Unwin, 1961.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. The World as Will and Idea. Trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp. Vols. I, III. London: Kegan Paul, 1906.
- von Franz, M.-L. "The Process of Individuation." In Man and His Symbols. Ed. C. G. Jung and von Franz. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- Woodcock, George. Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1970.